

Report of: Strategic Director, Housing, Health & Community

To: Executive Board

Date: 19th June 2007

Item No:

Title of Report : Response to Community Scrutiny Review of Anti-social Behaviour Reduction



Summary and Recommendations



Purpose of report: This report provides officer comments on the recommendations arising from the Community Scrutiny Committee's Review of Anti-social Behaviour Reduction.

Key decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan

Scrutiny Responsibility: Community Scrutiny Committee



Ward(s) affected: All

Report Approved by



Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Altaf-Khan, Portfolio Holder for a Safer City

Legal: Jeremy Thomas, Head of Legal and democratic Services



Finance: Andy Collett, Group Accountant

Strategic Director: Michael Lawrence, Strategic Director, Housing Health Communities



Policy Framework: This report supports the Council's vision statement to "Reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour".



Recommendation(s): 1. That the Executive Board endorse the actions proposed in the officer responses set out in this report.



Introduction

1. At their meeting on 24th April 2007 Community Scrutiny considered a Review of Anti-social Behaviour Reduction. This report provides an officer response to the recommendations contained within the review.

Background

2. A review of Anti-social Behaviour Reduction has been carried out by the Community Scrutiny Review Group, which was endorsed by the Community Scrutiny Committee. The review contains 20 recommendations to be considered by the Executive Board. The recommendations have been considered by the Strategic Director for Housing, Health and Communities, Business Unit Managers, and other officers and their responses are set out in this report.

Recommendations & Responses

3. Each of the recommendations contained within the Review are set out below with a response from Officers or the relevant organisation.
4. In some cases recommendations have been made regarding other partner agencies. Scrutiny Officers have stated that Scrutiny Committee is not expecting Council Officers to advise Executive Board on whether these recommendations are feasible within the organisation or not. Rather Officers should recommend whether Executive Board should support scrutiny in sending the recommendations to the relevant organisations or Partnership Boards.

The Anti-social Behaviour Reduction Action Plan 2006-2007:

5. 1. The review group recommends that the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership reviews the performance and targets of the Anti Social Behaviour Action Plan regularly, preferably once every 6 months. Local Area Agreement (LAA) mandatory ASB indicators should be an integral part of the performance framework.

Response: The Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership welcomes this recommendation and is in the process of developing a performance management framework that incorporate the LAA indicators and this is reviewed on an ongoing basis.

5. 2. The review group recommends that to assist in the development of the annual OSCP ASB Reduction Action Plan there is an annual multi agency workshop bringing together all appropriate partners to monitor work undertaken in reducing anti social behaviour. Part of this workshop should involve work planning that leads to a list of planned activities and highlights areas where future focus may be required.

Response: The Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership is currently developing a broader ASB Strategy that focuses upon the priorities for the City. All partners who tackle these priorities will be fully engaged with. As a part of the implementation of national standards for community safety partnership, the Oxford Safer Community Partnership is developing a strategic assessment that will monitor future trends in all community safety themes, including anti-social behaviour, in order to develop targeted actions.

Combating Alcohol related anti social behaviour:

5. 3. Thames Valley Police is recommended to ensure that it collates and processes information on incidents linked with licensed premises. This information should include: number of licence applications considered, number of interviews with licensees, number of incidents associated with each licensed premise including for instance yellow cards, Fixed Penalty Notices for underage drinkers, number of prosecutions, number of representations at licensing committees, number of premises taken for reviews, number of visits by police officers under operation Birria. This monitoring information should be made available to Oxford City Council's Community Scrutiny Committee and / or the relevant Licensing Committee.

Response: The Oxford Community Safety Partnership welcomes this recommendation and is working with Thames Valley Police to build these requirements into its performance management framework. This provides the opportunity to assess whether operational tactics are successfully using their powers under the Licensing Act 2003.

5. 4. The review group recommends that Thames Valley Police use this comprehensive monitoring system (see recommendation 3) to demonstrate that they are successfully using their powers under the Licensing Act 2003.

