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**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE  
COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 9 JANUARY 2003**

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**COS.8/03      COMMUNITY SAFETY BEST VALUE REVIEW**

The Community Safety Co-ordinator presented report ECD.02/03 enclosing a draft report prepared by Nacro Crime and Social Policy, a firm of consultants commissioned to assist the City Council in the development and completion of its Best Value Review of Community Safety, together with a draft Action Plan.

The report detailed the work undertaken to date on the Best Value Review which had been based upon the four 'Cs' of best value - challenge, compare, consult and compete.

The Community Safety Co-ordinator outlined the content of the Consultant's report and the recommendations contained therein, which related closely to the scope of the Review.

The overall assessment was that Carlisle City Council provided a good service that would develop and improve in the short-term provided those recommendations were fully implemented. Some progress had been made during the process of conducting the Review in that there was now a joint CDRP with Eden District Council and some of the issues exposed during the Review process had been identified within the Carlisle and Eden Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy.

Partnerships should develop a strategy for communicating with local people, paying particular attention to those living in areas of greatest need and/or who were most vulnerable, to ensure they could make people aware of attempts to reduce anti-social behaviour, including progress and successes.

The Council was working well with other partners to reduce crime with some worthwhile initiatives and crime levels were falling in line with national trends. However, the Council was not joining up the work of its internal services sufficiently to deliver on corporate or local strategy aims in reducing crime.

Throughout the consultation process it was apparent that anti-social behaviour was the primary concern of those who were consulted. The success of Carlisle and Eden's joint Crime and Disorder Strategy may depend on the partnerships' ability to effectively tackle that issue and be seen to be doing so. A clear definition of anti-social behaviour needed to be developed and communicated, agencies needed to be clear what it did and did not constitute.

The Review supported the intention to appoint a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator as indicated within Carlisle and Eden's Crime and Disorder Strategy and the decision to incorporate community intelligence into the decision making process. The newly appointed co-ordinator, in a dedicated role, would be in a position to devise a Strategy to ensure that aim was developed and actively applied.

The City Council had made a number of service specific improvements, including conducting a consultation process with residents to engage them in Community Safety issues. However, internal consultation with service departments proved difficult and raised the question of how high profile the issue of community safety actually was across the organisation.

The Review recognised the level of expertise that existed within the City Council and sought to use and build upon it during the course of the Review. The Review must also take into account the views of service users and the resulting recommendations sought to balance organisational aims and objectives with operational needs and requirements. By progressing the recommendations of the report there would be a more efficient and effective Community Safety function over time.

The Community Safety Co-ordinator then introduced Sergeant Andy Baines who worked in the Best Value Office and was a member of the Best Value Review Team.

In considering the matter, Members raised the following issues to which the Community Safety Co-ordinator and Sergeant Baines responded:

The Consultant's report is difficult to follow and includes a great deal of repetition.

That was acknowledged.

*At Recommendation 6 it states that "Elected Members must challenge any cursory reference to community safety within future committee reports to assist the mainstreaming of community safety into corporate business." The reality was that all Departments need to look at that on a day to day and strategic basis also.*

*6.1 Action raised the issue of training. What would that entail?*

Training would not necessarily be a major issue, but rather a change in the way of thinking. Work was being done on a continuous County wide training programme. It should be noted, however, that the scope to undertake training for all staff depended upon the level of funding which could be obtained during the financial year 2003-04.

*Concern existed around the labelling of areas as hotspots which may stigmatise them and worsen their prospects. The effectiveness of the Hotspots Task Group was also an issue.*

"Hotspots" was an overused phrase. The challenge for the Review had been to implement a structure which made reference to hotspots and worked to reduce offences in these locations without tightly defining them.

Hotspots were now looked at on a six monthly basis and based on selecting the top one or two locations according to Police incident data. Currock and Upperby were the first areas selected for priority under the Review.

*Who will feed in data as regards Drugs and Alcohol for the rest of the County?*

The Council was not solely responsible for drugs and alcohol on estates. It was part of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership which was reviewing how these issues were tackled and the manner by which data was collected. A lot of good data was available via the Website.

Members then expressed their appreciation of the considerable amount of work undertaken by the Community Safety Co-ordinator and Sergeant Baines, and looked forward to monitoring the Action Plan in due course.

Sergeant Baines added that people acknowledged that the Community Safety Co-ordinator and himself worked together and the City Council's commitment to Community Safety was recognised regionally as good practice.

RESOLVED - That the draft report and draft Action Plan on the Community Safety Best Value Review be forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, for onward transmission to the Executive and Council subject to that Committee's agreement.