Scrutiny of community safety partnerships

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Introduction

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) produces Library Monitors in order to help scrutineers learn from the experiences of their peers in reviewing specific topics. Library Monitors are so called because they draw on existing scrutiny reviews which can be found in the CfPS reviews 'Library'.

CfPS Library Monitors aim to:

◊ Be a one-stop shop for all the information about a subject you need in preparation for undertaking a review

◊ Add value to the more than 3,200 scrutiny reviews stored in our searchable review 'Library'

◊ Provide guidance based on the experiences of overview and scrutiny committees who have completed a review into the subject

◊ Provide scoping and benchmarking information and links to enable scrutineers to dedicate more time to scrutiny

The 12th edition of the CfPS scrutiny 'Library Monitor' looks at the subject of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and draws information from case study reviews into the subject (hosted in our 'Library') from eight different authorities.

The research for this document was conducted by Alison Yates, CfPS Research Assistant, who is also the principal author of the report.

Contents

1. Why scrutinise Community Safety Partnerships?

1.1   Community safety and policing are undergoing their biggest reforms for fifty years. The government describes its new approach to fighting crime as a 'radical shift in power from Whitehall to local communities'[1] and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are part of this approach - they are seen to have made a positive contribution to community safety, and are viewed as the place where decisions on how to tackle local crime issues should be made.[2] However, as explained in more detail in this Monitor, in this changing landscape there is a pressure for CSPs to prove their effectiveness, especially as Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are free to fund any organisation that supports their priorities, opening the way to private and third sector bodies entering the arena. A robust scrutiny review of a CSP could provide a valuable assessment of its current work and the resulting recommendations should provide guidance in ensuring a CSP is in good shape, working to the latest Home Office guidelines and aware of PCC priorities.

Background and legislative context

1.2   Community Safety Partnerships[3] (CSPs) were introduced in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. They are made up of a number of 'responsible authorities', some of whom are specified by statute, and some of whom sit as a result of local agreement, working together to protect their local communities from crime. They have made significant progress in improving community safety at local level, but they continue to evolve due to ongoing reforms. In 2009, councils were given new powers to scrutinise CSPs through provision made in the Police and Justice Act 2006.[4] More recently, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility (PRSR) Act 2011 (along with the cut in budgets

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[1] Home Office website, http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/fighting-crime-programme/, cited 8th February 2012
[2] Home Office (March 2011) *A New Approach to Fighting Crime*, p. 8
[3] They were originally known as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships or CDRPs.
[4] Home Office, in partnership with the CfPS and LGiU (May 2009) National Support Framework: Delivering Safer and Confident Communities – Guidance for the Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Matters – England. Implementing Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, p.1

that began in 2010[5]) means that CSPs are working in a new context and face challenges of which scrutineers need to be aware.

1.3   The PRSR Act 2011 makes no significant amendments to the role and remit of CSPs, or their local scrutiny arrangements. However, the introduction in November 2012 of elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) means changes to their working context – particularly as funding for CSPs will be funnelled through the PCC (see more on this below).

1.4   After their elections on 12th November 2012 PCCs will be responsible for:

- appointing Chief Constables and holding them to account

- producing a five year police and crime plan

- setting an annual local precept and annual force budget

- making community safety grants , including those to CSPs[6] [7]

1.5   Police and Crime Panels (PCPs) will scrutinise PCCs, primarily via an annual report produced by the PCC and a "police and crime plan" which will set the PCC's policy. The PCP will also have a statutory duty to review, and possibly veto, the policing precept[8]. In England (outside of London), PCPs will be comprised of representatives from each local authority on the force areas with a minimum of 10 councillors and two co-opted members. Where there is a city mayor, they will be entitled to represent their local authority and will be free to draw together an 'advisory group' to help them scrutinise the PCC.[9] In London the Mayor assumed the PCC role In January 2012 (as part of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime) and the London Assembly

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[5] For example, the Community and Safety Fund for Unitary and Counties will shrink by 20% between 2011 and 2012, and by a further 40% between 2012-13 (Source: *PCCs and Community Safety*, presentation by Chris Williams, Local Government Group, July 2011)

[6] *Police & Crime Commissioners Update*, No 1, Home Office, July 2011, p. 1

[7] See section 1.7 onwards on funding

[8] More details on the role and function of PCPs can be found in unofficial guidance co-produced by CfPS and the LGA - http://www.cfps.org.uk/publications?item=7002&offset=175

[9] *Police & Crime Commissioners Update*, No 1, Home Office, July 2011, p.2. It may be that regulations expected from the Home Office will alter the way that city mayors are nominated to sit on the PCP under certain circumstances.

formed a separate committee to act as the PCP[10]. In Wales PCPs will be freestanding bodies established by the Home Secretary. [11]

1.6   Home Office guidance states that PCCs will 'be supported to work effectively with other local leaders to prioritise resources to suit local needs and priorities' but that they 'will not become a responsible authority on Community Safety Partnerships.' [12]. Hence, CSP scrutiny provisions will not apply to them. There is, however, a duty for both parties to cooperate and have regard to each others 'relevant priorities in carrying out their respective functions'[13]; and PCCs have the authority to require a report from a CSP where they are not content that the CSP is carrying out its duties 'effectively and efficiently'. There are also plans for regulations to be introduced to allow the PCCs to call representatives of CSPs together to discuss strategic priorities and issues affecting the whole police area.[14]

