

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 18TH JANUARY 2006

REPORT OF THE REVIEW PANEL ON COMMUNITY SAFETY

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Scrutiny Commission of the conclusions and recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Review Panel established to look into Community Safety activities in particular strategies for tackling antisocial behaviour.

Background

2. The Scrutiny Commission at its meeting in June agreed to establish a Panel to consider how issues of Community Safety and Crime and Antisocial Behaviour were being addressed by the County Council and its partners and to identify areas of improvement.

Membership of the Panel

3. The following members were appointed to serve on the Panel:-

Mr. M. Jones CC Mr. E. D. Snartt CC Mr. S. Galton CC
Mr. N. Stork CC Mr. J. Moore CC

Mr. Jones CC was nominated Chairman

Terms of Reference

4. The Scrutiny Commission did not set out detailed terms of reference but left this to the Panel to determine. After some deliberation the Panel decided that it would undertake a broad brush review of activities under the following headings.
 - i) Activity undertaken corporately within the County Council;
 - ii) Activity undertaken by County Council Departments which would contribute to reducing crime and antisocial behaviour;
 - iii) Activities undertaken by Other Partners or by Partnerships e.g. Police, District Councils and Crime and Disorder Partnerships

Arising from this the panel would seek to identify areas of activity of particular relevance to the crime and disorder agenda; this would help to emphasise the range of activity undertaken by the Authority. The Panel would then further identify issues that could usefully be investigated in more detail to improve existing practices and policies bearing in mind the contents of the emerging Local Area Agreement.

5. The Panel then concluded that
 - i) given the recent significant investment by the County Council it should consider in more detail the role of Police Community Safety Officers (PCSO'S) and in particular the basis for their deployment and how their role might evolve to respond to the changing circumstances. It would also wish to focus on any measures of their effectiveness and impact.
 - ii) it should consider in more depth current youth work activities and possible improvements that may be possible arising from the Youth Green Paper.

Conduct of the Review

6. The Panel met 5 times. At 3 of its meetings the Panel received detailed information on the activities of the County Council corporately, those undertaken by the County Council departments which contribute towards reducing crime and antisocial behaviour and those undertaken by Partners or in Partnership.
7. One meeting of the Panel was devoted to considering in greater depth the activities of the Youth Service as it considered these made a key contribution in diverting young people away from crime and antisocial behaviour and the forthcoming Green Paper may offer further opportunities for developing activities which would engage young people.
8. The Panel also received information on the role and remit of the PCSO's and met with Chief Superintendent Dave Evans of Leicestershire Constabulary to discuss in detail arrangements for their deployment, how their role might be developed and evidence regarding the effectiveness and impact of the introduction of PCSO's.

Information provided to the Panel

9. The information provided to the Panel under the headings of 'Core', 'County Council Departments' and 'Other Partners or Partnership Activity' was as follows:

Core

- a) The Community Safety Section Structure
- b) The Overall Strategy for Community Safety
- c) Tackling antisocial behaviour including use of
 - ASBO's and ABC's
 - Dispersal Orders
 - Response to low level incidents of Graffiti and Vandalism
- d) Drugs and Alcohol Strategies
- e) Community Support Officers – Role and Impact

Other County Council Departments

- f) Youth Services including provision in school holidays
- g) Youth Work Curriculum
- h) Curriculum in Primary and Secondary Schools which seek to address issues of antisocial behaviour
- i) Social Services particularly looked after children
- j) Community Facilities – Provision of Libraries, Country Parks
- k) The Built Environment in particular Street Lighting
- l) Decriminalisation of Parking

Partners and Partnerships

- m) Resources in the CDRP's
- n) Domestic Violence
- o) Use of the Recovered Asset Fund (operated by the Police)
- p) Neighbourhood Watch/Crimestoppers
- q) CCTV
- r) Sports and Leisure
- s) The Princes' Trust

