

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD ON 31 JULY 2017 AT 1400 HOURS, SANDWELL

PRESENT:-

- Cllr Sean Coughlan (Chair) - Walsall
- Cllr Ken Hawkins (Vice-Chair) – Solihull
- Cllr Cathryn Bayton – Dudley
- Cllr Elaine Costigan – Sandwell
- Cllr Peter Douglas Osborn – Birmingham
- Cllr Jayne Francis – Birmingham
- Cllr Diana Holl-Allen MBE – Solihull
- Cllr David Hosell – Sandwell
- Cllr Les Jones – Dudley
- Cllr John O’Shea – Birmingham
- Cllr Paul Sweet – Wolverhampton
- Lionel Walker – Independent Member

ALSO PRESENT:-

- David Jamieson – West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner
- Ashley Bertie – Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
- Lynnette Kelly – Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
- Jonathan Jardine – Chief Executive, OPCC
- Sarah Norman – Panel Lead Chief Executive
- Sarah Fradgley– Panel Support Officer

ELECTION OF CHAIR

329 Nominations were invited by Sarah Norman, Panel Chief Executive, for the position of Chair of the Panel. It was proposed, seconded and:-

RESOLVED:-

That Councillor Sean Coughlan (Walsall) be appointed Chair of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel for the period ending with the Annual Meeting in 2018.

COUNCILLOR SEAN COUGHLAN IN THE CHAIR

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

330 Nominations were invited by Cllr Coughlan for the position of Vice-Chair of the Panel. It was proposed, seconded and:-

RESOLVED:-

That Councillor Ken Hawkins (Solihull) be appointed Vice-Chair of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel for the period ending with the Annual Meeting in 2018.

POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEMBERSHIP 2017-2018

- 331 It was noted that the following Members and their Named Substitutes had been appointed to the Panel for 2017-2018:-

Local Authority	Panel Member	Named Substitute
Birmingham	Clr John O'Shea	Clr Carole Griffiths
Birmingham	Clr Jayne Francis	Clr Mick Brown
Birmingham*	Clr Peter Douglas Osborn	Clr David Barrie
Coventry	Clr Abdul Salam Khan	Clr Pervez Akhtar
Dudley	Clr Cathryn Bayton	Clr Melvyn Mottram
Sandwell	Clr Elaine Costigan	Clr Julie Webb
Solihull	Clr Ken Hawkins	Clr Brian Holmes
Solihull*	Clr Diana Holl-Allen MBE	Clr Andy Mackiewicz
Walsall	Clr Sean Coughlan	Clr Claire Clews
Wolverhampton	Clr Paul Sweet	Clr Zee Russell
ABCA*+	Clr Les Jones (Dudley)	Clr Peter Washbrook (Walsall)
ABCA*+	Clr David Hosell (Sandwell)	Clr Bhupinder Gakhal (Wolverhampton)
Independent Panel Member	Kristina Murphy	N/A
Independent Panel Member	Lionel Walker	N/A

* Nomination approved by the West Midlands Joint Committee 29 June 2017

+ Nominations made by the Association of Black Country Authorities and approved by the West Midlands Joint Committee 29 June 2017

APOLOGIES

- 332 Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor Khan (Coventry) and Kristina Murphy (Independent Panel Member).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 333 None.

MINUTES

- 334 The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising – Minute 321 – The PCC clarified police powers regarding obstruction of cycle lanes.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 335 The Chair advised that no public questions had been submitted that had met the Panel's question time criteria.

Following an observation that very few public questions were received, Members felt there was a need to increase publicity about the Panel to encourage more public participation. A request was also made for a Panel information sheet that Councillors could take to their surgeries.

The Panel Office was asked to look at how the Panel could further publicise its work and responsibilities.

WMP2020 CHANGE PROGRAMME UPDATE AND EVALUATION FINDINGS

- 336 The following report of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) setting out progress of the WMP2020 change programme was received:-

(See document No.1)

The PCC explained the WMP2020 programme focused on operational arrangements. His responsibility was to ensure the programme ran properly and effectively on behalf of the public, which he did through his Strategic Policing and Crime Board and regular meetings with the Force and Accenture. Grant Thornton had evaluated whether the programme represented good value for money. A review undertaken by PriceWaterhouseCooper recommended further work to identify all the benefits arising from improvements.

The PCC highlighted a number of improvements achieved through WMP2020 including a reduction in complaints against officers and increase in the speed of convictions since the introduction of the Body Worn Cameras; increased capacity of Lloyd House following its refurbishment; changes to the WMP website; rationalisation of call centres; and a Neighbourhood Policing model that focussed on offenders. It was confirmed that police body worn cameras are activated on/off by the officer, but they could not delete a recording.

