

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 1400 HOURS, SOLIHULL

PRESENT:-

Cllr Ken Hawkins (Vice- Chair) Solihull – in the Chair
Cllr Cathryn Bayton – Dudley
Cllr Peter Douglas Osborn – Birmingham
Cllr Jayne Francis – Birmingham
Cllr Diana Holl-Allen – Solihull
Cllr David Hosell – Sandwell
Cllr John O’Shea – Birmingham

ALSO PRESENT:-

David Jamieson – West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner
Ashley Bertie – Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Lynnette Kelly – Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Mark Kenyon – Chief Finance Officer, OPCC
Ben Twomey – Policy Officer, OPCC
Hazel Pulley – Chair of the West Midlands FGM Task Force
Shelley Ward – Regional Programme Manager Preventing Violence against Vulnerable People
Sarah Norman – Panel Lead Chief Executive
Emma Williamson – Lead Officer
Sarah Fradgley – Panel Support Officer

NOTICE OF RECORDING

- 357 The Chairman announced that the meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's Internet site (<https://solihull.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>) and members of the press/public may record and take photographs. The whole of the meeting would be filmed except where there were confidential or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

- 358 Apologies for non-attendance were received from:-

Cllr Sean Coughlan, Cllr Elaine Costigan, Cllr Abdul Salam Khan, Cllr Pervez Akhtar, Cllr Paul Sweet and Cllr Zee Russell.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 359 Councillor Jayne Francis – Researcher for Birmingham and Solihull Women’s Aid.
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MINUTES

- 360 The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 September 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
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PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 361 The Chair advised that no public questions had been submitted that met the Panel's question time criteria.
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TACKLING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) IN THE WEST MIDLANDS - PROGRESS REPORT

- 362 The Chair welcomed Hazel Pulley Chair of the FGM Task Force and Shelley Ward, Regional Programme Manager Preventing Violence against Vulnerable People, to the meeting. Hazel presented the report and summarised the work of the FGM Task Force towards the recommendations of the 2015 Panel Inquiry Report Tackling FGM in the West Midlands:

(See document No.1)

The report recommended the Task Force reporting structure through the Panel be concluded because wherever possible, the Task Force had completed the actions and suggested any areas outstanding be assumed under local working arrangements of the relevant Strategic Partnership Boards. To assist with this the Taskforce had drafted guidance for the Specific Point of Contact (SPOCs). In addition, the Task Force FGM tiered training plan would be circulated upon completion. A regional FGM group would also continue to meet to share and develop best practice, with a particular focus upon community engagement, and prevention.

Responding to questions about continued oversight of this work, Hazel advised Members work to tackle FGM would continue, but she believed it was more appropriate for this to be led by the SPOCs. She felt the regional taskforce had been incredibly worthwhile with its main outcomes being raising awareness of FGM and improving training across the region.

Noting the number of additional cases of FGM recorded by the region's hospitals, Members sought reassurance that West Midlands Police and the PCC were doing everything in their power to find perpetrators.

The PCC stated that FGM was an abhorrent crime that caused lifelong physical and psychological damage. He had included it in his Police and Crime Plan and it was an area he and West Midlands Police were collaborating with other agencies, including the Border Force. The PCC advised that ACC Lynnette Kelly was taking over the tackling FGM brief with support from Jo Barber from the Victims Commission. The PCC had also offered to host further regional work if necessary.

Members noted the difficulty securing a prosecution nationally. Jo advised that 133 FGM safeguarding reports were made to West Midlands Police in 2016 and 2 cases reported as crimes. West Midlands Police had secured 5 FGM Protection Orders to date.

Hazel reiterated the commitment to end FGM in a generation but explained that recorded FGM cases may rise with immigration of women who had experienced FGM earlier in their lives. It was important to act on this data to safeguard any babies and children through the education and support of their mothers.

Members noted the importance of community development work to secure cultural change against the FGM practice and the role of women in this work was key. Responding to a question what Councillors could do, Hazel suggested they ask questions at other committee meetings and when working with other agencies what was being done to ensure girls are safeguarded against FGM and what support can be given to ladies and children who have experienced FGM.

The Chair commented that the Inquiry had been a valuable piece of work for the Region and thanked Hazel, Shelley, Jo and others who had been involved on the FGM Task Force. The PCC thanked the Panel for conducting the Inquiry that had been very effective, and offered to provide a further progress update to a future Panel meeting.

RESOLVED:-

1. That the work undertaken by the West Midlands FGM Task Force to complete actions recommended within the Tackling FGM in the West Midland Panel Inquiry report be noted;
2. The Task Force meeting and reporting structure through the Panel be concluded; and
3. Progress made by the Police and Crime Commissioner towards tackling FGM in the West Midlands be noted.

SUBSTANCE MISUSE

363 The Police and Crime Commissioner introduced the report into research into the scale and impact of substance misuse in the West Midlands:-

(See document No.2)

Drawing Members' attention to the Drug Facts Sheet, the PCC stated that whilst a lot of good work had been undertaken by various services and voluntary organisations, he felt there had been collective failure to solve the problem that cost public services in the West Midlands £1.4 billion a year. He was hosting a Drugs Summit on 15 December 2017 to facilitate an open and pragmatic discussion to inform a future agenda and actions.

