

**DATE: 6 September 2011**

**Community Safety Plan**

**Ward(s):** All

**Portfolios:** Cllr Z Ali – Communities and Partnerships

**Summary of report:**

To provide an update for the Scrutiny and Performance Panel on progress made against delivering the six priorities within the Walsall Community Safety Plan (CSP) 2011-2014. This report highlights some of the key activities taking place against these priorities.

**Background papers:**

Walsall Community Safety Plan 2011-2014

**Reason for scrutiny:**

Members have expressed an interest in scrutinising the work carried out by partners towards delivery of the Community Safety Plan.

This is a time of considerable change for community safety partnerships and the introduction of elected police and crime commissioners in May 2012 will have an impact upon how partnerships are funded and how services are provided.

**Resource and legal considerations:**

This report provides a summary of activities against the six priorities of the community safety plan. Some of this activity is supported with funding from the Home Office Community Safety Grant (£299,898 for 2011-2012.) Community Safety Partnerships have already been advised of their allocation for 2012 – 2013, with Walsall's being set at £151,719. This funding will, at some stage, be passed to the police and crime commissioner, the elections for which are planned to take place in May 2012.

**Citizen impact:**

Community Safety underpins the social and economic well-being of our communities. Anti-social behaviour is a priority on all six area partnership plans and perceptions continue to be a challenge for partners, despite encouraging year on year figures on overall crime levels. Tackling anti-social behaviour and criminal activity contributes to the council achieving against its priority areas and contributes to residents, businesses and visitors having confidence and pride in Walsall.

### **Environmental impact:**

It is not anticipated that the scrutiny exercise will have direct impact upon the environment, although the delivery of the community safety priorities would contribute to tackling environmental crime issues such as criminal damage, fly-tipping and graffiti.

### **Performance management:**

Performance management is considered by the Safer Walsall Partnership Board and any recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel will be presented to partners therein.

### **Equality Implications:**

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out in connection with this report. Equalities implications are considered in the development and delivery of interventions and programmes.

### **Consultation:**

The contents of this report have been considered for accuracy, by the Head of Public Safety.

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### **Background**

Safer Walsall Partnership (SWP) is required to annually refresh its Community Safety Plan based on the findings of a comprehensive strategic assessment which uses data from across the partnership to provide a detailed analysis of the crime and disorder issues in the borough.

During mid-2010/11 the partnership undertook its second annual refresh and in doing so, moved into the final year of Walsall's first three-year Community Safety Plan. The plan details strategic priorities to be adopted by the partnership and should be the key community safety document for the borough linking to other strategic documents and plans.

Following the latest strategic assessment the following strategic priorities have been identified and approved by the SWP Board:

**Priority 1: Tackle Violent Crime: specific focus on Domestic Abuse, Town Centre Violence and Serious Youth Violence**

**Priority 2: Tackle Anti-social Behaviour**

**Priority 3: Address Harm caused by Drugs and Alcohol Misuse**

- Priority 4: Community: specific focus on Counter-Terrorism, Community Cohesion and Public Perceptions**
- Priority 5: Tackle Serious Acquisitive Crime: specific focus on reducing Domestic Burglary**
- Priority 6: Reduce re offending: a cross-cutting theme across all other priorities.**

Delivery against these strategic priorities will be served through a wide range of strategies and delivery plans that cut across partnership activity. Rather than detail each within the document and list individual actions, the community safety plan indicates the link between each priority and the respective strategies and plans that will deliver against them.

The plan also recognises the important link between the priorities within the area plans (which were still at the early stage of development at the time the community safety plan was written.)

### **Performance measurement**

The previous performance mechanisms worked to within partnerships have changed dramatically under the current government. All existing PSA targets and a significant number of indicators from the National Indicator Set have been abolished. The perception target and police single confidence target have also gone. There has been little direction from the Home Office on how performance should be measured, so discussion has been taking place regionally on how community safety partnerships can work together to establish some meaningful indicators. There has been very little direction from central government, pending the introduction of police and crime commissioners in May 2012.