Funding

1.7   PCCs will be responsible for making community safety grants, and will have powers to 'award grants to any organisation or body they consider will support their community safety priorities'[15]. This includes, but is not limited to, CSPs, so third party organisations are likely to become involved in the strategy for crime and disorder reduction.[16] Indeed, the Home Office is funding the Safer Future Communities project which supports Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations in preparation for the arrival of PCCs so that they might influence their local PCC's community safety priorities and access funding, service delivery and partnership opportunities.[17]

1.8   Existing arrangements for community safety and partnership funding will remain until 2012-13.[18] From 2013-14 PCCs will receive funding from the main grant and precept, and from the Community Safety Fund (CSF) which can be used to tackle drugs and crime, reduce re-offending, and improve community safety. PCCs will also be allowed

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[10] *Police & Crime Commissioners Bulletin, No. 5,* Home Office, January 2012, p.1
[11] *Police & Crime Commissioners Update*, No 2, Home Office, September 2011, p.3
[12] *Police & Crime Commissioners Update*, No 1, Home Office, July 2011, p.1
[13] As above, Annex A, p.4
[14] *Police & Crime Commissioners Update*, No 1, Home Office, July 2011, p. 2
[15] *Police & Crime Commissioners Bulletin*, No 4, Home Office, 21 December 2011, p. 1
[16] *Police & Crime Commissioners Update*, No 1, Home Office, July 2011, p. 1
[17] *Police & Crime Commissioners Bulletin, No.5,* Home Office, January 2012, p.4
[18] *Police & Crime Commissioners Bulletin*, No 4, op cit

to pool resources and funding with local partners 'according to local needs and priorities', including through community budgets.[19]

'Effective and efficient' CSPs

1.9   In the light of the significantly changing context in which CSPs work it is essential that they remain fit for purpose, so the Home Office has published guidelines on what it sees as being the key aims for CSPs in this new landscape.

1.10   Generally speaking, the Home Office has stressed the factors that make for effective multi-agency working:

- Strong leadership from key agencies
- Coordination of priorities and resources
- Sharing of information about vulnerable and repeat victims, offenders and offences
- A problem-solving approach to implement sustainable solutions
- Co-location of operational teams, effective case management and joint tasking [20]

1.11   More specifically, in preparing for the arrival of the PCC the Home Office's advice to local authorities includes for them to consider whether they have:

- the best possible partnership working arrangements in place and whether there is scope for 'clarification, simplification or rationalisation'
- evidence of success and value for money in relation to existing programmes[21]

1.12   CSPs are encouraged to take an 'actions-oriented' rather than a 'meetings oriented' approach, which means working in partnership because it makes business sense, not because of funding or targets. CSPs are also encouraged to focus on reduced bureaucracy, value for money and improved delivery of services. They are strongly advised to

[19] *Police & Crime Commissioners Bulletin*, No 4, ibid, p. 2
[20] *Community Safety Partnerships Under the New Government*, presentation by Stephen Rimmer, Crime and Policing Group, Home Office, October 2010
[21] *Police & Crime Commissioners Update*, No 1, op cit, p.3

prioritise stronger and clearer accountability to local communities[22]: central government has removed reporting requirements, such as those relating to local improvement targets under Local Area Agreements (LAAs), and are recommending instead that CSPs look to communities for advice on priorities when designing and commissioning services.[23] Finally, the Home Office also encourages CSPs to consider formal mergers as a possible route 'to further streamlining of resources resulting in a more efficient and effective service' and they have published guidance on how a merger can be carried out.[24]

1.13   As a result of all of this, it has become necessary for CSPs to rethink what they do, based on local priorities and outcomes. They should be open to scrutiny and challenge, produce fit for purpose data and information on their work, and understand their communities.[25] They will also need to consider their relationship with the incoming PCCs and how this relationship will work in practice. This involves:

- Considering current partnership priorities, and the potential involvement and interests of the commissioner
- Marshalling the evidence base and value for money of current programmes to support commissioner investment decisions
- Discussing how to support commissioning across partnerships and agencies, or across the police force area
- Considering how to help commissioners to understand the needs of local people, using existing engagement mechanisms[26]

1.14   Originally, it was proposed to give powers to the PCC for the area to compel CSPs to merge, but this proposal did not find its way into the final Act. It should though be noted that PCC funding decisions may lead to such mergers happening.

1.15   CSP scrutiny reviews are valuable in this context, not just because they prove the willingness of CSPs to open themselves to scrutiny, but because the resulting recommendations should help CSPs to adapt

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[22] *Community Safety Partnerships Under the New Government*, op cit
[23] Home Office (March 2011) *A New Approach to Fighting Crime*, p.8
[24] Guidance on Merging Community Safety Partnership Areas Under Section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as Amended by Section 97(3) of the Police Reform Act 2002 and Section 108 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009, August 2011, p.1
[25] *Community Safety Partnerships Under the New Government*, Chair's notes, Office for Public Management, 14.10.10
[26] *Police & Crime Commissioners Bulletin, No.5,* op cit, p.2-3

during and after the transition to the new policing landscape, including the introduction of PCCs [27]. Following a review, CSPs should be able to show evidence regarding their efficiency and effectiveness, be safeguarded against possible challenge from PCCs and be in a strong position when local crime and disorder strategy is opened up to the private and voluntary sectors in the future.

