



Partnership & Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

24th February 2011

Report from the Director of Strategy, Partnership and Improvement

For Action

Wards Affected:
ALL

Repercussions of the Abolition of Ring Fenced Grants for Community Safety Work in Brent

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report explains in brief the development of community safety focusing on how the work is financed. It looks in more depth at the recent changes brought about by the cuts in funding as it affects the Crime Prevention Strategy Group and the partnership work we deliver in Brent. Council finances and the former ring fenced grants are detailed. At the time of writing this report the borough Police do not have details of how the reductions in their funding and the inputs from the Mayor of London will affect services. A presentation will be given to the Committee to update them.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That members of the committee note the report and that updates are given as the new structure comes into place in April 2011
- 2.2 That members of the committee are updated regularly regarding the satisfaction survey conducted for the Police.
- 2.3 That a small set of key performance indicators are selected for crime and Anti Social Behaviour and monitored by the committee.

3.0 Detail

Background

- 3.1 Crime and community confidence is an extremely complex area of work touching on all departments within local authorities and interacts with a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector partners. Over time, to coordinate these functions, provide expert advice and underpin the required formal partnerships, Community Safety Units have become the norm. Reflective of the pivotal and highly political role of these departments, overwhelmingly they form part of central services or Chief Executives' departments in councils.
- 3.2 Brent Council's Community Safety Partnership Unit (BCSPU) was created following the Morgan Report of the mid 1990s, this report recognised that Crime and Disorder could not be tackled by the Police alone.
- 3.3 The Report proposed that Local Authorities work together with the Police in designing strategies to impact and reduce crime and disorder. The creation of a Community Safety team saw the development of a partnership between Brent Borough Council and Brent Police.
- 3.4 In 1998 central government took the principles of the Morgan Report forward and released the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This Act sets out statutory requirements for local authorities, Police and other key partners & agencies to work together to tackle crime and disorder in their area.
- 3.5 In response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and in recognition of the benefits of multi-agency partnership working brought, the Brent Community Safety Partnership was established in this borough, this is called the Crime Prevention Strategy Group (CPSG). Community Safety Partnerships are legally required to produce a three year strategy setting out objectives and targets which aim to reduce levels of crime and disorder and improve community safety.
- 3.6 The Partnership Community Safety team focuses on issues of crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour and works with other Brent Council departments as well as local agencies/organisations and the Brent Community Safety Partnership to try and address the issues by developing and implementing effective solutions.

The clear aim of this Partnership is:-

"To provide and promote a safe environment for people who live, work or visit Brent by reducing crime and the fear of crime and disorder."

Key areas of work include:

- coordinating actions to tackle antisocial behaviour
- coordinating action to address domestic violence, sexual violence and exploitation
- work to reduce drug and alcohol related crime and disorder through the Drug Intervention Programme (DIP), Prolific and Priority Offender Scheme (PPO) and Integrated Offender management Scheme (IOM)
- work to reduce hate crimes and keep victims safe
- physical works to the homes of victims of crime and vulnerable residents, including victims of domestic violence, to keep them safe in their homes and reduce burglary
- work with a range of partners to address issues of young people and antisocial behaviour and crime
- undertake analysis of crime and antisocial behaviour to direct the partnership's strategic and operational responses to tackling crime and antisocial behaviour
- undertake media and advertising activity on behalf of the partnership to keep residents and visitors informed and advise on how to stay safe
- use a range of partnership funds to commission services that reduce crime and keep victims safe.

Context

- 3.7 The work of the Brent Community Safety Partnership Unit has been adversely affected during the financial year 2010 -2011 with just over £135,000 having been withdrawn by central government. The cuts hit the unit's work predominantly around domestic violence. Actions taken to deal with this loss of income include: not recruiting to vacant posts, stopping non vital areas of work and asking one member of staff to "act-up" to cope with the capacity gap.
- 3.7 The landscape in all public sector organisations is changing rapidly; community safety is no exception. Academics are predicting changes in the patterns of both crime and disorder. Overall demand is expected to rise with the most pertinent change anticipated in localised Antisocial Behaviour and lower level crime and predicted increase in Domestic Violence related crime as financial stresses in families rise.

