

## West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

### Tuesday, 6 February 2018, - 11.00 am

#### Minutes

#### Present:

Cllr Brian Wilcox (Chairman), Cllr Michael Wood (Vice Chairman), Cllr Sebastian Bowen, Cllr David Chambers, Mrs Carole Clive, Cllr M Johnson, Cllr S M Mackay, Cllr Rajash Mehta, Cllr Vivienne Parry, Cllr Stephen Reynolds, Cllr Juliet Smith, Cllr Emma Stokes, Cllr C B Taylor, Cllr Dave Tremellen and Colonel Tony Ward OBE

#### Also attended:

John Campion, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner  
Tracey Onslow, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner  
Andy Champness, Chief Executive, Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner  
Elizabeth Hall, Treasurer, Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

Tim Rice (Senior Public Health Practitioner),  
Mark Sanders (Senior Finance Manager – Financial Planning & Reporting), Simon Mallinson (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Sheena Jones (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) and  
Samantha Morris (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

#### Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. Presentation handouts for West Mercia Budget 2018/19 Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19 to 2021/22 and Proposed Precept For 2018/19 (circulated at the Meeting)
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 November 2017 (previously circulated).

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

#### 240 Welcome and Introductions

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

#### 241 Named Substitutes

The named substitutes were:

Cllr Vivienne Parry for Cllr Roger Evans (Shropshire County Council)  
Cllr Kit Taylor for Cllr Karen May (Worcestershire County Council)

**242 Apologies and  
Declarations of  
Interest**

Council)

Apologies were received from Councillors Dakin, Evans and May.

A declaration of interest was made by Colonel Tony Ward who was a Member of the Trust, Integrity and Ethics Committee

It was noted that Cllr Mackay was in receipt of a police pension but not from West Mercia Police.

Cllrs Bowen, Mackay and Wood advised that they were former members of the West Mercia Police Authority and knew the former Chief Constable Paul West in a professional capacity only.

**243 Public  
Participation**

Scrutiny of the Sale of Registration Plate AB1

The Chairman in introducing the public participation advised that:

- As Panel members and members of the public were aware, major changes to police governance were introduced a few years ago with the direct election of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) for police areas
- Police and Crime Panels were also established at the same time as part of those new governance arrangements. This Panel acted on behalf of all the principal councils in the West Mercia police area, with councillor representatives and also independent members
- PCC's had wide-ranging powers and functions, and an important role for these Panels was to scrutinise or review decisions or other action taken by them. This was part of the public accountability of Commissioners – candidates were of course accountable to the electorate at the time of elections but Panels have a clear part to play on behalf of the public in relation to the exercise of Commissioners' functions during their term of office. Later Agenda items showed part of the ongoing work of the Panel eg in relation to the budget setting process
- The Scrutiny of the Sale of Registration Plate AB1 Agenda item related to a decision by the West Mercia PCC to sell the rights to number plate AB1. The sale had caused a considerable degree of public criticism and comment, whether or not such criticism was justified. It seemed to be in the

public interest to place the matter before the Panel to carry out a Scrutiny of the sale to help clarify the facts and increase transparency

- As the Report made clear, the Panel had also received a number of complaints concerning the conduct of the Commissioner in selling AB1 ie in relation to his decision to sell and the process used. It seemed that the most appropriate action to take was to scrutinise that decision causing concern in order to establish Who did What, When and Why. The additional transparency may itself resolve many or all of the complaints as far as the Panel could, or there may need to be further process to do so, but the focus of the Panel was to Scrutinise the sale of AB1 rather than attempt to resolve the individual complaints. The complaints had been summarised in the Report to inform the Panel as to the nature of the concerns raised, which may inform the Scrutiny
- In terms of how this item would be dealt with, there were a number of members of the public who would be allowed three minutes to speak with a total maximum of 30 minutes public participation for all speakers.

