

**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 October 2017 – February 2018**

### **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 October 2017. Sandwell has two members 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. Cllr Sean Coughlan (Walsall) is Panel Chair, and Cllr Ken Hawkins (Solihull) is Vice Chair.
- 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, referring serious complaints to the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

## **5 Work of the Panel (October 2017 – February 2018)**

- 5.1 The Panel has met three times since September 2017.
- In November 2017 Members received an update on the work of the West Midlands Female Genital Mutilation Task Force. Members were encouraged to ask at other committee meetings and when working with other agencies about what work is done to safeguard girls against FGM and support for those that have experienced it.
  - In February 2018 the Panel reviewed the PCC's policing precept and budget for 2018/19; The Panel's letter and the PCC's response are available at <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/>
- 5.2 In addition, the Panel has looked at the PCC's proposals to address substance misuse and the recommendations of the Gangs and Violent Crime Commission. Members have questioned the PCC on the Force's capacity to handle 101 and 999 calls, and the findings of the HMIC report into crime data integrity. Other key topics raised with the PCC include traveller encampments, theft of vehicles and police response and public perception of policing.
- 5.3 The next meeting will be held on 19 March 2018 in Coventry, where panel members will consider the police estate strategy.

## **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). 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 2018/19 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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