

Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnerships

Safer Communities Peer Review

March 2011

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Executive Summary

Local Government Improvement and Development have undertaken a peer review of the community safety function across the county and recommend how the function can most effectively be provided in the future. This review has focused on three issues:

- Greater joint working - exploring options possible joint working and reviewing governance arrangements
- Clarifying partners' roles - reviewing the County Council and countywide community safety functions ensuring focus on the localism agenda
- Crime research - reviewing options around provision of crime research data

There is strong operational collaboration and joined up working between the community safety partners in Cambridgeshire. There has been an amalgamation of domestic violence forums, examples where partners are already working together to share services and some examples of co-located teams in places like Fenland and Huntingdonshire.

High quality research is being undertaken by the County Council's Research Team in collaboration with Cambridgeshire Police's analytical teams. Community safety work is intelligence led and the research function is working well to support district community safety partnerships. This existing joint working and an effective research function provide a good platform for the future.

However, the increasingly joined up nature of tackling the community safety agenda and the significant reduction in public service funding over the next few years means that the partners need to work more collaboratively if they are to be successful in the future. The planned introduction of a Police and Crime Commissioner for the county in May 2012 will also mean that partners have to demonstrate their ability to manage the strategic as well as the operational issues more effectively to make a strong impact on crime for local communities.

Greater working together in the future needs to be built on mutual trust and respect. There is also a need for stronger management and political leadership. There is a broad consensus amongst the partners that some services are most effectively delivered county-wide (domestic violence, Integrated Offender Management and research and analysis). Some services are most effectively delivered at a local level (anti-social behaviour and specific local projects) and some services straddle the boundary (drug and alcohol awareness and most community safety campaigns/promotions).

Meeting the challenges of the future therefore is not simply an issue of restructuring organisational or partnership arrangements. It is also about creating a more collaborative culture. Alongside nurturing this culture, to ensure the partners are best able to meet future community safety challenges - whilst recognising at the current time there is insufficient will within the district CSPs to consider any greater structural collaboration through merging CSPs – this review recommends the creation of a key new post: a Community Safety Manager - whilst recognising at the current time there

is insufficient will within the district partnerships to consider any greater structural collaboration through merging partnerships.

Two of these posts should be created and jointly funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the five districts and the Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service. The posts would be funded from resources saved from rationalising and restructuring the current arrangements and not require any additional resource. This new role is aimed at providing the partners with a better strategic focus, more effectively linking strategic issues and a local focus whilst retaining the local focus and the integrity of the existing partnerships.

Recommendations

The peer review team primarily focused on the three issues already outlined. As a result there are a relatively focused set of recommendations resulting from the review, as follows:

- I. All the partner agencies involved in community safety foster a greater working relationship built on mutual trust and mutual respect.
- II. Create two Community Safety Manager posts jointly funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the five districts and Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- III. Provide stronger political and managerial governance through a single group to provide stronger strategic leadership and to improve partners' performance.
- IV. Formally agree the services which will be delivered county-wide, at the district level and those which straddle the boundary.
- V. Make partnership strategic assessments more focused and concise.

Background to the peer review

1. The Safer Communities peer review was developed by Local Government Improvement and Development (formerly the IDeA) with the support of the National Policing Improvement Agency in 2009 as a 'critical friend' challenge by peers against a specially constructed benchmark. The benchmark was developed to take account of the emphasis of the Home Office's 'hallmarks' for an effective Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership and to generally have a much stronger emphasis on outcomes rather than process. In 2010, this been further evolved to have a specific focus on improving partnerships' future productivity in light of the ongoing significant reductions in public sector funding. This particular review has reviewed the partnerships' current performance but mainly focused on producing a series of options for the future delivery of community safety within the county. It is therefore important to understand that this is a peer review of all the partners who make a contribution to community safety, not simply the local authorities across the county.
2. The peer review is not an inspection, rather it offers a supportive approach, undertaken by friends, albeit 'critical friends', and its intention is to help the partnerships identify their current strengths as well as areas for improvement. The Local Government Improvement and Development (LGID) peers were invited by the Cambridgeshire CSPs to challenge the effectiveness of the delivery of community safety priorities across the county both now and into the future.
3. The peer review team consisted of:
 - Sally Goodwin, Community Safety Manager, Derbyshire County Council
 - Kevin Hobson, Chief Inspector, Metropolitan Police
 - Councillor Pam Doodles, Cabinet Member for Community, Wealden District Council
 - Don Edwardson, Community Safety Officer, Crawley Borough Council
 - Neil Shaw, Local Government Improvement & Development
4. The programme for the on-site phase of the review was organised in advance and included a variety of activities designed to enable members of the team to meet and talk to a cross-section of partners from the five districts. Examples of activities the team undertook are:
 - Discussions with members of the five community safety partnerships and their various stakeholders
 - Discussions with the senior management and elected members from all of the five districts, Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Constabulary
 - Review of a range of supporting documentation supplied by the five partnerships
5. At the request of the partners, the review focused on the following three issues:
 - **Greater joint working** - exploring options possible joint working and review governance arrangements to determine what structures are required to deliver

those cross-county services that are appropriate and to afford a county-wide overview of issues and actions

