

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR
WEST MERCIA**



RECORD OF DECISION

TITLE: Commissioning Officer Recruitment

Ref: PCC/D/2021/15

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current West Mercia Diversionary Network (WMDN) project lead role ceases on 31st July 2021, which has prompted a review of current workload and resource within the Commissioning team.

The PCC is recommended to approve the recruitment of a permanent full time Commissioning Officer.

PROPOSAL

The Commissioner is recommended to approve;

1. The creation of a post within the OPCC staffing structure of a full-time, permanent Commissioning Officer.
2. The transfer of the costs to fund the post from the Commissioning budget to the OPCC staff budget.

**APPROVAL OF
West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner**

I hereby approve the above proposal.

Signed

PART 1 – NON-CONFIDENTIAL/EXEMPT FACTS AND FIGURES

SUPPORTING REPORT

Current Arrangements

1. The Commissioning team consists of the following resource;
 - a. Commissioning Manager 1 x FTE - permanent
 - b. Commissioning Officer – 1 x FTE - permanent
 - c. Commissioning Assistant – 1 x FTE – permanent
 - d. West Mercia Diversionary Network (WMDN) Project Lead – 0.6 x FTE – fixed term to 31st July 2021
2. The current WMDN role is a grade F post, offered at 0.6 FTE (3 days a week) Originally a 2 year contract to support the implementation of the CLIMB service, the contract runs out on 31st July 2021.
3. This creates a future issue within the Commissioning team in terms of maintaining current levels of service delivery. It also creates the opportunity to review the resource required.
4. The additional resource provided by this role has been instrumental in supporting to mobilise the CLIMB service since it went live in April 2020. As the role sits within the Commissioning Team, the capacity and development has been managed in line with wider needs of the team.
5. As a result of increased demand upon the Commissioning team, and a reduced need for the implementation support to the CLIMB service, the scope of the WMDN role has widened to include wider commissioning activity, including stakeholder engagement and relationship management. The post-holder has subsequently been allocated the following commissioning portfolio areas:
 - Child Criminal Exploitation
 - Serious Violence
 - Serious & Organised Crime
 - Safer Streets project implementation
 - RYPP programme implementation

Issues Arising

6. There is no longer a need for a WMDN project liaison role. Much of the activity centred around the CLIMB service is commissioning related, to be performed by those in commissioning roles. The % of time currently allocated to non-CLIMB activities by the current post holder outweighs those for CLIMB. The service has mobilised and is working very well, receiving significant referrals from a variety of partner agencies across the West Mercia area.
7. Resilience of the role as it is currently configured is limited. The post-holder operates largely independently. Absences due to annual leave, sickness, flex or family emergencies can contribute to a backlog of work in the current format.

8. Although the role is due to end, the demand for resource is still there, although not in the format of the original role profile. There have been some significant benefits which have arisen from changes made to the role which would have a significant impact upon the Commissioning Team should the resource not continue.
9. Demand generally across Commissioning has increased over the last 12 months. A significantly increased number of external funding opportunities, although largely successful and very positive, have created further additional workload not previously factored into the resource requirements for the team.
10. Additional demand has also been generated by the need to formally commission the ISVA and CSE services. Previously an annual grant, the funding amounts for these services required an overdue competitive tender process as well as a need to secure the longevity of specialist services which support victims of crimes such as sexual violence and exploitation.
11. In the 2020/21 year, the team have used the existing resource to manage the following, outside business as usual activity.
 - a. Completion of 9 funding applications, 8 of which were successful, resulting in additional income of over £1.6m.
 - b. Commissioning of large contracts for CSE and ISVA services (totalling almost £1.5m)
 - c. Implementation of DRIVE in a new site
 - d. Implementation of the RYPP training programme
 - e. Implementation of the CLIMB service
 - f. Road Safety Grant rounds
 - g. Management and oversight of the Safer Streets project implementation
12. Successful funding applications don't just require resource to research and complete bids, in most cases they require significant time and additional resource to implement, which has taken several months in the examples of DRIVE and RYPP. To put into context, the implementation of DRIVE in a new site is a full time role which the Commissioning Team have had to manage internally within existing resource from November 2020 – March 2021
13. The development of the commissioning approach has also been a factor increasing demand for the team across the last 12 months. As we look to move away from annual grants to multi-year contracts, the ability of the team to deliver this is limited by current resource.
14. The process of procuring a service via an open and competitive tender takes between 6-12 months from start to finish. This activity needs to be planned well in advance and as contracts are normally commenced in line with the financial year, this planning activity takes place at the same time for all such services, limiting the ability to commission multiple services a challenge within existing resource. To put this into context, on average it will take around 40-50% of a commissioning resource around 8 months to complete a full commissioning exercise for a single service. Currently, we only have 2 members of the team

