

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD ON 16
JANUARY 2017 AT 1400 HOURS, WOLVERHAMPTON**

PRESENT:-

CLlr Ken Hawkins (Vice-Chair) – Walsall
CLlr John O’Shea – Birmingham
CLlr Peter Douglas-Osborn – Birmingham
CLlr Pervez Akhtar – Coventry
CLlr Cathryn Bayton - Dudley
CLlr Preet Kaur Gill – Sandwell
CLlr Paul Sweet – Wolverhampton
CLlr Wendy Thompson - Wolverhampton
Kristina Murphy – Independent Member
Lionel Walker – Independent Member

ALSO PRESENT:

David Jamieson – West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner
Ashley Bertie – Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Judy Foster – Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Jonathan Jardine, Chief Executive, OPCC
Mark Keynon – Chief Finance Officer, OPCC
Alethea Fuller, Policy and Commissioning Manager, OPCC
Superintendent Karl Fellows, West Midlands Police
Superintendent Andrew Riley, West Midlands Police
Sarah Norman – Panel Lead Officer
Emma Williamson – Panel Officer
Baseema Begum – Panel Support Officer

1. APOLOGIES

300 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Sean Coughlan, Abdul Salam Khan, George Duggins, Dave Tyler, Julie Webb and Fiona Williams.

2. MINUTES

(See document No. 1)

301 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

302 None.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

303 None.

5. PROPOSED INQUIRY

304 (See document No. 2)

The PCC introduced the item and pledged his support to the inquiry. He emphasised that once the report has been produced he will be very keen to see meaningful activity, with a review of progress at a later date.

The PCC outlined that the Criminal Justice System (CJS) has a large number of players, the Police are just one: Probation, the Courts, Prison Service, Crown Prosecution Service and others such as Youth Justice Boards and those who work to reduce re-offending. He stated that his office has good bilateral relationships with each of these, but asked what the relationships between other partners are and if these were as effective as could be.

He outlined further that the 2011 Act placed on CJS partners a responsibility to co-operate on criminal justice matters, but with little guidance, as enabling legislation didn't put responsibility on anyone to do anything. Therefore there is no-one to take the lead on joint operations and joint thinking. The PCC is the only role with a democratic mandate. He has received feedback from the other bodies that it would be good if he were to co-ordinate the effort. He would however not have any authority over those bodies.

Currently there is no strategic group that brings the CJS partners in the West Midlands together – one of the very few areas in the country that does not. A strategic group would help in having a joined up service for example helping courts consider sentencing and take account of provision such as housing, level of training, profitable employment etc.

The PCC also highlighted that use of digital routes of information was very important as they have demonstrated to be efficient, for example the body-worn cameras used by police officers. However use of technology needs to be effective – a fast rapid system is required and systems that 'talk' to each other better rather than separate system that require more officer time.

Superintendent Karl Fellows, West Midlands Police stated that partnership engagement is key. His team engage on a daily basis with the Crown Prosecution Service and courts about cases going through and have a healthy relationship. Line managers meet on a fortnightly basis, both himself and Superintendent Andrew Riley attend monthly meetings with CPS and the court service and probation. Executive level meetings take place on a quarterly basis with the local prosecutor and officers.

Members raised the following points:

- Are there good bilateral questions between the parties – what about between other parties?
- Youth offending is a key area that requires further exploring. Children as young as 11 are on the periphery of criminal activity and the breeding ground of criminals of tomorrow. Taylor report talks about what work can be done in schools – some good examples around the country.

MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2017

- Major area of worry is young people who are illiterate, essential that there is a literacy programme, so they can be educated appropriately – needs more than 6 months at a time;
- Access to education before and at point of sentencing is needed. Education and engaging young people (in a creative way) at an earlier level is crucial. Partners need to work together on this. The impact of cutbacks to youth services needs to be considered in light of this.
- There is value in looking at those who come through the system but also those who have not actually been sentenced. There is a need to look at interventions in educations, housing, skills and substance misuse.
- How do we work with schools? Do they all have the necessary resources, skills to work with families and youth justice before it becomes a real problem?
- There is recognition that we have to do more with less however need to share good practice.
- It is important to have the support of parents and teachers in working together to ensure young people don't get involved in low level anti-social behaviour that leads to offending.
- Some schools make great efforts, other don't have such robust systems. There are also young people who are new to the country and/or school. In some cases some of those young people have very violent backgrounds however there are others who have settled in and been very successful.
- There is a need to look at the broader aspects for instance how effective are the Police in managing offenders? There is a need look at issues prior to conviction and how to keep youth offenders of criminal justice system. The focus should be on prevention.
- The role of peer mentors is important as young people need role models – people that they can identify with and those that have changed their behaviour and are on the right path.

In response to the points raised, the PCC responded that many of those in prison are those who perform poorly academically, so there is a need to look at how to provide on-going education support to assist rehabilitation. There is also a need to consider those at a very young age to avoid problems later on and those school children excluded from school. It is also important to note what organisations are doing to support young people.

