

Community safety



Our ambition

- A1** We want to put community safety at the heart of the place-shaping role of local authorities – reflecting the high priority that local communities place on these issues.¹ And we want to make it easier for *all* local partners – including local authorities, chief constables, police authorities, youth offending teams, probation boards and fire and rescue authorities – to work together in delivering improved community safety and building respect. This White Paper provides a sustainable framework for local action which will strengthen partnership working and give communities a bigger say in identifying and tackling local safety priorities.

The challenge

- A2** As a nation, Britain is safer today than it was ten years ago. Overall crime is down 35% since 1997. Perceptions of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are falling. Cases of arson are down and are currently below the 2010 target of 94,000. Thanks to this drop, and to strong national and local campaigning on smoke alarms, accidental fire deaths fell 20% in 2004/5. And an additional £40 million for civil protection work has ensured local areas are better equipped than ever to deal with major unexpected incidents such as flooding.
- A3** At the same time, local communities are playing a bigger role in making this happen. Many local agencies, such as the police and police authorities, already have a good record on consulting local communities. But we are stepping up our game. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) are being strengthened and made more accountable to communities through the Crime and Disorder Act Review. The Respect Action Plan is allowing the law-abiding majority to take back control, for example through the introduction of the Respect Standard for Housing Management. And the introduction of neighbourhood policing means citizens are getting a bigger say in how their local police service is run.

¹ The public say that low-level crime, anti-social behaviour and disrespect are the issues that are of most importance to communities locally. Home Office online report 49/04, 2004

- A4** But despite successes in many areas, we know that the performance of local partners on community safety is still too varied. For example, up to 80% of certain types of anti-social behaviour is not reported, either because people are unclear who is responsible or they simply do not believe anything will be done about it.
- A5** This is partly because local authorities do not always see it as their job to tackle anti-social behaviour or to improve community safety. But there is also the problem of a large number of different partnerships, performance frameworks and funding streams at the local level, meaning that different bodies are often pulled in different directions, rather than working together to meet shared priorities.

How the White Paper will meet the challenge

- A6** This White Paper will create a sustainable framework for local action on community safety and respect, strengthening partnership working and ensuring greater clarity over who is responsible for agreeing and delivering local community safety targets. Our aim is for it to be easier for local authorities, chief constables, police authorities and other partners to work together, within existing accountability frameworks.
- A7** There is also a critical role for local government to play, working in partnership with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), local probation boards, and youth offending teams, in reducing re-offending and protecting the public (see box below). Similarly, the delivery of an effective criminal justice system will require increasingly strong links to be made between local authorities, Local Criminal Justice Boards, and regional Reducing Re-offending Partnerships.

Partnership working to reduce re-offending

There are a number of successful examples of partnership working on reducing re-offending that we will look to build on. For example:

- through the 'accommodation pathway', local partners have worked together to develop appropriate housing options for prisoners and offenders subject to community orders, prior to and after their sentences, in order to prevent homelessness and re-offending;
- in a number of areas, local authorities are working in partnership with local probation boards to ensure that unpaid work meets local needs and helps repair the harm caused by crime. In Teesside, local authorities are offering a guaranteed job interview to local offenders who have completed the unpaid work element of their community sentence through the Neighbourhood Improvement Scheme. A number of these offenders have gone on to secure employment;
- an East Midlands Demonstration Project has been established between NOMS, Local Government East Midlands and local authorities from Leicestershire and Rutland, in order to develop a 'local partnership working toolkit'.



Responsive services and empowered communities

- A8 Neighbourhood policing is already making a difference in local communities, bringing down both crime and the fear of crime. Following this year's Budget announcement of an additional £100m for neighbourhood policing, the roll out will be accelerated, so that all areas will have neighbourhood policing by April 2007 – a huge step forward in reconnecting citizens with the police.
- A9 Neighbourhood management has also been highly effective in delivering more responsive services and engaging local residents.² However, take-up thus far has been largely limited to deprived areas. We will work with local authorities and the police to promote the wider use of neighbourhood management and its links with neighbourhood policing by:
- raising the profile of the pathfinders programme's achievements, and promoting take up elsewhere;
 - developing good practice guidance and model approaches to the integration of neighbourhood management and neighbourhood policing; and
 - encouraging local authorities, the police and other relevant partners – through new guidance – to co-ordinate their consultations and avoid producing multiple, overlapping plans for the same neighbourhood.
- A10 We are also strengthening the system of redress, so that people can easily report concerns and request action. We plan to extend the Community Call for Action (being introduced for crime and disorder issues in the Police and Justice Bill 2006) to cover all local government matters.
- A11 There are already a number of good examples of where service providers have involved local communities in service delivery (see box below).

