

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2010

THE EFFECTIVENESS AND FUTURE OF PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER (PACTs) IN MEDWAY – TASK GROUP REVIEW

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Summary

The committee agreed that a task group should be established to look into this matter and this report and the enclosed draft review document details the task group's work and recommendations.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 There is no legal obligation on the Police or other members of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to set up and support PACTs. However, The Louise Casey review, "Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime" published in 2008, established the top ten policing approaches that the public want to see. These included continuity in the local policing team and good engagement with the community to identify priorities for action and to give feedback on action and outcomes on cases of greatest community concern.
- 1.2 To meet these expectations the police service agreed to commit to a policing pledge which includes a commitment to "arrange regular public meetings to agree your priorities giving you a chance to meet your local team with other members of your community."
- 1.3 The council, the Local Strategic Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership have agreed a range of priorities and performance measures against which progress on community engagement and community safety is measured. These are set out in the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy,

which is the overarching strategy for Medway, the Council Plan and the Local Area Agreement and the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2009 – 2012 produced and delivered by the CSP.

- 1.4 In each of these documents there is a commitment to the development of the work of PACTs to enable the police and partners to listen and respond to resident's concerns and in particular involve residents in tackling local crime and anti-social behaviour concerns.

2. Background

- 2.1 Around the same time as launching this review, the committee was designated as the council's crime and disorder committee under the Police and Justice Act 2006 with a new power to review and scrutinise the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the partners who comprise it.
- 2.2 This is relevant because the majority of PACTs in Medway were initially set up to deal with crime and disorder issues. The responsible authorities represented on the CSP are now under an obligation to respond to reports from the committee and to have regard to associated recommendations.
- 2.3 The Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that a task group should be established to look into this matter and this report details the task group's work and recommendations.
- 2.4 PACT stands for Partners and Communities Together and, in practice, provides an opportunity for local people to come together to tell their local policing team, local authority and other partner agencies about the issues causing concern within their neighbourhood and to identify those to be dealt with as a priority.
- 2.5 Councillors expressed an interest in examining:
 - The impact and effectiveness of PACTs in comparison to areas without them
 - The issues being raised by PACTs, and the difficulty of the same issues being raised at meetings over time
 - Whether each PACTs priorities were being achieved with long-term benefits to those neighbourhoods, and
 - The extent to which information about the activities of, and outcomes from PACTs were being recorded, analysed and acted on.

3. Diversity Impact Assessment

- 3.1 As this review does not relate to a change to a council policy nor does it contain proposals to change a service provided by the council, there is no requirement to complete a Diversity Impact Assessment Form.

3.2 However, during the review Members were mindful of the need for PACTs to enable full community engagement and paragraph 7 of the draft review document recommends a referral to the council's Equalities and Cohesion Group and other recommendations about full public inclusion.

4. Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that the attached draft review document is referred to the Cabinet for endorsement on 30 November 2010 before referral to the Community Safety Partnership and the Kent Police Authority in early 2011.

5. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
Some residents may not have an opportunity to shape policing and other local priorities because they do not know about, or do not want to attend PACT meetings.	In some cases the views of a small minority of vocal residents, or people with a specific cause, may prevail at PACT meetings with little or no opportunity for input by the wider community.	The Task Group acknowledges that people want a range of different opportunities and methods for community engagement and recommends measures to support PACTs to encourage wide and representative participation.
Community not receiving or understanding feedback from PACT meetings	It is important that the whole community should have access to information about the activities of their local PACT.	The Task Group recommends that the CSP should support PACTs to publicise meetings, priorities agreed and progress on achieving outcomes.
Varying formats for PACT meetings without regard to best practice guidance	Many PACTs rely on their Chairmen or members to produce and distribute posters and information and meeting formats vary widely.	The Task Group is recommending the production of a protocol and guidance to support PACTs to operate in line with best practice and basic operational standards.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications for the council within the draft review document

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduced a new power to every local authority requiring them to have a designated crime and disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee with power to make recommendations regarding the functioning of their local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (in Medway this is the Community Safety Partnership) and the partners who comprise it (insofar as their activities relate to the partnership itself). The Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee became the council's 'crime and disorder committee' from 30 April 2009.
- 7.2 The responsible authorities represented on the Community Safety Partnership are now under an obligation to respond to reports from the committee and to have regard to associated recommendations.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The Cabinet is asked to support the recommendations below for referral on to the Community Safety Partnership and the Kent Police Authority:
1. That the CSP should be asked to accelerate action to establish a database of PACTs, the areas they cover and contact details for each should be produced and published ward by ward;
 2. A protocol and guidance for PACTs in Medway should be produced by the CSP in consultation with PACT chairmen, to include a clear statement of purpose, basic operational standards and advice on how to access support and resources;
 3. A toolkit should be developed by the CSP to assist PACT Chairman and neighbourhood teams to run meetings, record priorities, actions and outcomes;
 4. The protocol for PACTs should include a requirement that Councillors are automatically invited to become members of any PACT within their ward and provided with sufficient notice of meetings;
 5. Consideration should be given to facilitating contact between PACT Chairmen by establishing a Medway-wide Forum to enable them to share experience and best practice and to coordinate priorities across wards;

6. As part of its annual scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be provided by the CSP with an update on PACTs, including the priorities, actions and outcomes from them on a ward by ward basis with some evaluation of effectiveness;
7. That the CSP should develop some analysis and comparative information to assist in evaluating the impact of PACTs and other forms of public engagement on the incidence of crime and anti social behaviour ward by ward with a view to providing this information in the quarterly news ward profile information provided to Councillors;
8. That the Equalities and Cohesion Group should be asked to support the CSP in developing guidance to encourage and achieve participation by the widest cross section of people;
9. That the Equalities and Cohesion Group should be asked to support the CSP in developing guidance to encourage and achieve participation by the widest cross section of people;
10. In addition to ongoing publication of PACT data there should be an opportunity for local residents to periodically provide feedback on the operation of their local PACT and, in particular, the extent to which they feel able to influence decision-making at meetings;
11. That the CSP should encourage and support each PACT to hold an 'open meeting' (with no issues pre-arranged for discussion) specifically to involve local young people and neighbours of different ages and/or ethnic background in order to gain a real understanding of the issues and priorities for those groups;
12. That the CSP should be asked to progress the idea of Youth PACTs with membership invited from every secondary school, and the Youth Parliament;
13. The CSP is recommended to invite all partners to review their community engagement strategies and the groups and organisations they support to eliminate duplication and maximise the use of, and support for, PACTs where possible and appropriate;
14. That the CSP should be invited to consider launching a Medway annual PACT recognition award scheme to help raise the public profile of PACTs, particularly in the local press;
15. That the CSP Media Officer should be asked to develop some guidelines and offer practical support to PACTs with production and publication of advertising material for meetings.

Background papers

Police and Justice Act 2006

Community Safety Partnership Plan 2009 – 2012

Medway Sustainable Community Strategy

Council Plan 2010 - 2013

Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime (June 2008)

Policing in the 21st Century: reconnecting police and the people

The Coalition: our programme for government

NI 4 Action Plan (% of people who feel they can influence decision-making in their locality)

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