Members agreed with the PCC that it was important to have a sensible discussion on drugs taking and addiction, crime and criminal justice and how the problem might be tackled differently. The meeting heard of the number of children with a parent drug taker and likelihood this live experience would result in repeating substance misuse for another generation.

The PCC and Members praised the report. Ben Twomey, Policy Officer highlighted the key themes arising from the consultation which included diversion from drugs; tackling crime, gangs and organised crime; the need to understand the drivers for addiction; mental health; collaboration within the criminal justice service; different treatment options; linking with the local economic strategy to secure education, employment and training; and the stigma felt by of drug users and their families

The PCC was asked if legalisation of drugs and the control of supply had been considered. In the discussion it was suggested that this might be the only way to take control away from high level criminals. Medical grade drugs could be produced cheaply, thereby undercutting the prices of criminal dealers, and also preventing deaths through poisoning. If issued on a prescription basis this could be combined with targeted support.

The PCC commented that he would not be doing anything to encourage people to take drugs, the priority was to discourage drug taking and ensure effective interventions. As PCC he would focus on setting the strategic direction in policy terms and work with partners to look at what could be done within the current legal framework.

Members were concerned at the reports level of drug use in the region's prisons. The PCC reported that he had recently met the regional PCCs to discuss this issue. The Prison Service had been invited to his Drugs Summit. Members commented that there were not enough resources in terms of prison officers or treatment services in prisons and noted the varying level of engagement with drugs treatment upon release across the region.

Further comments we made about the need for timeliness of interventions and waiting times for treatment to effectively engage with drug users who often led chaotic lives.

Drawing the discussion to a close the Chair asked the PCC to give a verbal update the next Panel meeting. The PCC also offered to provide a more detailed report during 2018 once some of the policy had been developed.

RESOLVED:-

1. That the information contained in the report be noted;
2. That the PCC provide a verbal summary of the outcomes of the drugs summit to the next panel meeting; and
3. That a further update be timetabled for a panel meeting during 2018/19.

Disturbance by Member of the Public

- 364 During the previous item a member of the public interrupted the discussion and the Chair advised that they would be asked to leave the meeting if they continued to do so. Following further disrupting comments made, the Chair asked the member of the public to leave the meeting.
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POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

- 365 The following list of recent decisions made by the PCC was received and noted:-

(See document No.3)

The PCC and ACCs advised the Panel of the following:

- i. A recent terrorism live practice exercise that tested the responses of all blue light services had identified the need for a civic leaders' protocol and the PCC was exploring this with faith leaders and local authorities.
- ii. The Department for Local Government had announced the merger of the PCC and Mayor roles in the West Midlands. This represented a fundamental change to police accountability. The PCC and West Midlands mayor would be developing a joint proposal in Spring 2018 and the PCC felt it important for the Panel to have a view on this.
- iii. The Gangs Violence Commission would launch its report on 7 December 2017.
- iv. Other areas were looking at introducing speed camera following the success of pilots to reduce speed and accidents. ACC Kelly was working with the Force to develop protocols on the use of mobile speed cameras.
- v. West Midlands Police had launched its Cadets units and were also recruiting more volunteer custody visitors.
- vi. Police and Crime Minister Nick Hurd had formally opened Lloyd House
- vii. The Government has expected to announce the police budget before Christmas and more detail will be reported to the next Panel meeting. The PCC had lobbied hard on the needs and challenges of the West Midlands which needed an extra £22m just to stand still.

The PCC and ACCs then responded to a number of questions from Panel Members:

- i. Response times to 101 calls continued to be a concern of residents. The PCC advised that he continued to monitor closely that 999 calls were now on target and 101 calls on target most of the time. The force had underestimated the number needed in the call centre and there had been a surge of calls in the summer. Changes had been made and the PCC monitored this and would report back as required. Call handlers undertook rigorous training. Members should let the PCC know if a call is not handled properly and this would be investigated by a senior officer.

- ii. The PCC was congratulated on his work on knife crime. A member raised concern about an American website advertising free crossbows and knives and asked the PCC to look into the matter.
- iii. The rise in vehicle thefts was a serious national problem. The PCC understood that majority of vehicles were now stolen electronically. He was working closely with car manufacturers who he believe should design better security features and also retro fit these features to older cars.
- iv. Delays issuing uniforms and replacement kit had been resolved. The Force had done everything possible to source equipment for new and transferring officers and PCSOs and the PCC had been informed the problem had been solved.
- v. The PCC would report to the next meeting on the recent HMIC force efficiency rating.
- vi. Referring to recent local media reports on rising levels of crime, the PCC was asked what was known of the reasons for the rise. He responded that nationally PCCs and Chief Constables had discussed this and felt there had been a general shift in society for reasons not yet fully understood.
- vii. The PCC reassured the meeting that West Midlands Police were utilising a range of policing surveillance and intelligence to maintain the public security across the region over the festive season. There had been a spike in the number of violent crimes in the Region. However this trend did not follow previous geography, age and ethnicity patterns.

WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

366 The Panel received and noted the Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year was received and noted.

(See document No. 4)

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

367 It was confirmed the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Monday 15 January 2018.

The meeting ended at 1615

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CHAIR