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| meeting | CRIME REDUCTION SELECT COMMITTEE | |
| date | 18 June 2007 | agenda item number |

Report of the Chair of the Crime Reduction Select Committee

Crime Reduction Select Committee – consideration of evidence presented to the Select Committee

Purpose of the report

1. To present Members with a summary of the main evidence and information gathered during the course of this scrutiny review, and to invite the Select Committee to develop conclusions and recommendations for inclusion in a final report. The complete record of information presented at each Select Committee meeting during this scrutiny review, and the full deliberations by Members, can be found in the agenda papers and minutes for each meeting of this Select Committee.

Background

2. 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 1 of this report for Members' reference. It was also agreed that this scrutiny review should aim to conclude in July 2007.

Summary of issues from presentation 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 nationally faster 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

- 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. We hope to move to having one officer attending this board to represent all County Council services. Under this Board is a tactical group, which is chaired by Assistant Chief Constable Fish. The tactical group could 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.

Recommendation

It is recommended that;

The Select Committee consider the summary of issues from its meetings, and then agree conclusions and recommendations for the Select Committee's draft final report, which will be considered at the Select Committee meeting on 23 July 2007.

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| Councillor John Knight Chair of the Crime Reduction Select Committee |
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Background papers: Agenda papers and minutes of the Crime Reduction Select Committee – 19 March 2007, 23 April 2007, 21 May 2007