

Terms of Reference and Constitution of the North Hertfordshire Community Safety Responsible Authorities Group (NHRAG)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Responsible Authorities Group (RAG or "Group") represents the strategic and tasking arm of the North Hertfordshire Community Safety Partnership (NHCSP), an inter-agency collaboration to reduce local crime and anti-social behaviour. It acts as a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) as defined (and required) by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended. Its members work collectively within their own individual legal and constitutional frameworks to deliver a shared vision for the management of local crime and disorder.
- 1.2 The geographical limits of responsibility for the Responsible Authorities Group are coterminous with the administrative boundaries of North Hertfordshire District Council.

2. Status of the Responsible Authorities Group

- 2.1 The North Herts Community Safety Partnership is an unincorporated body and therefore it does not have a legal personality. The NHCSP is the collective term that describes the work of the Responsible Authorities Group, Joint Action Group (JAG) and the various sub-groups of either RAG or JAG. The NHCSP will be responsible for any specifically identified requirements under relevant legislation.
- 2.2 The Group is responsible for the performance of JAG and any sub-group(s) of the NHCSP.
- 2.3 The Group operates within the constitutional requirements of North Hertfordshire District Council, Hertfordshire Police, Hertfordshire County Council, and other partner agencies, who ensure that the Group's approach to policy formulation and operational matters are consistent with those of the agencies concerned.
- 2.4 Any target setting, budgetary, commissioning or contractual commitments made by RAG must also be ratified and delivered by individual partners according to their own adopted business processes.

3. Accountability and Access

- 3.1 All partner agencies are subject to regulation and oversight according to the pertinent statutory framework. For example, the discharge of duties or the exercise of powers by North Hertfordshire District Council are subject to review by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO); likewise, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) deals with complaints regarding Hertfordshire Police.
- 3.2 North Hertfordshire District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the responsibility, by virtue of the Police and Justice Act 2006, to review

and/or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the community safety function. This may, in practice, necessitate the attendance of representatives of relevant partner agencies before North Hertfordshire District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee to give evidence in connection with the management of local crime and disorder.

- 3.3 The Responsible Authorities Group has a responsibility to ensure that its actions, and those of its constituent members, are responsive to local need. This may be occasioned by a response to concerns raised by the public through their elected representatives (for example via the 'Councillor Call for Action' provision of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).

4. Principal Objectives and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The principle *objectives* of the Responsible Authorities Group are as follows:

4.1.1 The Group will endeavour to make North Hertfordshire a safer place in which to live, work, and visit.

4.1.2 To act as the main advisory and strategic partnership body as regards community safety issues and crime reduction measures throughout North Hertfordshire.

4.1.3 The Group shall secure accurate and timely information on local community safety matters in order to inform a strategic approach to their management.

4.1.4 To provide strategic and executive accountability, direction and decision making.

- 4.2 The principle *responsibilities* of the Responsible Authorities Group are as follows:

4.2.1 The Group will work to produce and deliver, both directly and collectively, an annual Strategic Assessment and Action Plan in order to discharge a specific duty to do so as contained within the Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007. The Assessment will:

- review progress against existing action plans and priorities
- review current crime and disorder issues
- establish agreed priorities for the annual revision of the Community Safety Plan for the district
- set out how the NHCSP will endeavour to reduce local crime & disorder, reduce reoffending, and combat substance misuse

4.2.4 Ensure that all sub-groups, such as the Joint Action Group, have been allocated relevant responsibilities.

- 4.2.5 The Group will secure and allocate financial resources assigned to the North Hertfordshire Community Safety Partnership in pursuit of the objectives cited in 4.1, above.
- 4.2.6 The Group will put in place arrangements governing the expenditure of partnership monies and for assessing the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of such expenditure. These arrangements to not supersede or relieve Partner's of their internal financial management obligations.
- 4.2.7 The Group will monitor performance on a quarterly and annual basis. Particular attention will be paid to the delivery of community safety initiatives and targets as set out in the Community Safety Action Plan (each Lead Officer will be required to submit written quarterly reports to RAG, as appropriate).
- 4.2.8 To promote effective local partnership working and involve the community to address community safety issues, not only those identified as a high priority in the district Strategic Assessment and current performance reports but also those raised by residents through public consultations.
- 4.2.9 To support the Hertfordshire Integrated Offender Management (IOM) approach to the reduction of reoffending.
- 4.2.10 To oversee and monitor the North Herts 'Community Trigger' process as defined in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014.
- 4.2.11 To ensure that the 'specified authorities' as defined in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, 2015 work collaboratively to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism.
- 4.2.12 To ensure that the 'specified authorities' as defined in the Modern Slavery Act, 2015 work collaboratively to prevent individuals from becoming victims of modern slavery.
- 4.2.13 To ensure that the Community Safety Partnership fulfils its statutory duty to undertake a Domestic Homicide Review where required.