- **Clarifying partners' roles** - review the County Council and countywide community safety functions ensuring focus on the localism agenda. This to include clarifying the roles at district and county level of all partners.
 - **Crime research** - review options around provision of crime research data (strategically versus operationally) and annual Strategic Assessments. Also to consider what performance frameworks are appropriate following the demise of National Indicators and Local Area Agreements
6. The team was appreciative of the support provided by the partners and would like to thank everybody they met during the process for their time and contributions. The team was particularly appreciative of the way in which officers' organised logistical support in the build up to and during the team's visit.

Context

7. The role of partnership working in the public sector has, in recent years, taken on an increasingly important role. At a national level, Government has been keen to drive the partnership agenda and this can partly be seen in the statutory role of Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships. The national landscape has changed in 2010 which has specifically resulted in significantly reduced public sector spending for the foreseeable future. In turn, this is driving public sector organisations to seek greater productivity and innovation from its services. It is also worth noting the current proposals to create Police and Crime Commissioners and abolish Police Authorities nationally. All these issues have a bearing on the context for the review.
8. Cambridgeshire is a largely rural county in the east of England. The six areas which make up the county are Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire and Peterborough. The county's population continues to grow - changing the shape, size and nature of its communities. This is a county of contrasts. Whilst overall this is a prosperous area, this masks areas of rural deprivation. Peterborough is a unitary authority and requested not to participate in this review as they have recently completed their own internal review.
9. Crime across the whole county is relatively low and has been reducing for a number of years. There were 60,017 crimes in the county in 2009/10 and has been a 6% reduction in crime in the year to date. The majority of crime is focused in the largest urban area – Cambridge City – with nearly a quarter of all recorded crimes. The rate of crime across the county is higher than a group of Most Similar CSPs (MSG) from across the country, with 16.3 crimes per 1,000 residents in Cambridgeshire compared to an MSG average of 14.4.
10. Cambridgeshire County Council along with five of the districts and boroughs are Conservative controlled, with the exception of Cambridge City – which is controlled by the Liberal Democrats.

11. The review has been undertaken recognising a number of significant internal and external pressures on the community safety functions in the partnerships. These include the:
 - potential impact of the recession on crime rates;
 - increasingly joined up nature of tackling the community safety agenda;
 - drive to be more outcome focused;
 - the significant reduction in public service funding in the next few years;
 - drive to get more added value out of partnerships;
 - challenges of effective service delivery in two-tier areas;
 - demands of neighbourhood policing versus the response policing role;
 - the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners
12. It is against this backdrop that the review has been undertaken. The development of the proposals arising from this review is aimed at strengthening the ability of the local authorities, police and other partners to tackle these challenges.

The current approach and partners' community safety performance

13. Crime across the whole county is relatively low and has been reducing for a number of years. The county had around 7,000 reported incidents of domestic violence last year, which represents an increase in reporting of around 40%. Satisfaction with the police's service has gradually improved over the last three years, with 85% of local people feeling satisfied with their overall experience with the police's services (compared to 81.2% in 2009). A recent residents' survey highlighted that 90% of residents were satisfied with Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service.
14. There is an extensive range of community safety projects across the county which appear to be having an impact on reducing crime, including; Cambridge street pastors, taxi marshals, youth engagement projects (such as the North Boys project in Cambridge and Junior FEET in Fenland), Crimebuster, Family Intervention Projects and the Freedom programme.
15. There is good evidence of partners using data and local knowledge to target key hotspot crimes or geographical hotspots which have resulted in a positive impact. For example, shoplifting in Wisbech, on-street drinking in Ely, night time economy in Cambridge and the junior PCSO project in Huntingdonshire.
16. However, public confidence in how the council and police deal with crime and anti-social behaviour is notably lower in Cambridgeshire when compared to the MSG, with only 46.9% of residents having confidence in the agencies, compared to areas like Essex and Devon & Cornwall where confidence is higher and Cambridgeshire is the lowest in the country.
17. A performance culture is not evident in holding CSPs to account for achieving their objectives. Although there are systematic performance management reports, the partners need to challenge under performance more robustly.

