

# **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**2nd July 2013**

## **CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY IN REDDITCH**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Rebecca Blake, Community Safety and Regulatory Services
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis, Acting Head of Community Services
Ward(s) Affected	No specific ward relevance.
Non-Key Decision	

### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

This report explains the undertakings of the Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel since being formed in 2010 to scrutinise the performance of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE:**

**how the Council's statutory crime and disorder scrutiny function should be most suitably undertaken**

### **3. KEY ISSUES**

#### **Background**

- 3.1 Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 included provisions that required local authorities to have a Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review or scrutinise the decisions and actions of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CRDPs) in England and Wales. These provisions came into effect in April 2009
- 3.2 In accordance with the new provisions, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered what procedures the Council should adopt for the scrutiny of crime and disorder matters in July 2009. There were several roles that this Committee could undertake: holding the CDRP to account for its decision making; scrutinising the performance of the CDRP; and undertaking policy reviews of specific crime and disorder issues. The Committee could also highlight and challenge people's perceptions of crime and disorder in the local area and undertake community engagement and consultation to establish local people's priorities for crime and disorder issues.
- 3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Borough Council establish a designated Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel as a sub-committee to

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scrutinise the performance of the local CDRP, the Redditch Community Safety Partnership

- 3.4 It was expected that the relevant five Members of the Panel would be able to develop sufficient expertise on crime and disorder issues. It was thought that this arrangement would also enable the Panel to develop close working relations with representatives from the Redditch Community Safety Partnership. The Panel would also have the opportunity to undertake task and finish reviews on significant issues if it elected to do so.
- 3.5 The Chair of the Panel would update the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee following each meeting to report on its business.
- 3.6 The Panel's first meeting took place on 8th March 2010. The Panel was scheduled to meet on a quarterly basis, although it would be able to meet on a more regular basis at its own discretion. Legally, the Panel is only required to meet once a year to scrutinise the Community Safety Partnership.
- 3.7 Since its first meeting in March 2010, the Panel has continued to meet on a quarterly basis. It has made three recommendations to date.
- 3.8 The first two recommendations were approved by the Executive Committee in January 2011. The first recommended that the Borough Council endorse and support the need for a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in the West Mercia Police Area. The second recommendation proposed that a letter be issued to the Health and Wellbeing Board to strongly encourage that the SARC be developed. The SARC was eventually opened in February 2013 in Bransford, Worcester, and offers services of evidence gathering and support with a 24-hour victim helpline. It was jointly funded by the West Mercia Police and the NHS.
- 3.9 The only other recommendation was rejected in November 2011. This proposed that the Council should not support the merger of Redditch Community Safety Partnership (RCSP) with Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) and Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership (WFCSP) resulting in the creation of a North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP). The NWCSP was eventually formed in April 2013. According to its own website, the NWCSP "provides a co-ordinated approach to tackling crime, delivering projects across the whole of the area and making best use of resources."
- 3.10 Since the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership began operating in shadow form in 2012, the Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel remains the only sub-committee of its kind in North Worcestershire. The Overview and Scrutiny Committees in both Wyre Forest and Bromsgrove act as their local authority's crime and disorder committees.
- 3.11 The Panel has not undertaken any task and finish reviews since being established in 2010.

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### **Possible Options**

- 3.12 The Committee could retain the status quo and leave the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel to focus on the performance of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership and to raise any areas of concern or highlight good practice regarding community safety in Redditch.
- 3.13 Alternatively, the Committee could decide to become the Council's designated crime and disorder committee and suspend the current operation of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel in the process. It would be required to fulfil the statutory obligation of looking at crime and disorder matters at least once a year. Should there are any particular aspects of concern, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could decide to undertake further scrutiny on this subject. This could involve setting up task and finish reviews into matters of particular concern. Under this scenario, the Committee could appoint the existing members of the Panel to lead on a review.

### **Financial Implications**

- 3.14 There are no direct financial implications directly relating to this report.

### **Legal Implications**

- 3.15 If the Committee proposes to change the current arrangements, the procedure rules for the Panel in part 8 of the Constitution would need to be updated.

### **Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.16 There are no direct service or operational implications that have been identified for this report.

### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.17 No direct customer or equality and diversity implications have been identified for this report.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 No risks have been identified.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference

### **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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