### **Overview of some of the key projects and activity taking place to deliver on the priorities.**

#### **Priority 1: Tackle Violent Crime: specific focus on Domestic Abuse, Town Centre Violence and Serious Youth Violence**

The direction of travel for **violent crime** figures over the past five years to July 2011 demonstrates a 24.8% reduction from 6003 incidents in 2006/2007 to 4517 incidents for 2010/2011 (year running August to July.)

#### **Domestic Abuse**

In terms of domestic abuse, the new Domestic Abuse Strategy has served as a catalyst for significant changes in how we deliver DA services locally. A commissioning model is currently being developed which has involved bringing together the DA offer of service areas within the council and beyond, in order to address any gaps in delivery and achieve better coordination of services and resources to meet the needs of victims across the board. This work has identified a significant difference in the number of cases reported to the police against those known to the Walsall Domestic Violence Forum. Levels of offences that were reported to the police may have levelled out because an optimal level has been reached for victims who are willing to report the

offence, something which has occurred across the majority of other local authorities in the West Midlands. Walsall Domestic Violence Forum has suggested that the current economic downturn has had a significant effect on reports with an increase for their services rising by 23% between 2008/09 and 2009/10 (4826(08/09) to 5955 (09/10.) These differences have highlighted a need for a single reporting mechanism with a clear pathway through the support services available and will inform the current work to simplify reporting and achieve better cohesion and coordination of resources.

A gap has already been identified in terms of services for young people involved in violent relationships. Walsall Council Creative Development Team was commissioned by NHS Walsall Teenage Pregnancy Team and Walsall Council Integrated Young People's Support Services to manage a creative and participatory film project that would raise young people's awareness to the key issues of domestic abuse.

The powerful film 'Is this what you want?' has been developed through Walsall Council Creative Development Team (Arts and Health) and engagement of a small group of young people from Mossley Youth Centre in the film making process.

Young people were successful in writing a bid and received funding from Walsall Integrated Young peoples Support Services – Positive Activities fund by the Youth Opportunities Fund with additional funding secured from Walsall Teenage Pregnancy Team – NHS Walsall.

The themes the project aimed to address through local research and NSPCC National Research were:

- Domestic abuse and pregnancy, the links between the two and issues surrounding this
- Control through internet, social networking websites and mobile phones
- The cycle of domestic abuse
- Modeling healthy relationships supporting young people to advocate healthy relationships
- The support available for young people
- Signposting Walsall young people to any local support if appropriate and available)
- Raising confidence and self esteem

This film has been shared amongst professionals and will support on-going work with young people.

### **Town Centre Violence**

The recent town centre survey indicates clearly that crime and anti-social behaviour is of significant concern to people who visit that area.

In response to this, a multi-agency working group is being set up to look at how partners can work together to tackle these issues and improve perceptions and experiences of people who visit Walsall town centre.

It is interesting to note, from those who responded to the survey, the difference in perceptions of safety within different age groups. For example, only 18% of those aged 65+ rate safety as poor compared to 26% of 16 to 24 and 28% of 35 to 44 year olds.

Last years town centre triage, funded through Tackling Knives Action Plan funding proved effective in supporting issues during the hours of the night-time economy. Although this funding stream is no longer available, through the continued cooperation of partners, this service will resume on 27 August and run on key dates through the year.

Be Safe is now a mainstreamed project and utilises A and E data and other intelligence to tackle town centre violence and anti-social behaviour during key periods. The introduction of the Street Pastors project on 26/03/11 has also proved to be a valuable resource in supporting young people who are vulnerable following the excesses of the night-time economy. Situations often escalate to violent and anti-social behaviour following excessive use of alcohol and/or other substances.

## **Priority 2: Tackle Anti-social Behaviour**

Anti-social behaviour is a clear priority on all six area plans. Although the evidence gained through the Place Survey is no longer available to us, there remains anecdotal evidence of perceptions that ASB levels are high and rising.