who can lead on this activity and therefore could realistically only conduct this activity for 2 or 3 services in a year, depending on their complexity. Investment is then needed once the process has finished in terms of supporting with contract mobilisation For CLIMB, this was 60% of an FTE.

15. New future work already known for 21/22 includes:
 - a. Re-commissioning the Victim Support contract which currently ends at end of March 2022
 - b. Procuring victim needs assessments to inform the VS commissioning activity – *these 2 activities are likely to take a total of 50-60% of an FTE resource over a period of 8-9 months*
 - c. Submitting funding applications – there are 7 known opportunities so far
 - d. Reviewing existing commissioning of services funded via grant, to assess in line with new Police and Crime Plan, with consideration of de-commissioning or formally commissioning via contract
 - e. Development of joint commissioning opportunities across NPS and regional PCC's – OOC'D's and Female Offenders
 - f. Joint commissioning of DA services with Worcestershire County Council – *resource of 40-50% of an FTE resource over a period of 8-9 months*
 - g. SARC accreditation project – *linking in with item k, this should be part of a full-time role*
 - h. Modern Slavery Human Trafficking and SOC prevention commissioning – *our needs assessments completed in 2020 have highlighted gaps in these areas*
 - i. Telford & Wrekin Community project
 - j. Joint working with NPS around Female Offender Strategy
 - k. SAAS strategy implementation work – *this was originally anticipated to be a full time role on its own, and is a full time role in other regional areas*
16. As the work of the commissioning team is largely built around engagement with service providers and partners, prior to COVID this involved significant travel time all across West Mercia. COVID has resulted in staff working remotely for a significant part of the year. The time saved from not travelling has allowed the team to manage the increased demands and complete several key pieces of work with current resource. A move towards a staged approach to "normal" needs to be considered as an impact upon ability to meet the demand.
17. The majority of the above work is not currently being undertaken. There is a risk there will be insufficient resource to carry out the activity required to deliver the outcomes, in addition to the possibility that we could be in the same situation as we are for 20/21, with an underspend in the PCC Commissioning budget.
18. Even with additional resource allocated, due to the demand that a formal commissioning process has, as well as the reality that there are only 2 people who can lead this (1 of whom is still fairly new to commissioning), there is a risk that all of the above activity won't get completed and will have to be prioritised.

19. We are also entering a new PCC term, and we have to consider that whoever the PCC is will have their own priorities which again may create further demand on the team for commissioning of services in addition to the above. In particular, a revitalised focus on prevention within a new Police and Crime Plan would require the commissioning of new services and hence additional demand. Other external factors to consider include additional government funding and legislation e.g. Domestic Abuse Bill which could also create additional demand.

20. We are starting to grow in terms of our joint commissioning with local and regional partners. Ideally, this capability should be developed over the coming year to better ensure that services are joined up, to achieve value for money and better outcomes for the public

21. Future planning for 22/23 budgets also suggests continued increased demand. With regards to Road Safety funds, we have been advised that the Road Safety reserves budget will not be available for 22/23 because of the changes to the funding of the Road Safety Unit. The PCC currently funds some large projects from this reserve so as we move towards Summer/Autumn 2021 there will need to be a review of existing provision to identify if any services need to be de-commissioned. Again, this will have a demand upon the team.

22. This workload includes a review of current service provision and performance, discussion around priorities for the new Police and Crime Plan, financial discussions, re-negotiation discussions, understanding local need and demand, managing risks associated, communications with providers, work to understand the impact of reducing or removing budgets. Expected workload for this particular exercise alone can be anticipated at around 30-40% of an FTE from around June to March (possibly longer)

Options

23. With the current post due to cease, it presents an opportunity to review the role and requirements of the Commissioning team in full.

