

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL or / and MIDSUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Head of Communities	Report Number: M29
To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Community Services)	Date of meeting: 22nd May 2012

BABERGH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

1. Purpose of Report

To detail the work of a key partnership for the Council, the Babergh Community Safety Partnership. This report concerns the activities of the partnership for 20011/12, results achieved and makes comments about significant future developments.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the content of the report is noted

3. Financial Implications

3.1 There are no financial implications associated with the content of this report

4. Risk Management

4.1 The nature of this report is such that a risk assessment is not required as the committee is not being asked to make a decision or agree any recommendations.

5. Consultations

5.1 None needed

6. Equality Analysis

6.1 The report is for noting and does not propose any change in policy, as such an equality analysis is not needed.

7. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

7.1 Aspects of the development of the partnership are detailed in this report.

8. Key Information

The Community Safety Partnership

- 8.1 Crime and disorder reduction partnerships (referred to in Suffolk as Community Safety Partnerships) were formed by Local Authorities following the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Nationally structures vary, but in Suffolk all the local authorities at district/borough level had adopted similar models. There is a Responsible Authorities Group (RAG), which principally has a strategic remit and in Babergh was chaired by Jenny Antill in 2011/12 with Trot Ward member for Alton, as Vice-Chair. During the year there have been a number of significant structural and procedural changes which are detailed later in this report. These changes have had a significant impact on both the Strategic and operational delivery of the partnership.
- 8.2 **Strategic Assessment and Action Plan Delivery 2011/12**
- 8.3 The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) undertakes strategic assessments and action planning to ensure that its activities are focused on those areas of most local relevance and need. These are reviewed on an annual basis. The strategic assessment itself is undertaken by Suffolk County Council on behalf of all CSPs in Suffolk and is a comprehensive audit of information about crime and disorder in the County. The assessment also looks to make some localised recommendations (for each CSP area), which are then considered by the CSP and a full action plan is developed. In addition, in Babergh, we have factored in local survey data and other District-wide information, including locally developed crime and anti-social behaviour data collection. The priorities for the partnership were adopted by the Responsible Authorities Group with delivery at an operational level being developed and coordinated by officers.
- 8.4 The action plan for 2011/12 took a thematic stance, consistent with the broad approach adopted in the previous year, however because of the background of ever diminishing resources both internally and with partners, a different way of focusing the work was adopted. This has enabled those diminished resources to be efficiently used and has avoided the possibility of spreading those resources too thinly. The partnership adopted the following approach, linking themes, operational objectives and means of delivery:

Theme	Operational Objective	Means of Delivery
Tackling violent crime	Reduce violence associated with the night time economy	NTE Core group
Tackling violent crime	Reduce the impact of domestic violence by raising awareness amongst victims and tackling perpetrators	Compassion/DV Coordinator
Tackling criminal damage	Reduce disorder associated with the night time economy	NTE Core group
Tackling anti-social behaviour	Reduce incidents and tackle perpetrators – reduce disproportionate perceptions about young people	ASB Team/BDC community development work
Tackle emerging issues identified by the community	Reduce fear of crime/disorder – increase confidence	SNTs
Tackle emerging crime issues	Ensure that issues are identified early and not allowed to become a significant problem	CSP - OWG
Identify and develop joint initiatives with MSDC	Increase effectiveness across district boundaries and explore opportunities for operational alignment	CSP – OWG

- 8.5 In comparison with the previous year's areas of focus there is a consistency of approach. Disorder/other crime taking place in town centres at night, Anti-Social Behaviour, Domestic Violence and creating capacity to react to emerging issues early, stopping those issues from becoming significant in the longer term, are common threads between the 10/11 and 11/12 priorities.

