

Report for Resolution

Report to Executive
28 July 2010

Report of Head of Local Neighbourhood Services

Subject Community safety partnership working

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Purpose

To seek the views of the Executive on a proposed merger of the Norwich Community Safety Partnership with the six district community safety partnerships to form a single county community safety partnership.

Recommendations

The Executive endorse the merger of the Norwich community safety 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
- the final decision being taken by the Chief Executive Officer as the named responsible person under the legislation

Financial Consequences

The financial consequences of this report will be met from existing budgetary resources

Risk Assessment

These new arrangements will require that the community safety partners use accurate data and an evidenced led problem solving approach and that the issues in Norwich are appropriately resourced. Senior officer's will contribute to and monitor the work of the future county community safety partnership to ensure this is done.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority "Safe and healthy neighbourhoods – working in partnership with residents to create neighbourhoods where people feel secure, where the streets are clean and well maintained, where there is good quality housing and local amenities and where there are active local communities" and the service plan priority to increase the access, visibility and responsiveness of city council staff and contractors working in communities

Executive Member: Councillor Waters – Executive Member

Ward: All wards

Contact Officers

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Background Documents

None

Report

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 Norwich these are Norwich City Council, Norfolk Constabulary, Norfolk Police Authority, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk PCT and from April 2010 the Probation Service.
2. These organisations are referred to as responsible authorities and work within community safety partnership's which were established at district or unitary local authority level. In Norwich this partnership is referred to as the Safer Norwich Partnership.
3. A review of the crime and disorder act set out in the Police & Justice Act 2006 and subsequent regulations, revised the statutory requirements.
4. The duty to produce three-yearly audits and strategies was repealed along with the duty to report annually to the Secretary of State on the partnership's work and progress.
5. These were replaced with a duty to:
 - produce an annual crime and disorder strategic assessment and a three-year rolling partnership plan
 - communicate with stakeholders, communities and the public on the preparation and implementation of the three year plan
 - comply with the Home Office "hallmarks," which are a set of minimum standards of partnership performance to reflect the changing landscape since 1998
 - establish in two tier local authority areas a countywide strategic group to oversee crime and disorder work (the county strategic group – community safety), which is attended by the Head of Local Neighbourhood Services, the council's strategic lead for community safety
6. The discharging of these duties is the responsibility of the responsible authorities or the Responsible Authority Partnership (RAP) whose membership is drawn from chief officers or their nominees. The legislation states that in local authorities the chief executive officer is named as the responsible person.

Proposed new arrangements

7. For some months the county level responsible authority partners, have questioned the need for and capacity to continue to support seven district based statutory community safety partnerships as well as the county strategic group for crime in Norfolk. The consequence of these formal arrangements for these partners has been voiced as the need to undertake various areas of work eight times. A county level task and finish group that included the assistant director neighbourhood development, have considered this and developed a set of revised working arrangements which have been endorsed in principle by

the county strategic group and formal approval is now being sought.

8. Whilst the legislation names the chief executive officer as the responsible person within local authorities, a view from members is being sought before a final decision is made. The proposals are that:
 - the seven district based community safety partnerships merge to form a single community safety partnership (CSP) for Norfolk to replace the seven district based CSP's and the county strategic group. This group would be responsible for developing a countywide strategic assessment of crime and disorder and annual partnership plan to ensure that the necessary interventions are developed to resolve these issues. The countywide CSP would enable partners to fulfil the statutory obligations once at a county level and create greater flexibility locally to develop partnership working suited to local issues and need
 - that district level local strategic partnerships undertake strategic community safety work alongside their other work
 - the existing district level delivery partnership group is revitalised to enable the prioritisation of longer term or embedded issues chaired by the LSP lead for the "safer" element. This group would act as a link between the LSP and district operational and neighbourhood working and enable strategic objectives and priorities to be turned into activity and for longer multi faceted problems to be escalated for additional support and guidance
 - the development of a co-located operational partnership team. Norfolk Constabulary has already committed resources to a Norwich team which includes:
 - a police ASB coordinator
 - crime/ASB reduction Officer
 - architectural liaison Officer
 - a chief inspector to oversee partnership working and facilitate problem solving and use of best practice
 - strengthened neighbourhood working which will bring together the council's neighbourhood management arrangements with the police led safer neighbourhood working both of which aim to deliver positive outcomes, where those relate to neighbourhood priorities that are of most concern to local people.

By October 2010, it is intended that each district area will have an operational partnership team so that partners can prioritise short, medium and long term work and risk assess emerging hotspots including the most vulnerable people and locations and highest risk perpetrators. The City Council's ASB corporate case officer is part of this team and in future will include the ASB co-ordinator.

9. In summary, this team will act as the 'clearing house' for the city with responsibility for the co-ordination of priority responses and signposting appropriately to deliver the most effective service for members of the public and partner stakeholders.

Review of proposals

10. The serious budget issues that are faced by the Council and its partners requires the Council with its partners to rethink how it contributes to this work to ensure that the available resources are focussed as far as possible onto front line activities, supporting the most vulnerable individuals in the community and not on unnecessary “process.”
11. 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 is still recorded in the City. The partners will use up to date data and an evidenced based problem solving approach for this work. At a local level the Council and partners will still require access to up to date crime and ASB performance information and discussions continue with partner agencies to agree how this can still be provided and reassurance that the crime and ASB issues faced by many residents in the city will be reflected in the resources that are allocated.
12. The Norfolk Constabulary have shown their commitment to this proposed structure by contributing a number of posts to the new Norwich partnership team and wish to discuss further opportunities for integration including co-location of staff.
13. The Council has allocated the ASB co-ordinator and corporate ASB case officer to the Norwich partnerships team and this team will have links to the council’s neighbourhood working. As operational partnership arrangements will be enhanced, the safer Norwich partnership “brand” may be retained for these purposes.
14. The work to support the partnership arrangements of the safer Norwich partnership is currently provided by the council’s partnerships team. As this role would now be undertaken by Norfolk County Council, this resource will now be reviewed as part of a wider review of partnership working within the City Council. The City of Norwich Partnership are currently reviewing its work and structure and the community safety strategic and performance work currently undertaken by the safer Norwich partnership responsible authorities will need to be integrated into its future working arrangement, some of which will be supported from operational service areas.
15. From an operational policing perspective, Bowthorpe has historically fallen under the responsibility of the south Norfolk police commander, which has hindered performance monitoring and operational working. It is hoped that these new arrangements could resolve this anomaly.

Conclusions

16. The Council is entering a challenging budgetary period and needs to ensure that its resources are focussed on actions and outcomes and not unnecessary process. The council’s involvement in discussions to develop a countywide community safety partnership may not have been supported previously, but given the dramatic changes in the external operating environment, this is an area where a pragmatic approach is required.

17. On this basis, members are asked to support the merger of the Norwich community safety partnership with the six other district community safety partnerships proposal to develop a countywide community safety partnership subject to:

- The council and local partners being able to access up to date crime and disorder data at the district level to inform our work
- That the safer Norwich partnership brand is retained for operational purposes
- Norfolk Constabulary considering how the anomaly of Bowthorpe being part of the south Norfolk policing arrangements can be resolved and integrated into the Norwich policing structure
- reassurances being provided from partners that the allocation of resources through the county community safety partnership uses a sound evidenced based approach that 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.