



Service Policy Panel

Report of: Community Safety and Partnerships
Officer
Date: 21st November 2006

Open

SECTION 17 AUDIT – SUMMER 2006

1. Summary

- 1.1 To report on the Council's fourth Section 17 (S17) Audit and progress in meeting this statutory duty as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA98).

2. Background

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 However, in the absence of case law, it remains unclear what the courts would consider a breach of S17. 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 S17, and that it is being implemented.

3. Progress

- 3.1 The Council's fourth S17 Audit was undertaken in August 2006 as attached in **Appendix A**.
- 3.2 The purpose of the audit was to help Divisions to:
 - a) Rate their service delivery against a range of S17 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.

3.3 It can be concluded from the attached audit that all Divisions have a robust understanding of the implications of S17 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 S17 will be discussed and monitored by the Internal Community Safety Officer Forum.

3.4 Financial implications relating to the implementation of S17 are met within respective Divisional budgets.

4. Next Steps

4.1 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 S17 duty;
- b) Tackle and sustain the low crime levels in partnership with other agencies; and
- c) Reduce people's fear of crime.

5. Appendices

- Appendix A – Fourth Section 17 Audit – Summer 2006

6. Background Papers

- Crime and Disorder Act 1998

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