

Area North Committee – 22nd August 2007

10. Area North Community Safety Action Panel

<i>Lead Councillor</i>	<i>Sue Steele (appointed member to the Area North Community Safety Action Panel)</i>
<i>Head of Service</i>	<i>Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North)</i>
<i>Lead Officer</i>	<i>Charlotte Jones, Head of Area Development (North)</i>
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Purpose of the Report

To provide the Committee with an overview of the work of the Area North Community Safety Action Panel. There will be a short presentation to the Committee by officers who have supported the work of the panel.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report, and to consider future issues for the Area North Community Safety Action Panel to address.

Background

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities and the police, with other key agencies and the community, to work together at district level to develop and implement strategies for reducing crime and disorder in the area.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires all authorities to which the crime and disorder act applies to, *'do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area'* and *'consider the impact of all their functions and decisions on crime and disorder in their local area'*.

The Area North Community Safety Action Panel is one of four panels in South Somerset, and is part of the structure of the Mendip and South Somerset Crime Reduction Partnership.

The Area Chairs all serve on the South Somerset Community Safety Steering Group.

The Heads of Service for Area Development act as the lead officers for SSDC to support the delivery of community safety at an area level, working closely with the Community Safety team. This involves work with many other agencies at a parish and town level, or across the area to support local actions to improve safety.

The Area Action Panel

The aims of the panel are:

- To work with local communities to identify and address community safety issues and to support and encourage local action. Last year it was agreed that this would include the remit of the former Area North Traffic Calming working group.

- To empower communities to take joint responsibility for appropriate aspects of community safety.

Funding the Panel and its Actions

All partner agencies provide officer time in kind to support the work of the panel; in addition South Somerset District Council employs a Community Safety Coordinator. South Somerset District Council also hosts the employment of four of the members of the Mendip and South Somerset Community Safety Partnership team who are directly funded by the Home Office.

To support the work of the panel, and to provide grants to local projects, there is an annual grant from the Home Office Safer and Stronger Communities fund and for 2007/08 this is £9,874, which includes £5,720 specifically for projects relating to buildings, facilities or equipment. Applications are made to the Community Safety team, and considered by regular meetings of the panel.

Members of the local community act in a voluntary capacity to serve on the panel, which is of immense value to its work.

Membership of the Panel

Members of the steering group include representatives from the following organisations and authorities:

- Avon & Somerset Police (Somerton Sector)
- South Somerset District Council
- Somerset County Council – including the Youth Service
- Fire Service,
- Primary Care Trust
- South Somerset Homes
- Somerset Rural Youth Project
- Neighbourhood Watch coordinator representative
- Parish and Town Council representatives (on request, by co-option).

The Action Plan

Each area panel adopts an Action Plan - which is available on the SSSC website (see below) and an annual report. The actions are identified from evidence of need from crime statistics, local consultation and involvement and agencies.

<http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=10542>

Last year the following actions were identified as being as area-wide priority, in addition to the many locally specific issues.

- Increase Neighbourhood Watch networks in villages and towns
- Continue working towards reducing traffic speed and improving road safety in rural parishes.
- Improve liaison with the police and continue to identify more efficient methods of reporting crime.
- Make easily available useful contact information for supporting communities.
- Work together to reduce anti social behaviour in public places (e.g. driving, litter, noise, vandalism)

- Support education programmes in primary and secondary schools to address road safety, anti social behaviour, substance and alcohol misuse etc.

Actions taken, either directly by the panel or by partners have included two parish workshops, dissemination of information, and convening numerous Local Action Groups to address concerns. A number of grants were made to support local projects, and a further update will be made at the Committee.

Financial Implications

None.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

Addressing community safety issues contributes across all corporate aims, and specifically:

- Objective 14 – Maintain above 90% the people who generally feel safe in their community

Other Implications

The work of the Area North Community Safety Action Panel contributes to the achievement of the Somerset Crime Reduction Strategy and the Somerset Local Area Agreement, as well as responding to the actions identified within local community plans.

Background Papers: *Area North Community Safety Action Plan, minutes and agendas of Community Safety Action Panel*
