



# Vibrant Safe and Sustainable Scrutiny Panel

## Minutes – 10 April 2014

### Attendance

#### Members of the Panel

Cllr Steve Simkins (Chair)  
Cllr Ian Brookfield  
Cllr Bishan Dass  
Cllr Barry Findlay  
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal  
Cllr Keith Inston  
Cllr Arun Photay  
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz  
Cllr Tersaim Singh  
Cllr Richard Whitehouse  
Cllr Andrew Wynne

#### Employees

Sheila Collett	Head of Neighbourhood Services
Lisa Parmar	Neighbourhood Safety Co-ordinator, Education and Enterprise
Jim Smith	Neighbourhood Safety Coordinator, Education and Enterprise
Karen Samuels	Head of Community Safety
Earl Piggott-Smith	Scrutiny Officer

#### Partners

Chief Inspector Darren Walsh West Midlands Police

### Apologies

No apologies for absence were received

## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

*Item No.*      *Title*

### MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS

#### **Chair's announcements**

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Chair) requested that letters of thanks be sent to all witnesses on behalf of the Panel who have attended meetings during 2013/14.

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Chair) thanked members of the Panel for their contributions to the discussion during the meetings and commented on the progress of the panel in meetings its remit. Cllr Steve Simkins commented on the wide remit of the Panel and expressed concern that some issues were not covered sufficiently during the year and would like this issue to be reviewed.

Chief Inspector Darren Walsh reported on awards given to two police officers at the recent Diamond Awards for their dedication to duty. The Panel wanted to formally add their congratulations to the officers concerned for receiving their awards. The Panel recommended that consideration be given to having a mayoral reception to formally acknowledge the work of the police and in particular those officers that have received awards.

#### 2.      **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3.      **Minutes of the previous meeting**

That the minutes of 13 March 2014 be amended to include Councillors Sue Constable and Bisham Dass as attending the meeting.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 13 March 2014 subject to agreed changes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 4.      **Matters arising**

Cllr Stephen Simkins referred to the discussion about the Crime Reduction Community Safety and Drugs Strategy.

The Panel requested update on request for information about zero contract hours relating to gangs commissioned delivery and how the contract will demonstrate value for money. The Panel also requested details of the powers of the Panel to hold the National Public Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) to account as the new providers for offender management.

Karen Samuels stated that not able to provide the information requested as the process for awarding the contract for the CRC has not yet been completed.

Karen Samuels agreed to provide an update to the Panel meeting in September or October 2014 when more details will hopefully be available. The report should include details of the performance indicators for the new service providers.

Chief Inspector Darren Walsh commented on the good performance of Wolverhampton in reducing re-offending rates and explained that issues about the role of the Council to hold the new body are not clear. Chief Inspector Walsh welcomed some of the planned changes but the situation will be clearer when the Ministry of Justice publish the performance framework.

The Panel expressed some concern about the lack of clarity about the role of scrutiny to hold successful bidder responsible for the management and rehabilitation of offenders.

Resolved:

That a report be presented at a future meeting.

## 5. **Work Programme 2013-14**

Earl Piggott-Smith provided a report which enabled review and development of the work programme for Vibrant Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel. Earl Piggott-Smith outlined details of the work done by the Panel during the year. Councillor Andrew Wynne requested that a further report on the revised deployment of the Neighbourhood Wardens across the City and its impact should be presented to the Panel in December 2014

Resolved:

1. The work programme update was noted.
2. Report on the deployment of the Neighbourhood Wardens to be presented to the Panel in December 2014 5 with performance data.

## 6. **Wolverhampton Local Police Unit Neighbourhood Watch**

Chief Inspector Darren Walsh presented a report to update the Panel on the work of the Neighbourhood Watch schemes (NHW). Chief Inspector Walsh commented on the increase in the number of NHW schemes and reasons for the current distribution across the City.

Chief Inspector Darren Walsh explained the current police boundaries across the City. Chief Inspector Darren Walsh commented on potential to increase the number of existing NHW Schemes in the future. Chief Inspector Darren Walsh commented on the flexible approach taken to creating and supporting NHW which is determined by the needs of the local community. Jim Smith commented the challenge in encouraging local residents to set up schemes in areas where the population is more mobile.

Shelia Collett commented on the need for further work to be done to support the development of NHW schemes in those areas of the City which currently do not have many schemes. Shelia Collett also commented on the need to offer reassurance to those communities who may have concerns about setting up a NHW schemes in their area.

The Panel queried whether there was a link between those areas with low crime rate and the number of NHW schemes in these areas. There was discussion about the possible reasons for this pattern. Jim Smith commented that local people were interested in setting up NHW schemes but they were concerns about possible retaliation if this was known to the wider community and there was a need to offer reassurance.

Lisa Parmar commented on the positive feedback from the 60 people who attended the NHW Co-ordinators event. Councillor Stephen Simkins stated that the event had provided an excellent first event and that this type of event should be held annually and should engage wider partners and Councillors

The Panel welcomed the focus by the police on 'cold spots strategy' where there is currently small number of NHW schemes.

Resolved:

That Panel supported the progress made to supporting the existing network of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and the plans for increasing the number of schemes in those areas currently underrepresented.

## 7. **Ministry of Justice - Transforming Rehabilitation: Update and Implications**

Karen Samuels presented an update report on the Ministry of Justice plans for introducing a new system for the management and rehabilitation of offenders. The plans focus on reducing re-offending rates, particularly among offender aged over 21 years.

Karen Samuels confirmed that West Midlands is among the top 10 performing areas for reducing re-offending rates. Karen Samuels outlined the main differences between the current arrangements for managing offenders and the new proposed arrangements.

Karen Samuels and Chief Inspector Darren Walsh welcomed the some elements of the proposed changes which will extend rehabilitation of offenders to include all adult offenders on community orders or suspended sentence orders where a custodial sentence of more than 1 day has been made. At present offenders over 21 who receive a terms of imprisonment under 12 months do not have statutory community supervision provided. Chief Inspector Darren Walsh also welcomed the requirement for new providers to work with offenders three months before their release in resettlement prisons to help in their transition and reduce the risk of re-offending.

Karen Samuels outlined the timetable for the scheme and the opportunities for local community and voluntary sector groups to bid for contracts with the successful Community Rehabilitation Company to be part of the supply chain.

Chief Inspector Darren Walsh commented on the opportunity presented by the changes to offer the right pathways, which offers the potential to make a real difference to lives of offenders.

The Panel welcomed the report but expressed concerns that the any new providers would not be subject to proper scrutiny. The Panel proposed that an invitation be sent to the successful bidder to attend a future meeting. The Panel suggested that this could be done 12 –15 months after the contract has been awarded to allow opportunity to assess performance.

Resolved:

1. The Panel would like to invite the successful bidder for Staffordshire and West Midlands Contract Package Area to a future meeting of the Panel.
2. The Panel requested that a report be presented on their work and progress against the key service performance targets.

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