

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
RESOURCES, PROSPERITY, PARTNERSHIP AND
CONSULTATION SELECT COMMITTEE
AT 10.30 A.M.**

**Agenda Item
No.**

8

WORK OF THE CRIME REDUCTION PANEL 2001/02

Report of the County Secretary

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Executive Member:- Derrick Ashley

1. Purpose of the report

To inform members of the activities of the Crime Reduction Panel during 2001/02

2. Summary

The Panel has only had one meeting on the 29 August 2001 since its establishment in June 2001.

Key matters considered were:

- The County Council's draft policy on crime and disorder and the role of the Crime Reduction Unit
- The role of the Crime Reduction Unit (CRU)
- Partnership support and funding initiatives for 2001/02
- The District Auditor's Review of Crime and Disorder

3. Background

3.1 At its meeting on the 19 June 2001 the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership and Consultation Select Committee established the Crime and Disorder Panel (the panel name was subsequently changed to the Crime Reduction Panel at the first panel meeting). Its purposes are:

- a) To comment on proposals from the Cabinet in relation to the County Council's approach to the Crime and Disorder Act and Community Safety.

- b) To scrutinise any matter in relation to County Council's approach to the Crime and Disorder Act and Community Safety chosen by them or referred by the Select Committee.

4. Activities

4.1 Policy Statement on Crime & Disorder

- 4.1.1 Officers had previously agreed with Panel Members that the Council should agree to and publish a policy statement on crime & disorder/crime reduction. This statement would briefly outline how the council would work with partner agencies to secure a safer environment for our communities. It would also set out a clear commitment from the council to achieve real progress in an area of work which has previously suffered from a lack of direction. The Panel, subject to minor alterations, endorsed the policy statement (attached as Appendix A).

4.2 The Role of the Crime Reduction Unit

- 4.2.1 Panel Members were introduced to the role & workplan of the Unit by Andrew Laycock, County Secretary. The Unit was established in February this year and has three members of staff: Head of Unit, Crime Reduction Officer and a Research Assistant. Their primary objective is to provide a strategic input into the 10 district council based local community safety partnerships. The unit is also required to ensure that all the Council's services have due regard for 'crime & disorder' implications when delivering their services – this is a statutory requirement defined in the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

- 4.2.2 Evidence must also be provided that crime reduction initiatives are actually working. Therefore, the unit will also focus on working with partners to implement frameworks that monitor performance, use resources effectively and ultimately make a positive difference for our communities. Panel members were encouraged by the early results achieved by the Unit and wished to see evidence of greater elected member input into the partnerships. Comment was also made as to whether consistency of approach by the District Councils could be improved. The officers presented some initial thoughts on both these issues to which the Panel responded by requesting further information.

(The CRU Work Plan is attached as Appendix B)

4.3 Partnership support and funding initiatives for 2001/02

- 4.3.1 A paper was presented which highlighted the funding opportunities that currently are able to support partnership activity in this area of work. A total of £1.4m has been identified. Various organisations are contributing to this sum including Hertfordshire Constabulary, Regional Government Office, the Police Authority and the council. Specific initiatives include:

- Disruption of drugs markets for supply of and demand for – approximately £900,000
- Using sport programmes to reduce offending/anti-social behaviour of young people – approximately £100,000 over two years
- The management of information to support the capacity building of partnerships – funds to be determined.

4.3.2 The Panel gave due consideration to the young peoples' project and gave their approval in principle for the allocation of funds, provisionally £100,000 over two years subject to further detailed information and the Panel's and the Executive Member's approval.

4.3.3 The Panel requested a report on the levels of financial support that District Councils were currently providing.

4.3.4 The Panel also considered the need to pool budgets in the future where it could be demonstrated that value for money would be improved.

Discussions are at a very early stage, but it is intended to examine the possibility of pooling budgets for the next financial year. Both the Herts Constabulary and the Council will examine possibilities of pooling £50,000. With the Council's contribution and £100,000 from the Constabulary, other agencies may, in due course, also wish to assess how budgets are utilised to support crime and disorder reduction initiatives.

4.4 The District Auditor's Review of Crime and Disorder

4.4.1 The Panel has been maintaining an overview of the progress made to implement recommendations of the review (attached as Appendix C).

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising out of the Panel's recent meeting. However the next meeting of the Panel may well consider how the council's partnership support programme, estimated at £45,000 should be allocated to partnerships.

The next meeting of the panel is 2.00pm 1 November 2001.

Background information referred to by author

Minutes of the Resources, Prosperity, Partnership & Consultation Select Committee
19 October 2000, 19 June 2001.

Crime Reduction Panel papers
29 August 2001.

