

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 5 JULY 2010

THE OXFORDSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP

Report by Acting Head of Community Safety & Trading Standards

Background

1. To fulfil the requirements of the Police and Justice Act 2006, the county council's Safer & Stronger Communities Committee has a duty to review or scrutinise decisions made and actions taken by the 'responsible authorities' which work in partnership to reduce crime and disorder across the county.
2. It is appropriate for the Committee to scrutinise the strategic, co-ordinating Community Safety group, the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP), rather than the five individual Community Safety Partnerships, (previously known as Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships or CDRPs), whose work will be covered by district council scrutiny committees. A summary of district-level arrangements is included later in this report.
3. The responsible authorities include Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council and district councils, Thames Valley Police, Thames Valley Police Authority, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust and the Probation Service.
4. Under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (and updates), these authorities have a duty to reduce crime, fear of crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, reoffending, racially-motivated crime and environmental crime, working with a range of stakeholders, including the Oxfordshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team and voluntary sector representatives who are key to shaping and delivering the community safety agenda. Authorities must also mainstream Community Safety within their organisations.
5. Scrutiny committees make reports or recommendations to the local authority relating to this work.

What does this report include?

- An outline of the role of OSCP
- Achieving positive outcomes through a partnership approach
- Examples of the work of OSCP in the last year
- The latest Performance information
- Details of district council scrutiny arrangements

What is the role of OSCP?

6. OSCP is one of seven thematic partnerships in Oxfordshire, which form a strategic framework to improve outcomes for local people.
7. Community Safety is one of two partnerships that the county council is required by Government to have in place. The other is the Children's Trust.
8. Partners have agreed to work together to support the delivery of community safety partnership priorities, and Oxfordshire 2030 and Local Area Agreement targets. Five Tactical Business Groups (Young People, Drugs, Alcohol, Domestic Abuse and Integrated Offender Management) report to OSCP, along with the Public Confidence Steering Group and the Oxfordshire MANTRA Challenging Hate Crime Steering Group.
9. One of OSCP's key roles is to ensure community safety activity complies with the six Hallmarks of Effective Partnerships:
 - Empowered and Effective Leadership
 - Visible and constructive accountability
 - Intelligence-led business processes
 - Effective and Responsive Delivery Structures
 - Engaged Communities
 - Appropriate Skills and Knowledge
10. Other roles are to oversee and be accountable for government funding for Community Safety, to commission an annual Strategic Intelligence Assessment (replaces the three-yearly audit of crime and disorder) to inform plans, address risk, identify countywide priorities, and allow for an overall intelligence-led business process; and to monitor and review performance on a quarterly basis.
11. Community Safety partners have signed up to an Information Sharing Protocol allowing sharing of data and information to help tackle crime and disorder.
12. The OSCP Officer Group, comprising Community Safety Managers from both statutory and supporting agencies at operational level, reports to OSCP and provides information, updates on new legislation and makes recommendations on policy, finance and performance.

How does the partnership achieve positive outcomes?

13. Fundamental to achieving positive outcomes for Community Safety is Oxfordshire's **Community Safety Agreement**. The Agreement is important because many crimes can be tackled more effectively through joint working between partnerships; it helps to ensure better value for money and reduce duplication by working together; secure opportunities to jointly access funding at a countywide level, and there is a legislative requirement to produce it.

14. The ethos of the Agreement (2009/10) should stand partners in good stead during the current climate: It states:

- We should recognise we are not starting from scratch and we need to build on existing relationships
- We should look at how we can join up processes as well as specific topics/work areas
- We need to keep our structures/joint working arrangements under review
- We need to review traditional methods and explore new ways of working
- We need to allow for flexibility and not apply a one-size fits all model

15. The Agreement also sets out the *process* for identifying joint working opportunities. This example shows how emerging priorities from the annual Strategic Intelligence Assessment can be tested to establish the best delivery methods:

- How are current/previous approaches working (is there overlap)?
- Does the work contribute to a Local Area Agreement target?
- Is it an Oxfordshire 2030 priority?
- At what level do the resources sit to support implementation of the work?
- Could an existing partnership expand its remit?
- Is a tiered approach appropriate i.e. complimentary work at different levels?
- We need to work with other partnerships to ensure best value; what is the best level to develop relationships with these partnerships?
- Who would provide the necessary support to any new partnership?

16. Joint working opportunities include adopting an Oxfordshire-wide approach; a one-off project group; Community Safety Partnership (CSP) level work; several CSPs working together; cross-boundary working; a tiered approach and new delivery mechanisms.

What kind of work has OSCP done in the last year?

17. Here are some of the highlights of the year's work:

- The OSCP Chief Executive members of Cherwell and West Oxfordshire put together a Review of Partnership Governance Arrangements with proposals for the structure of partnerships, which provides the current framework for thematic partnership, Public Service Board and Oxfordshire Partnership working;
- The police put in place a plan for preventing violent extremism and a multi-agency group was set up to tackle hate crime and increase reporting; this was in advance of the Cross-Government Hate Crime Action Plan, and GOSE commended community safety partners' work as being "ahead of the game";

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- Partners achieved 80% of the Local Area Agreement domestic abuse stretch target by increasing the number of domestic abuse incidents reported to the police, and 100% of their other two targets, relating to reducing the number of new entrants to the youth justice system and the reconviction of young offenders; and reducing the rate of re-offending by adult and juvenile priority and prolific offenders;
- A multi-agency steering group, set up to increase public confidence in councils' and the police's ability to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, carried out ground-breaking research into the best ways to communicate with local people. This approach can now be adopted by a wide range of services;
- Probation and the Oxfordshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team worked together to develop an Integrated Offender Management Scheme to reduce the re-offending of priority and prolific offenders;
- A comprehensive new Children and Young People's Plan was launched, which cross cuts with many other areas of community safety including alcohol, drugs and domestic abuse;
- Here's an example of how data-sharing work has produced some positive outcomes:

- There are well-developed data sharing arrangements between partners. Data collected in the A&E Departments at the John Radcliffe and Horton Hospitals is used by Community Safety partners to plan and implement community safety strategies
- Reports on the number of alcohol-related injuries have been used in conjunction with crime data to help establish the Special Saturation Policy in the City, effectively limiting the number of "vertical drinking spaces" in licensed premises
- Nightsafe partners use the data, in conjunction with Ambulance data and crime statistics, to identify hot spots, inform police tasking and change licensing conditions. For example, some premises can now only use polycarbonate glasses following "glassing" injuries
- The data collection system is used to monitor any drink spiking incidents which result in attendance at A&E
- Injuries as a result of domestic abuse can be identified by staff in the hospital who can then offer support and information appropriately
- Analysis of causes of injury was reported to the Trading Standards team to provide information which might help identify faulty or dangerous products. A system for patients to provide reports on causes of injury has now been set up in the department

- To enhance this further, a Community Safety Practitioner was appointed to hospital Emergency departments, to have direct contact with patients providing advice and information regarding alcohol related incidents/assaults, substance misuse, domestic abuse and knife crime, analysing and interpreting data on patients, reporting findings to partners, conducting risk assessments and deciding on appropriate action for clients, including signposting to alcohol treatment, domestic abuse advocacy services, providing appropriate information for Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences or sharing information with the police;
- A Strategic Intelligence Assessment, replacing the three-year audit of Crime & Disorder, was jointly produced by the police and CSPs;
- The partnership developed and adopted a new constitution;
- A successful four month alcohol campaign with the message “Know the facts, weigh up the risks, live with the consequences” brought together activity across the county to reduce alcohol-related harms;
- Statutory changes affecting CSPs coming into effect on 1 April 2010, making Probation a responsible authority and tackling reoffending the duty of all CSP partners had been anticipated by partners, with Probation long being a partner at the table and plans to tackle re-offending already built into CSP strategies;
- The four month campaign to increase reporting of domestic abuse received regional and national awards;
- In 2009/10 there were 272 new entrants to the Youth Justice System - a 50% reduction on 2008/09 from 523 entrants, and a six month Diversion Programme for Young People from vulnerable groups committing a first offence included 120 young people- there was just 4% re-offending;
- The Oxfordshire Young Victims of Crime Pilot, empowering young people, developing protective behaviour, and preventing victims becoming perpetrators, was shortlisted for a Youth Justice Board national Communications Award.

So how safe is Oxfordshire?

18. Four of Community Safety’s five Local Area Agreement targets are on track to be achieved - they are reducing Assault with Injury; increasing Drug users in effective treatment; decreasing repeat incidents of domestic abuse reported to the multi-agency risk assessment conferences and reducing the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system. The fifth target relates to the outcomes of the Place Survey in the autumn which measures public confidence.

19. In May 2010:

- All Crime across Oxfordshire was down by 8.8%, a reduction of 4,386 offences over 2008/09
- Serious acquisitive crime was also down across the county by 14.8%, a reduction of 939 offences
- Criminal damage was down by 13.1%, a cut of 1,151 offences
- Anti-social behaviour had reduced by 8.3% over last year, with a reduction of 2,344 incidents
- Theft of vehicles had reduced by 25.7% overall, a decrease of 294 vehicles
- Burglaries had reduced by 2.2%, down by 41
- Theft from vehicles was down 21.1%, a decrease of 624 crimes
- Assault with less serious injury had reduced by 9.9% with 366 less victims

20. This is a very positive performance outcome, but in a low crime county, may be hard to sustain. A small growth in offences may translate into a large percentage increase.
21. Robbery (personal and business) showed a slight increase of 20 offences across the county, up 5.1% over last year, and there was an 11.9% increase in theft of pedal cycles, 303 up on last year.

What are district councils' Scrutiny arrangements?

- In West Oxfordshire, the CSP is scrutinised through the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny committee for the council. Once a year, near the start of the new financial year, a report outlining the performance of the partnership against its agreed targets and action plans for the previous year, and its targets for the coming year goes to the committee. Last year a discussion was held at the meeting about various items but with no follow up actions, and the report on last year's performance is due to go in mid-July this year
- Oxford City is keen not to duplicate scrutiny activity, and decisions will shortly be made about whether a public committee or a panel will take on the role

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- The Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire are reviewing their work plan at the moment - a scrutiny plan will be available in the next few weeks. Ordinarily the community safety partnership submits a report to the scrutiny committee November/December. The committee may or may not request more detail on a particular subject
 - In Cherwell, the decision has been made that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider crime and disorder matters on a theme or topic basis in terms of outcomes for the local community (e.g. youth offending, domestic violence), and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board will review the performance of the Cherwell Safer Communities Partnership in terms of its effectiveness and delivery against targets
22. In short, partnership working across agencies and between OSCP and its Officer Group is effective and efficient. Processes are transparent and co-operation at both levels helps to achieve positive outcomes for local people which would not otherwise be possible.
23. This report provides background detail of the current structure and working of OSCP. At its September meeting the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee will have a further discussion on the specific issues or areas it wishes to scrutinise.

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Background Papers: Nil

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