



WEST MIDLANDS
COMBINED AUTHORITY

WMCA Board Meeting

Date	12 January 2018
Report title	Report of the Commission on Gangs & Violence: “Uniting to Improve Safety”
Portfolio Lead	Not applicable – Report from the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner
Accountable Chief Executive	Not applicable
Accountable employee(s)	Not applicable
Report to be/has been considered by	WMCA Programme Board - 15 December 2017

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The WMCA Board is recommended to:

- (1) Note the report of the Commission on Gangs and Violence, and agree ongoing participation in the Commission and the implementation of the report’s recommendations.

Purpose

- 1.1 To engage West Midlands Combined Authority in the collective response to gangs and gang related violence in the West Midlands and promote the report of the Commission on Gangs and Violence.

Background

- 2.1 Gangs and gang related violence affects all areas of the West Midlands, with some areas affected more severely than others. The impact of gangs and gang related violence includes, of course, those directly affected and harmed (including loss of life and terrible injuries, as well as other physical and mental harm), but also links to employment opportunities, economic development and the reputational consequences for inward investment. The Gangs and Violence Commission was established by the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2016 following an increase in gang related violence in Birmingham, and is a community-led group consisting of statutory partners and a network of “specialist providers” working with gang members, those at risk of becoming involved in gang related activity, families affected by gang violence and in gang affected areas. The Commission’s report, *Uniting to Improve Safety*, authored by Revd Dr Carver Anderson, was published in December 2017 (summary report attached, full report [here](#)).
- 2.2 The report was signed by the Police and Crime Commissioner, Chief Constable, Leader of Birmingham City Council, Birmingham’s Director of Public Health and Bishop Derek Webley, the Chair of the Commission. Mayor Andy Street made a video presentation at the report launch event.
- 2.3 The report includes 24 recommendations that are applicable to addressing gangs and gang related violence across the West Midlands. Highlights include:
 - A new negotiation and mediation capability to defuse violence between gangs and to help individuals disengage from gang activity.
 - A mentoring scheme to help young people at risk of offending
 - Support to rehabilitate ex-offenders as they leave prison.
 - New approaches to young people at risk of and experiencing school exclusion
 - Better engagement with businesses to support young people into employment and self-employment
- 2.4 The report also identifies three high level themes:
 - Ensuring enduring leadership, direction and commitment to the challenges posed by gangs and gang-related violence. The report finds a need for there to be sustained commitment to addressing gangs and gang-related violence, supported by appropriate processes and resources.
 - From enforcement to public health. The report sees gangs as a product of a range of wider social and economic factors, and addressing these – at individual, familial, community and population levels – will be more effective than enforcement and deterrence alone.
 - Images and stereotypes: Representation in public debates. The report looks for a reframed public debate on how gangs impact on communities, and the promotion and empowerment of genuine, credible authoritative voices at neighbourhood and community levels.

- 2.5 The Police and Crime Commissioner has already committed £2 million of police funding to support projects and activity associated with reducing the impact of gangs. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner will support the continued operation of the Gangs and Violence Commission to develop, implement and monitor a multi-agency action plan to implement the recommendations. It is hoped that the mayoral West Midlands Combined Authority will be an active partner in that work.

Financial Implications

- 3.1 None.

Legal Implications

- 4.1 None.

Equalities implications

- 5.1 While gangs and gang related violence can affect all populations, protected characteristics associated with ethnicity and gender are particularly salient.

Other implications

- 6.1 None.

Schedule of background papers

- 7.1 Report of the Commission on Gangs & Violence: “Uniting to Improve Safety”