
**Safer Communities Board
22 September 2011
Future Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership
arrangements**

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the current issues and challenges facing community safety partnership working and how future working arrangements in Worcestershire can be organised to best meet these challenges.
2. To propose outline options for future partnership structures and working arrangements that better target strategic priorities, taking account of the views and observations of Responsible Authorities and key stakeholders. The report is not a detailed business case.

Background

1. Introduction:

Community Safety responsibilities are primarily set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended), with specific reference to s17 of the Act:

Responsible Authorities, which includes Local Authorities, the Police, the Police Authority, Fire and Rescue Authority, Primary Care Trusts, and Probation Trusts, are required to develop policy and operational approaches to prevent crime and disorder, combating the misuse of drugs and alcohol, and anti social behaviour and other behaviour likely to adversely affect the local environment and to reduce reoffending.

This report sets out future policy and funding issues, the operational landscape for community safety and considers the views and requirements of Responsible Authorities and key partners, in the revision of future partnership working and the key issues that need to be addressed to position Worcestershire to meet some significant challenges ahead.

2. The current partnership landscape in Worcestershire:

There are currently four statutory Community Safety Partnerships in Worcestershire: South Worcestershire, Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest. They operate in localities and focus upon local delivery and partnership working on community safety issues and fulfilling their duties under the Act.

There is a County Strategic Group, the Safer Communities Board, made up of senior Responsible Authorities

representatives and wider stakeholders, which through a Community Safety Agreement, sets the strategic priorities for the Countywide partnerships and provides funding for CSPs and wider s17 activities.

Sitting alongside the partnerships are a significant number of other groups that support CSPs and the SCB.

There is also a higher spatial level strategic approach to community safety through the West Mercia Criminal Justice Board, which includes senior criminal justice and upper tier Local Authority representation and is currently in part preparing for the introduction of the new Police and Crime Commissioners.

The partnerships have been subject to a range of funding and performance frameworks over a number of years and to some extent have developed organically. The latest arrangements through the Comprehensive Area Assessment, Local Area Agreement, the Place Survey and National Indicators have gone and Partnerships can now decide how they are best organised.

The Safer Communities Board has agreed that a review of community safety partnership working across Worcestershire is required against the backdrop of changing Government priorities, severe pressures upon public finances, 60% reductions community safety fund grant, the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners from November 2012 and the logistical problems faced by partner organisations in servicing current partnership meetings and activities.

3. The emerging national policy landscape:

The Government recognises the successes of community safety partnership working and its contribution to reducing crime over many years. However with significant pressures outlined above in public sector funding affecting all Responsible Authorities, policy changes in criminal justice and community safety, the reduction of Whitehall control and top down performance management and the development of localism with closer working with communities and the voluntary sector, the Government has clearly signalled that local areas are free to operate their statutory functions in whichever way they believe will work most effectively.

There are a number of key issues that require detailed consideration and will influence how partnerships most effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities. These are briefly summarised as follows:

i. Public sector resource reductions.

There are reductions of 60% in community safety fund grant for use across Worcestershire between 2009/10 and 2012/13. This Home Office fund which is paid to Worcestershire County Council and provides revenue for CSPs and other key activities (see Table 1 page 9), will transfer to the PCC from April 2013, with the PCC completely free to commission and distribute funding as they choose. This is a significant risk to partnerships and how they currently fund their activities, including staffing resources.

This is compounded by significant budget reductions for Local Authorities and other Responsible Authorities.

Capital funding from the Home Office has also completely ceased. This was £176,000 in 2009/10 and £88,000 in 2010/11. Difficult decisions about how future funding is allocated and utilised will have to be made and there will need to be a reconsideration as to what other resources, community safety or otherwise can be made available or targeted to support community safety priority objectives. In future it will be vital to ensure that Worcestershire is able to highlight the effectiveness of meeting community safety priorities, to obtain grant funding support from the PCC, when control over these budgets passes to them.

ii. Current Government policy

The Government has recognised the importance of partnership working in ensuring safer communities and reconfirmed its support for the principles of the Crime and Disorder Act and s17 Responsible Authorities.

Subject to some minor changes, the most recent statutory Instrument (No 1230, 2011 The Crime and Disorder Formulation and Implementation of Strategy regulations 2011), confirms retention of the functions and requirements of CSPs and for a County Strategy Group to prepare a Community Safety Agreement on behalf of the Responsible Authorities.

