



meeting **CRIME REDUCTION SELECT COMMITTEE**

date **23 July 2007** agenda item number

Report of the Chair of the Crime Reduction Select Committee

Crime Reduction Select Committee – Draft Final Report

Purpose of the report

1. This report provides the Select Committee with draft conclusions and recommendations from its scrutiny review of crime reduction. The Select Committee is invited to discuss this draft report, making any amendments as necessary, and agree a final report, including recommendations arising from this scrutiny review, which will be referred to the County Council's Cabinet.

Background

2. The Crime Reduction Select Committee has met 5 times. On 26 February 2007 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned this scrutiny review of crime reduction. The agreed scope for this review is attached at Appendix C of this report for Members' reference. It was agreed that this scrutiny review should aim to conclude in July 2007, reporting to Council Cabinet in September 2007. The overall aims of this Select Committee were to review the effectiveness of our work in crime reduction.

Summary of issues from presentation on Monday 19 March by Chris Walker – Safer Communities Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council

3. At the Select Committee's first meeting on Monday 19 March 2007 Members discussed the key issues arising from the scope of this scrutiny review ; for example performance issues, crime levels, funding issues, value for money, and the targets set for crime reduction in Nottinghamshire.

Chris Walker, the County Council's Safer Communities Manager, then gave a presentation to the Select Committee on crime reduction. He outlined the community safety chart for Nottinghamshire and indicated that the Nottinghamshire Community Safety Board was chaired by Councillor Glynn Gilfoyle. In Nottinghamshire there had been a specific

community safety function since the early 1990s and the Safer Communities Team had been operating since 2003. The budget was £900,000. The themes funded were anti social behaviour (wardens, ASB officers, PCSOs etc); partnerships; vulnerable groups (victim support, domestic violence); and strategic data sharing.

He gave details of statistics for domestic burglary and vehicle crime and indicated that it was expected that they would both show an increase when the final quarter's figures were included. With regard to violent crime the rates were increasing but they were increasing faster nationally than in Nottinghamshire. He indicated that the number of robberies was creeping up and that they had started to move out into the conurbation. Mr Walker referred to the crime "problem solving triangle" which had an offender, a victim, and a location. He commented that if one of these was removed crime would be reduced. He suggested that future Select Committee meetings could examine the role of partners and the local area agreement in relation to crime reduction, together with input from the Police and the District Councils. A further meeting could then look at the County Council's contribution with input from the portfolio holder Councillor Gilfoyle. It was also reported that a Nottinghamshire Police Chief Superintendent, Richard Johnson, had joined the County Council on a two year secondment.

The Select Committee decided to look at crime figures and action being taken and agreed to invite the Chief Constable to their next meeting, together with the relevant County Council Cabinet Member, Councillor Gilfoyle.

Summary of issues from the presentation by Nottinghamshire Chief Constable Steve Green on 23 April 2007

- 4 Chief Constable Steve Green, Assistant Chief Constable Suzannah Fish, and Chief Superintendent Richard Johnson, attended the Select Committee's second meeting on Monday 23 April 2007 at the Committee's invitation.

The Chief Constable gave a presentation on crime trends and the Force's approach to crime reduction and partnership work. He welcomed the Committee's scrutiny and gave Chief Superintendent Johnson's secondment to the County Council as a measure of how seriously partnership work was taken. He stated that Assistant Chief Constable Fish had a specific responsibility for improving the quality of the Force's partnerships. In his view, more effective partnership working was possible with a unitary authority. For example, there were weekly joint tasking meetings with the City Council.

Following questions from Members the Chief Constable explained that there were two main sources of information for crime figures: police crime figures and the British Crime Survey, and explained the differences between the two. Assistant Chief Constable Fish

encouraged all crimes to be reported so that the police could gain an accurate picture.

Mr Green explained that some of the matching patterns in trends were due to nationally imposed changes in the way crimes were recorded. However he pointed out that Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire were currently showing similar crime trends without an obvious reason. During the last year there had been a reduction in crime levels in the City and an increase in the County. He referred to useful work with partners on Operation Cracker and Spectrum. He indicated that increases in crime – which had been referred to by a Councillor during the course of the meeting - reflected increased crime in particular “hot spots” of the County.

Ms Fish explained how the Force developed its performance targets, which were set by the Police Authority. She referred to the difficult balance between setting targets that would be challenging and lead to improvement and those which were impossible to achieve and demotivating. The police and partners’ crime targets did match. However, some of partners’ own targets, for example school exclusions, did not assist the police’s work.