An outline of what each of the speakers said is as follows:

Andy Parkes (retired Police Superintendent from West Mercia Police)

- Mr Parkes worked directly for Paul West in his last role
- He represented over 1000 people who had signed a petition in relation to the sale of AB1 and its subsequent withdrawal from auction and the sale to Paul West afterwards
- AB1 had been in existence in Worcestershire since 1900. In 1957, the local tax office gave it to West Mercia Police in perpetuity to ensure that it stayed within the Worcestershire heritage. Mr Parkes believed that there was paperwork available to evidence this
- Mr Parkes challenged whether AB1 could be sold without first consulting with the DVLA which he believed had not been done
- The first indication that the process for selling AB1 had commenced was in July 2017 via Brightwells, but Mr Parkes believed that the plate should have been withdrawn to allow for consultation with the public as to whether the plate should have been

sold. He believed that this would have demonstrated ethics, values, transparency and openness

- The plate was advertised for a short time and then was withdrawn and a private sale agreed at £160,000
- Mr Parkes believed that the plate could have been sold in excess of what was agreed as a private sale and it wasn't best use of the public money. The public had not seen the purpose for what the money was being used nor had they had the opportunity to bid for it. He believed it was an underhand, insider deal.

#### Clive Smith

Registration number AB1 was privately sold for £160,000 after it was withdrawn from sale through Brightwells Auctioneers at the direction of the PCC, John Campion. It was, at a conservative estimate worth at least £100,000 more than the sum for which it was sold. Mr Smith asked how the PCC justified his actions.

#### Tim Brookes

Mr Brookes made the point that the first public awareness of the sale of AB1 was via an advert in Telegraph Newspaper on 15 July 2017 and that he believed that the summation of the situation that the Panel had been given was misleading.

Mr Brookes lived in Worcestershire and owned a series of number plates. In his view AB1 was the 'Holy Grail' of number plates and Mr Brookes wanted it as it was his wife's initials. He had made six unanswered telephone calls to Brightwells on Saturday 15 July 2017 and finally made email contact and was advised by Brightwells that offers were sought based on £250,000. Mr Brookes was then advised on the Wednesday (19 July 2017) that the plate had been sold.

Mr Brookes was very unhappy with the situation. After being advised that that the plate had been sold Mr Brookes asked Brightwells to go back to the PCCs Office and make an initial offer of £305,000 and he advised that he was prepared to make a higher bid if needed. Brightwells confirmed to Mr Brookes that the offer had been made to West Mercia Police and had been received. Mr Brookes was further advised by Brightwells that there was an audit trail confirming his offer.

Mr Brookes made the point that there had been no extensive advertising of the number plate and that the only reference to AB1 being sold was the advert in the Telegraph Newspaper on 15 July. The sale wasn't completed until 11 August 2017 when Mr Brookes had been advised that it had been sold on Wednesday 19 July 2017. Mr Brookes reiterated that he believed that the PCC's statement was factually inaccurate.

Mr Brookes confirmed that all his dealings were through Steve Powis at Brightwells.

John Mayne

Mr Mayne outlined his employment history and that he had monitored memorabilia over the years.

Mr Mayne didn't believe that AB1 had ever been properly valued in the way that would be normal custom and practice for expensive items ie to have two valuations. He suggested that there was no evidence that the PCC had obtained a second opinion in this case. AB1 was withdrawn from sale even after offers were made. A business man had told Mr Mayne that he would be prepared to pay £250,000 and that he also had a number of other number plates and another person had said they would be prepared to pay £200,000.

The PCC had said he had accepted the highest offer which Mr Mayne said implied that there had been 3 bids, when in fact there had only been one offer. He believed that the PCC had been misleading, inaccurate and dishonest. He questioned whether the PCC was authorised to sell any asset he wanted to and whether there were any contract conditions in respect of Paul West selling the number plate on for greater profit that he would need to reimburse the Police with the difference.

Mr Mayne believed that the PCC had brought himself and the Force into disrepute and had not used public money effectively.

Richard Arnold (written submission read out by the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager)

Mr Arnold's complaint was based purely on the argument that the PCC disposed of the plate (which he was entitled to) without first ensuring that he got the best price for it. The PCC could have enquired with the Auction House how much commission he would have to pay, adding £160,000 and then selling the plate with a fixed reserve

(£160,000 less commission).

Andrew Knight

When Mr Knight realised that AB1 was being sold, he was interested as his Grandfather had previously owned the number plate when it had been in general circulation and it had been sold on with the car.

Although he was sad that the number plate was being sold, he understood the security issues of why it couldn't be used for the Chief Constable's car and that the funds were needed for the Service. He thought that the plate would be auctioned to achieve maximum value and total transparency.