[27] *Cutting Crime Through Partnerships: a New Approach*?, Chair's Notes, Westminster Briefing, Office for Public Management, 16th June 2011

2. Published guidance

The following publications provide further information about the background and legislative context in which CSPs work, some also provide practical advice on local partnership working:

The Home Office (January 2012) *Police and Crime Commissioners: What partners need to know*

The Local Government Association and CfPS (November 2011) *Police and crime panels: Guidance on role and composition*

The Home Office (March 2011) *A New Approach to Fighting Crime*

The Local Government Group (September 2010) *The lean Community Safety Partnership: A guide to making your partnership more efficient, effective and productive*

The Home Office (August 2010) *Information Sharing for Community Safety – Guidance and practice advice*

The Home Office, in partnership with the CfPS and LGiU (May 2009) *National Support Framework: Delivering Safer and Confident Communities – Guidance for the Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Matters – England. Implementing Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006*

The Audit Commission (April 2009) *Working Better Together? Managing Local Strategic Partnerships*

The Cabinet Office (June 2008) *Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime: A review by Louise Casey*

The Home Office (September 2007) *Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working*

3. Scoping the review

3.1 In tackling an issue as potentially complex as community safety it is important to make sure that the review is targeted both in terms of scope and desired outcomes. Good practice dictates that every scrutiny report should set out, clearly and succinctly, the terms of reference of the review and these terms should be referred to throughout the scrutiny process to ensure the review stays focused and on-track.

3.2 By narrowing the scope of the review to concentrate on a particular aspect of work carried out by a CSP, and thinking about where recommendations may be targeted, the review will be more manageable, less inclined to meander from its original remit and more likely to produce useful recommendations as a result. The reviews that have informed this publication, for example, have tended to reveal areas of weakness in relation to particular 'responsible authorities' who make up a CSP or to particular aspects of partnership working. Issues around communicating with the public, engaging external partners, and ensuring full commitment from the Council emerge as themes.

3.3 The importance of good and standardised data also appears as an area that attracts recommendations for improvement. It should of course be noted that scrutiny's legal powers limit it to scrutinising the work of the partnership rather than scrutiny of the individual responsible authorities. Sometimes the distinction between the two might be unclear – a reason to discuss and liaise with such partners at an early stage to design work that will add value and will not duplicate existing work.

3.4 A scrutiny panel may decide to focus on a specific community safety issue. For example, the second part of Buckinghamshire's Joint Review, reviewed for this Monitor, focused on the issue of 'fear of crime'. This case study approach may well prove a useful vehicle for scrutinising how well the CSP is working in practice and provide a more tangible way of getting to grips with the analysis rather than a more 'dry' approach of looking at CSP organisational structures.

3.5 Alternatively, scrutiny could look at, and contribute to, the development of broader CSP strategy, or look at the performance of a CSP using high-level scorecards or detailed data. As well as, or instead of, looking at particularly bad performance, this could involve looking at particularly good performance to see what lessons can be learned and enabling the sharing of good practice.[28] Such reviews will tend to examine the way that responsible authorities communicate with each other, and will tend to focus on management processes such as performance management rather than the detail of operational delivery.

3.6 During the scoping process, taking into consideration the changes in the wider landscape of local scrutiny is increasingly important. CSP scrutiny is statutory, as is scrutiny of local health bodies. Scrutiny has wider powers over a range of partners, initially introduced in the Local Government Act 2007 and restated and expanded in the Localism Act 2011[29]. There is also, of course, the work of PCPs to be acknowledged. Scrutiny practitioners working in these areas, occasionally jointly across multiple authorities and organisations, will need to consider the work of the others in planning their forward strategy in order to avoid duplication, crossover or even possible contradiction as it is likely that their recommendations will be aimed at, and directly affect, the same partners. This reflects the 'web of accountability' idea that we developed in our 2010 publication, *Accountability Works*.

Useful scoping questions

3.7 It is advisable that the themes of the Home Office's guidelines with regard to CSPs are taken into account when scoping a review. Here are some suggested questions to help initiate the scoping process, based around those themes. These are intended as a steer rather than an exhaustive list and they can be used to choose which route to take with the review - be it looking at the CSP in general, or looking in detail at a specific issue. They can then also be used to help refine the scope once the approach has been chosen.

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[28] For more on the use of different approaches to CSP scrutiny, see *National Support Framework: Delivering Safer and Confident Communities – Guidance for the Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Matters – England. Implementing Sections 19 and 20 of the Police and Justice Act 2006,* The Home Office, in partnership with the CfPS and LGiU, May 2009, p. 18
[29] Full details can be found in CfPS's Policy Briefing 14 on the new legislative framework.

3.8   Rather than answering all of the questions, at the initial scoping stage it's advised to pick two or three from each theme to help identify areas that may benefit from scrutiny. In addition, there will no doubt be other questions that fit with these themes and should be answered when scoping that are relevant to specific local circumstances:

- Efficiency[30]:
    - What are the latest statistics and trends in local crime? How do these compare to average regional and national measures and experiences?
    - How are the priorities of the CSP established?
    - Do the CSPs priorities match the interests of the PCC?[31]
    - What role does each of the responsible authorities play in the CSP's work?
    - How are the responsible authorities' resources used within the CSP context?
    - Are all of the responsible authorities fully engaged in the CSP?
    - Does the CSP allow for joint tasking among the responsible authorities?
    - Is the CSP actions-oriented?
    - Are there improvements that can be made in the CSP's delivery of services?
- Effectiveness[32]:
    - Does the CSP have strong leadership?
    - Does the CSP have a problem-solving approach?
    - Have the CSP's solutions and programmes proved to be sustainable? What evidence is there to support this claim?
    - How does the CSP compare with other CSPs in the region in terms of working practices and in relation to tackling crime and disorder?
    - Does the CSP have the best possible partnership working arrangements in place?
    - Does the CSP represent value for money? What evidence is there to support this claim?

