

Report of	Meeting	Date
Paul Lowe Merged CDRP Manager	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	23 August 2011

COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OPTIONS PAPER

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present Members with options within our community safety remit for consideration in relation to scrutiny.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That Members determine which area of community safety they wish to subject to scrutiny.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

2. The Crime & Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 require local authorities to scrutinise the work of Community Safety Partnerships at least annually in order to determine that local community safety issues are being dealt with effectively.
3. At the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 11 July 2011 Members requested an options paper outlining areas of community safety which could be the subject of scrutiny.
4. Two areas of community safety work are proposed for consideration as follows:
 - a. Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVA)
 - b. Neighbourhood Policing

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

5. The Crime & Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 require local authorities to scrutinise Community Safety Partnerships at least annually to ensure that local community safety issues are being effectively dealt with. These two areas of work are at the forefront of tackling crime and providing community reassurance and confidence in partners to tackle crime.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6. None

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

7. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Strong Family Support		Education and Jobs	
Being Healthy		Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods	
Safe Respectful Communities	x	Quality Community Services and Spaces	
Vibrant Local Economy		Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages	
A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money			x

BACKGROUND

8. The Police and Justice Act 2006 requires local authorities to establish a Member committee to:
- a. review or scrutinise decisions made, or other actions taken, in connection with the discharge of its crime and disorder function; and
 - b. make reports or recommendations to the Council with respect to the discharge of those functions.
9. The Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 requires the Member committee to meet not less than once in every twelve month period.
10. This Police and Justice Act amended the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to enable local authorities, where they agree, to operate jointly with the scrutiny arrangements of other neighbouring local authorities. Whilst Chorley Council and South Ribble Borough Council operate within a collaborative community safety partnership they are not officially merged as defined by Home Office guidance. Therefore Members are at liberty under our current arrangements to operate any scrutiny arrangements separately and given the existing budget and performance management arrangements, this would appear appropriate.

OPTIONS

11. The following areas of community safety work are proposed for scrutiny :
1. Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVA)
 2. Neighbourhood Policing

INDEPENDENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ADVOCACY SERVICE (IDVA)

12. Domestic abuse (including domestic violence) is a key priority for the Safer Chorley and South Ribble Partnership. One aspect of the domestic abuse agenda is the support high risk victims receive. The IDVA service supports high risk survivors of domestic abuse who are going through Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs). The operation of an IDVA service is also one of the requirements which enables Chorley and South Ribble to qualify for its joint Specialist Domestic Violence Court Service.

13. Whilst Chorley does have some problems linked to the town centre and the night time economy, the more evident issue is violence within the home and committed by known offenders. Of the crimes which had details of the offender's relationship to the victim, 73% (n=1166) offences between 01.05.2009 and 30.04.2011 were committed by a known offender. It is also evident that Domestic Violence figures are largely under representative of the issue of violence within the home and violence committed by known offenders as crimes will only be classed as domestic abuse if they satisfy the Home Office classification.
14. Over the last 4 years the funding for the IDVA service has been supported by various grants which are now not sustainable. To date the local partnership has not been able to identify sustainable funding to support the IDVA service and is currently reliant on one off grant contributions from the Home Office, Safer Lancashire Board and fortuitous funding opportunities.
15. The IDVA Service supports several partnership targets including the reduction in MARAC repeat rates and domestic abuse related murders. Therefore the cessation of the service would have significant implications for the partnership agenda and wider areas of business including but not limited to public confidence and wellbeing.

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

16. Neighbourhood policing is about local policing and relies on the police, their partners and the community working together to identify and tackle issues of concern. Neighbourhood policing is about creating a team dedicated to each local area. Historically Members have expressed interest in scrutinising the structures of the neighbourhood policing teams and how they interact with local partners and stakeholders including elected members. Lancashire Constabulary has recently undergone a significant reorganisation and enacted changes to its Neighbourhood Policing structure. Whilst these changes have been made they have yet to be fully embedded. Members may wish to subject these changes to scrutiny with a follow up review once the new working arrangements are embedded.

SCRUTINY METHODOLOGY

17. There are various options available to the Committee for scrutinising the chosen area of Crime and Disorder as follows:
 - To have a designated meeting to consider written information and invite key witnesses.
 - To commission a detailed report to be presented to the Committee.
 - To set up a Task and Finish Group.
18. Consideration must also be given as to whether to do a joint scrutiny with South Ribble Borough Council or to dedicate it to the Chorley element of the Partnership. Although the Partnership is a joint collaborative model and works with a joint strategic assessment Members should note that the funding arrangements through the Area Based Grant is still allocated separately and each authority has its own priorities and objectives.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

19. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance		Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	x	No significant implications in this area	

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF GOVERNANCE

20. The proposals contained within the report comply fully with the legal requirements for Councils to scrutinise the work of their local Community Safety Partnership under the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009 and with the Councils Constitutional requirements for overview and scrutiny in Chorley.

There are no background papers to this report.

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