In addition it is important to recognise that one of the challenges is that lower skilled jobs, which would have traditionally be taken up by those who have not achieved academically, are disappearing. There is a need to look at this issue of low skill levels more closely and how partners and support organisations are working together.

Ashley Bertie, Assistant PCC spoke of the work he is involved in with the Gangs Commission. The PCC's office has engaged with the business community and are getting these people these into schools to talk about what they do. Through this positive mentoring the aim is to get young people at risk of being involved in gangs away from them. The PCC is looking to invest in a co-ordinator role – bringing different cultural projects together and linking employers in with this.

Sarah Norman, Panel Lead Officer summarised the discussions and where the Panel could add value. She felt that there would be some scope in looking at the area of reducing youth offending with a particular emphasis on education and skills and the position of those young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). It would be helpful to look at what different interventions can do (e.g. peer mentoring) before and after conviction. It would also be helpful to consider the role of the PCC in co-ordinating partners so there is better partnership working and understanding where the gaps are in the judicial system.

The PCC added that he understood it was clear that the gaps are partnerships working. To focus on the 16-24 age group would be useful as they have the highest number of offenders and victims. It is also helpful to look at prevention and looking at what can be done to stop young people getting into the criminal justice system in the first place (under 16's who are at risk of offending). He felt that it would be beneficial for the Panel to invite the various agencies involving in working with young people including those that work with those that have offended.

6. PRELIMINARY BUDGET AND PRECEPT CONSIDERATIONS

305 (See document No. 3)

The PCC outlined the following points:

- West Midlands Police have been rated by inspectors as one of the top three most efficient in the country;
- Crime is changing not falling, but changing. Total crime is up 6.2% and is this due to a rise in crimes against 'the person' for example FGM/CSE;
- There is an intention to have a named officer for every neighbourhood;
- Since 2011 the force has seen a 17 % reduction in budget meaning a loss of approximately 1,900 uniformed officers. In addition there has been a top-slice from the transformation;
- Currently the number of WMP officer is 6,700, which will decline by 200 and stabilise around 6,500 by middle of next year.
- The proposal from Government includes a £6m cut year on year, which was not expected. The precept proposal will include a £5 increase in council tax on Band D properties. The increase will generate around £3.4m a year. If this was not implemented, there would be a loss of £130m to the budget over the years.
- The precept will be discussed at the next meeting and there is an assumption from government that the 10 areas with the lowest policing precepts in the country will make use of the £5 increase; the West Midlands is the second lowest.

Members made a number of comments:

- Is it possible to have an overview of those that have been charged and those convicted of crimes (against figures provided);
- Are there agreed priorities?
- Will there be a three year settlement or will it continue as an annual grant?

- What are the levels of reserves?

In response the PCC stated that there is a small reduction year on year, the unknown is how the council tax base rate will change. It is expected to be small so there is a reasonable degree of certainty. There will be more uncertainty in 2018 when the new police formula is brought in.

In respect of reserves, the PCC stated that there has to be some kept for accounting purposes, also in case of a major or serious incident (e.g. riots) and also for vehicles and insurance, but other areas are being tapered down. It was confirmed that by 2020 there will be the statutory minimum.

The PCC added in addition that new technology is being built into the procurement process to enable efficient working.

7. PCC'S UPDATE

306 (See document No. 4)

The PCC raised the following matters:

- The inquest into the Birmingham Bombings has been re-opened and there has been a request from one of the families to assist with legal costs; he was advised that he does not have any legal ability to do so and so have pointed the family to the Home Office;
- Lloyd House is now almost fully occupied and Steel House Lane station has now been closed;
- Ashley Bertie reported that the Gangs and Violence Commission was set up 18 months ago in response to an increase in violence in areas of the city; the commission is coming to the end of the first phase (March/April) and a report will be published;
- Judy Foster reported on the recruitment and the drive to increase diversity in the force, including a critical look at how that is done, using existing staff as ambassadors; the force is now attracting people at a record rate including 33% applications from BAME candidates. They are now working to ensure that translates into officers and that officers are retained and have the opportunity to progress;
- The M6 follow up hearing was held just before Christmas, and there has been substantial progress in working together. Now there needs to be agreement how this is taken forward with the Mayor and Combined Authority. Panel members noted the on-going issues with regards to the M6 and motorways around the region.
- There is a business summit on Wednesday 19th January, to work with the business community to better engage and to set up partnerships region-wide.
- On the Friday 10th February, in response to the large numbers of unauthorised encampments, a conference will be held to discuss solutions to work better together.

- The disturbances at Winson Green prison was largely contained by prison officers, but over 100 police officers were deployed around the perimeter, and some just inside – this has an impact on funding which have been the results of a failure of another service;
- The German Market and other areas a number of extra measures were put in place, working with organisers over many years, to reduce the possibility of an attack such as that occurred in Berlin.

8. WORK PROGRAMME 2016/ 17 AND RECENT DECISIONS BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

(See document No. 5)

307 Noted.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

308 Monday, 06 February 2017 at 1400 hours, Birmingham Council House

10. URGENT BUSINESS

308 None.

CHAIR

The meeting ended at 1610 hours