



**Final report of the  
Partnership Scrutiny Group**

*August 2009*

## BACKGROUND

1. The Partnership Scrutiny Group (hereafter known as 'the Group') was formally created by the Authority on 16 December 2008 (Minute 73) to scrutinise the effectiveness of the Authority's contribution to partnership working. The Review was established based on the prominence of partnership working in the Authority's risk register and its identification as a key gap in the Authority's self-assessment. As a result, the development of partnership working was agreed as a key action in the Authority's 2008/09 and 2009/10 Business Plans. Partnership working is seen as central to the delivery of the Authority's Mission:

*"To work in partnership with Cheshire Constabulary and others to create safer communities; and increase confidence and satisfaction in policing."*

2. Two of the Authority's strategic aims are;

- *"to improve partnership working";* and
- *"to be a community leader in policing and community safety."*

It was also recognised that effective partnership working was a key requisite to satisfy the requirements of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and the Use of Resources Assessment (UoR). Partnerships have subsequently been included as a topic within one of the four assessment themes in the proposed Police Authority Inspection Criteria, further demonstrating its importance to the Authority.

3. The Group's work is separate from, but related to another Scrutiny Group, formally created by the Authority on 24 February 2009 (Minute 98), to map and review community consultation and communication activities by statutory partners to inform the Authority's Contact Plan. Both Groups were tasked to produce separate reports to be considered by Engagement Committee on 25 August 2009.
4. The Group's membership comprised four Members, namely David Cargill, Moira Chapman, Anne Doran and Ruth McNeil.
5. In overseeing the development of the work and this final report, the Group has met on six occasions (16 February, 18 March, 21 April, 15 June, 27 July and 10 August 2009). The Group agreed its terms of reference as:

*"To appraise the effectiveness of the Authority's contribution to partnership working by carrying out a detailed investigation into the Authority's involvement in partnerships working, to identify areas for development and improvement"*.

6. The emphasis was on appraising and improving the Authority's effectiveness in partnership working, concentrating on outcomes and "value added", particularly in Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs); Crime and Disorder Partnerships (CDRPs); and Children's Trusts (CTs). The Group considered

that the objective of the Authority's partnership work must be to make a difference to outcomes for local communities, particularly with regard to community safety and where appropriate, support the Chief Constable in achieving the following objective in the 2009/10 Policing Plan:-

*"To work in partnership with others to create strong and vibrant communities".*

## **AREAS FOR SCRUTINY**

7. The Group agreed the following areas of activity:-
  - undertake a gap analysis of the Authority's current partnership activity, taking into account national and statutory and requirements, to support the identification of specific areas of strengths and weaknesses.
  - assessment by partners of the Authority's effectiveness in partnership working and how it could be improved and strengthened.
  - research of partnership working in Cheshire's Most Similar Group (MSG) of police authorities to inform the development of improved partnership activity.
  - review of partnership activity within the Constabulary, including the identification of key players/roles/responsibilities and clarification of the distinct roles of the Authority and the Constabulary.
  - identification of weaknesses in the Authority's current activity and recommendations to address them, including any governance issues.
  - identification of support mechanisms, which Members (particularly the Partnership Leads) need, to undertake their partnership roles effectively.
  - consider the need for a Partnership Strategy.
8. This report outlines the background and legislative basis for the Authority's involvement in partnership working, and covers the drivers for the Scrutiny Review and the progress previously made. The report then details the Group's work in each area, summarising the findings at the end of each section.

## **ROLE OF THE AUTHORITY IN PARTNERSHIPS AND DRIVERS FOR SCRUTINY REVIEW**

9. The Group resolved to concentrate on the four LSPs in Cheshire including the CDRPs. These are Cheshire West & Chester, Cheshire East, Warrington and Halton LSPs. The Group felt these were the key partnerships in Cheshire to deliver better outcomes for local communities and to encourage multi-agency working. The Group also determined that the Authority's role in the Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) and the Safer Roads Partnership should also

be considered. The Group resolved not to consider collaborative working with other police forces/authorities nor the private sector, due to restricted capacity.

