

**AT THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS
POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD AT THE CIVIC
SUITE, SOLIHULL ON MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER
2013 AT 1400 HOURS**

PRESENT:-

Birmingham

Councillor G Moore
Councillor Jess Phillips
Councillor Paula Smith

Dudley

Councillor D Tyler

Sandwell

Councillor D Cooper (Chair)
Councillor D Hosell

Solihull

Councillor D Jamieson
Councillor K Meeson

Walsall

Councillor M Bird

Wolverhampton

Councillor E Mattu

Co-opted Independent Members

Mr L Walker

ALSO PRESENT:-

Bob Jones, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner
Yvonne Mosquito, Deputy West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner
Jacky Courtney, Chief Executive, West Midlands Office for Policing and Crime

APOLOGIES

65 Apologies were submitted on behalf of the following: -

Councillor Deirdre Alden - Birmingham
Councillor Safeena Arshad – Dudley
Councillor S Bains - Coventry
Councillor Paulette Hamilton – Birmingham
Councillor D Hemingsley - Dudley
Councillor Ann Lucas – Coventry
Mr N Drew

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 66 Councillor Jess Phillips declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Manager, Victim Services, Sandwell Women's Aid.
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MINUTES

- 67 Further to Minute No. 59 (2) - Panel Question Time with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Bob Jones, Police and Crime Commissioner, confirmed that the local authorities in Birmingham and Solihull had now agreed on a more ambitious remote digital camera pilot for traffic policing, involving 15-17 cameras, and the launch of the initiative had therefore been postponed.

The Minutes of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 30 September 2013, having been previously circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIONS/OUTSTANDING MINUTES

The following schedule of Actions/Outstanding Minutes was submitted:-

(See document No.1)

In relation to Outstanding Minute No. 60 – Commissioning of Support Services for Victims of Crime, Bob Jones, Police and Crime Commissioner, reported that he had received a letter from the Ministry of Justice dated 4 November 2013 proposing that the main transfer of funding to Police and Crime Commissioners would take place on 1 April 2015. However, a number of pilots would be carried out before that date, including Yorkshire, the South West and individual metropolitan boroughs.

The Victims' Surcharge would also transfer to Police and Crime Commissioners before 2015, and he would be in a better position to provide further information at the next Panel meeting.

- 68 **RESOLVED:-**
- (i) That Actions/Outstanding Minute No. 59 (5), being the subject of a report later in the meeting, be discharged;
 - (ii) that the remaining Outstanding Minutes on the schedule be continued.
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- 69 The appointment of Councillor Deidre Alden as Member for Birmingham City Council, with Councillor Gareth Moore as substitute Member was noted.
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PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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There were no questions from members of the public.

PANEL SCRUTINY OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S DEVELOPMENT OF A PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The following programme and background papers for the session were submitted:-

(See document No. 2)

In addition to Bob Jones, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, the following witnesses attended the meeting:-

Margaret Corneby, Chief Executive, Black Country Chamber of Commerce
Henrietta Brealey, Policy Advisor, Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce
Nigel Kletz, Assistant Director of Procurement, Birmingham City Council
Mike Williams, Chief Finance Officer, West Midlands Office for Policing and Crime
Laura Gibb, Police Workforce and Efficiency Unit in the Home Office
Wayne Hanson, Police Workforce and Efficiency Unit in the Home Office

In his introductory remarks, the Chair commented that West Midlands Police had significant resources, and asked whether, in the review of the procurement strategy, maximum use could be made of them to benefit to the regional and national economy by creating and sustaining employment.

The Commissioner acknowledged the importance of ensuring that the best possible value for money was obtained, whilst keeping money in the local economy to create employment opportunities. He pointed out that part of the police role was to give residents hope, which in turn, was an important factor in reducing crime. Therefore, although obtaining best value was the first consideration in his review of the procurement strategy, local procurement was also important.

However, there were some constraints on procurement, with a number of contracts, including uniforms, body armour, police vehicles and IT, subject to mandation by the Home Secretary. Approximately 60% of expenditure was procured collectively, but problems arose due to the varying specifications of each Force, making it difficult to achieve economies of scale. The Home Office was aware of these difficulties, and was willing to consider an alternative framework for national procurement.

During introductory statements by the witnesses and questioning by Panel members, the following principal points were made:-

Black Country and Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce

- Public sector contract tenders often comprised a number of elements, some of which were very widely scoped. It would therefore be helpful if contracts were smaller, and consortia of businesses were allowed to submit a tender.
- The tender process was complex, therefore the specification of each contract should be made clear to potential bidders, possibly through the use of seminars.