Conclusions

11. The key conclusions are set out in the Appendices A, B and C to this report. Appendix A sets out the conclusions reached by the Panel in relation to those areas identified as Core Activity , Appendix B in relation to the work of County Council Departments, particularly the Youth Service and Appendix C to the role of Partners and Partnerships. The Panel also agreed the following general conclusions in relation to how the responses of the County Council and agencies to tackling antisocial behaviour might be improved:-

Communications	Improving communications between agencies/partners and information provision to the public. The current provision of information on the website was considered inadequate.
Consistency/ Co-ordination	A range of measures were employed to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. However, given the range of partners involved there was a need for some degree of consistency of approach. This was also important if a clear message was to be communicated across the County of what behaviour was unacceptable and what measures could be taken. The LAA process would provide an opportunity to co-ordinate such activity.
Champions	There was a need to mainstream crime and antisocial behaviour issues within the service departments in accordance with the requirements of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and to that end the use of Departmental Champions should be explored.

Recommendations

12. The Commission is asked to consider the conclusions of its Scrutiny Review Panel and in particular draw the following recommendations to the attention of the Cabinet, Partner Agencies or the Community Safety Programme Board as appropriate:-
- (a) That there would be merit in reviewing the number of partnership bodies and clarifying relationships between them. The development of the Local Area Agreement may help in doing this; **[Cabinet Partners and CSPB]**
 - (b) That the current review of the Community Safety Plan should seek to ensure close links to the emerging priorities in the Local Area Agreement and should focus on areas of activity the public would readily identify as community safety issues. To that end Road

Safety Issues should be excluded from the Community Safety Plan;
[Cabinet]

- (c) That the Youth Inclusion Support Panels (YISPs) be recognised as a key vehicle for delivering the youth crime prevention and contributing to the antisocial behaviour agenda. YISPs have a key role in helping to deliver the 'prevent and deter' strand of the Prolific and other Priorities Offenders Strategy. The Executive should ensure adequate resources are made available for this project in future years; **[Cabinet]**
- (d) That recognising the patchy response to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, there should be a review of how the responsibilities placed on the Council are disseminated to officers and of the training provided to officers. Consideration should also be given to the use of Departmental Champions; **[Cabinet]**
- (e) That all the Departmental Service Plans and Individual Section Plans should include appropriate key targets from the Community Safety Plan, so that the issue of tackling crime and antisocial behaviour is mainstreamed; **[Cabinet]**
- (f) That all SLAs with voluntary groups who receive grant funding from the County Council should include a requirement for the group to demonstrate, if appropriate, how it complies with the requirement of Section 17; **[Cabinet]**
- (g) That whilst recognising that the DAAT is required by the Government to focus its priorities on tackling drug misuse, the DAAT should be asked to broaden its scope to ensure a higher priority is given to problems of alcohol misuse in view of its impact on community safety and antisocial behaviour; **[Cabinet Partners and CSPB];**
- (h) That the key challenge was to ensure the message and commitment to working together to tackle anti-social behaviour was cascaded down to operational levels. Recognising that different services (e.g. Police, the Youth Service, Housing etc) would have differing priorities, some which were driven by national policies it may nevertheless be appropriate to consider:-
 - (i) agreeing a common definition of antisocial behaviour and an agreed menu of responses thereto;
 - (ii) setting targets within each service area as to how they are expected to deal with issues relating to anti-social behaviour;
[Cabinet, Partners and CSPB];

