The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Review: Delivering Effective Partnerships

Executive Summary

The purpose of this paper is to identify the requirements of the CDRP reform programme and what the implications are for the Safer and Stronger Communities Thematic Partnership. It is proposed that the SSCTP also becomes the ‘County Strategy Group’ as defined in the new crime and disorder legislation. The paper explains what new responsibilities the SSCTP will have by accepting this role.

Background

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 put partnership working on a statutory footing for the first time in England and Wales. Since that time, it has been acknowledged that inter-agency working has become key to the reduction of crime and disorder in our communities. However, the Home Office has recognised that the rate of crime reduction is slowing down nationally and that fear of crime is significant across the country. The national Crime Strategy which was launched in July 2007 identified that further innovation is necessary and that partnerships are central to the fight against crime. In support of this Crime Strategy, The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has been under review for over a year and is being coordinated as the CDRP reform programme by the CDRP Reform Steering Group.

The key features of the CDRP reform programme are as follows:

1) Schedule 9(3) of the Police and Justice Act 2006 has repealed the requirement of CDRPs to produce three year audits and strategies. There is also no longer a requirement to report annually on the partnership’s work to the Secretary of State.

2) Schedule 9(4) of the Police and Justice Act 2006 has increased the scope of S17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the ‘mainstreaming crime and disorder requirement’) to include anti social behaviour, substance misuse and behaviour which adversely affects the environment.

3) S.115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gave partners the power to share information for the purpose of reducing crime and disorder. Schedule 9(5) of the Police and Justice Act strengthens this by introducing a new duty on the same agencies. This duty (section 17A) requires the sharing of depersonalised data, already held in a depersonalised format, for the purposes of reducing crime and disorder. Appended are the regulations which specify the minimum data sets that agencies are legally obliged to share.
4) A framework of national standards has been introduced following extensive consultation. These have been created by the CDRP reform steering group and are based around six core strands of business which can determine CDRP effectiveness. The standards are:

- Empowered and effective leadership
- Intelligence led business processes
- Effective and responsive delivery structures
- Community engagement
- Visible and constructive accountability
- Appropriate knowledge and skills.

To support the implementation of these national standards, the Home Office has recently produced the long awaited ‘Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working’. It is through the guidance that the changes in the Crime and Disorder Act are made explicit.

The new statutory requirements have implications at both district and county level. Although the SSCTP is a county level organisation, it is also necessary to be aware of the district level implications which are being managed at CDRP level and are summarised below.

**Partnership working at District level**

- A strategy group to be set up
- To include: five responsible authorities, represented at senior level (Police, Police Authority, Fire, Local Authority, PCT), and the elected member responsible for community safety where there is one
- The Strategy Group to decide frequency of meetings
- Put in place arrangements to appoint the Chair and to determine period of tenure
- Carry out an annual review to ensure partners have the right skills and knowledge
- Prepare an annual strategic assessment and rolling 3 year delivery plan (see more under Assessment, and Planning and Delivery)

**Visibility and Accountability**

- The Strategy Group to hold one or more public meetings during the year – to hear their concerns and feedback what is being done on community safety
- The meetings to be attended by senior reps from within the five responsible authorities
- The Strategy Group to take appropriate steps to ensure that communities are aware of the meetings and what was discussed
- The Partnership to consult its communities about what community safety priorities to tackle and what should be included in the strategy and plan
- The Partnership to consider ways in which communities can support the delivery of the Partnership Plan
- The strategic assessment to include the priorities that the community have identified
- The Partnership to produce and publish a summary of the partnership plan (see section below on the Partnership Plan)

**Assessment**

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SSCTP 5th December 2007
• The Strategy Group will prepare an information-sharing protocol which covers non-personalised data (and where appropriate personalised data)
• The protocol to be signed by all responsible authorities
• Each responsible authority to nominate a designated liaison officer to facilitate the sharing of information (suggestions here include the development of a web-based data sharing hub)
• Certain sets of de personalised data (minimum requirements listed in annex J of the full guidance) to be shared at least quarterly. The first data set – July 07 to September 07 - to be shared by end of December 07.
• The strategic assessment to include information from the responsible authorities, wider partners, the overview and scrutiny committee where it exists, and from the community and the previous partnership plan.
• The strategic assessment to include: patterns of crime and disorder and substance misuse, ASB and crimes that adversely affect the environment; changes since the last assessment; analysis of why these changes have occurred; assessment on the extent to which last year's plan was implemented
• In preparing the strategic assessment, the partnership will consult the community e.g. through Neighbourhood policing

