**Friday, 24th April 2015**

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**Item 13**

**Ploughland House, Wakefield**

**Local Perspectives: the impact of the Commissioner**

**1. Purpose**

* 1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Panel of the work and views of the district Community Safety Partnerships and Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees. Updates have been received from three of the Community Safety Partnerships and only one Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the protocols agreed between the Police and Crime Panel and the local bodies.
  2. It is recommended that the Panel notes the common trends and views highlighted in the report. Suggestions for future work may be included in the Panel’s forward plan and members may also wish to raise any issues with the Police and Crime Commissioner at a future meeting.

**2. Views from Community Safety Partnerships**

2.1 Responses were received from three district Community Safety Partnerships (Bradford, Kirklees, Leeds).

2.2 Partnerships reiterated their feeling that local priorities were incorporated into the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan and that there was strong evidence that parties had ‘given regard to’ each other’s priorities.

2.3 There is strong evidence that the PCC is acting in accordance with his Police and Crime Plan. This includes widespread appreciation and support for his strong visible presence to listen to the views of communities and victims about how they might feel safer.

2.4 The Partnerships recognise the steps that the PCC is taking to build links. The PCC has brought the CSPs together in the West Yorkshire Community Safety Forum which looks at West Yorkshire-wide issues, sharing good practice and developing new approaches. Partnerships welcome the opportunity to engage regularly with the PCC to ensure strategic alignment between local and West Yorkshire-wide priorities.

2.5 Work is taking place at a West Yorkshire level to consider joint programmes around shared priorities in relation to Domestic Violence and Abuse, Child Sexual Exploitation, supporting vulnerable individuals (mental health) and Victims, which will bring greater consistency and improve services to these priority groups.

2.6 As well as the joint work, the Partnerships feel that the Commissioner supports them to address local priorities by enabling local areas to take ownership for PCC funding and providing support and insight into best practice in the region, eg Human Trafficking.

2.7 Partnerships have reported that across West Yorkshire, progress against priorities is generally as expected and most crime targets have been met. However, the changes to National Crime Recording Standards has had an impact and some crime targets have not been achieved as a result of the changes.

2.8 Partnerships feel that the funding passported to CSP’s from the Commissioner’s office has benefited the local areas enabling the continuation of existing programmes of work and the development of new initiatives. The opportunity to flexibly target funding to emerging priorities has been welcomed.

2.9 Additional funding provided in 2015/16 has helped to sustain models of good practice in relation to services to Victims, ASB, Domestic Violence, burglary reduction and drug and alcohol programmes, neighbourhood resolution Panels and approaches to restorative justice.

2.10 Partnerships have commented on the importance of timely handling of funding opportunities and in particular the need for early clarity around funding arrangements beyond 2015/16.

2.11 It has also been stressed that notwithstanding the benefits of experimenting with new and innovative delivery models, there is a need to ensure that new services are not being commissioned at the expense of those with a proven track record of delivering against West Yorkshire and local priorities.

**3. Views from Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees**

3.1 A response was received from the Wakefield Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

3.2 Since the last report to Panel Wakefield C&D Scrutiny has investigated the following issues which relate to priorities within the Police and Crime Plan:

**Hate crime**

During the year the committee has followed up on the implementation of recommendations it made in Feb/March 2014. All of these are now in progress or completed and include:

* A communication plan to raise awareness of existing methods of reporting hate crime/incidents, including specific measures targeted at minority groups.
* A co-ordinated public-awareness campaign to increase understanding of hate crime incidents across the district.
* A regular and on-going training programme for staff from all partner agencies likely to come in to contact with hate crime victims.
* Specific reference to hate crime in the Community Safety Plan.
* A hate crime action plan to co-ordinate partnership activity to address hate crime issues.

During the course of the investigation Wakefield became aware that unlike the other four police divisions in West Yorkshire, it does not have a Hate Crime Co-ordinator. No response has been received as to why this is the case.

**Domestic Abuse** – the committee has contributed to the development of a new domestic abuse strategy and is now beginning to follow up on actions to implement the strategy.

**Cybercrime** – the police provided the committee with an overview of the nature and extent of this type of crime in Wakefield.

**Victims’ and Witnesses’ Strategy** – the committee have contributed to the development of the first Victims’ and Witnesses’ Support Strategy for the district.

* 1. The Wakefield C&D Scrutiny Committee have given the following positive examples of the way in which the Police and Crime Commissioner is impacting on the district:
* The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) made £1 million available for use on county-wide programmes to tackle domestic abuse through the West Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Steering Group. The Group has identified gaps in services where this money can be put to good use e.g. perpetrator programmes. This will help to support the work that Wakefield’s Community Safety Partnership is already doing to tackle domestic abuse.
* The PCC has launched an online resource [www.helpforvictims.co.uk](http://www.helpforvictims.co.uk) aiming to help victims of crime find the help and support they need. Again this is in line with the recent work of our own Community Safety Partnership to improve support for victims.
* Wakefield’s Safer Places Scheme received a grant from the PCC’s Safer Communities Fund. This scheme is aimed at vulnerable people with learning disabilities, autism, dementia etc. and enables them to get help and support from places identified as safe havens e.g. shops, libraries, bus stations, where there will be someone who can help them in the event that they become a victim of crime, lost or feel unwell.

3.4The Wakefield C&D Scrutiny Committee is concerned about the impact of budget cuts on local policing. The committee are concerned that relatively low crime areas of West Yorkshire, such as Wakefield, may suffer as a result of the on-going cuts and that resources will be moved to higher crime areas. Although efforts are being made to protect frontline policing, the committee is concerned that this will potentially result in a poorer service to Wakefield and increased pressure on the remaining officers serving our communities.

3.5.The work programme for Wakefield’s C&D Scrutiny Committee for the forthcoming year will be discussed once the committee reconvenes following the local elections in June.

3.6 Wakefield Panel members have an open invitation to attend all scrutiny meetings as observers and the Chair will invite them to contribute if required.

**4. Implications for Panel**

4.1 Crucial to the success of the ‘Local Perspectives’ process is the two-way provision of information. Whilst information will be relayed back to the Partnerships and Committees that have kindly provided information for the Panel, this might be further underpinned by Panel members de-briefing colleagues in constituent areas in order to put in a firmer local context.

4.2 It is recommended that the Panel notes the common trends and views highlighted in the report. Suggestions for future work may be included in the Panel’s work programme and members may also wish to raise certain issues with the PCC.