

# Community Safety Peer Challenge

## Safe City Partnership

### Southampton

February 2014

Report

## Background and scope of the peer challenge

The peer team would like to say how much we enjoyed spending time in Southampton to work with you on the recent community safety peer challenge. We very much appreciated the welcome we received and the honesty with which people engaged in the process and the support provided in the lead up to, and during the course of, the challenge.

It is testimony to the Safe City Partnership's (SCP) and the council's desire for constructive external insight that Southampton commissioned the peer challenge. Peer challenges are managed and delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. It is important to stress that this was a peer challenge of a theme – community safety – and not of any one organisation. The peer challenge looked across a number of public agencies in their delivery of community safety and related governance issues; including the proposal of the SCP taking on the governance of youth justice.

The peers who delivered the peer challenge were:

- Alastair Macorkindale, Head of Community Safety, Waltham Forest (lead peer)
- Sue Dicks, Community Safety Manager, Bath & NE Somerset
- Nick Metcalfe, Youth Justice Manager, Kingston upon Hull City Council
- Detective Inspector Tom Harding, West Mercia Police
- Neil Shaw, Programme Manager, LGA
- Mike Short, Senior Adviser, LGA

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement-orientated and tailored to meet individual needs of councils and partnerships. The peers used their experience and knowledge to reflect on the evidence presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read. The guiding issues, as identified by the Partnership in their position statement for the peer challenge, were:

- How well SCP is meeting the community safety priorities of Southampton and how the governance arrangements for different aspects can be strengthened?
- Exploring how SCP can significantly improve its performance (including a specific focus on improving YOT performance)
- Examining how the council complies with its Section 17 obligations and how to lever a greater contribution to community safety outcomes from the wider involvement of other services
- What can we learn from good practice that partnerships and partners are doing elsewhere?
- A review of the operational practice in relation to the risk assessments and victim support work in the YOS.
- In delivering this focus the peer team will also consider the core components that all peer challenges cover:

- Understanding of local context and priority setting: Does the SCP understand its local context and has it established a clear set of community safety priorities?
- Financial planning and viability: Does SCP have financial plan/arrangements in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
- Political and managerial leadership: Does SCP have effective political and managerial leadership and is it a constructive partnership?
- Governance and decision-making: Are effective governance and decision-making arrangements in place to respond to key challenges and manage change, transformation and disinvestment?
- Organisational capacity: Are organisational capacity and resources focused in the right areas in order to deliver the agreed priorities?

## **Executive Summary**

Southampton has seen significant economic growth in recent years and is a place which continues to change. It has also experienced the national trend of notable reductions in crime rates for a number of years. However, the city is not without its community safety challenges and it looks to see how it can have a stronger impact on community safety outcomes and get more added value out of agencies working together on the issue.

SCP currently has five key priorities and overall positive outputs are being delivered in each of the areas. The partner agencies have also been working hard on making stronger linkages to other agendas like safeguarding and health. There are a number of highly visible community safety projects and initiatives that show a real willingness for agencies to work together, often beyond the statutory remit of their own services. This creates optimism for the future tackling of community safety issues.

However, the future landscape is likely to be very different. As public sector budgets continue to reduce it will be increasingly important to understand how working together is creating more added value than the individual actions of single organisations. There will be more need to focus on a smaller number of key priorities and support this with an approach to governance that focuses on providing strategic direction, aligning resources and holding agencies to account for delivery.

The context to the peer challenge was ably set out in a position statement that explained how Southampton is on a journey of radical change and improvement. The commitment of community safety partners at all levels to work together to address issues is reflected in a variety of examples. Overall the partner agencies have managed to maintain their services above and beyond those of their statutory responsibilities. However, whilst, for the most part, positive outcomes are being achieved in terms of reducing crime and disorder, the City's comparative position is not improving at a pace.

Therefore, the scope of the review focussed principally on:

- Community safety priorities and governance
- Improving performance
- Section 17 - leveraging greater contributions
- Youth offending
- Partnership capacity and finance.

