



**OFFICE OF THE POLICE & CRIME  
COMMISSIONER FOR THAMES VALLEY**

**REPORT FOR DECISION**     2013 - 036

**Title: Governance - PCC responsibilities on Supporting Victims**

**Executive Summary:**

The attached paper recommends a governance structure incorporated within the existing LCJB structure to support the PCC to discharge his various duties and responsibilities towards victims of crime. Key objectives of the proposed structure include (a) to ensure commissioning decisions are well informed and the PCC is transparent, and therefore accountable, with regards to those decisions, and (b) to improve PCC engagement and oversight of the services to victims provided by other CJ agencies, particularly implementation of the revised Victim's Code.

**Recommendation:**

**That the PCC that the following recommendation be proposed to the LCJB for approval and adoption:**

- (a) a revised structure supporting victims provided in Figure 1 in the paper. The new 'Victims, Witnesses and RJ' (VWRJ) sub-group would replace 3 existing Delivery/strategy groups (the Victims and Witnesses Delivery Group, the DV Strategy Group and the RJ Strategy Group),**
- (b) Chairmanship of the new group is provided via the PCC (potentially the Deputy PCC so that the PCC can engage at LCJB Board level),**
- (c) the Terms of Reference and Delivery Plan for the new group is revised in line with PCC responsibilities towards victims, and**
- (d) Operational or 'Task and Finish' groups be created as required to support thematic areas of work required by the VWRJ Delivery Group.**

**Police and Crime Commissioner**

I hereby approve the recommendation above.

**Signature**

**Date: 29 November 2013**

## **PART 1 – NON-CONFIDENTIAL**

### **1 Introduction and background**

- 1.1 Police and Crime Commissioners have a duty to consult with victims when preparing their Police and Crime Plans and, from October 2014, the majority of emotional and practical support services for victims of crime will be commissioned locally by PCCs. In addition to their central role of holding the police to account for their performance, they have a less well-defined, but nevertheless important, responsibility to galvanise closer working across all criminal justice agencies. Together, this gives PCCs a central role in leading victim-focussed work, for instance, ensuring the delivery of the revised Victims Code by all CJ agencies.
- 1.2 This paper sets out a proposed governance mechanism for the Thames Valley PCC to discharge his duty towards victims, including:-
- To inform commissioning decisions with respect to victims services funding;
  - To oversee implementation by other Criminal Justice (CJ) agencies of the Victim's Code, and to provide a mechanism to challenge those who fail to deliver;
  - To work with Local Authorities and other partners towards building an effective and integrated set of services for victims across Thames Valley (removing the postcode lottery);
  - To develop and monitor a mechanism to review feedback from victims, or complaints on services received from statutory or commissioned services; and
  - To ensure that the Thames Valley Police and Crime Plan, and the plans of all partner agencies, adequately reflect and focus on the needs and rights of victims of crime.

### **2 Issues for consideration**

#### Current Thames Valley governance mechanisms supporting victims

- 2.1 The Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) provides a forum for CJ agencies to meet and work towards shared priorities via several separate delivery mechanisms.
- 2.2 A Delivery Group of the existing LCJB, the Victims & Witnesses Delivery Group is chaired by the charity Victim Support, takes responsibility for CJ activity affecting victims, such as implementation of the Witness Charter and monitoring unsatisfactory court outcomes or other CJ processes where victims have failed to receive justice.
- 2.3 A Domestic Violence (DV) Strategy Group, a sub-group of the Victims & Witnesses Delivery Group, is chaired by an Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) of Thames Valley Police. This group consists of local authority partners, statutory agencies and charities concerned with domestic violence with the objective of seeking closer collaboration and coordination across Thames Valley.