Greater joint working

Strengths to build on

- strong operational collaboration and joined up working
- amalgamation of domestic violence forums
- working together to share services
- some examples of co-located teams

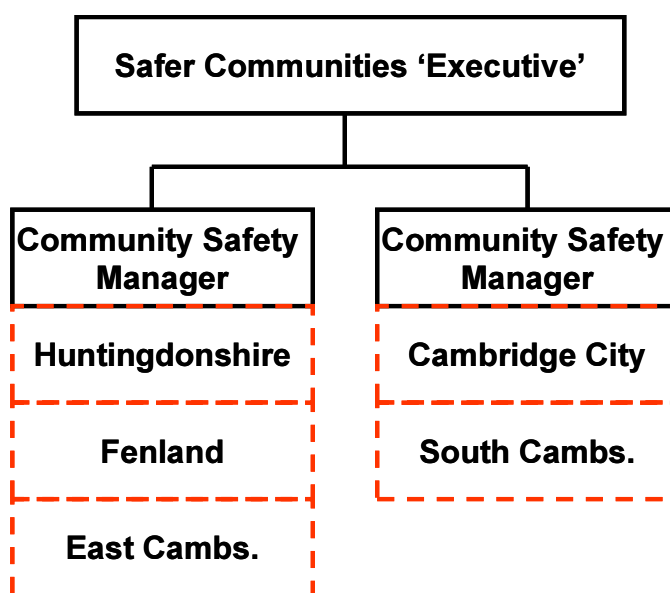
Areas for future improvement

- greater working together in the future needs to be built on mutual trust and respect
- greater collaborative working
- stronger management and political leadership

18. At the local level, there is a strong sense of operational collaboration and joined up working. This is generally founded upon strong working relationships between operational officers in each of the agencies. The amalgamation of the domestic violence forums at district level and the delivery of support through a service level agreement is aimed at making the best use of resources at the local level.
19. A number of the districts have been working together to share services such as legal and human resources. Some areas like Fenland and Huntingdonshire have co-located their council community safety team and the police's neighbourhood team (and sometimes included additional services such as licensing and street wardens). These different models demonstrate the benefits of more joined up working and present opportunities for the partners to deliver other services in a more collaborative way in the future.
20. However, there is a strong perception from local CSPs that the County Council has a 'command and control' approach to community safety in undertaking its role as the responsible authority for delivering the county's Local Area Agreement in the past. County-wide agencies struggle to involve districts consistently in the planning of services. District CSPs sometimes fail to involve themselves adequately in services which are out of the direct control of the district CSP (such drug treatment and the integrated offender management programme).
21. There does not appear to be a clear link between what is agreed strategically at the county level and how this impacts at a district/borough level and a lack of understanding around the role each partner should play in this. This is apparent at the district/borough CSP level when individual agency representatives sometimes appear to contradict what their own agency has signed up to strategically at the county level. This has created an atmosphere of distrust and a dysfunctional relationship between the partners. A key element in greater effective working in the future will be the ability of **all** partners to build a more effective working relationship, mutual trust and respect. It is imperative that those making decisions at the county level ensure that communication of those decisions is filtered down through their organisations and that they outline expectations of their representatives in the district/borough CSPs. This includes district representatives sitting at the county strategic level.

22. There is a strong divergence of views on the desired degree of future collaboration between the district CSPs and county-wide agencies. At one end of this spectrum, some county-wide representatives view that the amalgamation of community safety function into one single structure is the only way services will be effectively resourced. At the other end of this spectrum, representatives of most of the district CSPs believe that services should be mostly locally based. This lack of a consensus makes planning to meet future requirements very challenging.
23. Any formal merger of CSPs should occur only when two factors have aligned. Firstly, when there is a clear business case with sufficient weight. Secondly, when there is local will for an amalgamation. Imposed external change is highly unlikely to be successful. At this time, the business case for merged partnerships is building. However, at the current time there is insufficient will within the district CSPs to merge. This position should be revisited after the appointment of the new Policing & Crime Commissioner in May 2012.
24. What is clear is that there are benefits in greater collaboration between district CSPs, whilst ensuring that services are delivered to meet the needs of local people. These benefits include:
- improving the consistency of services
 - better sharing of learning and good practice
 - potential for some efficiency savings in posts across the five partnerships
 - economies of scale
 - potential to reduce the number of partnership meetings thereby increasing productivity
25. The partners need to consider the sustainability of the current community safety partnership structures. In the judgement of the peer review team the current approach is not sustainable and evolutionary change is needed to mitigate the challenges the future presents as well as reflecting the future strategy for Cambridgeshire. The current lack of joined up county and district/borough level strategy and understanding will present problems in 2012 with the arrival of Policing & Crime Commissioners. In addition, the county is currently not meeting its statutory responsibilities. Each county council area must have a county level group to help co-ordinate the work of the partnerships within the area. This is referred to in legislation as a 'County Strategy Group'. This group is responsible for preparing a community safety agreement for the county.
26. Whilst there is no prescriptive model for this area of business, the information the peer team has gathered and the research it has undertaken has led it to consider the following model as a way of ensuring a more collaborative future delivery of community safety in Cambridgeshire - see Figure 1, overleaf (and explained in the following paragraphs).

