

**REPORT TO BLABY & HINCKLEY COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP  
EXECUTIVE BOARD OCTOBER 2012**

**RE: EVALUATION OF INFORMAL MERGER ARRANGEMENTS**

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**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update members of the Joint Community Safety Partnership Executive Board on the evaluation of the informal merger of the Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth Community Safety Partnerships.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the joint Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth Community Safety Executive Board support the continuation of the current arrangements of an informal merger until April 2013 when consideration can be given to a formal merger.
- 2.2 That the learning from this evaluation report be shared with and fed into the appropriate county community safety boards.

**3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In Nov 2010 a paper proposing an informal merger of the Community Safety Partnerships of Blaby and Hinckley & Bosworth starting from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 was tabled at each of the executive boards for consideration.
- 3.2 The proposal paper put forward the following benefits of an informal merged arrangement :
- Potential for reduced number of meetings.
  - Staff and Partner time saved realising efficiency savings
  - One Community Safety Plan instead of two.
  - Retained local accountability and local identity
  - Proposed new arrangements responsive to the needs of local communities who are able to be involved in ensuring their area is safe for all to enjoy.
  - Increased capacity at operational level.
  - An enhanced scrutiny role at Board level leading to better outcomes for communities.
- 3.3 Each partnership voted on the proposal and the majority agreed that an informal merger was the best option with a plan to review this arrangement after 1 year, from April 2012.

- 3.4 The informal merger commenced in April 2011 seeing the joining up of the strategic arm of the two partnerships. It was agreed that the two areas should keep their own local delivery mechanisms in place.
- 3.5 New Terms of reference were put in place for the joint partnership.
- 3.6 The Police & Crime Commissioner for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland will be elected in November 2012 and take over responsibilities for the main budgets currently assigned to the Community Safety Partnerships from April 2013.

#### **4.0 EVALUATION OF INFORMAL MERGER**

- 4.1 The review of the informal merger commenced in April 2012 with a small task and finish group set up to consider what had been achieved. Members of the group included local authority staff from both areas, police partnership officer and representation from Leicestershire County Council.
- 4.2 An evaluation template was completed; see **Appendix 1** which also asked us to assess the performance of the partnership against the Hallmarks.
- 4.3 Section 5 of this report details the benefits realised in line with the potential benefits put forward to the executive boards by the original proposal (listed in 3.2) as well as some operational achievements that have been realised throughout the first year of the merger.

#### **5.0 BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES OF JOINT MERGER**

##### **5.1 Reduced number of meetings**

- The number of Community Safety Executive Board Meetings has reduced from 8 per year across the two partnerships to 4 per year as a joint partnership, this equates to a 50% reduction.
- For a number of strategic and thematic meetings at county level one officer represents the joint partnership meaning that we are sending 1 officer across the areas instead of 2. For example a Blaby officer represents both Hinckley and Blaby at County Domestic Abuse meetings and an officer from Hinckley represents both areas at the county strategic hate crime meetings.

##### **5.2 Staff and Partner time saved**

###### **5.2.1 Staff time savings realised by the merger (see Appendix 2):**

- Administration time saved to support the Community Safety Executive Board is estimated to be in the region of 60 hours per annum
- Time saved by producing joint key documents is estimated to be in the region of 20 hours per annum

- Preparation of joint papers for the Executive Board meetings is estimated to have saved around 32 hours per annum

A significant amount of time has also been saved by key officers representing the two areas at county meetings as detailed in 5.1

### **5.2.2 Partner time savings realised by the merger ( see Appendix 2):**

The following partners would have attended both Blaby and Hinckley Community Safety Partnership's Executive Board meetings before the merger:

Police Authority Rep  
 County Community safety Rep  
 Youth Service Rep  
 Fire and Rescue Service Rep  
 Police Partnership rep  
 Probation Rep  
 Voluntary Sector Rep

They would therefore have been attending 8 meetings a year which due to the merger has now reduced to 4 per year. Based on the meetings (including travel time and preparation) being 4.0 hours. This equates to a partner time saving of 112 hours per annum.

### **5.3 One Community Safety Plan instead of two**

One Community Safety Plan has been produced in April 2011 and April 2012. A joint public consultation has been delivered to inform the strategy in Feb 2011 and Feb 2012. The joint plan has enabled savings in:

- Document production times of plan and consultation
- Reduction in production costs for documents

The Community Safety plan has taken into consideration results of consultation in both areas and the individual threats and performance of the two areas via the strategic assessments.

