

Scrutiny Board (Safer and Stronger Communities)

Development of the Leeds Community Safety Business Plan

Comments from Scrutiny to the Safer Leeds Executive

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In June 2012, the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board learned that the Safer Leeds Executive was in the process of developing a Leeds Community Safety Business Plan in preparation for the introduction of an elected West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner in November 2012.
- 1.2 The Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services asked the Scrutiny Board to work closely with the Safer Leeds Executive to ensure that the Plan is fit for purpose prior to it being formally approved by the Safer Leeds Executive in September 2012.
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Board agreed to undertake this piece of work as a matter of priority via working group meetings during July and August to which all Board Members would be invited to attend.
- 1.4 Working group meetings took place on 17th July 2012 and 14th August. During these meetings, discussions were held with the Chief Officer for Community Safety and the Head of Community Safety Partnerships (Safer Leeds) surrounding the objectives of the business plan and its content nearing completion.
- 1.5 An initial draft of the plan was considered during the scrutiny working group meeting in July. Following this meeting, the Safer Leeds Executive received verbal feedback of the issues arising from the working group's discussion. An updated version of the draft was then considered at the scrutiny working group meeting in August.
- 1.6 This report presents the agreed view of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Board in relation to the draft Leeds Community Safety Business Plan. The Board has requested that these comments are formally considered by the Safer Leeds Executive prior to it approving the Plan.

2.0 Observations, Conclusions and Recommendations

- 2.1 As the business plan is split into nine separate sections, the views of the Scrutiny Board in relation to each individual section are set out below.

Chairs Statement

- 2.2 The Scrutiny Board acknowledges the statement made by the Chair of the Safer Leeds Partnership in introducing the business plan and also inviting the public to contact the partnership with any comments, suggestions or concerns

they may have about the work of the partnership. The Scrutiny Board does not wish to suggest any changes to this section.

Introduction to Safer Leeds

- 2.3 The Scrutiny Board does not wish to suggest any changes to this section as it clearly sets out the governance arrangements for Safer Leeds and highlights the partnership's ambition, desired outcome and commitments in accordance with the City Priority Plan.

Performance and Key Facts

- 2.4 This section includes a performance table highlighting the level of recorded crime across a ten year period for total offences and the most problematic offence categories. The Scrutiny Board is pleased to note that following its initial request, the definition of 'acquisitive crime' has now been included alongside this table.
- 2.5 In acknowledging the steady and sustained reduction in the total numbers of recorded crimes in Leeds over the last 10 years, the Scrutiny Board is pleased to note that the narrative surrounding the performance table now makes reference to the move towards increased partnership working, improved use of intelligence and better deployment of resources (including the targeted investment made in areas such as burglary reduction). The Scrutiny Board recognises that these are contributing factors in achieving such reductions and therefore needed to be acknowledged alongside the performance data.
- 2.6 The Scrutiny Board does not wish to make any other suggested changes to this section.

Recent Achievements

- 2.7 This section seeks to briefly demonstrate where the Safer Leeds Partnership has delivered integrated services to customers.
- 2.8 Within this section, it states that there is increasing public and partnership concerns around the sexual exploitation of children, which has led to a multi-agency approach in identifying and supporting victims and targeting offenders engaging in such activities.
- 2.9 Within the 'performance and key facts' section of the plan, reference is also made that vulnerable young people, including those in care or in chaotic family homes, and those who regularly go missing from home or care, can be targeted by abusers. Whilst an increase in the reporting of child sexual exploitation incidents nationally has clearly had an impact in terms of raising the profile of this problem, the Scrutiny Board recommends that further narrative is added within this section to underline why there is an increased cause for concern locally.

- 2.10 The Scrutiny Board acknowledges that the Safer Leeds Partnership has identified child sexual exploitation as a priority area for 2013/14, as highlighted within the business plan under 'partnership expectations'. The Scrutiny Board has also identified this as a potential piece of scrutiny work in the future. In recognition of the cross-cutting nature of this piece of work due to the associated links with the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board and Health and Wellbeing Board, the Scrutiny Board will explore how best to approach this with other relevant Scrutiny Boards in the future.

Recommendation 1

Where reference is made within the 'recent achievements' section of the business plan to the increasing public and partnership concerns around the sexual exploitation of children, further narrative should be added to underline why there is an increased cause for concern locally.

Partnership Expectations

- 2.11 Within this section, the Scrutiny Board is pleased to note that following its initial request, the partnership's priorities for 2013/14 no longer make reference to particular localities of concern. The Scrutiny Board considered that such references could be misinterpreted by the public in terms of the partnership's commitments and allocation of resources and therefore suggested that they be removed from the plan.
- 2.12 The Scrutiny Board is also pleased to note that where reference is made within this section to the vision of Leeds Initiative, the public are now signposted to the relevant section of the plan where they can seek further clarity of the role of Leeds Initiative and other governance arrangements if necessary.

