

Social Justice and Regeneration Committee

SJR(2)-09-06(p.8) Annex 1

Date: Thursday 8 June 2006

Time: 1.30pm-4.30pm

Venue: National Assembly for Wales

Title: Putting Communities First - Community Reassurance Wales

Seminar Report

Introduction

From the earliest stages of the planning of this "Putting Communities First-Community Reassurance in Wales" seminar, the intention was to identify a number of ideas for future development on an all-Wales basis. Therefore, the purpose of this post-seminar report is twofold. Firstly, it will explain the background to staging the event and describe how it was developed and delivered. Secondly, and importantly, it will outline the many issues that were raised during the seminar workshops and attempt to convert them into coherent recommendations for future development by the four Welsh Police Forces and their many partners.

Background

This All-Wales Seminar was held at the Angel Hotel, Cardiff on 4th July, 2005 and focussed upon how "Community Reassurance" in the Principality could be improved through the introduction of Neighbourhood Policing and the further development of partnership working.

The catalyst for the event arose from a meeting between Edwina Hart AM, the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration at the Welsh Assembly Government and members of the Police Authorities for Wales in 2004. During the meeting, a discussion took place about the impact of the then, recently, introduced Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), their future development, and the concerns and confusion about future funding.

A mutually agreed desire to encourage wider debate regarding the development of PCSOs, eventually culminated in this seminar – an event with a much broader remit than originally planned.

The importance of the seminar's subject was universally recognised, with the event being fully supported by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Police Authorities for Wales, the Welsh Local

Government Association and the Chief Constables of Dyfed-Powys, Gwent, North Wales and South Wales.

Similarly, the level of interest in the seminar was illustrated by the fact that over 150 delegates attended. They comprised strategic leaders, operational managers and deliverers of frontline services from the aforementioned supporting organisations, together with representatives from Local Authorities, Community Safety Partnerships, Voluntary Organisations, NHS Trusts and the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

The personal interest and support of the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration was evident through her involvement in delivering a keynote speech at the event.

The Seminar

The seminar programme was developed by members of the Welsh Police Force's Heads of Community Safety Group, chaired by ACC Dave Francis, of South Wales Police. The overall objective was to provide an opportunity for a diverse audience of partnership delegates to examine some of the good work that was already being delivered in Wales through partnership working and to identify ways in which progress could be made through the further development of partnerships and the introduction of Neighbourhood Policing.

The seminar attempted to focus upon both the strategic and operational impact of Neighbourhood Policing upon Community Reassurance, and the following aims were set out for delegates:-

To explore how to improve Community Reassurance through the development of an all-Wales approach to the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing, involving communities and wider partnerships.

To examine the future funding challenges that the development of Neighbourhood Policing will present to partnerships.

To consider the future development of the extended Police family in Wales within the context of Neighbourhood Policing.

To assist delegates in achieving the seminar aims, a full day of presentations and workshops were delivered by a variety of speakers from the four Welsh Police Forces and partnership organisations and the National Neighbourhood Policing Team. The aim was for the presentations to provide information on current work and future developments, in addition to setting challenges for the afternoons workshops.

The Workshops

The event culminated in five workshops held under the banner of "Community Reassurance in Wales – Improving the Service". Each workshop was led by an experienced facilitator, and focussed upon one of

the following key areas:-

- Community Engagement
- Accessibility, Visibility and Reassurance
- Quality of Service Commitment/Putting the Public First
- Building Capacity through the Extended Police Family
- The Funding Challenge

The purpose of each workshop was to identify a number of key areas for future development on an all-Wales basis.

The key issues for the future consideration and development following the seminar were debated under the following headings:-

1. What is working (including examples of good practice).
2. What isn't working (identifying barriers to progress).
3. What can we do to shape the future (including potential solutions).

The workshops produced a large amount of written feedback material, with an anticipated degree of duplication in the outcomes of each of the groups.

It is important to remember that the workshop outcomes are the individual, and combined, observations of a diverse audience who are currently shaping and delivering public services to communities throughout Wales. Between them, they have a vast amount of experience in working for and with communities.

As already mentioned, specific concerns about the funding of PCSOs beyond 2008 were amongst the initial catalysts for the seminar. It was, therefore, no surprise that the financial challenges associated with the future sustainability of PCSOs and the wider delivery of Neighbourhood Policing were also important issues for delegates.

The five workshops resulted in delegates identifying in excess of 50 issues for further consideration. Some of the many suggestions as to "What we can do to shape the future?" are already being considered or progressed, to varying degrees. Equally, a significant number require specific development, ideally on an all-Wales basis.

