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Joint Policing Committees Review

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<u>**Association of Criminal Justice Research and Development**</u>

Submission to the review of the role of Joint Policing Committees.

The Association of Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD) is an independent organisation that exits to promote reform, development and effective operation of the criminal justice system.

COMPARATIVE MODELS OF IRISH JOINT POLICING COMMITTEES: LESSONS FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS

Introduction

This submission seeks to highlight the community policing partnership groups which currently operate in a number of other jurisdictions so as to aid the analysis of Irish Joint Policing Committees (JPCs) and plans for their future. Recommendations for Irish JPCs are made at the end, drawing on the experiences of comparative groupings in the jurisdictions discussed below.

ENGLAND AND WALES

Background

Throughout the 1980's, Home Office Circulars and reports had put forward a case for the benefits of multi-agency partnerships in the operation of crime prevention within local communities. The general premise was that no one single agency, including the police, could successfully manage these problems alone. In 1990 there followed a report by an independent Working Group chaired by James Morgan,[1] tasked with monitoring the development of the multi-agency crime prevention approach in the light of Home Office guidance in this area. The fifth recommendation of the 'Morgan Report' encouraged a statutory responsibility for local authorities to develop community safety while working in conjunction with the police, through the multi-agency approach.

The UK Crime Reduction Programme (1999-2002) had as its main aim the implementation of a partnership based approach to crime prevention across all levels of government. Thus, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the CDA) put partnership working on a statutory footing for the first time. Section 5 of the CDA placed a statutory duty on 'responsible authorities', the police force, health authorities, local authorities and police authorities, to work together to tackle problems of crime and disorder in their area.[2] Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in England and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in Wales were created in each local authority area to implement this partnership working ethos. These partnerships are now collectively known as Community Safety Partnerships. As of January 2013 there are currently 310 CSP's in England and

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[1] Home Office (1991) *Safer Communities: The Local Delivery of Crime Prevention through the Partnership Approach* (Morgan Report). London: Home Office. Crime Prevention Unit

[2] Philips, C., Jacobsen, J., Prime, R., Carter, M., and Considine, M. (2002) *Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships: Round One Progress.* Police Research Series Paper 151. p.12. London: Home Office

22 in Wales.[3] Section 97 of the Police Reform Act 2002 amended the CDA and widened the range of actors to include Police Authorities, fire and rescue services and Primary Care Trusts. Local residents and businesses, as well as the voluntary sector can also participate. The Probation Service has latterly been added as a responsible authority and the Environment Agency and Registered Social Landlords as 'participatory' bodies. A Strategic Assessment must be undertaken by each CSP to produce a three year rolling Partnership Plan, which is revised annually and meetings must be arranged at least once annually.

A formal review of the partnership provisions of the CDA[4] suggested a range of measures in order to improve the effectiveness of the CSPs. A key finding of that 2006 Review was that 3 year audits and strategies were 'resource intensive (and) a distraction from delivery',[5] and that more regular strategic assessments should be carried out. New statutory requirements, incorporated within the Police and Justice Act 2006 (the 2006 Act), were said by the Home Office to form part of the *'Hallmarks of Effective Partnerships'*, which 'represent the key aspects of partnership working that underpin effective delivery through partnerships. Partnerships can use them to check their own effectiveness and to identify areas for improvement'.[6] These 'hallmarks' are listed as:

- Empowered and Effective Leadership
- Visible and Constructive Accountability
- Intelligence-led Business Processes
- Effective and Responsive Delivery Structures
- Engaged Communities; and
- Appropriate Skills and Knowledge

Each hallmark then comprised two elements: 'new statutory requirements for partnership working and suggested practice to achieve increased effective partnership working, using the statutory requirements as a foundation'.[7] The 2006 CDA Review also recommended mainstreaming of CDRP practice. Thus, Schedule 9 (4) of the Police and Justice Act 2006 increased the scope of Section 17 of the CDA (the mainstreaming crime reduction requirement) to include anti-social behaviour, drug abuse and environmental crime. While Section 115 of the CDA gave the responsible bodies the power to share information for the purposes of reducing crime and disorder, Schedule 9 (5) of the 2006 Act strengthened this again by introducing a new *duty* to share depersonalised information. Section 19 of the 2006 Act extended the remit of local

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[3] Home Office: Community Safety Partnerships. Available at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/partnerships/

[4] Home Office (2006) *Review of the Partnership Provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – Report of Findings*. Available at http://www.sholland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/506347D3-820B-4789-AA74-3934D0DC5BBA/0/ReviewofPartnerships.pdf

[5] Home Office (2006*) Delivering Safer Communities: A Guide to Effective Partnership Working. Guidance for CDRP's.* London. Home Office at 12.1. Available at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100407010852/http://crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/guidance_for_effective_partnerships.pdf

[6] Home Office (2007) *Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working. Guidance for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships*. London. Home office at 12.1.

