

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS POLICE AND CRIME
PANEL HELD ON 9 DECEMBER 2024 AT 14:00 HOURS –, COMMITTEE ROOM 5,
CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON CIVIC CENTRE, ST PETER’S SQUARE,
WOLVERHAMPTON, WV1 1SH.**

PRESENT: -

Members

Cllr Jasbir Jaspal (City of Wolverhampton Council – Chair)

Kristina Murphy (Independent Panel Member – Vice Chair)

Cllr Rashad Mahmood (Birmingham City Council)

Cllr Gareth Moore (Birmingham City Council)

Cllr Izzy Knowles (Birmingham City Council)

Cllr Abdul S Khan (Coventry City Council)

Cllr Pervez Akhtar (Coventry City Council)

Cllr Mushtaq Hussain (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council)

Cllr Ed Lawrence (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council)

Cllr Jackie Taylor (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council)

Cllr Bill Gavan MBE (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council)

Cllr Alan Feeney (Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council)

Cllr Waheed Rasab (Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council)

Adele Brown (Independent Panel Member)

ALSO PRESENT: -

Simon Foster – Police and Crime Commissioner

Mr Craig Guildford – Chief Constable Candidate

Alethea Fuller – Deputy Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime
Commissioner

Jane Heppel – Chief Finance Officer, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Police

Jonathan Jardine – Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

Tom Senior – Lead Officer (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council)

Sarah Fradgley – Overview & Scrutiny Manager (Birmingham City Council)

Sam Yarnall – Interim Scrutiny Officer (Birmingham City Council)

836 NOTICE OF RECORDING

The Chair notified Members that due to unforeseen circumstances the meeting was not livestreamed.

837 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies given at the meeting.

838 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Non-pecuniary interests were declared by Cllr G Moore, as a Trustee of the Birmingham LGBT, and Cllr I Knowles, being in receipt of a police Pension.

839 POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEMBERSHIP 2024/2025 AND INDEPENDENT PANEL MEMBER RECRUITMENT

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager explained to the Panel that there had been recent changes to the Panel in terms of membership. Cllr Hussain had been appointed by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council for the remainder of the Municipal Year. Independent Panel Member, Derek French, had resigned from post requiring the establishment of a recruitment panel. Cllr Jasbir Jaspal (Chair), Cllr Gareth Moore, Cllr Izzy Knowles, and Adele Brown (Independent Member) volunteered to form the selection panel.

RESOLVED

That :

- a) **The appointment of Councillor Mushtaq Hussain (Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council) for the remainder of the 2024/2025 Municipal Year, be noted;**
- b) **The resignation of Derek French Independent Member, be noted;**
- c) **The Panel proceed with the recruitment of an Independent Panel Member;**
- d) **The proposed recruitment timetable and process be approved;**
and
- e) **Councillor Jasbir Jaspal (Chair), Councillor Gareth Moore, Councillor Izzy Knowles and Adele Brown (Independent Member) be appointed to the selection panel to shortlist and interview candidates.**

840 MINUTES

RESOLVED: -

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2024 be confirmed as correct and signed by the Chair.

841 ACTION TRACKER

The Chair informed Members that there had been an update on the action tracker under minute items 842, 827 vi and 836.

RESOLVED: -

That the actions detailed in the action tracker were noted.

842 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair informed Members that there were no public questions presented prior to the meeting to be heard. Members discussed what would be the best approach to encourage the public to ask questions and it was agreed that Members would speak to their constituents to encourage public engagement.

During this item a member of the public presented the Chair with information in relation to the Confirmation Hearing of the Chief Constable. Members discussed how to deal with the information given. The Lead Officer reviewed the information briefly and advised Members that due to the nature of the information that it was to be given to the Police and Crime Commissioner to review as it pertained to a Police employment matter. Members agreed with the advice that the documentation be passed onto the Police and Crime Commissioner as the appropriate body to respond.

843 USE OF INFORMATION SUB-GROUP

The Chair of the Information Subgroup provided the update that summarised the work undertaken to examine the performance information proposed for the new Police and Crime Plan. The subgroup had made a number of recommendations including clarity on baselines and the terminology to be used. It was hoped this would help the Panel understand the performance information presented at panel meetings to scrutinise the work of the Commissioner. Members had no further debate on this item and agreed with the recommendations.

