



POLICE COMMUNITY ACTION TEAMS GOVERNANCE

Report by Chief Executive

AUDIT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 October 2020

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 **This report provides details of the existing governance arrangements for the Police Community Action Teams and options for any potential changes.**
- 1.2 At its meeting on 28 September 2020, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed that officers of the Council bring back a report to the next meeting of the Committee regarding the possibility of the Policy Community Action Team Officer/Member Strategic Oversight Group being included in the Scheme of Administration as a formal committee of Council. As part of the budget for 2018/19, Scottish Borders Council had agreed to fund a Community Action Team (CAT) of police officers for the Scottish Borders. Details were given of the terms of reference for the Officer/Member Strategic Oversight Group.
- 1.3 As the intelligence information being provided to the members of the CAT Strategic Oversight Group by Police Scotland is intrinsic to current police operations, members of the Oversight Group are required to agree to a confidentiality non-disclosure clause at each meeting. For this reason, the Oversight Group is a closed group with no other Members included either in the meetings or with access to the papers for each meeting.
- 1.4 Due to the confidential nature of police intelligence provided to the Strategic Oversight Group, it is not possible in its current form for the Strategic Oversight Group to be included in the Scheme of Administration. An option is given in Section 4 of the report of possible changes to allow performance management of the CATs through the Executive Committee, with operational tasking of the CATs carried out by a new Member/Officer Reference Group.
- 1.5 It is the view of all that are involved in the process that the current arrangements with the Strategic Oversight Group seem to be working well and is successful. For this reason, the officer recommendation is that no further action is taken.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Committee notes the alternative way of working detailed in Section 4 of the report on the Police Community Action Teams' governance, but that no further action is taken.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 28 September 2020, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed that officers of the Council bring back a report to the next meeting of the Committee regarding the possibility of the Policy Community Action Team Officer/Member Strategic Oversight Group being included in the Scheme of Administration as a formal committee of Council.
- 3.2 As part of the budget for 2018/19, Scottish Borders Council had agreed to fund a Community Action Team (CAT) of police officers for the Scottish Borders. At its meeting on 26 April 2018, Scottish Borders Council agreed the terms of reference for the Officer/Member Strategic Oversight Group. Its objectives are to ensure the Council maximises the value and operational effectiveness of the CAT across the Scottish Borders; and carry out an intelligence led approach to identifying priority areas of activity, supporting delivery of the Local Policing Plan and Community Planning Partnership Community Plan. The Oversight Group carries out its function by:
 - (a) ensuring the development of an analytical product necessary to support decision making while taking account of community information to feed into the monthly work plan;
 - (b) ensuring information is analysed to reach robust conclusions, examining options to inform a monthly work plan; and
 - (c) contributing to inform the quarterly performance report for the Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board and Executive Committee.

The Oversight Group reviews the previous month's CAT activity; considers the forward looking analytical picture; develops the context through local awareness and constituency issues; considers an appropriate response to identified current or emerging issues which is both realistic and achievable; and, looks at alternative options and approaches to address specific identified problems.

- 3.3 As the intelligence information being provided to the members of the CAT Strategic Oversight Group by Police Scotland is intrinsic to current police operations, members of the Oversight Group are required to agree to a confidentiality non-disclosure clause at each meeting. For this reason, the Oversight Group is a closed group with no other Members included either in the meetings or with access to the papers for each meeting.
- 3.4 All Members of the Council are encouraged to let either the Safer Communities & Community Justice Manager or members of the Oversight Group or the 2 Police Sergeants who manage the CATs, know of any issues within their Wards which could be considered as part of the monthly tasking for the CATs.
- 3.5 It is the view of all that are involved in the process that the current arrangements with the Strategic Oversight Group for governance and management seem to be working well and is successful.

4 CAT GOVERNANCE

- 4.1 The Scheme of Administration gives details of the membership, constitution and remit of the Council and each of its formal committees. Section II, paragraph 13 of the Scheme states: "An Elected Member may take part in the proceedings of, speak and vote (if appointed as a voting member) at any Committee (or Working Group) of which he or she is a member. An Elected Member may attend the proceedings of a Committee of which he or she is not a member but may not take part or vote and may only speak if, following a prior request to the Chairman, he or she is invited to address the Committee on the matter under consideration. Such a request may be granted where a specific Ward issue is involved, or otherwise in exceptional circumstances, at the Chairman's discretion."
- 4.2 Due to the confidential nature of police intelligence provided to the Strategic Oversight Group, it is not possible in its current form for the Strategic Oversight Group to be included in the Scheme of Administration. Members may wish to consider whether any change is therefore required to the current arrangements. There are opportunities for all Elected Members to feed into the tasking of the CATs. The performance of the CATs is monitored by the members of the Strategic Oversight Group. Performance statistics of the CATs are also reported through the quarterly performance reports to the Executive Committee.
- 4.3 While the recommendation is to take no further action, if Members were minded to consider changes to include part of the remit of the Strategic Oversight Group within the Scheme of Administration, then an alternative way of working could be:
 - Retain the tasking element of the CATs in a new Member/Officer Reference Group, retaining the existing membership of the Strategic Oversight Group, as this would deal with operational matters. All Elected Members would still be able to feed into the tasking of the CATs;
 - Transfer the existing objective of the Strategic Oversight Group to ensure the Council maximised the value and operational effectiveness of the CAT across the Scottish Borders to an existing formal committee of Council, already included in the Scheme of Administration.
 - The most apt committee for this would be the Executive Committee, as part of its usual quarterly performance monitoring of Council services. The Executive Committee monitors those services paid for by Council, while the Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board's purpose is to consider the adequacy and effectiveness of the Local Police Plan and that separation should be maintained.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk that some Members may feel excluded from information being provided to the current Police CATs Strategic Oversight Group. However, there are currently 9 Elected Members on the Group who can give assurance to the work of the CATs. Performance statistics are also provided each quarter to the Executive Committee.

5.3 **Integrated Impact Assessment**

No IIA has been carried out as it is considered there will be no unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation, or any impact on equality of opportunity for those who do or do not share a characteristic of age, disability, gender re-assignment, trans/transgender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race groups, religion or belief, sex-gender identity, and sexual orientation.

5.4 **Acting Sustainably**

There will be no economic, social or environmental effects arising from the recommendations in this report.

5.5 **Carbon Management**

There are no effects on the Council's carbon emissions arising from the recommendations in this report.

5.6 **Rural Proofing**

There is no impact on those living in rural areas arising from the recommendations in this report.

5.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

Any changes which are required to the Scheme of Administration will require Council approval.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 *The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, and Corporate Communications are being consulted and any comments received will be incorporated into the final report. Police Scotland are also being consulted.*

Approved by

David Robertson **Signature**
Executive Director, Finance & Regulatory

Author(s)

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Background Papers: Scheme of Administration

Previous Minute Reference: Audit & Scrutiny Committee, 28 September 2020

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Jenny Wilkinson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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