Response: Please see response to 3.3.

5. 5. The review group recommends that the Council's licensing department present fortnightly updates to all members on licence applications / licence amendments to allow councillors to monitor ward issues.

Response: The Licensing Authority currently mails out information on licensing applications and licence amendments to Thames Valley Police and members on an approximate 2 weekly basis.

In Support of our communities:

5. 6. The review group recommends that the Community Safety Team designs anti social behaviour toolkits using the external funding that has already been secured for this work.

Response: This is external funding for allocation of Oxford Safer Communities Partnership to tackle anti-social behaviour, although it is not specifically to

develop toolkits. However, this action forms part of the ASB Communication Plan and will be developed under the new strategy.

Tacking Drug Related Anti Social Behaviour:

5. 7. The review group recommends that additional work is undertaken to create a robust and formalised multi agency approach to deal with the closure of drug houses. There is a need for CANAcT to receive information from Thames Valley Police and Oxford City Homes at an earlier stage so that the process can be speeded up. Ways must also be found to reassure the local community that something is happening.

Response: Officers consider that the process is working effectively; the drugs caseworker works from the Police Station, and shares information with Crime Intelligence on a daily basis. Regular weekly surgeries held between CANAcT and Oxford City Homes at which candid information exchange takes place. The working relationship between Oxford City Homes and CANAcT is working well.

The recommendation only makes reference to Oxford City Homes but other social landlords and private landlords are also concerned and in some cases there may be opportunities to make improvements here.

There is a need to ensure that tenants rights and those of the wider community are upheld. This can be a difficult balancing act.

Reassurance of the community can only really occur retrospectively, as the need for confidential intelligence before a closure can take place is paramount. The speed of process is also set by legislative requirements on all parties concerned.

Officers recommend to Executive Board that they do not agree this recommendation.

5. 8. The review group recommends that a reminder of the 'spikey' anti drinks spiking device should be reissued once a year.

Response: Oxford Community Safety Partnership welcome this recommendation and will pass this onto the Nightsafe Project Board to consider an annual campaign.

5. 9. The review group recommends that a reminder of the availability of Class A drug testing kits to Licensed premises is issued once a year.

Response: Oxford Community Safety Partnership welcome this recommendation and will pass this onto the Nightsafe Project Board to consider an annual campaign.

Supporting Families and Young People:

5. 10. The review group recognised the importance of early intervention and preventative work to avoid ASB and recommends additional work be undertaken with at risk families by the CANAct Family support officer. To allow more casework to be undertaken additional funding should be sought to allow this post to become a 1.0 FTE.

Response: The recognition of the value of this work is welcome. Officers are seeking additional sources of external funding to extend this work, although this has not proved successful as yet.

5. 11. The review group recommends that the Leisure and Cultural Services Business Unit provides a coherent sports development programme that will ensure that the street sports sites are used to their full potential.

Response: Leisure and Culture Services will encourage maximum use of street sports sites and other community sport initiatives.

5. 12. The Oxford City Council Active Communities Manager and Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit Manager are recommended to work in partnership with the Youth Offending Service Manager to explore ways of securing funding for the Identification and Support Service (IDSS) beyond April 2008.

Response: This is the responsibility of the Children and Young People's Partnership and Board. The Partnership is currently in the process of reviewing 18 LEA funding streams as a part of the Local Area Agreement process, including funding for the Youth Offending Team. The Neighbourhood Renewal Business Manager is on the Partnership Board and will explore ways that funding can be secured beyond April 2008.

5. 13. Children's Centres in Oxford should be considered a core resource and it should be ensured that Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council support workers work closely with these centres to reduce social exclusion.

Response: Many of the children's centres in the City are either relatively new or are still under development. The County Council are also in the process of establishing Child Locality Teams. As Locality Teams develop it is envisaged that these will improve services for children and young people and enable better joint service planning. The City Council has representation on the Children and Young People's Board and the Children and Young People's Partnership. These representatives will press for the City and County support workers to work closely with these centres to reduce social exclusion.

