

REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

GENERAL REPORT – 1 December 2009

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 1 December. This report summarises briefly the principal items debated and decisions reached.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships - Government Information Sheet

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

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

In response to a query relating to the total budget, officers explained that in addition to the monies, responsible authorities commit to the delivery of the crime and disorder agenda and the Chorley and South Ribble CDRP benefit from several grant funding pots.

Members queried the involvement of the Probation Service and noted that from April 2010 this will be a responsible authority. The Probation Service are an existing member of the Partnership and are already involved in the development of strategies and implementation of initiatives.

Draft protocol for scrutiny

As this scrutiny function is newly implemented, most Council's are adopting protocols setting out the expectations of the Committee and the partnership to ensure that relations are positively maintained.

A draft protocol is agreed which could be revised at any time, by agreement between all the interested parties, to enable continual improvement of the scrutiny process.

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

Safer Chorley and South Ribble Partnership - Strategic Assessment Plan

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Manager reported that each year the CDRP produces a strategic assessment which has to be reviewed on an annual basis. The strategic assessment plan is evidence based and incorporated actions and initiatives for all partners. The report has been considered by Responsible Authorities Group at their last meeting.

There are peaks of crime at certain time of the year and there is a need for members of the public to report crime to enable it to be measured. There is an issue of domestic violence being a hidden crime.

Members queried those measures and targets that have a red status and several other measures.

Clarification is requested on where responsibility lay for monitoring SpIDS. It is suggested that branding specific to the work of the partnership could be helpful in communicating the work undertaken. Advance information on campaigns, where appropriate, and the minutes of the Responsible Authorities Group are requested for Members information.

A detailed update on the Families First project and the scheme to reduce homelessness as a result of domestic violence will be presented to a future meeting. The issue of further resources being made available to the domestic violence hostel will be recommended to the Executive Cabinet.

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

Progress report

Superintendent Williams reported that the partnership is progressing well and a business improvement plan has been created. A review of the partnership will be undertaken in the New Year to see how the merged partnership is achieving.

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

Performance Information

Superintendent Williams explained that the figures for Chorley are relatively low and therefore could be seriously affected by a crime spree undertaken by one individual. There has been an increase in the figures relating to burglary in October. The figures are reported as a comparison to the same month the previous year.

Further information will be provided on the figures for serious acquisitive crime, burglary dwelling and serious violent crime 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.

Recommendation

The Council is recommended to note this report.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS EDGERLEY
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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There are no background papers to this report.