### **Requirements on the Authority in Cheshire LSPs**

10. LSPs are non-statutory, multi-agency partnerships, which match local authority boundaries. LSPs bring together the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors; allowing different initiatives and services to support one another so that they can work together more effectively.
11. Perceived lack of joint working at a local level was one of the key reasons why the Government required LSPs to be established in 2001. The imperatives were seen as delivering sustainable economic, social and physical regeneration that meet the needs of local communities. The Government envisaged that a combination of organisations and the community working co-operatively as part of an LSP would have a far greater chance of success in delivering outcomes to meet local needs.
12. The LSP must oversee the development, monitoring and delivery of a Local Area Agreement (LAA), based on a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for the area. The LAA must contain statutory and local priorities and targets within the following blocks: -
  - Safer and Stronger Communities (discharged by the statutory Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership)
  - Children and Young People (discharged by the statutory Children's Trust)
  - Healthier Communities and Older People
  - Economic Development and Enterprise
13. The Local Government and Public Involvement In Health Act 2007 introduced a new "duty to co-operate" on local authorities, in preparing the LAA to consult and co-operate with each partner body concerning relevant targets.
14. With regard to CDRPs, Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory duty on police, fire, and local authorities "to do all that they can reasonably to prevent crime and disorder in their area." This required authorities to work in partnership to tackle problems in their area, through Crime and Disorder Partnerships (CDRPs). CDRPs are statutory bodies in their own right and their duties were increased through The Police and Justice Act 2006.
15. In respect of Children's Trusts (CTs), Section 10 of the Children's Act 2004 placed a duty on local authorities (including police authorities) to make arrangements through which key agencies co-operate to improve the well-

being of children and young people.

## **Drivers for Scrutiny Review and Progress Previously Made**

16. The Authority had identified partnership working as a key risk and as an area for further work in the Authority's first formal self-assessment in 2007. The Local Government and Public Involvement In Health Act 2007 and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Cheshire, whereby two new Unitary Councils came into being on 1 April 2009, were perceived as providing opportunities to enhance partnership working. The establishment of the two new unitary councils also meant that the number of CDRPs in the former County Council area reduced from six to two, again providing opportunities for the Authority to consolidate and improve partnership working.

17. In the Authority's 2008/09 Business Plan, improved partnership working was identified as one of the five key actions. The 2009/10 Business Plan reports progress against this action as follows:-

*“Work has been on-going with the emerging community safety partnerships in East and West Cheshire to develop the new partnerships in the light of local government re-organisation, whilst the Authority has continued to work with Halton and Warrington in delivering their partnership plan. Analysis was undertaken of LAAs in formulating the policing objectives. The Authority continues to work towards increased involvement in the wider partnership agenda and has commissioned work to commence in 2009/10 to explore and enhance its involvement in LSPs. Work has been undertaken with partners in developing the role of the Authority, although progress has been limited to an extent by LGR in East and West Cheshire.”*

18. The Authority's Engagement Committee on 24 November 2008 (Minute 34) agreed that a Lead Member for each local authority area be appointed to undertake the partnership activity in that area. This role would comprise representing the Authority on the LSP, CDRP and Children's Trust. The Partnership Lead Members were subsequently agreed by the Authority on 7 April 2009 (Minute 12 (b)) as follows for 2009/10: -

<i>Cheshire East</i>	<i>Ainsley Arnold</i>
<i>Cheshire West &amp; Chester</i>	<i>Moira Chapman</i>
<i>Halton</i>	<i>Dave Cargill</i>
<i>Warrington</i>	<i>Brian Maher / Colin Oliver</i>

19. At this stage, the Authority considered that it had made good progress in CDRP and CT working but that there was further work to do to ensure the Authority was represented on LSPs themselves and to persuade partners of the value of the Authority's contribution to LSPs over and above the statutory core role of the Authority on CDRPs and CTs. As a result, a key action in the 2009/10 Business Plan on partnerships stated:-

