

# Report to Council

**29 October 2024**

<b>Subject:</b>	West Midlands Police and Crime Panel Update – October 2024
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## **1 Recommendations**

- 1.1 That the information contained in the report providing an update on West Midlands Police and Crime Panel activities since March 2024 be noted.

## **2 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 2.1 Bi-annual reports on the activities of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel are presented to Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council for consideration. This report reflects on the work of the Panel between March and October 2024.
- 2.2 Sandwell is represented on the Panel by Councillor Jackie Taylor and Councillor Bill Gavan MBE. Councillor Maria Crompton is appointed as named substitute member.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Council Plan?

Growing Up in Sandwell	The involvement of Council representatives in the decision-making process of joint authorities will encourage better understanding of local and wider needs and viewpoints.
Living in Sandwell	
Thriving Economy in Sandwell	
Healthy in Sandwell	
One Council One Team	

## 4 Context and Key Issues

### Role of the Police and Crime Panel

- 4.1 The Panel is a joint scrutiny body of the West Midland authorities with a dual role to ‘support and challenge’ the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
- 4.2 The Panel acts as a critical friend to the PCC on behalf of West Midlands residents and must perform the following statutory functions:
- Review and comment on the PCC’s draft Police and Crime Plan.
  - Review the PCC's Annual Reports.
  - Scrutinise decisions and actions of the PCC.
  - Review (with the power to veto) the PCC's proposed Council Tax precept.
  - Hold confirmation hearings before the PCC makes certain senior appointments (Chief Constable, Deputy PCC, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer), with the power to veto the Chief Constable appointment.
  - Handle non-criminal complaints about the conduct of the PCC and Deputy PCC, referring serious complaints to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (task delegated to the Birmingham Monitoring Officer).
  - Appoint an acting PCC if required.
  - Suspend the PCC if charged.
- 4.3 The Panel’s work programme consists of statutory tasks (listed above) and wider exploratory work to build knowledge and insight into the

strategic policing, community safety and criminal justice landscape to fulfil its role to hold the PCC to account.

- 4.4 The Panel must maintain a strategic focus when scrutinising the work of the PCC, rather than scrutinising operational detail.

### **Panel Membership**

- 4.5 The Panel consists of 12 councillors appointed annually representing the 7 West Midland districts. Membership must reflect the political balance of the region. Named substitutes are appointed for each councillor member. Three independent members also serve on the Panel.
- 4.6 Sandwell is represented on the Panel by Councillor Jackie Taylor and Councillor Bill Gavan MBE. Councillor Maria Crompton is appointed as named substitute member.
- 4.7 The Panel elected Councillor Jasbir Jaspal (City of Wolverhampton) as Chair and Kristina Murphy (Independent Co-opted Member) as Vice Chair for the 2024/2025 Municipal Year.

### **Meetings and agenda papers**

- 4.8 The Panel meets approximately six times a year at venues across the region. Meeting papers, meeting dates, published reports, together with more information about the Panel can be found on the Panel's website: [www.westmidlandspcp.org.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.org.uk) Meetings are livestreamed for the public. Links to web streams are published on our website alongside the meeting papers.

### **Panel Resources and Officer Support**

- 4.9 The Panel operates within the limits of the Home Office Grant. The Panel agreed in 2012 that councillor members would not use this to draw special responsibility allowances, but travel and carer expenses can be claimed.
- 4.10 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council's Chief Executive provides lead officer support. Birmingham City Council acts as secretariat and provides legal support.

## **Key activities by the Police and Crime Panel (March 2024- October 2024)**

- 4.11 **In March 2024** the Panel considered the PCC's 'End of Term Report' that highlighted several key milestones that had been achieved during his 2021-24 term of office. The Panel obtained reassurances that the outcomes of key criminal justice initiatives commissioned by the PCC had received positive academic evaluations. Annual updates from the panel lead officer monitoring the Panel budget and expenditure, and the administration of PCC complaints were also considered.
- 4.12 **In May 2024** new members were appointed to the Panel and all members and named substitute members were invited to participate in an online induction. The session covered the role and responsibilities of the Panel and a work programming session.
- 4.13 **On 22 July 2024** - The Panel held its AGM and considered reports by the PCC on recent activities performance monitoring. Members provided constructive challenge on the development of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan and public consultation associated with this.
- 4.14 The Panel also held a confirmation hearing for the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner post. Members put questions to the Commissioner's proposed candidate, Mr Wasim Ali, to assess his suitability and experience for the position. The Panel recommended the PCC proceed with the appointment.
- 4.15 **On 7 October 2024** – The Panel considered a second update report on the development of the PCC Police and Crime Plan. Members sought reassurances on the work of the commissioner's office to evaluate the responses to the call for evidence from partnership organisations and experts, as well as comments gathered from public consultation events. The Panel will formally review the draft plan in January.

The Chief Constable also addressed the meeting reporting back on the work to respond to HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) concerns that led to it placing the West Midlands Police into Engage Status of enhanced monitoring in December 2023. The Panel commended the PCC and Chief Constable for the rapid improvement that had led to the Inspectorate removing the force from Engage Status in September.

The Panel also examined the PCC’s Statement of Accounts to build knowledge and insight of the financial position ahead of the Panel’s review of the PCC’s budget and proposed precept in February.

- 4.15 **Use of Information Subgroup** – The Panel has formed a subgroup to undertake a focussed piece of work to draw conclusions on the type of information it needs to assess the performance of the PCC. The subgroup will meet in October to examine the performance metrics the PCC intends to use in his new Police and Crime Plan and provide comment.

### **Forward Plan**

- 4.16 The Panel has scheduled meetings in, December, January, February and March. Members will continue to shape its work programme to enable it to assess the impact, actions and decisions of the PCC.
- 4.17 All Panel members are encouraged to develop dialogue with their local scrutiny committees on policing, community safety and criminal justice to feed into the panel work programming process.

## **5 Alternative Options**

- 5.1 Not Applicable

## **6. Implications**

<b>Resources:</b>	There are no direct financial implications associated with this update report. The administration costs of the Panel are met by a ringfenced Home Office grant. The Panel is administered by Birmingham City Council the appointed Host Authority.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	A Police and Crime Panel must be maintained to carry out scrutiny functions and responsibilities as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.  The Panel membership must represent all the districts and reflect the political composition of the region.
<b>Risk:</b>	There are no identified risks associated with the recommendation in this report.

	<p>Under the Home Office Grant Agreement, the West Midlands must maintain a panel to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, meeting in public and making necessary reports on PCCs' decisions and actions. To mitigate risk, annual inductions are provided to members and the Panel sets an annual programme of public meetings and maintains a work programme that provides for scrutiny and challenge of the PCC.</p>
<p><b>Equality:</b></p>	<p>This Police and Crime Panel is a joint committee of West Midlands Local Authorities. Therefore, it has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.</li> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</li> <li>• Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</li> </ul> <p>The Panel considers these duties during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. Including how policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; whether impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within the West Midlands; and whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.</p>
<p><b>Health and Wellbeing:</b></p>	<p>The Police and Crime Panel scrutinises and challenges the decisions and activities of the PCC in fulfilling the objectives of the West Midlands police and crime plan. Policing, community safety and criminal justice have implications for the wellbeing of residents.</p>

<b>Social Value:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Climate Change:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	Not applicable

## 7. Appendices

None

## 8. Background Papers

[WMPCP agenda and minutes published on www.westmidlandspcp.org.uk](http://www.westmidlandspcp.org.uk)

[Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#)