

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Wednesday, 27 November 2019, - 11.00 am

Minutes

Present:

Mr S J Mackay (Chairman), Mr R C Adams, Mr S Bowen, Mr G Butler, Mrs C Clive, Mr B Durkin, Mr R Evans, Mr J Grubb, Mr A D Kent, Mr J Lavery, Mr D Tremellen, Mr P Whatley and Mr M Wood (Vice Chairman)

Also attended:

John Champion, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner
Anthony Bangham, Chief Constable, West Mercia Police
Andy Champness, Chief Executive, Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

Tim Rice (Senior Public Health Practitioner) and
Samantha Morris (Scrutiny Co-ordinator)

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 September 2019 (previously circulated).

(A copy of documents A will be attached to the signed Minutes).

315 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

316 Named Substitutes

Councillor Gwilym Butler was a substitute for Councillor William Parr.

317 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillors Helen Dyke, and Kuldip Sahota.

Declarations of interest were made as follows:

- 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).

318 Appointment of Co-opted

The Chairman reported that Col Tony Ward, Independent Lay Co-optee of the Panel had resigned as a member of the Panel.

Members

Councillor Wood (Vice-Chairman) expressed his thanks and gratitude to Col Ward for his services over the years to both the Panel and the former Police Authority. The Chairman had already written to thank Col Ward for his contribution to the Panel and it was agreed that the Vice-Chairman would also write on behalf of the Panel to Col Ward to express the Panel's gratitude.

It was agreed that the recruitment of an independent co-opted member as set out at paragraph 6 of the report, and that Councillors Bowen, Wood and Tremellen be appointed to an Appointments Panel to conduct the recruitment process and appoint to the vacancy.

The Panel was also asked to note that Councillor Dave Tremellen had been appointed to the Panel as a co-opted member by Shropshire Council to replace Councillor Gwilym Butler.

319 Public Participation

None.

320 Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

321 Rural Crime Strategy - Consultation Report

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) reported that he was in the process of developing a series of strategies which he would share with the Panel when they had been consulted upon.

The PCC's draft Rural Crime Strategy, which the Panel had discussed initially at its last meeting, was consulted upon between 10 October - 8 November 2019. The report detailed how the Strategy Consultation was publicised and the PCC reiterated that he was keen to ensure that everyone received the same level of service and had confidence in the Police. He encouraged the Panel to comment on the Strategy to add rigour to the process.

During the discussion, the following main points were discussed:

- Considering the breadth of the Consultation, a Member suggested that the response rate was quite low (38 online responses and 3 responses directly to the PCC). It was questioned therefore

whether the responses were meaningful. The PCC acknowledged that he would have liked a better response rate and welcomed any ideas for future consultations, he added that he held question and answer sessions in local communities as well as using case work to inform the process and that the Consultation wasn't the end of the journey.

- It was suggested that a 4 week Consultation spanning over a half term school holiday was an insufficient period of time to consult and it should have been 8 or 12 weeks long. The PCC explained that he had previously carried out a 12 week consultation and unfortunately the response rate hadn't been any better, he added that there would be refreshes of the Strategy and he would still take any responses to Consultation at the moment, even though it had closed.
- A Member asked the PCC if he would consider a more structured approach to communicating with communities, rather than the current ad-hoc approach, to which the PCC advised that he had worked very hard over the last 3 years to improve communication and was always willing and open to discussions and invitations, but other partners needed to take part too. It was suggested that a one state approach to communication ie Police/Fire/Council would raise public confidence.
- The Chief Constable added that Superintendent's had structured relationships with local councils and had a good understanding of local issues, but it was also important to have flexibility too.
- One of the email responses to the Consultation suggested that the Get Safe initiative had not been adopted in Herefordshire. The PCC agreed to check and report back to the Panel.
- The point was made that key performance indicators relating to rural crime should be included in the regular performance summary received by the Panel at each meeting. It was agreed that Delivery Plan and KPI's would be shared with the Panel when available.
- It was confirmed that Community Speedwatch groups were required to put out the advanced warning signs for the period of monitoring.
- It was suggested death as a result of speeding was a big concern and consideration should be given to simple cost effective schemes. The PCC agreed and advised that average speed camera technology would be investigated in the coming months.

**322 Her Majesty's
Inspectorate of
Constabulary
and Fire and
Rescue
Services
(HMICFRS)
Inspection
Report - 'PEEL:
Police
effectiveness,
efficiency and
legitimacy
2018/19 An
inspection of
West Mercia**

- In response to the question about whether the PCC had sufficient information from the Consultation and whether consideration was being given to extending the Consultation. The PCC advised that he had sufficient information and was concerned that if the Consultation period was extended, it would be in the 'purdah' period prior to the national government elections. It was intended that the Strategy would be a 'live' document.
- The Chairman of the Panel advised that he had met with representatives of the National Farmers Union to discuss the draft Strategy and had been advised that:
 - where a rural business crime had been committed, it was important that police officers were aware that often these crimes took place next to a victim's home
 - it was also helpful where there was a spate of crimes, for police officers to remind communities about preventative actions which could be taken.

The Chairman summed up the discussion, which had covered communication, timing and technology around the Consultation as well as the need for KPI's which would be shared with the Panel when available.

