

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Tuesday, 18 June 2019, - 11.00 am

Minutes

Present:

Mr S J Mackay (Chairman), Mr R C Adams, Mrs C Clive, Mr Barry Durkin, Ms H Dyke, Mr R Evans, Mr J Grubb, Mr A D Kent, Mr J Lavery, Mr J Riaz, Mr Kuldip Sahota, Colonel A Ward OBE, Mr Peter Whatley and Mr M Wood (Vice Chairman)

Also attended:

John Champion, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner
Tracey Onslow, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Andy Champness, Chief Executive, Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

Tim Rice (Senior Public Health Practitioner),
Sheena Jones (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) and Samantha Morris (Scrutiny Co-ordinator)

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. Presentation handout for Commissioning Activity of the Police and Crime Commissioner Including the Changes to Victim Support Services (circulated at the Meeting)
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 February 2019 (previously circulated).

(Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes).

294 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The changes to the Substantive membership were:

- Adam Kent was replacing Karen May (Bromsgrove)
- Sarah Rouse was replacing Tony Baker (Malvern)
- Julian Grubb was replacing Gareth Prosser (Redditch)
- Jabba Riaz was replacing James Stanley (Worcester City)
- Rob Adams was replacing Emma Stokes (Wychavon)
- Helen Dyke was replacing Juliet Smith (Wyre Forest)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kuldip Sahota was replacing Stephen Reynolds (Telford and Wrekin) <p>Thanks, were also recorded to all those members who had just left the Panel.</p>
295	Named Substitutes	Cllr Peter Whatley was a substitute for Cllr Sarah Rouse (Malvern).
296	Apologies and Declarations of Interest	<p>Apologies were received from Councillors Gwilym Butler, William Parr and Sarah Rouse.</p> <p>Declarations of interest were made as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julian Grubb was a retired Police Officer in receipt of a Police Pension (not West Mercia Police) • Steve Mackay was a retired Police Officer in receipt of a Police Pension (not West Mercia Police).
297	Appointment of Co-opted Members	<p>It was recommended that the Panel agreed to the co-option of 5 elected members as set out in the Report and notified to the Panel, or such members as may be nominated from time to time by their respective authorities to achieve the balanced appointment objective.</p> <p>Given the nominations from each of the authorities, to secure political balance the additional co-opted members would be 1 Labour councillor, 3 Conservative councillors and 1 Liberal Democrat councillor. Nominations to these places were received as follows:</p> <p>Shropshire (3 co-optees): Councillors Butler, Parr (Conservative) and Evans (Liberal Democrat) Telford and Wrekin (1 Labour Co-optee): Councillor Lavery Herefordshire (1 Conservative Co-optee): Councillor Durkin</p> <p>Accordingly, the Panel agreed that Councillors Butler, Parr, Evans, Lavery and Durkin or such members as may be nominated from time to time by their respective authorities to achieve the balanced appointment objective be co-opted to the Panel.</p>
298	Public Participation	None.
299	Confirmation of	The Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 February 2019

**the Minutes of
the previous
meeting**

**300 Draft Annual
Report of the
Police and
Crime
Commissioner
for West Mercia**

were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Panel was invited to consider the draft Annual Report of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and determine whether it would wish to make any recommendations to the PCC for consideration. The 2018/19 Report provided a high-level overview of the PCC's work over the last financial year.

Under Section 12 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the PCC was required to report to the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) on the exercise of his functions in each financial year. Specifically, the Annual Report should report on:

- a) the exercise of the PCC's functions in each financial year, and
- b) the progress which had been made in the financial year in meeting the police and crime objectives in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan

In accordance with the Act, the Panel was required to review the Report and to make any recommendations to the PCC for consideration. The PCC must then respond to any report or recommendations that the Panel made prior to publishing the final version of the Report.

The PCC introduced the Report and explained that the last year had built on the progress made in previous years, continuing with the principles of: *Putting Victims and Survivors First, Building a more Secure, Reformed, Reassured and ultimately Safer West Mercia.*

The PCC highlighted some of the areas of focus for the year:

Putting Victims and Survivors First

- The launch of the Victim Advice Line, a dedicated victim support service in April 2019
- The work taking place through the Drive Project to deter perpetrator behaviour

Building a more Secure West Mercia

- The PCC's Drug Strategy published in May 2019
- Keeping the communities safe by managing the demand of the 999 service and working to

improve the 101 service (acknowledging that there was still further work to be done)

- The development of the Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) Strategy, which was being consulted on shortly

Reforming West Mercia

- Continuing with the organisational reform and although the Strategic Alliance was coming to an end, negotiations would continue with Warwickshire to identify future alternative collaboration arrangements which would be mutually beneficial
- Continuing with the new Policing Priorities by investing in the workforce, with a focus on well-being and sickness
- Continued work around estates focusing on ensuring police buildings were fit for purpose and located where they were most effective

Reassuring West Mercia's Communities

- The PCC had continued his activity engaging with the community, working together with partners to be part of solutions to local issues, with ongoing support for SmartWater and focusing on rural and business crime.

