

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMUNITY & LEISURE SERVICES
POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL
8TH SEPTEMBER 2005

RE: COMMUNITY SAFETY - SECTION 17 AUDIT - SUMMER 2005

Background

The Council's third Section 17(S17) Audit and Progress in meeting this statutory duty as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA98) was reported to the Community and Leisure Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel on 8th September 2005.

The CDA98 provided local authorities, the Police and a number of other key partners with a new legal framework to reduce crime and disorder. Within this, S17 of the Act requires local authorities to consider the crime reduction potential of all their policies, service provision and other decisions.

However, in the absence of case law, it remains unclear what the courts would consider a breach of S.17. Experience of similar duties suggests that the courts would seek evidence that an authority has done all it reasonably can to prevent crime, has a coherent plan for complying with S.17, and that it is being implemented.

Progress

The Council's third Section 17 Audit was undertaken in June 2005.

The purpose of the audit was to help divisions to:

- (a) Rate their service delivery against a range of Section 17 standards, as defined by the Audit Commission.
- (b) Provide evidence to justify achievement and the level of rating indicated and
- (c) Set development goals where a gap in a service's performance against a particular standard has been identified.

It can be concluded from the audit that all Divisions have a robust understanding of the implications of Section 17 and, in most cases, have well-developed responses or actions for meeting the duty. Where gaps have been identified a development goal for service improvement has been set. Progress of Section 17 will be discussed and monitored by the Internal Community Safety Officer Forum.

Financial implications relating to the implementation of Section 17 are met within respective divisional budgets.

Next Steps

Wyre Forest is a low crime district in comparison to national and regional figures. However, we must continue to embed community safety into the planning and delivery of services in order to:

- (a) Meet the Section 17 duty;
- (b) Tackle and sustain the low crime levels in partnership with other agencies
- (c) Reduce people's fear of crime.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

The excellent progress by all service areas in implementing the Section 17 duty be noted.