

Report to District Executive – 4th March 2010

11. Revised Delivery Structures for Community Safety in Somerset

Executive Portfolio Holder: Tony Fife, Executive Portfolio Holder for Community Safety
Strategic Director: Rina Singh, Strategic Director (Place and Performance)
Assistant Director: Martin Woods, Assistant Director (Communities)
Service Manager: Alice Knight, Third Sector & Partnerships Manager
Lead Officer: Steve Brewer, Community Safety Co-ordinator
Contact Details: Martin.woods@southsomerset.gov.uk
 Alice.knight@southsomerset.gov.uk
 Steve.brewer@southsomerset.gov.uk

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present options for the delivery of Community Safety Structures in Somerset in the light of reduced funding levels across the county.

Forward Plan

This report did not appear on the District Executive Forward Plan as the decision to press ahead with the revised community safety structures was only supported by the Somerset Safer Communities Group (SCG) in December 2009 and the Mendip and South Somerset Community Safety Partnership in January 2009, and decisions on community safety funding were discussed for the first time on 22nd February, 2010 following the County Full Council decisions and announcements on savings.

Public Interest

The public interest will be because of public perception the importance of crime as supported by The Place Survey (2008) which ranked crime as the top of 5 factors in making Somerset a good place to live SSDC works in partnership with a range of other agencies in Somerset to support community safety and tackle anti-social behaviour.

Recommendations

- (1) That in view of the uncertainty regarding delivery and staffing Members delay the decision to join a single Countywide Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) incorporating the current Somerset Safer Communities Group and the 2 existing Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (Somerset East & West) and in the mean time work with officers and partners to clarify matters over staffing and delivery arrangements.

Background

Since the 1998 *Crime & Disorder Act* it has been the responsibility of local authorities to work in partnership with the police, probation and health services to work together to reduce crime and disorder in the local area.

South Somerset has worked in partnership with all agencies through the Mendip and South Somerset Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) to discharge its duties under the Crime and Disorder Act.

During 2009 it was agreed by the various partners that a review for community safety across Somerset was needed, looking at how community safety could be best delivered in

Somerset in the most efficient and effective manner. The review pointed to the need for simpler structures across Somerset in the light of:

- Reduced resources and capacity across agencies
- Lines of accountability being complex and poorly understood with the Countywide Safer Community Group and local CDRP's
- Officers from all organisations attending multiple meetings, and having responsibility for various commissioned groups.

The Community Safety Review began an exercise to map all posts engaged in Community Safety and it was intended that all posts associated with Community Safety would be considered and included in any new structures. This should include the police funded Community Safety funded posts. The full review was not completed or agreed by the SCG. The conclusion however was that a single CDRP would offer advantages over the current system, and that was necessary before a countywide review of posts could take place.

Funding and Staffing

On the 22nd of February 2010, SSDC and all members of the SCG were advised in letter from the Chair of the Safer Communities Group, Cmdr. Nikki Watson that the resource available to the local delivery of Community Safety from Somerset County Council Area Based Grant would greatly reduce.

These changes would result in a reduction of across the county of £314,429; a 42% reduction.

There is no cut proposed to the Strategic allocation of £245,600 to the Countywide Drugs and Alcohol Team and Youth Offending Team or to the core County community safety staff. This means the £314,429 reduction is applied to both East and West CDRP areas.

Allowing for some manoeuvring and variations over capital and revenue funds the deficit in salary budget levels would be £61,000 for South Somerset on a forecast salary cost of £114,500. This represents a dramatic reduction.

In effect this would mean community safety function as it is now undertaken would be delivered at county level from a much-reduced funding level, probably on a commissioned basis. The statutory responsibility remains with the accountable bodies ie the CDRP and the local authority.

There has been no offer to spread the cut amongst all County Community Safety staffing, who are funded from outside the Area Based Grant.