Safer Leeds Partnership – Our Priorities 2013/14

- 2.13 The Scrutiny Board notes that this particular section had been added following the initial version of the draft plan. As the purpose of this new section is to provide further narrative surrounding the partnership's priorities, this is welcomed by the Scrutiny Board.
- 2.14 Linked to the partnership's priority to effectively tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour, particular reference is made within this section to the role of the new multi-agency Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team and the positive impact this has had in dealing with ASB complaints. Whilst the previous section of the plan makes specific reference to the partnership's priority to extend multi-agency approaches to ASB and also noise nuisance, there is no reference to noise nuisance within this particular section.
- 2.15 In acknowledging that noise nuisance represents a substantial proportion of complaints made by the public, the Scrutiny Board recommends that further narrative is added to reiterate the partnership's commitment to find better solutions for people experiencing domestic noise problems, which is reflective in the recent transfer of staff from Environmental Health to the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

Recommendation 2

That further narrative is added to the 'Safer Leeds Partnership – Our Priorities 2013/14' section of the plan to reiterate the partnership's commitment to find better solutions for people experiencing domestic noise problems, which is reflective in the recent transfer of staff from Environmental Health to the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

- 2.16 The Scrutiny Board also recommends that the concluding statement within this section is removed given that other sections of the plan already make sufficient reference to the changing landscape of community safety funding and the delivery of existing services.

Recommendation 3

That the concluding statement within the 'Safer Leeds Partnership – Our Priorities 2013/14' section is removed.

Financial Budget

- 2.17 Within this section, the Scrutiny Board is pleased to note that following its initial request, a further pie chart will be added to illustrate the different funding sources for Safer Leeds. The Scrutiny Board does not wish to make any other suggested changes to this section.

Changing Landscape

- 2.18 As part of the changing landscape, the Scrutiny Board recommends that reference is also made to the role of the new Police and Crime Panel within this section.

Recommendation 4

That reference is made to the role of the new Police and Crime Panel within the 'changing landscape' section of the business plan.

Our City Priorities & Governance

- 2.19 The Scrutiny Board is happy that this section clarifies the role of Leeds Initiative and the five strategic partnership boards in delivering the key outcomes and priorities set out within the City Priority Plan. The Scrutiny Board does not wish to suggest any changes to this section.

Appendix – Leeds Community Safety Services

- 2.20 The Scrutiny Board is happy that this section provides further clarity of the role of existing community safety services and does not wish to suggest any changes to this section.

Other observations made by the Scrutiny Board:

- 2.21 In the development of any plan, it is vital to acknowledge the target audience. Local community safety business plans are designed to be high level plans

used to articulate the community safety landscape for each of the relevant districts to prospective Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) candidates and members of the public.

- 2.22 In view of this, the Scrutiny Board set out to ensure that the Leeds Community Safety Business Plan accurately reflects and clearly articulates local community safety priorities and demonstrates the effectiveness of the activity it wishes the PCC to support. However, the Scrutiny Board is also mindful that, as a public facing document, the business plan needs to be succinct and not heavily overloaded with performance related data that the public may find difficult to digest.
- 2.23 The Scrutiny Board acknowledges that further work will continue by the Safer Leeds Executive to ensure that the business plan will be accompanied with supportive performance related data, which will be made available to the successful PCC candidate. The Board also acknowledges that a number of existing strategies have been used to inform the draft Leeds Community Safety Business Plan. These are as follows:
- The Leeds Burglary Reduction Strategy (2011 – 2015)
 - Leeds Anti Social Behaviour – Quest Review 2010/11
 - The Leeds Domestic Violence Action Plan 2012/13
 - The Leeds Reducing Re-Offending Plan 2010 – 13
 - The Drug Recover Action Plan 2012/13
 - The Leeds Alcohol Harm Reduction Plan 2011 – 2015
 - Corporate Performance reports – Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime Reduction
- 2.24 The Scrutiny Board also recognises the importance of having a consistent approach across West Yorkshire and is therefore pleased to note that the Leeds Community Safety Business Plan is to act as a template to provide a common framework for the other districts.
- 2.25 Whilst the use of plain English is important, the Scrutiny Board accepts that some community safety language is unavoidable within the business plan when making reference to crime and disorder activities and existing support programmes.
- 2.26 The Scrutiny Board is pleased to note that following its initial request, definitions have been provided in relation to certain crime and disorder terminology, such as ‘acquisitive crime’. However, the Scrutiny Board further recommends that the use of abbreviations within the plan is minimised as much as possible. Where these do occur, a full definition should be provided within each of the relevant sections of the plan for ease of reference.

Recommendation 5

As a public facing document, the use of abbreviations within the business plan should be minimised as much as possible. Where these do occur, a full definition should be provided within each of the relevant sections of the plan for ease of reference.