

West Mercia Police and Crime Panel

Mr Bill Longmore
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
PO Box 487
Shrewsbury
SY2 6WB

15 February 2013

Dear Mr Longmore

THE DRAFT POLICE AND CRIME PLAN FOR WEST MERCIA 2013-2017

Thank you for attending the public meeting of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel on 5 February 2013. The Panel considered that this was a helpful discussion at which you explained the rationale behind your draft Plan and, together with your officers, answered the Panel's questions.

The Panel, as a statutory consultee, and in accordance with the requirements of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, is formally required to report its findings to you. Set out below are the Panel's comments which cover the headline issues and specific points that its wishes to bring to your attention for further consideration when finalising the Plan for publication.

1. Objectives

The Panel:

- considered that meeting 13 objectives is very ambitious and challenging and will require a significant amount of partnership working. Although the Panel noted your point that there was no set priority order, the wider perception of partners and the public may be that they are in priority order.
- suggests that "engaging with communities and victims of crime" are separate points and should be moved to the top of the priority list (and that this is reflected throughout the Plan).
- seeks more detail in the Plan about how partners will be engaged in objective setting and an indication of timescales.
- stated that the objectives need to be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound).

Cllr Paul
Middlebrough
Chairman, West
Mercia Police and
Crime Panel

c/o Legal and
Democratic Services
Worcestershire
County Council
County Hall
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

Tel 01905 728753 • Fax 01905 728747 • Minicom (01905) 766399 • DX 29941 Worcester 2
sclark@worcestershire.gov.uk • www.worcestershire.gov.uk

- would find it helpful if there was some indication of the objectives that would initially be a focus for you (the PCC) and what the main outcomes or "early wins" that the PCC would wish to see evidenced in the first year.
- would find it helpful if a clearer reference to the groups and organisations that are currently being worked with in partnership could be included.

2. Success measures

The Panel:

- is aware that this is a critical issue that is recognised as work in progress in the draft Plan, but it is vital that this is prioritised in order that the PCC's work can be measured.
- commented that the PCC may want to explore standardising measures and outcomes across West Mercia, as Community Safety Partnerships have very similar objectives to those in the Plan. It was however recognised that standardising data and agreeing joint measures was a very complex area of work and it would be helpful to explore and confirm how partners and stakeholders can assist in this work.
- believed that there should be an emphasis on more qualitative information including case studies, to reflect achievement, rather than a total reliance on data.
- broadly wished to see an early focus on specific measures including:
 - achieving an increased reporting of sexual violence
 - monitoring of the success in developing effective and innovative "watch" schemes
 - under Objective 7, the possibility of highlighting the number of offences reported or logged, as well as charges made, as many are dealt with by out of court resolutions and this would build a richer picture of criminal activity.
- stated that it would be helpful to consider setting a small number of high level success measures that sit above a more detailed and tiered level of wider measures.

3. Community/victim engagement

The Panel:

- whilst welcoming that there are significant references to community engagement throughout the Plan and specifically Objectives 8 and 13,

the Panel views community and victim engagement as an essential and core aspect of the Plan and would like to see some more detail on the approach to community engagement, public confidence and feeling safe and how this will be developed.

- stated that it would be helpful to expand on the notion of a new "community spirit" and more explanation of the vision.
- seeks reassurance from the PCC that he will ensure that there is effective and meaningful dialogue with harder to reach groups and those more marginalised members of the community that do not tend to engage.

4. Resources

The Panel:

- asks for further information to be provided on the allocation of partnership/community funding over the life of the Plan and welcomes the current financial support for Community Safety Partnerships and the recognition that they are a primary focus for delivery of the Plan and objectives.
- commented that the Plan must acknowledge the significant challenges facing the public sector and local communities.
- would welcome further investigation and clarification on the "victims surcharge" in order to determine how these funds could be accrued for West Mercia.
- would like consideration to be given to explore opportunities for the pooling of resources and potential for joint commissioning exercises (eg domestic abuse services).
- believes that there could be standardisation of services across West Mercia, building upon the sharing of facilities with other organisations and the Police.

5. General issues

There are a number of specific points and questions that the Panel would wish to make:

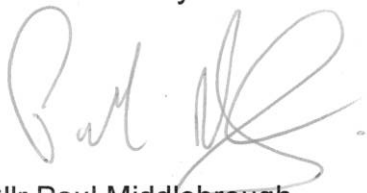
- i. A reduction in alcohol harm to communities and working with Health and Wellbeing Boards on this is welcomed (objective. 3).
-

- ii. The Panel want to be assured that there will continue to be a strong focus on tackling drug misuse and related crime and reducing re-offending activity (obj.4).
- iii. Anti social behaviour (including repeat asb) is a key issue for ongoing focus in communities and we look forward to seeing how joint working with the PCC will be developed (obj. 5).
- iv. Domestic abuse should be given a higher profile generally within the Plan. There should be further discussion about the management and resourcing of Domestic Homicide Reviews across West Mercia (obj. 9).
- v. The Panel is pleased to see an emphasis on hate and race crime and the need to consult widely with victims and groups such as LGBT fora, to help inform the work required to tackle this problem (obj. 9).
- vi. The Panel is pleased to see reference to safeguarding, but there needs to be a clear reference to working alongside with Adult Safeguarding Boards as well as Children's safeguarding Boards (obj. 9).
- vii. Developing a close working relationship with Health and Wellbeing Boards will be essential and in particular the Panel wish to see improved understanding and joint working on issues such as mental health and the impact upon the criminal justice system.
- viii. The Panel welcomes the focus upon rural crime and community safety issues and would wish to see the PCC actively involving local town and parish Councillors who are close to local communities and could assist with delivery of the Plan.
- ix. There is no reference to the vital role of Local Authorities in the Plan and clearly they are critical partners in the delivery and future success of the Plan. There should be clear recognition of this in the final document.
- x. The Panel is pleased to see the support given to the role of Police Community Support Officers and the recognition of their value to the Police and local communities. Final clarification would be welcomed over the numbers of PCSO posts that will be funded over the life of the Plan.

The Panel wish to record their full support for the Plan and the ambitions of the PCC to assist and protect victims and communities across West Mercia from crime and harm. It is recognised that the Plan is ambitious and challenging and the new working arrangements will take some time to fully be embedded.

We hope that the PCC will take full account of the Panel's comments and questions in the drafting of the final Plan and we await your response with keen interest.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Middlebrough', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cllr Paul Middlebrough
Chairman of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel
