DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PROBLEM SOLVING AND FEEDBACK FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

Safer York Partnership Board Monday 30th July 2007

1.0   **Background**

1.1   In September 2005, Safer York Partnership and North Yorkshire Police piloted neighbourhood policing in five wards of the city: Micklegate, Clifton, Heworth, Woodthorpe & Dringhouses and Westfield.

1.2   This pilot was evaluated by Safer York Partnership and the following problems were identified with the model used:

- Difficulties with the questionnaire in signposting residents to select key crime types that are being addressed through SYP task groups as priorities
- Lack of detail on locations/victims/offenders from the consultation data that could be used for problem solving
- Impact on the workload of partners ie. Neighbourhood Management Unit CYC, Street Environment Officers

1.3   In April 2006 North Yorkshire Police implemented neighbourhood policing across the force.   Resourcing and deployment issues resulted in some difficulties in developing the pilot in York beyond the original five wards.

1.4   In December 2006, North Yorkshire Police reviewed its neighbourhood policing structure in Central Area and fully staffed neighbourhood policing teams have been in place in York since January 2007.

1.5   Since March 2007, Safer York Partnership has reviewed its board and governance processes and has had two members of staff on long term sick leave. This has resulted in delays in moving this work forward.

2.0   **Development of consultation and problem solving models**

2.1   The model adopted for the pilot of neighbourhood policing was based on the National Reassurance Policing model and involved a seven step process from data analysis through consultation and problem solving to feedback. In order to utilise existing structures where possible, the problem solving stage of the model was conducted through the ward planning groups chaired by elected members and comprised of neighbourhood management unit, police, street environment officers, estate managers and other partners where appropriate.   For the purpose of this additional work, discussion of neighbourhood policing issues was distinguished from the broader planning agenda by calling this part of the meeting a Joint Action Group (JAG).

2.2   As mentioned in 1.2 above, this model proved to impact significantly on the workload and resources of those services involved in ward planning meetings.   For example, there was an expectation that neighbourhood management unit officers would provide secretariat support to meetings.

2.3   Whilst this model did have some success in the five pilot wards, it could not be sustained across eighteen ward areas, particularly where the allocation of

resource within some services could mean attendance at several meetings eg. Street environment officers.

2.4   In addition to the resourcing and sustainability issue, neighbourhood policing team inspectors raised concerns about the community consultation process and the suitability of JAGs as the mechanism to carry out intelligence led problem solving.   The questionnaire based consultation was based on questions used in the British Crime survey and asked respondents to pick from a list of crime and disorder problems, the issues of greatest concern in their neighbourhood.   Because this list included burglary and vehicle crime, respondents were choosing these because they assumed that they are serious and therefore issues that they would wish the police to be addressing. However, analysis of local data showed that in some of these areas, they were not actually problems in terms of real crime.

2.5   Key crime types are addressed on a geographical basis through hotspot mapping and data analysis by the SYP task groups.   This posed a problem for neighbourhood policing teams, as the actions discussed in the JAG tended to fall to them to resolve either with other specialist police teams or through the task groups and it was becoming difficult to identify issues which other JAG members could contribute to.

2.6   Following the identification of these problems, SYP developed a revised consultation model involving specially convened Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings where an open question of "what are the problems in your neighbourhood?" could be asked of local residents and from those listed, they could vote for the three policing priorities they would like to see addressed.   This model was piloted in Clifton, Haxby and Wiggington and Westfield/Woodthorpe & Dringhouses.

2.7   Following the PACT meetings, SYP convened a problem solving meeting to tackle the priorities identified.   These meetings involved representatives of services and agencies who could assist in addressing each of the priorities.

2.8   Whilst this model enabled a more accurate diagnosis of neighbourhood problems, it was clear that SYP did not have the resources within its staff structure to support the operate this process as a stand-alone model in each of the 18 ward areas.   Neither did the partnership have the capacity to develop and support multi-agency problem solving meetings in each ward area.

