

Minutes of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

County Hall, Worcester

Tuesday, 13 July 2021, 11.00 am

Present:

Cllr Barry Durkin (Chairman), Cllr Rob Adams, Cllr Jeff Anderson, Cllr Sebastian Bowen, Mrs C Clive, Cllr Roger Evans, Cllr Adam Kent, Cllr Nigel Lumby, Cllr Stephen Reynolds, Cllr James Stanley and Cllr Graham Ballinger

Also attended:

John Champion, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner
Andy Champness, Chief Executive, Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
Deputy Chief Constable Pippa Mills, Essex Police
Tracey Onslow
Lizzi Platts, Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
Amy Miles, Office of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner

Paul Kinsella, Public Health Practitioner
Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager
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 4 February 2021 (previously circulated).

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

374 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Councillors Aled Luckman (Worcestershire County Council), Nyear Nazir (Redditch Borough Council), Richard Overton (Shropshire Council) Vivienne Parry (Shropshire Council) and Tom Wells (Malvern District Council).

No declarations of interest were made.

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375 Named Substitutes

Councillor Stephen Reynolds for Richard Overton (Telford and Wrekin Council).

376 Election of Chairman

It was noted that following the local elections in May, Cllr Steve Mackay had stood down as Chairman of the Panel.

Nominations for Chairman were received for Cllrs Aled Luckman and Barry Durkin. On being put to the vote, Cllr Aled Luckman was duly elected as Chairman of the Panel for 3 years until July 2024.

377 Election of Vice-Chairman

There was also a vacancy for Vice-Chairman. Nominations for Vice-Chairman were received for Cllrs Sebastian Bowen and Barry Durkin, on being put to the vote, Cllr Durkin was duly elected as Vice-Chairman for 3 years until July 2024.

Given that apologies had been received from Cllr Luckman, Cllr Durkin took the Chair.

378 Appointment of Co-opted Members

The following elected members were unanimously co-opted on to the Panel: Cllrs Jeff Anderson, Vivienne Parry, Roger Evans (Shropshire), Cllr Richard Overton (Telford and Wrekin) and Cllr Barry Durkin (Herefordshire).

Additionally, one of the two Independent Lay Members on the Panel, Aled Luckman had become an elected member of Worcestershire County Council and therefore couldn't hold the position of lay independent co-opted member.

The Agreement for Panel Arrangements required the Panel to ensure that there were two serving Lay Members and accordingly, the Panel agreed the process for recruitment as detailed in the agenda report that the recruitment and selection of a new Lay Member would be carried out by a small Appointments Panel of 3 panel members, supported by the support officers to the Panel.

Members were asked to email the Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager if they were interested in being a Member of the Appointments Panel.

Cllrs Durkin, Bowen and Adams expressed an interest in being a Member of the Appointment Panel at the meeting. The membership would be confirmed in due course.

379 Chairman's Welcome to Panel Members and Police and Crime Commissioner

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and congratulated John Campion on his appointment as the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

Thanks were noted for the previous Panel Chairman, Councillor Steve Mackay for his long and good service to the Panel. It was agreed that a letter of thanks would be sent to Cllr Mackay on behalf of the Panel.

The PCC was invited to address the Panel and in doing so explained that he would continue to focus on victims and survivors, building a more secure West Mercia, continuing to reform the service and providing reassurance to the communities he served.

380 Public Participation

None.

381 Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

382 Confirmation Hearing Chief Constable

It was noted that the current Chief Constable, Anthony Bangham had notified the PCC of his decision to retire from his current position in March 2021 and a recruitment exercise had been undertaken in response. On 30 June, the Panel was advised that following a thorough, open and competitive two-day process involving four candidates, current Essex Deputy Chief Constable Pippa Mills had been chosen as the preferred candidate to be the next West Mercia Chief Constable.

Schedule 8 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act stated that within three weeks of receipt of notification of the proposed appointment by the PCC of a Chief Constable, the Panel:

- a) must undertake a review of the proposed appointment in accordance with the requirements set out in Schedule 8 of the Act
- b) must hold a public confirmation meeting
- c) must make a report to and make recommendations to the PCC in relation to the appointment of a Chief Constable by the PCC.
- d) may exercise its right of veto in respect of the appointment in accordance with the Act and Regulations made under it.

The Act also stated that the PCC must notify the Panel of the preferred candidate for appointment as Chief Constable and provide it with the following information:

- The name of the person whom the PCC is proposing to appoint;
- The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate and how the candidate satisfied these criteria and
- The terms and conditions under which the candidate was to be appointed.