Figure 1: Model for greater future collaborative working



27. In the view of the peer team, the most obvious alignment of the existing partnerships is into two groupings - Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire in one area and South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City in a second area. However, there is insufficient capacity at county and district level to deliver this model. Resources therefore need to be realigned, not necessarily increased, to deliver this approach.
28. The two Community Safety Managers should be jointly funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the five districts and the Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service. These two new roles are dependent on the removal of the district CSP Officer. The posts would be funded from resources saved from rationalising and restructuring the current arrangements and not require any additional resource. The peer team recognise that these existing posts are often not a full time equivalent post, but are often a proportion of one person's time. The new Community Safety Manager roles are aimed to provide:
- a better strategic focus to the community safety agenda
 - more effective linking between strategic issues and a local focus
 - retention of a local focus and existing CSP integrity
 - a platform for future greater collaboration
 - readiness for the introduction of the Policing & Crime Commissioner
 - an efficiency saving (through the removal of district CSP Officer posts and reducing duplication of some partnership officers attending multiple CSPs)

Crucially, it will be for partners in the CSPs to determine the scale and nature of the remodelling of their staffing structures. However, the creation of the two new Community Safety Manager posts without reductions in staffing posts will negate the impact of pursuing this approach.

29. This should be underpinned by overall stronger political and managerial governance. Whilst the Cambridgeshire Safer & Stronger Strategic Board was perceived by many to be less than effective, there is a need for a single group (identified as the 'Executive' in Figure 1) to focus the leadership of community safety at the strategic level. This should be based on the principles that each partner has equal weight, a commitment to action once decisions have been made and a collaborative leadership style (members and officers included). Such a group should also have a focus on challenging and improving partners' performance.

Clarifying partners' roles

Key issues

- Some services most effectively delivered county-wide (domestic violence, Integrated Offender Management and research and analysis)
 - Some services most effectively delivered at a local level (anti-social behaviour and specific local projects)
 - Some services straddle the boundary (drug and alcohol awareness and most community safety campaigns/promotions)
30. Community engagement work is extensive. There are a range of mechanisms through which agencies understand local issues and needs, including; local surveys and neighbourhood panels/forums. Partners need to build on this and begin to exploit social media.
31. Balancing county-wide and local priorities is always a challenge. Over a number of years a process has developed iteratively which has resulted in three county-wide priorities, complemented by more local priorities set by each district CSP. CSPs like Fenland and Huntingdonshire have also recently begun to rationalise their priorities and this should be undertaken more consistently by other CSPs as it will help focus CSPs on a smaller number of priorities.
32. District CSPs should work harder with county-wide agencies to identify how they can complement the delivery of county-wide priorities. A good example, where this is emerging is the work Fenland has been undertaking to address the county priority to reduce re-offending. Whilst the Integrated Offender Management programme is being undertaken across the county, Fenland complement this by undertaking early intervention work with targeted groups of young people which fall outside the programme. All district CSPs should work more consistently with county-wide agencies to explore these opportunities to contribute and complement county-wide activity.
33. There is a broad consensus that some services are most effectively delivered by county-wide agencies. These include; domestic violence, integrated offender management, research and analysis. There is an equally broad consensus that some services are most effectively delivered at a local level, including; anti-social behaviour and some specific local projects. Finally, there is a broad consensus that some services should be delivered across the county (and would benefit from cross-district co-ordination) but elements

should be delivered locally, including; drug and alcohol awareness and most community safety campaigns/promotions.