Although Mr Knight and a consortium of his family were interested in the Plate, the indicative bid (£250,000) was beyond what they could afford so they were unable to bid. However, when Mr Knight found out that the Plate had been withdrawn from sale and the price that it was sold at was considerably less than estimated value and in fact less than he and his family may have offered to pay he was dismayed.

He felt it was an 'inside job' and the lack of transparency and the fact that the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) didn't investigate the situation was despicable. There was a lack of confidence in the process and the plate was donated on the basis that it would never be sold.

Mr Knight suggested that a full audit into the sale should be carried out and that the PCC had failed in his duty to get the best price and value for the Authority which had suffered a financial loss.

Mr Knight would also like a full investigation to be carried out by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary.

Peter Harris (written submission read out by the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager)

The PCC had justified the sale of AB1 as an asset to be sold to support policing and keep communities safe. If so why it was not sold at market value but virtually gifted at a knock down price to a retiring officer without the initials 'AB', who appeared to have no other desire for ownership than to make future financial gain?

Did the PCC ascertain the true market value of the asset

before deciding on the now apparent unrealistic value when he was obligated to realise the best price by the best practice constraints of his job, and why was the plate not put out to public auction?

Barrie Redding (written submission read out by the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager)

- Mr Redding understood that AB1 was 'gifted' to the Constabulary to preserve its existence and to prevent it being lost or indeed sold in the commercial market. This aspect appeared to have been totally ignored by the PCC
- This item was part of the heritage of the Force and should have remained as such
- If the Force were indeed so desperate for cash, then perhaps with such an issue, some specific use should have been identified and not merely monies to be thrown into a general pot. It might have been more amenable to any sale if some specific use of the proceeds could be seen. As an example, perhaps an interview suite for child/abuse victims and with some mention of the origin of the funding, thus at least in some way part retaining some of the heritage aspect
- With regard to the sale itself, originally the item was apparently placed with local Auctioneers, in itself perhaps the only proper way to sell the item. At this early stage, indications were that the sale could realise £250,000
- For some reason a decision was made to then sell the item privately. This would appear to move some distance from the idea of best practice
- The sale would appear to have been for an amount far less than the initial projected figure and the PCC had sold the Force and the people of West Mercia somewhat short
- Many questions remained unanswered as to why this action was taken. It would appear at best irresponsible and at worst potentially criminal
- To add to the confusion we were told that the purchaser would not sell the plate in his lifetime, but now the inference is that it would not go outside the County - both these aspects were totally unenforceable.
- In short the whole matter had been handled with total contempt for all those connected with West Mercia and had provided a potentially very lucrative investment to person(s) other than those that could have benefitted

- Mr Redding believed that action needed to be taken against the PCC, which would guide him to dealing with matters in a more thoughtful and honest manner and to consider more carefully his duties to all aspects of the Service for which he has responsibility.

The Chairman made the point that the Panel dealt with complaints about the conduct of the PCC short of criminality. However, complaints which alleged that a potential criminal offence had been committed by the PCC were referred to the national Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) (now the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)) for consideration. The IOPC considered whether to instigate a criminal investigation in relation to the complaints referred to it. If the IOPC decided not to pursue such a complaint referred to it, then the complaint was referred back to the PCP to consider.

In terms of the complaints received in respect of AB1, the IOPC determined that, on the information available, there was not sufficient substance to the allegations that the PCC had committed a criminal offence for the IOPC to determine that an investigation was necessary and referred the 4 complaints concerning alleged criminal conduct back to the Police and Crime Panel.

The Chairman invited the PCC to respond to the public's contribution; however the PCC suggested that he would pick up some of the points during the substantive discussion.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the Panel were undertaking a Scrutiny exercise of the decision of the PCC and the matters surrounding that and how the Panel dealt with that was a matter for the Panel to determine. The Panel had heard a number of comments which may be covered either in the PCC's report or during the ensuing discussion. It was in order for the Chairman to ask the PCC to respond to the public and if the PCC declined that was a matter for the PCC.

The role of the Panel was to dig into the facts behind the matters of concern and although the complaints were relevant to reflect the public concern, the Panel was not trying to resolve individual complaints but scrutinising the decision. The PCC was not on trial and the Panel had a statutory duty to scrutinise the PCC and determine the best way forward.