- 2.4 A Restorative Justice (RJ) Strategy Group, chaired by the charity Thames Valley Partnership, exists independently of the LCJB and was set up to drive and oversee RJ activity across relevant statutory and voluntary sector agencies. The group has representation from the probation and police services as well as the voluntary sector.
- 2.5 Local Authorities, via Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) have various mechanisms for commissioning and overseeing services relating to victims of crime or anti-social behaviour. Many have DV groups sitting below CSP Boards, and YOTs have a Thames Valley victim's officers group reporting to the Thames Valley YOT Managers Group.
- 2.6 It is also possible that additional commissioning for victims services is take place through new forums such as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Health & Wellbeing Boards, although CSPs should be made aware of such activity via CCGs (who are a responsible authority on all CSPs).
- 2.7 Both children's and adult's safeguarding boards also have shared interests and responsibilities in relation to vulnerable people who are victims of crime and in ensuring that agencies comply with their statutory duties with regards to those individuals.
- 2.8 To identify further collaboration opportunities in relation to CSP commissioning, the PCC has recently established a CSP 'Future's Forum', which involves CSP Managers and has led to the creation of several working groups. The remit of the groups is to identify joint working/commissioning opportunities in relation to their respective themes (among them DV and human exploitation).

Proposed Thames Valley governance mechanism to support victims

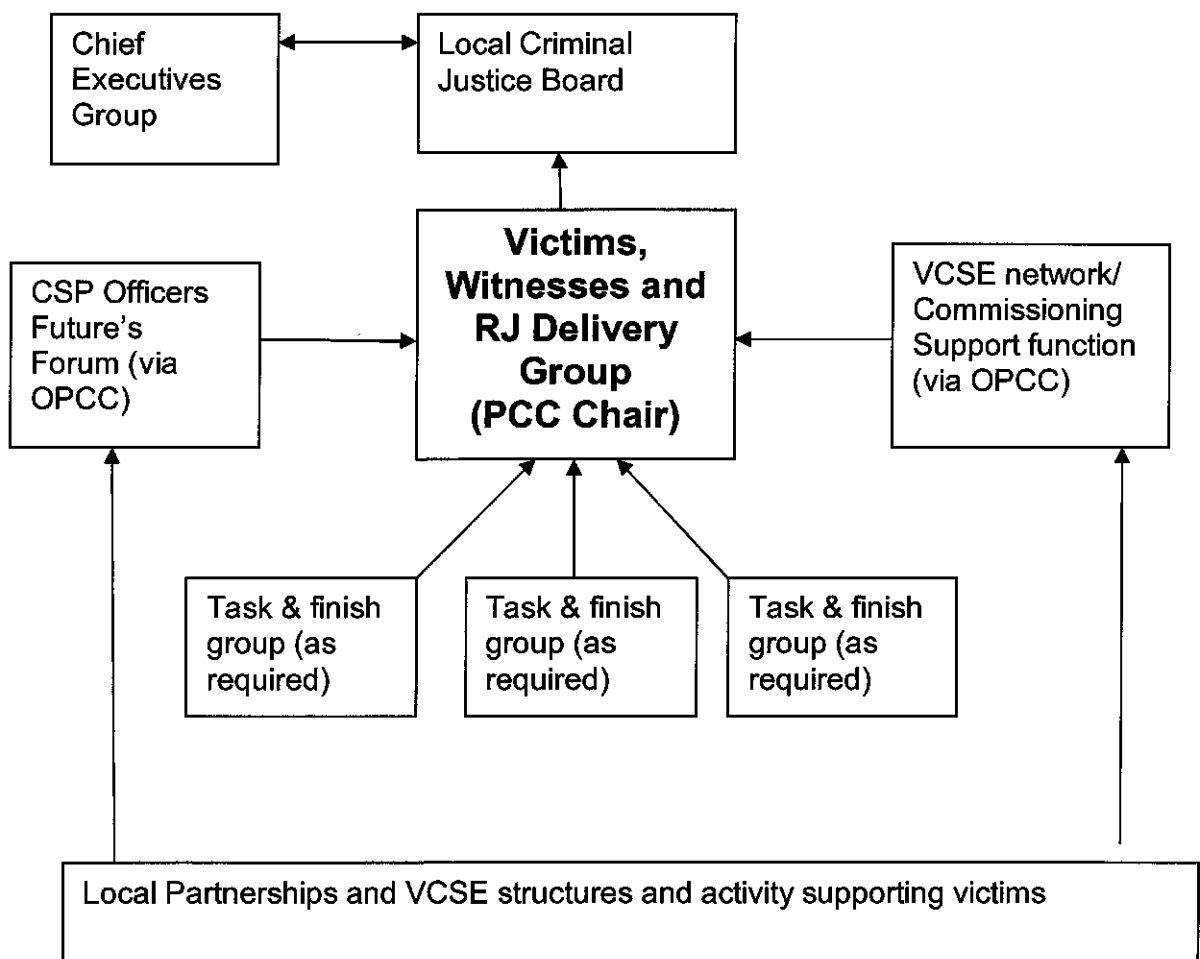
- 2.9 A governance mechanism to allow the PCC to oversee and monitor delivery of all Thames Valley Local Authority and CJ activity in relation to victims (as outlined in the Introduction above), is provided in Figure 1. The proposed structure acknowledges the importance of engaging with CJ agencies as well as local authority partners in relation to supporting victims.
- 2.10 At the top tier, the existing LCJB and Chief Executives Group have cross-cutting interests in relation to victims of crime through ensuring that the various statutory authorities within their remit support and deliver services of a high standard to victims and are accountable for the decisions they make.
- 2.11 It is proposed that a new 'Victims, Witnesses and RJ Delivery Group' is formed to replace the existing Victims and Witnesses Delivery Group and the existing Domestic Violence Strategy Group. This group should also take over a strategic-level function in relation to RJ, which is not currently overseen under the LCJB umbrella. The 'Victims, Witnesses and RJ group' would require a new Terms of Reference, a comprehensive Delivery Plan and a new Chair with considerable authority to drive forward multi-agency work supporting victims.
- 2.12 It is proposed here that the Terms of Reference includes strategic objectives mirroring the PCC priorities listed in the 'Introduction' above. Detailed actions, owners and delivery dates would be reflected in the Delivery Plan, and risks to delivering against the agreed priorities would be raised to the LCJB. The Chief Executives Group and the Police and Crime Panel would also receive up-dates