24. Potential options are as follows.

1. **Allow the role to cease naturally on 31st July 2021, redirecting the workload into the existing Commissioning Team.**

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost saving for the 21/22 commissioning budget as this is where the funds for the post are currently allocated from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Insufficient resource to meet demand - Priority areas of work will have to be reduced - Reduced capacity to submit additional funding bids - Reduced ability to attend partnership meetings - Overall reduced output from commissioning team

	- No ability to commission any new services due to re-distribution of the workload
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2. Extend the existing post for a longer term, to 31st March 2022

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Straightforward option to complete, just needing an update to HR and contract extension - Would allow the current post holder to remain in post - Would remove the need to go through a formal recruitment process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not reflect the current work being completed by the post holder - Budget pressure on commissioning budget as the post has only been accounted for up to 31st July 2021 - Short term extension may not be attractive and may result in current post holder leaving, leading to a need to recruit - Does not solve the “lone working” issues mentioned in point 20

3. Replace the role with a permanent part-time Commissioning Officer post.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would allow for some key pieces of work to continue - Improves resilience in terms of team capacity - Allows some opportunity to submit new funding bids - Would allow for some new commissioning activity to take place where gaps have been identified from needs assessments completed - Would increase the integration of the role into the commissioning team - Limited ability for any unused capacity - Job profile already there, no need for HAY evaluation - No significant additional overall budget pressure as grades are the same for existing and proposed roles - Security of role will attract better quality of candidates - Increased flexibility to amend the portfolio areas and increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates a budget pressure for the OPCC staffing budget, as the current post is being funded via the commissioning budget, unless funds are transferred from the one to the other - A formal recruitment process would need to take place, which may result in a gap in resource/increase in induction support if the current post holder either does not apply or is unsuccessful in the post - Does not fully meet the requirement in terms of resource for the tasks mentioned above, therefore requiring a reassessment and prioritisation of commissioning activity. - Does not accurately reflect the growth in demand for the team over the last 12 months. - Creates limited opportunity for new Commissioning activity should the future PCC wish to develop different priority areas

knowledge and awareness amongst the wider team as well as added resilience

4. Replace the role with a permanent full-time Commissioning Officer post.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Would allow for key pieces of work to continue - Improves resilience in terms of team capacity - Allows additional opportunity to submit funding bids - Would allow for new commissioning activity to take place where gaps have been identified from needs assessments completed - Would increase the integration of the role into the commissioning team - Limited ability for any unused capacity - Job profile already there, no need for HAY evaluation - Security of role will attract better quality of candidates - Would create additional capacity within the team to allow for longer term planning and commissioning of services - Would support internal governance, allowing increased capacity to be able to look at areas of desirable work e.g producing regular reporting of commissioned services - Increased flexibility to amend the portfolio areas and increase knowledge and awareness amongst the wider team as well as added resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creates an increased cost, as the current post is being funded via the commissioning budget on a part time arrangement Funds would have to be transferred from the commissioning budget to the staff budget to fund the post. However, there are sufficient funds within the current commissioning budget to do this without having an impact on commissioning of services - A formal recruitment process would need to take place, which may result in a gap in resource/increase in induction support if the current post holder either does not apply or is unsuccessful in the post - Reduced flexibility should demand for commissioning reduce

Analysis

25 Ceasing the role completely would have a detrimental impact upon resource within the commissioning team at a time which is hugely significant at the start of a new PCC term. It would lead to reduced output from the commissioning team. This is why Option 1 is not recommended.