### **Governance, priorities and decision making**

We noted that SCP governance architecture is sound and the partnership has five key priorities with positive outputs being delivered in each. The current partnership structure and behaviours (not enough challenge) are hampering this process. Therefore, given the reducing resources in the public sector, we suggest that the SCP needs to focus on a smaller number of priorities with a greater level of challenge between partners on performance. As a more strategic top level partnership, the SCP should be focusing on two or three key priorities and developing a more streamlined governance structure to deliver this.

Growing the city's economy is the single biggest driver to helping the vulnerable to achieve more and Southampton has admirable ambitions in this area. Reducing reoffending and tackling youth crime is likely to make a significant contribution to these intertwined agendas and this might be a useful starting point for a discussion on more focused priorities.

The SCP is currently more operational than strategic in nature and yet with continuing reducing resources it will be even more important to take a more strategic approach and be better linked to other partnerships. There is a need for the SCP to clarify its governance and operational arrangements so that the links to statutory boards (such as Youth Offending Partnership, Safeguarding Boards and Health and Wellbeing Board) is clear. There also needs to be clarification and rationalisation of operational task and finish groups set up to better deliver a smaller number (perhaps just two or three) priorities. The SCP could better deliver on its priorities by concentrating on an outcome focus by looking at existing methodologies to assist partnerships to help clarify vision, outcomes and benefits.

### **Improving performance**

The SCP can demonstrate improving year-on-year performance across nearly all its core crime reduction and community safety areas of performance. However, there is a need to better understand 'what works' as the Partnership is currently not able to say with confidence which initiatives, projects and campaigns are driving down crime. Some of the building blocks to drive future improvement are not yet in place and the approach to performance management is underdeveloped. Taking a more evidence based approach will be important in analysing crime patterns and the impact of specific initiatives. This needs to be through a more systematic evaluation of existing interventions, projects and campaigns accompanied by a change in behaviours where agencies are more systematically held account for their performance against the SCP's objectives. This is also likely to make better use of

resources and will be made more achievable if the SCP focuses on a smaller number of priorities with clear accountability and expectations of what each of the partners have to deliver in respect of these priorities. Southampton's universities could make an important contribution to supporting this more evidence driven approach, along with stronger use of analytical capability across the partnership's agencies.

### **The council's community safety responsibilities: section 17 and leveraging greater contributions**

There are good examples where public services across Southampton have embraced (or considered) their community safety responsibilities. Many of the council's functions played an integral part in delivering on community safety issues and in this context the council plays a critical role. The peer team were impressed with a number of examples of how the council's functions played an integral part in community safety, for example from teams in housing, licensing, planning, environmental health and safeguarding. This is evidenced in Planning considering crime issues as part of new city centre regeneration schemes.

Housing Services business/service plans which are based on local community priorities, the linkages made through locating Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) in Children Services which also has responsibility for Families Matter and safeguarding. Progress on Families Matter appears to be good - the work is targeting the right families, delivering support and there are early signs of delivering positive outcomes. While council requires all reports to either council or cabinet meetings to consider section 17 issues, this has to be used as a mechanism for more systematic and consistent consideration of community safety implications of council policies, actions and decisions.

### **Youth Offending Service**

Southampton Youth Offending Service (SYOS) is making steady progress and there is evidence of increased confidence in the management and staff of the service to deliver against the Service strategic plan. For example it has implemented potentially effective programmes for reducing first time entrants and reducing reoffending. It also needs to do more to reduce the numbers of young people entering the criminal justice system. SYOS has implemented programmes for reducing youth crime, such as triage, youth crime diversion and the Priority Young People scheme. The impact of these schemes will take time to be reflected in positive outcomes. They are still works in progress and it will be important to monitor that they are having the desired impact.