[7] As above

authorities to scrutinise the functioning of local CSPs. Every local authority now must have a crime and disorder committee with the power to review and scrutinise the partnership's workings.

Community and Police Consultative Groups (CPCG)

This model is also similar to its Irish JPC counterpart. It has attempted to develop a greater level of public ownership than the statutory-heavy CSP format. These particular groups were introduced following the 'Brixton Riots' in 1981 and provide a forum for engagement between the police and local communities. Since 2005 the membership has been extended to include the local fire brigade chief, local courts and the local prosecutor. In some areas they have been renamed as Public Safety Boards in order to move the group away from the original focus on policing to a wider context of safety within communities. The CPCG receives a small amount of funding linked to a yearly application process showing outputs and outcomes. The change in name and addition of other agencies means that meetings now involve a broader range of issues than simple policing concerns and can include community safety issues such as fire safety in the homes. The Divisional Chief Superintendent will attend CPCG meetings, which are chaired by independent local community representatives rather than local politicians or authority officials. An officer at Assistant Commissioner level is regularly involved within the process. For example, within the London boroughs, such an officer will regularly meet with all the London Chairs of the Consultative Groups at the same time. The meetings are seen to be generally well attended with a diverse mixture of the local community. Young people are also regular attendees, and this has been a recognised key objective within the general strategy of the CPCGs.

Operation: Berry et al have noted that, while most Community Safety Partnerships act at the strategic level, it is actually through local agencies working together where most of the activity takes place. These particular partnerships lack the statutory foundation of the actual CSPs, but still strive to deliver programs incorporating such things as drug intervention and the reduction of prolific offending (Prolific and Priority Offending Programs) within the same local framework.[8] Sutton, Cherny and White have argued that the statutory nature of CSPs has been problematic in that,

> *rather than being used as a mechanism for the centre to establish dialogue with local authorities and community groups, this statutory obligation seems to have become a target for imposing fixed targets (e.g., specified reductions in certain volume crimes). Flexibility in addressing local problems was not encouraged.[9]*

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[8] Berry, G., Briggs, P., Erol, R., van Staden, L. (2011) Effectiveness of Partnership Working in a Crime and Disorder Context: A Rapid Evidence Assessment. Research Report No. 52, at p.2. Available at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/horr52/horr52-report?view=Binary

[9] Sutton, A, Cherney, A & White, R 2008, *Crime prevention: Principles, perspectives and practices,* Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne. At page 77. Quoted in the Australian institute of Criminology: National Crime Prevention Framework (2012). Australian Government. At p.45. Available at http://www.aic.gov.au/media_library/aic/ncpf/ncp_framework.pdf

A Home Office evaluation of partnership working within three CDRP (as they were then) case studies in England,[10] noted that while there was unanimous approval for the partnership model as a way forward to manage issues such as crime reduction and community safety, a number of concerns also arose. Limited resources, including time pressures, a lack of relevant skills and a shortage of funds limited the opportunities for successful partnership working.[11] Cynicism existed at all stages regarding unequal contributions from various partners.[12] Other problems arose due to the auditing of crime and disorder statutory requirement (within the CDA), including issues with contracting, and data and information sharing. The process of strategic development was also seen to be problematic due to a lack of a problem solving approach, and concerns over target setting and a lack of integration amongst partners.[13] However, it was also found that no agency was perceived to be dominating the process.

The Committee of Public Accounts within the House of Commons has in the past expressed some concern as to a lack of real evidence that the Partnerships within this jurisdiction were actually reducing crime,[14] despite the fact that nearly 5 billion pounds had been spent on the project (between 2000-2005).[15] Better targeting of schemes and better monitoring of outcomes was recommended to increase effectiveness,[16] along with more sharing of best practice.[17] Williams has also noted how the Partnerships have been viewed as 'over-burdened with performance and monitoring requirements leading to 'paper tales of achievement' rather than real integration and delivery'.[18] Gibbs has noted problems with the ill-defined notions of community safety and disorder which have formed the backbone of the statutory partnerships, leading to a lack of uniformity and confusion with aims and outcomes.[19] This confusion can then lead to conflict between partners. Also, statutory partnerships may result in the prioritization of some partners, such as the police and local authorities, over others, such as community and voluntary groups, who are not listed but expected to come to the table as 'equal partners'. This equality is said to be 'unrealistic'.[20]

A more general restriction with achieving successful community engagement within this model, indeed true for most 'community based' programs, is the 'diverse, contestable and fragmented

[10] Philips, C., Jacobsen, J., Prime, R., Carter, M., and Considine, M. (2002) *Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships: Round One Progress.* Police Research Series Paper 151. London: Home Office

[11] Philips et al (2002) at p.44

[12] Philips et al (2002) at p.45

[13] As above at p. 5 of Executive Summary

[14] House of Commons, Committee of Public Accounts (2006) *Reducing Crime: The Home Office Working with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.* Twenty Third Report of session 2004–5. The Stationery Office, London.

