



**STRATEGIC POLICING AND CRIME BOARD
3 March 2015**

**Update on issues raised by Police and Crime
Panel at meetings held on 19 January and 2
February 2015**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of the report is to update the Board on issues raised by the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel at its meetings held on 19 January and 2 February 2015.

BACKGROUND

2. The Commissioner attended the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel meetings on 19 January and 2 February where he was asked to report on the following items.

19 January

- Panel scrutiny inquiry into partnership working on preventing violence against vulnerable people: female genital mutilation (FGM).
- The Commissioner's preliminary revenue budget and capital programme proposals 2015/16 and outline approach to the Police and Crime Plan

2 February

- Innovation and Integration Partnership with Accenture (UK) Ltd and the WMP2020 programme to deliver policing services.
- Panel's formal review of the Commissioner's budget and precept.
- Variations to the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan.

- Commissioning of support services for victims of crime.
3. At both meetings the Panel also held a 'question time with the Commissioner' session.

ISSUES RAISED BY THE PANEL

FGM Inquiry

4. The FGM inquiry was held over two meetings, the first on 29 November 2014 and the second on 19 January 2015. The Panel heard from a wide range of witnesses including the Muslim Women's Network, a head teacher, a nurse, the Commissioner, the West Midlands Police and the West Midlands Lead for Preventing Violence against Vulnerable People. The aim of the inquiry was for the Panel to consider what the Commissioner could do to facilitate integrated working between agencies to prevent and respond to FGM in the West Midlands. Having now heard from the witnesses, the Panel will consider a report on the inquiry at its 9 March 2015 meeting.
5. Panel members were concerned at the seriousness of the issue and the number of victims involved. They recognised the difficulty in bringing prosecutions which needed to be based on medical evidence. However, FGM was illegal in the UK and it was important to pursue prosecutions. The importance of raising the profile and awareness of FGM was recognised.
6. A full report on the findings of the inquiry will be considered at the Panel's next meeting on 9 March.

Innovation and Integration Partnership with Accenture (UK) Ltd and WMP2020

7. The Panel had previously been provided with a paper on the Partnership at its meeting in November 2014 but unfortunately had not had sufficient time to spend on the issue. Hence the request for further consideration. The Panel was provided with a copy of the paper which had been considered by the Strategic Policing and Crime Board meeting on 4 November 2014 together with a covering paper which updated on the work with Accenture since November 2014. The Deputy Chief Constable attended the Panel alongside the Commissioner for this item.
8. The Panel explored the nature of the contract with Accenture together with the ambitions for the work to be developed over the next five years. The Panel was interested in the detail of the work programme. It was explained that the detail of the programme would follow on from the work to develop the target operating model/WMP2020 Blueprint.
9. Following the meeting, the Commissioner made contact with the Chairman of the Panel, Councillor Darren Cooper, to offer an informal briefing to the Panel prior to a future meeting to provide further detail. Cllr Cooper has agreed that such a briefing would be helpful suggesting that it take place later in the year once the Blueprint had been agreed.

The Commissioner's Budget and Precept and Capital Budget

10. The Panel provided its statutory report on the Commissioner's proposed budget and Precept on 7 February and the Commissioner responded on 11 February. The Panel's statutory report with its comments on the precept and budget is available on the Panel's website <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/>
11. Whilst the Panel supported the budget and precept it raised the following issues:
 - The Panel felt there was a lack of clarity about what the public were getting for the increase in the Precept of 1.99%.
 - Some Panel members felt that more reserves could be used whilst still retaining a prudential amount.
 - Some Panel members felt that inadequate information had been provided on staffing levels, particularly given that a large proportion of the revenue budget was for staffing costs. The Panel would have liked more detail about the direct impact of the closure of the front desks on staffing. The Panel felt it needed to be made clearer to the public what the police officer recruitment would mean in terms of police officer numbers at the end of the period.
 - The Panel was disappointed with the reporting in the Solihull News of the Panel's discussion of the preliminary budget at its 19 January meeting. It also commented on the short timescales of the Commissioner's consultation on the budget and the number of people who had responded. It suggested identifying opportunities with the districts next time to signpost the consultation alongside their own budget consultations.
12. The Commissioner is required to respond to the issues and recommendations made by the Panel and has done so. His response can again be found on the Panel's website but for ease of reference is attached to this report at **Annex A**.

Variations to the Police and Crime Plan

13. The Commissioner is required to seek the views of the Panel on any variations that he intends to make to the Police and Crime Plan. The Panel is required to provide a statutory report on those proposed variations to the Plan to which the Commissioner has responded. The Panel's report and Commissioner's response are available on the Panel's website <http://westmidlandspcp.co.uk/>. For ease of reference the Commissioner's response is attached to this report at **Annex B**.
14. The Panel welcomed the reshaping of the Police and Crime Plan which was an important document that provided a strong basis from which it would continue to challenge and scrutinise the Commissioner. The Panel was satisfied that many important issues had been covered but there were other areas that it asked the Commissioner to consider before finalising the Plan. These included:
 - Reintroducing the police cadet programme for young people
 - More detail to reflect the proactive work of the Force to address 'hidden crimes' and more details about how improvements would be achieved in each of the areas.

- Reference to be made to relevant forthcoming legislative changes
 - More information about how the Force would discharge its Prevent duties and support local authorities in theirs.
 - Reference to be made to the impact of alcohol-related crime
 - A suggestion that attention be given to ex-military personnel in the mental health triage service
 - More context to be provided to give clarity to the public on the rationale for the Commissioner's chosen priorities.
15. The Board will note from the Commissioner's response that a number of the matters raised by the Panel have been reflected in the Plan which is included elsewhere on this agenda.

Commissioning of support services for victims of crime

16. The Commissioner spoke to the report he had prepared on commissioning support services for victims. He outlined the funding arrangements, the background to the establishment of his Victims Commission and the value he placed on working with the third sector. While the Commission had only just held its first meeting, which the Commissioner attended, the Commissioner already believed that the body would be a valuable advisory body to him.
17. The Commissioner offered updates in the future should the Panel so wish.

Question time with the Commissioner

18. Questions raised by the Panel during the question time session at the 19 January meeting related to counter terrorism policing particularly in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris.
19. Questions raised by the Panel at the 2 February meeting related to the handling of Freedom of Information requests. This followed an article in the Birmingham Mail in which there had been some criticism of the initial refusal by the Force to provide information which was subsequently provided. The Deputy Chief Constable provided an explanation of the approach to Freedom of Information requests taken by the Force.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

20. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

21. Schedule 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 sets out the process for issuing a precept including the Panel's role in reviewing the proposed precept.

22. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 also sets out the process for the Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan and the Panel's role in the process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

23. The Board is asked to note the report.

Jacky Courtney
Chief Executive