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority community advocates

Bilingual fire-safety advocates have been working in Merseyside since 2002. There are currently four advocates, speaking Somali, Bengali, Arabic and Chinese, based in fire stations across Merseyside.

The project aims to ensure that a larger number of households are engaged in home fire risk checks and that the fire service is able to build closer links with these communities over the longer term. To date over 2000 Home Fire Safety Check Referrals have been secured by advocates.

2 In neighbourhood management pathfinder areas, for example, satisfaction levels with the police service, street cleaning and with the area as a place to live have all gone up between 2003 and 2006 – ODPM, *Neighbourhood Management – at the Turning Point* – Programme Review 2005-06, (2006)

Effective, accountable and responsive local government

- A12** We want to see local authorities everywhere demonstrating strong leadership on community safety – with a single, highly visible figure taking responsibility for community safety at executive level – so that the public know who to hold to account. That is why regulations are being made through the Police and Justice Bill (2006) which will require the portfolio holder for community safety on councils' executives to play a key role on the CDRP.
- A13** Similarly, we expect local authorities to appoint appropriately skilled and representative members to sit on police authorities. And we will continue to support the IDeA Leadership Academy in providing leadership programmes for fire and rescue authority members which facilitate peer learning and support.

Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper

- A14** Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) will provide the forum for setting the strategic vision for an area, for capturing that vision in the Sustainable Community Strategy, and for agreeing priorities for improvement in the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Responsibility for driving delivery of community safety outcomes is the role of the CDRP.

Review of the Crime and Disorder Act Provisions on Partnership Working

CDRPs have proved highly successful in bringing together local government, the police and other partners to make communities safer. The major recommendations of this review are:

Functions and Roles

The functions of CDRPs and the roles and responsibilities of partners will be defined in a set of national standards for partnership working.

In two-tier areas, LAAs give top-tier LSPs a strategic overview of community safety issues that must be fully linked to, and consistent with, the district-level CDRP, and a bottom-up, intelligence-led approach.

A Firmer Focus on Delivery

CDRPs will be required to undertake a regular strategic assessment and produce annual three-year rolling plans in the place of triennial audits and strategies.

The information-sharing provisions of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 have been strengthened and a duty has been placed on relevant authorities to share depersonalised data which is already held in a depersonalised format.

The Police National Intelligence Model (NIM) is being adapted for partnerships. CDRPs will be required to follow its principles, enabling much more focused action on the drivers of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.



Community Engagement & Accountability

CDRPs will be required to consult, engage and report regularly to their communities, including through 'face the people' sessions, where senior representatives of CDRPs will meet communities in sessions open to the media.

The powers of local authority overview and scrutiny committees (OSCs) will be extended to encompass the work of CDRPs and to deal with issues raised by members of the community under the Community Call for Action (CCfA).

The CCfA will extend the role of local elected members as community representatives by establishing them as the first port of call for members of the community who believe a crime and disorder issue has not been dealt with adequately by a CDRP partner. The emphasis will be on the local councillor to work with relevant partners before escalating the issue to the OSC. In addition, the lead member for community safety will be required to play a key role in the CDRP.

A15 This White Paper will build on the reforms set out above, strengthening partnership working with:

- a duty on the local authority to prepare the LAA as well as the Sustainable Community Strategy in consultation with others;
- a new duty on the local authority and named local partners (including chief constables, police authorities, local probation boards, youth offending teams, and fire and rescue authorities) to co-operate with each other in agreeing the relevant targets in the LAA;
- statutory guidance saying that the Sustainable Community Strategy and other local and regional statutory plans, such as the local policing plan, and the regional reducing re-offending plan, should have regard to each other;
- a new duty on the local authority and named partners to have regard to specific targets agreed in the LAA. Where there is sustained underperformance by individual partners against agreed targets, a range of intervention measures are available (see chapter six). But there is flexibility within this framework to react to changing circumstances and the operational independence of the police will be completely maintained. For example, a new security threat or public order requirement would require the chief constable to redeploy their officers to reflect the change in priorities. In such circumstances, the police would have well founded reasons for departing from the previously agreed community safety targets in the LAA;³ and
- the development of a community safety coordination structure at county council level in two-tier areas.