[15] As above at p.5

[16] As above at p.9

[17] Williams, I (2009) 'Offender health and social care: a review of the evidence on inter-agency collaboration'. *Health and Social care in the Community* 17 (6) 573-580, at 576.

[18] Williams (2009) as above at p.576

[19] Gibbs, A. (2001) 'Partnerships between the Probation Service and Voluntary Sector Organisations'. *British Journal of Social Work* 31, 15-27, at p.23/24

[20] Gibbs (2001) as above at p.24

nature of local communities'.[21] Indeed, Crime and Disorder Partnership guidance had noted the importance of involving groups that were 'hard to reach', such as drug users, children and ethnic minorities. This has been imitated in the JPC Guidelines which have also stated the importance of involving 'marginalised' and 'hard to reach groups'.[22] Philips *et al*[23] were critical in their evaluation of failed attempts at involving such groups within that partnership model, although Newburn has further noted that these difficulties can be put down to a general confusion as to which groups are in fact 'hard to reach' and why, with confusion and variation amongst police forces.[24] Crawford has stated that 'an assertion of community at a local level can be beautifully conciliatory, socially nuanced and constructive but it can also be parochial, intolerant oppressive and unjust'.[25] Funding is also an important issue. It is all well and good, Hughes reiterates, providing minimum standards for community partnership working within CSPs, but without the necessary funding these guidelines may prove unrealistic and ultimately unattainable.[26] This may be especially relevant within the Irish jurisdiction, with Government priorities in an increasingly austere atmosphere being pushed into other areas such as prison spending and reform.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Background

Community Safety Partnerships in this jurisdiction originate from recommendations within the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, which recommended two reviews of policing and justice. The Patten Commission (1999) recommended the establishment of District Policing Partnership Boards (DPPBs), established by local councils and made up from a majority of elected representatives with a remit to 'monitor the performance of the police in their districts, as well as that of other protective agencies such as the fire service, environmental protection, public health and consumer protection authorities'.[27]

The Criminal Justice Review (2000)[28] then recommended the combining of community safety and policing functions within one body. The establishment of Community Safety and Policing

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[21] Hughes, G and Rowe, M (2007) 'Neighbourhood policing and community safety: Researching the inabilities of the local governance of crime, disorder and security in contemporary UK'. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*. Volume 7 (4): 317-346, 337

[22] Garda Siochana Act 2005: Joint Policing Committee Guidelines at Section 7.8. Available at http://www.garda.ie/Documents/User/Joint%20Policing%20Committees%20Guidelines%20-%20English%20Version.pdf

[23] See footnote 2

[24] Newburn, T. (2002) 'Community Safety and Policing: Some Implications of the Crime and Disorder Act' in Hughes, G., Muncie, J., and Eugene McLaughlin (eds.), *Crime Prevention and Community Safety: New Directions*. Sage. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, at p.111

[25] Crawford, A (1997) quoted in Newburn (2002) as above at 114

[26] Hughes *et al* (2007) as above at p.331

[27] Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (November 2006): *An Inspection of Community justice Partnerships*. CJINI, at 3. 1.2

[28] Criminal Justice Inspection Review Team (2000): *Report of the Criminal Justice Review in Northern Ireland*. TSO: Belfast

Partnerships (CSPPs) would be chaired by local authority elected representatives and would include private sector, trade unions and the voluntary sector working with the community.[29] The Government did not fully accept the recommendations relating to CSPPs and what followed saw the establishment of District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) on a statutory basis through the Police Act 2000 (ultimately implemented from 2003 onwards), while Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were established on a purely voluntary basis within each council district by the Community Safety Unit within the Northern Ireland Office. Thus, at that stage there were two distinct bodies managing police accountability and community safety, yet also overlapping on issues concerning local community engagement and the identification of local priorities.[30]