We have been made aware of discussions about potentially combining the Youth Offending Partnership (YOP) and SCP. We recognise that this proposal to combine governance arrangements for SCP and YOP was to ensure engagement of senior officers in progressing youth offending issues and this is now beginning to bear results, for example in custody issues. However, it is our view that any changes to the formal governance of the YOP need to be made with care; loss of focus on this subject could engender significant risk and lack of traction on future performance improvement. We therefore recommend no changes are made to the current

governance arrangements for the Youth Justice Board as the risks outweigh the possible benefits at this time. [This recommendations has been implemented now]

### **Partnership capacity and finance**

In a climate of reducing capacity and resources for community safety, the SCP has maintained good relationships between agencies and there continues to be an overall reduction in crime in the city. There is willingness at the senior officer level to take a joined up approach and maintaining a good pace of improvement. In part this is as a result of the strong leadership from the council's chief executive and the collective courage of the partners to be brave and bold. The SCP Chair is both visible and well respected by the agencies. However, like all other cities, there are financial challenges facing all public sector agencies and resultant reductions in services. There are recent examples of agencies represented on the SCP withdrawing services as funding reduces, some of which have been with limited discussion of the wider impact on other agencies of such service reductions. Any future service reductions by any partner need to be discussed by SCP so the impact on others can be explored.

### **Recommendations**

As a result of our main findings above the peer team developed a number of key recommendations which we feel would greatly assist the improvement of community safety in Southampton. These are;

- Strategic priorities, governance and leadership
  - Build on the shared vision for the city being developed by Southampton Connect to decide what is important in delivering community safety outcomes (ensuring that this is partnership driven and evidence based)
  - Developing the economy is the single biggest driver to helping the vulnerable to achieve more, therefore, consider what aspects of community safety help or hinder in delivering this priority.
  - Strengthen strategic leadership and ensure that the delivery structure is fit for purpose to achieve better understanding of needs and risks, differentiate between needs and reduce to two or three priorities and hold each to account in a transparent way with a focus on outcomes
  - Reduce the number of sub groups
- Improve performance
  - Measure the right things
  - Develop a culture of evidence based policy making by significantly improving analytical understanding of crime and disorder. Maximise the relationship with Southampton's universities, in particular their inputs into the 'What Works Centre' for crime reduction at The College of Policing
  - All partners need to work together to identify and make effective use of analytical resources across partnership to achieve agreed outcomes as research and analysis is needed for partnership work to be effective.
  - Set evidence based, stretch but achievable target setting
  - Have regular stop/start continue conversations based on impacts
  - Facilitate data sharing and don't let agencies hide behind Data Protection Act

- Youth Offending
  - Maintain separate governance arrangements for the Youth Justice Board but ensure these have senior representations from all the key agencies and improve alignment between the Safe City Partnership and the Youth Offending Partnership, for example through combined meetings.
  - Work with the Police about best way to reduce offending and identifying best places for people to be referred to
  - Develop real time proxy data
- Section 17
  - Identify risks in a systematic manner embedded in policy and operational decision making and manage them robustly
- Golden thread – deliver the improvements recommended in the Corporate Peer Challenge report and use the assistance offered from the LGA and peers (Transforming Awards Challenge – Element B funds via CLG)

SCP and the council embraced the challenge positively and supported the process very well and we have offered further peer support to help them in facilitating some of the further improvement of the SCP identified in this report if that would be helpful. This would be aimed at building on the outcomes from the peer challenge and possibly in supporting SCP in their work to review community safety policies.

## Detailed findings in the focus areas

### COMMUNITY SAFETY PRIORITIES AND GOVERNANCE

#### Strengths

We noted that the SCP governance architecture works well and that its quarterly meetings are well attended. Overall the SCP agencies have managed to maintain services above and beyond those of its statutory responsibilities.

The partnership has established five key priorities. Overall, positive outputs are being delivered in each of the five priority areas;

- Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in key locations
- Reduce the harm caused by drugs and alcohol
- Reduce repeat victimisation
- Reduce reoffending
- Reduce youth crime

Details of SCP achievements and good examples in these priority areas are more fully outlined in the appropriate sections below.

We understand that while Southampton Connect is the strategic city partnership, other partnership boards such as SCP do not formally sit under Connect. However, there seems to be some overlap between the priorities of different partnership boards and how they work. For example, there is an overlap between the SCP and the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB). There could be some considerable benefit in instigating regular meetings of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of these two Boards with the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) in order to ensure that focus and work of the respective Boards are aligned alongside the priorities of the PCC's Police and Crime Plan. We acknowledge that SCP has recognised this issue and will shortly be working to address clearer working arrangements.

