

Area North Committee – 28th May 2008

8. Area North Community Safety Action Panel

Lead Councillor: Sue Steele (appointed member to the Area North Community Safety Action Panel)
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Purpose of the report

To provide an overview of the work of the Area North Community Safety Action Panel, and to present the draft Area North Community Safety Action Plan 2008-09.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note this report, and action plan, and raise any matters of interest or concern for the Area North Community Safety Action Panel or South Somerset Steering Group to consider.

Members are also asked to note the recommendation contained in Agenda item 10 of this Agenda, which seeks to allocate up to £10,000 from the Area North Service Enhancement budget towards local priorities for community safety.

Background

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities and other public bodies 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'*.

Area North does not have a high crime rate and anti-social behaviour is relatively low, however on occasions there are local issues that affect people's quality of life, and these issues surrounding safety, crime and anti-social behaviour often need a combined approach to resolve them. By working together and using enforcement, education and diversionary tactics relevant organisations can pool their resources and work towards a common goal for the benefit of the community.

South Somerset District Council employs a Community Safety Coordinator, based at Brympton Way and hosts the employment of four of the members of the Mendip and South Somerset Community Safety Partnership team whose salaries are funded by the Home Office.

The Area North Community Safety Action Panel

The main aims of the panel are:

- To work with local communities to identify and address community safety issues and to support and encourage local action.

- To provide a forum for partner agencies, and community representatives to develop mutual understanding of local issues and collaborate on projects and initiatives

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 Chairmen of the four Area Action Panels, and the Heads of Area Development are appointed to serve on the South Somerset Community Safety Steering Group.

Meetings of the Panel review progress of the action plan, receive updates from partners on current issues affecting community safety, and consider recent crime reports and trends.

Local Action Groups / Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings

Recently the Police have been tasked with organising and delivering **Partners and Communities Together** (PACT) meetings in the main settlements of Area North (Langport, Somerton, Martock and South Petherton). The PACT meetings will be open to the public and will be held every three months. The aim of these meetings is to give the public the opportunity to highlight and prioritise issues of concern relating to crime and safety. A panel made up of representatives from a variety of public sector organisations will report on progress at the next PACT meeting three months later.

It is recognised that the PACT meetings need to avoid duplication with meetings of Local Action Groups, or other open public meetings, and this has been addressed through joining up these meetings where practicable.

Local Action Groups will continue to be formed when requested, and are supported by a variety of partners, working closely with residents and parish councils to assess local issues, identify some possible solutions, and develop a series of projects or initiatives to improve local community safety.

SSDC Services supporting Community Safety

All members of the Area Development and Community Safety teams, work with community groups, local councillors and partner agencies to reduce levels of crime, anti-social behaviour, and fear of crime. This can include supporting public meetings, working to identify and address the causes and factors affecting levels of crime and disorder, developing projects in support of local community safety initiatives and improving communications between various services.

Most SSDC services have duties or provide services which are designed to help build strong and safe communities. Some examples include:

- **Streetscene** – addressing environmental concerns including litter education, help with community litter picks and flytipping enforcement
- **Development Control / Planning Policy** – assessing the implications for crime and safety within new developments
- **Sport and Leisure** – providing services to support diversionary activities for young people
- **Customer Services** – reporting (and recording) complaints of anti-social behaviour
- **Environmental Health** – noise, licensing
- **Engineering and Property Services** – car parks, toilets and traffic calming

Membership of the Area North Action Panel

Members of the Area North Action Panel include representatives from the following organisations and authorities:

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

Current community representatives are appointed by Somerton Town and Ilton Parish Councils. The current Chairman of the Panel is Cllr John Deering, of Somerton Town Council.

Projects supported 2007-08

The table below includes a number of projects supported and funded by the Panel during 2007-08.

Project	Revenue	Capital	
Workshop	500		Event took place on 4th September and was attended by 27 people representing 10 different parishes. Evaluation feedback showed that attendees thought that the event was both useful and informative.
Firebreak	1,000		Firebreak 38 run with 8 students from Stanchester Community School and all 8 completed the course. The course commenced on 13 September and concluded on 13 December with a formal Passing Out Parade.
South Petherton Teen Café	373		Time Out Together bus carried out a programme of visits over five weeks. During this time, the recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour fell significantly. The parish council have commissioned Time Out Together to attend sessions for the following 12 weeks.
Overt CCTV		5,500	The Camera has been purchased. The use of the camera will be prioritised at Police pre-tasking meetings.
Somerton CCTV	2,281	220	Order placed towards the end of February. Work due to start shortly on installation of cameras
	4,154	5,720	

In addition a successful community workshop was held in September 2007, which received positive evaluations from those who attended. The Panel was also successful in identifying a number of local issues, and directing support from appropriate agencies towards this.

In general the main benefit of the Panel, is the co-ordination and communication between partners it supports, and the means to engage with communities.

The 2008-09 Action Plan

Each Area Panel adopts an Action Plan annually – based on local priorities identified from Local Action Groups, Parish Plans, direct from town and parish councils, or from the experience of those working in the community.

This year the Panel has identified four main priority areas, and a series of actions within each.

To work with partners and communities to:

- Address the causes and impact of unacceptable levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime
- Reduce speeding and traffic problems
- Target and reduce levels of litter (especially town centres) and flytipping
- Working together, involving all sections of the community

A summary of the action plan is included in Appendix A

Resources to deliver the Action Plan

Other than dedicated administration for the Panel, all officer time is given in kind to support the work of the Panel. SSDC funds the costs of meetings in kind. Members of the local community act in a voluntary capacity to serve on the panel, which is of immense value to its work.

Funding for projects and to support the work of the panel was previously available from the Home Office budget, via Somerset County Council. This is currently under review, and an update will be provided at the meeting.

In view of the likely limited additional funding made available to Area Action Panels for 2008-09, and the additional resource requirement to address these community priorities, which overlap with SSDC priorities, it is recommended that the Area Committee allocates up to £10,000 from the Area North Service Enhancement Budget towards funding the Action Plan.

If approved this would be administered by the Head of Area Development and Community Safety Co-ordinator in conjunction with the Area Action Panel, and individual ward members as appropriate. This is likely to include:

- Cost of additional community development support to communities experiencing relatively high levels of crime or anti-social behaviour.
- Activities to increase local involvement with educational and voluntary activities, including neighbourhood watch, litter picks etc
- Costs of workshops / events to share good practice and access services who can help

Members should note that an additional allocation from the Service Enhancement Budget is recommended towards the environmental priority, contained within the Area Development Plan report, included elsewhere in this agenda.

Financial Implications

None from this report, the financial implication of an allocation from the Area North service enhancement budget is contained elsewhere in this agenda (Area Development Plan report)

Implications for Corporate Priorities

Improving levels of community safety contributes across all corporate aims, and specifically:

- Objective 14 - maintain above 90% the people who generally feel safe in their community
- Objective 16 – maintain above 80% the people satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

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*