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[30] See footnote 25
[31] For a summary of the scope of the PCC, see *Police and Crime Commissioners: What partners need to know*, The Home Office, January 2012, Annex, p.7
[32] For more detailed guidance on what constitutes an efficient and effective CSP see *The lean Community Safety Partnership: A guide to making your partnership more efficient, effective and productive*, The Local Government Group, September 2010

- – Would a merger of CSPs improve their effectiveness? What would be the benefits/risks of a merger?
- Understanding local communities:
  - – How is the local community involved in the work of the CSP?
  - – Do the mechanisms for hearing local voices and concerns work effectively?
  - – How are local voices and concerns fed into the CSP's agenda?
  - – What evidence does the CSP provide to show that its work is based on local priorities? Is this evidence robust?
  - – What is the experience of victims of crime within the CSP's area?
- Accountability:
  - – Does the CSP produce data that is fit for purpose?
  - – Does the CSP communicate its work and achievements clearly to the local community?
  - – Is the CSP open to scrutiny and challenge? If not, how could the CSP be more transparent?
  - – Do the responsible authorities share key crime data efficiently?
  - – Does the CSP provide evidence of its successes? Is this evidence robust?

Case study scoping

3.9 Here is a brief overview of the scoping process conducted, and scoping decisions made, by each of the scrutiny review panels analysed for this Monitor. They have been grouped into clusters based on the resulting themes of focus chosen for the reviews.

3.10 Partnership working: general
- o The original remit of **Buckinghamshire County Council**'s review, concluded in November 2010, was to scrutinise how members of the overarching 'Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board' were discharging their functions, and to identify areas for improved partnership working. Subsequently, it was agreed to use a case study approach for the second part of the review – looking at partnership working in the context of reducing the fear of crime in Buckinghamshire. This case study was chosen because tackling fear of crime was a key priority for the 'Safer Bucks Partnership

Plan', as public confidence was not increasing at the same rate at which crime levels were falling.

- o **Gloucestershire County Council**'s review, also in 2010, was prompted by the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee's concern about the complexity of the arrangements surrounding CSPs in the county. The task group took a general approach to look at the role and funding of the CSPs operating in Gloucestershire.

- o **Wear Valley District Council**[33] used a phased approach when setting the scope of their 2008 review of the Wear & Tees CSP: phase one of the review involved 'familiarisation with the Wear and Tees CSP', consulting with the Community Safety Manager and the CSP Executive Group and attending the Executive and Tasking and Coordinating groups of the CSP. Phase two involved deeper scrutiny of the CSP itself, which meant interviews with key figures in the partnership and benchmarking with guidance from the Home Office. The result of these two phases was the decision to focus on three areas of concern relating to the CSP: engagement of partners; data sharing; and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

3.11 These case studies show that, if time allows, and to clarify the focus of what otherwise might be a wide-ranging review, the scoping process can be a valuable exercise to aid a deeper understanding of the issue. This is a general lesson for the scoping of scrutiny reviews, but has particular pertinence in relation to community safety, which is an extremely broad policy area that cuts across a range of council and partner services.

3.12 In the Gloucestershire example, where there was a clear concern raised about the wider arrangements of all the CSPs in the county, the task group chose to include the aim of getting a better understanding of CSPs in the terms of reference of the review itself; scoping is useful in identifying gaps in the scrutiny panel's knowledge which may then guide the discussion as to routes the review could take.

3.13 <u>Local authority involvement</u>

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[33] Abolished as part of the 2009 local government reorganisation in the north east. The unitary council for the area is now Durham County Council.

- o **Newcastle City Council** chose in 2009 to look at how well the Council was embracing its statutory duty to embed community safety in its work, further to section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The reasons for choosing s17 in particular included the considerations that: non-compliance would mean significant risks to the Council (through possible civil action, judicial review, and community impact and partnerships relations); the Council's officer group membership had recently changed and so it was timely to check participation by Directorates; and finally that the Council was devolving more responsibility to Ward Committees so it was necessary to check that Members knew how to respond. In initially scoping the review, Newcastle found that key targets around community safety were being met, so didn't include such issues in the review.

- o **The London Borough of Haringey** decided to look at the issue of future resources for achieving targets within the Safer and Stronger Communities block of their Local Area Agreement (LAA), concluding the review in 2008. Concerns around the issue were raised by a Cabinet Member, and then accepted as an appropriate subject for review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In the light of these funding uncertainties the report also covered issues surrounding s17 and the mainstreaming of crime and disorder reduction in the Council's work as this was seen as having an important role in making the most efficient and effective use of resources, a need that was part of Haringey's Crime Reduction Strategy.

3.14 These two authorities both came to focus on s17 for quite different reasons: in Newcastle, by first looking at crime statistics, it was discovered that the CSP was apparently working well in terms of crime targets and outcomes, but it was found that uncertainty remained around whether the Council was delivering its s17 obligations. Haringey came to review this area in detail as part of a wider remit of resourcing; scoping of resourcing issues highlighted this area as one where improvements may be made. A review's ultimate scope may be established by 'digging deeper' in one general area of concern to reveal a more specific issue that would benefit from scrutiny.