Criticisms of CSPs at that time included a lack of input from non-criminal justice agencies, partly due to their voluntary nature as well as an over-emphasis on police activities coupled with limited input from other criminal justice agencies.[31] Concerns were also raised about the effectiveness of DPPs, with an over-emphasis on accountability functions over that of crime prevention.[32] Both bodies were also criticised for a perceived lack of true community involvement. It was recommended that within CSPs, membership should be regularly reviewed (every three years) to allow for an increase in community membership. The Criminal Justice Inspection Report (CJINI) (2006)[33] issued a number of recommendations for best practice within CSPs and a more effective partnership model. These included the publishing of small annual reports to aid accountability, a review of the 'disproportionate' levels of bureaucracy within CSPs (three tiers replicated in twenty six district councils where one tier might be sufficient), more robust arrangements to monitor attendance and ensure non-attendance was followed up, funding to be introduced in an annual bloc in order to deliver successful completion of action plans, and the immediate introduction of a proper equality monitoring system.[34] In order to address these concerns, streamline the process and merge functions and responsibilities as recommended by the 2006 CJINI Report, the Justice Act (NI) 2011 (the 2011 Act), Part 3 and Schedules 1 and 2, replaced the dual partnership model and formed Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs).

Operation: They are funded jointly by the NI Policing Board and the Department of Justice. There are 26 partnerships, one for each council area. Belfast has one PCSP and four District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSPs) covering the north, south, east and west of the city. The membership of PCSPs varies across the country and can be comprised of elected and independent members, as well as statutory bodies. They usually consist of between 8, 9 or 10 councillors nominated by the District Council, 7, 8 or 9 independent members appointed by the Policing Board and representatives of designated organisations which may be formally designated

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[29] CJINI (2006) at 1.5

[30] Rea, D; Donnelly, D. and Fitzsimons, J (2009) *International comparison research: models of police governance and accountability*. Northern Ireland Policing Board, at 3.2.5

[31] Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (October 2012). *Anti-Social Behaviour: An inspection of the criminal justice system's approach to addressing anti-social behaviour in Northern Ireland*. (October 2012). CJINI, at 2.18. Available at http://www.cjini.org/CJNI/files/3e/3e02e6eb-f2bd-446e-a3fe-5b72d4ee8a85.pdf

[32] As above, at 2.19/2.20

[33] Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (November 2006): *An Inspection of Community justice Partnerships*. CJINI, at Executive Summary, Recommendations, at p.10

[34] CJINI Report (2006) as above

by the Department, and/or selected by the PCSPs because of the contribution they can make to local policing and community safety issues.[35] Statutory bodies (pending designation) can include the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, the Youth Justice Agency, NI Fire Brigade, NI Probation Service and Social Care Trusts. Each PCSP has a Policing Committee specifically charged with police monitoring and engagement, with the wider PCSP charged with community safety management.[36] They may also develop Delivery Groups to tackle local community safety issues. At a strategic level, PCSPS aim to contribute to a set of particular targets set in the Programme for Government, including the NI Policing Plan and the Community Safety Strategy.[37] Their general aim is said to be to 'make communities safer'.[38] Section 21 and 22 of the 2011 Act outlines the functions of PCSPs. The Partnerships are to,

consult and engage with the local community on the issues of concern in relation to policing and community safety. The Policing Committee has a responsibility to provide views to the relevant district commander and the Policing Board on policing matters; identify and prioritize the particular issues of concern and prepare plans for how these can be tackled; monitor **-** *a Policing Committee comprising the political and independent members will monitor the performance of the police and work to gain the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime and deliver a reduction in crime and enhance community safety in their district, directly through their own actions, through the work of their delivery groups or through support for the work of others.[39]*

As these PCSP's have only been operating since April 2012, it is relatively early for any type of evaluation into how they are operating in practice. In theory at least, at this early stage, the change in structure has been welcomed and viewed as a positive step. For example, the 2012 CJNII Report[40] into crime prevention, particularly the issue of anti-social behaviour, has noted that the Partnerships have a vital role to play within communities in tackling such offending behaviour. It has been stated that,

PCSPs have a duty to educate local communities around the reality as opposed to the 'fear' of being subject to anti-social behaviour and crime. Engagement and increased knowledge in this area would engender greater understanding about what justice agencies can and cannot deliver…PCSPs have (also) an important role to play in providing community input to the decision-making process around how anti-social behaviour is addressed. This can be achieved through sharing of knowledge and facilitation of

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[35] Northern Ireland Policing Board: *Code of Practice for the Exercise of Functions by Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP's) and District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (DPCSP's)* (November 2012): Department of Justice for Northern Ireland

[36] NI Direct Government Services Information Page: Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. Available at http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/policing-and-community-safety-partnerships