- 3.8 Concurrently, over the last year there has been a remarkable strengthening in operational level partnership working between the key partners and this proposal has been developed with input from the key partners.
- 3.9 All of the agencies the BCSPU and CPSG work with are also experiencing the same pressures of reductions in funding and the cessation of grants. All of the agencies are keen to embrace the wider Government agenda of the Big Society by commissioning some services currently delivered by the statutory sector.

The Big Society

- 3.10 At the end of January, the Home Office was due to publish a new crime strategy: when it is released this will include a more localised, participative approach to tackling crime and disorder.

The **two** core challenges face local borough and town councils in the near future are:

- Ensuring central co-ordination and strategy development with fewer resources
- Ensuring mechanisms for engaging and empowering local people to contribute more to determining priorities and in some cases to the delivery of services.

Home Office Letter to Heads of Community Safety January 4th 2011

Planning for the New Future

- 3.11 The need to meet changing demand with fewer resources in all agencies led to three interlinked strands of work.
- Review of CPSG and its delivery structure
 - One Council Programme, an internal Council review to be undertaken as part of the programme to investigate where there are gaps, overlaps and ineffective working practices
 - The “Looking Local Joint Working Programme” looked at how to deliver effectively within current anticipated resources; focusing on customer service and reducing waste.
- 3.12 The review of CPSG itself was prompted by the Chair, aware the group had been in existence for over ten years and both it and the reporting/delivery structure had grown, as in other boroughs rather ad-hoc. Reports coming to the board showed that there is considerable overlap and duplication. Part of

this work was carried out by an independent consultant financed the Home Office funding.

- 3.13 As part of the Local Authority's "One Council Programme" there has been a broad brush look at community safety functions that currently sit in other departments. Best Practice from elsewhere has been reviewed and partners invited to comment.
- 3.14 A concept paper has been accepted, that proposes drawing in other community safety functions to the BCSPU. A business case has been submitted for approval or amendment to the One Council Programme. This impacts on this restructure and it is vital to be delivering the core work as well as possible, making best use of internal and external resources to make the rationalisation of community safety functions work.
- 3.15 Additionally, the work around the One Council project provided more information for this proposal.
- 3.16 The Council Directorate Strategy, Partnership and Improvement (SP&I) and in particular BCSPU and the Police started planning for the anticipated reductions in grant funding.
- 3.17 At an operational management level, between partners there was recognition that the delivery mechanism had grown in response to funding offers from various Government Departments, and what should have been short term projects have become embedded in the structure. It was also evident that there was duplication in a number of areas that not only sapped precious resources it caused considerable confusion to residents and professional partners alike.
- 3.18 A study was undertaken, to make the service ready that looked at:
- Current service delivery design – focusing on the logical and effective placing of roles and responsibilities and reducing duplication
 - 15 Beacon and/or Green Flag¹ boroughs plus three others that closely resembled in crime, disorder and demographic terms the London Borough of Brent.

¹ Beacon and Green Flag status are given to high performing boroughs and/or departments by the Audit Commission and IDEA. Other non governmental awards were taken into account when deciding which teams to review.

3.19 This resulted in:

- The Local Government and Improvement Agency funding a fact finding training visit to a high performing Council who have given support through the planning process and will continue to do so as (subject to consultation) the plan is implemented
- The proposed new staffing structure for BCSPU and enmeshes with changes already implemented in the Police Service to deliver a more effective service within the resources available. The change in the Police structure to deliver this programme has yielded an additional Sergeant currently placed in the Antisocial Behaviour Team and part-time use of another to help coordinate local level working.

