

Task Group Policing and Community Safety in an Era of Public Spending Cuts

Why do we want to look at this?

Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships became Community Safety Partnerships in April 2010. The aim of these partnerships is to enable 'responsible authorities' to develop and deliver local strategies to reduce crime and disorder. The responsible authorities must work cooperatively to achieve their objectives. The responsible authorities are police authorities, police forces, councils, fire and rescue authorities, primary care trusts and probation trusts.

The context within which Policing and Community Safety is delivered has changed over the last two years. The coalition government's deficit reduction strategy as embodied in the Spending Review 2010 has provided Community Safety Partnership with an ongoing challenge. A number of partners are grappling with large budget reduction with Local Government facing a 26 percent real term reduction in funding and Brent Council having to make some difficult decisions about the services that are delivered and the size and shape of the organisation. Government funding for the police will also be reduced by 20 percent over the next four years and will lead to a reduction in police numbers. In addition the way that policing in London is led both strategically and operationally has changed. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 abolished the Metropolitan Police Authority and replaced it with the Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime (MOPC). A new Metropolitan Police Commissioner has also been appointed.

At a time of reducing resources and changing landscape it is more important than ever that the partners within Brent's Community Safety Partnership work closely together towards a common purpose - How do we make the best use of the resources available in Brent, ensure they are used to deliver on the right priorities for Brent, engage with our communities in setting priorities, promote local accountability, and influence policing policy in London?

The Minister of State for Policing and Criminal Justice offers support the role of community safety partnerships in tackling community safety issues by saying '*We know that the police cannot fight crime alone. Successful local partnerships between the police, local authorities and other criminal justice agencies are crucial*'¹

What are the key issues and what should the review cover?

One of the key issues that the task group could address is to establish what an effective, functioning community safety partnership looks like within the context outlined above. How should the individual partners work collaboratively in the best interests of the people of Brent and how can the partnership increase rates of satisfaction.

The review would provide the opportunity to talk to partners and local communities about policing and community safety priorities in Brent and ensure they influence and help achieve local priorities and the priorities set by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.

¹ Nick Herbert MP, Minister of state for Policing and Criminal Justice – New era in policing November 2011

The review would also seek to establish the extent of the reduction in resources for policing and community safety in Brent since the Public Spending Review 2010. The review will identify the current resources available for policing and community safety and see how these are being balanced against agreed priorities.

To do this the task group could:

- Review how the individual partners should work collaboratively in the best interests of the people of Brent and how the partnership can increase rates of satisfaction
- Talk to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime to establish how they will work with Brent's Community Safety Partnership will work with.
- Review community safety partnerships in other boroughs to establish areas of best practice and make recommendations on the shape of Brent's Community Safety Partnership and how the partners within it should work together.
- Look at the trends and profile of crime in Brent and the drivers behind those trends and make recommendation on tackling those drivers.
- Establish how the effectiveness of the partnership will be measured, what crime data the partnership should be monitoring and make recommendations on the partnership's priorities.
- Investigate better ways of achieving agreed outcomes and value for money within the financial resources available.