

**West Midlands Police & Crime Panel Community Safety Fund Review
Wolverhampton's Submission**

Questions to consider:

1. How does the PCC engage with CSPs and how does that support good outcomes for the people of the West Midlands?

PCC engagement is largely via the Asst PCC's attendance at CSP/LPCB meetings which have been regular for the last 12 months. There is also the opportunity to engage with officers through bi-monthly Head of Community Safety meetings. This allows us to address any difficulties around communication and to understand the changing landscape within which the PCC operates. It is effective use of the CSF in Wolverhampton that enables us to deliver good outcomes for local residents.

2. Does the current approach and funding properly reflect need across region?

Differing need in each area, although some areas have additional needs not currently reflected in the funding allocations – Gangs – BE, Sandwell and Wolverhampton Prevent – W'ton & Solihull not included in priority list by Home Office. However, rationale for this is not understood as we had an incendiary device planted in our area as part of the Pavlo Lapshyn bombings and have recognised more is needed to build community trust to encourage reporting – we have to fund our Prevent post out of the CSF whereas other areas receive 2 year Home Office funding for this.

☒ Is the amount of money the right amount?

There is always more demand than can be met through available resources. SWP has to undertake priority setting each year to determine which aspects of delivery will cease and which will be commissioned. The decision of the PCC to pass on a 25% reduction in funding is obviously disappointing – we will undoubtedly be unable to deliver against all SWP strategic priorities as a consequence. Unsure how the ringfenced projects agreed by PCC have been identified, and how these are being protected as part of the reduced funding allocations.

☒ Is it effective being split across the LA areas? Or would it be more effectively spent if combined?

Much of the delivery will cover key shortfalls in local service delivery, staffing etc. Much of our local commissioned delivery is undertaken by local third sector providers - It is not always appropriate for a provider from a different agency from another area to start delivering when there are established partnerships already in place and working well. In some instances, this practice can be dangerous – ie gangs work needs to be undertaken by local established and trusted community organisations who have the credibility to deliver within gang-affected areas. To bring in an outside body can fuel tensions and conflict between rival gangs – these dynamics are well understood within our existing partnership arrangements but would not be by a body acting purely in a commissioning capacity at a regional level.

☒ Are the grant conditions too stringent or should they be more specific?

Grant conditions require a detail costed plan to be submitted for approval at the start of each financial year. There is, however, limited scope for our LPCB to vary delivery through the year following a change in the delivery landscape. As long as delivery is in line with agreed strategic priorities for the LPCB or identified underspend part way through the year used to support other aspects of the agreed plan, and is reflected in reporting to the PCC, this should be allowed. The requirement to seek approval from the PCC for all revisions to the plan are currently constraining.

3. Can steps be taken to minimise duplication and/or improve outcomes through collaboration across CSP areas?

The HOCS meet regularly to discuss and identify opportunities for joint working and liaise frequently to seek advice and share practise. There are clear examples where this has happened – Black Country car

cruising injunction, shared learning from new ASB legislation, DHRs, joint standards and operating protocols for domestic violence, Coordination and shared practise on Prevent to name a few. Joint commissioning is not always appropriate for the reasons stated above. Where common themes of work are identified (e.g. DHRs) that have resource implications for each CSP, options for more cost-effective delivery have already been fully explored with savings not identifiable. The HOCS maintain a commitment and flexibility to joint working, and are open to new proposals identified from this review for improving delivery, efficiencies and outcomes.

☒ Should there be more incentive or expectation that CSPs work together?

There is already a long established track record of CSPs working collaboratively to further common aims.

4. What infrastructure and support is in place for CSPs to manage the funding?

Although the funding is ringfenced for CSPs, the local authority is the accountable body for the funding. Consequently, in addition to quarterly reporting to the PCC, there are council financial accounting requirements which are also adhered to ensuring robust financial, procurement and contract management arrangements are in place and that these are met. Budget forecasting is undertaken monthly within the council using established financial systems and a named finance officer is allocated to support with these requirements. As well as being subject to audit and scrutiny as part of the council's existing processes, the accountability line sits directly with SWP Board which receives quarterly financial update reports.

☒ What impact are local authority cuts having for CSPs and that infrastructure/support?

The local authority cuts have not (to date) resulted in a loss of the staffing infrastructure/support for the CSP; elements of community safety service delivery (e.g. the city's ASB service) are now being delivered differently which has generated cost savings.

☒ Is the burden/responsibility on CSPs (in managing the fund in line with the conditions) proportionate to the amounts received?

The quarterly reporting cycle can place a disproportionate amount of bureaucracy and monitoring on the community safety team, and consequently on partners who are required to contribute to the report; there is often little or no variation in outcomes over a 3 month period to warrant sending in reports on such a frequent basis.

☒ What, if any, improvements could be made to get best use out of the money?

We are already exploring joint commissioning options with local commissioning partners; there is more scope to identify these opportunities across the local authority area than across local authority boundaries – e.g. delivery against the Violence Against Women & Girls strategy.

5. Should alternative approaches be considered? For example:

☒ A broad commissioning approach, whereby the PCC specifies broad outcomes and CSPs (and perhaps other agencies) bid for funds to achieve local plan priorities?

This approach would undermine the CSP's efforts to coordinate local delivery and avoid duplication of local delivery which is currently in place. It would open up unnecessary competition across providers which are, at present, open to collaborative working.

☒ Have a broader approach, with very few conditions attached.

In advance of each financial year, the CSP is required to submit a fully costed plan to the PCC. This plan outlines delivery against, not only local priorities, but also contributions towards the PCC's strategic plan. If CSPs can continue to evidence their continued support towards delivery against the PCC's objectives, these should be sufficient conditions for continuation of CSF.