A new IT system is being installed within the ASB Unit (planned completion mid – September 2011.) This will address a need for a more efficient case management system, better storage of evidence, standardisation of material and the capacity to identify repeat callers and assess vulnerability in a more efficient and robust way. This new system will bring us into line with the rest of Public Safety and enable better information sharing as other council departments and external partners will have access to reporting and information over a secure web-based link. There has been investment in a tool which enables issues to be spatially mapped, thus creating a picture of issues in each location i.e. there may be fly-tipping, neighbour nuisance, vandalism etc. This tool will provide a clear view of what's happening so that area resources may be allocated accordingly.

This will further enhance our focus on intelligence led, timely solutions.

The ASB Unit has worked with police colleagues to replace the previous Consultation and Problem Solving meetings with a Vulnerability Forum, wherein specific cases can be discussed at a technical level. These meetings will discuss victims and perpetrators of hate crime, ASB etc in a task specific approach. This coordinated approach will afford greater coordination of services and clearer definition of 'who does what.'

New measures such as the recently introduced gang injunctions are aimed at tackling the issues around urban street gangs. Although here in Walsall, we don't have the issues of some of our near neighbours, such as Birmingham and Wolverhampton, there is potential for cross boundary activity and there are already known gang nominals in the borough. Walsall has representation on the regional gang violence group and is currently in the process of setting up a local group in order to bring intelligence together and map local issues to gain a better understanding of the local picture and develop a plan of action around education, intelligence sharing etc in order to disseminate regional intelligence at a local level.,

There is now greater coordination between the ASB Unit, IYPSS and IDOM and work is in progress to rationalise the current structure of meetings where known perpetrators

are discussed to ensure more direct information sharing and clear identification of the needs of the victim and perpetrator.

### **Priority 3: Address Harm caused by Drugs and Alcohol Misuse**

Work is currently underway to establish two pilot Community Alcohol Partnerships in order to tackle issues caused by alcohol mis-use, particularly amongst young people. The aim of this work is to engage partners and trade in order to address issues at a very local level in areas identified through police, local and partner intelligence and by utilising data from activity such as the collection of alcohol related litter.

Addaction continue to provide the following services:

- Open access services accepting self referrals and referrals from all agencies both statutory and voluntary
- Harm Reduction Services including:
- Needle Exchange service
- Information & advice – actively encouraging needle returns and engaging long term injecting users in structured treatment
- Blood Bourne Virus – testing & vaccination
- Stimulant services
- Family support group

In addition, Lantern House provides the following services for the comprehensive structured treatment for drug & alcohol users:

- Open Access services accepting self referrals and referrals from all agencies both statutory and voluntary
- Shared Care
- Community Alcohol Team
- Substitute Prescribing

There is also work commissioned to address the needs of Children & Young People around treatment, outreach work and specialist prescribing provision.

### **Priority 4: Community: specific focus on Counter-Terrorism, Community Cohesion and Public Perceptions**

The first ever Walsall PREVENT plan was developed to respond to the national Contest strategy to respond to the threat of international terrorism, after the 7/7 bombings in London.

After consultation and using a local narrative numerous activities were undertaken to successfully build resilience at a local level against the threat of extremists. The PREVENT plan has built the resilience to extremism in Walsall through building closer relationships with key partners and developing improved communication lines.

The Union of Muslim Organisation have been a key strategic partner in the development of the local narrative and ensuring delivery through the PREVENT Executive Advisory Committee.

## The National PREVENT Strategy 2011

The new Prevent strategy and consultation findings report was launched in June 2011. The new approach aims to be more focused regarding violent extremism / terrorism.

The greatest threat to national security remains from Islamic extremists such as Al Qa'ida, its affiliates and like-minded groups or individuals who hold similar beliefs in terms of terrorist activity. The response will be the responsibility for the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT)

Domestic extremism and integration will sit within the Department Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Prevent will make a clearer distinction between counter-terrorist activity and integration activity

Funding has been intelligence led and thus targeted at 25 priority areas in the UK. Walsall is not one of the areas identified therefore there will be no further funding for Walsall regarding preventing violent extremism. One of the priority areas is Birmingham which borders with Walsall and as such we must remain vigilant and continue building resilience against all forms of extremism within our communities as we have both Islamic extremist groups and right wing extremist groups active in the borough and Black Country region.

