

Report to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Date: October 2022

West Midlands Police and Crime Panel – Update October 2022

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. This report reflects on the work of the Panel between February 2022 and October 2022.
- 1.2 Sandwell is represented on the Panel by Cllr Zahir Hussain and Cllr Danny Millard. Cllr Richard McVittie is a named substitute member.

2 Recommendation

It is recommended that the information contained in the report be noted.

3 Role of the Police and Crime Panel

- 3.1 The Panel is a joint scrutiny body of the West Midland authorities with a dual role to 'support and challenge' the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
- 3.2 The Panel acts as a critical friend to the PCC on behalf of West Midlands residents and must perform the following statutory functions:
 - Review and comment on the PCC's draft Police and Crime Plan.
 - Review the PCC's Annual Reports.
 - Scrutinise decisions and actions by the PCC.
 - Review (with the power to veto) the PCC's proposed Council Tax precept.
 - Hold confirmation hearings before the PCC makes certain senior appointments (Chief Constable, Deputy PCC, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer), with the power to veto the Chief Constable appointment.
 - Handle non-criminal complaints about the conduct of the PCC and Deputy PCC, referring serious complaints to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (task delegated to the Birmingham Monitoring Officer).
 - Appoint an acting PCC if required.
 - Suspend the PCC if charged.
- 3.3 The Panel's work programme consists of statutory tasks (listed above) and wider exploratory work to build knowledge and insight into the strategic policing and the wider community safety and criminal justice landscape to fulfil its role to hold the PCC to account.
- 3.4 The Panel must maintain a strategic focus in scrutinising the work of the PCC, rather than operational detail.

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 and are appointed annually. 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 The Panel elected Councillor Suky Samra (Walsall MBC) as Chair and Kristina Murphy (Independent Co-opted Member) as Vice Chair for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year.

5 Meetings and agenda papers

- 5.1 Meeting papers, meeting dates, published reports, together with more information about the Panel can be found on the Panel's website: www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk. Meetings are livestreamed for the public.

6 Panel Resources and Officer Support

- 6.1 The Panel continues to operate within the limits of the Home Office Grant. The Panel agreed in 2012 that members would not use this to draw special responsibility allowances, but travel and carer expenses can be claimed.
- 6.2 Dudley MBC's Chief Executive provides lead officer support. Birmingham City Council acts as secretariat and provides legal support. Solihull MBC supports the Panel with its scrutiny of the PCC budget and precept.

7 Highlights October 2021 – February 2022

- 7.1 **February 2022:** Panel members attended a briefing on the PCC's Performance Monitoring Framework in preparation for consideration of the first set of performance data in March. A group of Members also visited Lloyd House and received briefings on the Commissioning, Audit, Communications and Policy team functions of the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner, toured the WMP Force Contact and had a demonstration of the mobile technology used by police officers.
- 7.2 **March 2022:** Chief Constable Sir David Thompson attended the Panel meeting and answered questions from Panel members a range of key priorities and the context that policing working within, including progress toward recruitment targets, actions to address public confidence in the police, tackling vehicle crime and violent crime, and the capacity of the police contact centre to meet increasing demand.
- 7.3 **March – May 2022:** The Panel Chair sat as an observer on the new Chief Constable selection and interview process.
- 7.4 **May 2022** - the annual appointment process of panel members saw a 50% turnover of councillor panel members.
- 7.5 **July 2022:** The Panel conducted a Confirmation Hearing for the new Chief Constable of West Midlands Police. The Panel has a key role in the appointment process by holding a public hearing to question the preferred candidate to assess their suitability. The PCC must then have regard to the Panel's recommendation. The Panel recommended the PCC appoint his preferred candidate.
- 7.6 **October 2022:** Panel is tracking the progress towards implementation of the recommendations contained in the Panel scrutiny inquiry *Public Confidence in the Police*. The inquiry sought to understand why the level of public confidence in West Midlands Police had fallen and examine what the PCC could do to address the factors that had an impact.

7.7 The report containing 10 recommendations for the PCC to consider is available on the panel website. www.westmidlandspcp.gov.uk

8 Forward Plan

8.1 As Panel shapes its work programme for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year to assess the impact, actions and decisions of the PCC, there are opportunities for further dialogue and closer working with local scrutiny committees.

Background Papers

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

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