

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Item 7

REPORT for meeting to be held on 29 September 2011

Community safety partnership and performance

Summary:

In recent years, scrutiny committee has been provided with performance information from the Safer Norwich Partnership, the statutory community safety partnership (CSP) for Norwich, to inform its scrutiny function of that partnership. In 2010, the responsible authority partners in Norfolk agreed to merge the district level community safety partnerships to create a single Norfolk wide partnership, the decision for which has now been endorsed by the Home Secretary. The role of scrutiny committee will therefore change as the scrutiny of the partnership as a whole will now be undertaken at county level.

This report summarises these new arrangements which are being implemented. The report also covers the current CSP priorities, the information that will be used by the partnership to monitor performance, the forthcoming changes that will be introduced to community safety work in the near future and suggests an approach to identify areas that scrutiny committee may wish to explore further in more detail at a later meeting.

Recommendation:

Members are asked to consider the report and identify an area where they may wish to request officers provide further information for a more detailed review.

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Background

1. Under the crime and disorder act 1998 and subsequent legislation, a number of named statutory agencies are required to work in partnership to reduce crime and disorder. In Norfolk this includes Norwich City Council, Norfolk Constabulary, Norfolk Police Authority, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk PCT, district councils and the Probation Service.

2. These organisations are referred to as responsible authorities and work within community safety partnerships (CSPs) which were originally established at district or unitary local authority level.
3. The discharging of these duties rests with the responsible authorities whose membership is drawn from chief officers or their nominees. In local authorities the chief executive officer is the responsible person.

New partnership arrangements

4. During 2010, county level partners in particular, questioned the need for and capacity to continue to support seven district based CSPs as well as the county strategy group in Norfolk. The consequence of these formal arrangements for these partners was that various areas of work were undertaken eight times. A county level task and finish group developed draft revised working arrangements which proposed the following:
 - the seven district based community safety partnerships would merge to form a single community safety partnership (CSP) for Norfolk. This group would develop a countywide strategic assessment of crime and disorder and annual partnership plan to ensure that the necessary interventions are developed to resolve these issues
 - that district level local strategic partnerships would undertake strategic community safety work alongside their other work should they wish
 - existing district level operational community safety partnership groups would be revitalised to enable the prioritisation of longer term or embedded issues to be considered and would act as a link between the local strategic partnership, district level operational and neighbourhood working and enable local priorities to be escalated for resolution
 - the development of a co-located operational partnership team (OPT) in each district that would allow partners to prioritise short, medium and long term work and risk assess the most vulnerable people and locations and highest risk perpetrators.

Review of new arrangements

5. In Norwich a report on the proposals was considered by Cabinet in July 2010, where Cabinet resolved to endorse the merger of the Safer Norwich partnership with the six Norfolk district community safety partnerships to form a countywide community safety partnership, subject to:
 - the Council and local partners being able to access up to date crime and disorder data at district level

- the safer Norwich partnership brand being retained for operational purposes
 - Norfolk Constabulary considers how the anomaly of Bowthorpe being part of the South Norfolk policing arrangements can be resolved and integrated into the Norwich policing structure through this process
 - reassurance being provided from partners that the allocation of resources through the county community safety partnership uses a sound evidenced based approach and recognises the high levels of crime and disorder that occur in the city
 - opportunities for co-location and shared use of resources continue to be explored with the police and other partners and reported to the Executive should this be required
 - that the final decision be taken by the Chief Executive Officer as the named responsible person under the legislation.
6. The budget issues faced by the Council were also a contributory factor in taking this decision. It allowed the resources available to the Council to be focussed as far as possible onto front line activity rather than the administration of the partnership which would move to county level.
 7. The responsible authorities agreed to merge the seven partnerships which have subsequently been endorsed by the Home Secretary.

