

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER, 2006

REVIEW OF EAST DURHAM LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

**SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE, HEAD OF NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVES
– COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

(I) What is the role of the sub-group within the LSP and which Members/Officers from the District Council supported it?

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that the Community Safety Partnership worked differently to other implementation groups. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, a Crime Reduction Partnership (CRP) was established. The CRP was established when the LSP was formed in 2001 and became an implementation group of the LSP. He explained that he was the Lead Officer for the District Council and Vice Chair of the Community Safety Partnership. Other Officers of the District Council included the Senior Community Safety Officer and the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager as well as Officers from that Section. The Member representative was the Executive Member for Liveability.

(II) Where has the LSP been most and least effective so far?

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that the CSP had a strong reputation in the region in terms of the different projects which had been taken forward. They had been successful in reducing burglary by 30% as well as reducing vehicle crime. Another example was the Easington Response to Arson (ERA) which brought together a number of agencies.

The CSP had been least effective in reducing the incidence of anti-social behaviour although a lot of time and resources had been allocated to this. Although good progress had been made in terms of the presence of authority and enforcement work there were still issues to address in terms of tolerance and a lack of diversionary activity/facilities in the district. Public perception of the fear of crime was high and disproportionate to actual crime. This was reflected in the Action Plans that were in place.

A Member referred to youths causing annoyance and felt that there was a poor response from the District Council and the Police when receiving reports from the public.

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that the response could be inconsistent. Some people had reported issues and there had been no follow up. The Street Wardens service had been recently reviewed and a public consultation exercise carried out. The public perception of what they thought their duties were and what they actually did, was different in places. The new police communications system also caused some problems regarding response to ASB.

Discussion ensued regarding future recording of statistics on youth causing annoyance. The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that 60 - 70% of all anti-social behaviour complaints were classified as youths causing annoyance. There were dozens of categories for incidents of anti-social behaviour and the Council had focused particularly on youths

causing annoyance. The category of youths causing annoyance was now to be deleted and the District Council needed to focus on new categories. There was a need to establish new base line information

The Chair explained that changes in recording practices made it very difficult to carry out a trend analysis.

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that violent crime had increased dramatically and this was largely because of a change in the way that crimes were recorded.

(III) Are the LSP Sub Groups equally as effective in terms of structure and outcomes?

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that Chief Superintendent Suddes would be best placed to answer this question.

(IV) How does the LSP ensure that full benefits of sharing data and information between partners were obtained?

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that all LSP Sub Groups were required to submit performance management reports and presentations were carried out by the Sub Groups to the full LSP. Cross working between the Sub Groups did occur, for example, the Community Safety Partnership and the Health Sub-Group were tackling alcohol and substance misuse.

(V) What steps could the LSP take to ensure wider involvement in its work?

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that the Community Empowerment Network (CEN) were very much part of the process.

A Member queried if the LSP had taken into consideration ex-prisoners who lived in the District. 93% of prisoners had a reading and writing ability of 9 year olds. A number of prisoners were also given methadone. What happened to them when they came back into the environment?

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that a lot of work had been carried out around Priority Prolific Offenders (PPO's). There was a small proportion of persistent offenders responsible for 25% of crime and the cycle needed to be broken. One recent PPO had been housed and there had been a huge amount of partnership working across the LSP. Easington District was the first area to introduce a mentoring programme for PPO's and there was an intensive support service to keep them on track. The Probation Service had identified that housing and mentoring were two of the most important factors to break the cycle.

(VI) The LSP should be accountable to the community for its work. How is accountability achieved, measured and reported back to the community? Was the membership of the LSP with Sub-Groups reflective of the community?

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that the LSP required the community network element and was an essential part of the LSP. The Community Empowerment Network did not represent specific areas but general community views.

In the last round of commissioning the funding, the CEN played a major role in its distribution. Members of the CEN had representatives on the Executive of the LSP and the LSP and information was disseminated back to its members.

(VII) How effective was the LSP at communicating its achievements/non-achievements?

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that the Sub-Groups promoted the work they did. A large campaign had just taken place about criminal damage which had resulted in a reduction. Easington District was one of 20 areas that had the LSP TV system and public kiosks would be installed shortly throughout the District.

(VIII) What arrangements were in place within the Sub-Group to report upon its activities and what were the reporting mechanisms from the Sub-Group to the LSP?

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that this was done through the Chair's report. Performance management had been introduced a year ago and each Implementation Group had a pro-forma to complete which showed how the Group had performed against areas within its targets.

(IX) How effective was the LSP and the Sub-Group at raising awareness of its activities to partner organisations and the community?

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that Chief Superintendent Suddes would need to express his own personal opinion on this. He added that the Group did a lot to raise awareness and the Council were looking at the community engagement process. There was a lot of overlap with the Police consultation and Council consultation and the LSP was trying to streamline and feed into the process.