

West Midlands Police and Crime Panel – Update March 2023

Solihull Metropolitan District Council

Date: 4 April 2023

Report of the Panel Lead Officer: Kevin O' Keefe Chief Executive Dudley MBC

1 Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the key activities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel (“the Panel”) and its scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). This report reflects on the work of the Panel between November 2022 and March 2023.
- 1.2 Solihull MBC is represented on the Panel by Cllr Alan Feeney. Cllr James Butler is a named substitute member.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **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.
- 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 of 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

- 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.org.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.org.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. A decision has recently agreed to award a small discretionary allowance to Independent Panel members.
- 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 November 2022 – March 2023

- 7.1 The Panel met on 14 November 2022 to review the **PCC's Annual Report** setting out progress made towards his Police and Crime Plan objectives. The Panel recommended the PCC consider including more performance data and case study examples to demonstrate the impact of work. The Panel further recommended the annual report outline the action plan to address ongoing concerns about the rate of progress towards the 50% Stop and Search positive outcome rate objective and addressing disproportionality of those subject to a Stop and Search.
- 7.2 On 9 January 2023 the Panel examined the Commissioner's work with criminal justice and community safety partners, and his oversight of West Midlands Police, to reduce **serious violence**. The Panel welcomed representatives of the

Violence Reduction Partnership and West Midlands Police who outlined their focus and activities.

- 7.3 The Panel examined the Commissioner's preliminary **budget proposals** and proposed **policing precept** ahead of formally reviewing the policing precept for 2022-23 at its 6 February meeting.
- 7.4 The Panel continued with its focus on key themes arising from its **Public Confidence in Policing** scrutiny inquiry, which an update the PCC's oversight of West Midlands Police **Force Contact Improvement Plan** to improve its contact with the public and call handling performance, rebuilding **neighbourhood policing**, and West Midlands Police compliance to the **Victim's Code** and impact of projects to support vulnerable **victims**.
- 7.5 The Panel welcomed a **public question** at the meeting about scrutiny of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan objectives for **road safety**. The Panel had incorporated this topic into its work programme as a result of the question.
- 7.6 Anyone who lives, works or studies in the West Midlands can ask a question relating to the Panel's role in scrutinising the PCC, more details can be found on the [West Midlands Police and Crime Panel getting involved webpage](#).
- 7.7 Panel members have continued to undertake **training** to support them in their role as well improving core knowledge on policing functions, for example call handling and police finance.
- 7.8 In March a group of Panel members also visited Lloyd House and received briefings on the commissioning, communications and policy team functions of the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner and toured the WMP Force Contact and the CCTV suite.

8 Forward Plan

- 8.1 As Panel shapes its work programme for the 2023/2024 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.

9 Finance Implications

- 9.1 There are no direct finance implications associated with this update report.

10 Legal Implications

- 10.1 A Police and Crime Panel must be maintained to carry out scrutiny functions and responsibilities as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Panel membership must represent all the districts and reflect the political composition of the region.

11 Equalities Implications

- 11.1 This Police and Crime Panel is a joint committee of West Midlands Local Authorities. Therefore, it has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:
- 11.1.1 Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
 - 11.1.2 Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
 - 11.1.3 Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 11.2 The Panel considers these duties during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. Including how policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; whether impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within the West Midlands; and whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.

12 Background Papers

- 12.1 West Midlands Police and Crime Panel Minutes and Agenda:
www.westmidlandspcp.org.uk

13 Contact officers:

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