**244 Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting**

The PCC advised that the public contribution was typical of the issue from the beginning. There had been suggestion, rumour and invention throughout the process. He had set out clearly the process followed and the timeline in the paperwork. The exempt papers showed the offers received. The PCC felt offended at the suggestion that he had received offers from outside calling into question his integrity and that of his Chief Executive (and Monitoring Officer). He believed that the Panel should accept the paperwork as it was written as his submission. No-one was prevented from bidding for the number plate as it was in the PCC's interest to get the highest bid. However, following the agreed sale, the PCC was advised by Brightwells that there was a Worcestershire resident who intended to start bidding at £300,000 but this was an intention and the PCC could only work with actual offers made.

The PCC was offended that he had been referred to by the public as dishonest. There had been an extensive process in respect of the sale of AB1 including referral to the IOPC and the Alliance's Internal Audit Committee which had reviewed the process and found nothing wrong.

AB1 was an item no longer in use, which the PCC acknowledged did have heritage value but he believed that those times had passed and he had decided to dispose of it in an open and transparent process to achieve best value. He received an offer and was able to conduct the sale without incurring the commission fee from Brightwells fully meeting the duty to maximise value to the taxpayer. The PCC was fully prepared to be questioned on the feasibility of whether he should have decided to sell the number plate or not in the first place but objected to having his integrity questioned. He didn't personally know Paul West nor had he sold the Plate for a lesser value. The process was overseen by professional officers. Applying hindsight, he suggested was neither fair or in the interests of the community which he served.

The Chairman reiterated that the Panel was considering the process not questioning the PCC's integrity.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 November 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**245 Scrutiny of the Sale of Registration Plate AB1**

The Panel was asked to scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) actions in selling the rights to registration plate AB1 and having done so, decide whether it wished to make a report to the PCC on the matter.

The Panel had before it a Report which covered the background to the issue, the Panel's role in relation to complaints, the Panel's role in relation to Scrutiny, a summary of complaints received relating to the sale of AB1, a Report from the PCC relating to the sale of AB1 and an exempt appendix to the Report of the PCC (circulated to Panel Members only).

The PCC was invited to present the detail of the process he followed in selling the AB1 Registration Plate:

- The PCC was concerned the regulations didn't seem to be being followed in the spirit in which they were intended and although the Chairman suggested that he was not on trial, it could feel that way
- The Panel were advised that pages 15-29 of the Agenda contained detail on the process for sale and pages 31- 35 were the exempt shouldn't be discussed public part of the meeting due to commercial sensitivity
- Specifically, the Panel's attention was drawn to pages 31 and 34 (exempt papers) which set out the offers received and the timeframe for sale as recommended by Brightwells (including how offers should be received to ensure transparency) and page 15 which set out the timeline and sale process
- The PCC believed that the papers demonstrated a clear marketing strategy as suggested by Brightwells, who were instructed on 15 June 2017
- The value of the number plate was difficult to ascertain as all number plates were unique and worth what someone was willing to pay for them
- On 17 July 2017, after receiving a number of offers as detailed on page 31 of the exempt papers the PCC received a direct offer of £160,000 (which was considerably higher than any others received). The PCC was mindful that if this offer was accepted, it would be a private sale and would avoid the commission charge
- Following legal advice, on 18 July 2017 the Registration Plate was withdrawn from sale with Brightwells and a sale was agreed in principle with Mr West
- The necessary standard legal checks were

undertaken including provenance of the funds to pay for the purchase under anti-money laundering legislation

- The sale was then completed on 8 August 2017 and although there had been a time lapse between the sale being agreed and completed, it was not unusual
- No higher offers than the one accepted were received. Other people had subsequently indicated via media that they would have paid more
- The PCC was confident that the process followed had given the maximum opportunity to the communities to achieve the highest value and had also avoided the commission charges.

Ultimately, the PCC believed that issues such as this could be very distracting but he was confident that the process stood up to scrutiny. He had put in place appropriate measures in terms of a contract with Mr West should he choose to sell the number plate to protect the people of Worcestershire. He believed that people were upset that he had decided to sell AB1 in the first place and had moved on to be critical of the process.