3.0   **Striking the balance between demand and resource**

3.1   Neighbourhood policing must be implemented in all wards of the city by April 2008.   This includes a model to identify policing priorities and a means of working in partnership with other agencies to resolve them.   CDRPs need to be able to demonstrate greater accountability to the community and to hold "Face the Public" sessions to provide feedback on actions taken to address crime and disorder.

3.2   Local Authorities are also required to demonstrate greater accountability to the community and to have neighbourhood action plans (NAPs) in place to address the community's priorities.   This work has been undertaken by the Neighbourhood Management Unit and the neighbourhood plans are produced

for all 18 ward areas of the city. Following consultation with the community, community safety has been identified as a top priority for all but one ward.

3.3 Since the production of the neighbourhood action plans, meetings have taken place between the Director Safer York Partnership and the Head of Neighbourhood Management Unit (NMU) to identify how best to ensure that a sustainable model can be produced to meet the needs of the neighbourhood policing teams in identifying and addressing public priorities within the resource levels available in the NMU and SYP.

4.0 **A new model for Safer Neighbourhoods**

4.1 SYP is now managed within the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Directorate. Work is underway to co-locate the SYP team with the NMU. This will bring increase cohesion between community safety and wider neighbourhood management.

4.2 The PACT meeting model worked well as a means of understanding the true nature of neighbourhood problems. It also provided a better and welcomed interface between the police and local residents and enabled NPT officers to gain better quality intelligence and detail about the community safety problems that affect quality of life for residents. However, the three meetings were chaired by SYP to ensure that they were not dominated by complaints about police performance/response and the cost of venue hire was met by SYP. This is not sustainable in the long term due to the availability/workload of staff in the SYP team.

4.3 Ward Committee meetings are held quarterly in each of the wards. Attendance is largely determined by the agenda and the existence of problems/issues of interest to the community. Given that consultation for the NAPs identified community safety as a priority and attendance at PACTs was good, it can be assumed that discussion of policing priorities could increase attendance at ward committees if they were to be used as the vehicle for identifying public priorities. This would need to be agreed as an agenda item so that policing priorities are identified and feedback given through the cycle of ward committee meetings during the year.

4.4 Ward committees are chaired by elected members, therefore use of these meetings for identifying policing priorities would continue to offer independency in the chairing plus ensures that elected members are fully engaged and informed in the prioritisation process.

4.5 SYP's role is to facilitate multi-agency problem solving to tackle crime and disorder. It has accountability at all levels from community through to the Local Strategic Partnership. SYP's strength is its ability to use intelligence led processes to target resources to areas/problems of greatest need. However, it is supported by a small team and unable to take on the role of managing individual problem solving groups for each ward. Furthermore, partners engaged in problem solving do not have the resources to attend individual problem solving meetings in each of the 18 ward areas.

4.6 The initial pilot of neighbourhood policing identified flaws in the use of ward planning meetings convened as JAGs fulfilling the function of multi-agency problem solving meetings. These meetings already have a full agenda and with the introduction of NAPs, this will increase as the ward planning

meetings assume a performance management function in respect of the entire content of the NAP.

4.7   The pilot PACTs identified some commonality within the problems identified in each of the three areas eg. Under age alcohol consumption and grafitti. There is also commonality between the priorities identified and some work already being addressed through SYP's multi-agency task groups eg. Speeding traffic was identified in two PACTs and is being addressed through the Road Safety Task Group. Therefore the following assumptions can be made:

a)   There is likely to be some common themes identified across clusters of wards within the 18

b)   Some problems identified through consultation are already being addressed through SYP task groups

c)   Some problems will be unique to a ward and require a specially convened meeting

4.8   Policing priorities for each ward, as identified through the ward committee, would be fed to SYP. SYP is then best placed to determine which of these problems are common across a number of wards, which need to be addressed through existing task groups and which will require an individual approach. SYP is then in the best position to ensure that these problems are routed through one of these processes and where necessary a specially convened meeting is set up comprised of those partners who can actively contribute to resolving the problem. This is represented in the flowchart at appendix A.