*“The Authority will continue to develop positive relationships with the various partnerships throughout Cheshire, building on the work undertaken during*

*LGR in Cheshire East and West, and further strengthening links in Halton and Warrington. This will enhance our role in partnership working including a lead role in engagement (covered in the other scrutiny report) and involvement in local delivery arrangements. The Authority will also seek a better understanding of LSPs and a more consistent representation at the appropriate level.”*

20. In framing this action, the Authority recognised that establishing effective partnership working with the new Councils of Cheshire West & Chester and Cheshire East had been difficult, given their focus on LGR. The partnerships were inevitably immature as LSPs and the LAAs were taking time to develop.
21. In the last six months, the Chief Executive has been discussing the role of the Authority in partnership working with the four Council Chief Executives. The Chief Executive has emphasised the importance and usefulness of the Authority being represented and fully engaged in each of the LSPs. In Cheshire West & Chester and Halton this has happened and the Authority has been fully embraced in the partnerships and is contributing effectively; in Warrington the principle has been agreed and discussions are progressing to achieve this by the end of the year. In Cheshire East Council, however, this principle has not yet been accepted, despite considerable effort by Members and the Chief Executive. The Group noted the position in Cheshire East Council with significant disappointment and noted the risks of not fully joining up partnership arrangements in Cheshire East and the potential impact on CAA.

#### **Recommendation 1**

- (i) That the Chief Executive continue to progress discussions with Warrington Borough Council to ensure that the Authority is represented on the LSP by the end of the year.
- (ii) That it be noted with significant disappointment that Cheshire East Council has not yet accepted the Authority's involvement in the LSP, despite the Authority's best endeavours and the Chief Executive and Partnership Lead Member continue to press for the Authority to be accepted as a partner on the LSP.
- (iii) That the Chief Executive and Partnership Lead Members work to further consolidate relationships in Cheshire West & Chester and Halton LSPs, to provide a solid basis for further joint improvement in community outcomes.

22. Overall, the Group considered that good progress had been made in developing partnership working since it had been identified as an area for improvement in the self-assessment, particularly in terms of representation on two of the four LSPs, all CDRPs and CTs. However, the Group concluded that LGR had caused the Authority difficulties in sustaining effective partnership working in West and East Cheshire whilst the two new unitaries

were being established, that those emerging partnerships are still developing and in that sense are immature.

### **Cheshire Criminal Justice Board (LCJB)**

23. Cheshire Criminal Justice Board was established in April 2003, as one of 42 English and Welsh LCJBs. The Board aims to improve co-operation between criminal justice agencies to deliver a joined-up criminal justice service and to improve the way justice works in Cheshire. It brings together the Chief Officers of the Constabulary, Crown Prosecution Service, the Courts Service, all Cheshire Youth Offending Teams, Cheshire Probation, the H M Prison Service and a Local Authority.
24. The Group discussed whether the Authority should be represented on the LCJB, which it considered to be operational and delivery focused. The Authority is represented on three groups which feed into the LCJB, which are the LCJB Consultative Group (established by the Board); the LCJB officer level Engagement Group, and the Criminal Justice Performance Improvement Meeting (CJPIM).
25. In conclusion, the Group considered that the Authority did not have a statutory role on the LCJB itself, which was operational in nature. The Authority was, however, well linked into LCJB activity through its representation on various groups which met the Authority's duties to engage and scrutinise performance. The Group concluded LCJB representation was working effectively and did not need to be changed.