RESOLVED: -

That:

the work of the subgroup to date and the next steps identified for future activity, be noted; and the comments developed by the Use of Information Subgroup in relation to the draft Police and Crime Plan key performance indicators be endorsed.

844 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES AND RECENT KEY DECISIONS

The Police and Crime Commissioner provided an update on the recent activities, initiatives and key decisions that had been made since his re-election. The Commissioner highlighted that the recent activity and decisions by him and his Office had impacted the Police and Crime Plan and that the draft would be presented to the Panel in the New Year. The update included:

- Tackling street racing;
- Supporting young people to fulfil their potential;
- Continual work on the Knife Robbery Task Force, that was convened by the Home Secretary as part of the Government's Safer Streets Campaign;
- The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, this promoted further funding to the Police Force to address the 800 fewer police officers there were in contrast to the numbers of Officers in 2010; and
- Recent work on White Ribbon Day to promote the work that West Midlands Police and the Commissioner were conducting to support women and child that were subject to domestic abuse.

During the update, Members was informed that on the 3rd October 2024 that the Commissioner met with partners as part of a pilot to support community policing within the region. This pilot would support the priorities set in the Commissioner last Police and Crime Plan that explored the support for women in the criminal justice system as well as supporting those that had experienced domestic abuse. The Commissioner also summarised that from July 2023 to June 2024 there had been reduction of violence by 9% and that there had been a further reduction in knife crime.

Members asked the following of the Commissioner in response to his update:

- Members discussed the perception of residents that crime was not reducing The Commissioner explained that the statistics were quoted from the Office of National Statistics and the National Crime Survey for England and Wales and related to police recorded crime. Members requested a breakdown of the figures across the region to monitor the crime rate reduction. The Commissioner explained that the statistics breaks it down across the cities as well as the types of crimes that were being committed. It was explained that areas such as Walsall were outliers for the number of criminal offences that were being committed, particularly, with youth violence. It was explained that the statistics illustrated that whilst the West Midlands decreased by 10% in the number of criminal acts, the nation had increased by 10%. Further information was said to be included in the Commissioners Accountability report that was presented to his Governance Board in November 2024 and urged concerned councillors to contact him.

- Members requested a regular update on road safety to monitor the progress made under the Road Safety Action Plan. The Commissioner agreed to report back to the Panel in his capacity as Chair of the Strategic Group it was prefaced that this was a joint work with the Combined Authority.
- Members discussed the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee recently announced by the Government and The Commissioner agreed to share the local numbers once finalised by the Government.
- Members discussed recent events in the region regarding road safety and street racing, which led to a fatality in Coventry earlier in the year. Members and the Commissioner discussed that the recent tragic events led to further speed cameras and speed limits to be enforced and it was an opportunity for further collaborative working to address the concerns across the West Midlands.
- Members and the Commissioner discussed some of the initiatives that had been established to support public trust with the force, this included discussion on Operation SNAP for road crimes. It was highlighted that the operation mentioned had seen 14,000 cases to date with it being projected to 16,000 cases by years end in identifying and tackling road safety offences.
- Members discussed the recent site visit to the C3 Contact Centre and the recent update to Neighbourhood Policing. It was discussed that the current plan for Neighbourhood Policing was not aligned with current ward boundaries and if this would be considered in the future. The Commissioner urged the Panel to write to himself outlining the concerns to be considered as part of an operational manner of West Midlands Police.
- Members discussed the recent Government Policy surrounding releasing offenders with lesser offences earlier from their sentences and discussed whether there were statistics on the numbers that had re-offended; at the time of the meeting there were no statistics to be presented.

Following the debate, Members agreed the recommendations.

RESOLVED –

That the update prepared by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the recent key decisions be noted; and that there would be a further update on road safety.

The Chief Finance Officer provided an update on the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Forecast Outturn Position of the West Midlands Police and Police and Crime Commissioner's Office. The update provided insight into the finance report that was presented to the October 2024 Governance and Accountability Board. The Chief Finance Officer will give further details of the financial situation in January as well as the developments noted as part of the 2025/26 Medium-Term Financial Plan. The Chief Finance Officer updated the Panel on the 2025/26 budget considerations as detailed within the report. It detailed a savings requirement of £10 million, primarily from staff and operational efficiencies. It was highlighted that underspends detailed within the report would help with supporting the savings needed for future years. Members heard information in relation to the Capital financing and repayment of loans to support the organisation. As part of the update Members of the Panel heard about the future investments being explored as part of the 2025/26 budget proposals. This included consideration of developments of AI in aiding the directing of 999 calls to the appropriate operators.

