

Agenda Item No. 4

Title: **Presentation of the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee**

Chairman of Scrutiny Committee: **Cllr Jeff Osborn**

Reporting Officer: **Diana Jones, Policy Officer**

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee concerning:

- Measures to aid Partnership Working, both generally, and specifically in the field of Anti-Social Behaviour.
- The need for county-wide co-ordination and active monitoring of CCTV equipment .

Background

At the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 19 March 2008, members of the Committee expressed concern about two issues, namely the need for more co-ordination to aid partnership working, particularly in the field of anti-social behaviour, and the need for county-wide co-ordination of CCTV equipment and monitoring.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group looking into Partnership Working in the field of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) presented the Group's final report. This focused on the recently-established Neighbourhood Policing Team Tasking Groups, and included two recommendations to Cabinet, concerning better administrative and geographical co-ordination to help agencies work together more easily.

The Community Development Officer, Jacky Nicholas, was invited to provide an update on Neighbourhood Policing Teams, which have been introduced in Wiltshire since April 2007. These teams have now been successfully set up, along with their Tasking Groups of partner agencies which decide local priorities for action. However, some concern was expressed about the lack of co-ordination of CCTV facilities managed by different agencies, which could hinder co-operative working.

Main Issues

Partnership Working in the field of Anti-Social Behaviour

Eighteen Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) Tasking Groups have been set up in West Wiltshire over the last year. Members include the police, councillors, residents' and tenants' representatives, and others concerned to tackle local problems. The Groups have proved successful in enabling partner agencies to work together to address these problems, often in imaginative and innovative ways, such as setting up a monthly disco for under-16s in Trowbridge.

After consulting key partners, the Task and Finish Group decided some steps could be taken to help agencies work together more easily. The problem of organising Tasking Group meetings so they do not clash with members' other commitments was raised, and it was felt that it would be very useful, both for Tasking Groups and other partnership bodies, if a central calendar could be maintained for the meetings of all county, district, town and parish councils and their respective committees, and the meetings of all partnership bodies. As the move towards a unitary authority progresses, the calendar could also contain details of Community Area Board and Partnership meetings.

If available on-line, this would be easily accessible to those organising meetings when choosing suitable dates. In this way, clashes at partnership meetings should be kept to a minimum and attendance maximised.

In some areas there is also the problem that the NPT area boundaries do not coincide with district council ward boundaries, leading to some councillors having to attend up to three Tasking Group meetings. This resulted from changes in ward boundaries in spring 2007. It is hoped that the boundaries of NPTs and the wards of the new unitary council will be coterminous, so that Councillors would only need to attend one Tasking Group meeting for their ward.

The Group decided recommendations should also be made to Wiltshire Contabulary, concerning the need to:

- reduce the abstraction rate (which diverts NPT officers from preventive neighbourhood work into reactive policing)
- allow partners access to the police NPT database, or the partners should set up a joint county-wide ASB database

Recommendations should also be made, the Group decided, to the Safer Wiltshire Executive Board concerning the need for:

- a single, easy-to-remember telephone number/e-mail address for the public to report ASB.
- streamlining partnership bodies, to reduce the burden on representatives and encourage a wider range of stake-holders to become involved

- continued training for those sitting on partnership groups
- positive professional publicity about neighbourhood policing and what Tasking Groups have achieved, including local feedback on problems raised and action taken within communities, to provide accountability to the public.

County-wide co-ordination of CCTV

Co-operative working between partners in Neighbourhood Policing Team Tasking Groups is proving a fruitful method of problem-solving, with several initiatives being launched in the District to prevent Anti-Social Behaviour. However concern was expressed about the lack of co-ordination of CCTV facilities maintained by different agencies in the county (in town centres, schools, hospitals and railway stations), which can hinder action to address Anti-Social Behaviour and other crime. It was felt that CCTV throughout the county should be professionally monitored in order to be effective, and an opportunity to co-ordinate systems and centralise monitoring will present itself in April 2009, when local government is re-organised.

A scoping exercise on this topic was carried out by police in North and West Wiltshire in 2006, which concluded that centralisation of CCTV would be beneficial. As a large project, it would need to be taken forward by the police and the new unitary authority.

Effects on strategies and codes

The Corporate Plan vision states that the Council's role includes being a community leader and working in partnership to achieve high quality service.

Both areas of concern are linked to the Wiltshire Local Area Agreement target of reducing ASB in the district. The central on-line calendar should enable NPT Tasking Group meetings to be attended by more members, and thus be more effective in planning preventive action. Co-ordinating CCTV coverage and monitoring should directly help to reduce ASB. In addition, by helping co-ordinate the work of local and community organisations, both measures would contribute to the Council demonstrating strong community leadership.

Risk Management Implications

None

Finance and performance implications

There may be financial implications in creating a central on-line calendar of meetings, and there would be costs associated with co-ordinating CCTV county-wide, although the amount to be borne by each partner agency would have to be negotiated.

National indicators relating to reducing ASB are due to be announced, which will be incorporated into the Local Area Agreement.

Legal implications

There are no direct legal implications from this report.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to consider the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee as follows:

Partnership Working in the field of Anti-Social Behaviour

- Resources should be committed to creating a central on-line 'calendar' of meetings which could avert clashes, as these reduce attendance at partnership meetings.
- The boundaries of Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Community Areas and Council wards should correspond as closely as possible.

County-wide co-ordination of CCTV

- The Committee recommends to Cabinet that co-ordinated activity is initiated, with the relevant parties, to develop CCTV in a coherent fashion throughout the County.

Background papers

Partnership Working in the field of Anti-Social Behaviour - Final report of the task and finish group, presented to Scrutiny Committee, 19 March 2008.

Draft Scrutiny Committee minutes 19 March 2008.

CCTV – Strategic Development. Executive Summary Wiltshire Constabulary/N. & W. Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership, 2006.