We recognise that the HWB focus has a much wider than that of the SCP and that the council has a clear understanding of what health and well-being is and what works well. This has resulted in good support to health as part of the council's transformation work. The HWB is learning to work differently in preparation for future budget cuts, people are clear on their ambitions and the politicians are supporting and engaging by being on board with the key principles. The HWB feel that the new three way work streams of vulnerable adults and children together with prevention and positive lives will provide the opportunities for change and better governance.

The peer team received consistent feedback that the top level SCP needs to retain a consistent strategic focus as it is too often drawn into operational issues. Governance of community safety issues will be significantly strengthened if SCP focused on providing direction, directing resources, managing performance and holding partners to account.

Under SCP there are a number of separate task and finish groups with a community safety remit. They are part of the complex Southampton partnership structure which



is currently being streamlined. With reduced partnership capacity it will be critical to reduce the number of these groups being supported. It is for SCP to determine the number and nature of the group(s). However, SCP may wish to consider a radical approach by having a single 'delivery group' alongside the geographical tasking groups currently in existence. Although there are disadvantages to this, it would significantly streamline the number of groups and free up considerable time. A less radical evolution would be to retain groups closely aligned to delivering SCP's priorities and terminate others that do not.

There is currently seems to be disconnect between the priorities of the Police & Crime Commissioner and SCP. Ideally, SCP and the PCC would be able to collectively discuss and agree a set of priorities upon which to focus. This has not happened to date and it is the responsibility of both parties to work to make this happen for the benefit of Southampton residents. An annual priority setting process, supported by a clear evidence base to inform priority setting may help this. This may require some external facilitation or brokerage and the LGA would be pleased to assist.

### Moving Forward

There is an overlap in some areas between SCP and HWB (e.g. impact of alcohol). There could be some benefit in instigating regular meetings of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of these two Boards with the Police & Crime Commissioner in order to ensure that respective focus and work of the two Boards are aligned.

As the capacity of agencies to support the community safety agenda has reduced, the number of priorities for SCP has grown. Now is the time to take stock and reduce the number of priorities to two or three issues, driven by the strategic assessment and a judgement of where SCP can make the strongest impact. With such a strong focus on the city's economy, this is likely to mean a strong community safety focus on reoffending and youth crime.

The interplay between SCP and linked partnerships is not as clear as the diagram in its Annual Plan for 2012/13 implied. The SCP is more operational than strategic in nature and yet with continuing reducing resources it will be even more important to be more strategic and linked to other partnerships. There is a need to clarify the role and remit of 'operational groups', which are often described as boards, to align with perhaps just two or three priorities. Operational groups below the SCP have grown and declined over a number of years. Now is the time to reduce these significantly, aligned to a smaller number of priorities.

SCP should be concentrated on an outcome focus. There is likely to be a benefit in looking at existing methodologies such as CHaMPS2 used by Birmingham City Council to assist their partnership to clarify vision, outcomes and benefits. In addition there is assistance from the LGA to support community safety partnerships in using principles of change management and programme and project management as applied to 'whole place community budget pilots'. This bespoke improvement offer is in two parts;

- Community Safety Strategic Challenge - to help inform the next phase of improvement, supporting the identification of economies of scale, exploring opportunities of wider partnership working and joint working
- Community Safety Leadership Academy - which includes workshops, mentoring and support on an on-going basis on the development of relationships with PCCs, HWBs, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and relevant community groups

#### Recommendations

- Build on the shared vision for the city being developed by Southampton Connect to decide what is important in delivering community safety outcomes (ensuring that this is partnership driven and evidence based)
- Developing the economy is the single biggest driver to helping the vulnerable to achieve more, therefore, consider what aspects of community safety help or hinder in delivering this priority.
- Strengthen strategic leadership and ensure that the delivery structure is fit for purpose to achieve better understanding of needs and risks, differentiate between needs and reduce to two or three priorities and hold each to account in a transparent way with a focus on outcomes
- Reduce the number of sub groups

### **IMPROVING PERFORMANCE**

The peer team focused on SCP's achievements in delivering on its priorities and on identifying key areas where future performance needs to be significantly improved. Southampton can demonstrate improving year-on-year performance across nearly all its core crime reduction and community safety areas of performance. This has followed the national trend of seeing significant overall reductions across all crime categories.