During the ensuing discussion the following main points were discussed:

- Although there was no suggestion of an improper relationship with Mr West, a Panel Member suggested that it was very important to be mindful of public perception of the situation. As there hadn't been a public auction for the sale of AB1, there could be a question as to whether proper public value had been achieved. The PCC advised that page 33 onwards of the Agenda detailed the advice given by Brightwells on how best to sell AB1 and there was never a suggestion of a public auction as an option for sale, but that sealed bids should be submitted. The PCC suggested that a public auction would have had a limited pool of bidders, whereas the method of sale chosen was a longer process with more opportunity to reach a wider audience
- Given that a public auction was usually the preferred method of sale for such items and could be accessed in person, by telephone or over the internet, it was questioned why this wasn't chosen as the preferred option. The PCC confirmed that Brightwells had advised on the best method of sale for AB1, which he had followed and felt that

his integrity was being called into question when had had followed professional advice throughout the process

- In view of the fact that the advert went into the Telegraph on 15 July and then a private sale was agreed on 17 July, it was suggested that the timescale was too short and the plate was sold too quickly. The PCC reminded the Panel that marketing had in fact commenced on 15 June and the sale was agreed on 17 July. He reiterated to the Panel that he was given a marketing plan from Brightwells which he followed and no one was prevented from bidding. There was national and local press coverage and it was untrue to suggest that the plate had only been marketed for 2 days. The PCC believed he had achieved the best value and had accepted the highest offer made
- On 19 July, after the private sale had been agreed in principle, the PCC received an email from Brightwells saying that they had a bidder who intended to start bidding at £300,000 but he reiterated that this was after the sale was agreed
- The PCC confirmed that AB1 was marketed from the day that Brightwells were instructed and that Brightwells stood to gain a significant commission fee if they sold the plate, so it was in their interest to sell it
- The PCC did not believe that his actions compromised Brightwells marketing strategy. The advert referred to the best offer and as page 31 of the Agenda demonstrated, 3 offers were received so the marketing strategy had worked as there was interest in AB1
- In response to the question as to why only one auction company was approached to market AB1, the PCC advised that Brightwells were an internationally renowned company who were able to do the job. The PCC regretted the controversy that sale of AB1 had caused but he was ultimately confident that the right process had been followed in order to get best value
- It was suggested that Brightwells would have regretted the loss of income from not negotiating the sale, but the PCC was confident that all offers made to Brightwells before the private sale had been agreed had been forwarded on to him. He confirmed that he had not received an offer of either £250,000 or £300,000 from Brightwells
- The PCC was questioned as to why he didn't consider any other specialist auction houses eg Bonhams or Sotheby's in deciding which company

to market AB1 with. The PCC confirmed that Brightwells were local with a very good track record of selling similar items and that he believed the marketing plan suggested was acceptable

- The PCC reiterated that he was the accountable person, had confidence in the chosen approach but, as with any process it wasn't perfect. The plate was marketed widely and sufficient opportunity was given to the public to submit bids
- It was confirmed that that the Chief Executive was fully aware of the private bid made by Mr West and that the PCC had taken legal advice before accepting the offer
- The offer of £160,000 included VAT, so the actual income received was £133,333.33. All bids were inclusive of VAT
- Up until the private sale was agreed in principle, the PCC would have accepted other bids
- When the £300,000 offer was made on 19 July, the private sale had already been agreed in principle and this agreement was binding
- A Panel Member suggested that if an offer of £300,000 had been made before the private sale had been agreed in principle, then Brightwells would be taking appropriate action as they would have lost a considerable amount of commission. The PCC confirmed that before agreeing the private sale in principle he had checked with Brightwells that there were no outstanding offers
- It was suggested that it would have been wiser to have let the 3 month marketing process run its full course
- The PCC stated that if the £300,000 bid had been submitted to him before the private sale was agreed in principle, then he wouldn't have agreed the private sale.

The PCC was asked whether he would act in the same way again if the situation arose and confirmed that with the benefit of hindsight he wouldn't have agreed the sale with Mr West and would have spoken to Mr Brookes. He had never met Mr Brookes during the process. He further made the point that there could have been other higher bids and the situation could have still been subject to Scrutiny.

