

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 1 December 2009

Present: Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Chair), Councillor Alan Cullens (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Mike Devaney, Marie Gray, Harold Heaton, Adrian Lowe, Rosie Russell, Edward Smith, Joyce Snape and Peter Wilson

Also in attendance: Councillor Eric Bell (Executive Member (Neighbourhoods)) and Stuart Williams (Chief Superintendent Lancashire Constabulary)

Officers in attendance: Simon Clark (Service Manager - Environment), Paul Lowe (Merged Crime and Disorder Reduction Manager), Carol Russell (Head of Democratic Services) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

09.OS.97 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Nora Ball and Iris Smith.

09.OS.98 MINUTES

RESOLVED – The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Information requested at the last meeting regarding a potential hotspot for alcohol misuse would be forwarded to the ward Councillors for Chorley North East and Chorley North West.

09.OS.99 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were declared.

09.OS.100 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public requested to ask a question at the meeting.

09.OS.101 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIPS - GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SHEET

The Merged Crime and Disorder Reduction Manager presented a summary of the Government Information Sheet, previously sent to Members. The document was an overview of Crime and Disorder Reduction partnerships.

South Ribble and Chorley Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships were currently piloting a merger of the two partnerships, the Safer Chorley and South Ribble Partnership, which commenced in July 2008 for a 20-month period.

In response to a query relating to the total budget, officers explained that in addition to the budget responsible authorities commit to the delivery of the crime and disorder agenda and the Chorley and South Ribble Pilot merged CDRP benefited from several grant funding pots. Whilst it was not possible to undertake a cost analysis of the information sharing aspect of the partnership, the benefits were significant.

The merged Responsible Authorities Group included Chorley Council, South Ribble Council, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Constabulary, Lancashire Police Authority, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and NHS Central Lancashire.

Members queried the involvement of the Probation Service and noted that from April 2010 this would be a responsible authority. The Probation Service was an existing member of the Partnership and was already involved in the development of strategies and implementation of initiatives. The reoffending rates for Chorley were queried.

RESOLVED –

- 1. The summary of the information sheet be noted.**
- 2. Details of the budget and how this had been allocated for the merged partnership across Chorley and South Ribble would be forwarded to Committee members.**
- 3. The reoffending rates for Chorley would also be forwarded to Committee members.**

09.OS.102 DRAFT PROTOCOL FOR SCRUTINY

The Head of Democratic Services presented a draft protocol outlining the aims, objectives and roles for the scrutiny of crime and disorder.

As the function was newly implemented, most Councils were adopting protocols setting out the expectations of the Committee and the partnership to ensure that relations were positively maintained.

Members highlighted that crime and disorder scrutiny was not a complaints process for Members or officers, the purpose was to scrutinise the partnership not individual crime issues. There would be the opportunity for members of the public to ask questions in the usual way at each meeting.

The meeting could be used for Councillor Call for Action but only after issues had been pursued elsewhere. Councillor Call for Action as a process could be used across all council services if required although to date there appeared to be little evidence that this was being used in this way.

The protocol could be revised at any time, by agreement between all the interested parties, to enable continual improvement of the scrutiny process.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the protocol be adopted subject to two amendments:**
Paragraph 12: This will not however, include confidential information that might impinge upon actual operations undertaken by all partners or individuals, unless an individual gives consent for such information to be released.
Paragraph 15: Individual crime and disorder issues in Members' wards will generally be best tackled at an operational level with community safety partners.

09.OS.103 SAFER CHORLEY AND SOUTH RIBBLE PARTNERSHIP

(a) Strategic Assessment Plan

The Merged Crime and Disorder Reduction Manager reported that each year the CDRP had to produce a strategic assessment which had to be reviewed on an annual basis.

The strategic assessment was evidence based and incorporated actions and initiatives. The report had been considered by the Responsible Authorities Group at their last meeting.

There were peaks of crime at certain times of the year and there was a need for members of the public to report crime to enable it to be measured. Domestic violence could be a hidden crime.

Members queried those measures and targets that had a red status.

It was noted that 1.5 Reduce crime in Chorley. Target 3% by March 2011 had been removed from the corporate strategy.

Although 1.3 Reduce criminal damage. Target, downward trend. Baseline 1,458 (07/08) was set at red this was due to a month on month comparison. There was a real need for partnership work on this and reductions were being achieved.

6.2 Provision of specialist services and interventions - Maintain Specialist Domestic Violence Court status: funding had not been secured for the post of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates for 2010/11. If funding was not secured this service could be lost. There was potential to have an indicator for instances of repeat domestic violence next year.

6.2 Provision of specialist services and interventions – Increase available places by 1. Currently there are refuge places for 3 families. There was no funding available to increase the provision, a meeting was scheduled to discuss the potential to increase provision.