Future Action-Seminar Recommendations

The issues identified by delegates have now been translated into a number of recommendations for development on an all Wales basis. The recommendations are:-

1. Develop an all Wales Approach to Delivering Neighbourhood Policing.

An all-Wales Neighbourhood Policing Basic Command Unit Pathfinder Forum should be formed.

Consideration should be given to inviting representation from key partner agencies, including the Welsh Local Government Association, who express a commitment to assist in the development of Neighbourhood Policing in their Local Government manifesto for 2005/08.

Early issues for consideration by the Forum could include the matter of "branding" eg. the Neighbourhood Policing Model in Wales could be renamed the Welsh Neighbourhood Partnership Model; and the Extended Police Family could be renamed the Welsh Extended Partnership Family?

A Wales- wide publicity campaign should be undertaken to ensure that both the public and partner agencies understand the different roles of PCSO`s and other Extended Police Family members.

2. Improved Engagement with Volunteers.

The need to develop an all-Wales approach to improve engagement with and the use of volunteers by Police and partners is recognised. Closer collaboration with the Assembly`s Voluntary Sector Unit should be considered to progress this work.

3. Adopt a Common Approach to Extended Police Family Development.

The existing all-Wales Extended Police Family Forum could be tasked with developing a common approach to the recruitment, training and deployment of all Extended Police (Partnership) Family staff members.

The renaming of this forum could also be considered under the "branding" debate.

4. Develop a Joint Partnership Approach to Funding.

The existing Welsh Police Directors of Finance Group could be requested to consider and develop plans to meet the many financial issues and challenges that were raised during the seminar. Despite the latest reassurances made by the Home Secretary and the Police Minister that funding for 24,000 PCSO`s is in place post 2008, further debate on an all Wales basis is needed.

Representatives from partner agencies should be involved in this work.

5. More Effective Engagement with Youth.

The need for the Police and partners to improve engagement with young people should be developed through closer involvement with the Assembly's established Young Peoples Partnership Frameworks.

6. Supporting the Assembly's "Making the Connections" Agenda.

To ensure that the work undertaken by Police and partners in developing the Neighbourhood Policing and Community Reassurance agenda both supports and complements the Assembly's 5 year Action Plan for, "Delivering Better Services in Wales-Delivering the Connections:From Vision to Action".

7. Work Towards a Greater Degree of Plan Rationalisation Across Agencies.

For all partner agencies to play an active part in the Assembly's Local Government Plan Rationalisation Programme.

8. Improve Information Sharing between Agencies.

To work with partner agencies and the Assembly to improve the willingness and commitment to sharing information.

The Welsh Police Forces' Heads of Community Safety Group have considered the recommendations and produced an Action Plan to progress the issues that have been identified. Work has already commenced in respect of most of the recommendations. A copy of the Action Plan is attached as an Annex to this report.

Conclusion

The apparent success of the seminar is best measured not by the level of attendance and interest in the event itself, but by the ideas and recommendations that flowed from it. The above recommendations are broad in their nature and they will need to be developed further if real and meaningful progress is to be made for the benefit of communities throughout Wales.

An overwhelming view was shared by delegates at the seminar, which, if fully embraced, will positively impact upon all 8 recommendations contained in this report. That shared view was that all partner agencies should work hard to engage in more effective partnership working. This is a significant challenge for all!

This Seminar Report is submitted to the sponsors of the seminar, namely the Minister for Social Justice

and Regeneration at the Welsh Assembly Government; the Police Authorities for Wales; the Welsh Local Government Association and the Association of Chief Police Officers, Wales, for their information and to secure their support in taking any recommendations forward.

Annex

Putting Communities First - Community reassurance in Wales

Seminar Recommendations - Action plan produced by Wales Police Heads of Community Safety Group (November 2005)