Mr Green stated that the clear up rate was 22%, an improvement on previous years. One way the figure could be improved was by doing more work to identify other offences carried out by a particular offender. However, this effort was not likely to give rise to a proportionate increase in the offender’s penalty. Ms Fish explained how business crime was now a priority, with a project focusing on industrial estates being rolled out across the county.

The Chief Constable regarded PCSOs - Police Community Support Officers - as an important element in neighbourhood policing, with their main role being building a relationship with the community. By mid summer he expected that the Force would have its own complement of 250 PCSOS. Although Gedling Borough Council had funded some PCSOS, in the main the funding was from Home Office grants or the Force’s base budget. In the City and Ashfield, street wardens were to be under closer management by the police. He explained that when traffic wardens had been made into PCSOS they had not been able to keep their traffic enforcement powers. At a similar time the County Council had been expected to take over decriminalised parking enforcement but this had yet to happen.

Ms Fish referred to the weeks of action which took place in the City. She emphasised that they had a long term value, with planning and preparation in advance, and the sustainment of achievement afterwards. Mr Green said there were times when local authorities could seem impregnable, and gave an example where the County Council and a District Council were both involved. He encouraged more joint working in assessment, planning, tasking and performance management.

The Committee then agreed that a model for joint tasking meetings should be presented for consideration and discussion at the next meeting of the Select Committee on Monday 21 May, when Councillor Gilfoyle would also discuss issues with the Select Committee

Summary of issues from discussions at Select Committee meeting of 21 May 2007 – consideration of tasking and co-ordination report, and discussion with Councillor Gilfoyle – Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Partnerships

5. The Select Committee began its meeting by discussing the requested report on tasking and co-ordination; the report had been prepared for the Committee by Richard Hodge, Service Director, Community Safety, Regeneration and Protection. Members had also been sent a CD Rom prior to the meeting as an example of how tasking and co-ordination could be carried out; the CD Rom concerned work which was ongoing in Middlesbrough.

Chris Walker, Safer Communities Manager, began by informing the Select Committee that the report showed how tasking and co-ordination fits into the NIM model – the Police National Intelligence Model. Through the Crime and Disorder Act review the NIM will become the key process for local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to address crime and anti social behaviour in their area, and tasking and co-ordination is a key element within the NIM. The Crime and Disorder Act review encourages a more business like approach, such as that carried out in tasking and co-ordination in Middlesbrough and Nottingham City; however these are compact unitary authorities. To give other examples, in Northants tasking and co-ordination is not fully operational, and Derbyshire is not yet carrying out tasking and co-ordination but is still doing well with regard to its crime figures. In Nottinghamshire the tasking and co-ordination process is led by the police with slightly different approaches being taken in each of the 3 police divisions.

Richard Hodge then explained to the Select Committee that we have made fair progress over the last two years but the task is more complex in two tier areas. We have been set a very high benchmark by Nottingham City which is doing very well in this area of work. Each of the 3 Divisional Commanders in Nottinghamshire has their own priorities, and different approaches to tasking and co-ordination. Mr Hodge also explained how the County wide Community Safety Board is growing and maturing – it is strategic, and is chaired by Councillor Gilfoyle. Under this Board is a tactical group, which is chaired by Assistant Chief Constable Fish. The tactical group would carry out tasking and co-ordination on some issues.

Police Chief Superintendent Richard Johnson then told the Committee about recent discussions which had discussed the potential of creating

a county wide hub of officers from the district based Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, perhaps being located together. Government Office East Midlands has also been in discussion with us about a possible review of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership working arrangements.

In discussion Members raised issues such as the feasibility of having one focus for the whole County when we cover such a large area, and whether it would be possible to move ahead on the basis of 3 areas. There was also discussion of the district based Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in the County.

Councillor Glynn Gilfoyle explained that the County Council is an equal partner in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, but across the Council our responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act are not yet as entrenched as he would wish. We also need to consider how the County Council is represented at the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership meetings, as we tend to take an officer from each service – for example children and young people, or highways, rather than someone who can speak for all services. The police also operate on the basis of divisions so it would be difficult to adopt one over arching model. The tactical group does look at issues which affect all the districts, for example anti social behaviour. Issues such as this also need more mainstreaming.

Councillor Gilfoyle also said that it would be expensive to send, for example, a Service Director to all the meetings. Perhaps we could look at video conferencing, or representation by a County Council officer who can answer for all departments. They could also be involved in the Local Strategic Partnership. We could also look at how we protect County Council equipment from crime, for example IT equipment or mobile phones. It has also been good to have Chief Superintendent Richard Johnson work with us on tactical and practical issues. Councillor Gilfoyle also liked the idea of an external review.