at a frequency agreed by those groups via the Victim, Witnesses and RJ Group Chair.

2.13 The PCC has a wider remit around supporting victims that all other CJ agencies, due to the devolving of victims service's funding to PCCs and his duty to consult with, and champion, the rights and needs of victims. The PCC also has a responsibility to cooperate with Local Authority partners to improve community safety, and to generate closer working across the criminal justice system, hence can serve as a bridge between the Criminal Justice System and Local Authority partners.

2.14 The proposed structure is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Proposed Governance Structure



### **3 Financial comment**

- 3.1 The PCC has recently been allocated a grant for 2013/14 from the MoJ of £730,464. This grant is to be used to:
- Build RJ capacity in your area and, where capacity is sufficient, fund RJ activity
  - Build the capacity and capability of wider VCSE support providers in advance of local commissioning
  - Prepare yourselves for local commissioning
- 3.2 Any costs associated with developing the governance structure will be funded from the MoJ grant

### **4 Legal comments**

- 4.1 The PCC is responsible for developing appropriate commissioning arrangements for victims' services. Establishing appropriate and effective governance arrangements is an integral and vital part of this work.

### **5 Equality comments**

- 5.1 No specific issues arising directly from this report

### **6 Background papers**

Minister's letter dated 4 November 2013  
MoJ Victim services Commissioning Framework (May 2013)

**Public access to information**

Information in this form is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and other legislation. Part 1 of this form will be made available on the website within 1 working day of approval. Any facts and advice that should not be automatically available on request should not be included in Part 1 but instead on a separate Part 2 form. Deferment of publication is only applicable where release before that date would compromise the implementation of the decision being approved.

**Is the publication of this form to be deferred? No**

**If yes, for what reason?**

**Until what date?**

**Is there a Part 2 form? No**

| <b>Name &amp; Role</b>  | <b>Officer</b>        |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Head of Unit</b><br>This report proposes an appropriate governance structure to discharge the PCC's various duties and responsibilities towards victims of crime | Policy Officer        |
| <b>Legal Advice</b><br>The PCC is responsible for developing appropriate commissioning services for victims and witnesses.  | Chief Executive       |
| <b>Financial Advice</b><br>The MoJ has provided a grant of £730,464 to fund this activity in 2013/14  | Chief Finance Officer |
| <b>Equalities &amp; Diversity</b><br>No specific issues arising from this report  | Chief Executive       |

**OFFICER'S APPROVAL**

We have been consulted about the proposal and confirm that financial and legal advice have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

We are satisfied that this is an appropriate request to be submitted to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

  
Chief Executive

Date: 29 November 2013

  
Chief Finance Officer

Date: 29 November 2013