SEMINAR RECOMMENDATION	INITIAL ACTION TO PROGRESS	REVIEW DATE
<p>1. Develop an all-Wales Approach to Delivering Neighbourhood Policing</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · An all-Wales Neighbourhood Policing BCU Pathfinder Forum should be formed. 	<p>This forum has been formed and includes representatives from all Welsh Forces.</p>	<p>Completed.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Consideration should be given to include representation from key partner agencies, including the Welsh Local Government Association. 	<p>Terms of reference are being developed, and wider membership of the forum is being considered by the Heads of Community Safety in the Welsh forces.</p> <p>Several meetings have been held with The Director, WLGA and senior colleagues.</p>	<p>31st March,2006.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Early issues for consideration by the Forum could include the matter of "branding" eg, the Neighbourhood Policing Model in Wales could be renamed the Welsh Neighbourhood Partnership Model; and the Extended Police Family could be renamed the Welsh Extended Partnership Family? 	<p>These issues will be considered by the forum members and the WACPO Lead Officer on Neighbourhood Policing (DCC Mick Giannasi,Gwent),following any decisions on Police Restructuring in early 2006.</p>	<p>31st March,2006.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A Wales wide publicity campaign should be undertaken to ensure that both the public and partner agencies understand the different roles of PCSOs and other Extended Police Family members. 	This recommendation has been accepted by the Welsh Forces and will be undertaken during 2006/07 as part of the national PCSO recruitment programme.	31 st March 2007.
2.	Improved Engagement with Volunteers		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The need to develop an all-Wales approach to improve engagement with and the use of volunteers by Police and partners is recognised. Closer collaboration with the Assembly's Voluntary Sector Unit should be considered to progress this work. 	WACPO Police Liaison Officer at the Assembly to facilitate initial collaboration with the Welsh Police Heads of Community Safety Group to consider how to develop wider engagement.	31 st March, 2006.
3.	Adopt a Common Approach to Extended Police Family Development		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The existing all-Wales Extended Police Family Forum could be tasked with developing a common approach to the recruitment, training and deployment of all Extended Police (Partnership) Family staff members. <p>The renaming of this forum could also be considered under the "branding" debate.</p>	Some collaboration between the Welsh Police Forces is being undertaken in respect of training of Special Constables and PCSO`s. Further work will be developed following decisions on Police Force Restructuring.	31 st July, 2006.
4.	Develop a Joint Partnership Approach to Funding		

	<p>· The existing Welsh Police Directors of Finance Group to be requested to consider and develop plans to meet the many financial issues and challenges that were raised during the seminar. Despite the latest reassurances made by the Home Secretary and the Police Minister that funding for 24,000 PCSOs is in place, post 2008, further debate on an all-Wales basis is needed.</p>	<p>All of the Welsh Police Forces are at an advanced stage of developing their implementation plans to introduce Neighbourhood Policing throughout their force areas during 2006. A key aspect of Neighbourhood Policing is the continued employment and development of Police Community Support Officers. All of the Welsh Chief Constables and their Police Authorities are currently assessing the operation of the Home Office Neighbourhood Policing Fund and how available funding streams will impact upon individual force targets for additional PCSO`s. These targets have been assigned to each authority to facilitate achieving the Home Office target of recruiting 24,000 PCSO`s by 2008.</p>	<p>31st July 2006</p>
	<p>· Representatives from partner agencies should be involved in this work.</p>	<p>Funding from Partner Agencies is being explored, but given their own financial circumstances, it is likely that this option will yield limited funds. A number of other funding streams relate to non-recurring funds with the likely risk of ceasing at some time in the future.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>More Effective Engagement with Youth</p>		

	<p>· The need for the Police and partners to improve engagement with young people should be developed through closer involvement with the Assembly's established Young People's Partnership Frameworks.</p>	<p>Initial scoping work was undertaken during the Autumn to establish the level and degree of involvement of both Police and partner agencies in established Young Peoples Frameworks.</p> <p>Discussions were then held between Police and Assembly Education Department representatives during December,2005.Plans are now underway to hold a joint Assembly/ Police seminar during March,2006,to progress the need for more effective engagement.</p>	<p>31st March,2006.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Supporting the Assembly's "Making the Connections" Agenda</p>		
	<p>· To ensure that the work undertaken by Police and partners in developing the Neighbourhood Policing and Community Reassurance agenda, both supports and compliments the Assembly's 5 year Action Plan for, "Delivering Better Services in Wales-Delivering the Connections: From Vision to Action."</p>	<p>WACPO's Police Liaison Officer at the Assembly commenced working with the "Making the Connections" Team during August,2005.</p> <p>Police representatives are now active members of the Assembly led Work Groups who are developing core principles in respect of "Customer Service" and "Public Engagement", for all public services in Wales.</p>	<p>30th June,2006.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>Work Towards a Greater Degree of Plan Rationalisation Across Agencies</p>		

<p>· For all partner agencies to play an active part in the Assembly's Local Government Plan Rationalisation Programme.</p>	<p>The Assembly's Local Government and Public Service Board met on 30th November,2005,and approved the phased implementation of the rationalisation of a significant number of public service plans, over the next few years.</p> <p>WACPO's Police Liaison Officer to monitor this work ,and ensure that the Police are engaged where necessary.</p>	<p>31st March,2006.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>Improve Information Sharing between Agencies</p>		
<p>· For all partner agencies and the Assembly to improve their willingness and commitment to sharing information.</p>	<p>The importance of, and the need to progress this work was raised by ACC Dave Francis, South Wales Police, at the All Wales Drug Intervention Programme Seminar held in Swansea , on 3rd November,2005.</p> <p>Consideration is now being given, with support from the Assembly, to form a multi agency working group to undertake this work.</p>	<p>31st March,2006.</p>	