

## **Social Issues Scrutiny Panel – 30 January 2006**

### **Report of the Community Safety Informal Scrutiny Group**

#### **Cllr Jean Hammerton, Chair of Community Safety Informal Scrutiny Group**

##### Purpose of the Report

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider this matter as part of its role in acting as a critical friend in examining proposals for the development or review of key Council policies and programmes.

This report covers the findings of the Community Safety Informal Scrutiny Group, appointed by the previous Community, Arts and Social Performance Improvement Committee.

##### Links to the Corporate Strategy

Community Safety has been identified as a key service area in the 2005-2008 Corporate Strategy, which specifically states that the City Council will be *“be a vigorous and challenging member of the Community Safety Partnership and fulfil our obligations under the new Community Safety Strategy.”*

##### Executive Summary

The former Community, Arts and Social performance Improvement Committee set up an informal scrutiny group to look at Community Safety in July 2004. Their remit was to keep an overview of the revision of the Community Safety Strategy for Winchester District. This report details their findings. The group’s recommendations are as follows:

- 1.1 A Members’ Training evening is organised to tie in with the Community Safety Conference in February in order to update Members with key community safety issues and the work of the Community Safety Partnership
- 1.2 The Area Community Panels are widely publicised to elected Members, as well as the public, and communication links between Members and the Panels are developed
- 1.3 The role of the Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Inclusive Communities on the Community Safety Partnership is publicised amongst Members
- 1.4 The Community Safety Officer’s role as a link point for Members be publicised through Members’ Briefing note
- 1.5 Better links are made with other Community Safety Partnerships in neighbouring districts, especially with partnerships which border on to the southern part of the Winchester District
- 1.6 A simplified Community Safety Partnership diagram is produced with case studies illustrating how people can link into various layers in the Partnership
- 1.7 Further thought is given by officers as to how to section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act can be promoted throughout the City Council (section 17 places a duty on the City Council to consider community safety in all of its core business), with recommendations to be brought back to the next meeting of the Social Issues Scrutiny Panel

- 1.8 The Social Issues Scrutiny Panel maintain an overview of the Community Safety Strategy and City Council's role in the Community Safety Partnership, with regular reviews in the work programme.

### Recommendation

That the Social Issues Scrutiny Panel endorses the Community Safety Informal Scrutiny Group's recommendations and refers them to Cabinet for agreement.

### **Background Documents**

Community Safety Strategy 2005 – 2008

Notes of the Community Safety Informal Scrutiny Group meetings, held on file in the Chief Executive's Department

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Final report of the Community Safety Informal Scrutiny Group



**Winchester**  
City Council

**SOCIAL ISSUES SCRUTINY PANEL  
REPORT**

**COMMUNITY  
SAFETY**

30 JANUARY 2006

## SCRUTINY REVIEW – COMMUNITY SAFETY

### REPORT OF COMMUNITY SAFETY INFORMAL SCRUTINY GROUP

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Community, Arts and Social Performance Improvement Committee decided on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004 to set up an Informal Scrutiny Group with the following terms of reference:

To hold three meetings at which it will:

- Familiarise itself with current issues relating to Community Safety and the Council's role in the Community Safety Partnership and provide initial feedback of the Strategy before its publication;
- Following publication of the revised Community Safety Strategy in April 2005, review the content of the Strategy and test the Council's and other partners proposed response to it;
- Review and make recommendations on the performance indicators used to monitor the Council's effectiveness in contributing to the targets in the Strategy."

- 1.2 The Group has now concluded its work, with this report setting out its key findings and conclusions.

#### 2 Background to the review

- 2.1 The review focused on the development of the Community Safety Strategy, from the initial crime audit in the Winchester District to the production of an action plan. Members in the informal scrutiny group took an overview of the strategy process and met at key points during the strategy's production to question principal Members and officers.

- 2.2 The review took place over two municipal years. From July 2004 – July 2005 Cllrs Hammerton, Bennetts, Cooper, Love and Rees sat on the informal scrutiny group, followed by Cllrs Hammerton, Love, Rees and Saunders between July 2005 and December 2005.

- 2.3 The review was supported by the Policy Officer.

- 2.4 Meetings of the informal scrutiny group took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2004, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2005, 19<sup>th</sup> April 2005 and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2005. An extra meeting of the group was called in order to fit better with the Community Safety Strategy process and to allow the group's intervention at the key points of the process.

#### 3 Investigations and witnesses

- 3.1 To meet its objectives the Group agreed to invite comment from several internal and external witnesses.

- 3.2 Inspector Steve Mote and Sergeant Kate Fryatt attended the group's meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> January and in addition Sergeant Fryatt attended on the 19<sup>th</sup> April. At the January meeting both officers principally answered questions about the proposed new Community Safety Partnership structure but also answered questions on the emerging Community Safety Strategy. At the April meeting, Sgt Fryatt answered questions on funding bid applications for community safety from the Government Office of the South East and elected Member involvement in the Community Safety Partnership. There was also the opportunity at the meetings for members to ask general, related questions of the police officers.
- 3.3 Members of the Group also invited the Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Inclusive Communities to attend the meetings to answer questions, as well as the Head of Community Development and the Community Safety Officer.

