

## **PROPOSED INQUIRY: ENSURING AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

### **1 Purpose**

- 1.1 At Panel meetings in both July and September, it was suggested that the Panel might assist the PCC by undertaking an inquiry into the wider criminal justice system and the PCC's role within it. This short note sets out a proposal as to how this work could be taken forward.

### **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 The proposed focus of the inquiry would be on how the PCC and other criminal justice agencies are co-operating in ensuring that there is an efficient and effective criminal justice system in the West Midlands.

- 2.2 There are two potential strands to this:

- The operational relationship between the relevant bodies: how are the bodies working together to meet performance targets and to ensure effective operation of the system. This would include the developing role of the Local Criminal Justice Partnership (see paragraph 3.5 below);
- The broader agenda that the criminal justice partners contribute to: e.g. reducing offending (including help with employment, housing, substance misuse etc.), assisting victims etc.

- 2.3 It is suggested that the inquiry is taken forward in two steps:

1. Initial scoping session with the PCC and Chief Constable at your January meeting. At that meeting, panel members would be able to explore the background to the work and discuss the key issues with the PCC. A terms of reference for the work would be agreed at that meeting;
2. Evidence gathering with key partners at your February and March meetings (partners to be determined at the January meeting).

### **3 Background**

#### ***The Duty to Co-operate***

- 3.1 Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, there is a reciprocal duty for the Police and Crime Commissioner and certain criminal justice bodies to co-operate in ensuring an efficient and effective criminal justice system:

*Section 10 (3): ... make arrangements (so far as it is appropriate to do so) for the exercise of functions so as to provide an efficient and effective criminal justice system for the police area.*

- 3.2 The criminal justice bodies included within this duty are the Chief Constable, Courts and Tribunal Service, Crown Prosecution Service, the Probation Service and prison providers.

- 3.3 The statutory duty is flexible to allow working arrangements to develop in a way that is most meaningful locally, and to leave room for innovation.
- 3.4 The policing protocol also states that the PCC has a wider responsibility to enhance the delivery of criminal justice in the area.

***The Local Criminal Justice Partnership***

- 3.5 The criminal justice bodies included in the duty to co-operate – the Police, Prosecution, Courts, Youth Offending Teams, Prisons and Probation – often come together as a Local Criminal Justice Partnership. These are non-statutory bodies whose purpose is to bring together the partners at the right time, to agree shared priorities and work collectively to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the criminal justice system in their areas.
- 3.6 In the West Midlands, the LCJP had not been active for a number of years, until recently when the Chief Constable re-constituted the partnership. He is the Chair of the partnership.

**4 For Decision**

4.1 For Panel members to:

- Agree the broad approach to the inquiry as set out in paragraph 2.3;
- Comment on the potential scope and direction of the inquiry.

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