South Somerset and Mendip CDRP has used resources to employ a small Community Safety team to deliver targeted interventions, support Intelligence and Community Speedwatch as well as and administer and support local action directed at addressing concerns raised by the community and expressed through local Area Action Panels. They are particularly successful in bringing together the local authorities, police and voluntary sector organisations to tackle crime and Anti Social Behaviour at a local level, and to support local communities to tackle their own identified issues. The only Officer paid for by SSDC is the Community Safety Officer.

We have as host authority responsibility for these staff, who have permanent employment status. The current position is that funding for the four M&SS partnership posts is only available for 6 months. This is on the basis that we agree to a Single CDRP and give the partnership notice. Other Districts have already given notice to their staff. The county have put a sum in to assist with redundancies, capped at £40,000

South Somerset wish to investigate a number of legal and HR implications including TUPE arising from this development. These need to be analysed by our HR team, especially where an activity is going to be continued at another level or by another agency.

At the time the report was written, neither Somerset County Council nor the police have formally agreed to a ring fence of all staff. This implies that all Community Safety staff will be from the SCC or the Police.

Implications and Conclusions

The options for SSSDC are simply:

- 1) To move to a single CDRP or
- 2) Maintain a Mendip and SS&MCDRP.

The process of moving to a single CDRP would require all responsible authorities to sign up and agree, of which we are one. The Safer Communities Group and the 2 CDRP's have agreed in principle to support the move towards one County-wide CDRP, incorporating the 2 existing CDRPs and the SCG, starting from 1st April 2010. This concept also has support from Government Office South West (GOSW). Legislation requires that this would need Home Office approval and would need to run as a temporary CDRP for 1 year until April 2011, before it becomes legal.

The Community Safety Review said that a single CDRP could lead to more effective governance, reduce duplication and be a platform from which to make further changes in the future.

The disadvantage is that it becomes more remote and the out of touch with local activities. All other Districts, the police and the PCT are in favour of this single CDRP approach.

SSDC would be represented, and therefore involved in strategic decisions. However there would be little local control as it is unlikely that the service would be based locally.

The advantage of maintaining the M&SSCDRP is that it is more local and arguably allows for our own self-determination, but it would require active cooperation with all partners to be successful. It will be for South Somerset (or Mendip) to make it work effectively. Though it must be noted that partners (for example Police) will have a statutory obligation to deliver the service in the South Somerset geographical area.

Although it would remain the statutory body it would have no control over resources other than its own. However from what is presently known, of the process for the merger, this is likely to be no different as SSSDC had no control over what was proposed ie reduction in funding.

The discussion over the single CDRP has been overshadowed by the February announcement on funding by SCC, which has severe implications for local delivery arrangements, so what was a more straightforward discussion has now a wider dimension.

Both scenarios represent major challenges for partnership working in a reducing funding context that will face all partners to a greater or lesser extent. To make a decision will be a balance in terms of corporate risk and capacity, and the views of partners.