Planning and Delivery

• The Partnership to produce a 3 year plan, based on the strategic assessment, which sets out how the priorities will be taken forward and delivered
• The Partnership Plan is to be refreshed annually
• The Partnership Plan is to include a strategy for tackling crime and disorder and what are the performance management arrangements for monitoring progress
• The Plan will contain information on how each partner will support the delivery of priorities and how these will be resourced
• The Plan will detail how the partnership will engage with communities
• The Partnership will publish a summary of the Plan
• The Strategy Group will be responsible for delivery of the Partnership Plan
• The Strategic Assessment must include and evaluation of the extent to which last year's plan was implemented
• The Strategy Group to ensure that partnership activities are assessed for Value for Money

It is the role of the CDRPs at district level to ensure compliance with the guidance which has been produced as part of the CDRP reform programme. Each CDRP is currently progressing its' strategic assessment in line with an agreed timetable. A county wide practitioner group is in existence to assist with understanding and to support the creating of products which when complete will support the creation of the county community safety agreement.

Partnership working in 2-tier areas

Under the CDRP reform programme, there are new statutory responsibilities for two tier areas such as Cumbria.

1) A county strategy group needs to be created. The role of this group is to co-ordinate district priorities to feed into the Local Area Agreement process. It is also suggested in the partnership guidance documentation that the county strategy group should co-
ordinate community safety activities between partnerships, especially if there are cross district issues. The county strategy group is in essence, a ‘county CDRP’. In Cumbria, the Safer and Stronger Communities Thematic Partnership is ideally placed to take on this role. However, to become the County Strategy Group, the SSCTP needs to agree to the following to ensure that the statutory requirements are fulfilled:

2) The group will be responsible for preparing a community safety agreement (CSA) for the county. This community safety agreement will be based on the district / CDRP level strategic assessments. The CSA will identify
   a) ways of co-ordinating across the county to address priorities
   b) How the responsible authorities might otherwise contribute to reducing crime, disorder and substance misuse through closer joint working across the county

3) The group must include chairs of each of the district strategy (CDRP) groups. The guidance identifies that since the CSA will feed into the Local Area Agreement, through which community safety partnership funding is allocated, it is important that each partnership has a voice at county level.

4) The county council elected member responsible for community safety must be a member of this group.

5) Representatives from the Police Force, Police Authority, Fire and Rescue Authority and Primary Care Trust must sit on the group. The requirement is that each member has an appropriate level of seniority within their home organisation to commit resources and make decisions.

6) There must be arrangements for appointing a chair, agreeing the period for which the chair can serve and the grounds on which the chair can be changed within this period.

7) The group can decide on the frequency of its meetings and can invite others to their meetings. It is acknowledged that although the responsibility for the community safety agreement falls to the responsible authorities, other partners have important perspectives, information, requirements and resources. A list of potential partners is identified in Appendix G of the Partnership guidance.

Clearly, the SSCTP in Cumbria complies with many of the requirements of the CDRP reform programme, but where slight adaptations are necessary, the group needs to ensure that its terms of reference also remain relevant for delivering other Cumbria specific outcomes required by the County Strategic Partnership.

Recommendations:

1) The SSCTP accepts the role of county strategy group as defined by The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007. The membership and terms of reference are adapted to reflect this change.

2) A sub-group of the SSCTP is identified and tasked with creating the county community safety agreement in compliance with statutory requirements and national guidance.
3) In support of 2), the above group is made responsible for ensuring that the SSCTP is kept aware of any issue from the CDRP reform programme which affects its core function of managing crime and disorder reduction through partnership at a county level.