- (i) That the development of the three figure Single Non-Emergency Number [SNEN(101)] be welcomed as it provides a means of identifying the key contacts and processes at local level in relation to the tackling of anti-social behaviour. However, it is essential for all agencies to ensure that the SNEN is accompanied by an improved and responsive service to ensure public confidence is built up and maintained; **[Cabinet, Partners and CSPB];**
- (j) That whilst welcoming the commitment by the Police and the additional investment by the County Council in providing Community Support Officers on the basis that the increased provision based in the Community would go some way in reassuring the public and reducing the incidence of low level crime and anti-social behaviour consideration should be given to:-
 - (i) Monitoring and reporting on the commitment given by the Police to limit abstraction of PCSOs and ensuring the early return to normal duties of those abstracted;
 - (ii) The roll out across the County of the pilot multi-agency neighbourhood surgeries led and co-ordinated by the Police;
 - (iii) The possibility of co-locating, where appropriate, the local Beat Officer and PCSO in facilities operated by other statutory partners as a means of improving communication and joint working. **[Cabinet, Partners and CSPB];**
- (k) That Community Safety Issues should be woven into the education curriculum of both primary and secondary schools; **[Cabinet]**
- (l) That it be recognised that Outreach (Detached) Youth Work had had a positive impact in most settings and there was a merit in providing more street based work; **[Cabinet]**
- (m) That, in developing the Youth Service in response to any proposals arising from the Green Paper, it was important to consider steps intended to:-
 - (i) Increase availability of mobile provision buses etc;
 - (ii) Consider the need to engage with young people under the age of 13 particularly in relation to reducing antisocial behaviour
 - (iii) Recognise the need to increase provision during the summer holidays.

- (iv) Join with others in improving needs analysis and use these outcomes to change resource allocations whilst recognising the need to consider carefully the impact on existing provision
 - (v) Improve ability to predict and respond to emerging issues – not just chasing hot-spots **[Cabinet]**
- (n) That recognising the key role played by CDRPs consideration should be given by each CDRP to identifying a lead partner to champion and ensure appropriate community provision was in place to provide young people with activities which would divert them from anti-social activities. **[Partners, CSPB]**.

MR M. JONES CC
CHAIRMAN OF THE REVIEW PANEL

CORE ACTIVITIES

Key Conclusions

Community Safety Section

The Panel noted with satisfaction the work being undertaken within the Chief Executive's Department (core). It also noted the good working arrangements in place for partnership working. The comments below should be seen in this context:-

- a) There would be merit in reviewing the number of partnership bodies and identifying and clarifying the relationships between them. The development of the Local Area Agreement may help in clarifying these;
- b) The current review of the Community Safety Plan should seek to ensure close links to the emerging priorities in the Local Area agreement and should focus on areas of activity the public would readily identify as community safety issues. To that end Road Safety Issues should be excluded from the Community Safety Plan;
- c) That the Youth Inclusion Support Panels (YISPs) be recognised as a key vehicle for delivering the youth crime prevention and contributing to the antisocial behaviour agenda YISPs have a role in helping to deliver the "Prevent and Deter" strand of the Prolific and other Priorities offenders strategy. The Executive should ensure adequate resources are made available for this project in future years.

Mainstreaming Crime and Antisocial Behaviour activity in the Council (Section 17)

[Note:- Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the County Council was given statutory responsibility with the Police and the District Councils to reduce crime and disorder. Under Section 17 of the Act, the Authority has a duty to integrate community safety issues into mainstream practice. Therefore, all decisions the Authority takes, (including 'passive' decisions to simply carry out a service, as well as deliberate changes to policy, or deciding on such matters as resources allocation), should be the subject of an appraisal of the crime and disorder implications.]

- d) Recognising the patchy response to Section 17 there should be a review of how the responsibilities placed on the Council are disseminated to officers and the training provided to officers. Consideration should also be given to use of Departmental Champions;

- e) That all the Departmental Service Plans and Individual Section Plans should include appropriate key targets from the Community Safety Plan, so that the issue of tackling crime and antisocial behaviour is mainstreamed;
- f) That all SLAs with voluntary groups who receive grant funding from the County Council should include a requirement for the group to demonstrate, if appropriate, how it complies with the requirement of Section 17;

Drugs and Alcohol Strategies

- g) that the work of the Drugs and Alcohol Teams and their focus on addressing the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on crime and antisocial behaviour was welcomed. Whilst the Panel recognised that the work of the DAAT is required by Government to focus primarily on tackling drug misuse, it considers that the DAAT should broaden its scope to ensure a higher priority is given to problems of alcohol misuse in view of its impact on community safety and antisocial behaviour.

Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASBOs and Dispersal Orders)

- h) The Panel recognised that the issue of tackling anti-social behaviour was one which would need to involve a range of agencies working together. Considerable efforts had been made to build relationships between the County and District Councils but a lot remains to be done. Whilst relationships on the Community Safety Programme Board (which in the main involves Chief Officers of the various authorities) were good, the key challenge now was to ensure the message and commitment to working together to tackle anti-social behaviour was cascaded down to operational levels. Recognising that different services (eg. Police, Youth, Housing etc) would have differing priorities, some which were driven by national policies it may nevertheless be appropriate to consider:-
 - agreeing a common definition of antisocial behaviour and an agreed menu of responses thereto;
 - setting targets within each service area as to how they are expected to deal with issues relating to anti-social behaviour;
- i) The development of the three figure Single Non-Emergency Number [SNEN(101)] may provide an opportunity to identify the key contacts and processes at local level in relation to the tackling of anti-social behaviour. The SNEN project would also ensure that a common definition of ASB will be finalised. Whilst welcoming this development the Panel was of the view that this should be accompanied by an improved and responsive service if public confidence in the service was to be maintained.

PCSOs

The Panel engaged in a discussion with Chief Superintendent D. Evans on:

- The role and remit of the PCSO's particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour.
- How this role might develop/evolve to respond to changing circumstances and what more could be done, if additional resources were available, to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour.
- the basis on which PCSO's are currently deployed.

Arising from this discussion the Panel noted and welcomed the news that the government had indicated that there would be additional funding made available over the next two years. The Leicestershire Constabulary has a target of ensuring that there are 350 PCSO's in post by 2007/08

With regard to the role of PCSOs the Panel welcomed the following commitments given by the Constabulary:-

that PCSO's were a community based resource and not a resource for normal day to day policing activity. To that end PCSO's had been given limited powers, sufficient to enable them to carry out their role.

PCSO's would be based in a particular locality and would be expected to remain in that locality for the majority of their time. The Constabulary has begun to develop a Neighbourhood Policing approach which will include the identification of neighbourhood teams, their size and composition will vary across Leicestershire. All neighbourhood teams will eventually include at least a Beat Officer and a PCSO. Neighbourhood Teams will be expected to:

- consult and engage with the local community and involve them in identifying the policing requirements for the areas and service priorities. As part of this process, the Beat Officer would need to identify and develop relationships with "Key Influencing Networks" in the area;
- each Beat Officer would be asked to submit a monthly report on the key priorities, threats and opportunities in the area. These would be collated centrally so that the policing responses were intelligence based and could be appropriately targeted.

This approach to neighbourhood policing was only just starting to develop, initially in the North area, and it would be some time before it was fully embedded.

Given that the focus of the Service was increasingly on community policing the intention was that the PCSO would rarely be “abstracted”. Clearly there would be the odd exceptional circumstances or major incident when ‘abstraction’ was necessary. In such circumstances the reason for the ‘abstraction’ and the length of time would be recorded so that monitoring could take place and any inappropriate abstraction could be dealt with.

The Panel welcomed these commitments by the Police and the investment by the County Council in providing Police Community Support Officers on the basis that the increased provision based in the Community would go some way in reassuring the public and reducing the incidence of low level crime and anti-social behaviour. The Panel is also of the view that:

- a) the commitment given about limiting abstraction of PCSO/s and to ensure their early return to normal duties following any abstraction be welcomed, and that mechanisms be put in place to monitor this commitment and report thereon to the County Safety Partnership Board;**
- b) the development and provision of multi-agency ‘neighbourhood surgeries’, co-ordinated by the Police be supported;**
- c) the possibility of co-location of Beat and Police Community Support officers within facilities operated by other statutory partners be explored as a means of improving communications and joint working.**

WORK OF DEPARTMENTS

The Panel received reports which summarised the activities of the Education, Social Services, Highways, Transportation and Waste Management and Community Services Departments. The Panel noted with satisfaction the range of activities undertaken and the close co-operation between service departments, the Community Safety Team and other Partners. The following examples of activity were highlighted as examples of how mainstream services could be focussed to assist in addressing the issue of reducing the incidence of antisocial behaviour.

