

**AT THE MEETING OF THE WEST MIDLANDS
POLICE AND CRIME PANEL HELD AT THE
COUNCIL HOUSE, WALSALL ON MONDAY 20
JANUARY 2014 AT 1400 HOURS**

PRESENT:-

Birmingham

Councillor Jess Phillips (Vice Chair)
Councillor Paula Smith

Coventry

Councillor Ann Lucas

Dudley

Councillor D Tyler

Sandwell

Councillor Julie Webb (Alternate)

Solihull

Councillor D Jamieson

Walsall

Councillor M Bird

Wolverhampton

Councillor E Mattu
Councillor J Rowley (Alternate)

Co-opted Independent Members

Mr L Walker

ALSO PRESENT:-

Bob Jones, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner
Mike Williams, Chief Finance Officer, West Midlands Office for Policing and Crime

APOLOGIES

74 Apologies were submitted on behalf of the following: -

Councillor Deirdre Alden – Birmingham
Councillor D Cooper - Sandwell
Councillor Paulette Hamilton – Birmingham
Councillor D Hosell – Sandwell
Councillor R Lawrence - Wolverhampton
Councillor R Sleigh - Solihull
Mr N Drew

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Lionel Walker declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item no. 6 – Panel Discussion on the Transforming Rehabilitation Agenda, as an employee of Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust.

MINUTES

- 76 Subject to an amendment to record the attendance of Councillor Julie Webb, the Minutes of the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel meeting held on 18 November 2013, having been previously circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
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At this point, the Chair agreed to vary the agenda order pending the arrival of the Police and Crime Commissioner at the meeting.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 77 There were no questions from members of the public.
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PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE TRANSFORMING REHABILITATION AGENDA

- 78 Lionel Walker declared a pecuniary interest and did not participate in the discussion on this item.

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

(See document No. 1)

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

Stephen Gill, Head of Business Transformation, Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust

Caroline Morrison, Competition Team Leader (Midlands), Ministry of Justice

Derek Quinn, Competition Support Manager, Staffordshire & West Midlands, Ministry of Justice

Sandra Sutton, Competition Support Manager, Staffordshire & West Midlands, Ministry of Justice

Gillian Crabbe, Safer Solihull Community Safety Partnership

Maryrose Lappin, Safer Sandwell Partnership

Karen Samuels, Wolverhampton Community Safety Partnership

Mandie Watson, Coventry Police and Crime Board

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Introducing the discussion, the Chair explained that the purpose of the session was to help Panel members understand the proposed changes to rehabilitation of offenders in the Offenders Rehabilitation Bill, which was expected to come into force on 1 April 2014, and the effect they would have on local agencies, including local authorities and the Community Safety Partnerships.

The Panel heard contributions from the following agencies:-

Ministry of Justice

Caroline Morrison, Competition Team Leader (Midlands), Ministry of Justice, summarised the proposed changes to the rehabilitation of offenders, progress towards their implementation and the performance framework which was being developed to hold the new providers to account by means of the following presentation:-

(See document No. 2)

Panel members noted that one of the key reforms was the extension of supervision to offenders with sentences of less than 12 months on release, whose reoffending rates were almost 60%. There would also be a resettlement service for every offender before release, delivered through designated resettlement prisons in each contract package area (CPA), together with “through the gate” rehabilitation support.

Ms Morrison emphasised that the Ministry of Justice was committed to ensuring that new providers understood existing structures, networks and partnerships, and that it would meet with key local strategic partners to discuss the competition process, provide information and gain an understanding of local priorities. The latter would be an important factor in the evaluation of bids to run the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs), therefore an event was being held on 5 March 2014 giving potential bidders for the Staffordshire and West Midlands contract the opportunity to meet with local stakeholders to discuss their priorities. She also emphasised the need to preserve and build on the good work already done by agencies who worked in partnership to manage offenders in the most effective way, for example, under Integrated Offender Management (IOM) arrangements and the importance of bidders understanding those arrangements.

Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust (SWMPT)

Stephen Gill, Head of Business Transformation, SWMPT, summarised the impact of the changes on the award-winning Trust, which would cease to exist on 31 May 2014.

With regard to the internal impact, 1800 staff, together with premises, back office staff and systems were being divided between two successor organisations, the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) and the National Probation Service (NPS). Staff had been advised of the successor organisation to which they had been assigned, and appeal letters were awaited. Payroll, pensions etc were being transferred to the new employers, but the changes had had an impact on morale and goodwill, and there had been a significant loss of staff. From June 2014, all offender management staff would be in new teams, with new managers. The caseload would then be split between the CRC and NPS, and new operating procedures would be implemented. Comprehensive training and briefing of staff would take place over the next 3-4 months.

As far as the external impact of the changes was concerned, the Trust had sought to delegate the powers to manage the service and interface with partners to Local Delivery Units (LDUs). A review of the allocation of partnership responsibilities was being undertaken, and they would be assigned to the NPS or CRC according to the nature of the work. For example, the CRC would primarily manage the IOM caseload. There would inevitably be an element of re-prioritisation, the detail of which was being worked out.

However, Mr Gill emphasised that, notwithstanding the changes, efforts were being made to ensure that work continued to prevent serious reoffending and that quality of service was maintained.