3.15 Local community involvement
- o A joint review was carried out by **Weymouth & Portland Borough Council (W&PBC), West Dorset District Council (WDDC) and**

Dorset County Council (DCC) in 2009, as the CSP (or CDRP as they refer to it) structure involved all three local authorities. The review was suggested by the W&PBC Brief-holder for Community Safety who felt that ongoing changes in the structure and funding of the CDRP might be leading to a lack of local democratic input, meaning issues of concern to local residents were not being raised. Therefore, it was decided that the review would focus on the governance of the CDRP.

o At **North Lincolnshire Council**, the report, also carried out in 2009, focussed on one element that makes up the CSP: Neighbourhood Action teams (NATS). NATS are groups of key individuals at Electoral Ward level which meet regularly to consider, prioritise and work together to resolve safer and stronger community issues. NATS representatives then regularly meet with other partner agencies to assist in dealing with the most resistant problems. The scrutiny panel decided on this area of review following consultation with Service Directors, Cabinet Members and other stakeholders. A concern was identified that NATS were all operating differently and the review broadly set out to establish whether NATS were acting as a catalyst for identifying and responding to problems at a local level, as intended.

o **The City and County of Swansea** 2008 review looked specifically at how best to involve the local community in partnership; scrutinising the existing channels for community input, via Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings which were facilitated by the police.

3.16 These case studies highlight that even before the Coalition's promotion of local community focus for CSP's there was a concern in a number of authorities on whether mechanisms for including local people in the partnerships were working. By looking at how a CSP's infrastructure affects one particular member group – whether it provides an effective structure for facilitating their playing a full part in the partnership – can prove a robust way of analysing its effectiveness.

4. Conducting the review

4.1 The scrutiny reviews analysed for this Monitor had an average of six members on their Board, with six months being the average time taken to complete the review. Each faced various challenges when scrutinising CSPs and, while by no means an exhaustive list of the possible challenges, this section looks at the main themes that emerged.

Engagement and consultation challenges

4.2 There may be more than one CSP that comes under the remit of the scrutiny review. Gathering evidence from all of them and establishing how each of them work may prove time consuming, particularly in two-tier areas, where each District Council may have stand-alone community safety plans. However, it is worth noting that attending CSP meetings proved very useful to those committees featured in this Monitor who chose to use this method of evidence collection. Here is where defined scoping of the review becomes so important; when establishing terms of reference it is important to consider if the review panel may be swamped by the amount of evidence required to conduct the investigation.

4.3 On a related point, a joint review – organised by two or more Overview and Scrutiny Boards – will prove most valuable in areas where CSPs cross local authority borders, or in two-tier locations. This arrangement may increase organisational complications in conducting the review, but only by taking a holistic approach to scrutinising CSP work can recommendations prove valid and useful. Again, detailed scoping can help keep the review to a manageable size.

4.4 Questions relating to future funding of CSPs will remain unanswered until PCCs are in place and have taken budgetary decisions; and even then funding arrangements will likely differ from area to area. In light of funding uncertainty, Gloucestershire chose not to make detailed recommendations in their review in 2010. However, now that guidelines have been provided highlighting the central importance of CSP efficiency and effectiveness, it seems sensible for CSPs to work on recommendations for improvements in relation to these guidelines, even while the levels of future funding are unknown.

4.5 Only a small percentage of the reviews analysed for this Monitor accessed information about best-practice from other local authorities. Clearly, the focus on the design of services should be based on local needs and priorities, but comparative evidence can prove extremely valuable in benchmarking strengths and weaknesses of local CSP arrangements. By identifying regions that face similar challenges around crime and safety, that are demographically comparable and that are working to similar budgets - and sourcing evidence on how those CSPs function or are being reformed - scrutiny reviews will be better able to establish trends with which to compare their CSP arrangements and outcomes, and produce more robust recommendations.

4.6 Sourcing evidence from a wide range of partners is crucial in establishing the full picture regarding a CSP's work (see the list of suggested 'Useful witnesses' in section 4.7). Engaging partners, therefore, is important and that means involving them from the outset and right through to the report drafting stage. It is a good idea to consult partners to ensure that recommendations are well targeted and anticipated by those affected. As one of the themes of the scrutiny reviews related to issues around the varying level of input from responsible authorities it is a truism that disengaged partners may be less inclined to cooperate with a scrutiny review. However, a review is a valuable opportunity for all parties of a CSP to better understand their roles and responsibilities, and by promoting a collaborative approach scrutiny can encourage 'buy in' to the review and so work for an outcome that is relevant and valid to all partners.

Useful witnesses

4.7 Here is a run-down of the potential witnesses from whom a CSP scrutiny review panel may choose to source its evidence. Clearly, time and resource constraints will dictate how many witnesses can be included. Typically, however. the broader the range of evidence the stronger the recommendations will be. Including witnesses who are not attending to represent one of the responsibilities that is part of the CSP is advisable in order to assess the CSP's wider impact and effectiveness. These could be members of the public or other stakeholders.