34. For services delivered by county-wide agencies, the benefits to local people include:
 - economies of scale, for example, the commissioning of drug treatment services
 - most efficient model of delivery, for example, handling Prolific and Persistent Offenders
 - more consistent management of services
 - staffing resilience (if staff are absent or leave)
35. For services delivered by district CSPs, the benefits to local people include:
 - the best use of local knowledge, for example, identifying the under reporting of domestic violence and knowledge of ASB hotspots
 - ability to react quickly and more flexibly
 - understanding the linkages to other local related work
34. The model for the future delivery of services must ensure that partners can take advantage of these respective benefits for the overall delivery of services at the most appropriate level. In the past, this has not always been the case.
36. All agencies have a specific challenge around ensuring greater consistency in the approach to tackling anti-social behaviour. Whilst there are benefits in retaining the local focus to ASB, it is critical that all partners work together to agree a consistent approach to assessing the vulnerability of complainants and work towards a single ASB case management system. The Fenland pilot might lay the groundwork for wider roll out across the county, but this greater consistency should be explored as an urgent issue as a specific risk to all partners.

Crime research

Strengths to build on

- high quality research from County Research Team
- effective working partnership with police analytical teams
- good value and creativity in research
- revised county strategic assessment offers sharper focus

Areas for future improvement

- making CSP strategic assessments even more concise
- integration with other partner assessments and intelligence data
- intelligence needs assessment of CSPs

37. The quality of the research products made available to CSPs by the County Council's research team is much appreciated and acknowledged by all partners. The team appears well led and motivated, with the appropriate skills, research tools, data sources and presentation. There is a highly effective working partnership with the police performance analysis team and police

intelligence analysis team. The leaders of these three teams make a formidable partnership in their own right: in helping to determine the right flow of intelligence for action around the partnerships and in maximising the best use of their resources.

38. The principal products of the County Council Research Team are currently:
 - community safety strategic assessments for the county and CSPs
 - problem profiles
 - project evaluations
39. The police performance analysts provide monthly crime and ASB performance and trend data, together with analysis of potential future trends, for the core business needs of other community safety partners. The police intelligence asset provides products for a variety of functions:
 - Neighbourhood Panels
 - investigation
 - patrol
 - tasking
 - police strategic assessment
 - specialist projects and operations
40. Quarterly updates of neighbourhood profiles appear to be a significant demand on time and resources and represent a cost of between £2,000 and £4,700 annually. Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire CSPs make the most demands for intelligence products.
41. At the time of the peer review, the county wide strategic assessment for 2011 is in final draft and offers readable, highly informative guidance for the placement of partnership interventions based on the 'Victim – Offender - Location' (VOL) model. The move to a revised house style in community safety strategic assessments based on VOL problem analysis enables a sharper focus on key trends and commonalities. Importantly, the assessment emphasises the fundamental requirement to complete the problem solving process (SARA model) from the scanning, analysis and reporting of the strategic assessments to the prioritising and action of the CSPs. The specific detail around offender profiling and commonalities will also contribute significantly to the effective implementation of integrated offender management across all CSPs. Fire and Rescue have an equally impressive research and data analysis capability and are able to draw upon a wide variety of local and national data sources to support identification of vulnerability and offender profiling.
42. However, the individual CSP strategic assessments would benefit from being more concise. Systematic evaluation of community safety projects will bring greater opportunities for best value and learning across all CSPs. The county research team are able to provide this function. CSPs need to be demanding customers and more proactive in their engagement with the providers of intelligence and performance data and information. Data providers and analysts are keen and enthusiastic to receive feedback on their products and

this will clearly help to define and improve the quality of intelligence-led problem orientated partnership working.

43. A thorough assessment of the intelligence and information needs of each CSP is fundamental to informing a strategy for the future crime research function. This should take account of the intelligence demands of integrated offender management and try to identify any overlaps in partner data.
44. Measuring performance across such a wide range of organisations and areas is challenging, with no external pressure from central government to measure performance in the form of national indicators. In the future, there should be a focused group of performance issues which are measured across the whole county. These should be small in number, linked to the priorities and complemented by further local performance measures in each CSP. The peer team recommend that the following performance measures are adopted across the county for 2011/12 to match the three county-wide priorities:
 - reducing re-offending (previous national indicators 18 & 30)
 - violent crime (previous national indicators 20 & 32)
 - anti-social behaviour (council and police annual perception surveys)

Contact details

For more information about this report please contact Neil Shaw, (Local Government Improvement and Development Improvement Manager):

Neil Shaw
Improvement Manager
Email: neil.shaw@local.gov.uk
Tel: 07876 688987