1. General Conclusions

Education (see separate section on the Youth Service)

- a) the proposed focus on making the curriculum and teaching in schools relevant and interesting was welcomed. This would engage pupils and, together with the attempt to identify young people at risk of disaffection at an early stage, would go some way to reduce the incidence of antisocial behaviour: Community Safety issues should be woven into the curriculum (both at primary and secondary level) where appropriate.

Social Services

- b) the considerable contribution made by the Social Services Department to the Youth Offending Service including the provision of specialist remand foster carers was particularly welcomed;
- c) the work undertaken to engage with looked after children and to improve the corporate parenting role of the Council was seen as a major step forward. This together with the work being done to prevent abuses towards such young people and other vulnerable adults was also welcomed.
- d) the various other activities including the provision of alarms, data link capsules, the handypersons scheme etc which are aimed at protecting vulnerable people were welcomed.

Community Services

- e) the work being undertaken by the Department to make its services more accessible and appropriate for young people was seen as a significant step towards the provision of alternative activities for young people e.g. the provision of an informal learning space in certain libraries for young adults for whom formal learning may present a barrier.

Highways Transportation and Waste Management

- f) the development of the Community Safety Lighting initiative whereby the Department, in consultation with CDRPs, provides and upgrade street lighting in certain identified areas was particularly supported. The provision of lighting columns on footpaths etc has a considerable impact on reducing crime and the fear of crime. The Panel noted however the pressures on this budget particularly as a result of the need to replace structurally unsound columns.

The Built Environment - All Departments

- g) the Panel noted that in designing new builds and developments consideration was given to the issue of 'designing out crime'. The Panel welcomed this but was of the view that this could be developed further and to that end recommended that advice and guidance on such issues should be sought from the Commission for the Built Environment. (it should be noted that in the time available the Panel did not seek detailed comments on this issue from the Property Services Section of the Resources Department.

2. Youth Service - Conclusions

The Panel decided to focus on the activities of the Youth Service, having identified this area of the Council's activity as one which could have a major impact on reducing crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Panel received detailed information on the role of the service and specifically the work being undertaken to prevent and address disaffection and social inclusion. The Panel noted good work that was being undertaken and the close liaison between the Youth Service, the Youth Offending Team and other agencies in seeking to reduce the incidence of antisocial behaviour.

The Panel was also made aware of the contents of the Green Paper 'Youth Matters' and the Extended schools agenda both of which offered greater opportunities to develop new and expand existing services for young people.

The Panel noted that the roll out of any proposals from the Green Paper and the Extended Schools agenda would need careful consideration and discussion with schools and colleges. The Panel's comments below should be seen in the context as set out above:-

- a) There was a need to clarify roles of different agencies;
- b) Outreach (Detached) Youth Work had had a positive impact in most settings and there was a merit in providing more street based work;
- c) Joint – working arrangements with District Councils were working well and these should be further developed;

- d) There was a need to recognise the specific role of youth workers and that they should not be asked to undertake a role which may appear similar to that of the police. Nevertheless, the Panel was of the view that given the statutory responsibilities placed on the Service as a result on Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act community safety issues should be taken into account by such workers in carrying out their work;
- e) It was vital to recognise that youth work as a development process with young people, not a quick fix;

The Panel concluded that, in developing the youth service, it was important to consider steps intended to:-

- (i) Increase availability of mobile provision buses etc to widen across all areas of identified need;
- (ii) Consider the need to engage with young people under the age of 13 particularly in relation to reducing antisocial behaviour
- (iii) Recognise the need to increase provision during the summer holidays.
- (iv) Join with others in improving needs analysis and use these outcomes to change resource allocations whilst recognising the need to consider carefully the impact on existing provision
- (v) Improve ability to predict and respond to emerging issues – not just chasing hot-spots

WORK OF PARTNERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Key Conclusions

District Based Crime and Disorder Partnerships

The Panel noted and welcomed the improving relationship between CDRP's and the Community Safety Programme Board. This relationship and shared understanding was key to tackling the causes and symptoms of anti-social behaviour. The positive involvement of CDRP's in the emerging LAA was also welcomed.

