**Friday April 26th, 2013**

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**Item 5**

**Old Restaurant, Wakefield Town Hall**

**Moving Forwards: Panel’s Work Programme**

**1. Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to prompt the Panel to consider:

* The nature of its relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner/ the Commissioner’s Office, following the publication of the Police and Crime Plan
* The focus of its future work programme and the way in which it takes this forward

**2. Background and Context**

2.1 Since the formation of the Police and Crime Panel in November 2012, its focus has, through necessity, centred on exercising its key statutory duties:

* Reviewing the proposed precept
* Reviewing the Police and Crime Plan
* Confirming senior appointments

(A new Chief Constable and Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner in the case of West Yorkshire)

2.2 Following the publication of the Police and Crime Plan, the Panel is now moving into a new phase as it begins to assess the impact that the Commissioner is having on communities across West Yorkshire.

2.3 In previous discussions about the Panel’s preferred approach to supporting and constructively challenging the Commissioner, Members have agreed that:

* They do not wish to be confined by the narrow role prescribed to Police and Crime Panels by Central Government.
* They would prefer to consider a wide range of information in the first instance with a view to potentially narrowing the Panel’s scope in future, if deemed appropriate.
* They need to focus on the strategic decisions made by the Commissioner and the impact that these decisions have on delivering the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan.
* They will not investigate or comment upon operational or organisational issues relating directly to the Force.

2.4 During these same discussions, the Panel indicated that it wished to prioritise the following issues/ themes within its work programme:

* Performance against the Police and Crime Plan
* Local perspectives

(Feedback from Community Safety Partnerships and Local Scrutiny Committees)

* Commissioner’s budget (Force and OPCC)
* Work of the Independent Audit Committee
* Local policing

(ASB, neighbourhood policing, hate crime, stop and search)

* Complaints against the Commissioner
* Regional collaboration
* Progress against the Strategic Policing Requirement
* Approach to supporting an ‘effective and efficient criminal justice system’, including support to victims and witnesses

(Feedback from West Yorkshire Criminal Justice Board)

2.5 The Panel’s work programme, as illustrated at item 11, has consequently been developed on this basis.

**3. Moving Forwards**

3.1 Subject to Panel Members confirming the assumptions outlined in 2.3 and 2.4, there is a need for a further discussion about the practicalities associated with taking the work programme forward on this basis.

3.2 A number of Panel Members have expressed an interest in leading on a particular issue/ theme to increase their own involvement with the Panel’s work programme and to ensure that the Panel’s approach is Member driven.

3.3 At the LGA Conference on Police and Crime Panels in London on March 21st, it became apparent that a significant number of Panels from across the country are intending to apply this ‘lead Member’ approach.

3.4 Whilst some Panels are intending to allocate ‘portfolios’ to Panel Members which reflect the objectives within the Police and Crime Plan, it would also be feasible for the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel to allocate ‘lead Members’ to the issues/ themes that they have already prioritised (as listed in 2.4)

3.5 If the Panel opted for the former approach, the ‘portfolios’ (as outlined in the Police and Crime Plan) would be:

* Safer communities
* Reducing crime and reoffending
* Reducing anti-social behaviour
* Supporting victims and witnesses
* Tackling local, regional and national threats, risks and harms
* Securing an effective and efficient Criminal Justice System
* Listening to communities

3.6 However, as has been previously articulated by the Panel, some of these objectives from within the Police and Crime Plan are particularly high level and would be difficult to monitor/ report back on without a robust performance management framework and indicators in place to underpin them.

For this reason, the Panel may choose to focus on a selection of the issues/ themes agreed previously (listed under 2.4) as well as a selection of the more specific objectives from within the Plan.

3.7 The way this ‘lead Member’ model would best work in practise is open to discussion by the Panel and whether it is indeed implemented clearly depends on the interest and ‘buy in’ of Panel Members.

3.8 The intention is not that this model would result in a committee structure, akin to that which operated under the Police Authority, but that each Member could determine their own role in overseeing a particular aspect of the Panel’s work programme.

For example, it may involve having regular meetings with the lead officer from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, or with the Commissioner himself, or it may just mean taking responsibility for ensuring the Commissioner provides the Panel with the necessary information.

3.9 The AWYA resource would still be in place to offer any, and as much, support as Panel Members might need and to continue to oversee/ co-ordinate the Panel’s work programme.

3.10 Closer links between Panel Members and the Commissioner/ the Commissioner’s Office has the potential to promote and harness positive working relationships between the Panel and the Commissioner, as well as helping to strike the right balance between scrutiny and support.

Panel Members, for example, could play a central role in helping the Commissioner to develop a performance management framework which helps him to understand the impact of his interventions in a particular field.

3.11 The importance of Panel Members retaining strong links with their local Community Safety Partnerships and local Scrutiny Committees would not cease.

**4. Recommendations**

4.1 The Panel is asked to:

* Re-visit their previous comments on the Panel’s forward work programme (as outlined in 2.3 and 2.4)
* Comment on the merits of a ‘Member led’ approach to the delivery of its work programme
* Suggest ways in which a ‘Member led’ approach could best work for the Police and Crime Panel
* Express an interest in leading on a particular ‘portfolio’ should this be the preferred way forward
* Consider the balance it wishes to strike between ‘support’ and ‘scrutiny’ and discuss how this might best be achieved