Some of the performance management 'architecture' exists to enable the collection and presentation of most performance data. The establishment of the Performance Review Group is welcomed in that it has created an opportunity to more systematically collect performance data.

To assess how SCP were performing against their five priorities we looked at raw data information available on LG Inform for a range of nine performance indicators to assess how SCP compares against three comparison groups of the nine English Core Cities, all English single tier authorities and all single tier and county councils in the South East. Please see appendix A for full details.

- all crime figures (2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12)
- burglary of dwellings (2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12)
- robbery offences (2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12)
- violence against the person offences recorded (2009/10, 2010/11 & 2011/12)
- adult reoffending (2011, 2012 and 2013)
- drug offences (2013)

- rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol related harm (2013)
- sexual offences (2013)
- first time entrants to the youth justice system (2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13)

This information indicates that:

- Compared with Core Cities the SCP has performed well on the first seven indicators, however, in comparison on first time entrants to the youth justice system SCP, although performing well with a lower than average figure in 2010/11, performed less well with higher than average figures in 2011/12 and 2012/13. The figures have been consistently increasing in stark contrast to the other eight core cities where reductions are being achieved. Southampton is ranked ninth in 2012/13. And for sexual offences in 2013 SCP has performed less well with a figure just higher than the average and with worsening figures during each quarter. Southampton is ranked sixth. However, all 9 core cities have worsening figures throughout the year.
- Compared with all English single tier authorities the SCP has performed well only on robbery offences. It has performed less well but with some improvements on;
  - all crime with higher than average figures for all three years but with improved figures year on year
  - drug offences with slightly higher than average figures but with improving figures through the year
  - adult reoffending with higher than average figures in 2010 and 2011 but performed better with a lower than average figure in 2013
  - burglary dwellings in 2009/10 and 2010/11 with higher than average figures but has performed well with lower than average figures in 2011/12
- However, the SCP has performed less well with little sign of improvement on:
  - violence against the person offences with higher than average figures for
  - rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol related harm with figures just above the average in 2013
  - sexual offences with a figure just above the average in 2013
  - first time entrants in the youth justice system with higher than average figures in 2011/12 and 2012/13
- Compared to all single tier and county councils in the South East region SCP has performed less well but with some signs of improvement for all crime and adult reoffending. However, SCP has performed less well with little sign of improvement on;
  - burglary dwellings with higher than average figures
  - robbery offences with higher figures than the average
  - violence against the person offences with higher than average figures
  - drug offences with higher than average figures in 2013

- first time entrants to the youth justice system with higher than average figures
- rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol related harm with a higher than average figure in 2013
- sexual offences with a higher than the average figure in 2013

On balance there is concern on SCP performance in particular for first time entrants into the youth justice system, sexual offences, violence against the person offences and the rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol related harm when compared across all three comparison groups.

However, some of the building blocks to drive improvement are not yet in place and the approach to performance management is underdeveloped. Specifically, this includes:

- the lack of a complete set of performance measures related to the partnership's priorities e.g. alcohol reduction
- incomplete use of data e.g. anti-social behaviour council data, performance indicator missing data
- limited consideration of how some targets are set
- the use of datasets from different time periods creating problems of comparability

### Strengths

Southampton can demonstrate improving year-on-year performance across nearly all its core crime reduction and community safety areas of performance. The SCP's Annual Plan for 2013/14 has a set of five priorities and some of the performance management 'architecture' exists to enable the collection and presentation of most performance data. The establishment of the Performance Review Group is welcomed in that it has created an opportunity to more systematically collect performance data.

The peer team were impressed by the Integrated Commissioning Board which enables the NHS and council to jointly commission services, and at an operational level officers share 'soft intelligence' between each other, enhancing their understanding of the 'hard' performance data. So, for example, it is positive to see some agencies involved in activities that are not part of their 'core' business and that they use these opportunities to add value. Those we noted include the fire service attending MARACs and housing attending community tasking groups.

