

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD ON 18 JANUARY AT 1400 HOURS, WALSALL

PRESENT:-

Cllr Mohammed Arif (Substitute) – Walsall
Cllr Rose Burley – Walsall
Cllr Darren Cooper – Sandwell
Cllr Ken Hawkins – Solihull
Cllr Diane Holl-Allen - Solihull
Cllr Abdul Khan (Substitute) – Coventry
Cllr Mike Leddy – Birmingham
Cllr John Rowley – Wolverhampton
Cllr Paul Tilsley – Birmingham
Cllr Dave Tyler – Dudley

ALSO PRESENT:

David Jamieson – West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner
Yvonne Mosquito – Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Sarah Norman - Chief Executive Dudley MBC / Panel Secretary
Emma Williamson – Head of Scrutiny Birmingham/ Panel Lead Officer
Jonathan Jardine – Chief Executive for the Office of PCC
Mark Kenyon – Chief Finance Officer for the Office of PCC
Alethea Fuller – Partnerships and Engagement Manager Office of PCC
Superintendent Claire Bell – West Midlands Police
Shelly Ward – West Midlands Strategic Lead Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People
Hazel Pulley – Headteacher Parkfield School and Chair West Midlands FGM Task Force
Julie Cooper – Head of Corporate Finance Solihull MBC

APOLOGIES

232 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of the following Panel Members:-

Councillors Lucas (Coventry), Mattu (Wolverhampton), O’Shea (Birmingham-substitute), Nick Drew and Lionel Walker (Independent Panel Members).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

233 During the course of the meeting the following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor Paul Tilsley: Director of Birmingham Airport and Non-Executive Director of Birmingham Community Health Trust

Councillor Rose Burley: Trustee and Vice Chair of the Walsall Domestic Violence Consortium

MINUTES

234 Subject to the correction to the spelling of Chief Constable Chris Sims in Minute No. 230, the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Minute No. 223 - The Panel noted the PCC's response to the Panel's Community Safety Funding inquiry and the Chair advised that both the report and the PCC's response would be published on the Panel website later that week.

Minute No. 230 – The PCC updated the Panel on the retirement of Chief Constable Chris Sims and appointment of the new Chief Constable David Thompson.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

235 **Mr Kendall**

“The IPCC upheld 70/148 complaint appeals against WMP disagreeing with responses provided to the complainant by WMP's "Professional Standards Department". Whilst one could perhaps expect a significant percentage of this dubious WMP PSD complaint rejection to be attributable to new information being provided in the appeal process, the IPCC's upholding of almost half of complaint appeals from the public rejected by WMP PSD is far too high. This is clear evidence of time wasting, rubber stamping and bias by WMP PSD who claim to be impartial when assessing complaints made by the public against WMP. Given the large scale of the IPCC's disagreements with WMP PSD's assessment of complaint appeals from the public, will the crime panel scrutinize the accountability of the Commissioner's office for WMP PSD's poor performance in assessing complaint appeals from the public?”

The Chairman gave the following response:-

Your question contained a number of unsubstantiated statements which the Panel cannot endorse. The substance of your question however, is to ask the Panel to scrutinise the Commissioner's role in overseeing the WMP PSD assessment of complaint appeals. Just to be clear: the Commissioner's role is to monitor complaints made against WMP officers and staff. The management of police complaints and appeals is an operational matter for the Chief Constable. Therefore the Panel will not look at the management of police complaints or appeals. However, given that we're coming to the end of this year's work programme, I suggest that the PCC is invited to a future Panel meeting to talk about his oversight role and the effectiveness of police complaints and appeals monitoring.

ORDER OF THE AGENDA

- 236 The order of the agenda was changed to consider Agenda Item 7 Hidden Crimes before Agenda Item 6 Tackling FGM in the West Midlands Six Month Update.
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HIDDEN CRIMES

- 237 The Chair explained that the Panel asked for an update on the Police and Crime Plan objectives that relate to hidden crimes. The following reports on Hidden Crimes and Victims Services were submitted:-

(See documents Nos.1 and 2)

The PCC presented the reports and during the course of the debate the following points were made:

Hidden crimes were moving up the police agenda, these tended to be more complex to investigate and required an entirely different skill set for officers. The number of police officers in the Public Protection Unit had increase from 300 to 800.

Clarification was given as to the definition of a hidden crime as happening behind closed doors, rather than in the public space. The hidden crime categories were umbrella crime terms. Rape was not classified as a specific category as this sat within several hidden crime categories.

The PCC felt it was imperative to have total openness with the public as the size of the problem and actions taken.

The PCC referred to the HMIC reports and spoke of his work with the Strategic Policing and Crime Board to monitor improvements. He highlighted the importance of closer working between with the seven local authorities to co-ordinate their reporting and working systems, and suggested a role for a future Metro Mayor could be to look at what areas need co-ordination to ensure consistency of case handling and efficiencies. It was noted that work was underway involving the MASHs to establish regional standards.

West Midlands Police were working with Birmingham Airport to train staff to spot passengers who may be potential victims of hidden crimes such as forced marriage or FGM. Additional training was to be given for staff to identify passengers displaying more subtle signs that they were at risk.

The PCC explained the approach taken by the West Midlands Victims Commission, made up of community and voluntary sector to advise on the allocation of funding (from receipts of the Victims surcharge). A thematic approach was taken however the OPCC undertook to look at the vacancy in Walsall representation on the Domestic Violence Consortium.

It was noted that magistrates saw many victims of domestic violence retract their case at court and it was suggested research into the reasons for this would be useful in determining what additional support services for victims may be required.

