

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:-	Democratic & Renewal Scrutiny Panel
2.	Date:-	27 th January, 2011
3.	Title:-	Partners & Communities Together Meetings (PACT)
4.	Directorate:-	Neighbourhoods & Adult Services

5. Summary

The Casey Review (Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime) examined how to better engage communities in the fight against crime and raise public confidence in the Criminal Justice System. The review set out a number of priorities for Community Safety Partnerships, one of which was '*One dialogue with the public on crime*', the main driver being the introduction of Partners & Communities Together (PACT) meetings in every Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) Area.

In February 2009, the Area Assembly Chairs supported the proposal for PACT meetings in Rotherham to be accommodated within our existing Area Assembly meetings and the PACT process is currently established within that overall structure across the seven Area Assembly/SNT areas.

6. Recommendations

That the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel notes the current position in relation to the PACT process in Rotherham and progress made to date.

7. Proposals and Details

Background

The Casey Review highlighted that the public want one response from public services on crime issues, focussed on what is wrong, what needs to be fixed and how that will occur, followed by feedback on what has happened. They want to attend a meeting that would deal with a range of problems from lighting, rubbish collection, potholes, lack of youth facilities, to reporting anti-social behaviour and crime problems.

Both the Casey and Flanagan Reviews highlighted the need to build on good practice by marrying together Neighbourhood Policing and Neighbourhood Management to deliver a better service to the public by:

- Nominating appropriate existing local authority officers as designated liaison points for each Safer neighbourhood Team for all joint action and tasking needed; and
- Ensuring that at every neighbourhood policing public meeting there is a local authority presence

In February 2009, the Area Assembly Chairs supported the proposal for PACT meetings in Rotherham to be accommodated within our existing Area Assembly structure. This structure was already embedded into daily business in Rotherham and is well supported administratively.

The amalgamation of the PACT meeting into the Area Assembly meeting ensured that appropriate local authority and police representatives are present to deal with a wide range of issues raised by the public through one meeting. The amalgamation of the PACT meeting into our Area Assembly process was seen as 'best practice' by the Home Office, however, it was acknowledged that across the borough Area Assemblies do not always meet every month. When this is the case, a 'stand alone' Police led PACT meeting should take place.

South Yorkshire Police have a corporate model for PACT meetings built around the following structure/format.

- The PACT part of the meeting (when part of an Area Assembly meeting) should be chaired by the SNT Inspector/Sergeant or other appropriate SNT police officer.
- The Local Authority should be represented by an appropriate officer(s).
- The purpose and format of the meeting should be explained to the attendees by the chair.
- All attendees should be offered the opportunity to have a say – the chair should ensure that a minority of attendees do not dominate the session
- The chair is to be aware of the requirements of the Data Protection Act.
- The meeting must respect the confidentiality of what is discussed

- Priorities identified by the PACT should be presented to the attendees for their views and comment.
- Feedback will be given on activities taken and progress in tackling existing priorities (delivered in the '*We Asked, You Said, We Did*' format).
- The preferred measure of success against the priorities should be defined by the attendees.
- 'Sign-off' should be offered to the attendees once the success measure has been achieved (attendees to decide final 'sign-off' of a priority).
- The chair should provide monthly updates on local crime and policing issues
- The chair should provide a brief on specific crimes/incidents and what happened to those brought to justice.
- The chair should deliver corporate/partner reassurance messages and local good news stories.
- The chair will deal with complaints and dissatisfaction by utilising existing recording procedures.

Current Position

The general feeling across partners is that PACT meetings have integrated well into the Area Assembly structure and are firmly established across all seven SNT areas. A continuing strength of the PACT is that it provides residents with the opportunity to receive information on crime and safety, have some influence in the setting of local priorities, receive regular feedback and hold the police and other agencies to account on performance.

In respect of the 'Stand Alone' PACT's that should take place during those months when there is no Area Assembly meeting, a check earlier this month revealed that future meeting dates are set in six of the seven area's, the exception being Rother Valley South. This has been brought to the attention of the police and is in the process of being rectified.

It should also be pointed out that the 'stand alone' meetings are not as well attended by those aligned to the Area Assembly meetings. This could be due to marketing of the meeting although both the Safer Neighbourhood Team and Area Assembly websites advertise details of forthcoming meetings where planned. The Police have questioned, given the general low attendance levels at the "stand alone" PACTs, whether they should be continued. In addition the officer attendance at the meetings needs re-consideration so that over representation of Council services and the Police does not occur. This is being assessed and would be subject to decision as part of the practical implementation of the Locality Review and Joint Action Group of the SRP.

Evidencing the effectiveness of PACT meetings in reducing crime and disorder is difficult, other than to establish that if an issue was raised at the PACT, it was addressed by the authorities and as a result of that activity the problem has ceased and the community informed of the outcome. Rotherham is currently seeing some significant reductions in reported crime and anti-social behaviour and

it may be more appropriate to see PACT meetings as one of a number of contributory factors in achieving this success.

Conclusion

- Rotherham easily integrated the PACT meeting into existing, well established structures
- Rotherham is well advanced in terms of partnership working and boundaries that are co-terminous e.g. SNTs, Area Assemblies, Streetpride, Localities etc.
- In some areas, this has increased attendances and given added focus to forums
- Views of local communities as to the frequency and need of “stand alone” PACT’s require to be sought
- The importance of the PACT process engaging with ‘hard to reach’ groups within the borough has been identified with interventions being put in place. An example of this is a sub-group of the PACT in Eastwood to specifically address issues within the Asian and Eastern European communities and local PACT meetings in Neighbourhood Action Group ‘hotspots’ (Eastwood Village and East Dene).

8. Finance

The PACT approach has been supported, especially during start up, by external Government funding (by Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Pioneer Area grant). It is unlikely that this grant will be provided beyond this financial year. Routine running of the PACT’s is substantially supported by the revenue budgets of the Council and Police.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The views of local people to set police and other agency priorities regarding crime and ASB is essential, and is required from the policy drivers highlighted and, in particular, the new Locality agenda. Streamlining of meetings and engagement opportunities are required, however, this must not be at the expense of the community viewpoint nor shared intelligence and working between partners. These aspects will be a consideration of the current Locality Review which is progressing.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

PACT activity supports the Corporate Plan’s objectives to help to create safe and healthy communities. In addressing the issue the Rotherham Safe priorities the approach contributes to delivering the following key strategic actions:

- Maintaining the current overall low crime rate in Rotherham, as well as continuing to address people’s concerns about anti-social behaviour and their fear of crime
- Increasing satisfaction with local neighbourhoods.

Significant policy drivers from the current Government have built on the previous Government's progress (see papers below) eg Locality Bill, Policing in the 21st Century, and "Stop the Rot" (HMIC).

The process have clear linkages to the seven outcomes of the Outcomes Framework for Social Care, and importantly includes:

- **Improved Quality of Life**, by supporting independence of people to live a fulfilled life
- **Freedom from Discrimination or Harassment**, by supporting *those who need social care having equal access to services without hindrance from discrimination or prejudice; people feel safe and are safeguarded from harm*
- **Improved Health and Emotional Well-being**, by promoting and facilitating the health and emotional well-being of people who use the services
- **Personal Dignity and Respect**, by providing confidential and secure services, which respects the individual and preserves people's dignity.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

'Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime' – Casey Review

'From the Neighbourhood to the National' – Policing Green Paper

'The Review of Policing, Final Report' – Sir Ronnie Flanagan

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