

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

REPORT TO: CDRP Board

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CLOSER WORKING WITH THE CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Purpose

1. In response to the recommendation by the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership on 23 July 2010, to consider the advantages and disadvantages of closer working with the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership.

Recommendations

2. That the South Cambridgeshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership considers the advantages and disadvantages of closer working with the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership and decides whether to
 - (a) further investigate closer working and initiate formal discussions with the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership; or
 - (b) defer making a decision on closer working arrangements if additional information is deemed necessary before a decision can be made; or
 - (c) reject the case of closer working at this time.

Background

3. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 promotes partnership working to reduce crime and disorder and places a statutory duty on police and local authorities to develop and implement a strategy to tackle problems in their area. In doing so, responsible authorities are required to work in partnership with a range of other local public, private, community and voluntary groups and with the community itself.
4. The general view is that no single organisation can hope to reduce crime on its own and that local organisations need to work together to develop comprehensive solutions to improve the community's quality of life. The Crime and Disorder Act required statutory Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to be set up at a district level.
5. The Police Reform Act 2002 makes provision for the Secretary of State to agree to two or more CDRPs being brought "together as if they constituted only one area". The process for 'merging' CDRPs can be found at Appendix A; this includes a pilot of working together as a merged partnership that would need to evidence that a merger would be successful and reduce crime and disorder. Informal closer working would not require Secretary of State approval as long as the statutory requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act continue to be complied with by both CDRPs.
6. Any decision about closer working should be made with regard to the New Delivery Model of Partnership Working considered by Cambridgeshire Together on 24 September 2010. The Cambridgeshire Together Board agreed to shift the Cambridgeshire approach to working in partnership to a model based on commissioned Task/Finish working based on local priorities, however, has deferred

the decision to decommission the countywide Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership to further consider its statutory functions.

7. Closer working could include anything from (a) a formal merger, (b) informal joint meeting or (c) consecutive meetings to (d) joint projects/shared services. The newly merged Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership, at its meeting on 23 July 2010, requested that the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership and South Cambridgeshire CDRP consider the advantages and disadvantages of closer working.

Considerations

8. Historically Cambridge Community Safety Partnership (CSP - herewith both the CSP and CDRP will be referred to as CDRPs for ease) and South Cambridgeshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership have been strongly linked due to geographical location, transport routes and commonality of crime types and offenders.
9. Recent analysis of Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC) within South Cambridgeshire identified the fact that criminals from the city were likely to be displaced to South Cambs if faced with an increase in police activity in any specific area of the city.
10. Attendance at CDRP meetings includes, by statute, many of the same public sector organisations e.g. Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, National Probation Service, NHS Cambridgeshire and the Fire and Rescue Service as these organisations have a wider remit than the district boundary.
11. In a bid for continuous improvement and efficiency CDRPs have sought to review their meeting structure and adapt accordingly. Recent examples of collaborative working at a tactical level with other CDRPs, not just Cambridge, include:
 - Combined City, East and South Cambridgeshire Domestic Violence Task Group.
 - Combined Reducing Reoffending Strategic Board.
 - A joint Street Reps Coordinator across South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.
 - Countywide coordination with regard to information sharing agreements, the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service / Domestic Abuse Unit, Prolific and other Priority Offenders and Integrated Offender Management.
 - Jointly funded (by CDRP member organisations rather than the CDRPs) Crime Research Team.
12. A review of the South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge Community Safety Plans shows significant overlap in priority areas, although, for various reasons, not all are showing movement towards collaborative working.

Advantages of Closer Working with Cambridge

13. The following bullet points are examples of the possible advantages to closer working e.g. joint meetings or meetings that follow each other:
 - A greater understanding of and ability to resolve issues/priorities where local authority and neighbourhood policing boundaries are not coterminous.
 - Improved information / data sharing and coordination between organisations.

- A greater ease to work together on cross-border issues e.g. displacement relating to Serious Acquisitive Crime (see para 9 above).
- Smarter use of time, resources and funding; less bureaucracy.
- Less demand on countywide organisations to attend meetings, which should free up time as well as resource from less travel, to increase attendance and deliver against CDRP actions.
- Improved administrative support to meetings (lead officers for some priorities currently prepare and circulate their own papers despite admin support being available to their counterparts).
- Stronger support and position when bidding for countywide funding.
- Sharing of best practice.

Disadvantages of Closer Working with Cambridge

14. The following bullet points are examples of the possible disadvantages to closer working e.g. joint meetings or meetings that follow each other, although many could be overcome through agenda planning, for example:
- CDRP meetings are open public meetings and thought would need to be applied as to how to make meetings accessible to everyone who wished to attend.
 - The formation of a CDRP has a democratic element and local accountability is a significant consideration. The rural/urban nature of the two areas would need to be balanced and the differences in approaches to tackling crime in each area acknowledged even if the priority headings are similar.
 - Potential to exclude issues affecting other districts bordering South Cambridgeshire that may impact on the district and vice-versa.
 - Strategic assessments and Community Safety Plans (statutory documents) would still need to be produced separately and associated meetings held to present the documents (unless a formal pilot merger was agreed).
 - District level problem solving groups concerned with the case management of offenders would likely need to remain due to their local context and contribution from non statutory partners such as Housing Associations.

Conclusions / Summary

15. The Local Strategic Partnership has requested that the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership and South Cambridgeshire CDRP consider the advantages and disadvantages of closer working. Closer working could include anything from (a) a formal merger, (b) informal joint meeting or (c) consecutive meetings to (d) joint projects/shared services.
16. There are a number of advantages and disadvantages to closer working with Cambridge. The CDRP Board is requested to consider these (including adding to the issues highlighted in this paper) and agree a way forward.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- 23 July 2010 report on Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Alignment to the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership by Ch Insp Dave Sargent.