Community Safety Partnership Engagement

Policy Development
Since April 2017 a programme of engagement activity with local Community Safety Partnerships has taken place, supported by a joint steering group of COSLA, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN). This report updates members of the key findings from this engagement, the opportunities it presents and to seek your views on a range of matters so that we can embark on the next steps.

Summary and Recommendations
The key purpose of the engagement is to identify key areas of activity, capture learning, identify shared interest; and explore how connections can be improved between local and national initiatives and activity.

This paper invites the Community Well-being Board to:

i. Note the key findings of the recent engagement activity (attached at Annex A) and provide initial elected member responses to the questions posed by it included at paragraph 11; and

ii. Consider and provide a view on the changing nature of community safety in your local authority area and the opportunity to improve policy connections at a local and national level.

References
None

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Community Safety Partnership Engagement

Policy Development
1. Between April 2017 and December 2017 a series of discussions with Community Safety Partnerships, Community Planning Partnerships and partners in each local authority area has taken place.

2. Community Safety Partnership membership varies across Scottish Local Authorities. However, the majority have representation from the local authority (housing, social work, environmental/community services), Police Scotland, SFRS and the NHS. Other partners may include the Scottish Ambulance Service, Health and Social Care Partnerships, Coastguard, Mountain Rescue, third sector, local business, local safety groups.

3. Community Safety Partnership priorities broadly group around personal threats and incivilities from others or personal dangers from the broader environment. Based on local circumstances and priorities many partnerships support initiatives and projects to; tackle antisocial behaviour, gender based violence, youth disorder, drugs and alcohol intake, as well as to improve personal, home, water and road safety.

4. The purpose of these discussions was to identify key areas of activity, to capture learning, to identify shared interest; and to explore how connections can be improved between local and national initiatives and activity.

5. Officials have now engaged with 29 of the 32 partnership areas. Two further meetings have been scheduled during December 2017 and contact has also been made with the remaining area with the aim to schedule discussions by late 2017/early 2018.

Current COSLA Position
6. COSLA officers have supported this activity through membership of a joint steering group which includes COSLA, the Scottish Government and the Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN). A seconded COSLA officer has led the engagement activity, supported by the Building Safer Communities team within Scottish Government.

What is changing
7. This engagement activity will soon be complete and has provided a greater understanding of the current and emerging Community Safety landscape in Scotland. A series of findings, opportunities and points for discussion have been drafted and attached at Annex A and summarised at paragraph 11.

8. These findings offer an opportunity for COSLA, alongside Scottish Government and the Scottish Community Safety Network, to collectively consider how Community Safety is positioned within the wider Community Planning landscape.
Proposed COSLA Position

9. Building safer, more resilient and cohesive communities is a key priority across Scottish Local Government and is set out explicitly within many Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs).

10. As members will also be aware, it is also intrinsically linked to wider outcomes for communities that all partnerships strive to improve including health and well-being, poverty and inequality outcomes. Given the importance to local communities and the collaborative approach of this engagement activity to date, Board Members are asked to consider the findings and provide a view on the opportunities identified.

11. Views of elected members are specifically sought on the following points for discussion. To support discussion, a brief explanation of the associated engagement finding has been included after the question. Further detail on the key findings are available at Annex A.

- **How can we improve our joint understanding and definition of Community Safety?**

Discussions have identified that the term ‘Community Safety’ is no longer consistently used across all partnerships and partners.

At a local level, the term remains in use if there is a sole partnership considering ‘traditional’ community safety activity e.g. antisocial behaviour, low level crime, youth disorder, environmental issues etc. Many local partnerships have or are in the process of moving away from this traditional approach. When the term is still in use there is a shared understanding that community safety covers many aspects that impact on an individual’s life. Local authority and partnership teams are described as ‘safer, connected communities’ or ‘safer and inclusive’ to demonstrate the changing relationship with communities.

At a national level, the recently published Justice Vision provides an opportunity to build on the ambition for a safe, just and resilient Scotland. This is further complemented by recent work to review National Outcome 11 (We have strong, resilient and supportive communities) and the development of a national Place Principle (Further detail of this work can be provided to members, if required).

- **How can Local Government reduce the complexity of local policy and governance to ensure a local, coordinated strategic approach to community safety is in place?**

The complexity of the landscape and relationship between key policy and legislative strands, both locally and nationally, make it challenging for local partnerships to coordinate a strategic approach to community safety. Each Community Planning Partnership has now completed development of a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) (or has agreed timescales to publish). This process has honed local partnership priorities. Whilst ‘creating safer communities’ or ‘community safety’ was a feature of most Single Outcome Agreements, in many LOIPs it does not explicitly exist. Instead components of community safety work are captured through wider strategic priorities e.g. to address alcohol issues; to create resilient communities etc.
In supporting the preventative agenda, how can links between strategic planning be better linked to scrutiny?

In some areas, there appeared to be a disconnect between wider community safety strategic planning and reporting, and formal elected member scrutiny of emergency services. The Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) is currently carrying out specific research on local scrutiny arrangements therefore discussions did not focus on quality or ability to scrutinise services, rather it focussed on the link between formal scrutiny and the impact on the wider community safety agenda. In most areas, but not all, there appeared to be gap between wider community safety strategic planning and reporting, and local plans. The recent Local Government election and the introduction of LOIPs has offered an opportunity to bridge this gap.

Next Steps
12. Board member views will be shared with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Community Safety Network with the aim to agree joint proposals to progress this work to the next stage.

13. Further developments and proposals would be brought back to the Board for consideration, when needed.

Summary and Recommendations
14. A key purpose of the community safety engagement is to explore how connections can be improved between local and national initiatives and activity. It is essential that local government fully engage and shape this discussion to support local community safety delivery.