The PCC pointed out that his integrity had been impugned, there had been suggestion that he had broken the law and that there had been a misconduct of public office. The issue had been referred to the IOPC and the West Mercia Police Internal Audit process and he had not

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broken the law, but had sold AB1 within agreed principles.

The PCC stated that advice from the Panel was welcomed.

The Chairman suggested that he was picking up that the Panel had some concerns about the process for the sale of AB1 and that he proposed to send a letter on behalf of the Panel summarising its views. The majority of members supported this suggestion but two members were not in favour of such action. The letter would therefore represent a majority, not a unanimous Panel view.

In summary, as well as the main discussion points from the meeting, the Panel highlighted that:

- The PCC's integrity was not being called into question, the Panel was confident that he had acted as the responsible person and decision maker acting on professional advice and in good faith. The Panel did however consider he needed to be very careful about public perception and putting himself in a position where he could be criticised when dealing with such matters
- given the process chosen for sale, it would have been more open and transparent if the auction had run for the full time period
- with the benefit of hindsight, it may have been better to run an open public auction which would have been more open and transparent
- Policies and procedures relating to the sale of assets should be reviewed and revised regularly.

The Panel adjourned from 12.55pm until 1.30pm

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) gave a presentation regarding the 2018/19 budget proposals, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Plan. (2021-2022).

The Budget headlines were:

- £211m revenue budget
- Sustaining Police Constable (PC) and Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) numbers where possible
- Continued investment in transforming West Mercia Police
- 3.94% Council Tax increase (2p a day for typical

- household)
- £4.7m drawn down from budget reserve in 2018/19

In the context of:

- Recorded Crime being up 10%
- RPI being 4.1% (at December 2017)
- Pay increase double the previously anticipated level for officers and staff
- Emerging threats to our communities
- Further reform of policing

The proposals would be funded by:

- Proposed 3.94% (£7.47) Council Tax increase +£1.6m revenue over existing strategy
- Council tax base increase 17/18 to 18/19 1.66%, (future years 1.5% growth estimate)
- Stable Government grants of £120m +£1.562m over existing strategy
- £4.7m contribution from budget reserve in 2018/19 (compared with £9.7m in 17/18)
- Balanced budget delivered in 2019/20

Councillor Sebastian Bowen, Chairman of the Budget Task Group, which looked at the proposed budget, MTFP and the Policing Plan, introduced his Report on the proposals. He thanked the Commissioner and his staff for the clarity of their written and oral presentation, the other members of the group as well as Mark Sanders, Worcestershire County Council's Senior Finance Officer, for assisting them. Reference was made to the Task Group's Report that had been circulated as part of the Agenda papers.

Subject to the results of the PCC's 2018/19 Budget Consultation which closed on 19 January, the Task Group was supportive of the PCC's financial strategy for the Budget proposals for 2018/ 2019 and the Medium Term Financial Plan through to 2021/2022 in context of the Policing Plan but would wish to be advised of substantial variations to the ambitious Savings Plans.

The Task Group felt the Government's settlement was encouraging and the PCC's reasons given for the proposed Council Tax increase of 4% in 2018/19 were fair. They also welcomed the advance notice that in 2019/2020, a 3% increase would be suggested.

The Task Group looked forward to the delivery of the

improvements to the West Mercia estate particularly the modern police stations at Hereford and Shrewsbury, as well as the continued modernisation of police force and the maintenance of the numbers of PC's and PCSO's. It was felt that adequate reserves should be set aside for new IT Systems.

The Task Group in its Report recommended that the Panel considered:

- (i) whether the Policing Plan supported by an ambitious transformation programme would be deliverable with the resources for the coming year and the expectation of the Medium Term Financial Plan: and
- (ii) in light of the Report provided by the Budget Task Group and taking into account PCC's Budget Consultation results, it would wish to approve the precept recommendation for 2018/19.

In addition, Cllr Bowen suggested that the Panel may also wish to consider:

- (iii) whether the level of reserves going forward were adequate for potential risks; and
- (iv) the need to set aside a reasonable contingency for the budget for delays and uncertainty in respect of the purchase, installation commissioning and operation of SAAB, Athena and other IT services.