The Channel project will remain with new guidance to be given as the consultation review found that interventions and those who are identified as vulnerable was not focused enough.

The new PREVENT strategy is concentrating on three main areas:

- **Individuals**; - concentrating on those who have been identified as vulnerable to extremism with targeted interventions
- **Institutions** – schools; further and higher education institutions are deemed as especially vulnerable to being targeted by extremists.
- **Ideology** – the extremist narrative and ideology used by extremist groups will be challenged.

## The Walsall PREVENT Strategic Priorities 2011-2014

- **Ideology** - domestic extremism, responding to the threat of the English Defence League / right wing extremism and Islamic extremists' groups active in Walsall.
- **Racism** – reducing racist incidents; improve reporting opportunities and supporting victims. Improved reporting mechanisms through smarter tension monitoring to give improved data for analysts to work with.
- **Individuals** - targeted interventions with the continued development of the Channel project

- **Mainstreaming** PREVENT through training and train the trainer activity throughout the partnership and community / voluntary sector will ensure resilience is built both in the short term and long term.
- **Improving integration** through new opportunities for communities to better understand one another and have meaningful opportunities to build strong and lasting relationships.
- **Institutions** - working with further and higher education institutions to build resilience and promote integration.

These priorities are to be set using an intelligence led approach using and the new shared intelligence working and tasking arrangements through the Borough Operations Group through the area partnerships model; the Counter Terrorist Local Profile; the recommendations of the Institute of Community Cohesion Walsall Diversity Mapping report and the national strategy.

### **Priority 5: Tackle Serious Acquisitive Crime: specific focus on reducing Domestic Burglary**

During periods of economic down-turn there is often an increase in burglary issues and substantial work has been carried out by the partnership multi-agency communications team to make residents aware of issues around the safety of themselves and their property. There have been on-going campaigns through a variety of media such as cinemas, via mobile phone alerts and mobile posters high-lighting issues such as personal safety, ensuring windows and doors are not left open during the Summer, pick-pocketing, leaving lights on when out etc.

Reassurance officers have been attending summer community events and distributing advice on safety issues and have developed presentations for use at local community groups. Community safety items are also being distributed, such as window alarms, personal alarms, property marking pens, safe cans etc.

A priority has been to engage with hard to reach groups and as part of this drive, the team will shortly be presenting to the Deaf Deaf/Blind Forum

Police have been responding to intelligence received through the National Intelligence Model by pro-actively distributing Smartwater property marking packs in vulnerable areas. This project has been part-funded by the Partnership. Most importantly, support has been given in the use of this product, so there is a greater chance of recovering items should they be lost in the future.

### **Priority 6: Reduce re offending: a cross-cutting theme across all other priorities.**

All of the above priorities carry the overarching aim to reduce reoffending, whether it is through perpetrators of domestic violence taking part in a programme to address their abusive behaviour, young people involved in crime and anti-social behaviour being directed to engage in positive activities, families in crisis receiving support through parenting programmes or individuals who are involved in substance mis-use taking part in a treatment programme.



Walsall IDOM (Integrated Diversion & Offender Management) is currently coming to the end of its initial period and has secured further funding to extend its work.

The aim of IDOM is to help local partners reduce crime and address many of the issues that are faced by perpetrators and their families. They support the greater coordination of agencies and programmes to manage offenders with an aim to ensure that high priority/highly damaging offenders do not fall between gaps in arrangements.

As they are now an established contributor to addressing re-offending within Walsall, they are playing a greater part as a partner in addressing re-offending and form part of our information sharing and tasking structures.


## **Conclusion**

As stated, this report provides a snap-shot of the work currently being carried out within Walsall. The area partnerships continue to provide a platform to address issues at a local level and support the approach to target resources where they are needed most.

At this time, there is little clear direction on the future of community safety partnerships, though ministers have clearly advocated the need to maintain them as an effective delivery mechanism.

Community safety partnerships across the West Midlands have been meeting together to explore more cohesive working and areas where resources may be shared in response to the reduction in the community safety grant and the drive to deliver greater efficiencies, pending the introduction of the police and crime commissioner.

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