

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
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**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
CABINET**

18 NOVEMBER 2002

CRIME AND DISORDER BEST VALUE REVIEW: INTERIM REPORT

Report of the Service Director, Regeneration

1. Purpose of Report

This report summarises the interim findings of the Best Value Review of Crime and Disorder services, and recommends to Members a way forward for the next stage of the Review.

2. Summary

The interim findings of the Best Value Review are summarised as supporting information to this report. In brief, the review has concentrated on two priority crime reduction areas, domestic burglaries and anti-social behaviour. On the evidence available to date, these services are performing satisfactorily in comparison with other local authority areas. Future improvements in these services are most likely to be obtained from an increased contribution by other Council services. A more serious concern of the review is the need to improve the internal co-ordination and monitoring arrangements in regard to all those areas of Council provision that have the potential to make a significant impact on crime reduction. The role and responsibilities of the corporate Community Safety Team should also be subject to a more detailed review in relation to internal co-ordination and the expectations of the Revitalising Neighbourhoods Project. It is proposed, as the next stage of the Review, that three tasks groups are established for each of these service areas to conduct further detailed work and to develop fully costed options for improvement.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Approve the recommendation of Corporate Directors Board that the Performance Management route is the appropriate way forward for the review of services that contribute to a reduction in Domestic Burglaries and Anti-Social Behaviour.
- 2) Approve the recommendation of Corporate Directors Board that the internal coordination of the City Council's crime and disorder services, the conduct of the Council's responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, and the future role of the corporate Community Safety Team are subject to a detailed Service Assessment.

- 3) Note the findings of the Interim Report on crime and disorder services, and, in particular, concerns about the present reliance on time-limited external funding to resource important aspects of these services.

4. Headline Financial and Legal Implications

There may be significant financial implications arising from this Best Value Review. These will become more apparent during the next stage of the review.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act (1998) places a statutory requirement on local authorities to consider the implications for reducing crime and disorder in exercising all their functions, and the need to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in their areas.

Officer to contact:

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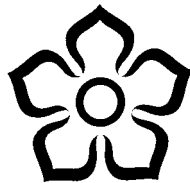
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DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 Report

1.1 Background

Cabinet agreed the scope for the review of crime and disorder services in April 2002, incorporating changes recommended by the Members Best Value Working Party. In view of the extent of the City Council's contribution to reducing crime and disorder in Leicester, Cabinet agreed to a revised focus on three core services; burglary reduction schemes, anti-social behaviour services, and the Community Safety Team. The first two services have been selected because they are strong priorities for local people and the Crime and Disorder Strategy; they address the fear of crime as well as crime reduction; the City Council has a leading service delivery role; and they have a neighbourhood focus. The Community Safety Team leads on the City Council's strategic relationship with the Leicester Partnership Against Crime and Disorder and its various action groups, in addition to providing other corporate services.

1.2 The Interim Report

The Interim Report summarises the work undertaken since April to complete the second stage of the Best Value Review. A copy of the document is available in the Members Library, and Members can obtain further copies from the Best Value Review Team on request..

The Interim Report addresses the strategic case for providing the three selected core services, within the broader crime and disorder context. Profiles for each service are

provided, together with an assessment of how these services are currently performing in comparison to other providers; whether they are meeting user expectations; whether they are meeting their objectives; and whether they have the capacity to meet future demands. Finally, the report recommends a way ahead for the review process.

1.3 Findings

The Interim Report found, on the limited information currently available, that all three services are performing satisfactorily overall in comparison to user expectations, within their present boundaries and remit. The Leicester Crime Reduction Partnership is ranked 3rd out of 12 in its Home Office “family” group, which consists of other major urban areas including Liverpool, Leeds, Nottingham, Bristol and Middlesborough. Future demands, however, are presenting services in Leicester with major challenges in terms of capacity and resources.

1.4 The City’s Burglary Reduction Schemes are currently restricted to certain specific areas of Leicester. Plans have been agreed with the Leicester Partnership Against Crime and Disorder to extend the coverage of these schemes to all areas of the City suffering from high burglary rates. These areas include those where burglary reduction schemes have ended, due to lack of funding. The planned extension of this service is critical to the achievement of Leicester’s Public Service Agreement target on domestic burglary reduction.

1.5 The Interim Report concludes that in order to ensure the successful rolling out of these schemes, more analysis and interpretation is required of the existing schemes to identify the reasons why some appear to be more successful than others in achieving a reduction in burglary rates. This may be due to the presence of other factors in the area, including CCTV, improved street-lighting, youth inclusion projects, police targeting of repeat offenders, and other community safety initiatives. The lack of benchmarking information and performance management indicators linking other services to burglary reduction are barriers to better monitoring and evaluation. Secondly, existing burglary schemes are dependent on the availability of time-limited external funding, and a resource plan is required to ensure the sustainability of an extended scheme covering large areas of the City.

