

## **Minutes of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel**

**Parkside Hall, Bromsgrove District Council, Parkside,**

**Stourbridge Road, Bromsgrove B61 0AD**

**Wednesday, 7 September 2022, 11.00 am**

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### **Present:**

Cllr James Stanley (Chairman), Cllr Graham Ballinger, Cllr Sebastian Bowen, Mrs C Clive, Cllr Roger Evans, Cllr Helen Jones, Cllr Jim Lavery, Cllr Nigel Lumby, Ms B McDowall, Cllr Nyear Nazir, Cllr Vivienne Parry, Cllr Mike Rouse and Cllr Paul Watling

### **Also attended:**

John Champion, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner  
Cllr Marc Bayliss  
Gareth Boulton, Chief Executive

Tim Rice, Senior Public Health Practitioner  
Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager  
Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

### **Available Papers**

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 June and 11 July 2022 (previously circulated).

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

### **443 Welcome and Introductions**

The Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **444 Named Substitutes**

Cllr Mike Rouse (Worcestershire County Council) for Cllr Aled Luckman.

#### **445 Election of a Chairman**

Cllr James Stanley was elected as Chairman for the meeting.

#### **446 Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Aled Luckman, Barry Durkin, Jeff Anderson, and Rob Adams.

There were no declaration of interests.

#### **447 Public Participation**

None.

#### **448 Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Minutes of the meetings of 15 June and 11 July 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **449 Confirmation of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner**

The Panel was asked to consider the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) preferred candidate, Councillor Marc Bayliss, for the role of Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC) for West Mercia.

In doing so, the Panel was required to satisfy itself that the preferred candidate selected by the PCC had the competence to undertake the role.

The PCC introduced the report which provided an overview of the appointment process that was undertaken to select the preferred candidate.

The PCC must under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (Act) notify the Panel of the preferred candidate for appointment as DPCC. As per Schedule 1 of the Act the PCC provided the following information to the Panel:

1. The name of the person whom the PCC was proposing to appoint;
2. The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate and how the candidate satisfied the criteria; and
3. The terms and conditions on which the candidate was to be appointed.

Also provided for the Panel's consideration were the details relating to:

1. The recruitment, application and interview process;

2. The candidate recruitment pack including the job and person specification;
3. stakeholder Panel questions
4. PCC Interview Questions
5. Scoring criteria
6. CV/covering letter of the preferred candidate.

During the discussion and opportunity for questions, the following main points were discussed:

- Given that Cllr Bayliss had other political responsibilities and business commitments, a Member questioned whether he would have sufficient time to devote to the role of DPCC. Cllr Bayliss confirmed that if he was to be confirmed in the role of DPCC he would be standing down as Leader of Worcester City Council to free up capacity.
- Cllr Bayliss' experience of policing stemmed from his role as local councillor for the last 21 years, the skills for which he believed were transferrable to that of DPCC.
- The PCC explained that a total of 9 applications had been received across two rounds of the recruitment process.
- The PCC and Cllr Bayliss had known each other in a professional capacity for approximately 18 years.
- Cllr Bayliss intended to build relationships by following on from his predecessor and meeting with the residents across the West Mercia area as soon as possible.
- Although Cllr Bayliss had not held a community safety portfolio, he had as Leader of Worcester City Council had frequent involvement with community safety matters and regularly engaged with the local Police Force.
- Cllr Baylis explained that the interview process had been taxing, pressing and robust. As part of the process he had familiarised himself with the PCC's Police and Crime Plan, looked at recent PEEL Reports and was aware of some of the pressing issues for West Mercia for example domestic abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation and anti-social behaviour.
- In terms of the portfolio that the DPCC would hold, the administration of grants would be part of the portfolio but the other areas were yet to be decided.
- The PCC confirmed that the full-time equivalent (FTE) salary for the post was £51,000 and that Cllr Baylis would provide 0.7 FTE, giving a pro rata salary of £35,700 per annum.
- The PCC was keen to support Cllr Bayliss to develop his knowledge of geographical issues and differences of the West Mercia area.

