

**Report to:** Sandwell Metropolitan Council

**Report of:** Councillor Elaine Costigan – Panel Member, West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

## **West Midlands Police and Crime Panel – Update January - September 2017**

### **1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 This report sets out the work of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel since the last report presented in March 2017. Sandwell has one member and one substitute member serving on the Panel.

### **2 It is recommended that:**

- a) The information contained in the report be noted;**
- b) Members consider whether there are any recommendations relating to the PCC and policing and crime in Sandwell that could be championed by the West Midlands Police and Crime Sandwell Panel Members.**

### **3 Introduction**

- 3.1 The West Midlands Police and Crime Panel was established in November 2012 as part of the new governance arrangements for policing to provide the checks and balances in relation to the performance of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). The Panel consists of 12 councillors representing the 7 districts across the West Midlands and 2 independent members. Named substitutes have also been appointed for each councillor member.
- 3.2 Sandwell is represented on the Panel by Cllr Elaine Costigan. Cllr Julie Webb is Cllr Costigan's named substitute. In addition, Cllr David Hosell sits as one of the Association of Black Country Authority's appointments to the panel.
- 3.3 Panel meeting papers, its statutory and scrutiny reports, together with more information about the Panel and meeting dates can be found on the Panel's website:  
[www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk).

### **4 The Role of the Police and Crime Panel**

- 4.1 The Panel has a dual role to both support and scrutinise the work of the PCC. The Panel acts as a critical friend on behalf of West Midlands residents and has a number of statutory tasks:
- Scrutinise and comment on the PCC's Police and Crime Plan;
  - Scrutinise and make a recommendation on the policing precept and budget for policing;
  - Review the PCC's Annual Report;
  - Hold confirmation hearings before the PCC makes certain key appointments;
  - Handle complaints about the PCC and Deputy PCC, referring serious complaints to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

### **5 Work of the Panel (January – September 2017)**

- 5.1 The Panel has met four times since January 2017. At its first meeting of the new municipal year in July, the Panel re-elected Cllr Sean Coughlan (Walsall) as Chair, and Cllr Ken Hawkins (Solihull) was re-elected as Vice Chair.

- 5.2 The Panel has carried out a number of statutory tasks:
- In February 2017 the Panel reviewed the PCC's policing precept and budget for 2017/18;
  - In September 2017, the Panel commented on the PCC's Annual Report 2016/17. The Panel's letter and the PCC's response are available at <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/>

5.3 In addition, the Panel have examined partnership working across youth justice agencies (March 2017); looked at work to tackle mental health and the supporting work of the West Midlands Combined Authority (July 2017); and received an update on the WMP2020 change programme (July 2017). The Panel have also scrutinised matters relating to the PCC's budget and how community safety funding will change (September 2017).

5.4 The next meeting will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> November in Solihull, where panel members will consider knife crime and progress in tackling female genital mutilation.

## **6 Raising the Panel's Profile and Public Engagement**

6.1 The Panel has a duty to raise awareness of it with key stakeholders, the public and the media. Efforts have continued to engage the public at meetings by holding them at venues across the region. There is the option for members of the public to ask questions of the Panel at each meeting.

6.2 The Panel communicates via Twitter (@westmidspcp) and press releases are distributed to the local media contacts. The Panel has a website: [www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk)

## **7 Panel Resources and Officer Support**

7.1 The Panel continues to operate within the limits of the Home Office Grant. The Panel agreed that Members would not use this to draw special responsibility allowances but Member travel and carer expenses can be claimed.

7.2 The Birmingham Scrutiny Office acts as the Panel Secretariat. Support is also provided by Birmingham legal officers and a Solihull finance officer.

## **8 Opportunities for Further Dialogue with Overview and Scrutiny**

As we shape the Panel's work programme for 2017/18 and assess the impact, actions and decisions of the PCC there are opportunities for further dialogue and closer working with local scrutiny committees. Elected members from all parties should be encouraged to raise issues relating to policing and crime with the Sandwell Police and Crime Panel Members.

## **9 Background papers**

West Midlands Police and Crime Panel Minutes and Agenda: [www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk)

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