The report proposes the establishment of a task group to investigate these issues, bringing together relevant services and agencies, residents’ representatives and victims of burglary, to identify and recommend service improvements for inclusion in the Crime and Disorder Best Value Review Implementation Plan.

1.6 There are also plans in the case of anti-social behaviour services to develop a citywide specialist team from the nucleus provided by an existing area-based project to tackle the more serious cases of anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour is an important aspect of this Best Value Review, since it is a topic closely associated with public perceptions of community well-being and the fear of crime. The citywide specialist team is one of several measures to emerge from a major review of anti-social behaviour services conducted by the Housing Directorate in 2001.

As in the case of burglary reduction, the Interim Report proposes that a task group, representing services and users, is established to evaluate the Neighbourhood Nuisance Project in Mowmacre as the model for the citywide specialist team.

Monitoring and evaluating the impact of services on anti-social behaviour depends on the availability and quality of comparative information about the incidence of anti-social behaviour in Leicester and elsewhere. With the exception of the Neighbourhood Nuisance Project, housing-based services and data are restricted to the City Council's own estates. The evaluation needs to include the considerable input from services in Education and Lifelong Learning, and Social Care and Health. The Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group, led by the City Council, is currently developing a common recording and monitoring format for multi-agency use. For benchmarking purposes, this work will need to be dovetailed to similar work being undertaken nationally by the Home Office.

Another key task for the task group will be to identify how to secure the involvement of other agencies in the City, including other social landlords.

- 1.7 In the case of both burglary reduction and anti-social behaviour services, improvements in performance measurement are needed to demonstrate more closely the link to strategic outcomes, and to monitor their impact on floor targets. This improvement will have a broader significance for all area-based services in the City currently resourced through time-limited external funding. Valuable lessons about "mainstreaming" are there to be learnt.
- 1.8 The Interim Report also draws attention to the need to re-assess the functions and resources of the Community Safety Team, in order to meet current demands on the Team and the aspirations of the Revitalising Neighbourhoods Project. A major part of the Team's present activities is concerned with supporting the work of the Leicester Partnership Against Crime and Disorder. This includes a leading role in the development and monitoring of the citywide crime reduction strategy and its various action plans, liaising with action groups, and helping the partnership to secure funding resources to implement its plans.
- 1.9 It has been agreed in principle by Cabinet that the Team should be relocated from Environment, Regeneration, and Development to Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal, with a view to building closer links between the Team and neighbour renewal services.
- 1.10 At the same time, underlying the service-specific issues outlined in the Interim Report, the second stage of the review has revealed corporate issues to be addressed. These include gaps in policy support, and a need for much better internal co-ordination in order to achieve the level of horizontal service integration required to meet the Revitalising Neighbourhoods programme and the wave of new Government initiatives on crime and disorder. There is an over-dependence on short-term external funding, while the true costs of our crime and disorder activities are unknown. Finally, the Interim Report concludes that much more could be done corporately to monitor Section 17 responsibilities, consult and engage with the general public on our crime and disorder activities, and ensure a more effective working relationship between Council services and other agencies in the Leicester Partnership Against Crime and Disorder.
- 1.11 These internal corporate management issues raise fresh questions about the role, functions, resources, and ideal location of the Community Safety Team for Members to consider.

1.12 Conclusions

In the light of the findings of the Interim Report, the Corporate Directors Board has recommended to Members that, for the purposes of the next stage of this Best Value Review, the preferred route for improving Burglary Reduction and Anti-Social Behaviour services should be the Performance Management process. Corporate Directors recommend that the Council's corporate management of the community safety function is the subject of a more detailed Service Assessment, to include the role and functions of the Community Safety Team, internal policy co-ordination, the implications of the Revitalising Neighbourhoods Project, and the management of Section 17 responsibilities.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

1. Financial Implications

There may be considerable financial implications arising from this Best Value Review. These implications will become more apparent during the next stage of the review.

2. Legal Implications

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) placed a statutory requirement on local authorities to consider the implications for reducing crime and disorder in exercising all of their functions, and the need to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in their areas

3. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	
Equal Opportunities	Yes	Clear evidence that disadvantaged groups are most vulnerable to certain types of crime, e.g. burglary
Policy	Yes	The need for certain areas of policy to be developed is discussed in the Interim Report
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	A safe and secure environment is a prerequisite for sustainable communities.
Crime and Disorder	Yes	
Human Rights Act		
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	The elderly and those on low incomes have a strong fear of crime.

4. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

Crime and Disorder Best Value Review Interim Report, August 2002

Crime and Disorder Best Value Review Scoping Exercise, Cabinet, 7th May 2002

5. Consultations

Crime and Disorder Best Value Review Project Team
Corporate Directors Board

6. Report Author

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