

Guidance for the Scrutiny of Crime & Disorder Matters

Summary

1. The Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee is responsible for the discharge of the functions conferred on the Council by sections 19 & 20 of the Police & Justice Act 2006, in relation to the scrutiny of community safety issues, the Police and the work of the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (Safer York Partnership). This report presents guidance for that role based on national guidance 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. In addition to the aforementioned acts The Local Government act section 12

has been amended to name the Chief Constable and the proposed post of Police and Crime Commissioner as bodies that should be held to account by Overview & Scrutiny, to ensure local accountability does take place in services delivered by the police.

Analysis

6. Since the committee took on the responsibility of scrutinising crime and disorder issues in York, it has received quarterly performance reports from the city's Safer York Partnership (SYP) which detailed particularly good performance and areas of concern. They have also received presentations from some of the Safer York partners to highlight their contribution to the partnership and to discuss possible crime and disorder issues for inclusion in the Committee's work programme, as follows:
 - North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service January 2010
 - North Yorkshire Police June 2010
 - The Probation Service Mar 2011
7. The Police Authority already play an active part in the Committee by providing regular performance update reports on the work of North Yorkshire Police, and by attending meetings when community safety matters are being discussed, and particularly when the police are to be present. The Council has two Councillor representatives on the Police Authority and the guidance suggests that one member of this Overview & Scrutiny Committee should be one of those Councillors in order that they may feed back to the committee issues concerning the Police authority.
8. NHS North Yorkshire & York (The Primary Care Trust) has yet to present to the Committee. Members may wish to consider inviting them to attend a future meeting this year, and how soon it would be appropriate to meet again with the other partners.

Options

9. Having considered the information contained within Appendix A and its associated appendices, Members may choose to
 - i. request further information specific to the local area, on any of the issues raised within the guidance
 - ii. agree a future timetable for meeting with the 'Safer York' partners, for inclusion in the committee's workplan

Corporate Strategy

10. 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

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

Risk Management

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

Recommendations

13. Members are asked to:
 - i. note the contents of the report and Appendix
 - ii. identify any issues raised within the guidance, for which further information is required
 - iii. agree a future timetable for meeting with the 'Safer York' partners

Reason: in order to progress the work of this Committee

Contact Details

Author:

Melanie Carr
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Services
Tel. 01904 552063

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty
Assistant Director, Governance & ITT

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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