Following a vote, a majority of Panel Members supported Cllr Marc Bayliss being appointed as the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia.

A report from the Panel would be provided to the PCC.

## 450 Estates Strategy Consultation

The PCC referred to the draft Estates Strategy which set out plans for the police estate over the coming years to support and enable the best possible policing services for communities. The Consultation on the draft Strategy had closed on 11 August 2022. Analysis of the consultation responses was being carried out and the Strategy would then be amended accordingly.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- It was clarified that the Northern Hub was the north part of the Police Force ie Shropshire and Telford.
- An update was provided on the progress of Redditch Police Station, noting that there had been delays due to environmental issues.
- Members were interested in knowing what the plans were for Police Stations in their communities and a summary of the situation for Police Stations across West Mercia was requested.
- The PCC reassured the Panel that that there were no plans for withdrawing Police buildings, however, if a building wasn't fit for purpose an alternative building would be sought. The PCC suggested that detailed work in this area may be better if carried out in a Task Group format.
- A Member suggested that Leominster and Ludlow Police Stations didn't have Police Officers on duty which didn't give confidence to the Public. The PCC explained that there should be a doorbell at both stations and that both stations were located in operational buildings. The PCC further explained that the number of front counters were being reduced and digital kiosks being developed.
- The PCC confirmed that although there were no proposals to close Wellington Police Station, the current site needed investment as it was not fit for purpose.

## 451 Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report

The PCC introduced the report. During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- A Member referred to Paragraph 40 of the Report about understanding and resolving issues around the Estate and IT infrastructure which had caused significant problems for the Force and asked how the PCC would provide assurance that resilience and governance of the Force's IT equipment and its infrastructure would be achieved in future. The PCC was further asked how he would ensure that the provision and installation of adequate approved infrastructure, preventive and protection measures would be achieved and appropriately tested, serviced and maintained to appropriate recognised standards. The PCC explained that he was responsible for the Estates function, for providing a fit for purpose Estate and for supporting the Police with the necessary

resources. Following the dissolution of Place Partnership Ltd, it had been discovered that there was a backlog in planned and routine maintenance. The PCC was assured that there was rigour and urgency in understanding the issues. He reminded the Panel that funding had been provided this year and it was likely that further funding would be provided next year.

- A Member advised that feedback from communities suggested that calls took a long time to respond to. In response, the PCC referred to the performance data provided and explained that the response time to 999 calls was stable, although the response for 101 calls was an issue. The PCC suggested that online reporting or contacting the Safer Neighbourhood Teams was key in helping the performance improve.
- It was further suggested that communities felt that the Police response to burglaries was disappointing as they were unlikely to attend a burglary but give a crime number instead. The PCC explained that the Community Charter said that Police would attend and offer preventative measures.
- In terms of the funding to support domestic violence, the PCC confirmed that there had been some success in grant funding but there needed to be a system approach in providing support in this area. It was pleasing to note that the number of arrests in this area were increasing.
- Reference was made to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Telford, the PCC explained that the recommendations arising from the inquiry had been submitted to the West Mercia Governance Board and that the Chief Constable was working through the report and developing a response to the recommendations.
- The 10 Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime and Save lives was welcomed.
- The PCC confirmed that with regard to the 20mph is Plenty Campaign, he was supportive of 20mph zones but not in a blanket approach. The PCC was willing to discuss individual West Mercia areas.
- It was noted that a significant backlog remained in the number of crown court cases. Another significant issue contributing to the backlog was the closure of the Crown Court in Hereford.
- It was confirmed that growing the number of Watch Schemes by 20% would be measured by the PCC's Police and Crime Plan.
- The PCC confirmed that PACT meetings should be well advertised in advance of them taking place.
- In terms of the impact of the cost of living increase on crime, the PCC explained that there was a Joint Prevention Strategy that all upper tier authorities were signed up to and was business as usual.
- The PCC confirmed that although there were contingencies for the increased energy costs, there would also be consequences, particularly over the long term.
- To ensure that staff wellbeing was being taken into account and to have a greater understanding, the Chief Constable was running some pulse surveys.
- Given the closure of Hereford Crown Court, a Member asked if this would impact on the Telford Crown court. The PCC confirmed that there was no threat to Telford Crown court, which was expanding.