During the opportunity for questions, the following main points were made:

- A Member questioned the information provided as part of the 'The Year in Numbers' and asked if 62% of 101 calls were answered within 30 seconds, what was happening with the other 38% of calls. The PCC explained that he received a weekly performance update and on average the wait time was 40 seconds with 10% of calls being abandoned. It was important to reduce the number of 101 calls by encouraging residents to use their local officer contacts. The PCC was less worried about the 101 performance and more concerned about the 999 response times
- It was suggested that the response time to 999 calls was better last year, with 90% of 999 calls being answered in 10 seconds compared to 80% in 10 seconds this year. The PCC advised that there had been an improvement overall
- It was suggested that it would be helpful if the 101 number gave an estimated wait time, the PCC

acknowledged that was helpful but unfortunately, the current system was old and out of date and the Police didn't have the more advanced technologies available to them yet

- The PCC reiterated the importance of sharing the contact details of the local Police officers as the first point of contact for communities
- A question was asked about whether knife crime was an increasing problem in West Mercia and whether there was a link with County Lines. The PCC explained that it was a complex problem and that County Lines was an issue in West Mercia, with violent tactics being on the increase. The focus for the Police was dealing with the criminality, but the change in Government focus to deal with it as a Public Health issue was good. There was, however still more to do around safeguarding those vulnerable people being exploited
- The Deputy PCC (DPCC) explained funding was available for the Community Safety Partnerships (CSP's) to use in the most appropriate way in their areas for youth knife crime eg Fearless Workers/Steer Clear. In addition, The ACE's agenda was about identifying those young people most likely to be exploited
- A member queried whether West Mercia used 'Stop and Search' and whether its use of was increasing. The PCC confirmed that it was a tactic used by West Mercia Police and considered useful. The Panel would be provided with some comparative data in respect of its usage
- It was suggested that it would be helpful if the 'Year in Numbers' page included the statistics from the previous year, to show performance trends. The PCC agreed to do this
- A question was asked about the feasibility of future Strategic Alliance/s. The PCC was clear that any future collaboration needed to be in the interests of both parties involved
- The PCC was asked for his views on Community Resolution Orders and in response advised that they were useful but not for serious issues. Data in respect of these would be provided in the next meeting's performance summary report
- A Member asked about how the PCC was tackling racial crime, hate crime, extremism and ensuring that the diversity of the workforce appropriately represented the make-up of society. The PCC confirmed that although the volume of hate and racial crime were low, there was more work to do

around perception and satisfaction levels. In respect of diversity of the workforce, gender diversity wasn't too bad, but ethnicity needed to be improved, but would take a while due to low staff turnover in the Police. The Chief Constable was leading on a piece of work looking at how to improve the situation. Terrorism prevention was part of the Prevent Agenda and was primarily the responsibility of local councils, although the Police supported it. The PCC urged councillors to encourage representatives from their local council to attend meetings of Serious and Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG), which was a multi-agency group working at a local level to reduce the harm caused by serious and organised crime

- The PCC was asked whether he was content with a 51% satisfaction rate for levels of local policing (as per the West Mercia Public Confidence and Perceptions Survey 2018/19) and how this compared nationally. The PCC confirmed that he was not satisfied with this statistic and wanted people to have confidence that the Police would be there when they needed them. The Chief Constable was confident that this would improve but the main problem was in the rural areas. Investment had been made in additional Police Officers, which should help to improve the situation and more work was being done around the visibility of Police Officers. In addition, this was being measured by the PCC, Town and Parish Councils carrying out surveys.
- It was noted that overall confidence in West Mercia Police had remained stable in quarter 4 at 85%). The PCC agreed to check whether there was an update on the public confidence in the police statistics which were measured through the national Crime Survey for England and were as at September 2018
- The PCC confirmed that the Chief Constable decided where additional Police Officer were placed. The PCC would continue to provide the Chief Constable adequate resources to do his job
- Against the Most Similar Group (MSG) of peer forces, West Mercia was currently ranked 8th out of the 8 forces, in line with the previous reporting period. The force's ranking against all forces had decreased to 37th out of 42 forces. The PCC acknowledged that overall satisfaction levels were on a downward trend and advised that investment was being made to improve the situation

**301 Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Constabulary
and Fire and
Rescue
Services
(HMICFRS)
'Peel: Police
Effectiveness
2017 An
Inspection of
West Mercia
Police' - Update
Report**

- It was suggested that the Panel should have the opportunity to look at the Serious Organised Crime Strategy. The PCC agreed to circulate the Strategy and update the Panel on the Consultation when the results were available.

In accordance with the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, the PCC would be sent a report of the Panel following its consideration of the Annual Report.

The Panel received an update report outlining how the Force and the PCC were responding to findings outlined in the 2017 PEEL Police Effectiveness Inspection Report.