4.8 CSP chairs are essential witnesses. In addition, representatives of all responsible authorities that are part of CSPs, and representatives from related organisations that are not CSP members, should all be considered as witnesses. As ever, relationships will need to be built up with these people over time to demonstrate to them the value of the scrutiny function. These include:

4.9 **Internal**
o Heads/Directors of relevant teams across the local authorities involved. For example -
  ◊ Community Safety/Neighbourhood Protection/Neighbourhood Management
  ◊ Youth Offending
  ◊ Drugs and Alcohol
  ◊ Anti-social Behaviour
  ◊ Housing
  ◊ Finance
  ◊ Strategy
  ◊ Communications
  ◊ Partnerships

4.10 **External**
o Fire and Rescue Service
o Probation Service
o Police Service (including PCSOs)
o Police and Crime Commissioners (although this will need to be subject to negotiation and liaison with the PCC and the PCP, and will probably be rare)
o Victim Support
o The Crown Prosecution Service
o The Local Criminal Justice Board
o HM Courts and Tribunal Service
o NHS representatives (including Local Health and Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups)
o Crime and Drugs Partnerships
o Drug Action and Alcohol Team/Substance Misuse Action Teams
o Registered social landlords
o Local schools and colleges
o Local residents/communities
  ◊ Community groups (including young and older people, BME, faith groups, people with disabilities, etc.)

◊ Neighbourhood Watch
◊ Neighbourhood Forum/Action Team Chairs (or equivalent representatives of local residents)
◊ Local Area Representatives
◊ Social Enterprise organisations
◊ Voluntary and community organisations

5. Making recommendations

5.1 The recommendations of the reviews analysed for this Monitor were published before the new structural landscape in policing and community safety was clarified in 2010/11; nevertheless, they provide value as they illustrate areas identified as needing improvement and reform and outline some of the ways that scrutiny practitioners have suggested to deal with those areas of weakness. We have focused on slightly older reviews as it has made it easier to assess medium and long term impacts.

5.2 In many cases, where the wider CSP was judged to be generally working well, elements within it were a cause for concern, so the CSP reviews revealed issues and raised recommendations to resolve, or to further investigate, these elements. For example -

5.3 Partnership working: general
   o **Wear Valley District Council** were concerned with the engagement of partners and recommended that greater voluntary sector involvement be secured. They also suggested that the venue for the Tasking and Coordinating Group of the CSP be rotated to increase its accessibility. Finally they recommended that responsible authorities be reminded of their statutory obligation in relation to CSP involvement and, specifically, that deeper NHS involvement be secured.
   o In addition, **Wear Valley** raised the issue of data sharing between partners, recommending that partner bodies each identify a 'data champion' to ensure data quality and the timely release of information, and that the format for data be standardised wherever practicable.

5.4 Local authority involvement
   o **Newcastle City Council** found that some Directorates within the local authority were better engaged in the tasks of the CSP than others, and recommended that all should participate fully in its work so that concerns of frontline staff in all areas could be fed back into the CSP's agenda. On a related note, the review also recommended that priority be given to Member training, deeming their awareness of community safety issues to be essential given

the important role they play in local problem solving through their participation in Safe Neighbourhood Action and Problem Groups (SNAPs). The resulting actions included ensuring all Directorates were represented on the internal team working on the s17 action plan, with each one providing update reports that would feed into the team's agenda. Further staff briefings were implemented to ensure knowledge of progress on s17 and consideration of the work of Safe Neighbourhoods, SNAPs groups and Neighbourhood Policing was incorporated into the s17 action plan. It was also proposed to organise a regular event with the Police Area Commander, neighbourhood Inspectors and Safe Newcastle Unit staff to which all members are invited, sharing information on policing and key community safety initiatives.

o **The London Borough of Haringey** recommended ways in which crime and disorder issues could be better embedded into Council work, such as; including community safety activities within business unit annual service plans, considering crime and disorder issues in all policy proposals, and including crime and disorder issues in the performance appraisals for all senior management. This conclusion prompted a more general recommendation that the CSP debate how partnership working could be further developed and joint working improved. Approved by cabinet, an action plan was put in place to address the recommendations, including analysing effective good practice at other local authorities with regard to s17, and having a core group of statutory agencies look at mainstreaming responsibilities and improving partnership working as part of a new Community Safety Strategy.

5.5   Local community involvement
o **Buckinghamshire County Council** recommended a future review on the uniformity of Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs). This recommendation was approved by BCC's Cabinet, but apparently no review was conducted. However, only a month after the review's approval, Thames Valley Police produced guidance for NAG members and chairpersons, outlining what makes an effective NAG: 'Effective Neighbourhood Action Groups: A Good Practice Briefing'.
o **North Lincolnshire Council**'s review, which looked at their equivalent neighbourhood groups, called NATs, recommended training for NAT members, the production and dissemination of a constitutional framework for all NATs so that they operated to similar terms of reference, and a check - to be carried out by the

police - that NAT membership was fit for purpose. It was recommended that work be done to raise the profile of NATs and for local residents to be made aware of their existence and their work. Similarly, it was recommended that other neighbourhood groups, such as Neighbourhood Watch and Resident Associations, participate in the NAT process. Finally, it was also suggested that an annual report relating to NAT performance be produced and circulated to relevant contacts. Actions implemented as a result of these recommendations included the rolling out of briefing and guidance sessions for NAT Chairs and members, run by Safer Neighbourhood Officers, and the development of training packages. Stronger Community Officers were also assigned areas in order to develop links between themselves, NAT chairs and with Safer Neighbourhood colleagues. Once training was delivered, the Stronger Community Officers were to be given responsibility to work with NAT Chairs to ensure their membership reflect their communities (as opposed to tasking the police with these checks). Safer Neighbourhood Teams also worked with the association representing Neighbourhood Watch Teams and developed a protocol for becoming involved with the NAT process.

o **The City and County of Swansea** found that communication between the Council and PACT meetings needed to improve, suggesting that corporate advice on how the authority should support PACT meetings should be developed, and that training and information be provided to PACT chairs. While PACT meetings provided a forum for the community to express their concerns, priorities were not always actioned, so it was recommended that each PACT group set up a PACT Action Group with the purpose of taking decisions forward, and that consideration be given to developing a performance framework to evaluate PACT meetings' success and effectiveness. The recommendations were agreed by the Cabinet and a PACT Action Group established.