Funding Community Safety

- 3.20 A statutory obligation was imposed by the 1998 act to have a multi-agency partnership. It should be noted that local authorities are the lead agency and the responsible authority for all grant funding.
- 3.21 A core group of participants were defined in the legislation with other agencies invited at the discretion of the group itself. However, no financial provision was made for this new statutory duty in the annual local Government settlement.
- 3.22 Until the financial year 2011-12 rafts of ring fenced funding had been provided by various Government departments, predominantly the Home Office and the Metropolitan Police Authority.
- 3.23 The vast majority of this funding has been on a year by year basis. Information about the ongoing provision and amounts, for the last five years, reached Heads of Community Safety and the Police at best in February and often in March for the following financial year, making planning and retention of good staff extremely difficult.
- 3.24 In Brent, in line with all other authorities, the Police and local Authority pooled their funding and distributed it through and with the approval of the CPSG.
- 3.25 All Local Authorities to date have differed in the amount of general fund they devote to Community Safety, but all used the additional ring fenced funds to finance posts.

	BCU	ABG	ABG (cap)	MPA	LAA	DV MARAC c/f	DAAT	Total
Partnership Budget 2010/11 Including £30,000. C/F Allocation	£ 265,000	£ 342,000	£ 56,000	£ 50,000	£ 71,000	£ 30,000	£ 50,000	£ 864,000
	2010/11					Allocation		834,00

3.26 Please note there was in financial year 2010/11 a carry-over of £30,000. In the light of better planning and in year cuts in funding there will be no under-spend in the current financial year.

3.27 Appendix one shows how this funding was allocated among the partners.

The 2011 -2012 Picture

3.28 Because of the low level of funding there is not going to be any formal pooling of funding streams as was the practice previously. However, there is constant dialogue between partners and a constant search to use what is available more effectively and garner any additional money.

3.29 This table gives a broad outline as to what is happening in the upcoming financial year.

Fund	2010/11 Allocation	2011/12 Allocation	Notes
Borough Command Unit	£265,000	£72,000	Police posts previously funded via partnership
Area Based Grant Revenue	£342,000 cut in year by £35,000. Leaving £307,000	None, incorporated to Local Government settlement	
Area Based Grant Capital	£56,000.	None, incorporated to Local Government	

		settlement	
Metropolitan Police Authority	£50,000.	None incorporated in core Police funding	
Local Area Agreement	£71,000. In year cut of £71,000.	None	This funded DV provision
Primary Care Trust Drug and Alcohol Team Funding	£50, 000	None	

Outcomes and Changes

- 3.30 Improved partnership working has allowed what funding is available to be used effectively, however, there will have to be a renewed focus on risk, ensuring that work is centred around vulnerable individuals and groups in the community.
- 3.31 Five posts have been lost from the Community Safety Partnership Unit, compensated for in part by bringing in the two housing crime officers transferring to the unit and the additional Police officer in the ASB unit.
- 3.32 We are also proposing to radically change how we deliver community safety subject to CPSG approval. This will focus work in the communities.
- 3.33 We are moving towards generic job descriptions this will allow resources to follow problems, and work to be planned.
- 3.34 The structure of CPSG has been reviewed and streamlined with six meetings being removed. Data collection has been reviewed so that we only at really gather and analyse information that informs the work..
- 3.35 Developing the Voluntary Sector is also vital as working with them we can access additional funds. One team member is going to spend considerably more time working in this area.
- 3.36 We are also looking to offer to undertake bespoke work for RSLs bringing in additional funds to increase staff numbers.
- 3.37 Staff are currently being consulted on the new structure.

3.38 Currently, we are confident that we can deliver a viable service to the residents in Brent. However, inevitably some of work residents valued will be cut for example partnership days have been reduced. We are looking to the Voluntary Sector to work with us to fund events such as “Mrs Kelly’s” where older or vulnerable people (those with learning disabilities and/or mental health needs) see a play and do drama work to gain or remind them of the skills needed to not let in bogus callers.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 None

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 None

6.0 Diversity Implications

6.1 None

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 None

Background Papers

Contact Officers

Genny Renard, Head of Integrated Community Safety & Development
Genny.renard@brent.gov.uk