Members acknowledged the difficult circumstances the police were operating in at a time when funding was stretched, and complimented the Force on the public reassurance it provided following recent increased terrorist threats.

Members went on to raise the following areas of concern they felt were causing their local constituents to lose confidence in the Force:

101 call answering and waiting time - Several Members recounted their experience and provided anecdotal evidence of long waiting times to have 101 calls answered. The PCC acknowledged the concerns and advised he had raised this with the Chief Constable. He explained that 101 calls had doubled in recent weeks. Substantial improvements were expected by autumn. Work was underway to cope with surges in demand and also drive out wasted calls. It was hoped the new WMP interactive website with an online reporting facility would also reduce 101 call numbers. The PCC agreed look into a suggestion to introduce a 'call queue position' message to assist callers and urged Members to advise him about any non-answered 101calls.

Police response times - Members reported several cases of long delays in police responding to incidents ranging from violent crime, drug dealing, a school's child safeguarding request, thefts from shops and car thefts. Local residents had voiced concerns to Councillors that crimes were not being recorded and police officers were not returning calls or visiting following an incident.

The PCC explained there were 2,000 fewer uniformed officers yet crime in the West Midlands had risen by 11%. With increased demand and less resources police responses had to be prioritised a lot of the time and so it was difficult for the Force to respond to crime in the same way as before. When asked about the progress of his recruitment pledge, the PCC confirmed he had committed to recruit 800 uniformed officers, 150 PCSOs and 200 support staff and recruitment was now half way. However, the net number of officers had reduced year on year. It was noted that vehicle thefts did not generally require an officer to visit the scene unless evidence had been left, and could be dealt with in half the time over the phone. The PCC urged car manufactures to improve vehicle security as some models could be stolen with the use of laptop.

Neighbourhood Policing - Members raised concern at the impact on local preventative work and neighbourhood policing when local police officers were redirected to counter-terrorism duties and live cases.

Responding to a comment about his media statement following a recent incident where a firearm was discharged by an armed officer, the PCC explained this it was a rare event and the IPCC would make sure the Force provided all necessary information.

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE FOR WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND SUPPORTING WORK OF THE WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY

- 337 The following report providing an update on the force's interaction with people living with mental health problems who come into contact with the Criminal Justice System, and work of the West Midlands Combined Authority Mental Health Commission, was submitted:-

(See document No.2)

Presenting the report the PCC highlighted the success of the Mental Health Triage teams and the Through the Gates project. He also advised that 9,000 calls a year to the police involved an individual with a mental health problem, and questioned why other services, particularly health, were failing to adequately support such individuals.

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER UPDATE

- 338 The Panel received and noted the following list of recent decisions made by the PCC.

(See document No. 3)

The Commissioner raised the following issues:

The number of serious violent crimes has risen in the last few weeks. However the pattern of such crimes had changed and no longer confined to urban areas of the Region, making it more difficult to focus police preventative work.

He was working in collaboration with the West Midlands Mayor on several issues including roads, traffic flow, mental health and homelessness.

Members reported that the problem illegal encampments remained a significant concern across the Region and despite the regional summit hosted by the PCC to tackle the issues surrounding such encampments, local residents had not seen any progress. The PCC explained that police powers were limited and urged local authorities to co-ordinate their efforts and make transitional sites available.

Assistant PCC Lynnette Kelly updated that Panel on a recent conference to reduce violence against women and a pilot targeting households with children where domestic violence had occurred.

Assistant PCC Ashley Bertie reported on the launch of the Cadets scheme and appointment of a School and Business Liaison Officer and a Fundraiser on the recommendation of the Gangs and Violence Commission.

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS MONITORING

- 339 The Panel received and noted the following report:-

(See document No.4)

The Panel Support Officer advised that the Police and Crime Act 2017 changed the PCC's police complaint handing responsibilities and the Panel would be consulted if any changes had to be made to the Panel's Complaints Procedure.

DEVELOPING THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2017-18

- 340 The Chair asked Members to advise the Panel Office of any preferences for the Panel's work programme during 2017-18.

(See document No.5)

MEETING DATES for 2017-2018

- 341 The following Panel meeting dates were agreed:

Mondays at 2pm

2017

11 September

27 November

2018

15 January

5 February

19 February (provisional)

19 March

URGENT BUSINESS

- 342 The PCC was urged to pledge his support for the criminalisation of carrying acid and other harmful substances, the PCC expressed his support for increasing the penalties for possession.

The meeting ended at 16:20

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CHAIR