

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

22ND NOVEMBER 2007

Proposed Merger of North Worcestershire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs)

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	Safer Communities
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enabling Community Wellbeing
KEY PRIORITY:	Community Safety
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APPENDICES	Appendix 1 – Current Staffing Structure of CDRPs/ Community Safety Functions across North Worcestershire Councils Appendix 2 – Proposed Structure for a North Worcestershire Merged CDRP

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on preparatory work that has been undertaken to evidence some of the benefits and efficiencies that would be gained by merging the CDRPs for the local authority areas of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest to create a North Worcestershire CDRP.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** to Council that:

- 2.1 **The Wyre Forest District Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership be formally merged with the CDRPs in Bromsgrove and Redditch to create a North Worcestershire CDRP, subject to robust consultation and engagement with Responsible Authorities and the ability to meet any additional financial implications within existing budgets that might be incurred in the short to medium term.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Over the last ten years, partnership working has contributed to a sustained fall in crime, disorder and the fear of crime across our communities in North Worcestershire. However, the landscape in which the three CDRPs for the local authority areas of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest deliver has changed considerably since legislation was first introduced in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA 98).

3.2 Following a formal review of the CDA98, the suggested improvements were reflected in the Police and Justice Act 2006 and in subsequent regulations, which came into force on 1st August 2007. To meet these requirements as detailed in '*Delivering Safer Communities: A Guide to Effective Partnership Working – September 2007*,' CDRPs will be expected to improve their skills and processes to perform better and in doing so, rise to the increased challenges posed by the greater flexibility they will be given and the needs of their communities.

3.3 Importantly, CDRPs will be required to meet a set of national minimum standards covering the following core strands:

- Empowered and Effective Leadership
- Intelligence- led Business Processes
- Effective and Responsive Delivery Structures
- Engaged Communities
- Visible and Constructive Accountability
- Appropriate Skills and Knowledge

3.4 The new regulations also set out that each CDRP must have a process for sharing information already held by partners; they should produce a strategic assessment of the issues affecting the partnership; they should set up a strategy group; that group should make some decisions about what the priorities ought to be; produce a plan which explains how those priorities will be delivered; and then have a dialogue with communities to inform these processes and explain the outcomes. CDRP's scope will be increased to include anti-social behaviour, tackling alcohol and other substance misuse and behaviour that adversely affects the environment.

3.5 In multi-tier local authority areas, the regulations encourage CDRPs to look at their structures and consider merging with other CDRPs where this will create greater co-terminosity across agency boundaries and it is clear that the results will benefit local communities by delivering better outcomes, whilst maintaining a local focus.

3.6 There are provisions within Section 5 of the CDA98 as amended by Section 97(3) of the Police Reform Act 2002, which set out the circumstances for CDRPs joining together to carry out their strategy and operational functions. To date, this legislation has been used by 4 local authority areas to create merged CDRPs in England, which includes the South Worcestershire CDRP.

3.7 In view of the new community safety legislation and its links with wider local government polices, e.g. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill, Local Area Agreements (LAA), Shared Services Agenda, National Performance Framework and the Comprehensive Area Assessment, it is considered timely to review the operation of the three CDRPs in North Worcestershire and to explore the benefits and efficiencies that would be achieved by merging them.

3.8 It should be noted that for the purposes of this report 'North Worcestershire' is defined as covering the geographical areas within the administrative boundaries of:

- Bromsgrove District Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Wyre Forest District Council

4. BENEFITS OF A PROPOSED MERGER

4.1 Joint working between the three CDRPs in North Worcestershire, on both strategic and operational matters, is well established, although currently on an informal basis. However, opportunities for shared management, shared systems, shared resources and shared administration could be achieved by a formal merger, with the consequence of the freeing up of resources to provide better value for money and the ability to invest in more actions for our local communities.

4.2 A North Worcestershire CDRP would provide the right strategic infrastructure and environment for supporting local implementation teams to deliver the vision of '**North Worcestershire – A safer place to live, work, visit and do business**'. It would also support the following:

- a) Improved delivery and performance of community safety within the communities of North Worcestershire, which further reduces actual crime levels, misuse of drugs, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime;
- b) Provide an improved and better aligned community safety service not just to the urban communities within North Worcestershire but to the rural communities of the three districts too;
- c) Promote better integration and closer working between Countywide/North Worcestershire authorities and the districts by overcoming the practical barriers of multi-tier working;
- d) Meet legislative requirements more effectively and efficiently, which will save duplication of effort and resources by those partner agencies who operate across the three authority areas;

- e) Increase Officer capacity for the delivery of community safety activity in local communities;
- f) Develop combined North Worcestershire crime and disorder reduction targets, which will better compliment the delivery of Safer Communities Block of the Worcestershire LAA;
- g) Provide a stronger voice and base to access grant funding from the Worcestershire LAA and to reporting bodies such as Government Office West Midlands;
- h) Become co-terminous with the current North Worcestershire operating boundaries of West Mercia Constabulary, West Mercia Criminal Justice Board, West Mercia Police Authority, West Mercia Probation Service and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service;
- i) Provide optimum value for money when benchmarked against similar partnerships;
- j) Become an exemplar of best practice in the reduction of crime and disorder; and
- k) Provide a stronger brand image and improve corporate communication across the three authority areas.

4.3 Even though there are clear and robust benefits for moving towards a North Worcestershire CDRP, consideration has been given to whether a Countywide CDRP would be a better approach and more effective use of resources. However, at this stage, it is believed that a North Worcestershire CDRP would be a more achievable option for the following reasons:

- a) The geographical expanse of Worcestershire being too large for a single CDRP and associated targets. There would be a greater potential for the local identity of the districts being lost;
- b) West Mercia Constabulary currently operate to two Basic Command Units with one in the North of the County and the other in the South;
- c) The management of Priority and Prolific Offenders (PPOs) is on a North and South Worcestershire model. To extend this Worcestershire wide could prove to be unrealistic and unmanageable due to the number of PPOs that are involved; and
- d) The activity within the Safer Communities Block of the Worcestershire LAA is co-ordinated and delivered on a North and South Worcestershire perspective and currently works well. It is considered it would be a little too ambitious at this stage to consider a Worcestershire wide work programme, particularly as the LAA is still young in its own development.

5. POTENTIAL STRUCTURE FOR A PROPOSED MERGER

- 5.1 Initial consultation on the principle of a proposed merged North Worcestershire CDRP has been undertaken with, and approved by, the following key stakeholders:
- Council Cabinets for the three local authority areas;
 - Chairpersons of the three CDRPs;
 - The North Worcestershire Responsible Authorities Group;
 - The Safer Communities Board of the Worcestershire Partnership; and
 - GOWM
- 5.2 To enable further discussion, preparatory work has now been undertaken in auditing the current staffing structure of the three CDRPs and the community safety functions across North Worcestershire Councils, as set out in **Appendix 1**. As expected, these arrangements differ for a number of reasons including the transfer by two authorities of their ASB teams as part of their housing stock function.
- 5.3 Whilst more detailed financial analysis is needed, the staffing costs of the three existing CDRPs is approximately **£376,766** (*this figure excludes the costs for Neighbourhood Wardens, CCTV Operatives, Lifeline Staff and ASB Teams for the respective authorities*). Of this total, approximately **£163,174** is currently funded by mainstream budgets and the remaining **£213,592** is grant funded.
- 5.4 A draft organisational structure for a proposed merged North Worcestershire CDRP is set out in **Appendix 2**, which would support to deliver each of the potential benefits as described in Section 4 of this report.
- 5.5 In summary the key features of the proposed structure are as follows:
- 5.6 **Local identity of each authority area being retained and being enhanced by the integration of dedicated Police Personnel** – this will be achieved by each local authority area having its own local delivery team of community safety practitioners including a:
- Community Safety Officer;
 - Police Crime Risk Manager;
 - Licensing Police Constable;
 - Police Constable; and
 - Administration Support
- 5.7 The local delivery team will be responsible for managing the **District Tasking Forum**, which is already operational in each district area and brings together a wider range of community safety practitioners for delivering a programme of activity to meet the needs of local communities. District Tasking also links directly into the Local Strategic Partnership for the area.
- 5.8 **A central team of combined strategic support** – this will comprise of both local authority and Police Personnel including:
- Community Safety Manager;

- Data Analysts;
- Police Inspector;
- Police Sergeant;
- Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator;
- Police Anti Social Behaviour Officers;
- Police Diversity Officer; and
- Police Youth Liaison Officer.