The PCC confirmed that the points discussed would be reflected in the Strategy.

In 2018, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) notified all police Chief Constables and PCC's of its intention to revise its PEEL inspection programme, by combining the three separate force inspections of 'efficiency', 'effectiveness' and 'legitimacy' into one integrated inspection. To facilitate this new approach all forces in England and Wales were to be inspected on up to 10 key areas, with subsequent inspection reports published in tranches in line with the inspection programme.

As part of the second tranche of the inspection programme West Mercia Police were subject to an initial onsite inspection in January 2019 and the Inspection report was published at the end of September 2019.

West Mercia was judged as 'requires improvement' in all three areas: effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. The report set out each of the areas for improvement (AFIs) and recommendations with a brief summary of the work

Police'

either being done or being considered to address the report findings.

The PCC advised that he and the Chief Constable had taken the unusual step of issuing a joint media release in respect of the Report reaffirming their commitment to delivering improvements, whilst strongly refuting some of its findings. The Chief Constable and PCC had written to HMICFRS to voice their concerns that sections of the document around efficiency and the ending of the Alliance with Warwickshire were out of date, not evidenced, not reflective of the current position and contained misleading inaccuracies. They recognised that some things needed to improve, and work had begun on these immediately following the inspection, but West Mercia were in a fundamentally different place from when the Inspection was carried out.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- A Member questioned why '*efficiency*' had previously been graded good and was now '*requires improvement*'. The PCC referred to the media release and pointed out that report had failed to reflect the benefits communities would see when police in West Mercia were no longer financially supporting a neighbouring force and did not recognise that some functions, such as local policing, moved to a standalone structure earlier this year with absolutely no detriment to public service or risk to public safety. The PCC reiterated that he and the Chief Constable had written to HMICFRS to voice their concerns that sections of the document around efficiency and the ending of the Alliance with Warwickshire were out of date, not evidenced, not reflective of the current position and contained misleading inaccuracies but he was keen to move on.
- 7 recommendations had been identified in respect of '*Investigating Crime*', the response to which was being led by a Detective Superintendent who had a small project team in place. A key indicator of the success of the action taken would be to achieve a 'good' grading at re-inspection.
- There was a trial in Shropshire on the Analysis & Service Improvement and Service Delivery & Continuous Improvement teams audit of the timeliness of responses. It was agreed that the Panel would be provided with an update on this.
- The PCC reiterated that elements of the report

**323 Police & Crime
Plan Activity
and
Performance
Monitoring
Report (July -
Sept 2019)**

were helpful in giving the force areas where improvements are needed, while acknowledging other areas where clear, significant improvements had been made. He reassured the Panel that he would continue to hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure progress was made and sustained. The Chief Constable concurred with this.

- The Chairman of the Panel asked whether it would be necessary for the PCC to amend the Policing Plan to achieve better results. The PCC advised that he would continue to adapt and change as appropriate, as well as reviewing the holding to account process for the Chief Constable.
- The PCC was congratulated on the significant improvements made around tackling serious organised crime in a short space of time.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the HMICFRS would be invited to a meeting to discuss the findings of the report in more detail.

The Panel was invited to consider the Police and Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report for July-September 2019.

The PCC highlighted:

- Increasing police officer numbers – Officers recruited as part of the PCC commitment to increase numbers by an additional 215 officers had continued to be posted to local areas and were making a valuable impact in communities across West Mercia, helping to make these communities safer and more secure. In addition, the PCC had welcomed confirmation from the government that West Mercia Police would receive an uplift of an additional 93 officers as part of the national recruitment of an additional 20,000 officers.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- In response to the question as to whether the uplift of an additional 93 officers as part of the national recruitment was guaranteed, the PCC confirmed that he was confident that government would honour its promise.
- It was noted that special constables had an

invaluable role to the police service, but the focus recently had been on the recruitment of additional police officers and had meant that the number of special constables had decreased. When the number of police officers recruited had levelled, there would be a focus on special constables.

- It was confirmed that the West Mercia Diversionary Network was connected with the Get Safe Programme.
- The PCC confirmed that he was willing to discuss options for specific areas for the Pathfinder Project, teaching young people how to drive safely.
- It was confirmed that there had been minimum disruption to the Delivery Plan, as result of the situation with the Strategic Alliance.
- The Panel would be provided with the evaluation (when available) of the Reducing Reoffending Strategy.
- The importance of a co-ordinated joined up approach to road safety solutions was emphasised. The Safer Roads Partnership Board was chaired by the PCC and top tier authorities were invited. It was agreed that details would be shared with the Panel.
- It was confirmed that the operational impact of the services which were removed by Warwickshire from the Alliance had been managed, as West Mercia had been planning for the end of the Alliance since the notice period began.

324 National Association of Police Fire and Crime Panels

The Chairman updated the Panel on the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels (NAPCP). It was agreed that the membership of the NAPFCP would be subscription free.

Accordingly, it was agreed that West Mercia Police and Crime Panel would wish to be a member of the NAPCP and Cllr Steve Mackay (Chairman) would be the Panel's representative.

325 Work Programme

No changes were made.

The meeting ended at 1.20 pm

Chairman