5.6 On looking at the performance of the CSP and benchmarking local crime rates with national statistics, fear of crime was identified by a number of scrutiny reviews as being disproportionate to actual crime rates (see **Buckinghamshire**, **Gloucestershire** and **Newcastle**, for example). As a result, recommendations included better coordinated media activities to improve communication with the local communities and better disseminate the message that these areas were safe places to live. In **Buckinghamshire**, the recommendation put the onus on encouraging Members themselves to sign up to the various

information sources so that they are kept informed about community safety issues in their areas, and can reinforce positive messages to residents.

5.7 In two-tier areas it was typically the case that the organisational structure of CSPs was found to be too complicated.

5.8 **Gloucestershire County Council**'s review recommended a county-wide strategic assessment encouraging the identification of issues best tackled locally and those that benefit from a county-wide approach in order to avoid duplication of work by the different CSPs in the region. Their review also recommended a streamlining of structures, suggesting the Gloucestershire Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership and the Gloucestershire Criminal Justice Board could be merged while other partnership arrangements be streamlined – pertinent given the move, as highlighted earlier, for CSP mergers.

5.9 Finally, recommendations focused on introducing common systems for recording crime and the activities of each partnership, allowing best-practice to be more easily shared and to make the best use of limited resources. As a result of the recommendations, steps were promptly taken to merge the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership with the Criminal Justice Board to create the Gloucestershire Stronger, Safer and Justice Commission. A county-wide scanning exercise was also triggered by the review, with the outcome shared with Community Safety partners. The priorities formed the basis of the new commission's Joint Strategic Commissioning Plan.

5.10 Similarly, in areas of joint working, the key issue was that of a lack of strategic oversight, for example, relating to how CSP projects were chosen, how they were evaluated and how resources were allocated.

5.11 The **W&PBC, WDDC and DCC** Joint Scrutiny Review recommended that this could be overcome by introducing a coordinating committee to address the strategic aspects of the programme. This would include longer term planning where major projects would only be started if there was a clear pathway by which they could transition into mainstream activity. It was recommended that existing joint working arrangements would need to be strengthened, and elected members better enabled to have regular input into the list of priorities put forward to the coordinating committee. These recommendations were

approved by **W&PBC's** Management Committee as they reflected similar concerns that had been raised by the Head of Regulatory Services. A plan **t**o replace existing CDRP arrangements with a single county-wide CSP, on which all local authorities in Dorset would be represented, had been initiated by Regulatory Services before the Joint Scrutiny Review began, however, the Review's recommendations were considered as part of the ongoing development of the plan, and it was concluded that a single CSP would best address the concerns raised through the scrutiny process.

Appendix: case study review details

The Appendix includes the finer details of the reviews used in the preparation of this Monitor including, where supplied, information on the membership of the scrutiny panel, the length of time the review took to complete, the terms of reference established as a result of the scoping process and the evidence collection methods used. They are listed in date order (starting with the most recent):

1) Buckinghamshire County Council
Crime and Disorder Management in Buckinghamshire
Overview and Scrutiny Joint Review
November 2010

Work on the review took place between June and September 2010 and the report was published in November 2010 (5 months).

Work was undertaken by a task and finish group of seven, led by Buckinghamshire County Council, which provided two members, with participation from two Chiltern District Council Councillors, one member from South Buckinghamshire, and two Councillors from Wycombe District Council.

Terms of reference:
Key issues for the review to address –
- Current arrangements for managing crime and disorder functions in Buckinghamshire
- The extent to which partners are working well together
- Opportunities for improved working
- Consider if there are any areas of weakness so these can be addressed
- Good practice

Evidence collection methods:
- Desktop research
- Evidence gathering meetings throughout June, July and August – conducted in all district areas of the county

- Questionnaire submitted to members of the Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board
- Influencing Perception Conference
- Research using various media articles and community newsletters
- Information was submitted from a number of partners, from across Buckinghamshire

2) Gloucestershire County Council
Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Task Group
2010

Work was undertaken by a task group of four, including one Councillor each from Gloucester City, Gloucestershire County and Tewkesbury Borough Councils and an independent member of Gloucestershire Police Authority.

Terms of reference:
- To understand the structure, role and funding of the community safety partnerships in Gloucestershire, including the role, responsibilities and contribution of individual partners on each partnership
- To examine whether the community safety partnerships are successful in making a difference for local people and providing value for money
- To assess whether their activities are evidence based and delivering against need identified in each district's strategic assessment
- To look at funding mechanisms and consider whether money is being effectively directed towards priorities

Evidence collection methods:
The task group met on six occasions and spoke to ten people involved in a wide range of community safety activities. They were asked questions on funding, value for money, how community safety partnerships are making a difference for local people, how priority issues such as anti-social behaviour are being tackled and whether any changes to current structures are necessary.

