

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD ON
19 MARCH 2018 AT 1400 HOURS, COVENTRY**

PRESENT:-

Cllr Abdul Khan – Coventry
Cllr Peter Douglas Osborn – Birmingham
Cllr Ken Hawkins – Solihull
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
Jonathon Jardine – Chief Executive, OPCC
Mark Kenyon – Chief Finance Officer, OPCC
Ben Twomey – Policy Officer, PCC
Councillor Pervez Akhtar – Coventry
Councillor Clive Duggins - Coventry
Emma Williamson – Lead Officer
Sarah Fradgley– Panel Support Officer

MINUTE SILENCE - COREY AND CASPER PLATT-MAY

388 The meeting observed a minute silence to pay respect to young brothers Cory and Casper Platt-May from Coventry who had been killed in a hit-and-run collision. A memorial service was being held at Coventry Cathedral that afternoon.

APOLOGIES

389 Apologies for non-attendance were received from:-

Cllr Coughlan, Cllr Hosell, Cllr Bayton, Cllr Tyler, Cllr Francis, Cllr Griffiths, Cllr Costigan, Cllr Holl-Allen, Kristine Murphy and Sarah Norman

The Chair announced the meeting was inquorate so would continue as an informal meeting of the Panel.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

390 None declared.

MINUTES

- 391 The PCC corrected minute 384, explaining that if the cost of a major incident amounted to over 1% of a force's budget, the Home Office would fund. He further clarified that there was a national counter terrorism fund of £50m, which was nationally overspent by £47m.

The PCC informed the Panel he had referred the issue raised at the last meeting concerning the Rea Valley area to the Chief Constable.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 392 The Chair advised that no public questions had been submitted.
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YOUTH JUSTICE REFORM- UPDATE ON COLLABORATIVE WORKING

- 393 The following report updating the Panel on the progress of the West Midlands Combined Authority Public Sector Reform work stream on youth justice was submitted:-

(See document No.1)

Claire Dhami, The WM Combined Authority Lead for criminal justice reform presented the report and informed Members that the WMCA Youth Justice Strategic Needs Assessment was expected to be completed in May 2018. She went on to summarise the regional action-research programme led by Dr Alex Chard that would drive reform of the youth justice system in the region. Member heard that local practitioners were conducting research to understand the extent of Abuse, Loss, Trauma, Attachment and Resilience (ALTAR) suffered by children who had entered the criminal justice system.

Members heard that the PCC had sponsored an additional 30 research studies to focus on gang involvement, and were pleased to note that girls would be included in the research for the first time. The Panel requested a copy of the research report expected to be published in September 2018.

Members discussed the correlation between school absences and poor literacy levels, with a child entering the criminal justice system. Questions were also raised about what emphasis was placed on prevention, as it was believed 70% of adults on probation had previous convictions when young.

The PCC spoke about the links between youth crime and the economic agenda and the availability of jobs and other opportunities for young people. He spoke of the budget cuts to youth services and the knock on effect on the police budget. He highlighted the success of the West Midlands Police Cadets scheme and plans to expand this work and secure more external funding for similar diversionary activities.

Members were reminded that prevention was a key theme running through the counter terrorism agenda and the focus of engagement with those at risk of joining a gang. Members

learnt that the Violence Prevention Alliance (involving Public Health, NHS and Police) was looking at effective ways to support young people away from violence, including a school based mediation project, targeted work with Accident and Emergency presentations and a domestic and family abuse/violence perpetrator programme with GPs. It was highlighted that the key to the success of this work was how public sector organisations effectively and lawfully shared data.

During the debate concern was raised that the West Midlands currently had no secure estate provision for children which meant appropriate accommodation had to be found outside the region. Local emergency accommodation for children was also needed to avoid detaining a child in a police cell or transporting children long distances. The Panel heard that the PCC, the Combined Authority and local authorities were looking to provide local long-term secure provision. Panel Members were urged to raise this urgent need with their local authorities who were responsible for providing such accommodation.

RESOLVED:

That Police and Crime Panel be sent a copy of the Regional Youth Justice Action-Research report when published.

WEST MIDLANDS POLICE ESTATE STRATEGY 2018

394 The following report of the Police and Crime Commissioner was submitted:-

(See document No. 2)

Panel Members had also received emails from local residents objecting to the proposal to close some police stations.

The PCC outlined the decision making responsibilities concerning the police estate, explaining that the Chief Constable was responsible for deciding operationally what estate was required for policing. Once the Chief Constable made a decision, only then was a property released to the PCC to decide how to dispose of it to the best advantage. The PCC stressed that he had not instructed the Chief Constable. Officers preparing the strategy confirmed there had been no involvement or influence by the PCC or the OPCC. The PCC called for an apology from Andrew Mitchell MP who had suggested in a recent parliamentary debate it had been a political decision which buildings to close.

