

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Economic and Community Development Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
MEETING DATE:	22 nd March 2012
TITLE:	Community Safety: Strategic Assessment and developing approach
WARD:	ALL
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report: None	

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This report provides an update on the Community Safety Strategic Assessment and sets out how it is informing and shaping the emerging approach to delivering community safety in Bath and North east Somerset.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Economic and Community Development Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel is asked to agree that:

2.1 It notes the key findings of the Community Safety Strategic Assessment and encourages partners to incorporate these into their detailed action plans

2.2 It comments on the developing approach to community safety in the context of changes such as the new Health and Wellbeing Board and the Police and Crime Commissioner process.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are none relating directly to this report. However, the direction of community safety within the Council is shaped by the national budget situation and in particular by the transfer of Home Office funding from Community Safety Partnerships to Police and Crime Commissioners in April 2013. The Council's Community Safety team has undertaken a comprehensive review of its activities and approach in the light of these changes and local needs and is putting in place a range of new approaches which are set out in this report.

4 THE REPORT

4.1 The 2007 Police and Justice Bill placed a responsibility upon the "responsible authorities" of the Crime and Disorder Partnership (CDRP) to conduct an annual review of the levels and trends of crime and disorder in the Bath and North East Somerset Area. This is the fifth strategic assessment to be conducted by the

partnership. The 2011 assessment is different from its predecessors however for the following reasons:

- (1) It now forms part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) of the Health and Wellbeing of Bath and North East Somerset. This process has been developed to support the new Health and Wellbeing Board and create a coherent picture of the area across a wide range of topics as well as provide a one-stop-shop for local communities to find out more about their local area. The opportunity for a more streamlined approach is significant. For example, learning more about the cross-cutting impact of alcohol has been identified as a key line of investigation in the JSNA process
- (2) It has been undertaken in the context of significant reductions in resources available nationally to Community Safety, and also identified through the Council's budget process as reported to a previous meeting of the Panel. However, this comes at the same time as new and continuing Government initiatives which impact on community safety, such as the review of the national "Prevent" strategy (which is a component of the Government's overall anti-terrorism strategy), a new approach to supporting victims of crime and the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (highlighted below).
- (3) As reported to a previous meeting of the Panel, new Police and Crime Commissioners will be elected across the country in November 2011 and these will receive Home Office funding streams currently allocated to councils to support the work of Community Safety Partnerships from April 2013. This has necessitated a fundamental revision of the approach taken to supporting community safety in the Council.

4.2 As well as informing detailed Action Plans which emanate from the Community Safety Plan (which was agreed by Council in 2009), the strategic assessment has also been used to inform and shape an approach to the key challenges set out in 4.1. In highlighting local needs and priorities rather than simply meeting centrally-set performance targets, the assessment can also be used to inform the priorities of local partners as well as influence the new Police and Crime Commissioner.

4.3 The Strategic Assessment itself draws on a very wide range of data, including crime and mapping information and also highlights the key changes and challenges facing community safety. The main issues are set out below along with the recommended approach for addressing them

- (1) Overall crime continues to fall and the area currently has historically low levels of youth custodial sentencing and is experiencing significant reductions in youth re-offending. However, there are current Police priorities for activity to tackle non-dwelling burglary, fuel theft, shoplifting and metal theft.

Recommended Approach: Continued close working between the Police and the Council with emphasis on using to the full the "new tools and powers" arising from the Government's review

- (2) Hotspots (geographical concentrations of crime and anti-social behaviour) remain consistent over time, particularly within the city centre as a result of the night-time economy.

Recommended Approach: continue to work with partners through the NTE Steering Group- for example, targeted Police patrols: to create an integrated city centre night-time marshalling service with the Business Improvement District.

- (3) Tackling domestic violence and abuse remains a key priority- there has been an increase over time in the number of children with notifications of domestic violence over time

Recommended Approach: continue to support and develop our partnership that tackles domestic violence and abuse and influence the Police and Crime Commissioner on this priority

- (4) Hate crime continues to be a key priority of the partnership and there is a link between this and the night-time economy.

Recommended Approach: continue to undertake case reviews relating to hate crime and work with partners to manage the transition of Home Office funding to the Police and Crime Commissioner at Avon and Somerset level. Government have published "Getting it Right for Victims and Witnesses" which proposes that, except for a small number of specialist national services, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) should be responsible for the commissioning process for services to support victims at a local level.

A detailed note on this issue was circulated to members of the Panel following the discussion at the previous meeting in relation to the submission from SARI)

4.4 This emerging approach to community safety in Bath and North East Somerset can be summarised as:

- Using data and evidence to inform decisions- for example, using "Problem Profiles" for Hate Crime and Domestic Violence
- Developing new ways of working to deliver priorities and anticipating change, attracting new funding where possible- for example, working with the Business Improvement District on night-time marshalling
- Cutting costs by working across services- for example, moving to a new communications hub with Customer Services
- Seeking efficiencies through working together at the right level - for example, proposing that support for victims should be commissioned across the Avon and Somerset area
- Getting the most out of partnership working eg through the proposed Anti Social Behaviour Team jointly with Somer and the Police
- Developing a sustainable funding approach that does not assume funding from either central Government or from the Council

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6 EQUALITIES

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on the potential impacts of the Council's budget on community safety outcomes. The Strategic Assessment generates equalities data which is used as the basis for these and other Equality Impact Assessments.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Cabinet Member; Staff; Other B&NES Services;; Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership,

7.2 Consultation was conducted at the December 2011 Responsible Authorities Group meeting of the Crime and Disorder Partnership. Other staff have been involved with the writing of the report on an ad-hoc basis. Priorities identified by local communities through the PACT (Partners and Communities Together) engagement process and through the Voicebox public survey.

8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

8.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Young People; Human Rights

9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Background papers	
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