

Birmingham City Council

City Council

7 November 2023



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

Report of: Cllr Sam Foster

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Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:

Not Relevant

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides a summary of the key activities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel (“the Panel) in 2023 in its scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner (“the Commissioner).

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the report be noted.

3 Background

3.1 The Panel is a joint scrutiny body of the West Midland authorities with a dual role to ‘support and challenge’ the work of the Commissioner. Appendix A outlines the Panel’s statutory functions.

3.2 The Panel consists of 12 councillors representing the seven West Midland districts and three independent members. Councillor membership reflects the political balance of the region. Member appointments are updated annually.

3.3 The Panel’s work programme consists of statutory tasks and wider exploratory work. Examining key strategic policing, crime and community safety topics of public

interest enables members to scrutinise the Commissioner on behalf of West Midlands communities.

- 3.4 Appendix 1 provides further information on key activities and developments during 2023.

4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

- 4.1 There are no options to be considered.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 A Police and Crime Panel must be maintained to carry out scrutiny functions and responsibilities as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The Panel membership must represent all the districts and reflect the political composition of the region.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report. The Panel continues to operate within the limits of the Home Office Grant.

7 Public Sector Equality Duty

- 7.1 This Police and Crime Panel is a joint committee of West Midlands Local Authorities. Therefore, it has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

7.1.1 Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.

7.1.2 Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.1.3 Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 7.2 The Panel considers these duties during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. Including how policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; whether impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within the West Midlands; and whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.

8 Other Implications

- 8.1 **How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?**

8.2 There are no recommended decisions within this report.

8.3 The Panel contributes towards the city's priorities and outcomes: A Safe Birmingham and in particular supporting its focus on making the city safer and safeguarding vulnerable citizens.

9 Background Papers

9.1 [West Midlands Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025](#)

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix A – West Midlands Police and Crime Panel Key Activities 2023

Appendix A

West Midlands Police and Crime Panel Key Activities 2023

1 Role of the Police and Crime Panel (“the Panel”)

- 1.1 The Panel is a joint scrutiny body of the West Midland authorities with a dual role to ‘support and challenge’ the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner (“the Commissioner”).
- 1.2 The Panel acts as a critical friend to the Commissioner on behalf of West Midlands residents and must perform the following statutory functions:
 - Review and comment on the Commissioner’s draft Police and Crime Plan.
 - Review the Commissioner's Annual Reports.
 - Scrutinise decisions and actions by the Commissioner in discharging his/her functions.
 - Review (with the power to veto) the Commissioner's proposed Council Tax precept.
 - Hold confirmation hearings before the Commissioner makes certain senior appointments (Chief Constable, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer), with the power to veto the Chief Constable appointment.
 - Handle non-criminal complaints about the conduct of the Commissioner and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, referring serious complaints to the Independent Office for Police Conduct.
 - Appoint an acting Commissioner if required.
 - Suspend the Commissioner if charged.

2 Panel Membership

- 2.1 The Panel consists of 12 councillors representing the seven West Midland districts and three independent members. Councillor membership reflects the political balance of the region, and appointments are made annually.
- 2.2 Birmingham is represented on the Panel by Cllr Sam Foster, Cllr Shabina Bano Scott and Cllr Gareth Moore. Cllr Ray Goodwin, Cllr Raqeeb Aziz and Cllr David Barrie are named substitutes.
- 2.3 The Panel elected Councillor Jasbir Jaspal (City of Wolverhampton) as Chair and Kristina Murphy (Independent Co-opted Member) as Vice Chair for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year.

3 Panel's Work Programme

- 3.1 The Panel's work programme consists of its statutory tasks (referred to in paragraph 1.2) and wider exploratory work. This specifically supports the Panel to scrutinise the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan and the discharge of his/her functions.
- 3.2 The Commissioner 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 could 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.
- 3.3 Meetings papers, meeting dates, published reports, together with more information about the Panel can be found on the [Panel's website: www.westmidlandspcp.org.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.org.uk). All Panel meetings are live streamed.

4 Key Activity in 2023

- 4.1 Following the annual appointment process of councillor panel members, **induction training** was held for all members and named substitute members. The session examined the role and responsibilities of the Commissioner and the Panel, how the Panel might develop an effective work programme, and the scrutiny of performance information published by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 4.2 In July 2023, the Panel conducted a **Confirmation Hearing** for the new Chief Finance Officer for the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Panel has a key role in the appointment process of senior positions and must hold a public hearing to question the preferred candidate to assess their suitability. The Panel recommended the Commissioner appoint his preferred candidate.
- 4.3 In September 2023, in response to increasing concerns about road safety across the region, the Panel chose to examine the delivery of **Police and Crime Plan objectives to improve road safety**. Questions from panel members sought assurance from the Commissioner on the outcomes of his partnership work with Local Authorities, and how he was holding the Chief Constable to account on action undertaken by West Midlands Police. The Panel called for better communication with local communities and councillors about the range of initiatives. The Panel also pledged its support to the Commissioner's campaign seeking to retain speeding fix penalty fines locally to be invested in new road safety projects.
- 4.4 The Panel also welcomed a **public question** at the meeting about the scrutiny of the Police and Crime Plan objective to maintain **PCSOs numbers** and efforts to maintain the wellbeing of PSCO where capacity was stretched.

- 4.5 Anyone who lives, works or studies in the West Midlands can ask a question relating to the Panel's role in scrutinising the Commissioner, questions should be submitted in writing to the Panel Officer. More details can be found on the [West Midlands Police and Crime Panel getting involved webpage](#).
- 4.6 Panel members have continued to undertake **training** to support them in their role and improving core knowledge on policing functions, In September 2023, a group of members visited Lloyd House Police Head Quarters where the Chief Constable outlined the **new police operational model** and responded to questions. Members also received briefings on performance monitoring and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner work on **tackling Drug Harm**. This was followed by a tour of the **WMP Force Contact Centre**.

5 Forward Plan

- 5.1 The Commissioner will be presenting his **Annual Report 2022/23** to the Panel on 13 November 2023 and the Panel will examine the progress made towards the Police and Crime Plan objectives.
- 5.2 The Panel continues its focus on Public Confidence in Policing by examining the Commissioner's **Fairness and Belonging Strategy**, a joint initiative with West Midlands Police for diversity and inclusion seeking to build police legitimacy with fair, proportionate, transparent and accountable services, improved engagement with communities, and recruitment and progression of a more representative force.
- 5.3 Panel members will examine the **Commissioner's budget proposals** between November 2023 and January 2024, before reviewing the proposed **2024 Policing Precept** in February.

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