Structural and Operational changes

- 8.6 The year has seen some significant change, partly brought about by external processes, chief amongst them a full scale review of CSP structures across the County. In addition the Babergh partnership has consistently looked to improve its delivery and was, in any case, planning changes in the operational delivery of its work. These factors resulted in the abolition of the partnership's Officer Working Group as it was felt that group had been superseded by more focused action groups given the task of making progress against the themes adopted by the partnership. These groups engaged with the partner organisations necessary to deliver operation activity and the OWG had become something of a talking shop with a range of partners attending with no clear role. These changes meant that consideration had to be given on how to manage the financial resources available to the partnership (Home Officer funding administered by the County Council) and the management of performance. The changes made were to empower the operational groups through discharging funding to them directly (in effect providing operational budgets for them) and forming a small governance group to look at financial and performance information – meeting only when needed. That governance group includes a number of Councillors and Officers from BDC, the Police and the County.
- 8.7 Alongside these operational changes the County-Wide review of CSP structures had thrown up discussion of a number of options for the structures that support strategic planning. Babergh, along with the County, Police and other County-wide services support the development of a single strategic group for the County, if it could be assured that delivery at local level would continue to be supported financially and be locally relevant to the needs of the community. The models developed to support this notion, in which Babergh played a leading part, gained initial support from a number of Senior officer throughout the County. However when put to the individual CSPs the proposals were not supported. The reasons given were numerous, but there was a particular concern that resources and local control would be wrestled away from localities. There were a number of safeguards that would have prevented this from happening, but the proposals proved too big a change in one step to be considered; it may well be that the ultimate shape of change will follow this model.
- 8.8 Change was not rejected wholesale though. For Babergh this has meant joining its strategic meeting with that of the Western CSP, a consortium involving the Districts of Mid Suffolk, St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath and now Babergh. This is with a view to full merger of the partnerships. To ensure that locally relevant work is not subsumed by this wider partnership Babergh continues to operate local action groups relevant to our area and is in the process of discussing the detail of a model for operational delivery across the Western partnership.

Action taken by the Community Safety Partnership

- 8.9 **Crime and Disorder in Town Centres at Night** – This has been and is likely to remain a key focus for the Community Safety Partnership. The Council and the Police have continued their effective joint working arrangements to ensure that there is a necessary focus of energies and resources on this theme. Other agencies are brought in for relevant problem solving of issues, however the loss of Babergh's Substance Misuse Officer (deleted from the establishment) and Community Safety Officer (left vacant since July) has had a significant impact on the delivery of this wider work, particularly in the promotion of responsible alcohol use. The partnership's strategic assessments have consistently shown that alcohol fuelled crime is a major factor contributing to the volume crimes for the District.

- 8.10 Babergh have a long standing joint multi-agency tactical approach. Tactics include how the town centre CCTV system is used, maximising its usefulness at low cost through the use of volunteers; targeted Police patrols; and coordinated license enforcement action. A local action groups meets on a regular basis to coordinate the operational implementation of specific actions.
- 8.11 In order to assess the partnerships impact in this area, there is specifically commissioned analytical support and corporate targets have been adopted (LPI115) as, in terms of crime, this is the key driver for violence and disorder. In 2011/12 the target adopted was to maintain the decreases seen in 09/10 (over 20% decrease) and 10/11 (a further 3% decrease). The results were a slight increase based on a comparison for the figures in 10/11 (1.8%). This needs to be seen in the context of the very considerable decreases achieved in previous years and the fact that for the first three Quarters of the year we saw continued decreases (7.3% - 29 offences), with a considerable spike in the last quarter. The details of this spike are being examined. It should also be noted that the total number of additional offences in the year was just 9.
- 8.12 **Anti-social Behaviour & Engaging Positively with Young People** – Concerns about anti-social behaviour amongst young people are consistently raised by our communities. These concerns are raised through direct public engagement via the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and through reports from individuals both to the council and the Police. There are often a mixture of perception of issues and actual incidents. The resulting actions developed through the partnership have therefore focused on ensuring that where genuine issues occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively; that unduly negative perception about young people are tackled; and that preventative and rehabilitative measures continue to be developed.
- 8.13 Aside from the core work that is done, including the continuing success of BeActive, a number of bespoke projects have been developed . These have focused the issues of underage drinking in a public place – a known causal factor in ASB and a preventative project working with Victims of ASB in order to tell their story. Operation Sabina, jointly developed by BDC and the local Police operates a 3 tier system that produces a range of interventions to tackle the issue of underage drinking in public. The final tier included the development of a video that tells the story of the consequences of alcohol misuse amongst young people, featuring local young people who have been adversely affected as a result. This video is being used in schools and more widely as an educative tool. The story of real victims is a way to bring home to people, the consequences of their thoughtless behaviour, a consideration which is often far from their minds. The *Broken Windows* video is now being used in schools as a way of making young people think twice about the affect of anti-social behaviour.
- 8.14 BeActive's project work has also developed and is focusing on developing additional provision of positive activity for young people in Sudbury. The HUB project has developed into a dual approach, one aspect focused on provided positive sporting activity and the other branch looking at the development of more generalised social space in Sudbury town centre (Bell Vue House). In Hadliegh the promotion of positive activity for young people has centred on a funded football programme and support for the Porch project. BeActive's engagement with individual young people referred as a result of anti-social or criminal behaviour continues its long track record of success. The success rate of over 90% of young people being diverted away from crime or anti-social behaviour continues.
- 8.15 Through the work of the ASB team, coordinated by Babergh's ASB Network Officer, 80 cases have been successfully dealt with throughout the year. These would include a wide-variety of issues involving housing, child protection, youth offending, mediation and a range of enforcement actions. Over 70 alleged perpetrators of ASB have been formally interviewed and over 50 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts issued.