An example of current good practice is the Asian Families Outreach Coordinator based in the Children's Centres. This post is jointly funded between the County Council and City Council.

Supporting Families and Young People (cont'd) :

5. 14. The review group recommends that information from the Oxford Secondary Schools NAG is shared with the appropriate Area Committee(s).

Response: Officers recommend that this recommendation is passed on to Thames Valley Police

5. 15. The review group requests that the Active Communities Manager contacts relevant Oxford agencies on a monthly basis to ensure that a directory of services for young people is always up to date.

Response: The information on the work of the Active Communities Manager and projects that he supports are updated regularly and sent to all relevant parties as a matter of course.

The Active Communities Manager work is predominantly with targeted referred young people. The referrals come from Youth Offending Team, Education Services and the Police. This achieved through multi-agency protocols.

Other non-referred activities include the holiday play scheme provision which is open to all. This is advertised through fliers on the estates and we have supported the Oxfordshire Children's Information Service, the port of call for information on children and young people's services.

There is also the Youth Service web site Spired.com that lists all services available to young people.

The Business Manager for Neighbourhood Renewal represents the City Council on a Children and Young People Communication Working Group aimed at improving the joint provision of information to children and young people.

It is not the role of the Active Communities Manager to update information directories.

Officers recommend that this recommendation is not adopted.

5. 16. Ensure that at a senior level Oxford City Council is represented on the Children and Young People's Local Area Agreement (LAA) block to ensure the needs of young people in the City are addressed through the LAA process.

Response: The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People represent the Council on the Children and Young People's Board.

The Leader of the Council represents the City Council on the Public Service Board.

The Business Manager for Neighbourhood Renewal represents the Council on the Children and Young People's Partnership and participates on a number of related working groups, including the Communications Group and the Youth Matters' Developing the Local Offer' Working Group.

Support of area based activities:

5. 17. The review group are supportive of plans to provide the tower block sites with CCTV coverage. The review group are aware that progress on these plans has been slow and recommend that to help decrease the levels of anti social behaviour in and around the tower block sites Oxford City Council should install an extensive CCTV system as soon as possible.

Response: Any instillation into Tower Blocks will need to go through a consultation process. There may also be cost implications for tenants via the service charges they pay. Officers cannot impose service charges or CCTV as a result of this recommendation. A pilot scheme has been agreed by the Housing Advisory Board.

5. 18. The review group recommends that additional work be undertaken to ensure that the CCTV programme focussed on shopping parades in Rose Hill, Woodfarm and Barton is completed without any further delay.

Response: These are now in place and operational at Woodfarm and Barton. The equipment is on order for Barton.

5. 19. The review group expressed concern over the shift patterns of Thames Valley Police PCSOs and NSOs and recommend that the Police ensure that the neighbourhood team shift patterns are able to match the neighbourhood demands and avoid more than two consecutive days off.

Response: This issue has already been raised with Thames Valley Police at the Street Warden Steering Group meeting held on 18th May. It has been agreed that these concerns would be discussed with the Area Commander and a response will be provided to the next meeting of the Street Warden Steering Group.

General recommendations arising from the review groups research:

5. 20. Assessment of Oxford's adherence to the RESPECT Action Plan needs to be undertaken by OSCP. Coordination of all elements should be led by the partnership. Key areas of work include Good Neighbourhood Agreements, Standards for Housing Management and Parental support activity.

Response: Officers recommend that this recommendation is passed onto the Community Safety Partnership for consideration.

However, Oxford City Homes, the largest public landlord is willing to participate fully in the RESPECT Agenda and is currently working with the

Oxford Community Safety Partnership and CANAcT to ensure this is rolled out. Oxford City Homes will struggle to implement local agreements on their own as many of Oxford's estates are multi-tenure (with a minority of council assets). The Community Safety Partnership will need to develop a strategy that takes into account other social landlords.

Recommendations

6. That the Executive Board endorse the actions proposed in the officer responses set out in this report.

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Background papers: None.

