

**AREA COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION ON LOCAL MULTI-AGENCY
PROBLEM SOLVING GROUPS.**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report requests the Area Committee to nominate a representative to become a core member of the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) Group for the South area.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Although Police - initiated LMAPS Groups have operated for some years, a recent exercise sponsored by the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) highlighted the need for review, and reform. The SSP Board has prioritised the review and development of LMAPS Groups for attention as they are regarded as an important means of achieving effective action at the neighbourhood level on crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.
- 2.2 LMAPS are designed to maximise the resolution of more complex local crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour issues which require action by more than one agency. They are, therefore, not intended to replace or impede existing communications between Members and agencies such as the Police but are intended to focus upon issues which cannot be dealt with effectively by one agency alone. They are designed to place a focus upon such issues and to either resolve them or escalate them – via a structured process – to a level where either resolution or closure of some form is achievable.

3.0 Current Position

- 3.1 Although LMAPS have been operating in the City for some years, two recent reviews have been carried out with a view to maximising their potential to address local crime, fear of crime and substance misuse issues. The first review resulted in changes to the number and membership of LMAPS Groups.
- 3.2 The second review refined initial proposals and went into far greater detail on governance and operational matters. This was to reflect the need to have appropriate safeguards in place given the nature of discussions and information exchange which might be necessary to resolve a local crime or disorder issue. A principal feature of this was the decision to divide LMAPS meetings into two parts, one comprising a 'core group' with a strictly defined membership and strengthened governance arrangements. Chaired by the local Police Inspector, the Core Group includes representation from the Council (Area

Regeneration Officer, CCS, Neighbourhood Relations Team and Youth Offending Service), Gentoo and the Fire Service. There is scope to add to core membership depending upon the specific circumstances of the area in question.

3.3 Recent pilots in Sunderland South and Washington included the Chairman of each of the local Area Committees concerned within the core membership of the respective LMAPS Group. Feedback from the two Members involved in this pilot has been incorporated into proposals for strengthening and improvement of LMAPS Groups which has been approved by the Safer Sunderland Partnership. Improvement priorities focus upon:

- community engagement and feedback processes.
- structure and escalation procedures.
- operation of meetings and membership.
- wider governance

3.4 Importantly, however, the pilot confirmed the need to strengthen the links between LMAPS Groups and Area Committees principally by;

- having direct Area Committee representation on the LMAPS core group.
- improving reporting and feedback from LMAPS to Area Committees.

4.0 LMAPS Groups: Key Operational Arrangements

4.1 LMAPS Groups work most effectively when information on local crime and disorder is inputted from a variety of sources, discussed and specific action plans developed. This can often involve the management of very sensitive information which, if not held in confidence, could undermine police operations and even place individuals or neighbourhoods at risk. It is for this reason that LMAPS meetings are divided between a confidential 'Part 1' with strictly controlled membership (the core group) and operating procedures and 'Part 2' which is open to any relevant interest.

4.2 It is therefore important that LMAPS Groups operate on a consistent basis and have strong information management and wider governance policies and procedures. These are either in place or are being developed. All LMAPS core members will need to be fully aware of these and committed to operating according to them. A focused training and awareness programme is currently being developed in support of this. Training will be mandatory for all LMAPS core members.

- 4.3 Training for all core LMAPS members will be delivered at a series of events to be held over coming weeks. These are designed to address 'teething' issues during the initial period of operation of LMAPS Groups, to ensure that these groups operate consistently and effectively and that everyone involved understands their purpose and approach and is aware of important governance arrangements which surround their operation.

5.0 Summary and Conclusion

- 5.1 Operating effectively, LMAPS Groups have the potential to achieve a clear impact upon local crime and disorder leading to reductions in local fear of crime levels. As well as promoting rapid, responsive, joined up action on local crime and disorder priorities, LMAPS are designed to lead to greater accountability of all agencies concerned in dealing with priority local issues. It is therefore considered important to strengthen links between the Area Committee and its LMAPS Group by achieving direct Area Committee representation on the LMAPS Core Group.

6.0 Recommendation

- 6.1 The Area Committee is recommended to nominate a representative to become a core member of South LMAPS Group.