The Government has set out its key Criminal Justice and Community Safety priorities in a number of policy and strategy statements covering, Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence, Drug and Alcohol recovery Reducing Reoffending and Preventing Violent Extremism. Additionally there are specific Criminal Justice reforms (introduction of Police and Crime Commissioner), commissioning the voluntary sector, Localism, abolition of top down targets (LAA/NIs), performance by results and the wider Government policy agenda on welfare reform and economic growth.

The recent riots in England have reemphasised Governments focus on some of these issues, notably reducing reoffending and the social and economic prospects of some sections of the community, which reflects the wider policy focus beyond just criminal justice, that is required to tackle these priority areas, reflecting the cross cutting nature of the community safety agenda.

There is a clear focus upon recovery and rehabilitation and the need for a multi agency approach to areas such as housing, training and employment, life skills and personal development, to ensure reductions in reoffending and substance misuse. This will require joint commissioning and better joining up of operational activities through clear strategic planning, to ensure effective interventions and support for localities.

These are key points for Partnerships to consider and how their strategic and operational activities are structured and operated, in a way that most effectively meets outcomes for local people.

iii. Police and Crime Commissioners: This is a central piece of Government policy under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill currently progressing through Parliament. The PCC will be established at West Mercia level from November 2012, with a range of powers including a reciprocal duty to cooperate with CSPs and to have regard to each others priorities for the purpose of fulfilling the s17 responsibilities. PCCs will as stated above take responsibility for community safety grant. The PCC could make Community safety grants to other organisations and so it will be critical to ensure that Worcestershire has very clear and robust strategic and partnership plans that also meet the PCC priorities. Currently preparation for the introduction of the PCC and any transitional arrangements is being made through the West Mercia Criminal Justice Board and Worcestershire is represented by WCC alongside the other Upper Tier local Authorities.

Arrangements will also be taking place to set up the scrutiny arrangements around the PCC function through the Police and Crime Panel for West Mercia, which will be coordinated with key partners by WCC.

Whatever partnership arrangements are agreed in Worcestershire, they will have to be effective and straightforward for the PCC to deal with at a WM spatial level.

Key changes to Police structures and operating levels, together

with the strategic alliance with the Warwickshire Police force, will place increasing pressures on the Police regarding their input and at what level this can take place.

4. Worcestershire Strategic Community safety priorities:

These are set out in the SCB Community Safety Agreement 2011/12. There is a focus upon Countywide coordination of strategic priorities: reducing reoffending, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse, ASB, Preventing Violent Extremism. These have to be the focus for partnership working, although recognising there will always be local issues that may fall outside this wide range of the current priorities. These priorities align with Government priorities and are therefore likely to be to a significant extent reflective of the PCC s expectations.

i. Reducing Reoffending:

This is a very complex area of work being developed in Worcestershire and also across other areas of West Mercia. Local Authorities and CSPs have a significant contribution to make in relation to building on existing work relating to Prolific and Priority Offenders and the wider services such as housing, youth work, drugs and alcohol reduction and education, which are key to the pathways to reducing reoffending.

Working at West Mercia Criminal Justice Board (WMCJB) level and in future with the PCC, is a challenge because of the size of West Mercia and the number of Local authorities and partners to be engaged. This will be the sort of issue that the WMCJB has to be able to manage effectively and particularly with the advent of the PCC, where we must be able to work in unison. Top level WMCJB strategic agreement has to filter into organisations operational activity and effective internal communications within partnership organisations is critical to achieve this. It will be vital to ensure that full partnership engagement takes place at the outset as West Mercia Police begin to develop their new approach to IOM and reducing reoffending.

The Government will be monitoring this work closely as reducing prison numbers, reducing reoffending and getting people off welfare and into work are major policy objectives.

ii. Drug and Alcohol misuse:

The Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), which is hosted by WCC is clearly the lead partnership agency for the delivery of a reduction in drug and alcohol misuse through commissioning of

services across the County. There is close working in a number of areas although some CSPs and partners are more involved than others. There is an excellent opportunity for the new contractor appointed by DAAT in April 2011, CRI, to develop new relationships with CSPs and partners and make a real difference in localities. The Recovery agenda (moving to sustaining long term recovery from drug and alcohol misuse), will enable good links to be made with other agencies, particularly the voluntary sector and to engage with volunteers, who are seen as a key to supporting this new approach. There is clearly a role for CSPs to support this work in their localities.

iii. Domestic Abuse:

There is very good partnership working on DA and in particular through the DA Forum and the accredited activity of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA), which are undoubtedly are having a very significant impact upon safeguarding and protecting families and individuals. There are strong links between agencies and provider organisations. The new responsibility for Domestic Homicide Reviews is coordinated through the Safer Communities Board on behalf of the CSPs, by the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator.