Committee Members then discussed how, following on from the Chief Constable's presentation, one single tasking and co-ordination body now did not seem to be a possibility, and how existing Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are the engine of the whole operation; therefore it is important to look at whether they are working effectively, and there was support for the idea of an external review. There was also discussion of whether one senior County Council officer could have a remit to act, or to report back for permission to act, on a range of issues.

Councillor Gilfoyle said that the issues were about resources, commitment, and mainstreaming community safety issues. Richard Hodge said that we are aware of the issues and are making progress.

Richard Johnson told the Committee how video conferencing could be very effective. He also felt that it was important to send someone to

meetings with the authority to make decisions, giving the example of a decision to reallocate youth workers to a particular area.

Councillor Gilfoyle told the Committee that the issues were about using the County Council's resources in the widest sense, not just financial resources. Community safety is the Council's number one priority and there is an invest to save benefit in looking at, for example, criminal damage to the County Council's own facilities.

There was discussion by Members about issues such as the need to support quicker ways of working, but also the style of organisations and issues such as standing orders and delegated decisions, and the possible difficulties in having one person with authority to make decisions which could affect a range of services; perhaps several people could be required rather than one. Members noted that at their next meeting they would start to consider their conclusions from this scrutiny review.

Summary of issues from discussion at Select Committee meeting of 18 June - consideration of issues / conclusions arising from the evidence considered during the scrutiny review

- 6 At their meeting on Monday 18 June the Select Committee began to draw together conclusions from the evidence considered during this scrutiny review. The Select Committee Chair requested that Richard Hodge, Service Director, outline the main issues arising from the evidence received in this scrutiny review so far, including describing to Members how the idea of a "community safety hub" of officers could work in practice.

Richard Hodge said that Select Committee Members may want to review our current position in regard to: the 4 crime indicators that Members had wished to examine; our tasking and co-ordination challenge - considering we have 3 Divisional Commanders in the County area ; and the prospect of a fundamental review of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in Nottinghamshire by way of a - Home Office Police Standards and Partnership Unit review, which would be co-ordinated by Government Office East Midlands. This review will probably not take place until the end of this year. All the relevant partners would need to be on board for this review to succeed. This review will look at key issues such as co-ordination and communication.

Richard Hodge also outlined how the Committee had discussed the idea of having a "hub" of officers involved in community safety issues; Nottingham City has given us a challenge to rise to in this respect, with a hub of officers all working well and under one roof. Key lines of communication are shortened, which is very helpful with regards to crime reduction work.

Committee Members welcomed the idea of the review, and felt that any recommendations from the Select Committee needed to take account of the fact that this review would be undertaken in the near future. Members agreed that the key to effective working appeared to be greater co-ordination and communication.

The Select Committee also commented on the wide range of agencies which the Committee had found need to work together in order to deliver effective crime reduction work. Committee Members were supportive of the idea of a hub, but with comments such as how a hub would need “teeth” and real power in order to make it succeed. There were also comments that effective crime reduction work appeared to need officers who could act quickly, and make decisions.

The Committee felt that there had been a lot of useful information arising from the scrutiny review around how things worked in the area of crime reduction and felt that it was important that Members continue to be kept in the loop around these issues in the future; for example the Chief Constable, local area Commanders, or Division Officers, could be invited to Member Forums, if this was the wish of individual Forums. Another suggestion was whether we could widen the invitation for attendance at Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership meetings, and / or the wider circulation of the minutes. The dissemination of information for County Councillors, as well as for District Councillors, was felt to be a key issue, with Members feeling that they had learnt a lot during the course of the scrutiny review.

Members then recapped the main issues arising from the scrutiny review and agreed that at the next meeting, which would be the last for this Select Committee, they would consider a draft report outlining their conclusions and recommendations. Once agreed, this report would be sent to the County Council's Cabinet in September 2007.

Draft Conclusions

The Select Committee is pleased to have had the chance to consider key issues around crime reduction in Nottinghamshire and has welcomed the provision of key information to Members during this scrutiny review; however there is some concern at the complicated structure for promoting community safety at strategic and tactical levels. The Committee also believes that there is a need for better co-ordination between district and county level.

The Select Committee welcomes the proposed Police Standards and Partnership Unit review of Nottinghamshire's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, believing that this external review could help improve our strategic structure, and the outward – community - focus of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. However the review itself

is outside the timescales for this Select Committee, and therefore its remit has not been considered in depth.

At a tactical level the Select Committee was interested in the tasking and co-ordination model which works well in the City, but did not feel that this was an appropriate model for the County. The Committee noted the nature of police structures in the County, and the need to work with 3 Divisional Commanders. With changing structures there is also an issue around continuity of relationships between the police and other bodies.

