

Community Safety Partnership Working

1.0 Summary

1.1 This is a report on community safety partnership working in Argyll and Bute which has been prompted by a number of recent developments to strengthen community planning arrangements.

1.2 The vision and direction for Argyll and Bute over the next ten years is set out in the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013 -23. Achieving this will require close collaboration between partners and strong strategic direction.

1.3 Outcome 6 of the Single Outcome Agreement has clear action and lines of responsibility for ensuring communities are safe, strong and resilient.

1.4 As a result of discussion involving key community safety partners, a new community safety partnership model has been identified to enhance strategic focus and deliver local action on community safety.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 The Community Safety Forum endorses the proposal to restructure community safety partnership working in line with the 'Community Safety Tasking and Coordinating Partnership' model set out in this report.

3.0 Background

3.1 The five local Community Safety Forums have been extremely successful in making their local communities safe.

3.2 The current community safety partnership structure has been in place since c2000 and comprises five area based Community Safety Forums – Bute, Cowal, Helensburgh and Lomond, Oban Lorn and the Isles, Mid Argyll Kintyre and the Islands.

3.3 Thematic areas of responsibility for the Community Safety Forums are:
Tackling Disorder, Anti Social Behaviour and Violence
Personal safety of the young, elderly and other vulnerable groups
Safeguarding the natural and built environment from fire, vandalism, graffiti, littering and dog fouling
Road and Water Safety
Engaging with communities to make people safe

3.4 Anti Social Behaviour issues are dealt with on an area basis by multi agency groups that meet, approximately, bi monthly to address local complaints.

4.0 Details

4.1 There are six short term outcomes within Outcome 6 of the Single Outcome Agreement which extend across a number of thematic areas. These will be delivered through work undertaken by a number of partners including community safety partners. This will require strong strategic direction and a commitment from partners to work together closely and demonstrate, through evidence, their success.

4.2 Weaknesses exist within the current community safety partnership structure when assessing this within the context of SOA 6 requirements.

- a) The area based structure of five Community Safety forums ensures a strong focus on local issues but there is a degree of fragmentation which makes accountability for performance unclear.
- b) A lack of data hampers oversight, comparison and challenge.
- c) The meeting schedule of four meetings per year is insufficient to provide drive for community safety work streams.
- d) Partner attendance at some Community Safety forums has declined which impacts on collaboration.

4.3 An alternative community safety partnership structure has been identified which has been endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership Management Committee to deliver SOA Outcome 6. This model is set out in Appendix 1 'Community Safety Tasking and Coordinating Partnership'.

4.4 The Community Safety Tasking and Coordinating Partnership will meet on a six week basis to work plan, problem solve and evaluate performance. Data and evidence will be gathered and shared to inform delivery and assess performance.

4.5 The partnership will comprise representatives from community safety services and stakeholder agencies in line with SOA 6. A lead person will represent the partnership at Area Community Planning meetings within all council areas to engage and fully integrate community safety within area community planning structures.

4.6 An SOA Outcome 6 Lead Officers group will also be established. The aim of this group is to provide strategic leadership and integrate the Community Safety Tasking and Coordinating Partnership with other strategic partnerships and groups who share SOA Outcome 6 responsibilities.

4.7 Membership of the SOA Outcome 6 Lead Officers Group would comprise a lead officer representing the Community Safety Tasking and Coordinating Partnership as well as a lead from the following partnerships and groups:

Counter Terrorism CONTEST Group

Serious and Organised Crime Interventions Group

Argyll and Bute Local Resilience Partnership

Violence Against Women Partnership

Child Protection Committee

Argyll and Bute Road Safety Group

Argyll and Bute Alcohol and Drugs Partnership

Argyll and Bute Third Sector Partnership

4.8 The valuable contribution to community safety by interested groups, including Crime Prevention Panels and Neighbourhood Watch schemes, is recognised. Local groups will continue to influence and shape community safety through membership of Area Community Planning Groups and delivery of the Single Outcome Agreement Local. It is not expected these groups will routinely attend Community Safety Tasking and Coordination Partnership meetings, but their attendance would be sought on a planned basis within the yearly schedule of meetings.

4.9 Anti Social Behaviour multi agency groups will remain as area based groups to address complaints and retain local context for this work stream. They would also report to the Community Safety Tasking and Coordinating partnership.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 This report acknowledges the role the community forums have played in making communities safer.

5.2 With work taking place to strengthen community planning the time is right to review the way in which community safety partnership working is structured and the effectiveness of this. When assessed within this context the current community safety partnership structure has identifiable weaknesses.

5.3 The model set out in this report would embed community safety partnership working within community planning and ensure greater coherence, collaboration and integration.

6.0 Implications

Strategic Implications	SOA Outcome 6
Resources	Existing resources partners have committed to deliver outcomes agreed within SOA Outcome 6.
Prevention	There is a risk that SOA Outcome 6 will not be fully achieved if community safety partnership working is not strengthened and better integrated.
Equalities	Contributes to equality outcomes identified in SOA outcome 6 to improve the safety of all groups and reduce outcome inequalities.

Report author - Robert Cowper, Community Safety Coordinator,
Argyll and Bute Council, Governance and Law
Robert.Cowper@argyll-bute.gov.uk
Telephone 01436 658831