There is a Strategy and plans in place, with specific groups reporting back to the Forum. Currently the Forum and workgroup structures are being reviewed to reduce the burden on partners. There are close links to both Adult and Childrens Safeguarding Boards

iv. Anti Social behaviour:

Tackling ASB is a significant work stream for CSPs and much of their successful activity in the community relates to this. It is sometimes difficult to quantify success and this is a very real challenge for future outcomes frameworks that have to be developed locally post LAA. ASB is a major issue in many communities and it will be important to clearly understand concerns and adopt best practice from across the County and elsewhere to tackle this. The Government will be making a variety of announcements on future policy and has recently confirmed the rolling out of the 101 police telephone number for reporting number for ASB incidents.

Work is required to better define this whole area of work as ASB/hate crime/safeguarding/harm prevention (such as the Pilkington case) heavily overlap and there are developments in all of these areas, particularly within the Police, that require clear communication and cooperation with all partners.

Therefore a clearer understanding of priorities is required to ensure improved joined up working.

v. Preventing Violent Extremism:

This is an area that we are working hard to increase awareness of and embed understanding of, across the partnerships through support from the County Prevent Coordinator, a post which comes to an end in January 2012. Although there is a proportionate response to be taken to a perceived low risk, we must not be complacent (see the events in Norway). This is a Government priority and relates to its overall counter terrorism strategy.

It is proving challenging to engage all partners on Prevent although ultimately it is all partners responsibility to ensure that this policy area is developed locally. This relates very closely to community cohesion and integration work which again is for all (not just a community safety issue). But there is a slow recognition by some in Worcestershire to recognise the potential significance and associated risk of not doing this work and this needs to be addressed at a senior corporate level. The PCC will undoubtedly be looking at this.

5. Outcomes/performance framework.

This is how we assess the effectiveness of meeting strategic priorities, but it has often been very challenging to develop a consistent and meaningful approach within a complex partnership context.

With the ending of the LAA and National Indicators there is a need to develop a new outcomes framework that reflects progress made towards meeting the strategic priorities. This is currently under construction and has to ensure that local delivery is actually shown to be making a difference. There will need to be clear CSP accountability for supporting these Countywide strategic priorities and the new outcomes framework, post the LAA, will be agreed and introduced to assist with this objective. It is important to be able to demonstrate effectiveness not only through the partnership but to local communities and the PCC. A move to consideration of medium to longer term outcomes, rather than short term target management is something that has to be developed.

6. Commissioning of Community Safety services. There is significant multi million pound operational and commissioning activity of direct and indirect community safety activity, much of which is at County level, primarily through WCC. This for instance includes the WCC Community Safety team, Drug and

Alcohol Action team, Domestic Abuse and, Supporting People (including support and housing for vulnerable people, ex offender people who misuse substances, people with mental health problems and domestic abuse services). The majority of the services commissioned are in the voluntary and independent sectors and provide services to local communities across Worcestershire.

There are many other commissioning arrangements in localities and across and beyond county level through other Responsible Authorities.

However there is more scope for joint commissioning of Community Safety activity and many projects have been individually grant funded or remain as part of previous schemes that were joint funded or receive contributions as part of Government funded processes. There is a need to review this approach and to make best use of existing funding resources, to where practical, commission services strategically, using pooled funding to reflect joint responsibilities. This is for instance currently being considered in relation to future provision of key preventative Domestic Abuse services such as the MARAC and IDVAs.

Commissioning can be complex and a specialist area of work but there are commissioning teams within Responsible Authorities able to consider this area of work and this should be a focus for revised partnership working arrangements.

7. Worcestershire Partnership: Future priorities and Governance Structures of the Worcestershire Partnership are under development. At present the SCB is a Theme Group of the Worcestershire Partnership, but this is likely to change. However the community safety agenda is recognised as being an important cross cutting issue that affects many key activities. We will continue to work closely with the Partnership as it finalises its priorities and working arrangements.

8. Future Partnership Funding

There is a huge financial challenge to partnership working from 2012/13 and beyond. Agreement needs to be reached on Community Safety fund allocation for 2012/13 and this will be a factor in any discussions that will be taking place on merger arrangements.

Table 1 sets out the last two years allocation figures and provisional figures for 2012/13. For 2012/13 it only includes the Community Safety Fund at this stage and the funding split between CSPs is based upon the needs formula utilised by the

SCB this financial year. This formula was agreed as reflective of the relative needs of localities based upon the key priorities and it is recommended that the needs based funding formula, subject to any technical update, is retained for the 2012/13 allocations.

2012/13 will be the last year that the WCC Community Safety Fund is available before it transfers to the PCC.

