

## Agenda Item: 8

Paper/Item Title	Establishment of Barnet Safer Neighbourhood Boards
Meeting Date	25 October 2013
Meeting	Barnet Safer Communities Partnership Board (BSCPB)
Report Author	Kiran Vagarwal, Head of Community Safety
Desired Outcome	<b><u>Decision Required on preferred proposal</u></b>

### 1. Paper Summary

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- 1.1 This briefing has been produced to provide further clarity on the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) proposal to establish Safer Neighbourhood Boards (SNBs) in each borough by April 2014.
- 1.2 The Boards will replace existing Community and Police Engagement Groups (CPEGs). CPEGs were established as a result of the Scarman Report which identified a collapse in relationship between the police and local communities as contributing to the 1982 Brixton Riots. CPEGs are being replaced by SNBs to fulfil a commitment from Mayor Boris Johnson's 2012 election manifesto.
- 1.3 In 2007/08 following a review of the current CPEGs across London, service level agreements were introduced outlining the activities each CPEG was expected to undertake annually and specific requirements around the diversity of the CPEG membership. In January 2012, MOPAC took control of the CPEG network and has continued to fund it under similar terms. This indicates that MOPAC currently have direct governance of the CPEG and potentially of the new SNBs.
- 1.4 In August 2013, the Police and Crime Committee report *Safer Neighbourhood Boards* (attached) calls for MOPAC to provide clearer guidance for people looking to set up SNBs specifically:
  - What Safer Neighbourhood Boards will be expected to do and how they are expected to do it
  - How MOPAC will monitor each board's performance of its duties
  - Who is expected to sit on the boards and how will they be representative of their communities
  - How the establishment and administration of the boards will be funded
- 1.5 The Committee also wants the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Stephen Greenhalgh, to publish each agreement for the establishment of a board and his reasons for granting approval for each proposal.

- 1.6 The role of community safety partnerships and indeed the council in establishing the SNBs is unclear. However, the SNBs will report directly to MOPAC who will also be the agency that will consider and agree final proposals.
- 1.7 In order to ensure the proposed Safer Neighbourhood Board meets the needs of Barnet, MOPAC have been asked to facilitate a workshop with community groups and present the Barnet proposal to members of BSCB.

## **2. Recommendations**

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- 2.1 The contents of this briefing and attached report are noted.
- 2.2 The position of the Council and BSCP in relation to the process of establishing the SNBs is clearly communicated to stakeholders.
- 2.3 Members of BSCB are presented with the final Barnet proposal by MOPAC.
- 2.4 Members of BSCB comment and confirm support of the Barnet Safer Neighbourhood Board proposal.

## **3. Background**

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- 3.1 The Police and Crime Committee examine the work of MOPAC and review the Police and Crime Plan for London. The Committee also investigates anything that it considers to be of importance to policing and crime reduction in Greater London and make recommendations for improvement. It recently explored the plans put forward by the Mayor to launch SNBs in each borough under three broad headings:
  - **SNB's functions** – whether MOPAC has given sufficient information and guidance on the range of functions SNB's will be expected to deliver
  - **Governance of SNB's** – the form Boards are likely to take and who should sit on them
  - **Resourcing SNB's** – whether MOPAC is providing sufficient financial and staff resources to ensure boards are properly established and able to carry out their duties.
- 3.2 The committee has made five recommendations with a view to improve the process for all stakeholders and to ensure that SNBs are fit for purpose when they are launched next year. These are listed in the final committee report produced in August 2013 (attached).
- 3.3 The report highlights weaknesses which could impact on the successful implementation of SNBs as follows:
  - Poor planning
  - Confused communication

- Inadequate funding
- With less than a year to go, MOPAC unable to clarify what role it expects the boards to play locally, who should sit on them and how MOPAC will ensure their effectiveness

3.4 It also lists fundamental questions that MOPAC need to address to ensure that the network which replaces the current CPEGs (Barnet's CSEG) is fit for purpose.

3.5 Overall it recommends that the Mayor must demonstrate that he understands the value of community engagement by providing clearer and more detailed guidance to partners and ensure the SNBs are funded adequately.

#### **4. Conclusion of the Police and Crime Committee**

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4.1 The conclusion of the committee was as follows:

- (i) *The present MOPAC proposal for SNBs does not yet represent a comprehensible plan for how the community engagement in London can be developed and improved. This lack of clarity on basic issues is feeding confusion among partners and stakeholders and reducing the likelihood of a successful launch of the network in April 2014.*
- (ii) *MOPAC should help alleviate any confusion among borough stakeholders by being clearer about the type of organisational structures it expects in the SNB proposals. It should also be clearer about the process for how SNBs are being established.*
- (iii) *MOPAC has not provided any evidence that financial resources it will provide SNBs will be sufficient, either to launch the network properly or to fund the initial work each will need to carry out. It is incumbent on MOPAC to make the case that funding levels are based on a realistic assessment of how the Boards will operate, and the type of support needed to recruit, train and support a volunteer base.*
- (iv) *MOPAC must take responsibility for ensuring that SNBs at a minimum will be an improvement on the status quo come April 2014. It was the Mayor's decision to end the current community engagement structure. It is therefore incumbent on him and MOPAC to ensure that what replaces it is fit for purpose and sustainable in each borough in London.*

## 5. Establishing the SNBs

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### 5.1 ***Independent Advisory Groups (IAG's) merging to form the new SNBs:***

The Mayor previously said the introduction of the SNBs would reduce duplication of community engagement and crime prevention activities within boroughs, his manifesto and MOPAC follow up letter said that the merging of borough IAGs and CPEGs would be the main way of reducing this complexity. However, the Committee subsequently learned that the IAGs will remain separate. The committee felt this has casted a doubt on a central rationale for the introduction of the SNBs.

### 5.2 ***Membership:***

MOPAC does not intend to specify who should be on the SNBs. The committee has asked MOPAC to avoid a situation where the Boards simply mirror existing borough based organisations such as Crime Reduction Partnerships.

### 5.3 ***Strategic relationships:***

- The report suggests that MOPAC explain its strategic relationship with the SNBs to show how the boards can maintain their day to day independence.
- The Deputy Mayor told the committee his relationship is that of a funder, however the committee felt that the expected functions of the SNB implies a more active role. For example a key purpose of the SNB's is to act as a link between MOPAC and boroughs, this can include taking on some tasks on behalf of the Mayor.
- The Deputy Mayor will approve each Board's proposal, including membership details.
- To improve transparency and accountability of the process, the committee has suggested MOPAC publish local agreements it reaches on each SNB. Publishing the agreed proposals for each borough will enable local people to hold MOPAC, the Mayor and the SNB themselves to account.
- The Deputy Mayor has said there will be no consultation on the design of the boards.

## 6. ***Functions of the SNB's***

6.1 There are ten proposed functions of the SNB listed on page 22 of the attached report, highlighting the key issues for each one. These should be noted as some of them have some direct impact on the priorities of Barnet Safer Communities Partnership Board, specifically:

- Establishing local policing priorities
- Monitoring crime performance and community confidence