- 5.9 The Community Safety Manager shall be responsible for the three local delivery teams as well as managing the development and implementation of strategic policy and North Worcestershire wide initiatives. The Community Safety Manager's role will be enhanced by the specialist support of the other officers within the combined team.
- 5.10 **Other agency specialists** – it is envisaged that other Responsible Authorities will see the benefits of integrating their own staff into the proposed model for securing more effective community safety outcomes.
- 5.11 **The North Worcestershire CDRP Board** – will have overall responsibility for the operation, performance and management of the North Worcestershire CDRP and shall bring together Chief Officers from each of the Responsible Authorities.
- 5.12 The overall cost of the non Police posts of the proposed North Worcestershire CDRP structure, as set out in Appendix 2 is approximately **£269,890**. Compared to the existing CDRP structure in Appendix 1, this would provide an initial salary saving of approximately **£106,876**.
- 5.13 All of the identified Police personnel in the proposed structure are existing posts and part of the North Worcestershire Division's mainstream budget. The total salary of these Police posts is approximately **£514,324**.
- 5.14 Should a formal merger be agreed, a full programme of consultation on the proposed structure would be undertaken to ensure it is fit for purpose and opportunities to engage other partner agency community safety specialists into the teams is maximised. Exact staffing costs could then be calculated. However in the first instance the costs that are detailed above provide an overall indication of the level of savings that could be achieved through a merger.
- 5.15 It is also acknowledged that for a merged CDRP to succeed there is the requirement to develop a staffing structure that is sustainable and funded from mainstream budgets. This is particularly important as from 2008/09 there shall no longer be any ring fenced funding for community safety activity from the Worcestershire LAA, which is currently the funding source for just over 50% of the staff in the existing CDRP structures for North Worcestershire.
- 5.16 Importantly, governance arrangements and methods of operation for a merged North Worcestershire CDRP structure shall be drafted if there is an agreement to formally merge. This information will show how the CDRP will operate and position itself in the

wider partnership environment including its relationship with the Safer Communities Board of the Worcestershire Partnership.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The overall aim of any proposed merged North Worcestershire CDRP will be to create long term financial efficiencies and whilst some initial calculations have been made regarding salary costs, consideration now needs to be given towards the pooling of mainstream community safety budgets that the three local authorities have and whether other partner agencies may wish to pool their budgets too.
- 6.2 The mainstream community safety budgets for Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council collectively bring together approximately £1,814,700. However, just over 50% of this funding is used for the running of CCTV systems across the three authority areas. Hence there could be opportunities to create even greater financial efficiencies by exploring the potential to join up some of the individual community safety functions that the three authorities run e.g. CCTV systems, Anti Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Warden Teams for example.

7. PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 7.1 Subject to the approval by the three local authorities to formally move towards a merged North Worcestershire CDRP, a Responsible Authorities Project Working Group shall be established to drive forward and project manage the merger process. The Group shall also include a Finance Officer and a Human Resources Officer to deal with these specialist matters.
- 7.2 Issues that would need early consideration by the Project Working Group include:
- a) Development of a Project Management Plan including a GANNT Chart with clearly defined timescales to work to;
 - b) A full cost / benefit analysis of the proposed merged CDRP structure for North Worcestershire and the financial opportunities to create greater efficiencies across the three local authority areas;
 - c) Budgetary implications for 2008/09 and beyond;
 - d) Host Authority for merged CDRP;
 - e) Development of a stakeholder consultation and communications plan and programme of activity;
 - f) Structural relationship with the Safer Communities Board of the Worcestershire Partnership and Local Strategic Partnerships in each of the authority areas;
 - g) Input to Worcestershire LAA negotiations for April 2008;
 - h) Further initial dialogue with those CDRPs in England that have merged to explore best practice and 'any lessons learnt'; and
 - i) Identify robust performance indicators which will be used to measure the short, medium and long term success of a merged CDRP. The new 'Assessment of Policing and Community Safety' performance framework will underpin this process.

8. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The legal and policy implications are set out in Section 3 of this report.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 The principal risk in pursuing a merger is the loss of local control in relation to the community safety agenda and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Strategy. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring that the tactical Tasking meetings for each District would continue to meet, that crime and disorder issues are still reported within a District framework, the development of locality action plans, ongoing communication with Elected Members and partners, and ensuring clarity of focus on respective community plans is maintained.

9.2 There would be a significant financial risk to the three CDRPs if the merger does not go ahead. Over the last 12 months, they have individually received between £107,000 and £124,000 of grant funding from the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA) to support the delivery of community safety in their respective authority areas. However, as of 2008/09, community safety funding within the LAA will not be ring fenced and will be pooled with all the other funding streams. A North Worcestershire CDRP would therefore have a stronger strategic voice for bidding for monies from the LAA than an individual district CDRP would have. It should be recalled that the South Worcestershire CDRPs will be bidding for funding as one CDRP following their merger a number of years ago.

9.3 From an employee perspective, there is currently 4.5 local authority staff who have a permanent contract and work directly on CDRP activity for one of the three district CDRPs. The proposed draft organisational structure for the merged CDRP would enable these employees to continue in similar posts as to those they currently have. However, full consultation with the Trade Unions and those employees would be instrumental in any further developments to pursue a proposed merger. This process would also apply to the 6.5 members of staff who are on temporary, grant funded contracts and work directly on CDRP activity for one of the three district CDRPs. However due to the rationalisation and the streamlining of activity it is unlikely that all of the grant funded staff could be secured in the proposed merged structure.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 The proposed merger of the Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest CDRPs represents an opportunity to improve community safety practice and outcomes across North Worcestershire. It has the secondary benefit of providing the opportunity for significant efficiency savings. Risks are evident in the proposed merger, but these can be mitigated through excellent project management of the process and effective and ongoing communication and consultation amongst all stakeholders.