5. Membership and Associated Obligations

- 5.1 The Responsible Authorities Group is comprised of the following bodies that have the 'Responsible Authority' status as granted by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended, and the Health and Social Care Act, 2012 to promote local community safety:
 - North Hertfordshire District Council (including the Portfolio Holder with the responsibility for community safety matters)
 - Hertfordshire County Council (in practice the County Community Safety Unit)
 - NHS Herts & West Essex Integrated Care Board Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Hertfordshire Constabulary

- Probation Service

Each of the above is assigned voting rights in connection with 6.4 below.

- 5.2 It is the responsibility of each partner agency to nominate individuals of the appropriate authority and ability to further the aims of the North Hertfordshire Community Safety Partnership. Each agency shall ensure that its representative(s) to RAG are fully inducted into its own organisation's contribution to the Partnership. Where the usual representative is not able to attend a RAG meeting then the partner agency shall secure an appropriate substitute who can comment on any action attributed to that agency.
- 5.3 The above Responsible Authorities have the following statutory duty (as defined by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended):

“... to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment) and the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in its area.”

Accordingly, partner agencies shall integrate the agreed actions of RAG, including those contained within the Strategic Assessment and Community Safety Action Plan, into their individual service plans and to be responsible for their ultimate delivery.

- 5.4 Responsible Authorities are obliged to work with other local agencies and organisations to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment as well as the misuse of drugs in their area.
- 5.5 To ensure the engagement of *all* interested parties in the management of local community safety, the Group welcomes the participation, including *ad hoc* membership, of voluntary groups or bodies such as the National Farmers Union (NFU), Neighbourhood Watch, Victim Support, the local magistracy or local Criminal Justice Boards. Settle and First Garden City Homes are also a co-opted member for the purpose of overseeing and monitoring the North Herts Community Trigger process. However, in recognition of the legislative framework governing the role of Community Safety Partnerships these members are not assigned voting rights as regards 6.4 below.

6. Chairing and Decision Making

- 6.1 The Chairing of the Responsible Authorities Group shall be a shared responsibility and rotated amongst the Group. This will generally be in alphabetical order of the organisations represented and will include both statutory and non-statutory partners. To assist with resilience there will be a nominated Chair and a Deputy Chair at each meeting. A timetable will be circulated at the beginning of each financial year, and it is the responsibility of each organisation to ensure that they fulfil this requirement. Administrative Chairing duties between meetings shall be undertaken by the North Hertfordshire District Council's senior representative.¹

¹ NHCSP decision 7.12.22

- 6.3 The Group will endeavour to proceed on the basis of consensus wherever reasonably practicable to do so.
- 6.4 Where a consensus cannot be reached a vote can be specifically requested by the Chair or another other voting Group Member. Where a simple majority is not achieved the Chair is authorised to take the final decision.
- 6.5 In the unlikely event of a dispute that cannot be resolved by the voting process (as provided for in 6.4, above) Partners may elect to refer the matter to the relevant Chief Officer for the Partner concerned; failing which the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) for determination. The finding(s) of the CEDR shall be binding on the NHCSP and the costs of this exercise shall be the responsibility of the relevant partners in dispute.

7. Data Management, Communication and information sharing

- 7.1 Data submitted to RAG for the purposes of decision making should be of a high quality.
- 7.2 Data presented to the Group is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, General Data Protection Regulation Act, 2018, Crime & Disorder (Prescribed Information) Regulations 2007, and the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as amended. Any data containing personal information regarding victims, informants, perpetrators, etc., must be shared, stored, retained and destroyed appropriately by the relevant partner agency.
- 7.3 Where appropriate, reports and other information submitted to the Group for discussion or decision shall be marked 'protected' or 'restricted' in order to comply with the partnership's commitment to data management.
- 7.4 External communication shall be facilitated through each of the partners of RAG, for example through newsletters and bulletins, the neighbourhood panels and through the joint communications group (comprising the communications teams of Hertfordshire Constabulary, Herts County Council and North Hertfordshire District Council).
- 7.5 The Group will hold one meeting in public each year.
- 7.6 Other than through internal dissemination to the senior officer or elected Members, shall be treated as confidential subject to any Information Sharing Protocol arrangements.

8. Annual Review

- 8.1 The Responsible Authorities Group shall conduct an annual review to consider where appropriate the following:
 - 8.1.1 The terms of reference and membership of the Group, taking into account changes in working practices and national developments.
 - 8.1.2 The knowledge and skills of the Group, and its constituent members, so that it may competently exercise its community safety functions.

8.1.3 The efficacy of the Partnership's structure and delivery arrangements.

8.1.4 Any other matter deemed appropriate by the Chair.

9. Administration

9.1 The RAG will aim to meet on a quarterly basis with dates to be agreed one year in advance.

9.2 All administrative support for RAG is to be provided by North Hertfordshire District Council who will be responsible for the production and distribution of minutes and agendas together with any associated material at least five working days in advance of a planned meeting.

Statutory Partners

North Hertfordshire District Council

Hertfordshire County Council

Hertfordshire Constabulary

NHS Herts & West Essex Integrated Care Board

Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

Probation Service

Standing Invitees

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

The Chief Executive, settle

The Chief Executive, First Garden City Homes

North Herts Advisor, National Farmers Union