
**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
BEST VALUE SCOPING PANEL
HELD ON 15 AUGUST 2001**

BVSP.4/01 COMMUNITY SAFETY

John Mallinson gave a presentation on the background to, and current issues with, the Community Safety function within the Council.

Councillors expressed regret that our partners in the delivery of Community Safety were unable to attend and asked that a list of those partners be circulated. Concern was raised as to how partners were going to be able to resource attendance at every Cumbrian Council's Community Safety review but it was explained that all Cumbrian Councils and the police were co-ordinating their reviews to minimise any duplication involved and it had been agreed by them that partner representatives would support the reviews in their individual districts.

4/01/a What Are Our Priorities?

It was agreed that the priorities for this review should be to investigate ways to further reduce crime and the fear of crime. In addition, there should be an increased focus on disorder and anti-social behaviour as it was considered that these issues were not the high priority that they should be. It was noted that there were a lot of issues relating to Community Safety coming on to the Statute Book in the near future, including issues around curfews and community orders etc. and these should be assessed during the review.

Current 'hotspots' should be tested to measure whether we've achieved our objectives for them (through consultation etc.) and also whether the geographical areas they cover are still the right ones. Botchergate was highlighted as an area where there was a high level of crime and disorder but, due to the low population level, wasn't identified as a 'hotspot'. The review team agreed to take this into consideration during the review.

The point was made that there may be other hotspots in Carlisle that do not relate to crime and disorder but were still community safety issues, areas of poor lighting for example, that should also be investigated during the review.

Section 17 development was identified as a high priority and one where the members could have direct influence through their committee work. It was agreed that all decisions taken in relation to the community should consider the effects on crime and disorder.

Member involvement in Community Safety issues needs to be improved and clear procedures need to be developed for all departments and members on how to deal with Community Safety issues.

It was requested that an additional line be added to the 'Accompanying Comments and Statements' title section of all committee reports to request a Community Safety Impact Statement if relevant.

4/01/b Which Activities Contribute?

Planning and licensing were identified as activities with a potentially major impact on crime and disorder, as well as housing allocation policy and tenancy enforcement. It was considered that the legal section should be giving more proactive guidance in strategy support. It was agreed that the Council should be setting a good example, so services like Grounds Maintenance and litter collection should be of a high standard – particularly in the areas such as 'hotspots'.

4/01/c Where Are We Now?

Mr Paul Musgrave explained that the Community Safety Partnership, of which we are a part, was quite effective and that we have a particularly good relationship with the Police. Information sharing had initially been poor but was improving. Some partners were more committed than others, with the County Council and the Health Authority less involved. It was hoped that the County's appointment of a Community Safety Officer would improve their contribution and members saw the potential to influence the involvement of the Health Authority. It was considered necessary to discover during the course of the review the reasons for their reluctance to participate in order that we may address them. This is also important so that there is no duplication, particularly with the Health Authority's work on deprivation.

Councillors considered that although there was obviously a lot happening within Community Safety, they weren't being kept informed about the process and needed better communications from Officers.

4/01/d Key Issues

It was considered that the discussion above had highlighted the key issues for the review.