- 8.16 **Domestic Violence** – Babergh continues to support the work of the local DV forum, Compassion, and delivers its action to tackle Domestic Abuse in partnership with them. Work in this area adopts the dual track of supporting victims – encouraging them to come forward; and developing practical action to tackle repeat perpetrators.
- 8.17 Compassion lead work in supporting victims through a befriending service and through the development and delivery of a specialist support programme (the Freedom Programme). In addition Compassion do extensive work to raise awareness of the issue and encouraging victims to come forward, including a programme of events during White Ribbon week. Work to tackle perpetrators from an enforcement perspective is coordinated through criminal action and via ASB casework. In addition Babergh has been working, with Compassion, on a county-wide basis to embed a rehabilitative programme called *Caring Dads*. This has involved extensive development work with Social Care teams and although progress is slow we believe properly embedding the programme is the best approach in the longer term.
- 8.18 **Emerging Crime Issue** – In the previous year the partnership supported the work of the Crime reduction officer to deal with burglary from other buildings (mainly out houses, sheds etc). This has been successful, with this issue no longer showing as an increasing concern. In the latter part of the year and into this year, the main emerging issue has been the theft of catalytic converters, particularly from commercial vehicles, Targeted work is ongoing to curtail this issue.

Future Issues

- 8.19 There are two main issues for the future. The first has already been referred to in this report - the development of joint working arrangements and full merger with the Western Community Safety Partnership. Babergh already shares its strategic meetings with the group and participates in the operational group overseeing the partnership's work (although we maintain our own local systems in this respect). Future work will focus on the development of this operational model, with a guiding principal of locally relevant and effective delivery, and the steps required towards formal legal merger. The other issue is that of the impending Police and Crime Commissioner and resulting change in the Police's relationships with CSPs. The election is due in November and, together with our colleagues throughout the West, as much as possible is being done to ensure that whoever is elected has the opportunity of understanding the positive contribution that the work of CSP's make.

Crime and other indicators

- 8.20 In terms of the overall crime picture in Babergh, over crime again reduced, this year a slight reduction of 1.2% (24 fewer offences). Aside from the figures already quoted in this report concerning specific crime types, the figures overall show a picture of maintaining low crime rates in most of the offence types. Two areas of exception to note are criminal damage offences which are down by 7.5% (76 fewer offences) and public order offences which shown an increase of 24% (42 more offences); in respect of the public order offences this can be linked to the increasingly effective use of our CCTV system. In partnership with the Police we have again increased the number of hours of direct monitoring and the number of offences detected via this method.

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