

Select Committee on Community Safety and Community Services
12th June 2008

Report of the Chief Executive

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) Reform

Purpose of Report

1. To inform select committee of the CDRP reform programme updated position following the review of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 (CDAR).

Background

2. Following the submission of the paper on CDRP reform to the select committee on the 10th January 2008, the partnership is still awaiting the government response to the published Flanagan report. This response will potentially enact legislation setting out the lines of accountability both for the CDRP and individual agency roles within it, e.g. the police. Prior to the publication of the Flanagan report the Government had signalled its intention to broaden the role of Council Overview and Scrutiny Committees to include CDRP's.
3. As outlined in the report of the 10th January, the summary of the three year plan has now been published and circulated. The plan itself is on the partnership website, and will be available in hard copy by the end of May.
4. At the safe and sound board meeting on the 19th May, the arrangements for the annually required 'face the people' sessions were discussed. The paper they considered is reproduced below:

Safe and sound briefing paper : 'face the people'

The review of the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 gave rise to regulations governing partnership strategies, policies and processes. In the areas of visibility and accountability three of those regulations state the following:

1. The strategy group must hold one or more public meetings during each year.
2. That the public meetings must be attended by individuals who hold a senior position within each responsible authority.
3. The strategy group shall take steps as it considers appropriate to bring to the attention of persons who live or work in the area, or who might otherwise be interested, information about what was discussed at such meetings and where the meetings are to be held.

At the board meeting on the 25th February, these requirements were debated, and the board considered the merits of a single, totally encompassing meeting, or two similar meetings, one on each O.C.U., which would allow more people to attend on the basis of having less distance to travel, or several meetings, based upon aggregating existing P.A.C.T. meetings, which would encourage a more localised focus.

Reservations were expressed around the potential time commitment required of senior board members, the processes required to ensure the meeting focussed on priorities and how the partnership was addressing them, and how to strike the required balance between accountability and consultation. The board did agree that, with regard to the last point, the meeting or meetings should take place in January of each year in order to allow any results of consultation to be fed into the strategic assessment process, and to be subsequently considered in the annual review of the three year plan.

The board then considered the merits of arranging the meeting(s) in conjunction with Dosti, tapping into the array of local community and voluntary groups who could supply 'delegates' to a public meeting. The board concluded a paper should be submitted for their consideration in May.

A meeting subsequently took place involving the Community Safety Team, Dosti and Police. The meeting acknowledged that Community Renewal and other partners would need to be involved to make the proposal effective. The proposal is based on delivering an efficient method of capturing the public view of past performance and future priorities, avoiding the usual cul-de-sacs of individuals' specific problems and misunderstanding or ignorance of the existing requirements placed upon the partnership, and providing clarity on exactly what the partnership will or will not do as a direct result of the meeting.

Proposal.

A process could be devised whereby both the public and the board members participating in the 'face the people' sessions have been briefed and given the opportunity to develop the scale and nature of their participation.

The basis for the programme would be that there would be initial awareness-raising through publicity, combined with invitations to preparatory workshops. The safe and sound board would need to discuss the level of influence they are prepared to allow the session to have. Workshops would then take place preparing the public participants for the areas that they need to be discussed, and then the board would need to discuss their requirements for the meeting structure following feedback from the workshops.

The programme for such a process could be:-

1. June – September: publicity through the Dosti networks, Community Renewal forums, PACT meetings and Neighbourhood Watch meetings, the safe and sound website explaining the principles of accountability and consultation to be addressed in the 'face the people' meeting(s).
2. August board meeting: board to consider their openness to community influence through the meeting process, and how they would wish feedback to be delivered. (Paper to be submitted).

3. September – November: Preparatory workshops for public participants, drawn from the groups listed in 1. above. The whole process outlined above and below would be explained to all participants, including the fact that the board would have advance knowledge of their views in order to provide the best possible platform for meaningful debate at the meeting. The participants would have the responsibility for taking the information to their groups, and for ensuring they reflect the interests and views of those they represent. At these workshops, members of the Community Safety Team and other partners would attend to brief participants on safe and sounds current priorities and how they were arrived at, including current lines of accountability. They would also receive information on the activities being undertaken to deliver against those priorities. They would be informed that in order to address the twin issues of accountability and consultation, the meeting would be addressing three essential questions, namely :
 - In terms of our partnership activities, what are we doing well and what are we doing badly?
 - What crime, anti-social behaviour or substance misuse reduction activities should we be doing that we are not doing?
 - What should our community safety priorities be next year, for the whole of Dudley Borough?
4. November board meeting: given the results of the deliberations of the workshops, the board would plan the ‘face the people’ meeting, allocating structure and time according to the public needs. This would include a decision on how many meetings would be held, based upon public interest. This is highly likely to conclude that only one meeting is needed, but would take proper account of public interest. Having already discussed the level of influence and responsibility they are prepared to accept, the board would allocate speakers to issues, and include further debating time where necessary. The board would decide what level and form of feedback they would offer at the meeting, and how this would be made reality within the revised three year plan.
5. January: ‘Face the people’ meeting(s) as structured, but to include evaluation and reflection on the whole process to inform the board regarding potential improvements for the following year.
6. One week after the meeting: Review and reflection session with all support staff involved, leading to paper to be submitted for boards’ consideration at the February board meeting.
7. The conclusions of the meeting are fed into the strategic assessment and the revised three year plan.
8. Feedback for the public in general will be partly delivered through the original groups used, and so some of the responsibility would lie with the public participants to report back to the people they represent. The partnership would also use its existing channels for publicising the outcomes.

Conclusion

5. At the meeting on the 19th May, the board concluded that the paper should be adopted as the agreed process for the face the people sessions, including the proposed timetable.

Finance

6. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage.

Law

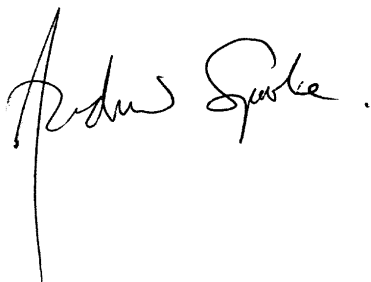
7. The contents of this report are a statutory requirement of the review of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as of 1st August 2007.

Equality Impact

8. This report is in accordance with the council's equality and diversity policy.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that the committee note the information contained in this report.
 10. That a further report be brought before the committee following the development event detailing safe and sounds position in meeting the requirements.
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