During the discussion the following main points were made:

- The PCC confirmed that he was confident of an increasing investment in vulnerable people
- The Budgets for the Community Safety Partnerships (CSP's) were determined by how much they had spent during the first year that John Campion was appointed as PCC and had been maintained at the same level ever since. The Deputy PCC advised that there were some functions that the CSP's had been expected to perform but were unable to do so; the money had therefore been moved with the agreement of the CSP's to a more appropriate area. There was also work underway in respect of a standardised analyst function across the CSP's. The way in which the funding was allocated had also changed and CSP's requested the funding at the time they actually needed it and then it was allocated
- A concern was expressed that direct grant funding

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for domestic abuse was being reduced. The Deputy PCC confirmed that this wasn't the case for West Mercia Police, although some other public sector organisations may be reducing funding. Moving forward, some of the smaller groups applying for funding had been asked to do so through the CSP's who in turn would request the funding from West Mercia Police, this would help ensure that the application for funding fitted with the strategic needs assessment and ensured that it was allocated to relevant projects

- In response to the suggestion that there were insufficient police in the Ludlow area, the PCC advised that in the first instance if the Police were not providing a good service, then contact should be made with the local inspector. He further pointed out, that when over 10,000 calls for service were received each week, it was likely that not everyone would be satisfied with the service received. Allocation of police staff was made according to the needs of the area from various teams
- It was confirmed that to sustain the numbers of PC's and PCO's and fund a 2% pay rise was going to be possible by removing some layers of supervision. Visible policing was a priority.

Following consideration of the PCC's presentation and the recommendations of the Budget Task Group, the Panel unanimously supported the PCC's proposals to increase the precept for 2018/19 as set out in his report by 3.94% for 2018/19, adding £7.47 to the annual Council Tax bill for a typical band D home as set out in the Report.

It was agreed that that this would be confirmed to the PCC in writing.

The Panel was invited to consider the Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report (October-December 2017) and determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny or make any comments.

In presenting the report, the PCC and the Deputy PCC highlighted:

- Perpetrator Programme, where preparatory work was underway to enable the Drive perpetrator programme to be implemented in Worcestershire. Worcestershire had been chosen as the project

location as it had the highest number of cases referred into Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)

- Missing Persons – The number of missing persons had seen a 9% reduction across West Mercia. Whilst there was usually a seasonal reduction in the autumn there had been a marked decrease of 21% in Telford and Wrekin in the last quarter due to a refreshed focus on missing people as part of Operation Vesta
- The PCC had reviewed his monthly Holding To Account (HTA) sessions with the Chief Constable and had revised them align with the Safer West Mercia Plan for 2018 and would hold:
  - Four performance sessions
  - Five thematic sessions
  - Two public sessions
  - One consolidation session.

During the discussion, the following points were made:

- Colour copies of the Performance Summary Report which was normally attached as an appendix (in colour) would in future only be made available on request, but would be referenced by a web link in the covering report. It was confirmed however that the covering report would include the summary page of performance and commentary
- Some feedback was provided by a Panel Member about the Rural and Business Crime Officers, which it was thought was inspirational and positive and would greatly benefit the rural communities
- In the last two months of 2017 HMICFRS published two force-specific inspection reports as part of its rolling PEEL inspection programme:
  - PEEL Efficiency (including leadership) where West Mercia was graded 'good' in the three areas of focus for this year's inspection and received an overall grading of 'good'; the same as last year. There were no recommendations made but there were two areas for improvement.
    - The force should ensure that it had effective systems and processes in place that enable it to understand how efficiently its investigative model supports the transfer of investigations.
    - The force should conduct a leadership skills audit that would allow it to understand leadership capacity and

capability

➤ PEEL Legitimacy (including leadership) where West Mercia was graded 'requires improvement' in the three areas of focus for this year's inspection and received an overall grading of 'requires improvement'; the force was graded 'good' last year. There were no recommendations made but there were eight areas for improvement which were:

- The force should ensure that all relevant officers had received sufficient, suitable training to enable them to use powers of arrest only when necessary.
- The force should improve its process for regularly and frequently scrutinising a broad range of data and information, including from body-worn video, to understand its use of force and improve how its workforce treats people with fairness and respect. It should also evaluate how stop and search activity reflected its priorities, to provide further reassurance to communities that its use of stop and search is fair and effective.
- The force should review the accuracy and timeliness of the information it included on its website about chief officers' pay, rewards and business interests.
- The force should review how it promoted access to the complaints system, including the support it is able to offer people who may need additional assistance and those in communities that have less trust and confidence in the police. It should also improve how it keeps complainants, witnesses and those subject to allegations updated about the progress of investigations.
- The force should ensure that it had effective systems and processes in place that enable it to understand the underlying causes of threats to its workforce's wellbeing, and take action to mitigate them.
- The force should ensure that its supervisors could recognise warning