The level of any possible additional funding from WCC community safety budget to the SCB in 2012/13 has not been finalised at this stage, due to consideration of internal community safety priorities, future commitments and internal reductions to that budget. However it is likely that if an allocation is made to the SCB, this will be substantially reduced and any such funding will be targeted towards commissioning and the support of services and activities that meet the strategic priorities, rather than a general grant to CSPs. It is therefore reasonable to assume for planning purposes that there will be no additional CSP funding in 2012/13, other than as set out provisionally in Table 1.

Although a speculative view at this stage, there can be no assumptions about how the PCC from April 2013 onwards, will allocate funding and it may be reasonable to assume that this will be used to commission services across and within West Mercia and not to sustain structures or fund posts.

Table 1 Community safety funding in Worcestershire

Funding	10/11	11/12	12/13 Provisional*
Community Safety Fund	£575,000	£544,338	£275,000
WCC Community Safety Grant Contribution	£132,000	£100,000	TBC
	£707,000	£644,338	TBC
Expenditure			
SCB Commissioning	£32,975	£20,000	TBC
Drug and Alcohol Action Team	£89,000	£69,000	TBC
WCC Community Safety Team	£35,000	£28,000	TBC
Bromsgrove CSP	£87,574	£71,695	£37,440
Redditch CSP	£90,327	£107,400	£56,086
S Worcs CSP	£269,882	£238,858	£124,735
Wyre Forest CSP	£102,995	£109,385	£57,122
	£707,000	£644,338	TBC

*Figures based upon using the same funding SCB formula split on 2011/12.

9. Worcestershire consultation on future partnership structures and priorities:

This consultative review has been steered by the SCB Policy and Commissioning Group, primarily through delegation to a small task and finish group. A key element of this work has been to confidentially interview senior representatives of the Responsible Authorities, CSPs and key stakeholders to establish their views of current and potential future working arrangements, structures and governance. The interviews were carried out by an Inspector at WM Police. The review also

presents an opportunity to restate the key strategic priorities that are in place in Worcestershire and how these can best be delivered. Some of the key issues highlighted by partners who were interviewed will be brought back to the Board and partners at a later date for discussion and further consideration. The issues around review and potential restructure have been discussed in many Fora and are well trailed. There has to be an agreement amongst the Responsible Authorities on future structures and governance, to ensure that future arrangements can be successfully developed and critically, agreed, understood and formally signed up to.

The Home Office has just issued new Guidance on the merging of CSPs and there is experience of CSP merger in South Worcestershire where the 3 CSPs joined together in April 2003.

Future Community Safety Partnership structure:

There were a wide range of views and observations amongst the Responsible Authorities. What is unanimously agreed is that the current status quo of four CSPs and the SCB is not sustainable and is not supported.

The other two options that were considered were:

- i. To restructure into one County based CSP or,
- ii To move to two CSPs, north and south and the SCB as the strategic county group. This would involve a merging of the three current other CSPs, (Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest).

There was a division in views on these two options and these are broadly summarised as follows:

Three of the Responsible Authorities considered that that single countywide CSP would be the most effective approach from their organisations perspective.

Six Responsible Authorities are strongly in favour the north and south CSP and SCB option, primarily because of the need to maintain a local focus on delivery and localism, political and other differences between the north and south of the county and that one CSP is not enough to effectively cover a large area like Worcestershire.

Three of the Responsible Authorities consider that ultimately a single CSP would probably be the most appropriate approach, but because of the significant changes taking place at the present time, the need to focus upon delivery, the logistics and lack of capacity of planning and agreeing a single CSP, the

need to prepare for the PCC and concerns about the scale of a single CSP operation, that two CSPs and a slimmed down SCB would be the preferred option.

However this should be reviewed at a future specified date when there is a relationship developed with the PCC and the future funding and policy landscape becomes clearer and settled, and the effectiveness of the new structures can be assessed.

If the north and south CSP structure is agreed, the Safer Communities Board will retain its responsibility for coordinating the countywide strategic approach through the Community Safety Agreement. It is proposed that the membership of the SCB is reduced to include only senior Responsible Authority representatives as voting members with consideration given to incorporating a small associate membership of non voting key stakeholders, perhaps on a "virtual " basis" or through an annual stakeholder meeting.

The frequency of meetings is likely to reduce and SCB sub groups would also be reviewed to rationalise the level of meetings. The Domestic Abuse Forum is already reviewing its own arrangements.

Commentary:

In terms of deciding what the future partnership structures should be, there is a range of views. But to effect change and specifically agree CSP mergers, all Responsible Authorities have to be in agreement for a submission to be made to the Home Office, and for the Home Secretary to make the relevant Order.