[37] Northern Ireland Policing Board Code of Practice as above at 2.4

[38] NI Direct Government Services Information Page: Policing and Community Safety Partnerships

[39] NI Direct Government Services as above

[40] Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (October 2012). *Anti-Social Behaviour: An inspection of the criminal justice system's approach to addressing anti-social behaviour in Northern Ireland*. (October 2012). CJINI.

communication and discussion between independent members of the community, political parties and statutory agencies.[41]

However, there have been continuing concerns as to the effectiveness of the Partnerships and whether they can truly eliminate the perceived flaws of their predecessors.[42] It has also been pointed out that the actual name of the partnerships, with *Policing* leading the title (similar in tone to the title of Joint *Policing* Committees in this jurisdiction) might place a primary focus on the police force itself to manage community safety, thus moving away from the shared responsibility ethos required.[43]

SCOTLAND

Background

After a process of local governmental reorganisation in 1996, both local authorities and police forces began to operate within a multi-agency approach in order to address community safety issues. This multi-agency approach had been agreed in 1998 between the Scottish Office, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland.[44] Following this, in July 1999, the Scottish Executive published detailed guidance for Community Safety Partnerships.[45] This guidance recommended that the local authority, police, fire service and health board or trust should be a participating body on all CSPs at a strategic level, as well as consider the role of private and voluntary sectors, housing associations and racial equality councils.

Operation: There are, at present 32 CSPs in Scotland covering both urban and rural areas, with the Scottish Executive being the main source of funding. Partnerships were made statutory through the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003. This followed much debate on the advantages and disadvantages of possible statutory grounding for the partnership working model.[46] Some preferred a non-statutory basis, feeling that 'such 'organic' collaborations tended to work better because they were built on genuine shared interests and commitments, rather than on perfunctory (interstitial) administrative responses to demands from on high'.[47]

Core members such as the police and local authority (see above) tend to be represented at a strategic level, while the private and voluntary sector tends to be represented at the local initiative

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[41] CJINI Press Release (October 3, 2012*). Inspectors find partnership working and community education central to tackling anti-social behaviour*. Available at http://www.cjini.org/TheInspections/Inspection-Reports/Latest-Publications.aspx?did=2391

[42] CJINI Report (2012) as above at 2.22

[43] At 2.22 as above

[44] The Scottish Office (1998): *Safer communities through partnerships - a strategy for action.*

[45] Scottish Executive (1999): *Safer communities in Scotland: guidance for community safety partnerships*

[46] Henry, A. (2012) 'Situating Community Safety: Emergent Professional Identities in Communities of Practice'. *.Criminology and Criminal Justice* 12 (4) 413-431 at 424

[47] Henry, A. (2012) as above at p.424/425

task group level.[48] The Scottish Government notes that CSPs 'work to reduce anti-social behaviour and fear of crime and to promote safer, more inclusive and healthier communities'.[49] However, unlike the crime and disorder reduction remit for CSPs in England and Wales, the Scottish partnership infrastructure was formalized in terms of 'Community Planning', bringing together other partnership agendas including, but not limited to, crime reduction and community safety.[50] In May 2000, an Accounts Commission study of Community Safety Partnerships in this jurisdiction[51] highlighted good practice standards and recommended a number of steps in order to increase operational effectiveness. It was noted that CSPs, to be effective, need to 'track the process of their strategies, action plans and initiatives and the impact their work is having on the community' and 'account for their activities and expenditure by informing stakeholders about their performance and progress'.[52]

A further recent study by the Scottish Community Safety Network (2012)[53] found that this model was operating well in the main, with community safety remaining as a priority. Other subject themes dealt with included public safety, fire and road safety anti-social behaviour, alcohol and drugs, public protection and domestic abuse. Thematic priorities included early intervention and community engagement. Some CSPs wanted more priority to be given to e-safety/e-crime and the role of partnerships with Serious Organised Crime (SOC).[54] Activities of common best practice were recognised in a number of CSPs. These included

> *fire information sharing, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), Early and Effective Intervention (EEI), victim support joint working, adult protection and domestic abuse training for other partnership staff, home security and repair projects for victims of domestic abuse or persistent anti-social behaviour and partnership serious incident reviews.*[55]

It was found that real opportunities existed for 'sharing learning across the sector in approaches to partnership working, structures and extending partnership relationships'.[56] Some areas were, however, viewed as needing improvement, including in 'leadership and direction, evidence based planning and evaluation'.

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[48] Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (November 2006): *An Inspection of Community justice Partnerships*. CJINI, at Executive Summary, Recommendations, at p.35

[49] The Scottish Government: Community Safety Partnerships. Available at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/17141/CSP

[50] Henry, A (2012) at p. 424.