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- A significant proportion of the value of public sector contracts went outside the West Midlands region, therefore a commitment in the Commissioner's procurement strategy to retain a high percentage of the remaining 40% of the procurement budget within the region would be welcome.
- IT had proved an innovative tool in effective procurement and had been well received. Increased use of IT would make it easier to tender.
- Chambers of Commerce made considerable efforts to guide their members through the public sector procurement process, but the tender documentation lacked consistency.
- Public sector organisations could do more to engage with local businesses, particularly with regard to pre-qualification questionnaires, which should make it clear which questions carried the most weight for decision-makers.
- There were no clear criteria for measuring social value consistently.

Nigel Kletz, Assistant Director of Procurement, Birmingham City Council

- Lessons learned from the approach taken by Birmingham City Council to procurement included the importance of sponsorship at senior level and support from the scrutiny function. It was also important that the organisational objectives were aligned to the Procurement Strategy, with recognition that procurement is a key tool in delivering social value through the supply chain.
- The Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility comprised 6 elements, including buy locally, being a good employer, ethical procurement and payment of the Living Wage by new contractors. Although existing contractors were not obliged to pay the Living Wage, many had agreed to do so voluntarily. The Commissioner was welcome to sign up to the Birmingham Business Charter, along with other organisations, including local universities.
- Efforts were made to innovate within the constraints of EU and UK regulations to achieve the City Council's procurement objectives.
- IT supported every stage of the procurement process, which had become a virtually paperless exercise.
- There might be opportunities for public sector organisations to commission services jointly, and use procurement as a means to deliver savings and social value for the region.

Police Workforce and Efficiency Unit in the Home Office

- Contract management needed to be effective.
- Social value was a matter for the Commissioner to determine, but as part of upstream crime prevention work, it was recognised that the creation of employment opportunities was an effective means of reducing crime.

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- The national Strategic Police Procurement Board could play a role in addressing issues around the standardisation of contracts.

During discussion, Panel members made the following points:-

- Tender documentation should include an appropriate weighting for what a business adds in value to the local area.
- If possible, a tiered mechanism should be built in to the procurement strategy to benefit the local, then the national economy, with contracts awarded to overseas businesses only if absolutely necessary.
- A summit of public sector providers, businesses and Chambers of Commerce to formulate standard procurement processes would be useful.
- Greater collaboration between public sector providers with regard to commissioning and procurement should be encouraged.
- The Commissioner should make use of existing “Find it in” websites wherever possible.

In conclusion, witnesses offered the Commissioner the following advice in development of a Procurement Strategy:-

- A much more outcomes-focussed element should be embedded in the strategy.
- Work with all partners to adopt a whole life cycle approach to commissioning, procurement and delivery of services.
- It was important to ensure that transparency was maintained.
- Continue to engage with businesses to ensure that they understood the strategy.
- Effective consultation with stakeholders was important.

The Chair thanked witnesses for their attendance and contribution to the Panel’s scrutiny of this matter.

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RESOLVED:-

That the comments in the above preamble be used to inform the Panel’s report to the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, and the key principles taken into account when finalising his Procurement Strategy.

SAFEGUARDING SUMMIT AND ACTION PLAN

The following report of the Police and Crime Commissioner was submitted:-

(See document No. 3)

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Bob Jones, Police and Crime Commissioner, presented his report, which informed of the discussions at the Safeguarding Summit held on 6 September 2013, and the action plan resulting from it.

He acknowledged that successive serious case reviews had highlighted the lack of communication between safeguarding agencies, and therefore the action plan emphasised the need for agencies to work and train together, through establishment of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH), the first of which had been launched in Sandwell that day. Panel members noted that the region now had an additional safeguarding resource, with Stephen Rimmer, the Home Office's director general of crime and policing, beginning a 2 year secondment as the region's strategic leader on action against the sexual exploitation of children and other vulnerable people. The position was jointly funded by the 7 West Midlands District Councils, and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Stephen Rimmer had been invited to chair the next Safeguarding Summit in January 2014, and he would also be taking the action plan forward.

In response to comments from Panel members, the Commissioner expressed confidence that co-location of specialist agencies would ensure an effective exchange of information. The issue of attendance of Police representatives at case conferences was included in the action plan, and was being covered in the review being undertaken by Jane Held. However, it was important to recognise the need to prioritise those conferences where Police attendance was absolutely necessary.

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RESOLVED:-

That the report be noted.

WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

The following report of the Panel Secretary was submitted:-

(See document No. 4)

Bob Jones, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, advised that he had launched a significant consultation on his budget proposals for 2014/15, and asked Panel members for assistance in publicizing it as widely as possible.

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RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the indicative future work programme be noted; and
 - (ii) that recent decisions made by the Police and Crime Commissioner be noted.
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The meeting ended at 1605 hours.

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CHAIRMAN