11. CONSULTEES

- Chief Executive

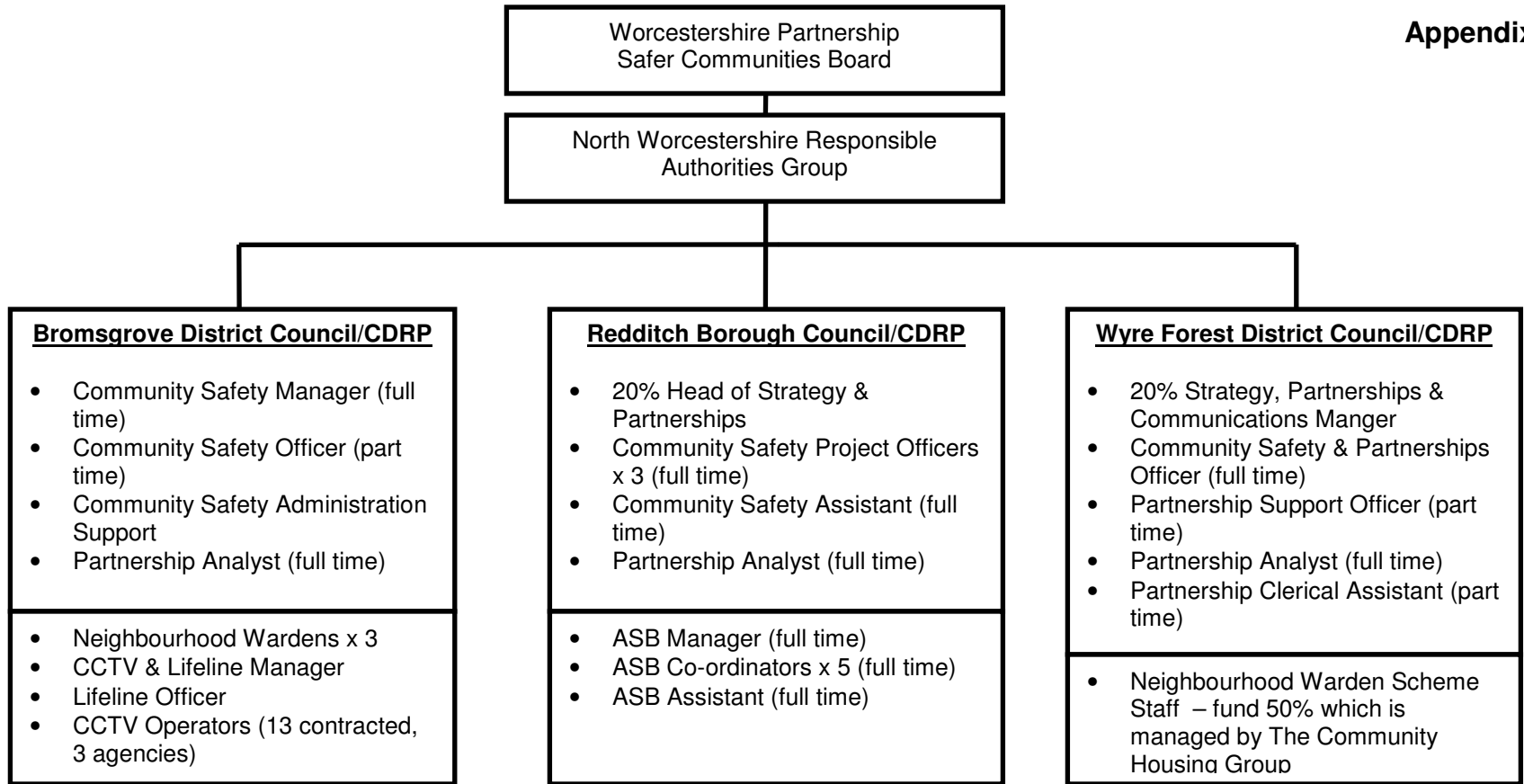
- Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services
- Head of Community and Partnership Services

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Section 5 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002
- The Police and Justice Act 2006
- Delivering Safer Communities: *'Guide to Effective Partnership Working – September 2007'*

**CURRENT STAFFING STRUCTURE OF CDRPS / COMMUNITY SAFETY FUNCTIONS ACROSS NORTH
WORCESTERSHIRE COUNCILS**

Appendix 1



PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR A NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE MERGED CRIME & DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP

APPENDIX 2

