

# North Somerset Council

## REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

**DATE OF MEETING: 20 JANUARY 2015**

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: COMMUNITY RESPONSE (JOINT WORKING WITH AVON & SOMERSET POLICE)**

**TOWN OR PARISH: ALL**

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: MANDY BISHOP/JO MERCER**

**KEY DECISION: NO**

### RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel:

- i. Note the content of the report
- ii. Provide their views on the proposed accreditation scheme powers
- iii. Provide their views on the role of the working group and the support and direction required from Officers.

### 1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Community Response Project which is one area of the Council's joint working with Avon and Somerset Police.
- 1.2 The report seeks the Panel's input to the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme application and the powers being sought in the application.
- 1.3 The report seeks the Panel's views on the activities of the Working Group which the Panel agreed to establish at its meeting in November.

### 2. POLICY

- 2.1 Sustaining Safer and Stronger Communities is one of the six corporate plan priorities for North Somerset. It is also a priority within the North Somerset People and Communities Strategy. The Council is committed to working in partnership to achieve these priorities. The Community Response project is one aspect of the Council's joint work with Avon and Somerset Police which aims to build and sustain safer and stronger communities.

### **3. DETAILS**

- 3.1 An all member briefing was held on 25 November 2014 to inform and engage Councillors about preliminary work to improve our joint working practices with Avon and Somerset Police (A&S). The aim of this programme of work is to improve our community response and make the best use of limited resources across both organisations.

Feedback from members on 25 November is summarised below:

- This is absolutely the right way forward – it is so important to avoid duplicating the issues and keeping solutions as simple as possible
- Role of Councillors – elected ward members want to be actively engaged with issues in their communities and therefore form a vital part of the solution
- The enforcement arm of the project – whilst support and prevention remain preferable, enforcement will also be an available sanction when required
- Accreditation – Members supported the council becoming a Community Safety Accredited Organisation to enable council officers to assume a broader range of powers
- Partners and Communities Together Meetings (PACT) – refreshing the partnership role and value of PACTs to the community and the role of ward members

- 3.2 Following this briefing the Panel agreed to form a working group to help inform and develop our Community Response.

- 3.3 Since the all member briefing and panel meeting on 25 November, there have been a number of developments including:

- 3.3.1 Two of the temporary Community Officers are now in post and have been undertaking their induction, this has included:

- Shadowing of key staff, such as Area Officers, Environmental Protection, Licensing and PCSOs
- Completion of their NSC mandatory training modules
- Spent time on foot patrols in rural communities
- Commenced visits to local communities and spent time with local businesses
- Dates have been arranged for them to go out on the mobile library, to ensure engagement with communities
- Undertaken some joint work with PCSOs to highlight home security to residents
- Working on hot spot issues, in areas such as Castlebatch, Locking and Dundry

- 3.3.2 The vehicle designs have been agreed with A&S colleagues (prior approval is required as part of Accreditation). The vehicles will be delivered next week and following the branding will be available from the end of January.

- 3.3.3 One of our Trading Standards Officers is now working either in Weston or Bridgewater police station 3 days/week. The officer is attending the neighbourhood policing tasking meetings each Wednesday and is in regular

contact with our local Inspector - Sharon Bennett. There have been some notable successes, even at this early stage of the project including:

- Intelligence sharing of illegal fireworks sales via social media. Information received by the police. NSC/Police search of intelligence systems in both organisations helped to inform the level of risk
- Police received information on a known rogue trader who was defrauding a 90 year old victim. This information enabled our Trading Standards Officer to respond in a timely way. A refund was secured for the victim, negating the need for them to go through a stressful court case
- Trading Standards has also provided the police with a list of potential victims of rogue traders and joint visits to these residents are taking place. These visits have been coordinated through colleagues in Adult Social Care.
- Counterfeit vodka – the intelligence on this product (analysis confirmed the beverage was ***injurious to health***) was provided by the police. Within 90 minutes of the call the council and the police had mobilised a multi-agency team – comprising Trading Standards/Food Safety/Licensing staff (NSC) and neighbourhood policing personnel (including an under-cover detective). Within hours the team had visited most of the licensed premises likely to have purchased the vodka. Several seizures were made and one premise voluntarily surrendered their liquor licence (within 3 hours)
- Our Trading Standards Officer is proactively liaising with Bath Trading Standards to share intelligence

3.3.4 The Community Safety Accreditation application is progressing. Under section 40 of the Police Reform Act (2002), Chief Constables can grant a limited range of powers to employees of other organisations who contribute towards community safety. The employing organisation needs to complete an application as part of the accreditation process. The application needs to be supported by evidence of relevant policies and procedures which demonstrate that the accredited powers would be well managed.

Initial work has been completed on the draft 'Joint Operational Protocol' and on the list of powers to be adopted by NSC. Officers will be seeking the Panel's views on the proposed powers to be applied for at the meeting of the Panel in January. NSC protocols and procedures (both HR and Operational) will need to be agreed and approved by Council prior to the submission of the Accreditation application.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 To date, internal consultation has taken place in both organisations. However, it is intended that over the next 2-3 months we will start to engage fully with communities and key partners.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 There are risks associated with delivering the Community Response in the proposed timescales. However, these have been mitigated through close management of an action plan, with all actions currently on track. In addition, officers have been identified to lead on each of the work streams and dedicated time and resource has been secured.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The work of the teams will be intelligence lead and provide a robust response to hot spot localities, where communities and businesses are experiencing anti-social behaviour. The service will have a high visibility presence in more rural communities.

## **8. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Building safer and stronger communities is one of the six corporate priorities

## **9. OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 This report is produced in response to a request from the panel and the establishment of the working group.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Presentation to the all Councillor briefing on 25 November 2014  
Minutes of the Community and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel 25 November 2014  
North Somerset People and Communities Strategy  
North Somerset Council Corporate Plan