

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Executive –20 June 2012

Proposed Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Merger

Report of the Community Development Lead

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Warmington)

1. Executive Summary

- To inform members of the move to merge East and West Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP) into one countywide structure, with the aim of streamlining governance and leadership in the community safety structure, allowing for more effective community engagement at a local level.
- This report details the recommendations made to the Safer Communities Group for a merger of the East and West CDRPs to form a Countywide Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) structure.
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on responsible authorities to work in partnership to address matters of crime and disorder, those statutory bodies are:
Police, Police Authority, Fire and Rescue Services, Primary Care Trusts, Local Authorities and Probation Services.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- Members agree and approve the merger of Safer Somerset West CDRP with Mendip and South Somerset Community Safety Partnership (Somerset East) to form a Countywide CDRP currently operating as the Safer Communities Group.
- That Taunton Deane Executive formalises the informal merger agreement that has been in place since 2010.
- That the report is put before Full Council for approval

2. Background

2.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA) as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002 and the Police and Justice Act 2006 (the '2006 Act'), places a duty on specific agencies, known as responsible authorities to work together and with other agencies within the community to tackle crime and disorder and the misuse of drugs. This legislation requires that a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) be organised. Taunton Deane first fulfilled this statutory requirement with the formation of Taunton Deane CDRP.

The 2006 Act introduced the requirement for minimum standards to be placed upon all Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs).

The standards are:

To convene a **strategy group** comprising all the responsible authorities in the CDRP and others as they choose.

To prepare a **strategic assessment** (a document identifying the crime and community safety priorities in the area through the analysis of information provided by partner agencies and the community).

To produce a **partnership plan** (which lays out their approach for addressing those priorities)

To meet minimum standards of **community consultation** and engagement on issues of crime and disorder and substance misuse.

To ensure that each CDRP has an **information sharing protocol** in place and that each responsible authority has a designated information sharing liaison officer to promote and facilitate information sharing.

In **two-tier areas**, there are minimum standards for organisations at county level to ensure that there is an appropriate linkage between decisions which might be made at the county level (for example by a Police Authority for a force covering the whole county) and those taken more locally. Further, this coordination at county level will allow the identification of county-wide priorities to feed into the new Police and Crime Commissioner's plans from November 2012 and opportunities for cross-border working.

In light of the minimum standards, in 2007 the decision was taken for the Taunton Deane CDRP to enter into a period of informal merger with Sedgemoor and West Somerset CDRPs to form the Safer Somerset West Partnership. In 2010, this was widened to include the whole county.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 In January 2009, the Safer Communities group, a sub group of the Somerset Strategic Partnership with responsibility for the safer LAA theme, approved a proposal to carry out a review of the community safety structures in Somerset with the primary aim to investigate how Somerset priorities are aligned to the available resources and make recommendations for improvement. The Community Safety Network (CSN), a group of practitioners from the statutory agencies, undertook the review.
- 3.2 A paper was submitted to the Safer Communities group in December 2009 outlining the recommendations of the CSN. A recommendation was made that the Safer Communities Group become the CDRP, as all statutory agencies already attend this meeting.
- 3.3 Member representation in the structure is at portfolio holder level. This reflects how members have historically been represented on the CDRP. The added value here is that with a countywide structure there is increased member involvement from across the county, six voices being stronger than one.
- 3.4 Scrutiny of this new group by members can be achieved through the scrutiny structure agreed by members at the Community Scrutiny Committee in 2009. Effectively this recommended two members from each of the districts, Taunton Deane, Sedgemoor and West Somerset to be co opted to look at community safety scrutiny issues.
- 3.5 Somerset has been operating on an informal merger basis since 2010. The recommended minimum informal merger period was 12 months.

4. Options

- 4.1.1 Members oppose the countywide merger, instead opting to remain informally merged. Please note, *The Home Secretary has power under the 'Act' to force a merger, making an order for two or more CDRP areas to work as a combined partnership.* This option will only be achievable if West Somerset and Sedgemoor also decide to oppose the countywide merger or if Taunton Deane has an appetite for its own CDRP.
- 4.2 **Members acknowledge and approve the merger of East and West CDRPs to a County CDRP, currently operating as the Safer Communities Group. Further work will then follow to ensure tactical and operational structures beneath reflect the local delivery needs.**

5. Finance Comments

- 5.1 As this is an external partnership, finance has not been consulted.

6. Legal Comments

- 6.1 Again, this is an external partnership operating within the constraints set by Government. Legal has not been consulted.
- 7. Links to Corporate Aims** (Please refer to the current edition of the Corporate Strategy)
- 7.1 The work of a countywide CDRP is likely to impact on deprivation and sustainable community development primarily. There may be some links to regeneration.
- 8. Environmental and Community Safety Implications** (if appropriate, such as Climate Change or measures to combat anti-social behaviour)
- 8.1 Environmentally there will be fewer meetings and therefore carbon emissions will be reduced. Fewer resources will be used in producing minutes and agendas.
- 8.2 Community safety will only be impacted through a changed structure for meetings. It is anticipated that local working structures at a tactical level will remain in place. This structure will allow for greater cohesion at a strategic level and clearer governance.
- 9. Equalities Impact** (An Equalities Impact Assessment should be carried out in respect of:-
- The Safer Somerset group has its own Equalities Champion and EIA.
- 10. Risk Management** (if appropriate, such as reputational and health and safety risks. If the item the subject of the report has been included in a Service Plan, the result of the risk assessment undertaken when the plan was prepared should be entered here.

RISK	CONSEQUENCE	PROBABILITY	IMPACT	TREATMENT
If TDBC refuse to agree a merger of the Somerset West CDRP to a countywide group	Then there may be a missed opportunity to improve governance, leadership and structure of the CDRP.	3	1	Agree to merger

If TDBC decline merger option and formulate a district CDRP	Then, partners may not be able to support. The Home Secretary may force a merger if all other responsible authorities join the Countywide CDRP.			Agree to merger
If TDBC approve the Countywide merger.	Then there may be a loss of effective partnership arrangements already established in Somerset West.			Approve merger with further work to be undertaken by the Community Safety Network to ensure the structure at tactical level reflects partnership working across Somerset West. Community Safety Officers to work together on tactical options.

11. Partnership Implications (if any)

11.1 Partnership implications are that if Taunton Deane fails to agree the merger, we risk being ostracised and not gaining the benefits of wider county working. It is likely that a county merger is the only way to deliver on the varied agenda which now includes preventing violent extremism and managing prolific offenders, amongst many other issues which are probably best dealt with at a county level.

12. Recommendations

12.1 Members agree and formally approve the merger of Safer Somerset West CDRP with Mendip and South Somerset Community Safety Partnership (Somerset East) to form a Countywide CDRP currently operating as the Safer Communities Group.

12.2 That the report is put before Full Council for approval

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