

Report to: Sandwell Metropolitan Council

Date: 6 October 2020

West Midlands Police and Crime Panel – Update October 2020

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Bi-annual reports on the activities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel are presented to Sandwell MBC for consideration. Sandwell is represented on the Panel by Cllr Maria Crompton and Cllr Farut Shaeen. Cllr Richard Jones is named substitute.
- 1.2 This report reflects on the work of the Panel during 2020/21 Municipal Year up to September 2020.

2 It is recommended that:

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

3 Role of the Police and Crime Panel

- 3.1 The West Midlands Police and Crime Panel was established in November 2012 as part of the new governance arrangements for policing. Under these arrangements the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) sets the strategic direction and budget for local policing and holds the Chief Constable to account for an efficient and effective police force.
- 3.2 The Police and Crime Panel provides the checks and balances in relation to the performance of the PCC.
- 3.3 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. It reviews and scrutinises the decisions and actions of the PCC, makes reports and recommendations, and fulfils a number of statutory tasks.

4 Panel Membership

- 4.1 The Panel consists of 12 councillors representing the 7 West Midland districts. The membership reflects the political balance of the region. Named substitutes are appointed for each councillor member. Two independent members also serve on the Panel who were appointed following a regional advertisement and competitive interview process.
- 4.2 In July 2020 the Panel elected Councillor Narinder Kaur Kooner (Birmingham) as Chair and Cllr Suky Samra (Walsall) as Vice Chair for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.
- 4.3 Sandwell is represented on the Panel by Cllr Maria Crompton and Cllr Farut Shaeen. Cllr Richard Jones is named substitute.
- 4.4 Meeting papers, meeting dates, its published reports, together with more information about the Panel can be found on the Panel’s website: www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk. All 2020 meetings have been live streamed.

5 Panel Resources and Officer Support

- 5.1 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 travel and carer expenses can be claimed.
- 5.2 Dudley's Chief Executive supports the Panel and the Birmingham Scrutiny Office acts as the secretariat. Support is also provided by Birmingham legal officers and a Solihull finance officer.

6 Core Work Programme –Statutory Tasks

- 6.1 The Panel has five statutory responsibilities that are the core element of its work programme:
- Scrutinise and make a recommendation on the PCC's proposed policing precept and budget, with the power to veto the precept;
 - Scrutinise and comment on the PCC's Police and Crime Plan;
 - Review the PCC's Annual Report;
 - Hold confirmation hearings before the PCC makes certain senior appointments; and
 - Handle non-criminal complaints about the PCC, referring serious complaints to the Independent Office for Police Conduct. (Task delegated to the Birmingham Monitoring Officer).
- 6.2 Panels are encouraged to also undertake wider exploratory work to build its knowledge and insight to hold the PCC to account.
- 6.3 At every meeting the Panel also receive regular updates from the PCC on recent activities and decisions taken.

7 Highlights February 2020 -September 2020

7.1 February 2020

The Panel reviewed the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposed policing precept and budget for 2020/21. Members sought further details on how budget savings would be achieved. The Panel's letter and the PCC's response are available at <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/>

7.2 March 2020

The PCC issued a new Emergency Chapter of the Police and Crime Plan to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Panel commented the document, acknowledging the considerable challenge of responding to the pandemic. The Panel welcomed the proactive work proposed to support the most vulnerable during the lockdown and also ongoing support to funded organisations and groups supporting victims and working to reduce crime. The Panel's response is available at <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/>

7.3 May 2020

The Panel held a Confirmation Hearing for Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner position to question the PCC's proposed appointee. The Panel recommended that Mr Saleem should to not be appointed. The Panel's letter and the PCC's response are available at <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/>

7.4 July 2020

The Panel discussed the budgetary impact of the pandemic and progress towards the PCC's new policy objectives to lead and support a partnership approach to respond to the pandemic and commission to mitigate the effect of COVID-19. Members discussed the collaborative work with regional criminal justice partners to respond to the challenges of COVID-19, the police enforcement of unofficial gatherings and heard of plans to review Hate Crime recording and support services for victims.

7.5 September 2020

The Panel will consider the PCC's Annual Report and examine out progress made towards the Police and Crime priorities and objectives.

8 Looking Ahead

- 8.1 As the Panel shapes its work programme for the remainder of the 2020/2021 Municipal Year to assess the impact, actions and decisions of the Police and Crime Commissioner, there are opportunities for further dialogue and closer working with local scrutiny committees.
- 8.2 Following the election of the new PCC in May 2021 one of the Panel's first tasks will be to review the Police and Crime Plan issued by the PCC ensuring it reflects the priorities of residents.
- 8.3 Elected members should be encouraged to raise issues relating to policing and crime with the Sandwell Police and Crime Panel Members.

Background Papers

West Midlands Police and Crime Panel Minutes and Agenda: www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk

Contact officer:

Sarah Fradgley, Panel Officer

Email: wmpcp@birmingham.gov.uk Tel: 0121 303 1727