### **5.4 Retained local accountability and local identity**

- Local identity and accountability has been retained.
- Both areas have individual action plans to ensure delivery of the strategy in their local area. Where appropriate, joint actions have taken place in partnership to ensure that wherever possible resources have been shared.
- A joint performance and achievement framework has been put in place and is reported on a quarterly basis to the CSP Executive Board. This framework ensures that individual area threats/achievements are highlighted as well as giving an update on joint successes.

## **5.5 New arrangements responsive to the needs of local communities**

- Consultation with the community to inform the joint strategy has ensured the joint partnership is dealing with priorities that are important to the community
- Our joint domestic abuse service means that a resident can contact either the Hinckley or Blaby workers for support, especially those residents that live on the border of the two local authority areas. At busy times one area can pick up cases for the other area meaning that we do not have to operate a waiting list and people can be seen as soon as possible. Alongside this we have been able to develop the service to have a male domestic abuse worker now.
- Our Joint Community Safety Campaigns means that we are getting the same message across to all residents of the two areas. This is key with burglary campaigns where we don't want to just move the offenders from one area to a neighbouring area; the campaigns are run at the same time.

## **5.6 Increased capacity at operational level**

- The reduction in time spent on producing documents and campaign plans means that all officers at operational level have more time to spend on dealing with other issues as they arise.
- Good practice is shared across the two areas so we don't have to spend time reinventing the wheel e.g. hate campaign plan, domestic abuse awareness campaign plan, burglary plan.
- The sharing of attendance at strategic themed meetings and joint campaigns etc has increased the capacity of officers to spend time on other areas of work

## **5.7 Enhanced scrutiny role at Board level leading to better outcomes for communities**

- Improved performance reporting systems ensure that members can more easily identify threats and question response to these threats
- Risk management and mitigating actions are now included in performance reports
- The reports have enabled members to identify where one area may be doing better than another and question whether there is anything we can learn from each other to improve performance.

## **5.8 Improved opportunities for the sharing of resources**

- In the last twelve months we have been successful in securing funding across the two areas e.g. community forum bids, BCU funding for burglary campaign.
- Safety Crew project in schools bought in a number of partners from other agencies to help run the sessions and the funding for the project was secured through one bid.

## 5.9 Joint Achievements

Appendix 3 lists some of the operational joint achievements for 2011-12

## 5.10 Comments from CSP Executive Board Members

**Below are some the comments received by the evaluation team from members of the joint CSP Board:**

*“I think the Partnership has worked well. Our two areas are similar and thus share similar problems and challenges. Joint working has given everyone the opportunity to compare issues and the means by which they are addressed. Overall it has led to more effective use of time and resources”* **Cllr David Bill Joint Chair of the CSP**

*“There has been strong political leadership, close officer co-operation, effective support and good cross partnership outcomes”* **David Prince Police Authority**

*“At a strategic level the merger has resulted in the desired efficiency savings for the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service(LFRS). Resource requirements to satisfy the joint CSP have been halved. This effectively saves me around 24 positive hours per year which would have been taken up in preparation, travel and attending meetings”* **Richard Hall, LFRS**

## 6.0 KEY DRIVERS TO SUCCESS OF THE MERGER

During the evaluation a number of key drivers were identified that were felt to contribute directly to the success of the merger:

- The two areas are similar in size and have a number of similar challenges
- The dedication and commitment of a number of key personnel
- Joint and effective chairing of CSP Executive meetings
- The attitude to achieve together, not just individually
- Officers of the Community Safety Teams working physically at times from each others base
- Regular communication between key officers

## 7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1 In April 2011 a joint Community Safety Plan was written with joint strategic priorities, this followed local consultation in both areas with residents.

This process was repeated again in 2012, the development of the joint plan has meant that less officer time has been spent in pulling this together.

Having the same priorities at a strategic level means we can identify the opportunities at an operational level to deliver projects and activities across the two local authority areas and there are many examples of when we have done this. This increases capacity and reduces staff and resource costs.

## **8.0 CONSULTATION**

8.1 As part of the evaluation process partners of the Community Safety Executive Board have been consulted with. Their comments were positive in support of the merger. See 6.0.

## **9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has completed for the joint strategic plan and delivery and operational work is still based at a local level which means both areas can consider the implications for their local communities.

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