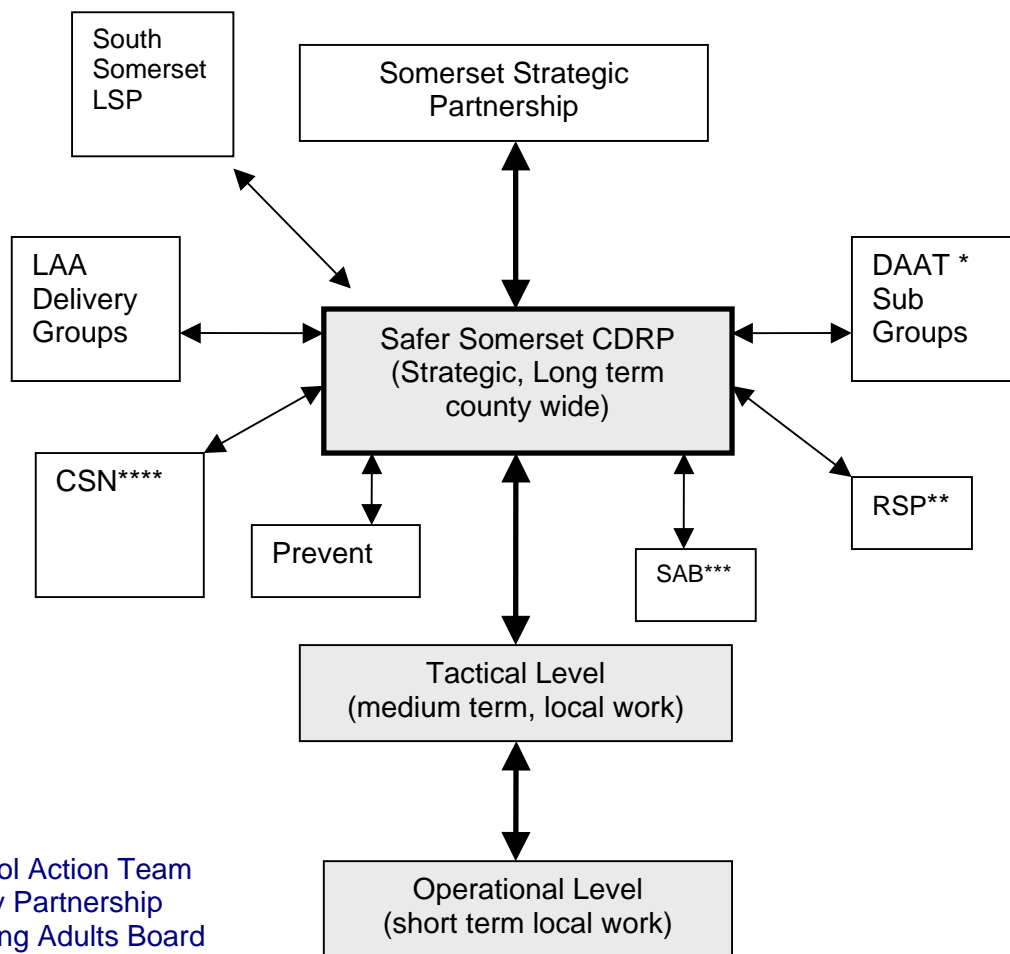
Members may further wish to consider what arrangement is best for making further cross cutting changes in an ever-reducing funding scenario.

In the mean time work will take place locally in assessing how our services and Areas can respond to the resource reduction and to minimise the impact. This will require the support of all services and area development teams.

Scrutiny

Local authorities can scrutinise Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), and Home Office guidance suggests this is undertaken at least once a year. In this new arrangement it will be appropriate to have some joint scrutiny arrangements between councils in Somerset.

The proposed revised structure is below:



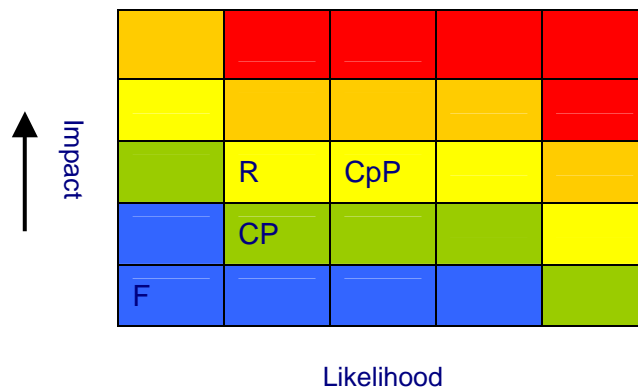
- *Drug & Alcohol Action Team
- ** Road Safety Partnership
- *** Safeguarding Adults Board
- **** Community Safety Network

Financial Implications

The Community Safety staffing budget for 2011/ 12 is projected to be £114558. The reduction in funding will leave a salary deficit of £61,000 from 1/4/2010.

One-off amelioration measures will mean that staffing will be able to be maintained for a period of approximately six months unless other funding can be found.

