

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

FRIDAY 22 MARCH 2002 AT 2.00 P.M.

JOINT BEST VALUE REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY

Report of the County Secretary

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1. Purpose of Report

To seek Cabinet approval of the recommendations and implementation plans arising from the Joint Best Value Review of Community Safety.

2. Summary

The Joint Best Value Review of Community Safety, which began in September 2001, has produced a set of recommendations and implementation plans as set out in detail in the Final Report (copy attached).

3. Conclusion

Cabinet is invited to consider the recommendations emerging from the Review.

The recommendations are designed to improve both the operation and the impact on the ground of the Community Safety Partnerships between HCC, the Districts and the Police. While the focus has been the St Albans Partnership, the recommendations are applicable county-wide.

While there are some additional resources required to support the implementation of the proposals, these are offset against anticipated longer term savings (currently difficult to quantify) gained through more effective partnership operation and better targeting of resources to address priority community safety issues.

4. The BV Process

The Review has followed a similar approach to other BV reviews, with a focus on the 4Cs (Challenge, Compare, Consult, Competition) and featuring a Challenge Workshop at which a number of hypotheses were developed. These hypotheses have been refined and developed by an officer Core Group and agreed with a Member

Review Group led by Nigel Brook - see Appendix A to the Final Report for a full description of the methodology and the approach taken to the 4Cs.

5. Background

Scope of the Review

St Albans City and District Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Police Authority agreed to carry out a joint best value review of Community Safety in the St Albans District, with the focus being the Community Safety Partnership established under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 between the District Council, County Council and Police.

It has sought to answer the key questions:

- How effective is the Partnership in making St Albans a safer place to live, and feel to be a safer place?
- Does the Partnership make a difference?

In addition to crime & disorder reduction (which is the statutory responsibility of the partnership) the review has also considered road and fire safety services to answer the questions:

- Are these services currently linked to the partnership?
- If so, are the links effective?
- If not, should they be linked?

It has been a cross-authority and cross-cutting exercise with joint working at member and officer level, with Terms of Reference (see Final Report – Appendix A) which represent a jointly agreed approach to best value methodology.

St Albans Community Safety Partnership

The Structure, membership of key groups and broad operation of the Partnership are covered in detail in the Appendices to the Final Report. In summary, a Strategy Group of senior officers from the three key partners, plus the Health Authority, Probation and Borough/District Safety Partnerships meet quarterly to set priorities and objectives. The Community Safety Network of key agencies meets annually to plan implementation and organise larger consultation events. The Community Safety Consultation Forum, a merger of the Police Community Partnership and St Albans Community Safety Advisory Group, meets three times a year to implement initiatives at local level and consults via a rolling programme of local meetings. The groups are supported by the Community Safety Co-ordinator.

Performance Assessment

A considerable amount of organisational and performance data was obtained which resulted in the production of the Position Statement – available separately. Analysis of this information highlighted eight Areas for Improvement, four broadly relating to organisation and operation of the Partnership itself, and four to the impact of Community Safety Initiatives on the ground.

The eight areas were:

Partnership Organisation:

- Leadership, Roles and Responsibilities - executive direction, membership and roles of key groups/officers, responsibility for key themes
- Communication / Information Sharing – information sharing between partners, use of IT, closing information gaps, improving meeting format/timing/management
- Effective Use of Resources – financial planning, pooling of budgets, use of people/time money, commitment of group members
- Objectives/Outcomes – SMART targets, performance information, mainstreaming

Impact of Community Safety Initiatives on the ground

- Public Consultation/Participation – effective engagement of the public
- Data/Information Analysis – getting the right information to the right people to enable analysis of trends, objective setting, targeting of resources and evaluation of results
- Addressing Key Public Concerns – achieving better alignment between actual safety levels and people’s fear of crime, targeting initiatives to areas of real public concern
- Evaluation/Monitoring of Impact – assessing the real impact of initiatives, use of cost/benefit analysis

Conclusions

Work on the above themes at the Challenge Workshop and subsequent analysis by the Core Group resulted in five key conclusions:

1. If we develop a structure to provide clear leadership, accountability and performance management, with identified resources, it will enable the strategy to be delivered more effectively.
2. If we establish a method and system for collecting cross-organisational data and protocols for sharing that data and we then present it in a user-friendly format to partners and the public, we will be able to measure the performance of the partnership and identify areas for resource input.
3. If we develop an effective method of assessing/determining cost/benefit analysis of crime prevention/reduction initiatives, we can then establish the cost effectiveness of the Community Safety Partnership

4. If we develop a clear link between partnership's objectives and agencies plans and budgets, and make available a pump priming budget, we could ensure the correct targeting of resources and delivery of effective initiatives.

