



STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD 2 July 2013

Outcomes from the Victims' Consultation

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to update members on the results of the consultation on the establishment of structures to engage with victims and allocate future funding. The consultation ran for 12 weeks from March 4 until May 31 2013 and followed the Commissioner's Victims' Summit held in January.

Background

2. The Commissioner has responsibility to gain the views of the public, with specific mention of victims of crime, in the policing area about matters concerning policing and crime. These requirements are set out in the Police Act 1996 as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. Other statutory consultation duties of relevance are those which require public consultation on the Commissioner's police and crime plan.
3. The Commissioner held a Victims' Summit on the 11 January 2013 with a number of specific objectives which included the opportunity to:
 - speak to victims and representatives in order to ensure that adequate support services are in place for victims and their families
 - discuss the distribution of victims funding which is being transferred to the Commissioner in October 2014 and to consider how the needs of victims will be represented locally. Police and Crime Commissioners will be responsible for ensuring that the emotional and practical support services for victims of crime are met. These services help victims to cope with and recover from the impacts of crime.
4. At the event the Commissioner also set out his ambitions for community led local policing and crime boards in each of the seven local authority areas which will ensure that the views of local people are reflected in priorities set locally for

policing and crime. The Boards will also be responsible for ensuring that those priorities are delivered. They will also be part of the decision making process on the local allocation of funds and monitor their local police and crime plan. The boards will be made up of members of the community as well as responsible authorities. The exact composition will be a matter for local determination.

5. Roundtable discussions gave participants the opportunity to discuss and develop options for distribution of victims funding from 2014. The information gained from the Summit formed the basis of the public consultation document.

The Consultation

6. The information gained from the Summit formed the basis of a public consultation document 'Victims Should Come First' which was launched on the 4 March 2103. The closing date for responses to the consultation was the 31 May 2013. In total, 119 formal responses were received. The consultation asked two questions:
 - Question 1 was about the development of a Victims Commission with a proposal that the Commission develop policies and procedures, identify local concerns and priorities and influence the final decisions on funding and allocations.
 - Question 2 gave three options for a commissioning framework and delivery structure. They included:
 - Option 1: West Midlands wide structure, led by Victims Support, working with other voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations
 - Option 2: West Midlands structure comprising VCSE organisations with no lead organisation
 - Option 3: In house procurement by the Office for Policing and Crime

The outcomes of the consultation

Question 1

7. 61% of respondents agreed with the setting up of a Victims Commission. A consistent message was that the Commission should ensure involvement from groups that cover the diversity of victims groups and support the diversity of the population of the West Midlands.

Question 2

8. Option 1 was supported by 78% of the responses. Respondents felt that Victim Support were well established and experienced in keeping victims of crime as the main focus, had a good structure in place and good links to the Force. There were concerns from some voluntary sector organisations that believe Victim Support is a mainstream organisation and a direct competitor to many of the voluntary and community specialist organisations. There is a consensus that there needed to be a lead organisation to drive the project, however there is also a need to ensure that there is not a dominant group within the decision making process.
9. Option 2 was supported by 18% of the responses. It is felt that there is a wide range of victims groups operating across the West Midlands area, many who

provide specialist support for victims and they need to be recognised for the work they do. They should also feature as part of a suite of provision which can be accessed by victims across the area.

10. Option 3 received 3.2% of responses. Consistent messages were around the cost involved in setting up a new structure and also that we should utilise existing structures.
11. Two alternative options were put forward as part of the consultation at 0.8%. The suggestion being that Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) should drive priorities from a local level with funding being awarded to them so that they can commission the support for victims from the voluntary and community sector. Alternatively, that the seven CSPs form a collective and commission services regionally across West Midlands force area.
12. The full report is available at **Annex A**.

Next Steps

13. There are a number of questions that need to be addressed in preparing for new commissioning arrangements. They include:
 - What is the demand for support services to victims and witnesses?
 - What services are delivered now, where, how and what gaps can be identified in the scope and effectiveness of that provision?
 - What should victims and witnesses be able to expect from the support they receive in the future?
 - What are the options to bring this change about?
14. Baroness Newlove of Warrington, the Victims Commissioner is currently working with a number of PCCs to provide advice, based on engagement with victims, on the needs that should underpin their commissioning strategy. The Commissioner will request that a review is undertaken of provision and future requirements on behalf of the West Midlands and the review will be used to inform the commissioning structure.
15. The Commissioner will do further scoping work with Victim Support and the voluntary and community sector taking into account the results of the consultation. The Commissioner will also take account of recommendations made by the Strategic Policing and Crime Board.

Financial Implications

16. The cost of all consultation activities is included in the West Midlands Office for Policing and Crime budget for 2013-14.

Legal Implications

17. The legal implications are set out at paragraph 2.

Recommendations

18. The Board is asked to comment on the outcomes of the consultation, the next steps and note that a further paper which will form the basis for a formal decision by the Commissioner in the autumn.

Author: Alethea Fuller, Policy Manager, West Midlands Office for Policing and Crime