4.9   NPTs are core members of ward planning meetings and attend ward committees. Therefore, they are best placed to take ownership of the policing priorities, ensuring that feedback is given as part of the NAP monitoring process at the ward planning meetings and to the public at the ward committees. SYP's role is to ensure problems are routed to the most appropriate problem solving group, to provide data and information to assist problem solving and to provide the accountability structure whereby partners are held to account for their contributions to problem solving. Individual roles and responsibilities are outlined in Appendix B.

5.0   **Conclusions**

5.1   In order to meet the timescales for CDRP national standards and neighbourhood policing implementation, a sustainable model for community engagement and community safety problem solving needs to be in place by March 2008.

5.2   Neighbourhood Action Plans are now in place for all wards of the city and provide the means by which community priorities are identified and addressed. Elected members have ownership of this process and a performance management structure is in place through the ward planning meetings. Community safety has been identified in all but one ward as a priority and the policing priorities sit within this section of the NAPs.

5.3   Neighbourhood Management Unit and SYP are co-locating to provide greater cohesion between community safety and other neighbourhood services.

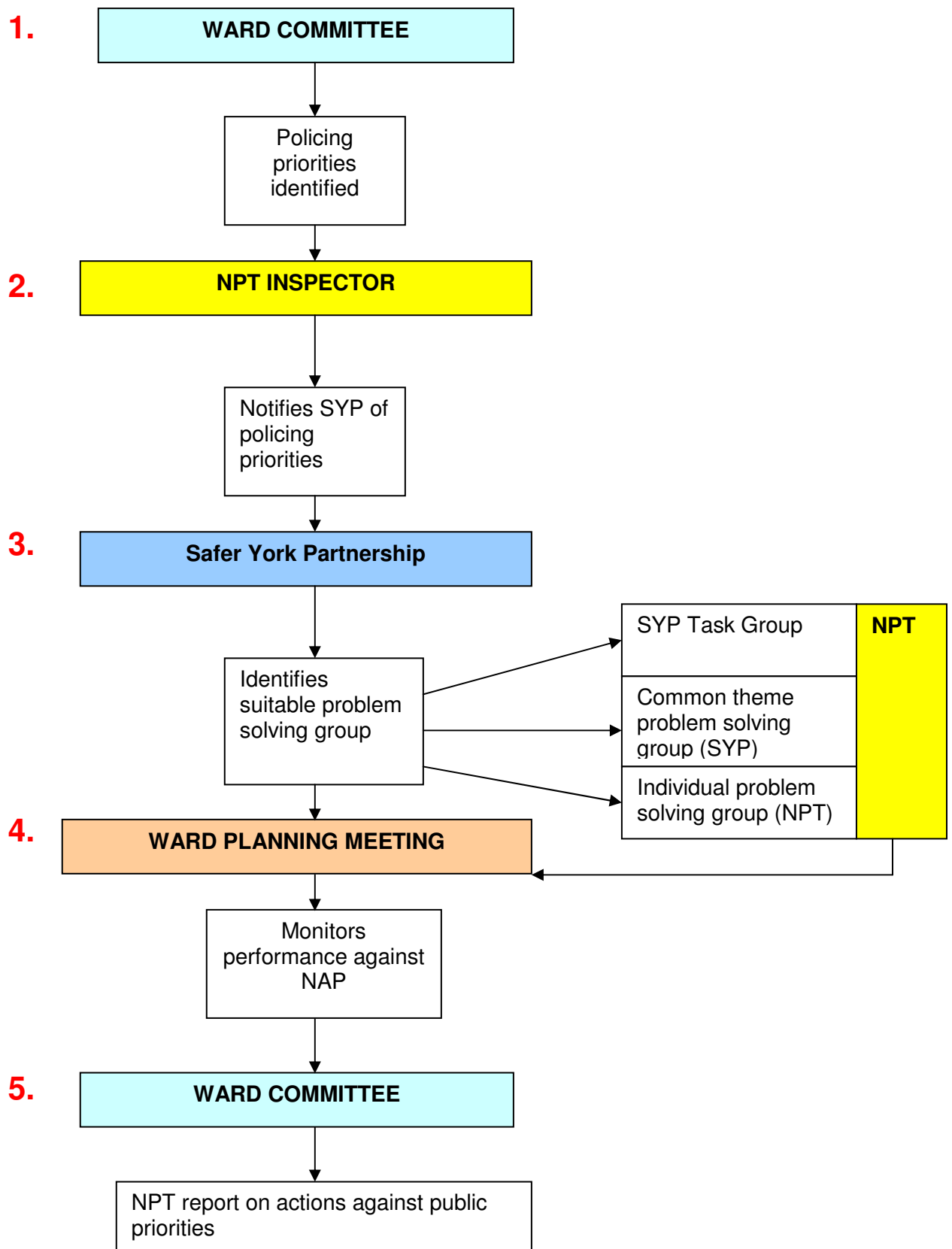However, the resource levels are finite and neighbourhood policing is just one area of work that they support.