The Agenda report provided the Panel with the Independent Report on the recruitment, application and interview process (Appendix A), the job profile and specification which set out the criteria used for assessment proposed terms and conditions (Appendix B).

The Chairman invited John Campion, PCC to address the Panel.

The PCC drew the Panels attention to the report which detailed the recruitment process and pointed out that pages 21 and 22 of the agenda papers should be disregarded. He reiterated that the role of the Panel was to consider the PCC's proposed appointment of a Chief Constable and that the process had been overseen by an Independent Person.

Four applicants were shortlisted and all were assessed and following the process, the PCC offered DCC Pippa Mills (currently serving with Essex) the position of preferred candidate for the post of Chief Constable of West Mercia Police.

Pippa had been appointed as DCC of Essex Police in March 2019 and had overseen the growth of the force through the national Police Uplift Programme. Prior to this Pippa was the Essex Police Assistant Chief Constable overseeing Criminal Justice, Operational Policing and Contact Management. She transferred to Essex in May 2017 having begun her career in the Metropolitan Police Service which she joined in 1996.

The PCC commended Pippa Mills as the preferred candidate to the Panel and advised if successful she would hopefully be able to take up the role at the end September/early October.

The Chairman invited DCC Pippa Mills to address the Panel and in doing so she highlighted that she believed that West Mercia was a good force but aspired to make it a great force. She had been in policing for 20 years and had worked in some very challenging boroughs. She believed that there were synergies between West Mercia and Essex for example Essex was 70% rural but bordered Metropolitan areas.

The Chairman invited questions from the Panel, during which the following points were discussed:

- In response to a question about the diversity of the county areas within West Mercia and the other adjoining Police Force areas eg West Midlands Police. Pippa explained that in terms of cross border criminals, there were regional arrangements and it was very important to share intelligence and work together, she believed that increasing the use of

technology was the way forward. A blended approach in terms of the use of technology and partnership working was key

- In terms of tackling drugs in local areas, the use of the newly introduced Police Charter would be key
- In response to a Members request for an example of a success/ challenge, Pippa advised that she was proud to say that in Essex, public confidence was a four-year high. She then went on to give an example of the presidential visit in 2018, which although an element of this had not met the standards she thought appropriate, had reinforced her view that it was important to learn from mistakes. The lessons learned had been shared and applied to a subsequent high-profile event
- The values of the Safer West Mercia Plan resonated with Pippa and she was keen to apply a clear vision to the Plan and build on the work of the previous CC, Anthony Bangham
- A Member highlighted that West Mercia was a very varied area in terms of political leadership and questioned how Pippa would manage the political diversity. Pippa explained that Essex had complexities, but she believed that the Police Charter set things out clearly and would ensure that local arrangements worked
- A Member highlighted the importance of the communities of West Mercia being able to see a visible police presence. Pippa explained that it was very important for communities to know who their local officer was but more importantly for the neighbourhood policing teams to tell communities what they were doing
- In terms of working within the financial envelope, Pippa was very keen on effectiveness and efficiency
- With regard to managing her relationship with the PCC, Pippa believed that the Policing Protocol 2011 was very clear in defining the priorities, as well as both having the same motivations ie public safety and public service
- A Member suggested that it was important moving forward that there was consistency in approach to neighbourhood policing and community involvement was key in helping the Police build up intelligence, an approach that Pippa was very supportive of
- The point was also made that working with local elected members was also important in building information about communities
- Pippa advised the Panel that work would also be undertaken to listen to the hard-to-reach groups who were often reluctant to come forward, as well as the more structured community groups.

The Chairman thanked Pippa for answering the Panel's questions and advised that the Panel would provide report to the PCC with its recommendation which would be published on the website and shared with the other West Mercia Authorities.

The Panel made its decision at the end of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Section 100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting in relation to the business specified as it was likely that if members of the public

were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

The Panel agreed that while there may have been a public interest in disclosing this information, namely openness in the deliberations of the Panel in determining its recommendation regarding the proposed appointment, it was felt that, on balance, this was outweighed by other factors in favour of maintaining the exemption, namely enabling a full discussion regarding the merits of the proposed appointment.

RESOLVED: THAT Pippa Mills was confirmed as the Chief Constable of West Mercia Police Service without qualification.

The Panel was impressed by DCC Pippa Mills' understanding of the complexity of policing West Mercia, her strong professional knowledge and understanding of the independence of the Chief Constable role.