26. Option 2 would only be short-term and would come with the risk that the current post-holder may not want to extend for a short time frame. If this was the case, there is a risk of a gap in resource during a recruitment period. This would also carry a further risk of not recruiting to such a short timescale for the role, not to mention the delay required whilst inducting a new member of staff, which may also be required for Options 3 or 4. Consequently, it is not recommended.
27. Options 3 & 4 have adverse budget implications as the role hasn't been budgeted beyond July 2021, but Option 4 would bring the benefit of job security, attracting more candidates for the role and prevent premature departure of the successful applicant. Previous experience of recruiting to temporary and part time posts has resulted in a high turnover of staff who seek permanent and full time employment elsewhere within the organisation (in the example of Partnership Analysts). Option 4 would also fully allow the team to effectively plan future delivery, with this option also providing added reassurance on demand management.
28. There are some significant pieces of work scheduled in 2021/22 for the Commissioning team. Long term security of resource within the team is needed to effectively deliver on the planned workload. Options 1 and 2 do not allow for this. Option 3 also only allows the team to continue "as is", and doesn't allow for any of the additional work to be completed without having to re-assess and re-prioritise, putting other work on hold.
29. For 2021/22, we have already completed 5 funding applications and are aware of at least 4 further opportunities in the coming weeks. This would indicate that demand for funding applications and consequent commissioning and monitoring of new services is likely to exceed that seen in 20/21.
30. Funding applications are often open for short periods of time, require intense bursts of activity and without a great deal of notice to plan into the work schedule. If we are looking ahead around 6-12 months to plan resource to allocate to commissioning activity, this creates additional unplanned work to support these bids. To complete an application requires a lot of analysing data/needs assessments as well as partnership activity and co-ordination. Each funding bid could take up between 60-70% of an FTE time pre-submission. Depending on the outcome of these bids, the resource required post award can take anything from 50-100% of an FTE. This is why Option 4 is the favourable one as it allows for maximum capacity to support these bids.
31. The liaison and partnership working required by the Commissioning team for these funding bids as well as commissioning activity will be undertaken by the whole team, allowing for resilience and a broad range of relationships to be established. Option 4 allows for additional capacity to be able to do this effectively.
32. In terms of management support and oversight, there is minimal difference between a member of staff who works part time and one which works full time. As a result, Option 4 would be preferred as it would be considered as a better

return on investment, being able to provide additional outputs compared to a part time role

- 33 Outcomes that we would seek to achieve from Option 4 would be:
- a. Increased commissioning activity output resulting in;
 - i. Communities feeling safer
 - ii. Increased diversionary activities for those at risk of offending
 - iii. Increased tailored services for all victims of crime
 - iv. Reductions in prevalence of crime
 - b. Increase in value for money of public funds
 - c. Overall increase in quality of services to support victims
 - d. Increased confidence around funding being targeted to areas of need
 - e. Additional income generated from funding bids
 - f. Increased PCC profile locally and regionally
34. In terms of the risks associated with Option 4, the main one is the fluctuation of ambition from a new PCC, which is manageable. If there is lesser ambition from the new PCC, then demand can be reassessed and recruitment paused if necessary. If there is greater ambition from the new PCC (which is very likely as we are entering into a new term), recruitment would still be necessary.
- 35 Additional risks include a reduction in demand of external funding opportunities. The likelihood of this risk is low, considering there are already 7 known opportunities so far for 21/22 funding. If demand for these opportunities were to cease later in the year, we would re-prioritise workload to focus on other commissioning activity. Part of the planned work for 21/22 is looking at future commissioning of services for 22/23 onwards so we would be able to focus any additional resource on this activity.

Recommendation

- 36 The Police and Crime Commissioner is recommended to support option 4.

Benefits

37. Anticipated benefits include.
- Greater resilience and flexibility for the Commissioning team, introducing some commonality between the roles within the team – this will allow demand to be managed more equally and effectively amongst the team, as well as allowing for resilience for periods of staff absence or likely increased demand for commissioning activity as a result of the ambitions of future PCC's
 - Reduced likelihood that further commissioning work will have to be restricted due to the reduced resource
 - Increased resource to support the multiple additional external additional funding opportunities, many of which have already been announced for the new financial year
 - Increased resource to enable key projects to be delivered and achieve more and better outcomes for the public

38 Benefits will start to be realised immediately upon the successful candidate taking up their post, following a period of recruitment and induction.

STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

This decision supports the following element(s) of the Safer West Mercia Plan:

Putting Victims and Survivors First Building a More Secure West Mercia Reforming West Mercia Reassuring West Mercia's Communities

The decision supports this/ these objective(s) through the following.