### **Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership (CSRP) Governance Board**

26. The CSRP comprises officers from the Constabulary, the Fire and Rescue Service and the four Councils' Highways Services. The objective of this officer-led partnership is to reduce road traffic collisions in Cheshire and in particular the number of killed and seriously injured (KSI) casualties. The incidence of collisions and the number of KSI have been and remain key issues in Cheshire. The LAA reduction targets for 2009-11 are challenging and the matter remains a key priority in the Authority's Policing Plan.
27. In recognising the absence of a governance framework for the CSRP, which directly involved the funding partners, the previous Chairman of the Authority established a Governance Board of Member partners in 2008 to oversee the work of the Partnership. The CSRP officers are accountable to the Board in reporting on performance against the LAA targets and in the deployment of resources. An annual report from the partnership is considered by the Authority in June. The Authority is now represented on the Governance Board by the Vice-Chairman, given his particular experience in road safety and highway engineering matters.

28. The Group considered these arrangements were working satisfactorily, but that Member challenge of collisions and KSIs could usefully be enhanced at Performance Panel when performance reports from the Chief Constable are considered.

### **GAP ANALYSIS OF THE AUTHORITY'S CURRENT DISCHARGE OF PARTNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES AGAINST NATIONAL GUIDELINES**

29. A gap analysis was undertaken by the Group against national guidelines to support the identification of strengths and weaknesses. In establishing the national context, the Group examined the following documents and guidelines:-
- Use of Resources Assessment (UoR), Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and Police Authority Inspection criteria, which relate to partnership working as a whole (2009)
  - the Hallmarks of Effective Practice set out by the Home Office in the document "Delivering Communities: A Guide to Effective Partnership Working" (September 2007). The Hallmarks relate specifically to CDRPs
  - the Association of Police Authorities' (APA) CDRP Self-Assessment document used for that purpose by the Authority's Engagement Committee in 2008, and their conclusions
30. The individual requirements of the documents are summarised collectively in Annex 1. In order to conduct the gap analysis, the Group set out in a matrix the requirements on the Authority from the above documents and then compiled evidence of compliance and strengths against each requirement. The matrix is set out in Annex 2 and shows weaknesses and gaps in the final column. The communication and consultation aspects are covered in the work of the Consultation Scrutiny Group and consequently have been excluded from Annex 2 and this report.

31. Having completed and assessed the gap analysis, the Group concluded that the Authority demonstrated compliance with requirements in the following areas:-
- Authority secures the views of local people directly about policing priorities through a range of mechanisms.
  - Authority consults the public directly as part of budget consultation to obtain views on policing priorities, which is then taken into account in budget setting. LAA priorities are also taken into account in budget setting.
  - The Authority took into account local priorities in setting the Chief Constable's objectives.
  - The Authority has influenced LAA targets in Safer and Stronger Communities and Children and Young People's Blocks.
  - Lead Partnership Members now identified for LSPs, CDRPs and CTs.
  - The Authority has demonstrated significant commitment to the work of Children's Trusts.
  - Lead Members feed back to Engagement Committee on partnership working and key issues quarterly
  - Performance against LAA targets considered bi-monthly at Performance Panel.
32. The Group, however, identified the following weaknesses or gaps:
- More focus needed in performance reporting to Engagement Committee and Performance Panel on outcomes and improvements for local communities, i.e. the effectiveness of partnerships.
  - Partnership risk management issues and management of the Authority's specific risks in partnership working need to be captured in feedback to Engagement Committee and escalated where significant.
  - Escalation routes also need to be formally determined where key issues arise or matters of concern are raised in relation to Partnerships.

- There are currently no formalised mechanisms between the relevant NPU Members and the Partnership Lead Member for partnership information sharing and feedback.
- The External Auditor has identified that Members do not currently evaluate the Authority's and Constabulary's contributions to partnerships, in terms of their own outputs/outcomes against resource inputs.
- The Constabulary has information sharing protocols in place with all four Councils and other partners, but the protocols have not been compiled on a consistent basis. The Constabulary is in the process of updating them for consistency across the board.
- Arrangements for overview and scrutiny of crime and disorder matters are not yet fully clarified with, nor established by, the Borough Councils.