The Committee is very supportive of the proposal for a “hub” which could bring together all aspects of the County Council’s work on community safety, including intelligence work, DAAT, and YOT. The advantages of a hub are that it could assist our internal focus, would help to ensure a structure that is fit and ready to deal with issues, will improve/ reduce lines of communication, and will assist in putting community safety issues at the centre of what we do - in line with the Local Area Agreement.

The Select Committee believe that not all Members are fully engaged with the work of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and that more should be done to help facilitate this. The Portfolio Holder is invited to all, but there would be benefits if other local members were also invited. Members would benefit from information from the CRDPs, and would also wish to feed in their intelligence around local issues. The Community Safety Team could also consider reporting to Member Forums on request, and the Police could be invited to Member Forum meetings.

The starting point for this Select Committee’s work was of course the poor performance around the 4 Best Value indicators listed in the scoping document of this review, and issues around whether we are setting targets which are sufficiently challenging. The Committee is still very concerned about performance for these 4 indicators, and issues of hot spots in parts of the County, but is satisfied, after examining the evidence, with the way targets have been set. The final quarter statistics for each of the BVPIs have now been included in the tables in Appendix A. Performance in terms of Domestic Burglary and Violent Crime is in line to achieve the three year LAA targets (as a contribution to the overall BCS (British Crime Survey) comparator crime target). However, in terms of Robbery and Vehicle Crime, performance has worsened and there will need a renewed focus from all partners in local CDRPs if the three year targets are to be achieved. The Committee would like to monitor both the BVPIs and the outcome from the Police Standards and Partnership Unit review. Target setting in future will be done through the LAA, with countywide targets negotiated and agreed with GOEM. The overall county crime reduction targets will be made up of the individual CDRP targets. Crime and disorder indicators will be included in the “basket” of 200 indicators that will be published later this year, with local decisions being made on which indicators are most important to local communities.

Draft Recommendations

The Select Committee therefore makes the following recommendations:

- 1. The Select Committee is very concerned about performance of the 4 Best Value indicators, and also wishes to ensure that challenging targets are being set which will address this situation. Because of this the Select Committee recommends that the Police Standards and Partnership Review of Nottinghamshire should be welcomed, and that information about the review and its outcomes are widely circulated.**
- 2. The report from the Police Standards and Partnership Review is expected in December 2007, and it is therefore strongly recommended that a Select Committee reconvene in late December 2007 or in early January 2008 to monitor the outcome of the review, and progress on the Best Value Performance Indicators. The timing of this Review was outside the timescales for this Select Committee and therefore the issues arising will need to be considered at this future date.**
- 3. That the tasking and co-ordination model in operation in the City is considered inappropriate for the County area; however the Committee does have concerns about the complicated structure for promoting community safety at strategic and tactical levels in the County and recommends that greater coordination and dissemination of information is required between districts and the county area.**
- 4. That a proposal for a “hub” which brings together all aspects of the County Council’s work on community safety is supported and should now be worked up in detail for consideration by the Cabinet. A key contributor to Nottingham City’s recent performance improvement has been a newly established hub, with multi-agency staff (local authority, police, probation, DAAT, situated in one place, thus reducing lines of communication and making effective decision making quicker and easier to achieve. At the heart of the City’s hub is the database on which all problem solving approaches are based. A county hub will be able to build on the already established JIN (Jupiter in Nottinghamshire) team but would benefit from other agency information/analytical officers being added to the team. Operational officers from partner agencies would then be able to be seconded into the hub to ensure the same working benefits are experienced as in the City. This will not happen immediately as there are clearly logistical and accommodation issues to resolve but planning can be taken forward with key partners to ensure this happens as quickly as possible.**

5. That providing information for - and receiving intelligence from – local County Council Members on crime reduction issues should be encouraged by inviting local Members to CDRPs meetings, by making minutes of the meetings more widely available, and by offering reports and briefings on crime reduction issues to Member Forums, including performance reports.

Recommendation

The Select Committee is asked to consider this draft report, including draft conclusions, and recommendations, and then agree a final report, with conclusions and recommendations which will be sent to Council Cabinet in September 2007.

Councillor John Knight
Chair of the Crime Reduction Select Committee

Background papers: Agenda papers and minutes of the Crime Reduction Select Committee – 19 March 2007, 23 April 2007, 21 May 2007, 18 June 2007

Members of the Crime Reduction Select Committee

Councillor John Knight (Chair)
Councillor Joe Lonergan MBE (Vice Chair)
Councillor John Carter
Councillor Jen Cole
Councillor Alan Davison
Councillor Stan Heptinstall MBE
Councillor Pat Lally
Councillor Bruce Laughton
Councillor Mark Spencer