5. If we improve the way we interact with the public, including hard-to-reach groups, using a range of targeted methods, this will enable us to target information and action into key areas of community concern and help reconcile the difference between public perception and reality.

6. Recommendations

The recommendations are in five key areas responding to the five key conclusions above:

Recommendation 1 – Partnership Leadership and Effectiveness (see Final Report – Section 2.1)

That the Partnership adopt a new structure, to include abolition of the Community Safety Network, the creation of Theme Groups to focus on community safety issues, and the re-definition of the roles of the Strategy Group, Consultation Forum and the Community Safety Co-ordinator to ensure more effective delivery of the Community Safety Strategy.

Recommendation 2 – Information Management (Final Report – Section 2.2)

That the Partnership sign up to the Information Management Project currently being negotiated between the County Council and 5 Partnerships - the Community Safety Co-ordinator to act as project manager for system implementation, ensuring the right information is available to key groups to support partnership objectives.

Recommendation 3 – Identifying Initiative Cost Effectiveness (Final Report – Section 2.3)

That the Partnership adopts the cost/benefit methodology being developed by Crime Concern for Stevenage Borough Council, with appropriate local modifications, in order to inform Partnership objective setting and provide effective evaluation of specific initiatives and targeting of resources.

Recommendation 4 – Mainstreaming Crime and Disorder (Final Report – Section 2.4)

That, to develop clear links between Partnership objectives and agency plans and budgets, there should be an agreed mainstreaming process whereby tasks identified in the Annual Plan are taken by agency representatives into mainstream service planning and budgeting processes, with progress and issues reported back to the Partnership. Also that agencies pool their Partnership support funds to use on agreed initiatives, with Partnership reporting to agencies on the use of funds.

The Chief Officer Group on Crime Reduction should ensure common agency priorities, identify their support for Partnership tasks and nominate a Gatekeeper to oversee all Partnership proposals put forward to their service for mainstreaming.

Recommendation 5 – Improving Public Consultation and Reducing the Fear of Crime (Final Report – Section 2.5)

That the Partnership should pilot, in HCC’s Customer Service Centre, a Community Safety Hotline for both giving and receiving information about community safety issues - this should be promoted via suitable publicity that also highlights the Partnership’s achievements. Also that other targeted consultation methods are investigated, including: local web-sites linked to HertsDirect; interactive digital TV; localised use of the county newspaper, coupled with e-mail; consultation with the media to improve reporting of community safety issues, and an expanded role for community safety consultation meetings.

Quick Wins

There were also a number of Quick Wins arising from the workshop sessions – a review of these has allowed those not already implemented or under development to be incorporated in the five key recommendations.

7. Financial Implications

The following table summarises the costs / savings that will emerge as each one of the recommendations is implemented. Please refer to section 6 for the recommendations.

Rec	Summary of Costs	Source of Funding	Summary of Savings	Net Cost / Saving
1	Additional Costs Related to the extra administration costs to support the Community Safety Co-ordinator role. Estimated at £10k.	Through District / Police Budgets	There will be a saving of up to 500 hours. At a cost per hour of £40, the total saving will up to £20k. See Final Report Appendices – Page 13.	There could be a potential net saving of up to £10k. This is likely to be for the first year only.
2	The project will cost circa £20-30k and there will be additional role-on costs of between £2-7k each year.	Partnership Pooled Budget	There will be savings gained from better-implemented initiatives and projects, however, this figure is not quantifiable.	Long-term net savings are anticipated but at this stage, it is not possible to quantify this figure.
3	There are no additional costs of extracting the methodology of the project. Applying the project will require officer time but no additional resources should be needed.	Partnership Pooled Budget	Savings will be gained from the better use of resources and more effective delivery of initiatives. Again, it is not possible to quantify this at this stage.	Long-term net savings are anticipated but at this stage, it is not possible to quantify this figure.

4	There are no necessary cost implications, however, it may lead to pressure for growth.	Partnership Pooled Budget	If success is achieved in mainstreaming crime and disorder initiatives there may be less resultant demand in the future for 'crime and disorder' specific budgets. As of yet this is not quantifiable	There will be no net cost or saving.
5	The costs of the hotline and website, including publicity, will circa £15k.	Partnership Pooled Budget	There may be a reduction in the Fear of Crime which can be classified as a 'social cost'	Possible net savings in consultation costs by utilising existing Police Authority frameworks.