### **Recommendations to address the gaps**

33. The Group considered that Engagement Committee should review the standard template used by Members when reporting on discussions at and issues arising from partnership meetings. Its effectiveness and ease of use should be reviewed and potential gaps, including the following issues, be considered:-

- Outcomes being achieved
- Partnership/Authority risks

#### **Recommendation 2**

That Engagement Committee review the reporting template used by Partnership Lead Members for effectiveness and ease of use.

34. The Group concluded that escalation of Police Authority and Partnership risk matters or concerns were vital in ensuring effective governance.

#### **Recommendation 3**

- (i) That the Treasurer evaluate the quarterly reports to Engagement Committee by Partnership Lead Members to determine any significant Authority risks which need to be captured in the Authority's risk register, with mitigating actions and escalate as necessary to the Audit Committee.
- (ii) That in the case of risks or matters of concern to a Partnership as a whole, the Treasurer advise the Chief Executive accordingly, who will determine if the matter needs to be discussed at the Cheshire Chief Executives' Management Team.

35. The Group considered the External Auditor's view about the need for the Authority to evaluate the value for money of the cost of its contribution and inputs. The Group concluded that this task was not practicable, given the fact that the bulk of the contribution was non cash (i.e. time) and was spread across many Members. It would be too difficult and time consuming to collect and analyse this information.
36. The Group considered that formal communication and feedback mechanisms needed to be established between NPU Lead Members and the relevant Partnership Lead. A feedback form has recently been developed for NPU Members to log key issues arising from contact with their NPU Inspectors and Area Commanders. This form could be extended to include partnership issues. The completed forms will be sent to the Authority's Research Officer, who will collate the issues quarterly by Council area and forward a summary to the relevant Partnership Lead Member.

#### **Recommendation 4**

That consideration be given to extending the NPU Member feedback form to include partnership issues. If agreed, the Authority's Research Officer will then be asked to collate the feedback quarterly by Council area and forward a summary to the relevant Partnership Lead Member.

37. In relation to information sharing protocols, the Authority needs to ensure that the Constabulary concludes the work to update information sharing protocols with partners on a consistent basis, to an agreed timetable.

#### **Recommendation 5**

That Engagement Committee ensure the Constabulary complete their work to update and agree their information sharing protocols with all relevant partners, on a consistent basis, to an agreed timetable.

38. The Home Office produced guidance in May 2009 on the framework for scrutiny, which states that the terms of reference of a scrutiny committee are to scrutinise the work of the CDRP and the partners who comprise it, insofar as their activities relate to the activity of the CDRP itself. The guidance suggests that the committee should act as a critical friend to the CDRP.
39. Regulations published under the Act allow scrutiny committees to co-opt additional members. The Home Office guidance states that local authorities should take steps to involve police authorities in their work. There are three options:-
  - One member of the committee to be a Police Authority Member (the Home Office envisages this being the most common approach)

- Standing invitation to Police Authority Member to attend as “expert adviser”
  - Co-option of a Police Authority Member onto the Committee when policing matters are discussed.
40. The guidance and options are currently being discussed by the Chief Executive with the four Council Chief Executives in Cheshire. The Group stated the importance of progressing those discussions to ensure the Authority is represented on the overview and scrutiny committees. Engagement Committee on 25 August 2009 will consider a report on this matter for information.

#### **Recommendation 6**

That the Chief Executive continue and conclude discussions with the four Cheshire Council Chief Executives regarding Authority representation on overview and scrutiny committees where crime and disorder matters are discussed.

