

# Executive Report



## 5 November 2010

Report of Head of Corporate Strategy

Author: Liz Hayden

Telephone: 01235 540309

Textphone: 18001 01235 540309

E-mail: [liz.hayden@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:liz.hayden@southandvale.gov.uk)

Wards affected (Vale only): All

Cabinet member responsible: Jane Murphy

Tel: 01235 819511

E-mail: [jane.murphy@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:jane.murphy@southoxon.gov.uk)

To: CABINET

DATE: 4 November 2010

Report No 63/10

Executive member responsible: Tony De Vere

Tel: 01235 547693

E-mail: [tony.devere@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:tony.devere@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

To: EXECUTIVE

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## Recommendation to merge the South and Vale community safety partnerships (CSPs)

### Recommendation

To pilot a South and Vale community safety partnership (CSP) with effect from 1 April 2011, with a view to permanently merging the two CSPs into a single CSP

### Purpose of Report

1. This report recommends that Cabinet and Executive agree to pilot a South and Vale CSP with a view to merging the two CSPs into a single community safety partnership with effect from 1 April 2011.

### Strategic Objectives

2. The proposed merger contributes to the South strategic objective "helping people feel safe and secure" and the Vale strategic objective "helping to maintain a safe

Vale". It also contributes to the shared strategic objective of managing our business effectively.

## **Background**

3. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA) as amended by section 97(3) of the Police Reform Act 2002 sets out the circumstances in which the responsible authorities for each CSP area can join together to work as a partnership to reduce crime, antisocial behaviour and the fear of crime.
4. More recently the consultation paper "Policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: reconnecting police and the people" recognises that CSPs have played a strong role in preventing crime. The consultation paper sets out how the government wants these partnerships to continue but in a less prescriptive way.

## **The Role of CSPs**

5. The police, local authorities, police authority, fire authority, probation and primary care trusts are statutory members of the CSP, known as "responsible authorities" and must be involved.
6. The role of a CSP is to address national and local crime priorities. This includes an:
  - annual strategic intelligence assessment (SIA) of crime which identifies priorities in the area by assessing risks and opportunities and existing levels of crime
  - three year annual rolling community safety partnership plan which sets out the approach for addressing the priorities identified in the SIA
  - meeting minimum standards of community consultation and engagement on issues of crime and disorder and substance misuse
  - ensuring that the CSP has an information sharing protocol in place to facilitate partnership working.

## **Benefits of a joint South and Vale CSP**

7. The restructure of the South and Vale district community safety teams has been approved and we are currently in the process of forming a new shared community safety team. Thames Valley Police have recently announced that they intend to merge the two local police areas (LPAs) on the 1 April 2011. Furthermore, the future of primary care trusts is uncertain.
  8. The benefits of creating one CSP include:
    - the new partnership would be coterminous with the newly formed police area and would reflect the local authority shared services ethos
    - a reduction in the number of meetings that partnership officers and statutory members are expected to attend
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- pooling of expertise, knowledge, skills and resources to more effectively tackle crime and disorder

### **Process for merger:**

9. The Home Office has broken the process for merging CSPs down into six stages:
  1. The proposal to merge must be supported by all responsible authorities across both areas and discussed with the relevant Home Office Regional Deputy Director.
  2. CSPs pilot working together as a merged partnership. There is no specific timescale for this however, at the end of the pilot period the CSP must be able to provide evidence to support a merger and demonstrate that it has been successful.
  3. Following the pilot an application to merge is made to the Home Office Regional Deputy Director; this must be endorsed by all responsible authorities.
  4. The Home Office Regional Director will consider the application and make a recommendation supporting the application to the Police and Crime Performance Unit (PCPU).
  5. If approved the PCPU will recommend to the Secretary of State that an order is made to allow the merger.
  6. Recommendation is approved and Home Office legal advisers arrange for an order to be made

### **Options**

10. The option to maintain two CSPs was considered however with the reduced resource available to partners we are concerned that there is not enough capacity to keep both partnerships working effectively.

### **Financial Implications**

11. There are no financial implications to this report as there will be no additional cost to partners and by pooling resources we will deliver a more efficient service. Partners will need to consider how the budgets are managed, as at present there are separate funding streams for the two CSPs.

### **Legal Implications**

12. The proposed merger must be supported by all “responsible authorities” across both areas and discussed with the relevant Home Office Regional Deputy Director.

### **Risks**

13. The main risks of *not* merging the CSPs are that we may not be able to properly resource two partnerships. The merged partnership will be coterminous with the newly formed police area. Reducing the number of meetings that partners are expected to attend will enable us to dedicate more time to delivery. The future of
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community safety funding is uncertain. By pooling expertise, knowledge, skills and resources we will be able to continue to tackle crime and disorder in both district council areas.

## **Other Implications**

14. Other implications are covered in the body of the report.

## **Conclusion**

15. The merger of the CSPs will ensure that our structure is fit for the future and enable the councils to maximise efficiencies by harmonising working arrangements.

## **Background Papers**

- Guidance on merging crime and disorder reduction partnership areas under section 5 of the CDA 1998 as amended by section 97(3) of the PRA 2002: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100413151441/http://crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/partnerships66.htm>