15. This paper invites the Board Members to:
   i. Note the key findings of the recent engagement activity (attached at Annex A) and provide initial elected member responses to the questions posed at paragraph 11;
   ii. Consider and provide a view on the changing nature of community safety in your local authority area and the opportunity to improve policy connections at a local and national level.

December 2017
Annex A

Key Findings and Opportunities from Community Safety Partnership Engagement April 2017- December 2017

Defining Community Safety: Discussions have identified that the term ‘Community Safety’ is no longer consistently used across all partnerships and partners.

At a local level, the term remains in use if there is a sole partnership considering ‘traditional’ community safety activity e.g. antisocial behaviour, low level crime, youth disorder, environmental issues etc. Many local partnerships have or are in the process of moving away from this traditional approach. When the term is still in use there is a shared understanding that community safety covers many aspects that impact on an individual’s life. Local authority and partnership teams are described as ‘safer, connected communities’ or ‘safer and inclusive’ to demonstrate the changing relationship with communities.

At a national level, the recently published Justice Vision provides an opportunity to build on the ambition for a safe, just and resilient Scotland. This is further complemented by recent work to review National Outcome 11 (We have strong, resilient and supportive communities) and the development of a national Place Principle. (Further detail of this work can be provided to members, if required).

Linking Policy Priorities: The complexity of the landscape and relationship between key policy and legislative strands, both locally and nationally, make it challenging for local partnerships to coordinate a strategic approach to community safety.

As with discussions held with local authority lead officers, Scottish Government lead officials with a shared interest in a number of policy areas that link to community safety have met: to consider cross government links and engagement with stakeholders, and to identify opportunities to better support local delivery including the challenge of connecting national priorities at the local level. This network will continue to meet to ensure links are staffed.

Local Priority Setting: Each Community Planning Partnership has now completed development of a Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) (or has agreed timescales to publish). This process has honed local partnership priorities. Whilst ‘creating safer communities’ or ‘community safety’ was a feature of most Single Outcome Agreements, in many LOIPs it does not explicitly exist. Instead components of community safety work are captured through wider strategic priorities e.g. to address alcohol issues; to create resilient communities etc.

This change in strategic prioritisation has also influenced a number of local changes;

(i) CSPs have reconfigured to become ‘operational and tactical’ partnerships with no or less elected member representation;

(ii) CSPs are balancing the delivery of authority wide services alongside a real shift of focus to diverting resources within priority localities.

(iii) Relationships with those who previously did not sit on a ‘traditional’ CSP e.g. adult social work services, wider NHS partners (e.g. GPs) is still proving challenging in some areas.

(iv) Strategic (needs) assessments previously carried out by/for Community Safety partnerships are being carried out for the wider Community Planning Partnership. Exclusively Community Safety assessments are less common and often focused on specific localities.
(v) Local authorities are considering staffing roles. There has been some initial moves, in some areas, to ‘communities’ officers rather than sector specific officers. This appears to be a direction of travel for many authorities.

A notable local change has taken place following the introduction of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act, 2016. In many local areas, the Community Safety Partnership has merged with the recently established Community Justice Partnerships/Boards. Relationships are currently in place between COSLA and Community Justice Scotland, and discussions continue around how to jointly support local partnerships.

**Working Collaboratively:** local practitioners have identified that positive community safety outcomes have been best delivered when key partners have agreed shared priorities, and have worked in collaboration with communities to understand their ‘place’. Structural arrangements to support this rightly, vary across local authorities based on local circumstance and need. Through this work we have collected some best practice examples of community and partnership led work and this will be shared across the sector via the Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN). We will also continue to work with the SCSN to support the further identification and sharing of examples.

**Prevention and Accountability:** Each partnership maintains a clear focus on prevention. Many carry out ‘primary’ preventative activity including delivering educational community safety programmes in schools or proactive public safety campaigns, however much of the resource is likely to focus on ‘secondary prevention’.

For clarification:
- Primary prevention aims to prevent a threat/risk before it occurs through, for example work in schools.
- Secondary prevention aims to reduce the impact of a threat that has already occurred by introducing initiatives to prevent the threat/risk reoccurring, for example work to tackle anti-social behaviour.

There is a view that organisational partner Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) / performance measures can impact on the ability to further drive forward the collective preventative agenda, by limiting the scope of the work of each organisation to meet accountability expectations.

Further, Community Safety Partnerships, in some areas, still find engaging with some key partners challenging, most notable being the NHS. Although there is evidence to support the preventative work of community safety initiatives, the unarguable, successful case hasn’t yet been made to see a real shift in resources e.g. with the NHS to shift resources from acute care to prevention.

At a national level, the recently established Health and Justice Collaboration Board provides an opportunity to consider these challenges at a strategic level. It is proposed that we will share the outcomes from this work to support their discussion.

Finally, in some areas, there appeared to be a disconnect between wider community safety strategic planning and reporting, and formal elected member scrutiny of emergency services.

The Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) is currently carrying out specific research on local scrutiny arrangements therefore discussions did not focus on quality or ability to scrutinise services, rather it focussed on the link between formal scrutiny and the impact on the wider community safety agenda. In most areas, but not all, there appeared to be gap
between wider community safety strategic planning and reporting, and local plans. The recent Local Government election and the introduction of LOIPs has offered an opportunity to bridge this gap.

**Points for discussions:**

How can we improve our joint understanding and definition of Community Safety?

How can Local Government reduce the complexity of local policy and governance to ensure a local, coordinated strategic approach to community safety is in place?

In supporting the preventative agenda, how can links between strategic planning be better linked to scrutiny?