The PCC was pleased to advise that the Force had been disengaged and he was keen to ensure that a similar situation didn't occur in the future.

During the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- A Member suggested the number of offences carried out whilst on bail or awaiting sentencing was increasing. The PCC explained that the process of gathering 'good' evidence could take a while, but it was important that the justice process was fair. The PCC was unsure whether the changes to the pre-charge bail limit as part of the Policing and Crime Act was connected to this or not
- A Member referred to Area for Improvement (AFI) 3 which was about the force taking steps to understand the reasons why a high proportion of crimes related to domestic abuse fell into the category 'Evidential difficulties; victim does not support police action' and asked whether as part of the measures being taken, dip sampling was being used. The PCC explained that there had been significant work around this AFI as the levels were too high and there were issues around timeliness and quality, which was a focus for the newly formed Strategic Priorities Board jointly chaired by both Assistant Chief Constables (ACC)
- The force had arranged for a number of peer reviews to feed into their approach to SOC, with input from both Merseyside and Derbyshire. The PCC agreed to check when the findings from the peer reviews would be available
- More recently, the force had been subject to a Home Office supported strategic framework review of serious violence and vulnerability,

**302 Police & Crime
Plan Activity
and
Performance
Monitoring
Report (January
- March 2019)**

focusing on issues such as county lines and gang violence. The review focused on partnership approaches and it was anticipated that the findings from the review would help inform the partnership work around preventing people from being drawn into SOC.

- It was confirmed that the HMICFRS Inspection regime was not being carried out jointly with Warwickshire, both forces were inspected separately.

The Report was noted.

The Panel was invited to consider the Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report for January to March 2019 and determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny or make any comments.

The main points made during the discussion were:

- It was noted that in respect of oversight of complaints made against the police, the Police and Crime Act 2017 included significant changes to the police complaints and discipline system. Notably, the Act gave PCCs a greater role in the police complaints system. A question was asked about the staff resource implications of these changes. In response the Chief Executive, OPCC explained that these changes had yet to take place, but the Home Office had agreed a 6-month implementation phase and consideration was being given to approaching the changes from a regional perspective and a draft joint Business Case with West Midlands, Staffordshire and Warwickshire was being prepared
- The Home Office had announced that it would be closing the online crime reporting tool (Track my Crime) with effect from 1 August 2019. Police Transformation funding had been used to develop the Single Online Home website (SOH), the new national digital public contact platform for police forces, being delivered by the NPCC's Digital Policing Portfolio, which over 40 forces in England and Wales had committed to joining, including West Mercia. In future SOH would provide the platform for online reporting. It wouldn't necessarily have a tracking facility
- With regard to Regional financial investigation (FI). The PCC explained that the money was shared out between partners, (including the

303 Commissioning Activity of the Police and Crime Commissioner Including the Changes to Victim Support Services

courts), government and the Police.

The Report was noted.

The Panel received a presentation on the commissioning process used by the Police and Crime Commissioner's office on the coverage of activity and recent changes to victim support services, which had received endorsement from the Ministry of Justice.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- A Member asked about what support was available for speeding in rural areas. The PCC explained that he was willing with local authorities to assist with engineering for safe enforcement sites and acknowledged that there was still more to do, but ultimately there was a balance between community priority and keeping people safe. The PCC also advised that there would be an average speed camera pilot shortly
- The PCC was commended on the SmartWater Scheme in Claines. It was suggested that a similar scheme would be welcomed in Worcester in respect of Asian gold burglary which was an increasing crime. The PCC advised that that the SmartWater Scheme was open to all and the detail would be provided to the Panel. Essentially, the PCC offered 25% towards the cost, kits at a reduced price, signage and help with the distribution. The PCC didn't lead on the Scheme, it was community led (although he was part of the solution)
- The PCC was asked about his views in respect of re-habilitation of offenders, particularly young people just entering the workforce. The PCC, whilst understanding the importance of punishing crime was also keen not criminalise young people so as to reduce their life chances. The PCC was also mindful of the views of communities
- The Panel would be provided with referral waiting times for specialist victim support
- It was confirmed that West Mercia were members of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, which facilitated the sharing of best practice
- The PCC's commissioning schemes were audited by the Worcestershire and Warwickshire Internal Audit Team.

**304 Complaints
2018-19 Annual
Report**

The Report was noted.

The Panel was reminded that one of its functions under the Elected Local Policing Bodies (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2012 was to deal with non-criminal complaints about the conduct of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and his Deputy via its approved procedure as detailed in the Agenda report.

The Democratic, Governance and Scrutiny Manager reported that during 2018-19, four complaints were recorded concerning the conduct of the PCC. Two of these were referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) and both were returned to the PCP as they did not merit investigation by the IOPC. No further action was taken on either of these complaints by the PCP. One of the remaining 2 complaints was withdrawn and the regulations for complaints were disapplied for the fourth complaint as it was repetitious.

The Report was noted.

The meeting ended at 1.05 pm

Chairman