

Birmingham City Council

City Council

7 December 2021



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

Report of: Cllr Mick Brown

Report author: Christian Scade, Interim Head of Scrutiny and Committee 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 Recommendation

- 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 challenge' 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:
- Review and comment on the PCC's draft Police and Crime Plan.
 - Review the PCC's Annual Reports.
 - Scrutinise decisions and actions by the PCC.
 - Review (with the power to veto) the PCC's proposed Council Tax precept.
 - 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).
 - Appoint an acting PCC if required.
 - 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.
- 4.2 Birmingham is represented on the Panel by Cllr Mick Brown, Cllr Saima Suleman and Cllr Bret O'Reilly. Cllr Safia Akhtar, Cllr Shabrana Hussain, and Cllr Hendrina Quinnen are named substitutes.
- 4.3 The Panel elected Councillor Suky Samra (Walsall) as Chair and Kristina Murphy (Independent Member) as Vice Chair for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.
- 4.4 Appointments to the Panel are made annually. Looking ahead to the 2022/23 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 in 3.2 above), and wider exploratory work. Examining key policing, crime and community safety topics of public interest enables members to 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 can 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.
- 5.3 Meeting papers, meeting dates, published reports, together with more information about the Panel can be found on the Panel's website: www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk. Following the need to return to in-person meetings, the Panel holds a combination of in person decision-making meetings and virtual informal sessions. All meetings are live streamed.

6 Highlights May 2021 – December 2021

May 2021:

- 6.1 Simon Foster was elected West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner for a three-year term.
- 6.2 The panel held interviews to fill a vacant independent panel member position. A regional advertising campaign was undertaken, and competitive interviews conducted by a cross-party selection panel. The Panel appointed Lionel Walker.

June 2021:

- 6.3 The annual appointment process of panel members resulted in a 60% turnover of councillor panel members. The panel secretariat delivered an induction workshop for all members that examined the role of the Panel. A further member briefing on police finance was delivered by the Chief Finance Officer at the Office of the PCC in September.

July 2021:

- 6.4 The West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner attended his first Panel meeting and set out his aspirations for his term of office, and his approach to developing his Police and Crime Plan.

October 2021:

- 6.5 The Panel reviewed the draft West Midlands Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025 and made a number of recommendations for the PCC to consider before publication. The Panel's report and the PCC's response are available on the Panel website www.westmidlandspcp.co.uk

November 2021:

- 6.6 The Panel will examine the PCC's Annual Report. It will also consider the PCC's performance framework associated with the implementation of his Police and Crime Plan and new reporting responsibilities for the National Crime and Policing Measures. The Panel will also receive an update on the West Midlands Police Estate Strategy.

7 Forward Plan

Public Confidence in Policing: Panel Scrutiny Inquiry

- 7.1 In 2020 the Panel decided to undertake an in-depth scrutiny inquiry into public confidence in policing to understand the factors that had led to the reported drop in public confidence in West Midlands Police and what steps the PCC was taking to address these issues.
- 7.2 The inquiry focussed on four areas: communication with the public, the victim experience and crime outcomes, public expectations of a modern police force, and trust and legitimacy.
- 7.3 During 2020 and 2021 the Panel collected evidence from a range of sources, conducted a survey and held a stakeholder evidence gathering session. It is grateful for all those that contributed.
- 7.4 The conclusions from the evidence received have developed 10 recommendations for the PCC to consider. The report is due to be published in December.

Policing budget and precept

7.5 In January 2022 the Panel will examine the PCC budget proposals and formally review the PCC's proposed policing precept for 2022-23.

Further suggestions for the Panel Work Programme

As the Panel shapes its future work programme, City Council members are encouraged to suggest issues that the Birmingham Panel Members (Cllr Brown, Cllr Suleman and Cllr O'Reilly) could seek to add to the Police and Crime Panel work programme.