

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **15 December 2004**

By: **Director of Policy Management and Communications**

Title of Report: **Community Safety in East Sussex**

Purpose of Report:

- **To update Cabinet on the progress made by each of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and the County Council's Community Safety Steering Group.**
- **To seek approval for the priorities to be taken forward in the new three year East Sussex Community Safety strategy.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. **note the progress being made by each of the CDRPs to tackle crime and the fear of crime;**
 2. **note the input made by the County Council into meeting its Section 17 responsibilities;**
 3. **note the introduction of a mini- Local Area Agreement (LAA) on Safer and Stronger Communities from April 2005; and**
 4. **seek approval for the priorities to be taken forward in the new three year East Sussex Community Safety strategy.**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no specific financial implications from this report although the introduction of the mini LAA will ultimately see the County Council taking on responsibility for some funding streams currently allocated to districts and boroughs.

2. Background

2.1 Improving Community Safety is consistently raised by residents as a high priority. The County Council has been working in partnership to create safer communities for many years. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Police Reform Act 2002 formalised our partnership approach through the establishment of CDRPs. These now involve the County Council, District and Borough Councils, the Police Force, the Police Authority, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Primary Care Trusts. In East Sussex the CDRPs are currently based on the five Borough and District areas. Each CDRP produces and publishes every three years a locally based strategy to reduce crime and disorder in their local area, and ESCC is a joint partner in all five of the East Sussex strategies.

2.2 In addition to our work with CDRPs the Council is committed to fulfilling our responsibility under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 to consider crime reduction and community safety in all its work. The senior officers on the CDRPs together with the Lead Member for Community Safety, the Director of Policy Management and Communications and other key officers with an involvement in community safety form the Community Safety Steering Group, which has responsibility for articulating community safety priorities throughout the Council's planning processes and in the East Sussex Community Safety strategy.

3. Current Progress

3.1 The County Council's Key Objective for Community Safety as outlined in the Council Plan is: 'To ensure that the Council works effectively to tackle priority areas, is fully involved with the development and implementation of strategies and actions of the five CDRPs and continues the process of mainstreaming activity through all Council services'.

3.2 Appendix 1 offers a summary of the successful initiatives that are happening within departments of the County Council and through specific community safety funding provided by the County Council.

3.3 Appendix 2 offers a summary of the work of each of the CDRPs; outlines specific initiatives which the County Council has a leading role in; highlights the priorities identified from the local audits of crime produced with the help of the Crime and Disorder Data Information Exchange (CADDIE) and the local residents survey; and highlights the priorities for inclusion in the new three year CDRP strategies.

4 Future Developments

4.1 At the end of July 2004, the Government announced the pilot Local Area Agreement (LAA) programme as part of its strategy to build a new relationship between central and local government. An LAA is structured around three service blocks: children and young people; safer and stronger communities; and healthier communities and older people. 19 authorities are currently piloting a full LAA. Government have also said that all authorities will implement the 'safer and stronger communities' aspect from April 2005. County Councils in two tier areas will be the recipient of the pooled budget created by combining budgets currently provided to all CDRPs and some districts and boroughs by both the Home Office and ODPM.

4.2 Draft guidance for the implementation of this fund has just been issued but raises more questions than it answers and it is fair to say that the Government Office are struggling with the processes for implementation. It is likely that the first year of the mini LAA will be a 'shadow' year, with funding continuing to be allocated as at present. However there will be significant implications for the County Council and indeed for districts and boroughs in future years.

4.3 The Police Reform White Paper was published on 9 November 2004. The key issue for local authorities will be that it seeks to "enhance the current role of councillors and local authority community safety officers to give them an explicit remit to provide a focal point for the local authority in terms of dealing with those agencies responsible for community safety." Work is underway to explore these potential developments.

5 County Council Priorities

5.1 In the light of the development of the mini LAA, it is increasingly important that the priorities identified by the County Council for inclusion in the Community Safety Strategy pick up on those areas identified through crime audit and trend data, and public consultation at the local CDRP level. The focus must be on what the County Council can do to help in the delivery of those local priorities as well as picking up any overarching areas that have countywide implication that may not assume a high enough priority at local level.

5.2 The following areas are considered to be the priority and more detail is included at the end of Appendix 1: reducing violent crime, reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing drug & alcohol misuse, combating racism, improving road safety and protecting people. If approved, these priorities will be developed into a new three year Community Safety Strategy for East Sussex from April 2005.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Cabinet is asked to note the report and approve the priorities as outlined in 5.2 above.

Becky Shaw,
Director of Policy Management and Communications