Implementing the new arrangements

County level arrangements

8. The county CSP will be responsible for:
 - producing an annual crime and disorder strategic assessment and a three-year rolling partnership plan to ensure that the necessary interventions are developed to resolve these issues
 - communicating with stakeholders, communities and the public on the preparation and implementation of the three year plan
 - complying with the Home Office “hallmarks”, which set minimum standards of partnership performance

Norwich level arrangements

9. In Norwich the operational partnership team is being developed and will shortly be located in Vantage House. This team will oversee and prioritise short, medium and long term work and risk assess emerging hotspots, vulnerable people, locations and highest risk perpetrators.
10. The team will include the Council’s ABATE team, police officers and PCSOs whose focus is ASB and vulnerable individuals and two police architectural liaison officers. The location of the team provides opportunities for closer working with teams who are also located in Vantage House and whose focus is vulnerable individuals.

11. A partnership operations group (POG) has been established that meets when required so that partners can respond to longer term or embedded thematic and area based priorities or where issues can be escalated for additional problem solving and response. This is chaired by the Council's head of local neighbourhood services and in conjunction with the partnerships chief inspector coordinates this group and agrees issues that need to be considered.
12. A multi-agency antisocial behaviour action group (ASBAG) has been developed that is chaired by the Council's strategic partnership and community safety officer. The ASBAG oversees all ASB cases which have interventions above the level of an acceptable behaviour contract (ABC) on a case and risk basis to ensure they are effectively managed and monitored with victims and witnesses supported.
13. The introduction of neighbourhood working provides the opportunity for closer working between the council's neighbourhood teams and the police safer neighbourhood teams both of which aim to deliver positive outcomes, which are influenced by local people's concerns and priorities. This includes the role that residents have in setting priorities that is currently undertaken through SNAP's. These are currently being reviewed by the police and there will be an opportunity for the council to inform this review.
14. The City of Norwich Partnership has recently been dissolved and a new Locality Board is being established whose purpose is:
 - to understand future needs of the City and to determine priorities for the locality
 - to take action upon issues of local need that require collaboration to be effective
 - to identify opportunities for cost savings and efficiencies through joint service redesign and shared provision and better co-ordination of public service delivery

This will encompass community safety alongside other issues.

15. Locally partners will use up to date data and an evidenced based problem solving approach for this work. This will include use of police crime and ASB data, analytical products and performance information and increasingly information that is drawn from Civica, the Council's workflow management system. Some members may have seen the hotspot maps that are now being used to guide the work of the neighbourhood teams and the location of neighbourhood walkabouts.

Role of scrutiny

16. Whilst scrutiny committee undertook the scrutiny role of the then safer Norwich partnership, this role will now be undertaken at county level, the detail of which is still to be finalised. The role of this committee will therefore change and could focus on a particular area of work or thematic community safety issue at it takes place or occurs in Norwich.

17. The remainder of the report covers the current priorities of the CSP which may identify an issue for consideration.

CSP priorities

18. The strategic assessment has identified the following priorities for the CSP, each of which has an identified lead, who in conjunction with partners are currently preparing delivery plans and targets following the scrapping of the national performance framework and the local area agreement:
- Anti-social behaviour
 - Protecting vulnerable people – young people, people at risk of domestic abuse
 - Reducing the harm caused by the misuse of drugs and alcohol
 - Improving support to offenders to prevent them from re-offending, particularly prolific and other priority offenders
 - Raising the confidence of communities in the safety of their local area
19. The CSP supports activity for most of these priorities with Home Office safer communities funding which is now allocated to the County Council as part of its un-ring fenced grant. The county council have agreed to passport the full amount through to the CSP.
20. This funding is being reduced following the Government's comprehensive spending assessment and the allocations for 2011-12 and 2012-13 are as follows

2011-12

£718,552 (this is a 20% reduction from the 2010-11 Home Office grant to the CSP). The CSP is also receiving additional one off grants of £73,000 from the Police and £69,000 from Norfolk county council

2012-13

£363,502 (this is a 60% reduction from 2010-11 Home Office grant to the CSP). A small carried forward has been agreed which will result in a small increase in this figure.