³ The accompanying guidance will make clear the police retain complete operational independence

- A16** We want local public service providers to have maximum flexibility in how they deliver shared outcomes. So, in order to complement the alignment of indicators and targets, we will bring more area-based funding streams into the LAA pooled funding pot by April 2009. We will also consider how, for example, we might better integrate immigration objectives into LAAs including looking at whether we might route some aspects of immigration funding to LAAs in future years.
- A17** However, there will be some funding streams that for specific reasons are unsuitable for LAAs.⁴ For example, this route may be needed for funding intended to support defined activities which may be exceptionally difficult to deliver locally – such as youth justice funding. There may also be some short-term needs for grants outside the LAA framework where new pilot schemes are initiated. In such cases, the expectation would be that funding streams would eventually be included within LAAs, once the scheme was fully established.
- A18** In addition to crime and policing issues, we will expect local partners, such as local probation boards, youth offending teams, fire and rescue authorities and representatives from the voluntary and private sectors, to continue working together in agreeing and delivering on priorities for reducing re-offending, managing migration, youth justice and fire and other safety risks.

Performance framework

- A19** As a Government, we have already taken steps to bring greater coherence to the performance assessment of policing and community safety with the introduction of the Assessment of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) framework, which will emphasise the outcomes achieved by partnerships as a whole, and not just the separate agencies in isolation.
- A20** The scope of this White Paper is services delivered by local authorities or local authorities in partnership with others. Our aim is to align the community safety elements of the new framework with the community safety element of APACS so that the police, local authorities and other partners are all working towards the same set of indicators and targets. Under the new framework there will be:
- an agreed, single set of national outcome indicators for community safety – for all issues addressed by local authorities, on their own and in partnership. In this, the relevant Secretary of State will be responsible for identifying appropriate community safety performance indicators to be included in the national set, and to be reported on by all areas;⁵

⁴ The funding streams that are excluded from LAAs will be published each year

⁵ Subject to decisions on national outcomes and indicators in the Comprehensive Spending Review (2007)



- a single agreement between the government and local public service providers on the community safety priorities for improvement for a particular area (in the LAA), for which partners will be held jointly responsible;
- an aligned assessment regime, so that there is a single way of reporting on and judging performance against each indicator and a single route for using those judgments to inform the targets agreed for each area. The relevant Secretary of State will retain oversight of the monitoring and assessment of performance;⁶ and
- an aligned intervention regime, with central government working with and through the Government Offices, able to support partners and take action in individual areas of concern.

A21 This will not diminish the operational independence or vertical accountability of the police – from the BCU commander to the chief constable. Similarly, the tripartite relationship between the Home Secretary, police authorities and chief constables will remain untouched. The Home Secretary will continue to be able to monitor and intervene in cases of underperformance on Home Office issues, and the police authority will remain responsible for setting local policing objectives and targets. The direct performance management and funding relationship between local authority chief executives, their statutory partners, and the Youth Justice Board, with regard to youth offending teams, will also remain as it is now.

A22 In short, our aims are for:

- local authority, police and other relevant plans to reflect the same priorities;
- there to be a single set of community safety indicators for services delivered by local authorities and the police and other partners;
- agreed community safety priorities to be set out in the LAA; and
- all relevant partners to have regard to these priorities as they carry out their duties.

Conclusion

A23 Many local authorities are already providing strong strategic leadership on community safety, backed by successful partnerships with their key partners: chief constables, police authorities, fire and rescue authorities, youth offending teams and probation boards. This White Paper removes barriers to collaborative working, and offers a powerful new set of levers to allow every local authority to meet the community's expectations for a safer environment in which to live and work.

⁶ This will not include regulatory information for example about CJS processes