In trying to take an overview of the responses, it would appear that the majority of Responsible Authorities (and stakeholders) are in favour of, with some prepared to accept at the present time, a model comprising two CSPs, north and south, with a leaner County Strategic Group This would also then require the other Responsible Authorities who favour a single CSP to agree to this approach.

This would be subject to a future review of the effectiveness of the revised structures.

As would be expected there are a range of views about current and future approaches and many views clearly relate to the current structural arrangements across the whole partnership landscape as being too complex and onerous to operate within. The ability to service and support partnership activity and the divergence of views over a single or two CSPs is broadly, (but

not exclusively), reflected in the difference in responses between the Local Authorities and those Responsible Authorities that have a county or wider area of operation.

In terms of the logistics of change, the establishment of two CSPs and a County SCB would, primarily involve the merger of the three existing Northern CSPs and subject to agreement by the Responsible Authorities, a reasonable target date for the new partnership structures should be April 2012.

The establishment of a single CSP would clearly be a more extensive project, which would involve reviewing arrangements across all local Authority areas and detailed consideration and agreement of funding and budgets and management arrangements and accountability and would almost certainly not be resolved by April 2012.

It will require strong and clear leadership from all Responsible Authorities to ensure that the transition and change is managed effectively and that organisationally there is a consistent approach taken.

The current strategic priorities are broadly accepted and this is reflected in the strategic assessment across the County and National policy requirements. There are some partners who are unclear about their role or their input in supporting some areas of work and certainly there is recognition that some outcomes are unclear at present. This is not surprising to some extent post LAA and National Indicators, although there is work being undertaken to develop a new outcomes framework, which is always challenging in a complex partnership arena. The partnership review presents an opportunity to reflect upon and re emphasise the importance of the strategic priorities and how partnerships have duties against many of these, as well as having a clear role to support a wide area of related activity. Clearly as new working arrangements are developed partners and stakeholders need to be fully engaged and help shape new partnership arrangements while at the same time maintaining delivery against the strategic and local priorities.

Future development and training approaches to help overcome the complexity of partnership working across so many different disciplines needs to be considered, to ease some of the of the frustrations and difficulties reflected by partners.

It is strongly recommended that the new partnership arrangements are underpinned by a clear Memorandum of

Agreement signed upto at Chief Executive or equivalent level, which sets out requirements, expectations, working arrangements and accountability of community safety partnership arrangements. This will be assisted by restating partnership objectives and reflecting that we are all working in a significantly different environment to that inhabited by responsible Authorities and CSPs in the recent past.

Conclusion:

There is a clear rationale and support to change the way partnerships operate and with it there will need to be a change of approach and in some instances culture, to ensure effective joint working. The funding levels of the past that have enabled many activities to take place have receded. But that also presents opportunities to do things differently and find new ways of supporting communities. Many of the current partnership arrangements and activities have developed in a piecemeal and organic fashion often dictated by Government and this is an opportunity to reshape them to meet the current agenda and priorities.

There is a lot of excellent work that is carried out and the positive impact upon people's lives is widely recognised. Although very challenging in the light of funding reductions, there is a clear responsibility on partners to work in different ways to engage with, support and protect local communities and vulnerable people across Worcestershire.

Recommendations:

- 1. That the Safer communities Board agrees to the restructuring of the current CSP arrangements into two CSPs (North and South Worcestershire) and one county strategic Community Safety Board and recommends this decision to the Worcestershire Responsible Authorities.**
- 2. To recommend that the three North Worcestershire CSPs to immediately progress the merger into a single North Worcestershire CSP. The responsible Authorities to progress to merger and obtain appropriate local approvals and Home Office agreement to the merger by 1 April 2012 or earlier.**
- 3. That the Safer Communities Board to continue as the strategic coordination body for community safety in Worcestershire, subject to a review of its operations and membership and this to be limited to the voting**

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

15th November 2011

Responsible Authorities for Worcestershire, with a limited associate non voting membership to be agreed.

4. Agreement to continue with the needs based allocation formula for the Community Safety Fund (subject to a needs update for 2012/13) for allocation to CSPs in 2012/13.

5. Subject to recommendations 1-3 above and agreement to CSP merger taking place, a Community Safety Partnership Memorandum of Agreement to be developed and agreed by the Responsible Authorities by 1 April 2012, setting out the purpose and operational requirements of the agreed partnership arrangements.

6. Subject recommendations 1-3 above, a completed review of the functioning of the new community safety partnership structures and operations is to take place by April 2014.

Background
Papers

None