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| MEETING: | COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE |
| DATE: | 8 OCTOBER 2010 |
| TITLE OF REPORT: | PROGRESS REPORT FROM SAFER HEREFORDSHIRE SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP |
| REPORT BY: | Partnership Manager for Safer Herefordshire |

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Purpose

To provide a summary of the evidence the Review Group has received and to set out the considered findings and recommendations to the Committee.

Recommendation(s)

THAT: The recommendations below be adopted by the Committee, and referred to the Cabinet Member (Environment and Strategic Housing), for consideration.

Key Points Summary

- The Review Group considered that there was a generally improving picture regarding anti-social behaviour.
- Publicity of the Community Protection Team and the CCTV service should be improved.
- The Review Group expressed a lack of confidence in the figures provided for the numbers of drug users within the County, which made the allocation of resources more difficult.
- That with the current economic climate, it is to be expected that an increase in criminality in the County be likely, in order to feed the habits of drug users.

Introduction and Background

2 The Community Services Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for scrutinising the local Community Safety Partnership 'Safer Herefordshire'. To ensure this process was carried out effectively, a review group, made up of members of the main committee, was established. The Review Group considers a rolling programme of Safer Herefordshire activities and performance. Since the last Scrutiny meeting, the Safer Herefordshire Review Group has met twice. They have reviewed:

- NI21 – dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour by the council and police, and
- NI40 – to increase the numbers of people in effective drug treatment (crack and opiate users).

This report sets out the recommendations and findings from the Review Group meetings.

Key Considerations

- 3 **Anti-social Behaviour (ASB):** The police stated 94% of people in the County did not perceive there was an issue with crime. Attention is therefore being given to policing repeat ASB, as this is most distressing to victims. Police activity has to be weighed up against how much the victim is at risk, how quickly the police can respond to a call, and how important it was considered in the light of more serious crimes. Repeat victimisations are reducing, although there are pockets of problems. Perceptions of ASB are complex, and a communications strategy has been put in place to assist.
- 4 The work of the Community Protection team is promoted at every opportunity, particularly where successful prosecutions and campaigns have taken place. However it is often not recognised that the team address ASB; people recognise dog fouling and fly tipping as wrong, but do not see it as ASB.
- 5 A monthly multi-agency meeting is held to look at priorities and how they should be tackled. This is called MATAC (Multi-agency Tasking and Co-ordination). A representative from the group has observed this meeting, which discussed strategy, tactics and case management. Despite being wide ranging, it was well chaired and very focused.
- 6 Works is carried out in schools by both the Community Protection Team and the police, with the aim of influencing the behaviour of young people in the future.
- 7 **Drug treatment:** Glasgow University provides areas with an estimation of their number of drug users. Locally this has been estimated at 1009, however there is a wide confidence interval, so could be between 800 – 1200 users. Whilst the use of heroin is decreasing, class B and C drug use is on the increase. The degree of intravenous class A drug use is higher in Herefordshire, than elsewhere in the region. Whilst this is on the decline, data from needle exchange services indicate it is still an issue. The use of crack cocaine is increasing in the County.
- 8 The following points were made during the discussion:
 - a. With the increase in financial pressures, it was important that the Children's Trust's drug prevention educational work in schools should not be lost.
 - b. The criminal justice system is not effective for chaotic drug users; treatment regimes would be more appropriate.
 - c. Grants from central government are linked to performance; the related NI40 is rated green and the National Treatment Agency (NTA) is happy with local progress.

Conclusions

- 9 The way matters of anti social behaviour were being reported was being looked at. The police were aware that people reported issues of concern to their Ward and Parish Councillors. It was agreed that it was appropriate for Councillors to contact the police with their concerns. The council also has two Police Authority members; Councillors were encouraged to use these posts to raise issues, as they could forward issues to the correct person in the force.
- 10 In-patient detox and rehabilitation programmes are not as effective as other treatment programmes, as they are costly and it is very hard to measure specific outcomes. The drug and alcohol treatment services deal with the physical aspects of addiction, but a more effective model would be wrap around support, which would also address the underlying causes. Housing is also an issue, as it is difficult to access reasonable housing for recovering

addicts. Registered Social landlords should be encouraged to set some housing stock aside for them, as part of the wrap around agenda.

11 There are a many routes into treatment systems for users, including via GP's. 19 out of 24 surgeries are providing treatment; regionally this is a high level of engagement. A Consultant Psychologist has been engaged to support GP's and work with those not yet involved in the scheme.

12 As a result of the discussions of the Review Group, the following recommendations were made:

- (a) That the two Council Members of the West Mercia Police Authority could be utilised more effectively by the council;**
- (b) That the Review Group supported the concept of the wrap around agenda, and that the closer working relationship with Strategic Housing Services within the Sustainable Communities Directorate, will provide additional support; and**
- (c) That the Review Group recognised that, whilst there was a high involvement of GP surgeries in drug treatment support, every effort should be made to ensure that all GP practises in the County were part of the programme.**

Community Impact

13 Engagement with drug users shows that effective wrap-around services are needed.

Financial Implications

13 There are no additional finance implications.

Legal Implications

14 None identified.

Risk Management

15 None identified.

Consultees

16 Safer Herefordshire partners are consulted as projects are progressed.

17 Drug treatment providers and service users are consulted and involved in service development work.

Appendices

18 None.

Background Papers

Safer Herefordshire Budget/Outcome Report 2010/11 – Quarter 1: Reducing Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) and improving perceptions of ASB.

Anti-social Behaviour and Crime in Herefordshire – Closing the Perception Gap.

Reducing Drug Related Harm – Adults.

Adult Drug Treatment Plan 2010/11 Part 1: Strategic Summary, needs assessment and key priorities.

Adult Drug Treatment Budget 2010/11.