### **ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUTHORITY BY PARTNERS AND RESEARCH INTO PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN OTHER POLICE AUTHORITIES**

#### **Feedback from partners**

41. A questionnaire was sent to 18 Members and officers involved in working with Police Authority Members and officers in the four Cheshire LSPs, including CDRPs and CTs. 11 responses were received from across the LSPs.
42. Overall the feedback was positive. A summary of the key findings is set out below: -
- (i) There was a strong awareness of the Authority’s role as a ‘relevant’ partner. All respondents were aware of the Authority’s role within CDRPs; 10/11 respondents were aware of the Authority’s role on LSPs and 7/11 respondents stated they were aware of the Authority’s role in Children’s Trusts.
  - (ii) 10/11 respondents were aware of the attendance of Police Authority Members at partnership meetings.
  - (iii) 8/11 respondents recognised Members were attending as representatives of the Authority. Three respondents considered that Members were attending as councillors. However, given the strong awareness of the Authority’s role as relevant body, it is apparent that the Authority’s role within partnership working is clear amongst most partners.

- (iv) When asked to specify the role the Authority had in partnership, the most frequently stated roles were: -
- to ensure that the partnership priorities were reflected in policing objectives
  - to identify opportunities for joint working
  - to make decisions affecting the partnership
- (v) Feedback regarding the contribution Members made to partnerships was very positive, with 9/11 describing Members as 'good' or 'excellent'. The remaining two respondents perceived Members' contribution as "average."
- (vi) Feedback regarding the contribution officers made to partnerships was very positive with 5/6 of those who were able to comment describing the contribution as either 'good' or 'excellent'.

### **Research into partnership working in other police authorities**

43. A questionnaire was sent to Cheshire's Most Similar Group – Suffolk, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Devon and Cornwall, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and Staffordshire - to research these police authorities partnership working. The questionnaire was also sent to North West authorities – Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Lancashire and Cumbria. In addition, the views of North Wales were sought, given the history of close partnership working, and also of West Yorkshire, which has a UoR score of '4' and is identified by the Audit Commission as having strong partnership working.
44. Of the 13 authorities, six returned the questionnaire. A summary of findings is set out below:-
- (i) Many of the police authorities are currently reviewing and developing their partnership working. Three of the authorities have a partnership strategy.
  - (ii) One authority stated they did not currently send any Members or officers to CDRP, LSP or Children's Trust meetings, as they were currently reviewing partnership working. Of the five authorities which sent Members to meetings, all sent Members to CDRP and LSP meetings. Only one authority sent a Member to Children's Trust meetings. Officer attendance at partnership meetings was far less common. Only one authority sent an officer to CDRP and LSP meetings. Another authority stated that they sent an officer to CDRP meetings but this was only when a Member was unable to attend. Job titles of officers attending meetings included the Chief Executive,

the Head of Community Engagement and Policy Officers.

- (iii) The following were the most commonly perceived roles for the Authority in partnership working:-
  - to share information with the partnership
  - to make decisions affecting the partnership
  - to identify opportunities for joint working
  - to ensure that the partnership priorities are reflected in policing objectives.
  - to monitor the contribution and performance of the Constabulary with regard to partnership working
- (iv) The most frequently cited contributions Members made to partnership working were:-
  - Adding value to discussions and resolutions
  - Ensuring important issues are included on agendas (e.g. the issue of Confidence has been included as an agenda item on CDRPs at the instigation of the Authority).
  - understanding priorities, issues and adding value
- (v) 4/6 authorities stated that they had mechanisms for the Member to report back to the Authority following a partnership meeting. This was done primarily through panels or committees, although one authority did state it has a 'simple report back sheet'.
- (vi) 4/6 authorities claimed to have used the APA guidance "Crime and Disorder Reduction partnerships: The Role of the Authority Self-Assessment"
- (vii) One authority had established a partnership liaison group of Lead Members to share best practice. Good practice in other authorities included identifying and managing risk, devising a protocol for meetings, and establishing a clear understanding of the Authority's role and purpose in partnership working.
- (viii) None of the authorities which responded provided partnership training to their Members.

