

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MIDSUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Head of Communities	Report Number: JSC/12/13
To: Joint Scrutiny	Date of meeting: 31 July 2013

REVIEW OF THE WESTERN COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To review the involvement of Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils in the Western Community Safety Partnership

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to scrutinise the work of the Western Community Safety Partnership over the past year 2012/2013.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 Mid Suffolk and Babergh District Councils contribute officer time to the partnership and have the ability to influence how the budget is allocated.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 None needed.

5. Equality Analysis

- 5.1 The report is for monitoring purposes and does not propose any policy changes therefore an equality analysis is not needed.

6. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

- 6.1 The strategic leadership of the Partnership is provided by the Responsible Authorities Group. This Group is made up of members representing:-

- Forest Heath District Council
- Babergh District Council
- St Edmundsbury Borough Council
- Mid Suffolk District Council
- Suffolk County Council
- Suffolk Police
- Suffolk Fire & Rescue Service
- Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group
- Suffolk Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- Norfolk and Suffolk Probation Trust
- Suffolk Youth Offending Service
- Registered Social Landlords

The Responsible Authorities Group commissions the annual strategic assessment, assessing the priorities for the area. It meets three times per year to approve and monitor the progress of the strategy. It also agrees the allocation of Partnership resources considers the implications of new legislation and shares information on Partnership activities.

Performance against the Partnership plan is reviewed by the Responsible Authorities Group.

Operational work is co-ordinated by the Officer Working Group. Agencies can submit Expressions of Interest or the Officer Working Group will commission projects and initiatives to meet our objectives.

7. Key Information

7.1 Strategic Priorities: the strategic priorities for the Western Community Safety Partnership are based on the Suffolk Annual Strategic Assessment. This identifies issues that are most relevant to the local area in terms of crime, disorder, community safety, anti social behaviour and substance misuse.

For 2012-2013 the priorities were expressed in 3 themes:

- Theme One: sustaining a safer night time economy
- Theme Two: protecting and developing communities
- Theme Three: protecting vulnerable families.

These were delivered through partnership working to:

- Tackle alcohol related violence, criminal damage and anti social behaviour relating to the night time economy
- Address public concerns around violent crime
- Reduce anti social behaviour involving young people and families
- Identify emerging issues through community led intelligence
- Raise awareness of emerging issues and substance misuse
- Identify and reduce the chances of re-offending of our most prolific offenders through the Integrated Offender Management system.

For 2013-2014 the priorities are expressed in 5 themes:

Theme One: Sustaining a Safer Night Time Economy

Priorities: Reduction in violence in a public place associated with alcohol
 Reduction in Anti Social Behaviour associated with alcohol
 Reduction in Criminal Damage and Public Order

Theme Two: Anti social Behaviour

Priorities: Reduce reports of ASB involving young people
Improve the way young people are perceived
Reduce criminal damage where young people are the offenders

Theme Three: Domestic Abuse

Priorities: Reduce Domestic abuse by raising awareness
Support victims
Work with perpetrators

Theme Four: Substance Misuse

Priorities: Increase awareness and understanding of substance misuse
Reduce illegal drug and harmful alcohol use in the most deprived areas
Promote and support Recovery

Theme Five: Emerging Crime

Priorities: Tackle short term issues not included in the Strategic Assessment
Support SNTs/OPTs with priorities raised identified by the community/partner engagement process

Mapping these against the emerging MSDC and BDCs priorities the vision is that “Communities feel safer and there are lower levels of crime”.

As the Councils’ priority is worked up into a more detailed strategy/work plan then the themes of the Western Community Safety Partnership can be considered alongside the Councils’ vision.

7.2 Crime Statistics:

In Suffolk 2012/13 saw a crime reduction of 12.3% and the county has the lowest overall recorded crime rate since 1998/99.

In Western Suffolk between March 2012 and April 2013 there was a 9% reduction in recorded offences this represents 1223 offences.

These statistics are broken down in more detail at:

http://www.ukcrimestats.com/Police_Force/Suffolk_Constabulary

These statistics are clearly good news however there are areas for concern. In Western Suffolk for the year ending April 2013 domestic burglary has increased by 20% which represents 93 more offences. Too many of these incidents have happened when the householder has left doors and windows unlocked and there has been a radio campaign to alert the public to this danger.

In 2012/2013 there was also an increase in the number of recorded sexual offences. This is due to more people reporting historical sexual crimes in the light of high profile public investigations of celebrities.

7.3 Funding: in 2012-2013 the Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant from the Home Office went directly to the Western Community Safety Partnership; with a small under spend from the previous year the total budget was £89,654.

In 2013-2014 the Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant from the Home Office went directly to the Police and Crime Commissioner who has passed this on to the Suffolk Community Safety Partnerships to commission services and award grants that will contribute to the Police and Crime Objectives in the Police and Crime Commissioner's Plan. For 2013/2014 this was £72,238.

Community Safety Partnerships were established in 1998 under the Crime and Disorder Act; since then they have been key players in reducing crime, anti social behaviour and reoffending across England and Wales. All of the partners involved in the Western Community Safety Partnership share the common goal of working together to make communities safer. Up until 2013 the Home Office directly funded the partnership and this was fundamental to its success.

In November 2012 when the Police and Crime Commissioner was elected the Home Office redirected the Crime and Disorder Reduction Grant to the Police and Crime Commissioner whose initial intention was to retain the grant and commission community safety projects that would meet the targets laid out in the Police and Crime Plan.

After hearing representations from all of the community safety partnerships in Suffolk, the Police and Crime Commissioner had a change of heart and divided the fund up amongst the community safety partnerships for them to commission projects. However, the Police and Crime Commissioner made it very clear that this is a transitional arrangement only and the same funding arrangements will not apply next year.

This uncertainty around funding for 2014/2015 means that the position of the Community Safety partnership is fragile. The Police and Crime Commissioner has said that there will be a new commissioning framework in place to structure the distribution of the Crime and Disorder Grant and that all partners will be involved in developing this.

7.4 Conclusion: In the coming year all Community Safety Partnerships will have to consider their position very carefully and balance the new funding arrangements against the statutory requirements to have a formal community safety partnership.

The reporting arrangements put in place by the Police and Crime Commissioner will give the opportunity for community safety projects to have a higher profile in the county.

The Western Community Safety Partnership is large consisting of 4 districts. This balances addressing local community safety issues while still taking advantage of working together to save duplication, time and money. However, there has been discussion in the past about merging all the Community Safety Partnerships into one and this is something that the Police and Crime Commissioner could raise again.

8. Appendices

Title	Location
(a) Western Community Safety Partnership Plan 2013-2014	http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/community-and-living/your-community/upload/WSCSP-Plan-2013-14.pdf

9. Background Documents

None.

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