Referring to the report, the PCC informed the Panel that the police estate was in need of essential maintenance and much was no longer suitable for modern day policing. The Force's Estate Strategy proposed closure of 24 buildings and renovation of the remaining estate into modern, flexible accommodation. The PCC explained that with 2000 less police officers many buildings were now underutilised and some were not fit for purpose, with staff working in poor conditions. Ways of working had changed, with more digital technology, enabling officers to complete tasks without needing to return to a station. The estates programme also supported the new operational policing model and integration with partners through co-

location with local public sector partners. The Fire Service and local authorities had indicated support for this. The PCC referred to ongoing discussions with Solihull MBC.

The PCC assured the meeting that each building deemed to be surplus by the Chief Constable would be looked at on a case by case basis and there would be local consultation and engagement on the future of each site.

Cllr O'Shea presented the PCC with a 400 signature petition from local residents opposing the closure of Acocks Green Police Station, to be passed to the Chief Constable. He highlighted residents' concerns that there had been very little engagement so far, uncertainty where police would be based locally as the area lacked other civic buildings suitable for co-location, and fear that neighbourhood police officers would move to outlying areas. He believed closure of the station would risk successful local policing efforts and the local Princes Trust project that was also based in the police station. He asked if travel time to patrol areas of officers starting from a response base had been factored in to decisions.

Cllr O'Shea went on to explain that the Acocks Green police station was of architectural significance and had been at the heart of the community for 100 years, was well used, and provided reassurance of a local police presence. He asked for assurances that neighbourhood policing teams would be based in neighbourhoods.

Councillor Akhtar went on to highlight that Willenhall Police Station, also on the surplus list, was a modern building and had transformed the local area. Members criticised the communication surrounding the publication of the estate strategy.

The PCC acknowledged the historic association with buildings, but explained that given police budgets, tough decisions had to be made between maintaining buildings or providing frontline policing. He wanted police officers out in the neighbourhoods serving the community.

He assured the meeting he would not sign the release any building until he was reassured the local policing requirement and local police presence was met in each area.

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted

WEST MIDLANDS DRUGS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

395 The following report of the Police and Crime Commissioner was submitted:

(See document No.3)

The PCC presented the report that set out eight recommendations developed following his West Midlands Drugs Policy Summit. He explained these aimed to bring services together to work more efficiently and in new ways to reduce crime and harm of drug addiction on the public and addicts.

During the course of the debate the following comments were made:

The annual cost of substance misuse to the West Midlands region was estimated at £1.4billion. 1 in 5 crimes were committed by people addicted to drugs. Every 3 days someone died in the West Midlands from drug poisoning. 22,500 children in the West Midlands had a parent suffering from drug addiction.

A regional diversion scheme based on the Turning Point programme focused on treating drug offences and drug related offending as a health issue, rather than taking offenders through the court process.

Heroin Assisted Treatment had been endorsed by the Home Office and PCC's had been encouraged to engage with local partners to establish this approach, however no central funding was available. It aimed to address the demand for illegal supply.

Extending awareness and wider/consistent provision across the region for Naloxone medication, used to block or reverse the effects of opioids, was seen as a positive approach to responding to overdose/ poisoning emergencies.

There was general support from Panel members for the recommendations and the Panel asked for a further update report. It was acknowledged that previous efforts to tackle drugs through enforcement had failed. It was hoped that measures would be effective in crippling the drugs market and profitability in the illegal supply of drugs.

Councillor Douglas Osborne asked it to be placed on record his disagreement with the policy to supply heroin through Heroin Assisted Treatment.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and updates on the progress of the PCC's Drugs Policy Recommendations be presented to the Panel.

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER UPDATE

396 The PCC and APCCs advised the Panel of the following:

- i. The PCC was supporting new legislation creating a separate offence for attacks on service dogs.
- ii. The new West Midlands Community Safety Partnership had been established. It would make recommendations to the PCC on how CSP funding would be spent. The same level of funding was available, but the method of allocation had changed.
- iii. The PCC was seeking nominations for his Outstanding Citizens Awards.
- iv. The PCC hosted a Vehicle Theft meeting on 12 April 2018 involving police from across country, motor manufactures and other interested partners to discuss the problem and how to reduce this crime and catch perpetrators.
- v. The PCC recently met the Home Secretary and Home Office Ministers to discuss the national trend of violent crime and knife crime and had requested additional funding for local work to tackle such crime.

- vi. The PCC was working to address the discrepancy of firearms licence charge as the fixed fee did not cover the full cost to issue the licence. He believed the full cost should be met by those requesting the licence, not from the police budget.
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RECENT DECISIONS BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

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

(See document No.4)

MEETING DATES 2018/19

- 398 The Panel is asked to note the suggested programme of meeting dates for 2018/2019:-

Mondays at 2pm

16 July 2018, 17 September 2018, 19 November 2018

14 January 2019, 4 February 2019, 18 February 2019 (if precept veto), 18 March 2019

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 399 Responding to a question from a Member, Jonathan Jardine informed the meeting that the Chief Constable had briefed the PCC on matters relating to the poisoning incident in Salisbury.

The meeting ended at 16:15

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CHAIR