- Increased commissioning activity output resulting in;
 - a. Communities feeling safer
 - b. Increased diversionary activities for those at risk of offending
 - c. Increased tailored services for all victims of crime
 - d. Increased interventions which tackle offending behaviour
- Reductions in prevalence of crime
- Increase in value for money of public funds
- Overall increase in quality of services to support victims
- Increased confidence around funding being targeted to areas of need
- Additional income generated from funding bids
- Increased PCC profile locally and regionally

39. The primary function of the commissioning team is to commission efficient and effective services and activity to support the objectives of the Police and Crime Plan. The PCC is also mandated by government to commission support services for victims of crime, a function which is managed by the Commissioning Team.

40. The team also commissions early intervention and prevention and tackling offending behaviour services, which cover the overarching secure and reassure objectives.

41. The effective and efficient delivery of the commissioning function is important in maximising the impact in each area.

Governance

42. **Scrutiny** – Bringing the post into the commissioning team as a commissioning officer will allow a greater sharing of workload and oversight by the Commissioning Manager. Building capacity within the team will also allow for the multiple additional funds from government, as well as the PCC budget, to be scrutinised more and targeted to areas where we have clear identifications of need and demand

43 **Best value and service to the public** – The recommended option does bring with it some additional costs as it is an increase from a part-time role to a full-time one. The increased investment will provide increased resource to follow

formal commissioning processes (procurement and contracting), therefore allowing a greater emphasis and requirement for providers to deliver value for money. It will also give longer-term security of service provision for both providers and the general public, leading to higher quality services which are able to adapt to meet changes in demand – this is often difficult to do with short term funding options such as a grant.

- 44. **Accountability** – The revised post would bring the post formerly into the commissioning team and therefore create better visibility and ownership of work. Increased flexibility will also improve value for money and allow for resilience within the team to manage current and future demands. Increased resource will also allow for increased focus on accountability from our service providers. Having the resource to be able to follow formal commissioning processes allows for specific service specifications to be developed, allowing the PCC to hold providers to account for service delivery more effectively.
- 45. **Audit Trail** – The proposed change of role and increase to full-time will allow greater audit and scrutiny of all funded projects and services, allowing better control over public spending and outcomes.
- 46. **Public Voice** – Additional resource within the team will allow the team to better understand the voice of the public in relation to the commissioning of services by the PCC, allowing for increased co-ordination of partnership activity of consultation and engagement activities.

FINANCIAL COMMENTS

Financial Comments

- 47. The costs associated with the recommended option represents genuine growth and would need to be found from PCC budgets.
- 48. Costs for 21/22 – 0.6 grade F post = £44,194 pa pro rata (£ 26,846 pa), budgeted only to 31st July 2021
- 49. Costs of options:
 - Option 1** – as per current financial commitments, to cease on 31st July 2021
 - Option 2** – would require an additional £17,894.34 for 2021/22
 - Option 3** – would require an additional £17,894.34 for 2021/22
 - Option 4** – would require an additional £29,462.66 for 2021/22, and £44,194 pa (subject to pay increase) thereafter
- 50. The Finance team have been consulted about this proposal and the budgetary requirements and have confirmed that there is budget available within the

21/22 commissioning budget which would be transferred across to the PCC office staff budget for Option 4

51. The proposed option would require an additional £29,462.66 for 2021/22, and £44,194 pa (subject to pay increase) thereafter

52 The Finance team have been consulted about this proposal and the budgetary requirements and have confirmed that there is budget available within the 21/22 commissioning budget which would be transferred across to the PCC office staff budget for Option 4.

TREASURER COMMENTS

This proposal can be funded by a transfer of funds and virement from the Commissioning (Grants and Commissioned Services) budget to the OPCC staffing budget. This will however reduce the funds available to support Grants and Commissioned Services The establishment of the post will provide additional capacity to prepare bids and take advantage of opportunities for additional targeted funding from central government.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS


By virtue of schedule 11, paragraph 14 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the Police and Crime Commissioner may do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the exercise of the functions of commissioner That includes. entering into contracts and other agreements (whether legally binding or not) and acquiring and disposing of property (including land).

PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act) and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the West Mercia Commissioner's website. Any facts and advice that should not be made automatically available on request are not included in Part 1 but instead in a separate Part 2 report.

OFFICER APPROVAL

Chief Executive Officer

Signature 

Date 22nd April 2021