### Moving forward

However, some of the building blocks to drive improvement are not yet in place and the approach to performance management is underdeveloped. Specifically, this includes:

- the lack of a complete set of performance measures related to the partnership's priorities e.g. alcohol reduction

- incomplete use of data e.g. ASB council data, performance indicator missing data
- limited consideration of how some targets are set
- the use of datasets from different time periods creating problems of comparability

So despite a desire by senior partner representatives to take a single approach to the issue of community safety, some agencies are clearly still reluctant to share their data consistently. The SCP is struggling to obtain NHS data on alcohol related hospital admissions, timely data from the Drug and Alcohol Team (DAT) and occasionally experiences problems obtaining probation data. This data exists and there is no significant reason why this cannot be shared. Until these basic issues are resolved, the SCP will struggle to have a clear and useful picture of performance on which to base future decisions.

A considerable wealth of data exists within current organisational domains. A more evidence driven approach in future should make considerably better use of the available data. The creation of 'community mapping' using a wealth of data sets from the agencies will provide a much more sophisticated picture of vulnerable communities and individuals and assist the SCP to know they are meeting their needs.

The other significant building block of the evidence led approach will be more systematic evaluation of existing interventions, projects and campaigns. This is currently very limited and the partners struggle to articulate how their interventions are leading to a positive impact on crime issues. In a time of declining resources, the partners need to more systematically evaluate interventions to understand 'what works' and therefore where resources can have most impact.

Additional shared analytical capacity is likely to be a help in drawing this together, but any additional capacity will need the support of senior partnership representatives to build the appropriate relationships within the agencies. Data protection concerns are being used as a smokescreen to artificially create barriers to practical data sharing and need to be removed.

However, the better evidence driven approach must also be accompanied by a change in behaviours where agencies are more systematically held account for their performance against the SCPs objectives by the partner agencies.

Southampton is fortunate to have two universities within the city. These provide potential opportunities to grow the research/analytical/evaluation capacity of the SCP. The team feel the SCP could work with the universities to offer a basket of potential research/evaluation projects to undergraduate students annually.

## Recommendations

- Measure the right things
- Develop a culture of evidence based policy making by significantly improving analytical understanding of crime and disorder. Maximise the relationship with Southampton's universities, in particular their inputs into the 'What Works Centre' for crime reduction at The College of Policing
- All partners need to work together to identify and make effective use of analytical resources across partnership to achieve agreed outcomes as research and analysis is needed for partnership work to be effective.
- Set evidence based, stretch but achievable target setting
- Have regular stop/start continue conversations based on impacts
- Facilitate data sharing and don't let agencies hide behind Data Protection Act

## SECTION 17 OBLIGATIONS

### Strengths

The peer team were impressed with a number of examples of how the council's functions played an integral part in delivering on community safety issues. There are good examples of public services across Southampton embracing (or considering) their community safety responsibilities. This includes:

- Housing Services creating a junior wardens scheme and being significantly involved in ASB work and the neighbourhood warden scheme
- Planning considering crime issues as part of new regeneration schemes
- Licensing and Environmental Health supporting ASB work
- The Fire and Rescue Service becoming involved in health improvement activities
- Independent Domestic Violence (IDVAs) sit under Children Services and they link well with Families Matter and safeguarding.
- Leisure Services working with young people on diversionary activities
- Street cleaning and park services involved in StreetCRED and night time economy issues
- Social Care being significantly involved in Family Matters and youth crime issues

In addition the council requires all reports to either council or cabinet meetings to consider section 17 issues.

### Moving forward

The linkages between the council's community safety team, the youth offending service and housing service need strengthening as the information flow and data sharing is patchy between the two service areas and SYOS. There needs to either be a much more joined up approach, or an agreement that one area will take a lead on ASB issues.