Following the update, Members raised the following points:

- Members discussed the impact on the police force and the commissioner's office of the in year cost savings and it was explained by the Chief Finance Officer that the assumptions outlined in the report had factored in the impact of any of these which would be ongoing, and it was to be hoped that the provisional Government settlement, which was still to be announced, would help with the finances of the force.
- Members asked what the position was financially at year end and it was illustrated that the budget would be balanced.
- Members and Officers discussed the impact of electric vehicle fleets, and it was explained that there were still unknowns with electric vehicles but the Commissioner was exploring the options regarding decarbonisation methods.
- Members asked a point of clarity on what would happen if a budget was not balanced. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the process was the same of that for a local authority in which a section 114 notice would be issued.

RESOLVED –

That the contents of the report, be noted.

846 PANEL WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager provided an update to Members. The next meeting was scheduled for the 20 January 2025 and the draft Police and Crime Plan was scheduled for that meeting. The meeting following that in February 2025 was scheduled to conduct a statutory function of the panel to

look at the Police and Crime Precept. Members had no further comments on the work programme.

RESOLVED

That the report and work programme, be noted.

847 NEXT MEETING DATE

The Chair informed Members that the next meeting was scheduled for the 20 January 2025 at 2pm to take place at Sandwell Council Chamber. Members were informed that public questions could be raised 4 clear working days before the meeting.

848 URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair updated the Panel on the ongoing concern with a lack of financial advice, previously provided by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, following the notification that this arrangement might not be continuing. It was agreed that the Chair of the Panel would write to the MET Leaders Group to seek a resolution. It was noted that financial advice was useful for the Panel to support its scrutiny of the Police Precept proposals. .

849 CONFIRMATION HEARING – CHIEF CONSTABLE

The Chair informed Members of the procedure for the Confirmation Hearing of the Chief Constable. This included a summary of the process by the Lead Officer and then for the Commissioner to outline the report as to their recommendations. Following that the Panel had the opportunity to ask the applicant, Mr Guildford, questions and then for a right of reply from the applicant.

The Lead Officer summarised the powers that the Panel had in relation to the appointment. It was explained that the Panel had powers of veto, requiring a 2/3-member majority vote , or it could endorse the recommendation of the Commissioner, or present recommendations for the Commissioner to consider.

The Commissioner presented the ground for his recommendation to reappoint Mr Guildford to the post of Chief Constable stating that he considered it to be in the best interests of West Midlands Police to retain the services of a proven leader with experience, integrity and professionalism, who was committed to delivering an effective and efficient policing service to the people and communities of the West Midlands. The Commissioner summarised Mr Guildford's service to date and the recruitment process Mr Guildford had been subjected to on appointment in 2022. The Commissioner clarified that as this would be re-appointment for a further term a job advert and open interview process was not required. It was reiterated that the retire

and rehire process was in-line with National Policy and legal guidance.. Members were reminded that they were notified of the process on the 11 November 2024 via a letter which outlined Mr Guildford's retirement as well as the process for a need of a Confirmation Hearing to rehire Mr Guildford.

Following the updates from the Commissioner and the Lead Officer, Members of the Panel put the following questions to Mr Guildford

What work had been done and would need to be done to address discrimination and misogyny within the Police force?

Mr Guildford responded that he was fully committed to addressing this. the goal would be to work with the force to look at the issues that was facilitating this. Following that, there would be work to examine the regulations and code of ethics that were in place within the force. Dismissals were made when necessary. Members were informed of the diversity representation within the force. It was stated that there was a 50/50 split between male and female officers and staff and there were approximately 17% officers from a non-white background. Promotions within the force were made as fair as possible. During the applicant's tenure it was said that additional training had been introduced specifically aimed at tackling discrimination and misogyny with high profile advocates supporting the development of the training.

With the new draft Police and Crime plan from the Commissioner, what involvement did you have and what do you foresee for the future of the region?

Mr Guildford responded that the priorities to the Plan and the force had changed in the last two years since his first term in office. The recent announcement by the newly elected Government had brought further changes to be considered In terms of future development, it was explained that there was work to continue to increase numbers of staff and police officers and he was committed to utilising the full range of employment routes into the force and engage communities This was illustrated with the Applicant explaining the degree apprenticeship scheme within the forensics unit to help foster young people into the force. There was further discussion and work discussed on addressing smaller crimes such as knife crime.