21. In previous years this has added additional resource to some existing interventions and services, for example domestic abuse advocacy workers, or youth inclusion support panels, or funded activities where the CSP has a responsibility for example the prolific and priority offender's scheme.
22. Over the coming weeks the CSP will be agreeing how the reduced budget in 2012-13 will be allocated.

Police reform and social responsibility act 2011

23. One of the biggest changes to community safety will arise from the introduction of elected police and crime commissioners (PCC's) in 2012. Introduced through the police reform and social Responsibility act, which has now received royal assent, the PCC will replace police authorities.

24. PCC's will not be a responsible authority, but PCC's will have a range of responsibilities and duties including:

- a mutual duty to co-operate with CSPs to reduce crime and disorder
- have regard to the CSP priorities when setting their police and crime plan for the force area
- be able to require a report from a CSP on their work to reduce crime and disorder
- be given powers through regulations to convene and chair meetings with the CSP to discuss strategic priorities
- be able to make crime and disorder reduction grants to any organisation or person in their force area. In order for this to happen the money currently allocated to CSP's will transfer to the PCC as well as some elements of drug intervention programme funding.

25. As part of these new arrangements, local authorities will have a direct role in holding commissioners to account through a police and crime panel (PCP) will be established to scrutinise the PCC and support them in the effective exercise of their functions.

26. Examples of county level performance information will be provided at your meeting, though with the CSP in a period of transition the framework is currently being revised.

Next steps

27. This report indicates an area of work that is in transition and will continue to do so for some time to come, both in terms of available resources and the changes brought about by the police reform and social responsibility act 2011.

28. Whilst the proportion of Norfolk's crime and ASB that is recorded in Norwich has fallen in recent years, approximately 30% of all Norfolk's recorded crime and 25% of all ASB is recorded in the City and some significant challenges remain.

29. The strategic assessment identifies similar issues across the county but in many cases higher incidents occur in Norwich. ASB, domestic abuse, issues related to the night time economy, hate crimes and incidents are the issues highlighted in the strategic assessment as key issues in Norwich.

What is community safety?

30. However, it is perhaps important for scrutiny committee to be mindful of what community safety is. As a term, it is often used in tandem with crime reduction, though they are different.
31. Community safety refers to a sense of personal security and feeling of safety in a place where people live, work, or spend their leisure time. It is about being safe and feeling safe, by addressing locally identified priorities. It is a complex and multifaceted concept which can be difficult to define.
32. Its focus is much wider than crime reduction as it looks at bringing about physical and/or social changes in line with local priorities to local environments as a way of preventing crime and disorder from taking place.
33. The Home Office defines community safety as:
'An aspect of quality of life in which people, individually and collectively, are protected as far as possible from hazards or threats that result from the criminal or antisocial behaviour of others and are equipped or helped to cope with those they do experience' (source: Community Safety Advisory Service, Community Safety and Crime Reduction, 2007).

Options

34. Historically, scrutiny committee have by default, considered crime issues and police crime data rather than broader community safety issues and data due to the performance framework used by CSPs. With the changes to the national performance framework and changes to the CSP other opportunities might be considered.
35. With the priorities of the CSP being antisocial behaviour, protecting vulnerable people (young people, people at risk of domestic abuse), reducing the harm caused by the misuse of drugs and alcohol, improving the support to offenders to prevent them from re-offending and raising the confidence of communities in the safety of their local area, these may indicate some thematic areas for further consideration by scrutiny committee.
36. Scrutiny committee's interest is likely to be at the Norwich level and members may consider looking in more detail at one of these priorities. This might include the evidence of the issue, what are the drivers that lead people to offend, the responses from partners to the issue and level of resources available and outcomes achieved in Norwich from these interventions.