- The PCC was asked for his views on the victim satisfaction data. In response, the PCC confirmed that the data was accurate but that he was unhappy with what it was saying in terms of timescales and quality and that there would be further investment in this area this year.
- The PCC was not concerned about the 999 abandonment rate as West Mercia was generally above target and there were reciprocal arrangements in place with other Forces to pick up any calls which couldn't be answered.
- A Member raised a previously reported issue about Parish Councils not receiving the relevant Safer Neighbourhood Team Reports split down by area. Whilst the PCC acknowledged that this was a frustration, he confirmed that it was not a priority.
- A Member queried the data relating to 'Digital Requests for Service – Single Online Home' which hadn't increased since August 2020 – the PCC explained that although the data was old, the performance could be better and there was a desire to do better.
- It was suggested that satisfaction with initial contact in respect of burglary and violent crime, was showing a worrying downward trend.
- The PCC suggested that the Panel could consider adding to its work programme an in depth report on outcomes and satisfaction.
- In terms of violent crime, a Member questioned whether any system wide learning took place. The PCC explained that learning from other best practice was standard and that the new Deputy Chief Constable had previously been the lead for violence in the Metropolitan Police.

## **452 'From Harm to Hope. A 10 Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime and Save Lives.'**

The PCC introduced the 10 Year Drugs Plan to Cut Crime and Save Lives – 'From Harm To Hope'. In West Mercia, it had been agreed with partners that there would be two partnerships across the policing area, aligned to Integrated Care Board (ICB) boundaries (Herefordshire & Worcestershire, and Shropshire & Telford and Wrekin). It had also been agreed that the PCC would act as Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for both partnerships, which would include a wide range of local agencies such as police, the NHS, local authorities and probation services. Specific elements of the partnerships, such as structures, staffing, governance and terms of reference were yet to be determined.

During the discussion, a Member questioned how it was envisaged that drug supply chain could be broken. The PCC explained that the powers were there through the judiciary but capacity was an issue that needed further consideration.

The Report was noted.

## **453 Prevention Strategy**

The PCC introduced the joint Prevention Strategy which had been developed and agreed between the PCC and West Mercia Police. At the centre of the Prevention Strategy, was a clear and joint commitment by the PCC and Chief

Constable that prevention must play an ever greater role in ensuring that the communities of West Mercia not only felt safe but were safe. The overarching aims of the Strategy were; fewer victims, less crime, increased public confidence in policing, and greater public involvement in preventing harm.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- It was suggested that school exclusion levels were high in Worcestershire and that the Police and Worcestershire County Council should be working together collaboratively to drive down exclusions and limit the opportunity for young people to be groomed. The PCC agreed that the cycle needed to be broken.
- A Member questioned how the PCC would get continuous feedback from all communities, in response the PCC explained that there were a number of initiatives and that he was conscious that the communities needed him to listen and for them to be heard.
- A Member suggested that work with young people should start early at primary school level, so that children and young people were familiar with the police from an early age and vice versa.
- A Member suggested that although not a police issue, education health and care plans needed to be better in Worcestershire which in turn would help to reduce the number of exclusions.
- It was suggested that it may be helpful for ex-offenders to share their stories with young people – the PCC confirmed that some of the prevention work did include ex-offenders.

#### **454 Complaints 2021-22 Annual Report**

The Report was noted.

#### **455 Work Programme**

The Panel considered the Work Programme and it was agreed that:

- Membership of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group would be sought (Cllr Bowen expressed an interest at the meeting)
- It would be considered how best to monitor the data provided in the Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report.

The meeting ended at 1.30 pm

Chairman .....