

Birmingham City Council

City Council

12 January 2021



Subject: Lead Member Report: West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

Report of: Cllr Shafique Shah

Report author: Emma Williamson, Head of Scrutiny Services

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? ☐ Yes ☒ No

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the work of the West Midland's Police and Crime Panel ("the Panel").

2 Motion

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3 Role of the Police and Crime Panel

- 3.1 The Panel is a joint scrutiny body of the West Midland authorities with a dual role to support and scrutinise the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
- 3.2 The Panel acts as a critical friend to the PCC on behalf of West Midlands residents and must perform the following statutory functions:
- To review and comment on the PCC's draft Police and Crime Plan and any amendments;
 - To review the PCC's Annual Reports;
 - To review and scrutinise decisions and actions by the PCC;
 - To review (with the power to veto) the PCC's proposed Council Tax precept;
 - To hold confirmation hearings before the PCC makes certain senior appointments (Chief Constable, Deputy PCC, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer), with the power to veto the Chief Constable appointment;
 - Handle non-criminal complaints about the conduct of the PCC and Deputy PCC, referring serious complaints to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (task delegated to the Birmingham Monitoring Officer);
 - To appoint an acting PCC if required;
 - To suspend the PCC if charged.

4 Panel Membership

- 4.1 The Panel consists of 12 councillors representing the seven West Midland districts and two independent members. Councillor membership reflects the political balance of the region. The Panel elected Councillor Narinder Kaur Kooner (Birmingham) as Chair and Cllr Suky Samra (Walsall) as Vice Chair for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.
- 4.2 Birmingham is represented on the Panel by Cllr Shafique Shah, Cllr Narinder Kaur Kooner and Cllr John Lines. Cllr Shabrana Hussain, Cllr Fred Grindrod and Cllr David Barrie are named substitutes.
- 4.3 Appointments to the Panel are usually made annually. Looking ahead to the 2021/22 appointments, the district authorities have been asked to consider consistency in membership as regular attendance by committed members aids an effective Panel. Members appointed to the Panel should be able to attend regularly.

5 Police and Crime Panel Work Programme

- 5.1 The Panel's work programme consists of statutory tasks (listed above) and wider exploratory work to build knowledge and insight into the strategic policing landscape in order to hold the PCC to account.
- 5.2 The PCC attends every Panel meeting to respond to questions and provides updates on recent activities. The Panel may also invite the Chief Constable to attend to answer any questions which appear to the Panel to be necessary to carry out its functions. The Panel may also invite other persons (residents, stakeholders, councillors, officers from other parts of the public sector) to discuss issues of local concern and/or answer questions.

Highlights March 2020 – December 2020

- 5.3 **March 2020:** The Panel commented on the content of the PCC's new **Emergency Chapter of the Police and Crime Plan** to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Panel acknowledged the considerable challenge to respond to the pandemic and the unprecedented circumstances the PCC, the Force, officers and staff must operate within to effectively support communities.
- 5.4 The Panel welcomed the PCC's proactive work to support the most vulnerable and ongoing support to funded organisations and groups supporting victims and working to reduce crime. The Panel's response is available at <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/>
- 5.5 **May 2020:** The Panel held a Confirmation Hearing for the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner position. The Panel's role was to question the PCC's proposed appointee to assess his suitability for the post. The Panel's letter and the PCC's response are available at <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/publications/>
- 5.6 **July 2020:** The Panel examined the PCC's ongoing response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Members discussed the progress towards the PCC's new policy objectives to lead and support a partnership response and commission

support services to mitigate the effect of COVID-19. Members also discussed collaborative work with regional criminal justice partners, police enforcement of unofficial gatherings and heard of plans to review Hate Crime victim support services.

- 5.7 Members discussed the budgetary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and sought assurance from the PCC that the £9.9m 2020/21 Revenue Budget shortfall would be effectively managed this year.
- 5.8 **September 2020:** The Panel reviewed the PCC's draft Annual Report and made suggestions for inclusion in the final version. Members discussed in detail the reported decline in overall public confidence in West Midlands Police. The Panel has sought additional information to fully understand the data collected against the measure of public confidence to inform a Panel inquiry into the reasons for this decline and actions that can be taken to address this.
- 5.9 Members also considered its annual monitoring reports on complaint handling and the Panel budget and expenditure of its Home Office grant.
- 5.10 **November 2020:** The Panel invited the Director of the Violence Reduction Unit to provide an update on its work and collaboration with the PCC and other partners.
- 5.11 **December 2020:** an informal meeting of Panel members was held to discuss a proposed terms of reference for the inquiry into public confidence in the police, with a view to commencing evidence gathering in the new year.

Looking Ahead

- 5.12 As the Panel continues to shape its work programme for the remainder of the 2020/2021 municipal year and into 2021/22, Members may have suggestions for the Panel to consider.
- 5.13 In January 2021 the Panel will examine the PCC budget proposals ahead of formally reviewing the PCC's proposed policing precept in February 2021.