



meeting      Community Services Select Committee

date            3<sup>rd</sup> October 2005

agenda item number

## **Report of the Assistant Director, Regeneration**

### **Scrutiny of Community Safety Initiatives**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide suggestions for Community Safety Initiatives which the Community Services Select Committee might wish to scrutinise.

#### **Information and Advice**

2. At the last meeting the Select Committee considered a report on its proposed work programme which included a proposal to establish a study group to look at the effectiveness of community safety initiatives. The report was agreed in principle but the Committee asked for the project to be scoped in greater detail. This paper provides that information.
3. Community Safety work in the County Council is based within the Safer Communities Team in the Culture & Community Department. The Safer Communities Team also has staff within it working on Health Inequalities issues.
4. Community Safety involves a wide range of work; much of it delivered in partnership as part of the district based Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. The areas of work which occupy the majority of the time of the staff working on Community Safety are:
  - Anti social behaviour
  - Crime reduction
  - Substance misuse
  - Community safety awareness
  - Domestic violence

5. The following areas of work are suggested as possible topics for scrutiny:

**Neighbourhood Wardens in Ashfield:** Ashfield District Council is using wardens extensively. They are seen as an addition to the police in providing both a point of contact when the public need help or information, and also as a means of re-assuring the public that crime is being dealt with.

The County Council contributes significant amounts of money towards the cost of district based wardens.

It is proposed that a visit to Ashfield to meet wardens, the public in the areas they patrol and discussions with those managing the wardens is undertaken. It is also proposed that discussions are held with the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to discuss the impact of the wardens.

**Activate Project:** This project offers targeted detached youth work in areas where anti social behaviour is an issue. It is managed by Mick Lord who is based within the Young People's Division of the County Council

It is proposed that Members visit the project to see it in operation, to talk to local young people about the issue of 'having nothing to do' and to discuss how the impact of a project of this sort can be evaluated.

Responding to young people who are perceived to be causing a problem by hanging around is a contentious issue with local communities and some partners. Youth work is generally built around a planned programme of developmental activities for young people which commits staff to work several months ahead and consequently there is limited capacity for a rapid response to 'young people problems'. Exceptionally, 'Activate' is able to do this.

**Anti Social Behaviour:** Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) is a significant problem across the County. The range of actions that fall within the broad Home Office definition of ASB include graffiti, noise nuisance, intimidation, criminal damage and offensive or abusive language.

The County Council works with partners on ASB issues. It is proposed that Members visit one of the district based ASB Teams in the County to discuss operational issues and the effectiveness of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Parenting Orders and Anti Social Behaviour Orders.

Members may find it useful to talk to library staff who are experiencing significant ASB problems.

The role of the County Council in ASB work is developing. Discussions with the County Council Youth Service may be helpful in providing an idea of the scale of ASB and demands upon the service to respond.

The success of ASB work will be measured under the developing Local Area Agreements by asking residents about their perceptions of ASB. Members might find it useful to talk to Neighbourhood Watch and other locally based

groups to establish what impact ASB is having on communities and the effectiveness of the current remedies.

### **Approach to the review**

6. It is felt that this scrutiny could effectively be approached by a small study group of 6 members supported by officers from the Safer Communities Team. As well as receiving reports on the national picture and local context, the study group would be able to take evidence informally by visiting the projects identified in the report.
7. It is anticipated that the study group could undertake this work over a fairly intensive period, say between October and the end of January. It would be expected to make an interim report to the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December and a final report to the select committee on 13<sup>th</sup> February.
8. It is estimated that the cost of this approach would be approximately £100 and this will be met from the Community Safety budget.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, crime and disorder and users. Where such implications are material, they have been brought out in the text of this report.

### **Recommendation**

10. It is recommended that a study group be established to undertake the review as outlined in the report.

**Nigel Hamshere**  
**Assistant Director, Regeneration**  
(Contact Officer: Adrian Dudley)

### **Legal Services' Comments**

Under Article 6 of the constitution, Select Committees must within their terms of reference review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions; make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any regulatory committee in connection with the discharge of any functions; and consider matters affecting the County of Nottinghamshire or its inhabitants. The Select Committee should take these requirements into account when considering the contents of this report. (JA 20.09.05)

**Director of Resources Financial Comments CC/PB)**

The financial implications are as outlined in the report.

**Background Papers Available for Inspection**

Community Safety Strategy 2002-2005.

**Electoral Division(s) Affected**

All.