[51] Accounts Commission (May 2000) *Safe and sound: a study of community safety partnerships in Scotland.* ,Audit Scotland on behalf of the Accounts Commission. Available at http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2000/nr_000525_community_partnerships.pdf

[52] Accounts Commission Bulletin (November 2000): *Measuring the Performance of Community Safety Partnerships*. Available at http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2000/nr_001109_community_safety_partnerships.pdf

[53] Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) (2012): Community Safety Partnership Research: Initial Report at p.2. Available at http://safercommunitiesscotland.org/Documents/Community%20Safety%20Unit%20-%20CSP%20Research%20-%20Initial%20SCSN%20Report%20-%20December%202012.pdf

[54] As above at p.5

[55] As above at p.2

[56] As above at p.4 unless stated

AUSTRALIA

Background

Within this jurisdiction, because of the federal/state division of powers and multi-tiered government structure, a coordinated response to crime prevention and community safety within a partnership model has proved difficult.[57] The National Community Crime Prevention Programme (NCCPP), established in 2004, was one example of a federal response to crime reduction and community safety efforts within local communities, but this has been limited to mainly funding of various grassroots initiatives.[58] Within Western Australia, which has a history of crime prevention initiatives involving partnership working between local government agencies and local communities spanning several years,[59] a number of initiatives have been deployed. In Victoria, there has been the Good Neighbourhood program (from 1988) and the Safer Streets and Homes initiative launched in 2002. Both have been viewed as somewhat less than successful.[60] A new crime prevention strategy includes the Western Australian. Community Safety and Crime Prevention partnerships program (CSCP), presided over by the Strategic Crime Prevention Division (SCPD) of Western Australia Police. A Community Crime Prevention Plan (CCPP) is seen as providing strategic direction, developed in conjunction with relevant state and local government departments and agencies.[61] The CCPP is seen as helping to prioritize community safety concerns and identify responsibilities for relevant actors. Sectors such as health, housing, education welfare and justice can all be represented within partnerships. Interestingly, police noted within this jurisdiction the importance of partnership working with the local press, especially with regard to accurate reporting of crime and highlighting the importance of crime prevention strategies.[62] A number of crime prevention diversity officers (23) in each regional police district across the state help to highlight local problems and priorities, although there has been inconsistency within districts as to their attendance at meetings and overall operation.[63]

Operation: Homel has argued that crime prevention policy has suffered in Australia due to 'a lack of effective leadership, inflexible top-down program design and poor communication between central and local stakeholders'.[64] Cherney and Sutton, in reviewing Australian practice,

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[57] Parliament of Victoria: Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee (June 2012): Inquiry into Locally Based Approaches to Community Safety and Crime Prevention. Final Report: at p.46. Available at
http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/dcpc/Locally_Based_Approach_Crime_Prevention/dcpc.icp.finalreport.pdf

[58] As above at p.46/47

[59] Parliament of Victoria Report (2012) as above at p.53/55 unless stated

[60] Cherney, A and Sutton, A. (2007) 'Crime prevention in Australia: Beyond "What works?"?', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, vol.40, no.1, April, pp.65–81 at p.65/66

[61] Parliament of Victoria Report (2012) as above at p.55

[62] As above at p.59

[63] As above at p.60

[64] Homel, P. (2005). 'A short history of crime prevention in Australia'. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice, 47*(2): 355–368. Quoted in [64] Cherney, A and Sutton, A. (2007) 'Crime prevention in Australia: Beyond "What works?"?', *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, vol.40, no.1, April, pp.65–81 at p.66

have highlighted the importance of combining both local and expert knowledge for crime prevention strategies to be successful. A refusal to do so was seen as one of the main reasons for ambitious US community crime prevention interventions in the 1970's and 1980's ultimately failing.[65] The authors have painted a less than positive future for Australian partnership working, noting that

> *the idea that federal and state governments will commit to crime prevention contract and planning schemes that give grassroots stakeholders a legitimate basis for articulating demands in relation to resource levels and allocations can easily be dismissed as fanciful.[66]*

Perhaps due to similar concerns over Australia's potential in this area, a new national Crime Prevention Framework has been recently developed by the Australian Institute of Criminology[67] in order to help develop best practice approaches to community safety and the prevention of crime as well as clarifying roles and functions of possible partnership actors and relationships. The 'working document' is based on a number of principles, which can form a basis for all partnership models managing community safety and crime reduction, including the Irish JPC model. These are listed in full as:

> *strong and committed leadership at all levels; collaboration between multiple stakeholders to address the wide-ranging causes of crime and to draw upon the skills, expertise, resources and responsibilities necessary to address those causes; the practical application of research and evaluation findings in the development and implementation of measures to reduce crime, targeted to areas of the greatest need and adapted to suit local conditions; a focus on outcomes and a commitment to demonstrating measurable results through evaluation and performance measurement, with clear lines of accountability; building and maintaining the capacity to implement effective crime prevention policies and interventions; promoting an active and engaged community, and being responsive to the diversity and changing nature of communities; long-term commitment to achieving sustainable reductions in crime and savings to the criminal justice system and the community; and coordination across sectors to embed crime prevention into relevant social and economic policies, including education, employment, health, and housing policies, particularly those directed towards at-risk communities, children, families and youth.[68]*

Other best practice strategies for partnership working within this jurisdiction should, it has been noted, include both centralised and localised approaches and dialogue,[69] involve a mix of shorter

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[65] Cherney and Sutton (2007) as above at p.69

[66] Cherney and Sutton (2007) at p, 76

[67] The Australian institute of Criminology: National Crime Prevention Framework (2012). Australian Government. Available at http://www.aic.gov.au/media_library/aic/ncpf/ncp_framework.pdf

[68] The Australian institute of Criminology: National Crime Prevention Framework (2012) as above at Section 5

[69] Cherney, A and Sutton, A. (2007) 'Crime prevention in Australia: Beyond 'What works?': *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, vol.40, no.1, April, pp.65–81,65

term (situational) and long term (social) crime prevention approaches[70] (the example mooted is that of alcohol related violence), involve multi-agency collaborative working, strong evidence based research as to 'what works' and effective monitoring and evaluation of key program features, an expert and knowledgeable workforce, longer time frames for achievable results, and plans put in place to guarantee adequate funding for initiatives.[71]

To conclude, it should be noted that the survey included in the Review of Joint Policing Committees discussion document has not noted that the response rate to the survey was only 18% of JPC members country-wide. Of these returned surveys, 77% were from national and local elected officials, local authority officials and Garda representatives. Only 15% of community representatives responded. It is interesting to note that on question #3, the Garda response was statistically 20% below state and local elected/officials. On question #2, the Garda response was statistically 25% higher than elected officials. On question#1, the Garda response was statistically 24% below elected officials and community representatives. The feedback commentary from the survey in Appendix 1 is more relevant to the suggestions and recommendations listed below.

POTENTIAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS WITHIN JOINT POLICING COMMITTEES (JPC'S)

- Practice should include both shorter (situational) term and long term (social) crime prevention approaches. Examples can be seen in the management of drug abuse and alcohol related violence. For example, it has been noted that 'the optimal crime prevention approach to address this issue would rely upon multiple short-term and long-term interventions, including policing, public education and environmental/design initiatives targeted at both the general public as well as the perpetrators of such violence'.[72]
- It is submitted that there are too many JPCs in this jurisdiction. The UK would have about 1500 JPCs if they had the same amount per-capita. A good example is Scotland (much closer is size and population to Ireland) which only has 32 operating models. It is recommended that the following two tier structure be implemented in order to replace the existing JPC structure. The first tier should be comprised of a Community Safety Partnership. As noted above, this is a statutory group containing the key partner agencies, local authority, police, HSE, Fire Brigade, Courts, probation and prosecutors. Within this jurisdiction education providers should also be included. These partnerships are usually chaired by one of the members - usually a local authority manager or divisional chief superintendent. This group would have shared targets and would bring partnership

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[70] Parliament of Victoria Final Report (2012): Chapter 4 at page 75
[71] Parliament of Victoria Final Report (2012) as above
[72] As above at page 76

working in Ireland to a much higher level. Within this jurisdiction, there may need to be an alignment to county boundaries in order to link into other partner agencies. The second tier would be comprised of Community Safety Boards/CPCG's. This should be elevated from the current Local Policing Fora (LPF) to the main consultation and engagement group. It is recommended that there should be one per Garda Division – as in the cities there will be a need for more than one. Some of the members of the Community Safety Partnership, for example the Chief Superintendent, senior council officials or fire brigade chiefs, would attend. This meeting would be chaired by an independent local person or community leader rather than an official. Councillors, politicians and the media can also attend. However, it should be dominated in membership by people representing local areas and local communities. New Irish names for these groups should also be developed. True community consultation, collaboration and action should take place in established LPF's within each Division and report their progress and receive support on their initiatives from the Divisional JPC. In Key Feedback from Appendix 1, it was noted that *"…Local Policing Fora (LPF) may address some local concerns more effectively than JPC's… LPF are effective at encouraging community involvement as they are less likely to operate with reference to political allegiances… some respondents highlighted the need for complementary activity between area JPC's and enhanced communication between LPF and each JPC…"*

