

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD ON
14 JANUARY 2019 14:00 HOURS, SANDWELL**

PRESENT:-

Cllr John O'Shea – Birmingham
Cllr Pervez Akhtar – Coventry
Rose Burley – Walsall
Cllr Elaine Costigan – Sandwell
Cllr Ken Hawkins – Solihull
Cllr John Lines – Birmingham
Cllr Hazel Malcolm – Wolverhampton
Cllr Suky Samra – Walsall
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
Lynnette Kelly – Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner
Deputy Chief Constable Louisa Rolfe
Jonathon Jardine – Chief Executive, OPCC
Mark Kenyon – Chief Finance Officer, OPCC
Emma Williamson – Lead Officer Head of Birmingham Scrutiny Services
Sarah Fradgley – Scrutiny Officer

APOLOGIES

- 434 Apologies for non-attendance were received from Cllr Mike Bird, Cllr Abdul Khan and Sarah Norman.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 435 None declared.

MINUTES

- 436 Subject to the spelling correction in Minute 434, the minutes of the Panel meeting held on 26 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

Minute 421 vii - The Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that the force would not charge for the supply of uniforms to Special Constable.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 437 The Chair advised that no public questions had been submitted.

LOCAL POLICING AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 438 The Police and Crime Commissioner and Deputy Chief Constable Louise Rolfe presented the following report highlighting the neighbourhood policing objectives, the range of methods used to engage with local communities and efforts to increase the number of Special Constables and other volunteers to support the police: -

(See document No. 1 – *Engagement*)

The PCC explained that the West Midlands had one of the highest proportions of neighbourhood police officers in the country and was actively recruiting PCSOs to reach its 464 target.

The WMNOW two-way messaging system had 60,000 subscribers to date. The Panel noted the low number of subscribers from BME communities and asked how the service was advertised. Members were told that efforts were ongoing to promote WMNOW, ranging from supermarket publicity events, to sending a sign-up link to 101 callers. The PCC suggested Panel Members could also help by encouraging their constituents to sign up.

Responding to questions about how West Midlands Police used social media data to evaluate the impact of the public interaction with WMNOW, the Deputy Chief Constable said she could provide the PCC with more information on this.

The meeting was told how the Force was working to increase the number and diversity of special constables and other volunteer opportunities and had established a volunteer recruitment and support team. The aim was to have 600 specials in place by the 2022 Commonwealth Games and the Deputy Chief Constable hoped more would be recruited given the rapid rise in street watch volunteers. Special constable training consisted of 3 dedicated weekends that could be worked around other commitments. Those looking to volunteer should look at the dedicated volunteer page on the west midlands police website.

The PCC spoke of the success of the Cadets scheme to engage with harder-to-reach children and develop active citizenship. It was hoped to have 1000 Cadets in place by the Commonwealth Games.

It was noted that evaluation of the Operation Wholestone research into the impact of neighbourhood policing engagement suggested visible on the street engagement had a positive impact on public trust and confidence in the police.

Responding to a question as to whether neighbourhood policing resources were deployed to counter terrorism work and emergency response, the Deputy Chief Constable explained that such redeployment was only used as a last resort and would involve neighbourhood teams with issues that required local knowledge or local problem solving.

The meeting was reassured that the table on page 1 of the report plotted the delivered WMP2020 Next Generation Local Policing objectives against the more recent National College

of Policing Guidelines and the guideline areas not reflected in the table were an integral part of the infrastructure.

Concern was expressed that the report and presentation did not accurately reflect the picture of what was happening on the street. Members highlighted falling public confidence in the police, and fears of vigilantism as a result of rising knife crime, local station closures, less officers seen on the beat, and local officer rest days not covered. Another example was given at the lack of police action against a perpetrator of online banking fraud which did not progress beyond a police report.

The Deputy Chief Constable told the meeting that the Force was aware of the challenges it faced. It had 25% less officers, increased emergency calls and a changing nature of crime, including international crime, to respond to. She spoke of the importance of partnership working as issues could not be solved by policing alone.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Chief Constable for attending and responding to questions.

