



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Working towards a more integrated Safer City Agenda
Date:	24th April 2009
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Relevant Background Information

Community safety is one of the main concerns of the people of Belfast and hence is a key element of the *Supporting People and Communities* theme of the Council's Corporate Plan.

Members will be aware that the Council's contribution to a Safer City is achieved through its leadership role in both the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and District Policing Partnership (DPP) as well as through the delivery of services by a number of departments. At various Committee and full Council meetings, Members have expressed the view that there is too much duplication of effort and confusion created by the way we currently deliver the safer city agenda and have called for a much more integrated approach.

A report outlining the issues of concern was presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 20th March. At this meeting, the Committee agreed to an invitation being sent to all Members to participate in a safer city workshop, which was held on 6th April 2009.

Since the previous report on 20th March, the Minister for Policing and Criminal Justice has issued a consultation document on the future of CSPs and DPPs - '*Local Partnership Working on Policing and Community Safety: a way forward*', and has asked for initial comments on the general principles detailed in the paper by the end of April, with an extended timeframe to the end of May for more detailed comments. This approach was confirmed as appropriate by the NIO official at the safer city workshop, in response to members' concerns over the short timeframe. The consultation document is attached in Appendix 2.

Key Issues

Safer City Workshop

The safer city workshop was attended by Members from all Parties and by chief and

senior officers from across a number of departments. Notes from the workshop are attached in Appendix 1. In summary, the key actions that need to be taken forward at this stage are:

- CSP/DPP staff to be brought together under one Service and management structure;
- A proposal paper to be developed and agreed through the political system with actions to outline how to better align the work and outcomes of both partnerships;
- The feasibility of organising joint CSP / DPP meetings around a number of key issues to be pursued;
- The Northern Ireland Policing Board to be approached to review the Code of Practice that governs the DPP administrative and delivery functions;
- A single point of contact to be put in place within the Council on safer city;
- The Transition Committee to be engaged in discussions around rationalising community engagement structures in preparation for community planning.

As firmer proposals around these actions are developed they will be brought back to this Committee for agreement.

Consultation on CSPs and DPPs

In terms of the consultation document, the paper proposes that the NIO aims to have integrated partnerships combining all of the functions of the CSPs and DPPs in place to coincide with the changes to local government planned for the Spring of 2011, whilst acknowledging that the final decision on the shape of the integrated partnerships will need to be taken in the devolved context by a local Minister. It also suggests that, once we have established a vision for future arrangements for local partnership working, progress should be made on implementing interim measures to bring the two partnerships closer together, in anticipation of further integration in the future.

At the safer city workshop mentioned above there was a general consensus in favour of the principle of creating fully integrated partnerships in the longer term and on taking steps as soon as possible to align more closely the work and approaches of the CSP and DPP within Belfast. It is proposed that the Council makes an interim response to the NIO Minister outlining this view and that a more detailed report is brought back in May in respect of the specific questions posed in the consultation document.

Resource Implications

None at this stage.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- Note the discussions which took place at the safer city workshop; and
- Agree that the Council provides an interim response to the NIO, stating that it is in agreement with the principle of creating fully integrated partnerships in the longer term and on taking steps as soon as possible to more closely align the work and approaches of CSPs and DPPs.

Key to Abbreviations

CSP - Community Safety Partnership
DPP – District Policing Partnership
NIO – Northern Ireland Office

Documents Attached

1. Notes of Safer City Workshop
2. NIO Consultation Document: Local Partnership Working on Policing and Community Safety; a way forward.

Decision Tracking

1. The Head of Environmental Health will bring a report to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in May outlining a draft detailed response to the NIO consultation document;
2. The Chief Executive will bring forward a report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in the near future outlining proposals for bringing the staff of the DPP and CSP together in one Service;
3. Further update reports detailing progress on better aligning the work of the DPP and CSP will be brought back to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee by the Head of Environmental Health and the Head of Committee and Members' Services, as appropriate.

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