

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

## **Guidance for the Scrutiny of Crime & Disorder Matters**

### **Summary**

1. This report presents guidance for the scrutiny of crime and disorder matters in England, based on national guidance recently produced in partnership by Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) & the Local Government Information Unit (LgiU).

### **Background**

2. Crime is consistently one of the top concerns for communities everywhere, and therefore working to keep the areas we live in safe and harmonious is an ongoing priority for politicians and public servants alike. But, safety depends on far more than the action of the few professionals for whom it is their dedicated occupation. It needs a creative and cooperative approach that draws in other services – from licensing, to activities for teenagers, to planning – but also engages the community at large: businesses; faith groups; local charities; community groups; and individual members of the public.
3. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) have made significant progress over the past ten years, but further evolution is always required. The guidance attached at Annex A details a number of changes made as the result of recent reforms i.e. reductions in bureaucracy, devolving responsibilities to the local level, streamlining of processes. The powers now given to enable Councillors to scrutinise CDRPs are integral to this new landscape.
4. The new provisions are designed to enable Councillors to bring their unique perspective to bear on how CDRPs are tackling crime and disorder in the local area in order to benefit their community.
5. These powers are given to local authorities' scrutiny functions by sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 ('the Act') – as amended by section 126 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. There have also been regulations passed under section 20 of the Police and Justice Act. These provisions provide local authorities with a framework for the development of an ongoing relationship between CDRPs and scrutiny bodies.

## **Analysis**

6. The guidance suggests that one member of the Committee could be a member of the Police Authority. The Council has two Councillor representatives on the Police Authority (Cllr Orrell and Cllr Potter), and it is recommended that the police authority play an active part at Committee when community safety matters are being discussed, and particularly when the police are to be present.
7. The guidance also suggests a best practice approach to carrying out the scrutiny of Crime and disorder matters, which raises a number of issues for the Committee to address. For example, does this Committee want to:
  - Develop a joint approach to the scrutiny of community issues with other Councils in the county area
  - Work with other Councils to identify areas suitable for scrutiny to ensure they complement each other and minimise the risk that partnerships will need to contribute to a large number of reviews on a similar subject at the same time
  - Agree how regularly to examine the performance of the Safer York Partnership i.e. receiving performance monitoring reports which highlight particularly good and particularly poor performance
  - Receive information on the most recent CPA assessment of the local public bodies that make up the Safer York Partnership
  - Invite the partners on the Safer York Partnership to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss possible crime and disorder issues to be included in the Committee's work programme for 2009/10
  - Develop a protocol in consultation with the Safer York Partnership which details the mutual expectations of the community safety scrutiny process and its methodology, in order to ensure a good working relationship
  - Co-opt a specialist member to serve on the Committee as a full voting member, or co-opt a specialist member on an ad-hoc basis when community safety matters are being discussed/reviewed

## **Options**

8. Having considered the information contained within the Annex A and its associated appendices, Members may choose to
  - request further information specific to the local area, on any of the issues raised within the guidance
  - agree a response to the some or all of the issues raised in paragraph 7 above

## **Corporate Strategy**

9. The work of this Committee directly supports the third theme of the Corporate Strategy - 'We want York to be a safer city with low crime rates and high opinions of the city's safety record'.

## Implications

10. There are no known Legal, HR, Equalities, Finance, Crime and Disorder, ITT, Property & Other implications associated with the recommendation within this report.

## Risk Management

11. There are no known risks associated with the recommendation in this report.

## Recommendations

12. Members are asked to:
  - i. note the contents of the report and its annexes
  - ii. decide what if any further information is required at this stage
  - iii. respond to the issues raised in paragraph 7 above
  - iv. identify any further issues raised within the guidance, to be addressed

Reason: in order to progress the work of this Committee

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**Wards Affected:**

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** N/A

**Appendix A** – Guidance for the Scrutiny of Crime & Disorder Matters