During discussion, Ms Morrison made the following principal points in response to questions and comments from Panel members and representatives of the Community Safety Partnerships:-

- Risk escalation would be managed through a model developed in conjunction with the Probation Trusts. If the CRC identified a change in the level of risk of reoffending, it would carry out an assessment and refer it to the NPS if appropriate.
- 30 bids had been received to run the CRCs, from both private companies and mutuals formed by probation staff. Full details were available on the Ministry of Justice's website.
- There would be a local account manager for the National Offender Management Services (NOMS), who would have a relationship management function to ensure that the CRC contract was being delivered effectively locally. The account manager would engage with partners, including the Police and Crime Commissioner, and might also have a role with Management Boards.
- There would be opportunities for the voluntary sector under the new system, with a significant weighting for localism included in assessment of the bids to run the CRCs.
- The importance of magistrates as stakeholders in the process was acknowledged, and she would ensure that the changes to rehabilitation of offenders were communicated to them.
- Performance measures were in place via the account management function to ensure that CRCs did not 'cherry pick' services. Payment by results accounted for only 12% of the CRC contract.
- The importance of interventions to address accommodation needs, drug and alcohol misuse, employment needs and mental health problems was recognised as integral to the strategy to reduce reoffending, and would form part of the resettlement service delivered in prison.
- The Competition Team would comprise Derek Quinn, Sandra Sutton and herself, together with SWMPT contract managers.

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- The CRCs should be capable of addressing the needs of each offender, and evidence of this would be sought during evaluation of the bids.
- Interim account managers would be in place to ensure that the activities of the CRCs were scrutinised from the outset.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner was a key strategic partner, and CRCs should align their bids in accordance with his priorities.
- It was important to recognise that staff from SWMPT would transfer to the new CRC, thereby minimising concern regarding establishment of relationships with the new providers.
- The way in which bidders proposed to address the problems in each local area would be assessed as part of the evaluation process.

Commenting on the discussion, Bob Jones, Police and Crime Commissioner, emphasised that he had no involvement in the process of change, although he was monitoring it closely. In his view, there was no meaningful local involvement in the process, and continuity would be lost. However, he confirmed that he would use his powers to hold the new provider of rehabilitation services to account.

In conclusion, the Chair remarked that although the reduction of reoffending was a key priority, she was concerned that the CRC would profit from criminal activity in the West Midlands, at a time when public sector organisations were making cuts in services. However, she thanked Ministry of Justice representatives for their attendance at the meeting, and for listening to Panel members' views. She would welcome further Panel involvement in the transformation of offender management process.

PRELIMINARY REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME PROPOSALS 2014/15 AND OUTLINE APPROACH TO THE POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

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

(See document No. 3)

Mike Williams, Chief Finance Officer, West Midlands Office for Policing and Crime, presented the report, drawing attention to two issues that were not included in it, but which would have an impact on the precept – (i) the level of precept increase that would trigger a referendum was still not clear and (ii) the freeze grant position had now been set at a 1% precept increase, which the Commissioner was not minded to accept.

With regard to the revenue budget, he explained that West Midlands Police continued to suffer from the grant damping arrangements amounting to approximately £40m. The Commissioner continued to make representations to central government regarding the unfairness of these arrangements and the Home Office had promised a review of the funding formula. Panel members noted that 12% of the revenue budget was funded by the precept. The national average was 30%, but in some areas, it was as high as 50%.

Attention was drawn to paragraph 6 of the report, which set out the context in which the 2014/15 revenue budget proposals had been made. Panel members noted proposals to recruit 250 police officers in 2014/15 and, subject to available funding levels, a further 200 police officers in 2015/16. They also noted the proposal to recruit up to 100 police staff posts to release police officers for front line duties, and the commitment to protect Community Safety funding at 2013/14 levels. A precept increase of 3% was proposed, which was broadly in line with inflation.

Paragraphs 12 – 16 of the report outlined the approach to development of variations to the Police and Crime Plan, further details of which would be presented to the Panel at its meeting on 3 February 2014.

Councillor Jamieson asked how the additional staff would be paid for after 2017. Mike Williams drew attention to paragraph 22 of the report, and explained that there would be a reduction in the use of reserves over time. There would be fewer police officers at the end of the 2016/17 financial year than currently, despite plans to recruit 450 officers, because some 250 officers would leave the force during that period.

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RESOLVED:-

- (i) That the report be noted; and
 - (ii) that the Commissioner's proposal to set a precept increase of 3% for 2014/15 be supported in principle.
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WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

The following report of the Panel Secretary was submitted:-

(See document No. 4)

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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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SCHEDULE OF ACTIONS/OUTSTANDING MINUTES

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

(See document No. 5)

In relation to Outstanding Minute No. 68 – Commissioning of Support Services for Victims of Crime, Bob Jones, Police and Crime Commissioner, explained that the position regarding the transfer of the Victims' Surcharge to Police and Crime Commissioners was not yet clear, and he would provide a further update in due course.

The Chair thanked the Commissioner for his positive response to the Panel's recommendations for development of his Procurement Strategy following the discussions at the last meeting.

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RESOLVED:-

That all Outstanding Minutes on the schedule be continued.

The meeting ended at 1610 hours.

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CHAIRMAN