The Panel welcomed the reports and congratulated the PCC and West Midlands Police for the improvements made.

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

TACKLING FGM IN WEST MIDLANDS: SIX MONTH PROGRESS UPDATE

238 The following report setting out progress made towards the implementation of the recommendations in the Panel's Tackling FGM in the West Midlands report, was submitted:-

(See document No.3)

The PCC congratulated the Panel for its report and the updates that it had obtained. Referring to an article in The Times newspaper that day, the PCC emphasised that it was not the view of the OPCC or West Midlands Police that FGM was a practice based within any one religion or

was a religious requirement, it was a cultural issue that was practiced by people from many faiths.

The Deputy PCC commended the work of the Panel to raise awareness of FGM and updated on the work undertaken by the OPCC and WMP since the Panel's report was published. She had shared the Panel's report and the work of the PCC and WMP to tackle FGM.

It was noted that more people were reporting people at risk of FGM and two FGM Protection Orders had been issued. Work was underway to develop an education and community engagement campaign.

Members felt it was important to maintain a high profile for FGM and seek further updates on the recommendations in 6-9 months. It was suggested the Panel ask executive health boards to include a FGM progress report in their annual reports on an ongoing basis. Also that Local Authorities might approach local health and wellbeing agencies to do the same.

Disappointment was expressed at some responses that stated the FGM problem was small in Walsall as it was felt a small number of cases was still too many. Responding to a question as to progress made on working towards criminal prosecutions for FGM, the PCC noted that prosecutions on their own would not eradicate FGM, but also education both here and abroad to change mind-sets and rethink cultural practices.

Hazel Pulley Chair of the FGM Task Force and Shelly Ward, Strategic Lead for Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People gave an update of the work of the West Midlands FGM Task Force established in response to a Panel recommendation. Work to date had included developing a common risk assessment and work to build an understanding of the prevalence of FGM across the West Midlands. The Task Force had also identified the key facets that should be included in FGM training. They highlighted that some localities needed to do more to address FGM and asked Panel Members to encourage their local authorities to become involved in the FGM Task Force.

RESOLVED:-

- i) That the report be noted; and
- ii) A further progress update towards recommendations be obtained and reported to the Panel in 6-9 months.

PRELIMINARY REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17

- 239 The following report setting out the PCC's preliminary budget and policing precept proposals for 2016/17 was submitted:-

(See document No.4)

The PCC presented the report and advised that the ten PCC areas with the lowest precepts were now permitted to increase their precept by £5. The West Midlands had the second lowest ratio. The PCC proposed to set a precept increase of £5 on Band D properties and associated increase on all other properties in 2016/17. These proposals were out to public consultation and once he had considered the consultation results, the PCC would present his final proposals to the Panel for formal review.

The PCC explained that changes to the financial settlement meant the PCC could lift the compulsory redundancy for PCSOs and could complete the commitment to recruit 450 police officers. The PCC was confident that he could now look at recruiting more police officers.

In response to a question as to whether the PCC could now review his plans to reduce Community Safety Grants, the PCC explained the cuts reflected policing budget cuts over the past four years that had not been previously made. He would not reconsider as he wished to see efficiencies made in this area and savings generated.

Responding to questions about police station closures and budget reserves, the PCC explained that police station closures were a Chief Constable decision and non-essential reserves were largely earmarked for expenditure. The PCC undertook to present his medium-term financial plan to a future Panel meeting.

Members discussed the police recruitment and the PCC spoke of his determination to make changes and progress to see ethnic make up the Force reflected the local population. Members noted that retention of officers and promotion remained a challenge and noted the efforts to change the culture of the police to encourage BME applicants; they also heard about the advice and budding of potential BME applicants, The PCC invited Panel Members to a police recruitment evening to meet the new recruits.

RESOLVED: -

- i) That the PCC's Revenue Budget proposals be noted; and
 - ii) The PCC proposal to set a precept increase of £5 on Band D properties and associated increase on all other properties in 2016/17 be noted.
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EJECTION OF A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC

- 240 At 3.30pm after a number of interruptions from the public gallery, the Chairman asked a member to the public to refrain from making further interruptions or they would be asked to leave the meeting. After a further interruption, the Chairman requested the member of the public leave the meeting room and he was escorted out.
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QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME WITH THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

- 241 Panel Members were given the opportunity to put questions to the PCC. The following update report on the performance against 2015/16 milestones and deliverables in the Police and Crime Panel was submitted:-

(See document No. 5)

Collaboration between the Police and Fire Services

The Chair asked the PCC about the Government plans for police and fire to work more closely. The PCC stated that the Government had published a discussion paper for more collaborative models and may mandate PCCs for plans for police and fire services to come together. He was taking a neutral approach but wanted to ensure the West Midlands was prepared and so he had met with fire and police unions and the Chair of the Fire Authority and Chief Officer to look at some of the issues. He regretted that the PCC role had not been integrated into Metro Mayor model.

Zombie Knives

PCC raised the issue of zombie knives, available to buy on-line as these weapons were starting to appear on the streets. He had called on Amazon to withdraw them from sale and written to the Home Secretary to ban imports.

WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16 AND RECENT DECISIONS BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

- 242 The following report setting out the Panel's future work programme and meeting dates, together with the list of decisions published by the Police and Crime Commissioner since the last Panel meeting, was submitted:-

(See document No.6)

The Panel were advised there would be a Member pre-meeting starting at 1pm on 1 February and were asked to note the change of venue to the Sandwell on 7 March 2016.

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 243 Monday 1 February 2015, Birmingham Council House.

Meeting ended at 1610 hours

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CHAIR