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER PRELIMINARY REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2019/20

- 439 The following report of the Police and Crime Commissioner setting out the provisional Police Grant Settlement, preliminary revenue budget, capital programme and precept proposals for 2019/20 was submitted: -

(See document No. 2 – Preliminary Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Proposals 2019/20)

The PCC summarised the points in the report, highlighting that whilst the police grant settlement for 2019/20 had risen by £15.9m to £460m, and PCCs will be permitted to raise their precept by up to £24 per year per band property, this was a standstill budget due to inflationary pressures, pay awards and additional pension costs.

The PCC regarded the precept increase as almost mandatory. However the increase would bring the West Midlands the lowest funding in the country per head of population at £5.96.

The PCC's public budget consultation was running until the end of January. 330 responses had been received so far, with 227 in favour. The final results would be reported to Panel on 4 February.

Members asked if survey respondents were a true reflection of the West Midlands population. Noting the greater tax burden on lower income households, Members asked how the PCC could demonstrate to the public his precept proposal represented value for money, given the public perception that crime was increasing and confidence in police falling.

The PCC acknowledged the difficulty obtaining survey responses from a cross section of the population, as public engagement with the budget was generally limited. He welcomed members' suggestions, and explained that he did discuss the budget at a number of community group meetings which tended to be more representative. He stressed that the rise in precept would give a standstill budget position, if not raised, there would be a reduction in uniformed officers.

The meeting was reminded that the funding formula damping arrangements remained unchanged and resulted in the West Midlands underfunded by £43m, with these funds going to other forces.

HMICFRS recognition of the WMP efficiency and value for money and favourable costs comparisons with other force areas was also highlighted, as well as the planned use of the reserves to support the budget to 2020 and the Reserve Strategy beyond 2020.

Responding to a question from a member about the level of reserves held, the chair suggested members could bring forward any additional information they had.

RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted

PANEL RESPONSE TO WMCA STAGE ONE CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED TRANSFER OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER POWERS TO THE WEST MIDLANDS MAYOR

440 The Panel's response to the WMCA Stage 1 consultation was noted:-

(See document No.3 - *Panel Response to WMCA Stage One Consultation*)

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE AND RECENT DECISIONS

441 The following report of the Police and Crime Commissioner was received:-

(See document No. 4 – *Recent PCC decisions*)

The PCC and Assistant PCCs Lynnette Kelly and Ashley Bertie updated the Panel of the following:-

- i. The shooting of male by an officer in Coventry was subject to an ongoing IOPC inquiry.
- ii. The PCC was leading a drive to reduce school exclusions in light of concerns that many excluded pupils did not receive alternative education and were vulnerable to committing crime, or becoming a victim of crime. Members highlighted that pupils on reduced timetables may also be vulnerable. The PCC had written to all chief executive and portfolio members in the West Midlands and hoped to facilitate a summit in the spring that could share best practice. A question was asked about the number of exclusions for knife crime.

- iii. The PCC had briefed the Home Office on work to tackle vehicle thefts and was pleased to participate in a national task force to meet the following day.
- iv. New speed cameras in Coventry had gone live.
- v. The Deputy Chief Constable responded to a recent Daily Mail article that criticised the introduction of custody blocks and suggested criminals were being let off because officers could not travel 2 hours to custody blocks. She noted a lot of the article was out of context and referred to other areas. She went on to explained that recording crime happens when call comes in, booking times had reduced and the standards on safe detention could not be achieved in old blocks. The Force was looking at how to support officers to address the points raised in the article by Richard Cooke, WM Police Federation.
- vi. The PCC's Strategic Policing and Crime Board had recently considered a report on Hidden Crimes in September which members could view online.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

442 2pm, Monday 4 February 2019, Solihull

The meeting ended at 16:05

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CHAIR