3) Newcastle City Council
Community Safety: Part of Everyday Business
Report of the Member Working Group Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel
June 2009

Work was undertaken by a Working Group of four Councillors.

The review was established in January 2009 and its report was published in June 2009. (6 months). The recommendations were approved by the Executive in July 2009.

Terms of reference:
"To test how well the Council is embracing its statutory duty to embed community safety in all that it does."

Evidence collection methods:
The Working Group met five times and received information from a range of Council officers including the Director of Regulatory Services and Public Protection, the Community Safety Manager and the Community Safety Co-ordinator.

4) Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, West Dorset District Council and Dorset County Council
A Joint Scrutiny Review of Governance of the Western Dorset Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (comprising W&PBC and WDDC)
W&PBC Scrutiny and Performance Committee
May 2009

Work was undertaken by a Scrutiny Review Group of eight, made up of four Councillors from W&PBC, two Councillors from WDDC and two Councillors from DCC.

Terms of reference:
"A scrutiny of the governance of the CDRP. In particular, concentrating on whether the existing and proposed structures of CDRPs within Dorset would prejudice the ability of elected councillors to carry out effective governance of the CDRP functions."

Evidence collection methods:
The review group was provided with the following documents:
- Home Office report *Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to Effective Partnership working*
- The Community Safety Partnership Structure in Dorset and the membership of its feeder groups
- The Funding and Commissioning Model agreed by the Safer Communities Group on 15 May 2008

- The strategic plans for the several Dorset CDRPs for 2002-2005 and 2005-2008, together with the draft strategic plan for 2008-2011
- The review groups received presentations from several officers of the contributing Councils and further discussed with these officers the issues leading to this scrutiny
- The panel also held discussions with two Councillors and a senior police officer.

5) North Lincolnshire Council
Neighbourhood Action Teams in North Lincolnshire
Report of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Panel
June 2009

Work was undertaken by a Scrutiny Panel made up of seven Councillors.

Terms of reference:
- To determine if Neighbourhood Action Teams act as a catalyst for solving problems at a local level
- To ascertain the level of commitment allocated to the Neighbourhood Action Teams by Safer Neighbourhood partners
- To determine if the issues Neighbourhood Action Teams are trying to tackle are sufficiently resourced
- To establish if a relationship exists between town and parish councils and the relevant Neighbourhood Action Team
- To establish if Neighbourhood Action Teams utilise the appropriate methodology when problem solving at a local level
- To determine whether Neighbourhood Action Team members raising the appropriate concerns of local residents

Evidence collection methods:
- Desktop research, including local and national press articles, websites and national journals
- Interviews with internal and external witnesses, including four neighbourhood police officers and five Councillors.
- A focus group was held with Neighbourhood Action Team chairs
- A questionnaire was sent to all Neighbourhood Action Team members and to all Town and Parish Councillors seeking their views on Neighbourhood Action Teams
- The panel attended the Town and Parish Council Liaison Meeting to deliver a presentation on the scrutiny review brief

- The panel attended the Neighbourhood Action Team forum to deliver a presentation on the scrutiny review brief
- A series of public meetings were held for witness interviews and presentations, together with planning and evaluation meetings to consider information collated and presented to members

6) Wear Valley District Council
Wear & Tees Community Safety Partnership Review – Executive Summary Interim Report
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (External)
2008

Work on the review began in April 2008 and interim recommendations agreed by the Scrutiny Committee in October 2008 (6 months).

Evidence collection methods:
- The Committee attended meetings of the 'Executive' and 'Tasking and Coordinating' groups of the CSP
- Interviews with key figures in the partnership (including the South Durham Area Commander), the acting Chief Executive and middle managers of Wear Valley District Council
- Examination of documents produced by the CSP, and benchmarking of the performance of the CSP using recently published guidance by the Home Office
- Written questions to members of the CSP

7) City and County of Swansea
Working with the Community to Reduce Crime: A Scrutiny Review of Community Policing and Partnership Working
Regeneration and Culture Scrutiny Board
April 2008

The review was established in August 2007 and its report was published in April 2008 (8 months).

Work was undertaken by a Scrutiny Board made up of 10 Councillors.

Terms of reference:
- To assess the effectiveness of PACT (Partners and Communities Together) meetings

- To identify how the community can best be involved in tackling anti social behaviour
- To identify how the Council can best support the implementation of neighbourhood policing

Evidence collection methods:
- A questionnaire was sent to all Local Accountability Panel members
- Councillors from the Board attended a selection of PACT meetings
- A survey was sent to all Swansea Councillors
- A short online survey was conducted through Directors/Heads of Service to identify current staff involvement in PACT meetings
- A focus group with police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) was held
- An interview was conducted with the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator
- Desktop research looking at practice in other local authority areas in both Wales and the UK was carried out

8) London Borough of Haringey
Scrutiny Review - Resourcing of Safer and Stronger Communities LAA Targets
Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Jan 2008

Work was undertaken by a Review Panel made up of four Councillors.

Terms of reference:
"To consider the future resourcing of actions to achieve strategic targets within the Safer and Stronger Communities block of the Local Area Agreement for Haringey 2007-2010 and to make recommendations thereon to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee"

Evidence collection methods:
- The Panel received evidence from a wide range of stakeholders, including two police representatives, four Haringey Councillors, a representative from Haringey Teaching Primary Care Trust, and the Principal of the College of North East London
- Documentary evidence
- Members of the Panel visited the London Boroughs of Camden and Brent to obtain the views of the relevant Community Safety staff there.