We were aware of the number of staff reductions in the Community Safety Team and using raw data from LG Inform noted that the figures for the estimated budget net

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expenditure on community safety (taken from the Revenue Accounts Budget) in 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14 indicate that compared with;

- Core Cities: the council has spent below the average figure for all three years with declining figures over all three years. Southampton is ranked ninth in 13/14 with expenditure reducing 35% over three years compared to the average of 21%
- All English single tier authorities: the council has spent above the average figure over the first two years but spent less than the average in 2013/14. The reduced budget of 35% compares to a 16% average reduction across England
- All single tier and county councils in the South East region: the council has spent above the average figure for all three years. The reduced budget of 35% compares to a reduction of 32% in the average across the region

Given the above average reductions made to their budget we would suggest a thorough review of all possible models of delivery and consideration of whether such reductions should continue to be made. This could include looking at different models as for example Portsmouth are examining as part of their work on 'Delivering Differently' with support from Cabinet Office, CLG and LGA. It would also be helpful for Southampton to use LG Inform to identify how other authorities with similar reduced expenditure profiles are performing against their priorities. We would suggest ongoing discussions with Core Cities via their quarterly meetings and in particular liaising with Newcastle who have a similar expenditure profile but better figures than Southampton for example on;

- all crime figures
- first time entrants into the youth offending service
- violence against the person offences recorded

Although the council requires all reports to consider section 17 issues, there is little evidence that this responsibility is understood and applied widely. It appears that generally only cursory attention is paid to this issue in council reports. The approach to section 17 obligations needs to be taken more seriously in practical terms. This will require middle managers to have a refresher briefing on the opportunities section 17 creates and encourage middle managers to approach community safety staff to consider the implications of major service changes or projects.

#### Recommendation

- Identify risks in a systematic manner embedded in policy and operational decision making and manage them robustly

## **YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE**

The peer team focused on examining the operational practice and governance of SYOS). The SYOS has been previously inspected by HMIP and come in for some negative criticism from the Youth Justice Board. SCP was keen to explore the current performance of SYOS. The peer challenge took place at the same time as a HMIP inspection of probation. The peer challenge does not aim to duplicate this process, but to examine the overall performance of SYOS and its governance arrangements.

### Strengths

SYOS is making steady progress in creating its own identity and direction following the disaggregation from Wessex Youth Offending Service (WYOS). The changes resulting from the disaggregation of the WYOS in terms of governance, resource reallocation and personnel change, as well as the loss of the (previous) highly respected and experienced SYOS Manager, created a period of uncertainty and inertia in the performance of the service. There is however evidence that there is increased confidence in the management and staff of the service to deliver against the service's strategic plan.

SYOS has implemented potentially effective programmes for reducing first time entrants (triage and youth crime diversion) and reducing reoffending (Priority Young People scheme). The positive impact of these schemes will take time to be reflected in historic headline key performance indicators. These initiatives are still works in progress and have some way to go before they are established and proven. They are local protocols and operating procedures owned by partners which need to be improved to achieve sustained success.

The service has a well-motivated multi agency staff team strongly committed to making a difference to the lives of its client children and young people. There are low levels of staff turnover in the small service. Individuals seem to support each other and internal communication is effective. There are systems for regular supervision and staff training.

Risk assessment has been recognised as being of improved quality; there is now increasing recognition that safeguarding and protecting children has an equal part in the domains of risk of reoffending and risk of serious harm to others. The Short Quality case file inspection undertaken by HMI Probation in 2013 found acceptable levels of practice; an improvement plan has been completed.

### Moving Forward

We have been made aware of discussions about potentially combining the YOP and SCP. We recognise that this proposal to combine governance arrangements for SCP and YOS was to ensure engagement of senior officers in progressing youth offending issues and this is now beginning to bear results, for example in custody issues. However, it is our view that any changes to the formal governance of the YOP need to be made with care; loss of focus on this subject could engender significant risk and lack of traction on future performance improvement. We therefore recommend no changes are made to the current governance arrangements for the Youth Justice Board as the risks outweigh the possible benefits at this time. [We

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understand that a decision has recently been made to keep separate governance arrangements but to align them better and to ensure seniority on the YOS Board.]