The Panel noted that the level of investment in each CDRP varied as did their priorities. Some CDRPs were very proactive and used ASBO's to tackle incidents of anti-social behaviour, whereas other adopted a different approach. Whilst it was recognised that this was appropriate given the different pressures and circumstances faced by each of the seven CDRPs the Panel was of the view that there may be merit in defining clearly those activities which would constitute antisocial behaviour and the range (menu) of response available. This would enable the public to be aware of and clear about options available and their limitations.

CDRPs had a key role to play in working with the Community Safety Programme Board and the Police to ensure that 'hot spots' of antisocial activity (identified through intelligence) were targeted in terms of punishing the perpetrators. Equally it was important to identify lead partners for each CDRP area to ensure appropriate community provision was in place to ensure that perpetrators and young people in particular, were provided with diversionary activities.

Voluntary and Community Groups

The Panel noted and acknowledged the significant role that voluntary and community groups play in tackling the issue of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence constitutes approximately 30% of violent crime. The inclusion of Domestic Violence in the Safer Communities theme of LAA was welcomed.

The Panel also welcomed proposals to raise awareness of Domestic Violence and for increased support for victims, survivors and children to prevent repeat victimisation.

The developing relationship between the County Domestic Violence Reduction Co-ordinator and District Councils (who are responsible for delivery) was welcomed. This would enable the gathering of comprehensive information of District Council activities to ensure that resources and activity were targeted to meeting the Best Value Targets (BVPI 225).

Sport and Leisure

The Panel noted that each District Council had a key role in the provision of sport and leisure activities which was recognised as a means of diverting people away from antisocial behaviour.

The Panel was particularly pleased to note that the recently established Leicester Shire and Rutland Sport Partnership had recognised within its objectives “sport as a way of reducing antisocial behaviour, vandalism and crime.”

To that end the County Council and District Councils were urged to work proactively with the Partnership so that funding could be ‘levered-in’ to further enhance sport facilities in the County.

Neighbourhood Watch and Crimestoppers

The Panel welcomed the fact that there were some 1200 Neighbourhood Watch schemes currently in operation in the area of the Constabulary. These schemes had had an impact on reducing incidence of crime and antisocial behaviour by acting as a deterrent as well as providing useful information to the Police.

Crimestoppers (0800 555 111)

The Panel noted that in 2004 Crimestoppers received 2533 Actionable Calls which resulted in:-

- 366 arrests
- £49,800 worth of property recovered
- £101,500 worth of vehicles recovered
- £39,029 worth of drugs and drugs money being seized.

The Panel was of the view that the important role played by Crimestoppers should be recognised and that all partners should seek to ensure that the service continues to receive adequate funding for its continued operation and development.

CCTV

The impact of CCTV in assisting the Police and Crown Prosecution Service in gathering evidence of antisocial behaviour was invaluable. CCTV also played an important role in deterring crime and antisocial behaviour though it was recognised a proportion of this antisocial activity may be displaced to other non-CCTV areas and the use of static CCTV cameras in residential areas may not always be appropriate. Nevertheless the Panel was of the view that, where appropriate and particularly in commercial centres, consideration should continue to be given to use of CCTV.

Decriminalised Parking

The Panel noted that in the near future the Police would no longer be responsible for enforcing on road parking restrictions and that discussions were currently taking place between the County Council and District Councils to find a solution to ensure parking restrictions are enforced. In view of this the Panel decided not to look at this issue.