Members of the public had expressed, previously, that there was distrust with the police force. How would you address the lack of public confidence, and would Neighbourhood Policing have a role to address this?

Mr Guildford outlined his rationale for remodelling neighbourhood policing and his focus on the force being 'big enough to cope, small enough to care' Despite being lighter on police officer numbers in comparison to 2010, it was highlighted that local people, and their safety were the priority. This was highlighted with discussion on inter-partner collaboration with stakeholders

such as local authorities with examples being quoted such as the work on promoting road safety and Operation Snap.

What would you say would be the ongoing challenges for the Police Force?

Mr Guildford responded that the ongoing financial concerns that had been noted nationally would be a continued concern to support. Another concern to be addressed was the age of the work force and there was work to address this with a peer mentor scheme to support newer officers to get experience. He referred to the recent challenges to address the HMICFRS Notice of Concern and spoke of his commitment to support front line officers carrying out a difficult job.

What would you say would be key priorities amongst local communities and how would you go about working with them?

Mr Guildford discussed the importance of working with local people and individuals to learn what was of concern for local people. There would also be work with the Police and Crime Commissioner as part of the Police and Crime Plan to address the needs of local people. Methods of data collection that had been used previously such as surveys were discussed as further methods to support the learning and development of local needs.

The economic situation experienced by all public sector organisations has led to a greater emphasis on joint working and shared services. What experience would you bring to the role which would enable you to work with partners in an effective manner at a time of tightening resources?

Mr Guildford explained he would be drawing upon his previous 30 years of service, including Chief Constable of two police forces, to fulfil the role. This would include working with partners and stakeholders as well as using the experience to identify further development for the Police Force.

How do you see the role of the Police and Crime Panel and how would you engage with them?

Mr Guildford recognised the role of the Panel was to hold the Police and Crime Commissioner to account. He stated that he would be happy to continue working with the Panel and would be able to share operational information at the invite of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

How would you support upcoming Officers to progress into roles of seniority such as prospective future candidates for the Chief Constable role?

Mr Guildford explained he was an Assessor for the Strategic Command Course and also a national mentor for senior roles within the Police force, providing guidance and advice to other prospective senior officers. He saw his

role was to nurture mentees rather than force individuals into roles by ensuring that they had the support to face high stress/intensity roles.

Recent years saw a decrease in homophobic and Islamophobic acts being committed, were these types of criminal acts still being monitored and dealt with?

Mr Guildford confirmed that these were still criminal offences that were being monitored.

When elements of the force are reviewed, such as practices and estates, and it is identified a need for new training or further development; how is this managed?

Mr Guildford explained that in terms of reviewing and changing locations of offices and departments, the key element was that the right people were involved at early stages. He believed that for times of review and change the Chief Constable would need the humility to understand the need for change and accept if there were any parts of the force that had not been reaching its full potential.

Following the questions and answer section of the Confirmation Hearing, the Chair invited the Applicant, Mr Guildford to make any closing remarks. Mr Guildford expressed a continued need to serve the people of the West Midlands and to improve the force to ensure that the public were safe.

850 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair stated that it was recommended that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during this item of business under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds:

- i. it was likely to disclose exempt information listed in Paragraphs 1, and 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to any individual or information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person; and
- ii. the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: -

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting.

(At 4.28 pm the Police and Crime Commissioner, proposed candidate for Chief Constable, and Officers from the OPCC left the meeting and the public meeting was closed).

Cllr A Feeney left at 4.28pm.

**851 PUBLIC MINUTES OF CLOSED SESSION: PANEL DELIBERATIONS ON
CONFIRMATION HEARING – CHIEF CONSTABLE**

The Panel Members discussed the proposed candidate and the comments that was raised during the question-and-answer portion of the hearing as well as subsequent debate in private. It was agreed by majority that the recommendation outlined within the report would be agreed.

RESOLVED: -

That the Panel:

- i. Noted the confirmation hearing process set out in this report;**
- ii. That the confirmation hearing for the post of Chief Constable was heard;**
- iii. The information provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the proposed appointment, and the preferred candidate during this confirmation hearing was considered; and**
- iv. That a report incorporating the Police and Crime Panel's recommendation to appoint Mr Guildford as Chief Constable be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner.**

Meeting Closed: 17.03 hours.

CHAIR