#### 4 Community Safety Background

- 4.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires Local Authorities to establish a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) with the Police, County Council and other local partners such as the Fire and Rescue Service and voluntary organisations. The ethos behind the partnerships was recognition that a broader approach was required to tackle crime and disorder beyond the Police's traditional powers of investigation and arrest.
- 4.2 The CDRPs were required to produce a Community Safety Strategy every three years. The Winchester District Community Safety Strategy was due to be updated in April 2005.
- 4.3 The previous Community Safety Strategy (2002-2005) had received comments from the Government Office of the Southeast (GOSE) stating that it was too general and lacked targets and action plans.
- 4.4 The City Council's Community Safety Partnership, prior to 2005, did not have any elected member representation, although Cabinet was required to endorse the draft Community Safety Strategy.
- 4.5 The Community Safety Partnership is funded directly from the Home Office. The funding is ring-fenced although there is a degree of discretion as how it is spent as long as it is used to work towards the targets within the Community Safety Strategy. The only funding from the City Council is the salary of the Community Safety Officer.

#### 5. Production of Community Safety Strategy

- 5.1 The first stage in the process of reviewing the Community Safety Strategy was a crime audit which was carried out during the summer of 2004. The University of Portsmouth, Institute of Criminal Justice, was commissioned to undertake the research and to carry out an analysis of the statistical data and information collected. Questionnaires were developed and distributed to gather the views of adults, young people, elected Members, the business sector, organisations

working in the field of substance and alcohol misuse, and local beat officers. This was supplemented by a series of intensive one to one interviews with key stakeholders, and an analysis of hard data provided by key partners and other agencies. The adult questionnaires were distributed to a random selection of 1,000 households across the district and were also freely available on demand. Schools and youth agencies were the main distribution networks for the young people's survey. Approximately 500 questionnaires were returned and analysed. The provisional headline findings of the audit were presented to a meeting of the Community Safety Partnership in September 2004 for consideration and discussion. The final results were used to help develop the Community Safety Strategy and to identify key priorities to be addressed during its 3 year life span i.e. 2005 – 2008. The draft strategy was approved by Cabinet and the Community Safety Partnership in March 2005.

- 5.2 The Community Safety Informal Scrutiny Group was updated on the rationale behind the creation of the community safety partnerships and community safety strategies by the then Director of Community Services.
- 5.3 Members were presented with the initial outcomes of the crime audit carried out by the University of Portsmouth, and the five key priorities which would form the basis of the strategy:
- Creating a safe and enjoyable evening economy
  - Creating communities that feel safe
  - Fighting crime through better working together
  - Being tough on anti-social behaviour
  - Reacting quickly and firmly to criminal activity
- 5.4 The group supported the initial findings, noting that although Winchester had generally very low crime levels the percentage change of any change in the crime rates would be more exaggerated than in areas with higher incidences of crime.
- 5.5 The group noted that the timescale for producing the Community Safety Strategy had slipped due to changes in City Council staff and the delay in recruiting a new community safety officer, along with the need for confirmation of Government funding before the finalisation of an action plan. It was noted that the strategy would therefore be sent to Cabinet for approval in March 2005 as opposed to the initial date of January and that the action plan was being finalised in December 2005.
- 5.6 The Community Safety Strategy draft Action Plan was presented to the Group at their meeting in October 2005, which Members accepted and endorsed the planned review of the action plan in 2006.

## 6. Other Key issues for the Community Safety Informal Scrutiny Review

### 6.1 Community Safety Partnership

- 6.1.1 Prior to its review, the Community Safety Partnership's structure had not been formalised and principally consisted of strategic meetings with no formal mechanism for partners to work in a joined up manner.
- 6.1.2 The Community Safety Partnership structure was reviewed at the end of 2004. The new structure (see appendix 2) was based on the 'Bromley Model'. The structure divides the partnerships into strategic and tactical levels and associated delivery bodies, with the introduction of Area Community Panels based on sectors within the Winchester District. Six monthly reviews will take place of the partnership to ensure that it is working effectively.
- 6.1.3 The Area Community Panels are intended to provide an opportunity for local issues to be fed into the Community Safety Partnership and to allow a local focus and implementation of the partnership's strategic priorities. It is anticipated that a police inspector will be affiliated with each Area Community Panel, and meetings of these groups would be open to the public and any local group experiencing problems. Discussion has also taken place at the Community Safety Partnership Strategic Group about the possible expansion of the area community panel role to include issues other than community safety, reflecting the full range of issues in the Community Strategy although this is to be explored further.
- 6.1.4 Members considered that the Partnership structure diagram should be simplified and a guide to the chart and groups represented on it be produced, as well as guidance for how people and organisations can get involved in the partnership and at which level their input would be appropriate. The latter could take the form of 'mini' case studies.