383 Confirmation Hearing Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner

The Panel was asked to consider the PCC's proposed appointment of a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC). In doing so, the Panel needed to satisfy itself that the preferred candidate selected by the PCC had the competence to undertake the role.

The Panel was provided with a report detailing the overview of the process that was undertaken to select the preferred candidate, and of the reasons for Tracey Onslow's nomination as the proposed DPCC.

By virtue of s18 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the Act) the PCC for West Mercia may appoint a person to be the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Mercia area. Under the Act the PCC must notify the PCP of the preferred candidate for appointment as DPCC. Schedule 1 of the Act states that the PCC must provide the following information:

- a) The name of the person whom the PCC is proposing to appoint;
- b) The criteria used to assess the suitability of the candidate and how the candidate satisfies these criteria; and
- c) The terms and conditions under which the candidate is to be appointed.

The Panel was provided with the:

- i) Relevant background and context
- ii) application and interview process;
- iii) Job profile and person specification, which set out the criteria used for assessment;
- iv) interview questions used in those assessments; and
- v) Proposed terms and conditions

The Chairman invited the PCC to address the Panel.

The PCC referred the Panel to the statutory information provided in the Agenda and reminded the Panel that Tracey Onslow had supported him as Deputy PCC for just under 5 years, sharing direct work and also had a portfolio of responsibility on his behalf.

The PCC was confident that Tracey's work had contributed to maximising the benefit to the community for services which were commissioned and in holding the force to account to account.

The PCC reminded the Panel that in 2016 a full recruitment process was undertaken in respect of the Deputy PCC role, in which the Panel was engaged throughout. The PCC confirmed to the Panel that Tracey as his Deputy had followed best practice and that he was confident that she still met the requirements. He reassured that Panel that he had followed the good practice from across England and Wales via both the Association of Police and Crime Chief Executives and the Association of PCCs, the PCC undertook a process to assess whether Tracey remained suitable for the role and was confident that this was the case. It was also important to have the continuity especially in light of the pandemic.

The Chairman invited Tracey Onslow to address the Panel.

Tracey explained that 5 years ago when she first became DPCC, she had welcomed the opportunity and it was an honour, Tracey had always lived in West Mercia and had enjoyed getting out and about in the West Mercia area. She was given the opportunity to get involved in commissioning of services for Victims and had visited every service to reassure herself that funding allocations were spent in the most appropriate way. Tracey had also added some scrutiny to the allocation of the grant funding, whereby local groups were required to apply for funding through the Community Safety Partnerships as well as introducing Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) to ensure value for money and assurance.

In the last 5 years a lot of work had centred around reforming services, including bringing IT up to date, introducing online holding to account sessions with the CC, enabling increased public involvement and community engagement. Tracey was very proud that the Community Charter was being introduced providing visibility for the public. She also highlighted that bringing the Estates Service back in-house from Place Partnership Limited would provide a saving of around £300k.

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

- If confirmed as DPCC, Tracey suggested that the top areas for focus for the next few years would be drugs, early intervention and community issues eg speeding and anti-social behaviour, criminal justice and backlogs in courts, although there were many more

- Following a question about what support was available for domestic abuse resulting from Covid-19, Tracey explained that £1m had been allocated to for services for victims of domestic abuse. It was also important to provide early help (to help prevent the crime in the first place, the Drive Programme (perpetrator programme) had been very successful (although expensive) and also victims services
- Acknowledging that Public confidence was really important to build, Tracey believed that the additional 400 police officers would contribute to this but, it was important to understand what was happening in areas as well such as education via schools. Cyber-crime and Child Sexual Exploitation was another area requiring greater understanding
- In response to a question about whether all areas of West Mercia had similar problems, Tracey advised that this was not necessarily the case but, it was important to get early intervention to alter behaviours before becoming a crime. It was important to ensure that the services provided were right for the community, but there was always more work to do
- It was suggested that online reporting was very useful tool for raising awareness of the lower levels of crime and councillors had a role in encouraging and reassuring communities that people would stay safe if they reported crime.

On putting it to the vote, Tracey Onslow was unanimously confirmed as Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia for a period of 3 years.

The meeting was adjourned from 12.50-1.00pm.

384 Draft Annual Report of the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia- 2021/22

Deferred to the next meeting.

385 Police & Crime Plan Activity and Performance Monitoring Report

Deferred to the next meeting.

386 Work Programme

Deferred to the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 1.15 pm

Chairman