5.4 Using ward committees to identify policing priorities under the overall neighbourhood management process will strengthen the role of ward committees and over time, may well help to increase attendance as the community sees these meetings as the forum in which to raise their problems.

5.5 SYP's role as a facilitator of partnership problem solving, places it in the best position to ensure that community safety problems are referred to the most appropriate problem solving group and its accountability structure provides the means by which partners are held to account for their part in contributing to actions to address policing priorities.

5.6 Ward planning meetings provide the mechanism by which elected members, local authority and the police can ensure that actions are being taken to address the priorities identified in the NAPs. In order to do this their function is extended beyond the JAG concept to encompass the full range of priorities in NAPs and as such the term JAG is no longer used.

6.0 **Recommendations**

6.1 That ward committees are used as the mechanism by which policing priorities are identified. (Opportunity exists to adopt this approach in October in wards that have not been involved in previous pilots)

6.2 That ward planning meetings take on responsibility for overseeing performance against policing priorities and therefore NPT attendance at these meetings is mandatory.

6.3 Safer York Partnership ensures that policing priorities are being addressed through intelligence led multi-agency problem solving and takes responsibility for identifying appropriate problem solving groups where this can be achieved.

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PROBLEM SOLVING

1. WARD COMMITTEE

Policing priorities identified

2. NPT INSPECTOR

Notifies SYP of policing priorities

3. Safer York Partnership

Identifies suitable problem solving group

	NPT
SYP Task Group	
Common theme problem solving group (SYP)	
Individual problem solving group (NPT)	

4. WARD PLANNING MEETING

Monitors performance against NAP

5. WARD COMMITTEE

NPT report on actions against public priorities

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT UNIT CYC
- Ownership of NAP process
- Ensure Identification of policing priorities is on ward committee agenda
- Ensure NPTs are provided with dates for ward committees and ward planning meetings
- Administration of ward planning meetings
- Assist with feedback to community on actions through ward newsletters, ward committee meetings, residents associations etc.

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM
- Attendance at ward committees
- Attendance at ward planning meetings
- Inspectors provide SYP with list of policing priorities for each ward
- Inspectors attend fortnightly tasking & co-ordination
- Inspectors attend SYP task groups where work is ongoing in their area
- Manage problem solving groups convened for addressing policing priorities that do not sit with SYP task groups
- Meet monthly with SYP and Head of NMU to monitor process

SAFER YORK PARTNERSHIP
- Identify how policing priorities are to be addressed eg. Through task group, by developing a problem solving group for common themes across several wards or by developing a unique problem solving group
- Provide and analyse data multi-agency data and information needed to address policing priorities
- Contribute to tasking and co-ordination process
- Provide funding to support NPT initiatives through SSCF
- Monitor overall process as part of partnership performance management through the Executive