Member noted that there were six mini MATACs within Chorley in areas with a disproportionate amount of crime and disorder issues. The mini MATACs were intelligence led. South Ribble had recently introduced 1 mini MATAC.

Promote the Safer Chorley and South Ribble Partnership. An improved mechanism was requested for the communication of work undertaken by the partnership, both to the public and to Members, perhaps via PACT meetings. It was AGREED that a quarterly report be submitted to Members via "intheknow". Advance notice of campaigns, where appropriate, was also requested via "intheknow".

It was suggested that a single branding scheme would be helpful for the public to identify with the partnership. The Council's communications team could be involved in developing this.

Actions 2009-2011 1.6 Increase the number of available Speed Indicator Device (SpID) sites available in each Borough. It was suggested that the Neighbourhood officers took on the responsibility for organising volunteers to staff SpIDs. LCC had the responsibility for training staff and putting the SpIDs up. Members noted the Council could review the potential for funding to SpIDs as part of the scrutiny of the budget for next year. It was AGREED that clarification be provided on where responsibility lay for monitoring SpIDs at the next meeting.

Reduce anti-social behaviour. Advice and training had been provided to Housing Associations relating to Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions (ASBIs). The use of these did save time in the long run, but Housing Associations could only be encouraged to use this mechanism. Positive feedback had been received where it had been used.

Increase trader compliance. Attendance on the course was only offered once, those not taking up the offer would be prosecuted in the usual way. Repeat offenders would have a review of their licence undertaken.

Reduction of illicit substances within each Borough. There were issues with drugs misuse where the substance was not illegal, such as glue sniffing and prescription drugs. This linked to mental health issues and work with the PCT. It would be helpful to consider recreational drugs in addition to illegal drugs. The alcohol co-ordinator was now the project co-ordinator and considered the whole picture of drugs and alcohol misuse.

Reduction in crime and disorder. There had been 34 families involved in the Families First project. There were a range of case requirements, most families had stayed throughout the programme. The project had really progressed since the current co-ordinator had been in post. It was AGREED that detailed statistics on the project be presented to the next meeting.

Families were referred to the project mainly through Housing Associations, with issues such as problematic behaviour, alcohol misuse or truancy. Councillors could receive training on the Common Assessment Framework used to refer families onto the project.

Reduce homelessness as a result of domestic abuse. There should be provision for women to move to a neighbouring location and there was a sanctuary scheme in operation between Chorley and South Ribble. This was an issue across Lancashire. It was AGREED that more information on this topic and the recommended number of places for a hostel were requested for the next meeting. It was RECOMMENDED that consideration be given to increase budget provision to the hostel in Chorley and to consider increasing the number of hostel places in Chorley.

Councillor Harold Heaton left the meeting at 8pm.

Reduce Domestic Violence. The Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVA) ensure that a system was in place to support people. It was vital that monthly Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings and the IDVA work together for this to be effective.

It was noted that the voluntary sector representative had been unwell, it was hoped that a replacement would be in place soon.

There were links between street pastors and MATACs.

Chief Superintendent Williams complimented the Chorley Neighbourhood Working model and the focus on improving structures and processes.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and information requested be presented to the next meeting.

(b) Progress report

Chief Superintendent Williams reported that the partnership was progressing well and a business improvement plan had been created.

The most positive aspect of the partnership had been the sharing of good practice and efficiencies achieved through collaborative working. It would be helpful if the funding arrangements were less prescriptive.

It was noted that the Police would be treating Buckshaw Village as one policing area.

A review of the partnership would be undertaken in the New Year to see how the merged partnership was achieving. There had certainly been a reduction in management costs and an increase in performance. Funding had also been secured which would not have been available to a sole CDRP.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(c) Performance Information

Chief Superintendent Williams explained that the crime figures for Chorley were relatively low and therefore could be seriously affected by a crime spree undertaken by one individual. There had been an increase in the figures relating to burglary in

October. The figures were reported as a comparison to the same month the previous year.

It was AGREED that further information be provided on the figures for serious acquisitive crime, burglary dwelling and serious violent crime at the next meeting as these show an increase.

Members discussed how scrutiny can go forward on crime and disorder and a report is requested to the next meeting outlining options, including whether joint scrutiny will be appropriate and the potential for Member Learning sessions with other crime and disorder partners being invited to contribute.

Councillor Joyce Snape left the meeting at 8.20pm.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the report be noted and information requested be presented to the next meeting.**
- 2. That a report be presented to the next meeting on future scrutiny of crime and disorder, including whether it could be undertaken jointly with South Ribble, potentially through Member learning sessions and work with other partners within the partnership.**

09.OS.104 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The Committee considered the Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan and the Council's Forward Plan for the four month period 1 December 2009 to 31 March 2010.

RESOLVED - The work programme and Forward Plan be noted.

Chair