## **Findings and recommendations from research conducted with the Authority's partners and other police authorities**

45. Cheshire Police Authority's partnership working is seen by partners and by comparison with other police authorities surveyed, as strong in the following areas:-
- Good awareness by partners on the whole of the Authority's role in partnership working
  - Members' contribution mostly regarded as good or excellent.
  - Officers' contribution mostly regarded as good or excellent.
  - Cheshire Police Authority's Member and officer attendance at the range of partnership meetings is as good as, if not better than, in the six other police authorities which responded to the survey.
46. The following areas were identified for further consideration and potential improvement:-
- the role of Authority Members in partnerships (LSPs, CDRPs and CTs) may require some clarification with some partners, to differentiate their role from that of Constabulary officers, and from councillors (of the four Councils).
  - the role of the Authority in Children's Trusts requires separate clarification with partners.
  - the advantage of introducing a Partnership Lead Members Forum, to ensure Members are appraised of their roles and responsibilities in relation to partnership working and to share developments and good practice.

### **Recommendation 7**

That as part of the work of ongoing work of Engagement Committee, consideration be given as to whether any specific further action is needed to increase partners' understanding of the role of the Authority in partnership working, and specifically in relation to the Authority's role in Children's Trusts.

**Recommendation 8** That a Partnership Lead Members' Forum be established as a matter of priority to meet bi-annually with the Engagement Manager and the Superintendent, Strategic Partnerships to share issues and best practice.

## REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY WITHIN THE CONSTABULARY

47. The Constabulary appointed a Superintendent, Strategic Partnerships in 2008, in recognition of the growing importance of partnerships. The Superintendent oversees the Communities Unit within the Constabulary, and is responsible for developing the Constabulary's strategies on partnership working and confidence. Whilst the Superintendent has the overview of LSPs across Cheshire and of emerging developments (eg CAA), the day-to-day input to the LSPs, CDRPs and Children's Trusts is provided by the three Area Commanders or their nominees. The onus is on the Area Commanders to ensure delivery of LAA outcomes.
48. The Constabulary's role is focused on delivering the relevant targets within each LAA. This requires detailed performance monitoring, risk management and exception reporting. The bi-monthly report to Performance Panel on Constabulary performance against policing priorities includes a section on LAA performance, to provide the necessary oversight to the Authority.
49. One of the Authority's key roles in partnership working is to ensure LAA targets are reflected in annual policing priorities and to support the Partnership proactively in delivering the targets. Whilst Authority Members and Constabulary officers attend partnership meetings, the Group felt that the arrangements for pre and post meeting briefings between the Partnership Lead Member and the Area Commander may not be taking place on a disciplined regular basis. It was considered important that these arrangements be re-established on a firm footing.

### **Recommendation 9**

That there is regular informal liaison between the Partnership Lead Member and the Area Commander, or their nominee, to prepare for meetings; identify actions; and for mutual support.

50. A key enabler of effective partnership working between the Authority and the Constabulary is to have good communications and linkages between Neighbourhood Policing Unit (NPU) Inspectors, through to Area Commanders, NPU dedicated Members and Partnership Lead Members and the feedback loops. The issue of effective linkages between NPU Members and Partnership Lead Members has been addressed in Recommendation 4. The Performance Management Scrutiny Review recommended that the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Performance Panel have six monthly informed meetings with Area Commanders. This could be further strengthened, in terms of partnership working, by including a discussion about any issues affecting partnership working. This should also feature as a standing item on the agenda of the six monthly Authority visits to the Areas. The Group also concluded that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Performance Panel would need to seek feedback from the Partnership Lead Member prior to meeting the Area Commander.

### **Recommendation 10**

- (i) That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Performance Panel should seek feedback from the relevant Partnership Lead Member about any significant partnership issues, prior to their six monthly meetings with individual Area Commanders.
- (ii) That partnership issues be included as a standing item on the agenda of the six monthly Authority visits to the Areas.

## **SUPPORT TO MEMBERS**

51. The Group concluded that the issue of briefing and support to Members was key in enabling them to carry out their roles effectively and directing and driving best practice. The Partnership Forum will help Members discharge their roles more effectively. The Group also considered that training for all Members on partnership working should be delivered.