We found no evidence that the SCP has the capacity to take on the governance of youth justice at this moment in time. While it's important to have clearly understood links between the YOP and the SCP, there are also strong views in central government (Ministry of Justice Guidance of Partnership Management Boards 2013) and HMI Probation that any changes should strengthen the focus on performance improvement, not weaken it.

There are examples from other community safety partnerships looking to improve working relationships, such as in Windsor and Maidenhead, where they meet as a CSP, but divide the agenda into sections, so that for part of the meeting they meet as the YOT management board. In Wokingham the YOT management board has been combined with their Substance Misuse Board, so that at each meeting half of the agenda is on YOT matters and half on substance misuse.

Local Youth Offending performance needs increased detailed analysis using real time data collection, with more informed understanding at political and corporate management level. The headline performance data currently being used to measure local performance is both historic and wholly dependent on raw data drawn from the Police National Computer. There is little evidence of local detailed analysis to verify its accuracy or its implications for local strategy. There are different youth justice models now available or currently in development from the Youth Justice Board.

There is unlikely to be real improvement achieved in youth offending key performance indicators of First Time Entrants, Reoffending and Use of Custody without the whole hearted policy support of all partners, and in particular Hampshire Constabulary. This pilot has now been agreed by the police. It is important in the development of pre court disposal and early intervention programmes.

With an increased focus on a smaller cohort of children and young people with complex needs and higher risk levels, the SYOS will require stronger support from social care and health partners. It is well recognised that effective early intervention and pre court disposal schemes leads to smaller caseloads of high risk cases. These young people will have additional needs which overlap into Families Matter, mental health and associated health needs, and safeguarding issues.

There is a Junior PCSO scheme and there are opportunities to link this with the Junior Warden Scheme in Housing Services. Neither was aware of each other and both work in schools separately. So perhaps there are on tap resources here to access at no costs. In addition for youth offenders in rehabilitation there are some wider schemes with which they could potentially engage; such as 'Young People's voice for their future', Youth Service User group and a Youth buddying/mentoring scheme.

At the appropriate time and to fit with the implementation of the new Assetplus assessment tool, a Youth Justice Sector lead peer review would be offer the local

partnership a more detailed assessment of youth offending service performance.

#### Recommendations

- Maintain separate governance arrangements for the Youth Justice Board but ensure these have senior representations from all the key agencies and improve alignment between the SCP and the YOP, for example through combined meetings.
- Work with the Police about best way to reduce offending and identifying best places for people to be referred to
- Develop real time proxy data

## **PARTNERSHIP CAPACITY & FINANCE**

### Strengths

In a climate of reducing capacity and resources for community safety, the SCP has maintained good relationships between agencies and there continues to be an overall reduction in crime in the city. Partners are committed to making a positive impact on crime and community safety issues. There is a good willingness at the senior officer level to take a joined up approach and maintain a good pace of improvement. In part this is as a result of the strong leadership from the council's chief executive and the collective courage of the partners to be brave and bold. The SCP Chair is both visible and well respected by the agencies.

The partners are gaining additional capacity and making creative use of existing resources by contributing to each other's agendas, for example, drawing other organisations into projects like StreetCRED and Hampshire Fire Service recruiting volunteers.

### Moving forward

There are examples of the agencies withdrawing services as funding reduces, with limited discussion of the wider impact on other agencies of such service reductions. The capacity of the agencies to tackle the community safety agenda will only get further stretched as the resource base declines. Any future service reductions need to be discussed at SCP so the impact on other agencies can be explored. For example the capacity of the council's community safety function has been significantly reduced in the last couple of years but there is little evidence of discussion about the potential implications for the overall capacity of the SCP to deliver community safety interventions.

## **Conclusions**

Finally, we would like to thank colleagues and members at Southampton, especially James, Suki, Caronwen and Miranda for their support in the lead up to the peer challenge and during the challenge itself. The council embraced the challenge positively and supported the process very well.

We have offered further peer support for council members/officers to help them in facilitating some of the further improvement of the SCP identified in this report if that would be helpful. This would be aimed at building on the outcomes from the peer challenge and possibly in supporting SCP in their work to review community safety policies.

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