### 6.2 Involvement of elected members in the community safety partnership function

- 6.2.1 As the previous structure of the Community Safety Partnership did not allow for direct Member representation, the new structure will offer opportunities for Member involvement.
- 6.2.2 The Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Inclusive Communities, (currently Cllr Brian Collin), will sit on the reviewed Community Safety Partnership as the City Council Member representative, with the Chief Executive taking the role of Chair of the partnership. Cllr Collin, therefore, would become the principal link for Members into the strategic level of the Community Safety Partnership.
- 6.2.3 Member involvement at a local level will be particularly important in the Area Community Panels, based around the following sectors: Denmead, Itchen Valley, Kings Worthy, Winchester, Bishops Waltham. Therefore details of these meetings and contacts will need to be well publicised.

6.2.4 In order to ensure better Member involvement in the Community Safety Partnership, the following options were considered:

- One Member from each Political party sitting on the Community Safety partnership
- Training/briefing sessions for all Members
- Regular briefings/updates prior to full Council meetings
- Regular scrutiny of the Community Safety partnership
- Member involvement in the Area Community Panels

6.3 The following options were considered to improve Members' understanding of community safety and to improve communication for Members:

- Promotion of Community Safety Officer as link to the Police through Members' Briefing Note
- Creation of a generic email to be used to contact the Police which would be filtered out to the relevant police officer
- Provide an evening training session for Members to properly prepare them to deal with queries from their residents regarding community safety
- To hold Members training in conjunction with the Community Safety Conference in February 2006
- Promote awareness amongst staff of section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act which puts a duty on local authorities to consider community safety in all of its core business
- Development of the community safety web pages on [www.winchester.gov.uk](http://www.winchester.gov.uk) to provide Members with sources of information on the work of the Community Safety Partnership and community safety generally

## 7 Boundaries with other Districts – and new BCU boundary

7.1 Due to the position of several relatively large settlements in the south of the District, the Community Strategies of Portsmouth and other areas could be more relevant than Winchester District's Community Safety Strategy. Strong links would therefore need to be made with other Community Safety Partnerships abutting the Winchester District to ensure the best results for the communities of the southern parishes.

7.2 Currently, the police have three Basic Command Units (BCU) which cover the Winchester District. However, as of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006, a single administrative area will cover the Winchester District which will help to ensure that there is consistent working right across the District. The new Operational Command Unit (replacing the BCU) will cover the administrative areas of Winchester District,



Fareham, Gosport, Havant and a small amount of the southern parishes in East Hampshire.

- 7.4 The Operational Command Unit (OCU) will be under the command of a Chief Superintendent. Underneath the Chief Superintendent will be a District Chief Inspector who will be responsible for a local authority area. This post will be responsible for partnership working and monitoring performance throughout the District. It is currently anticipated that the Chief Superintendent for the OCU will sit on the area's Local Strategic Partnerships as the community safety sector representatives, although this is to be confirmed.
- 7.5 The District Chief Inspector will have two sector inspectors reporting to them with one responsible for the Winchester town area and one for the wider District. Supporting the inspectors will be various sector officers and special constables, as well as an increased number of Police Community Support Officers (this increase will be phased between April 2006 and March 2008).
- 7.6 The structure of the OCU's community safety unit is to be decided.
- 7.7 The Community Safety Officer is also a member of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Safety Managers Group which already shares funds and best practice for cross border projects.

## 8 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 Following the monitoring of the Community Safety Strategy review, and considering opportunities for elected Members to become involved in the City Council's community safety function, the Informal Scrutiny Group makes the following recommendations:
- A Members' Training evening is organised to tie in with the Community Safety Conference in February in order to update Members with key community safety issues and the work of the Community Safety Partnership
  - The Area Community Panels are widely publicised to elected Members, as well as the public, and communication links between the two are developed
  - The role of the Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Inclusive Communities on the Community Safety Partnership is publicised amongst Members
  - The Community Safety Officer's role as a link point for Members be publicised through Members' Briefing note
  - Better links are made with other Community Safety Partnerships in neighbouring districts, especially with partnerships which border on to the southern part of the Winchester District

- A simplified Community Safety Partnership diagram is produced with case studies illustrating how people can link into various layers in the Partnership
- Further thought is given by officers as to how to section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act can be promoted throughout the City Council (section 17 places a duty on the City Council to consider community safety in all of its core business) with recommendations to be brought back to the next meeting of the Social Issues Scrutiny Panel
- The Social Issues Scrutiny Panel maintain an overview of the Community Safety Strategy and City Council's role in the Community Safety Partnership, with regular reviews in the work programme