

Area West Committee – 18th July 2012

8. Community Justice Panel

Strategic Director: Rina Singh (Place and Performance)
 Assistant Director: Helen Rutter (Communities)
 Service Manager: Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West)
 Lead Officer: Valerie Keitch, Community Justice Panel Manager
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Purpose of the Report

To provide information about the Community Justice Panel (CJP) in South Somerset.

Public Interest

The South Somerset Community Justice Panel (SSCJP) operates across the district to resolve issues of low level crime and anti-social behaviour. The project operates a form of restorative justice whereby local volunteers and criminal justice professionals are brought together to decide on what action should be taken to deal with incidents of anti-social behaviour. The panel brings together victims, offenders and their supporters face to face to deal with the consequences of an offence, and decide collectively how to repair the harm.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members note and comment on the report.

Background

The CJP has been supported by SSDC since its inception in 2004. Previously 3 members from the Area West Committee were on the Management Group. The structure for management of the Project changed in 2011 and the CJP is now a registered charity with Trustees and a Strategic Advisory Group.

The Charity Commission have approved a name change and the Project will now be known as Somerset Community Justice Panel. This is to reflect the wider area now covered.

Andrew Gillespie, Area Development Manager (West) and Steve Brewer, Community Safety Co-ordinator on behalf of Community Safety in South Somerset, as well as representatives from other partner agencies, attend the Strategic Advisory Group.

The Trustees are:

Emma Bourne (Chair)
 John Gallagher
 John Lacey

Taunton Deane have been invited to put forward a trustee in recognition of the CJP taking over the management of their 2 projects.

Yarlington Housing Group have also been invited to nominate a trustee in recognition of their ongoing funding support.

The Manager, Val Keitch and Co-ordinator, Nicky Doble are both based in the SSDC Area West Offices at Chard.

PC Bill Geddes was seconded to the CJP until January 2012 when he retired from the Police. At some point he will be working in a volunteer capacity for the CJP.

Delivering Restorative Justice in the Community

During 2011/2012, 98 cases were dealt with involving nearly 400 people. Of that total 53 were in Area West and involved 252 people. There were some complex cases involving a lot of offenders and victims.

The chart below shows types of cases and outcomes

Type of offence	Number	Referred by	Adults/Young people	Outcomes
Assault	16	Police	Both	ABC'S
Bullying	1	Police	Y	ABC
Parking dispute	1	Police	A	ABC
Criminal damage	19	Police	Both	ABC'S
ASB/Criminal damage	1		Y	ABC
Neighbour disputes	2	Yarlington Housing Group	A	Acceptable Agreements
Noise nuisance	2	Yarlington Housing Group	A	Acceptable agreements
Possession of Cannabis	1	Police	Y	ABC
Public Disorder	1	Police	y	ABC
Road rage	1	Police	A	Case not proceeded with
Sec 5 Public Order Act	2	Police	A	ABC
Theft and Shoplifting	5	Police	Y	ABC
Violence against the person	1	Police	A	ABC

Conditions were attached to Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC) and varied between compensation, unpaid work, apologies and agreement not to commit such offence in future.

Effective Outcomes for the Community

There were only 2 breaches of orders for non-payment of compensation and a couple of apology letters but those are still being chased up. None of the breaches have resulted in cases being returned for further action.

Funding

The Trustees would like to acknowledge the help given by all Area Committees last year.

Contributions this year have come from Taunton Deane, Yarlington Housing Group, Avon and Somerset Police and one or two small contributions from charities.

However, the Project is in danger of running out of funds fairly soon. Further bids have been made to various large Funders, but these things take time. The current economic climate means that many grant making charities are overwhelmed with applications.

Economies are in hand to cut the running costs; the Manager will become part-time from Monday, 2nd July in an effort to allow the project to continue for a bit longer.

Training is needed to ensure there are enough volunteers to cover the new areas, but this is on hold at the moment until more funding is obtained.

Government funding will not be available as the new pilot areas for neighbourhood resolution panels are being told it has to be out of existing resources.

The unknown factor is what stance the new Police and Crime Commissioner will take, a briefing sheet is being prepared to present to all candidates once they are announced.

Training

The Manager has delivered training to other areas and is now an assessor for the IIRP for New Trainers.

Further Expansion of the Project

The Justice Panels in South Somerset and Taunton Deane are running. Another panel in Mendip is planned.

General

The Trustees would like to acknowledge the help given to the Manager by SSDC whose support has been invaluable.

Financial Implications

Area Development Manager's Comments:

The CJP budget is ringfenced and reviewed regularly. Every effort is being made to ensure that the CJP can continue until April 2013. By this time the prospects for long term funding should be clear enough to allow Trustees to take decisions about the future.

Corporate Priority Implications

Health and Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

None.

Equality and Diversity Implications

Increased access to the justice system.

Background Papers: *Community Justice Panel report to Area West Committee – 20th July 2011.*