Risk Matrix



Key

Categories	Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)
R = Reputation	Red = High impact and high probability
CpP = Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange = Major impact and major probability
CP = Community Priorities	Yellow = Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY = Capacity	Green = Minor impact and minor probability
F = Financial	Blue = Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Corporate Priority Implications

Improve the housing, health & wellbeing of our citizens

Maintaining satisfaction with home as a place to live

Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities

Increasing the % of people from 66.4% to 68% who feel that local public services are working to make the place safer

Increasing % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood from 63.7% in 2008/09 to 65% by 2010/11

Increasing those who participate in regular volunteering at least once a month from 30.4% in 2008/09 to 34.4% in 2011/12

Deliver well managed, cost effective services

Increasing overall/general satisfaction with local area from 86.7% in 2008/09 to 88.7% in 2011/12

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

Fewer meetings would mean people travelling fewer miles across the County.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The new structure would ensure certain sub groups such as the Partnership Against Hate Crime would report directly to the new CDRP.

Background Papers: *Somerset Safer Communities Group Minutes December 2009*
CDRP Minutes November 2009
CDRP Minutes January 2010
Investigation into improving delivery structures for Community Safety in Somerset, CSN, report for Safer Communities Group, December 17th 2009

Minute from District Executive – 4th March 2010

155. Revised Delivery Structures for Community Safety in Somerset (Agenda item 11)

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety introduced the report, which presented options for the delivery of Community Safety structures in Somerset in the light of reduced funding levels across the County. The Portfolio Holder referred to the implications on staff and the delivery of the service of moving to a single County-wide Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and of the decision of Somerset County Council to greatly reduce funding levels. In view of the uncertainty regarding delivery and staffing he asked the Executive to delay any decision on the way forward until those matters in respect of the delivery of the service on a local level were clarified.

The Assistant Director (Communities) summarised the background to this issue as set out in the agenda report including the proposal to move to a single County-wide CDRP. He also referred to how the service was delivered at a local level and indicated that although the District Council had a liability for contracted staff they did not have control over the funding, which was to be reduced with effect from 1st April 2010. He confirmed that it would be preferable for a decision by this authority to be deferred as more clarity was needed regarding the staffing and delivery arrangements.

Cllr. Dave Bulmer reported that the Scrutiny Committee had considered this report and expressed concern over the high percentage of cuts particularly bearing in mind that community safety was a high priority in the Place Survey and it was felt that it should be reviewed as a priority. It was also questioned whether the cuts were on top of the reduction in funding for PCSOs. It had also been queried why community priorities was scored so low on the risk matrix in the agenda report.

The Assistant Director (Communities) confirmed that funding for PCSOs was a separate reduction. With reference to the risk matrix in the agenda report, the Strategic Director (Place and Performance) reported that the risk in respect of community priorities was shown as low because it related to the recommendation in the agenda, which was to delay a decision pending further clarification rather than on actually making the decision with regard to joining a single County-wide CDRP.

It was noted that the Scrutiny Committee would continue to be involved in the consideration of this matter.

Members indicated their disappointment with what had happened and that the District Council had been put in this position. Comment was expressed that the interests of the residents of South Somerset and those of the District Council's staff and the delivery of the service must come first.

The Executive supported the recommendation that a decision regarding this matter be delayed pending work being undertaken by officers and partners to clarify matters over staffing and delivery arrangements.

RESOLVED: that, in view of the uncertainty regarding delivery and staffing, the decision to join a single Countywide Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), incorporating the current Somerset Safer Communities Group and the two existing Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (Somerset East & West) be delayed and in the meantime work be undertaken by officers and partners to clarify matters over staffing and delivery arrangements.

Reason: To consider options for the delivery of Community Safety Structures in Somerset in the light of reduced funding levels across the county.

(Martin Woods, Assistant Director (Communities) - 01935 462060)
(martin.woods@southsomerset.gov.uk)