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Inspectorate of  
Constabulary  
and Fire &  
Rescue  
Services  
(HMICFRS)  
Inspection  
Report - A  
Progress  
Report On the  
Police  
Response to  
Domestic  
Abuse**

signs, intervene early and provide support to officers and staff who may be experiencing problems affecting their wellbeing.

- The force should ensure that it has effective systems, processes and guidance in place to manage individual performance and identify the most talented individuals within its workforce.

The Report was noted.

In November 2017 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published a national progress report on the police response to domestic abuse. The report was a follow up to two previous reports on domestic abuse the first of which was published in 2014 and the second, an initial progress report, was published in 2015.

In 2014 individual force reports were published alongside the national one, however, since that time inspectorate oversight of domestic abuse has been subsumed into the PEEL inspection programme.

The PCC was not required to respond directly to the Home Secretary on the findings from HMICFRS' thematic reports, only on force specific inspection reports. The PCC did however issue a media release in response to the report following its release and had detailed in the Agenda Report his objectives and the services which were currently being commissioned.

- The PCC was commended on this Report
- There was a concern that in certain areas of domestic abuse in England and Wales (page 42 of the Agenda) numbers were increasing. The PCC explained that in some instances there was a rise in the crime but also there was increased reporting and a greater confidence in reporting crime
- Reference was made to the graph (Figure 13) on page 186 of the Agenda which suggested that over 50% of West Mercia victims wouldn't support police action in the case of domestic abuse crimes. The PCC explained that there were a number of factors that would influence this but that it was on his radar, been subject to his HTA in January and that there was an action plan in place to address the issues, which would hopefully see

**249 Work that the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner Engages in Outside of Policing**

the situation show a gradual improvement.

- The point was made that the statistics in Figure 13 were 2016 and therefore dated. The PCC suggested that unfortunately, the HMICFRS Reports usually contained dated statistics
- It was questioned how the national shortage of detectives affected the situation when a domestic abuse crime had been reported in West Mercia. The PCC was confident that there were sufficient detectives in West Mercia but suggested that for a victim reporting a crime it was how the crime was dealt with that was important to them not who was actually investigating it. It wasn't necessarily appropriate for a detective to deal with all of these crimes and in fact many of the crimes could be dealt with by front line operational officers
- It was noted that on average, there were 52 instances of domestic violence before the first report by the victim was made. The PCC not only wanted to improve the police response but also the confidence of victims to report these cases earlier.

The Report was noted.

At the request of the Chairman, the PCC was asked to explain to the Panel about the work that he engaged in outside of Policing including those activities which were no longer carried out and any new activities which had been introduced.

Among other requirements under the terms of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, PCCs must bring together community safety and criminal justice partners, to make sure local priorities are joined up.

This fitted with the responsibility of the PCC to work with partners to arrange for the "efficient transaction of criminal justice policy in the area" and co-operating with local community safety partners and funding crime and disorder reduction strategies.

The Panel received a presentation from the DPCC which covered:

- Victim Services
- Offenders
- Criminal Justice
- Prevention and Diversion

Following the presentation, the following main points

were made:

- In terms of working with prisons, the DPCC had been working with HMP Hewell to arrange family intervention days. There was a well-known statistic that if prisoners could be kept in touch with their families they were 40% less likely to reoffend
- The previous PCC had supported the Inside Products Initiative to develop the skill of prisoners. Although a worthy concept, it proved to be a difficult initiative but skills for prisoners were important. The PCC believed that more needed to be done at regional given the geographical mix of prisoners
- Working with perpetrators could only be done on voluntary basis as it had to be consensual
- The pattern of offending, multi-disciplinary network of mentoring and activity for 13-24 year olds was a massive challenge and the Panel would like further statistics for trends in this area.

The meeting ended at 2.50 pm

Chairman .....