### **Recommendation 11**

That training on partnership working be delivered to all Members.

52. Partnership working is a dynamic environment and it would be helpful for the Authority officers to alert Partnership Lead Members to key developments and any actions to be taken, as ‘triggers’. The suggested method of coverage is to include a paragraph on Partnership Matters in the Members Bulletin, which is issued fortnightly. The regular Partnership Forum of Lead Members in recommendation 8 will also help ensure these Members are fully briefed and kept up to date.

### **Recommendation 12**

That a partnership update be included in the Members’ Bulletin to identify triggers on LSP issues for Partnership Lead Members to take forward.

## **PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY**

53. In the initial work plan the Group had identified the “need to develop a Partnership Strategy.” The Group agreed this was an essential development. In order to progress the Strategy, the Group recognised that its own recommendations, findings from the other Partnership Scrutiny Review and feedback from Partnership Lead Members now needed to be brought together in a single comprehensive document.
54. The Group considered that the Strategy should be aspirational, to set out the Authority’s current position in partnership working, the future desired position and the consequential areas for improvement. It would be accompanied by an annual action plan. Set out below are the elements

which the Group consider important to include in such a Strategy.

- The importance of and commitment to partnership working by the Authority. To emphasise the Authority's ethos of proactivity, over and above the statutory role, including developing partnerships.
  - Definition of "partnership" and the identification of the Authority's key partnerships (LSPs, CDRPs, CTs, CRSP)
  - The Authority's role and responsibilities in partnership working, as distinct from those of the Constabulary
  - Opportunities for further informal partnership working
  - Links with the Authority's Contact Plan
  - Governance of partnership working within the Authority, including escalation and resolution of difficulties
  - Action plan for improvement with success criteria
  - Monitoring and review mechanisms
  - Support, training and development for Members
55. Once approved, the Group suggests the Strategy be reviewed on an annual basis in January to ensure full alignment with the Policing Plan and the Authority's Risk Register and Business Plan. The action plan would also be rolled forward at this time. It is further suggested an annual partnership report be presented to the Authority in June.

### **Recommendation 13**

That a Partnership Strategy and an accompanying action plan be developed by the Treasurer and be submitted to Engagement Committee on 3 November 2009, for consideration.

## **CONCLUSION**

56. This report reflects the outcome of the work of the Authority's Partnership Scrutiny Group to assess the effectiveness of the Authority's partnership working. Partnership working is viewed by the Authority as key to the effective delivery of its Mission to create safer communities, and increase confidence and satisfaction in policing. The report evaluates the current contribution to partnership working as good and improving over recent years, based on a detailed assessment against legislative and national requirements and feedback from partners and research in other police authorities. The report identifies not only many areas of strength, but also

recommendations for continuous improvement to ensure the Authority continues to take a highly proactive approach to partnership working. The recommendations are summarised in Annex 3.

57. The next steps are to develop a comprehensive Partnership Strategy for the Authority based on the two Scrutiny Groups' findings and further discussions with Partnership Lead Members. The Partnership Strategy and accompanying action plan will then be considered by Engagement Committee at their meeting on 3 November 2009.

The report and recommendations were supported and endorsed by Engagement Committee on 25 August 2009 (Minute 19).

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS REPORT

APA	Association of Police Authorities
CAA	Comprehensive Area Assessment
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (part of LSP)
CJPIM	Criminal Justice Performance Improvement Meeting
CSRP	Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership
CT	Children's Trust
KSI	Killed and Seriously Injured (LAA indicator)
LAA	Local Area Agreement – an agreement developed amongst local partners to achieve a defined level of performance in a number of areas of common interest
LCJB	Local Criminal Justice Board
LGR	Local Government Reorganisation
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MSG	Most Similar Group – a Home Office defined group of forces deemed to be similar. In Cheshire's case the group consists of Devon & Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Warwickshire and Wiltshire
NPU	Neighbourhood Policing Unit
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
UoR	Use of Resources Assessment