



## West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel

### Principles for Engagement:

## Local Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees

### Background to Local Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees

Provisions in the Police and Justice Act 2006 extended the remit of local authorities to scrutinise crime and disorder functions and as of April 2009 each Council has been required to designate a Scrutiny Board to act as their 'Crime and Disorder Committee.'

'Crime and Disorder Committees' have the powers to review or scrutinise decisions made (or action taken) by the local Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the 'responsible authorities' that comprise it, but only with regards to activities which relate to the Partnership itself.

### Impact of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

Although the Act did not change the legal remit of local authority Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees, they will not have the power to directly scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner because he/ she will not be a 'responsible authority' on the CSP.

Under previous arrangements the Scrutiny Committees could scrutinise the West Yorkshire Police Authority. However, the reforms signal a readjustment of responsibilities in relation to the scrutiny of policing in West Yorkshire. In this sense, the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel will carry out part of the role previously exercised by Local Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees.

### Rationale for Engagement

The West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel fully recognise the benefits of establishing and maintaining strong links with the five Local Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees. These Local Scrutiny Committees can play a critical role in helping the Panel:

- To **recognise** the needs and concerns of local communities in relation to community safety and crime.
- To better **understand** the link between the strategic direction set by the Police and Crime Commissioner and its impact on individual wards and **neighbourhoods**.

- To **assess the impact** of all Partners on crime and community safety related issues in each district.
- To apply the **skills and expertise** necessary to effectively scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- To **focus** on issues which are common to all of the West Yorkshire districts.
- To **maximise its resources** by contributing to scrutiny work initiated by the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel.

Equally, the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel is eager to assist Local Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees by:

- Holding the **Commissioner to account** if he/she
  - Has a detrimental impact on the safety or confidence of communities in West Yorkshire
  - Raises public concern due to their chosen approach
  - Acts in a way which would have previously prompted the Committee to ‘call in the responsible authority.’
- **Informing and supporting** the Commissioner in such a way as to ensure his/ her approach and plans reflect the needs and interests of the diverse communities across West Yorkshire.
- **Promoting** policing and community safety interventions which have proved successful in the past or are working well under the Commissioner.
- **Leading** on scrutiny investigations on behalf of the five Scrutiny Committees where issues of sub-regional significance have been identified.

## **Moving Forwards**

On the basis of the rationale outlined above, the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel will work in partnership with Local Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committees (CDCs) in the following ways:

### **1. Panel Meetings**

- 1.1 CDC Chairs will, at the very least, be invited to meetings of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel on an annual basis to engage in an open discussion about the impact of the Commissioner in each district and to review the relevance of the latest iteration of the ‘Principles for Engagement.’
- 1.2 Should serious concerns arise during the year, the Panel may ask one or more CDC Chairs to attend additional Panel meetings and provide their perspective on the issue under consideration.

1.3 CDC Chairs can request an item to be put on the agenda of a Panel meeting by contacting the Chair of the Panel directly and explaining the reason for the request.

## **2. Influencing the Police and Crime Plan**

2.1 The Police and Crime Panel is in a fortunate position in terms of its ability to influence the development of the Police and Crime Plan and the CDCs are encouraged to inform the Panel's approach when exercising this influence.

2.2 The Police and Crime Panel will encourage the Commissioner to have regard to the business cases and strategic assessments submitted by the individual authorities when developing his/ her Police and Crime Plan and subsequent commissioning arrangements.

2.3 CDCs will be sent a copy of all the draft iterations of the Police and Crime Plan that are submitted to the Panel and will be asked to return any comments or suggestions in advance of the Panel meeting during which the draft will be discussed.

2.4 CDCs are also asked to brief their authority's Panel Members in advance of any discussions on the Plan so the local perspective is sufficiently understood and so the Panel is made aware if the Plan does not have regard to the evidenced needs of communities across West Yorkshire.

## **3. Regular Exchange of Information and Intelligence**

3.1 The five CDCs will each complete a quarterly briefing note for use by all Panel Members to support them in assessing the impact of the Commissioner across West Yorkshire.

3.2 The lead scrutiny officers will be notified of the deadlines for these briefing notes as far in advance as is practicable. These deadlines will be aligned with Panel Meeting dates as responses will be required two weeks before each Panel meeting.

3.3 All completed briefings notes are to be formally approved by the CDC Chair before submission.

3.4 Unless a request is made to the contrary, all submissions will be circulated to the other CDCs in West Yorkshire to allow comparisons and further linkages to be made.

3.5 The completion of the briefing notes will not be an onerous task and will only call upon information and examples that the CDCs are already aware of or hold.

- 3.6 CDCs will be encouraged to play an active role in developing and adapting the themes covered within the briefing note.
- 3.7 Questions in the briefing note will, at the very least, relate to:
- The findings of any relevant investigations carried out at the local level
  - Plans for any future investigations at the local level which may be of interest or relevance to the Panel and/ or other CDCs in West Yorkshire.
  - Any concerns the CDCs want the Panel to be aware of, to either raise directly with the Police and Crime Commissioner or to investigate further.
  - Any suggestions about the way in which the Panel could better support or influence the approach of the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 3.8 Panel Members will have sight of all of the completed briefing notes as well as a covering note highlighting any common issues or trends.
- 3.9 CDCs may also choose to arrange regular verbal briefings with the Panel Members representing their authority on the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel.

#### **4. Co-ordinating Work Programmes**

- 4.1 CDCs will submit the latest iteration of their work programmes along with their quarterly briefing notes.
- 4.2 These work programmes will then be circulated to the five CDC lead officers to help identify linkages across the five CDC work programmes and will also be used by the AWYA to identify linkages between the work of the CDCs and the Panel.
- 4.3 In cases where the CDCs are due to carry out investigations that are likely to be of interest to the Panel, the Panel may request a short briefing note summarising the results of these investigations.
- 4.4 Where one or more of the CDCs are due to investigate the same issue the Panel may decide to carry out the investigation at a sub-regional level on behalf of all five CDCs or in conjunction with them.
- 4.5 If the Panel identifies an issue for concern which relates to only one of the West Yorkshire districts, the relevant CDC may be asked to lead on the resultant investigation with support from a Panel Member from that authority.

- 4.6 CDCs will be notified of such a request from the Panel at the earliest possible opportunity and the Panel recognises that the CDC response to these requests will be dependent on the availability of resources at that time.
- 4.7 Equally, the Panel's ability to lead on investigations on behalf of the CDCs will be resource and work load dependent.

**5. Aligning Membership**

- 5.1 Where possible, at least one Panel Member will sit on each CDC to ensure the Panel has a detailed understanding of local issues as well as the skills necessary to effectively scrutinise the Commissioner.
- 5.2 Where membership is not aligned in this way a Panel Member from each authority will be designated as the lead Panel Member for their authority's CDC and as such will contribute to CDC meetings and investigations as and when required and subject to existing workload pressures.