- It is submitted that the JCP membership is imbalanced towards police, councillors and council officials and needs more community leaders and representatives; including populations most vulnerable to crime and disorder. The diversity of the community should be better represented. As noted in the above Appendix 1, one concern voiced: *"…elected members using the JPC solely to hold Gardai to account or to generate local press coverage and continue political arguments…"* Some respondents suggested widening the membership. This could then include bodies such as the: Chamber of Commerce, Community Alert, Neighbourhood Watch, HSE, Probation Service, Drugs Task Forces, Court and Public Prosecution representatives and Education providers.

- As is the practice in the UK, the name of these committees might be changed when recommendations are advanced to something with a broader and inclusive remit; for example, the Local Public Safety Authority…..Board……Forum. Central direction and coordination will be of paramount importance. Specific objectives should be targeted, such as tackling crime and law and order issues, managing the needs of young people or improving engagement with all community members..

- Reporting agencies and organisations should be required to submit reports to the JPC at least one week in advance of meetings to attendees, in order for members to be fully prepared to discuss the issues and input thoughtfully on discussions.

- Safeguards should be implemented in order to prevent the statutory footing of JPCs being used to emphasise fixed targets over dialogue and flexibility of working between partners.

- Partners should be careful not to dominate the process; for example an over-emphasis on police and local authorities over community and voluntary actors.

- Abstract language should be minimised within Committees, including the use of police and agency jargon. For example, terms such as 'community safety' should be explored

further and clarified as much as possible. This may help minimise confusion and achieve more focused aims and outcomes.

- Committees should share best practice standards and data and information as much as possible. While this appears common sense, and is mentioned in the JPC Guidelines[73], this comparative research has noted that it is not always the case. Chairs need to meet regionally and nationally with bi-annual regional conferences and an annual country-wide conference to showcase what is happening nationally. A national news- letter could also be developed.

- A designated non-elected director for the JPC should be appointed with the appropriate communication skills to develop a marketing strategy for promoting the JPC's work. Communication needs to be improved generally in this regard. More public meetings should be organised and attendance by community members should be prioritised. These directors could also be responsible for the coordination of each committee's activities.

- Attendance from the regulatory agencies should be made mandatory and carefully monitored.

- The specific identity of the 'local community' should be clarified as much as possible in order to best achieve the participation of all relevant actors. The term is used throughout the text of the JPC Guidelines, with no guidance as to whom and what it actually refers to. The diversity and fragmentation of these 'communities' should be carefully considered in order to increase inclusivity.

- Funding is an important factor in partnership working of this type. It should be carefully managed and prioritised (it is only mentioned once in the Guidelines at 10.1) and linked to specific plans. The level of funding should coincide with realistic outcomes.

- There should be regular reviews of Committee membership.

- Committees should regularly account for activities and expenditure by informing relevant stakeholders about their performance and progress. This may involve closer links with communication outlets (such as the press) to promote accurate reporting of crime and advertise the importance of crime prevention strategies and report favourable results achieved by Committees.

- Expert and local / lay knowledge should be merged. Researchers could play a more active role within the relevant agencies to improve the knowledge base.

- Crime prevention elements should be prioritised as part of JPC work plans; this may aid strategic direction, help with prioritising community safety concerns and identify responsibilities for relevant actors.

- Managerialist concerns such as targets, audits and performance indicators should not be prioritised over partnership development. There are some concerns that 'targets' can represent more easily achievable crime reduction aims over other aims that are just as important within local communities, but are more difficult to manage.

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[73] Garda Siochana Act 2005: Joint Policing Committee Guidelines. Available at
http://www.garda.ie/Documents/User/Joint%20Policing%20Committees%20Guidelines%20-%20English%20Version.pdf

- A Crime Prevention Framework outlining best practice standards (see page 11 above), similar to the Australian model, could help Committees to better manage policy strategy and outcomes.
- It is suggested that LPFs under the JPCs have specific community issues and that they are developing coordinated community responses to these issues on a short term and long term basis involving specific actions from all agencies, NGOs and community members. They have to report on the level of progress gained to the JPC and request support if any is required. It is recommended that the LPF utilise the concept developed by Doctor Herman Goldstein of Problem Orientated Policing, as well as the SARA (Scanning, Assessment, Response and Assessment) model in striving to solve community problems.
- Finally, it is recommended that members, Chairs and officers involved within the JPCs be provided with all the training needed in order to better improve the knowledge and skill sets required to ensure an efficient and effective operation of their committees.

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