

PROPOSED MERGER OF NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIPS (CDRPs)

CONSULTATION PAPER – JANUARY 2008

1. Purpose of Consultation Paper

The purpose of this paper is to seek the views of partners' on the proposal to merge the CDRPs for the local authority areas of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest to create a North Worcestershire CDRP.

The proposals within the paper are at a very early stage of development, as the Chief Officer Group of Responsible Authorities who are leading this process wish to use the feedback and comments from partners to shape what a merged CDRP would look like and how it could operate, this is subject to a formal merger being agreed.

At the end of the paper there is a stakeholder feedback form, which we hope you will take time to complete. Your comments are instrumental to this process.

2. Why are we considering a merger?

Over the last ten years, partnership working has contributed to a sustained fall in crime, disorder and the fear of crime across our communities in North Worcestershire. However, the landscape in which the three CDRPs operate has changed considerably since legislation was first introduced in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA 98).

Following a formal review of the CDA98, the suggested improvements were reflected in the Police and Justice Act 2006 and in subsequent regulations, which came into force on 1st August 2007. To meet these requirements, CDRPs will be expected to improve their skills and processes to perform better and in doing so, rise to the increased challenges posed by the greater flexibility they will be given and the needs of their communities.

In particular, CDRPs will be required to meet a set of national minimum standards (Hallmarks) covering the following core strands:

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

In multi-tier local authority areas, the new regulations encourage CDRPs to look at their structures and consider merging with other CDRPs where this will create greater co-terminosity across agency boundaries and it is clear that the results will benefit local communities by delivering better outcomes whilst maintaining a local focus.

Provisions within Section 5 of the CDA98 as amended by Section 93(3) of the Police Reform Act 2002 set out the circumstances for CDRPs joining together. To date, this legislation has been used by four local authority areas to create merged CDRPs in England, which includes South Worcestershire CDRP.

In view of the new community safety legislation and its links with wider government policies, e.g. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill, Local Area Agreements (LAA), Shared Services Agenda, National Performance Framework and the Comprehensive Area Assessment, it is considered timely to review the operation of the three CDRPs in North Worcestershire and to explore the benefits and efficiencies that would be achieved by merging them.

3. So what could the potential benefits of merging be?

Firstly, it is important to note that joint working between the three CDRPs in North Worcestershire, on both strategic and operational matters, is well established, although on an informal basis. However, opportunities for shared management, shared systems, shared resources and shared administration could be achieved by a formal merger, with the consequence of the freeing up of resources to provide better value for money and the ability to invest in more actions for our local communities.

A North Worcestershire CDRP would provide the right strategic infrastructure and environment for supporting local implementation teams to deliver the vision of '**North Worcestershire – A safer place to live, work, visit and do business.**' It would also support the following:

- Improved delivery and performance of community safety within the communities of North Worcestershire to further reduce actual crime levels, misuse of drugs, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime;
- Provide an improved and better aligned community safety service not just to the urban communities within North Worcestershire but to the rural communities of the three local authority areas too;
- Promote better integration and closer working between Countywide / North Worcestershire authorities and the districts by overcoming the practical barriers of multi-tier working;

- Meet legislative requirements more effectively and efficiently, which will save duplication of effort and resources by those partner agencies who operate across the three authority areas;
- Develop combined North Worcestershire crime and disorder reduction targets, which will better compliment the delivery of the Safer Communities Block of the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA);
- Provide a stronger voice and base to access grant funding from the Worcestershire LAA and to reporting bodies such as Government Office West Midlands (GOWM);
- Become co-terminous with the current North Worcestershire operating boundaries of West Mercia Constabulary, West Mercia Criminal Justice Board, West Mercia Police Authority, West Mercia Probation Service and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service;
- Provide optimum value for money when benchmarked against similar partnerships;
- Provide a stronger brand image and improve corporate communication across the three authority areas.

4. Has consideration been given to creating a Countywide CDRP instead?

Even though there are clear and robust benefits for moving towards a North Worcestershire CDRP, consideration has been given to whether a Countywide CDRP would be a better approach and more effective use of resources.

At this stage, it is believed that a North Worcestershire CDRP would be a more achievable option for the following reasons:

- The geographical expanse of Worcestershire is felt to be too large for a single CDRP and associated targets. There would be a greater potential for the local identity of the districts being lost;
- West Mercia Constabulary currently operate to two Basic Command Units with one in the North of the County and the other in the South;
- The management of Priority and Prolific Offenders (PPOs) is on a North and South Worcestershire model. To extend this Worcestershire wide could prove to be unrealistic and unmanageable due to the number of PPOs that are involved; and

- The activity within the Safer Communities Block of the Worcestershire LAA is co-ordinated and delivered on a North and South Worcestershire perspective and currently works well. It is considered it would be a little too ambitious at this stage to consider a Worcestershire wide work programme, particularly as the LAA is still young in its own development.

5. What could a potential merged CDRP structure look like?

Preparatory work has been undertaken in auditing the current staffing structure of the three CDRPs and their community safety functions across North Worcestershire, as set out in **Appendix 1**. As expected, these arrangements differ for a number of reasons including the transfer by two authorities of their ASB teams as part of their housing stock function.

A draft organisational structure for a proposed merged North Worcestershire CDRP has been drawn up by the CDRP Co-ordinators in consultation with the Chief Officer Group of Responsible Authorities, as set out in **Appendix 2**. The draft structure would support the delivery of each of the potential benefits as described in Section 3 of this report.

What are the key features of the proposed structure?

A **North Worcestershire CDRP Board** would be established and have overall responsibility for the operation, performance and management of the North Worcestershire CDRP for delivering the Vision '*North Worcestershire – A safer place to live, work, visit and do business.*'

It is proposed that the Board would bring together Chief Officers from each of the Responsible Authorities as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended by the Police Reform Act 2002. Membership of Elected and Appointed Members and other community safety partners would also need to be determined.

The Board will feed into and report directly to the Safer Communities Board of the Worcestershire Partnership. The North Worcestershire Community Safety Manager would be responsible for the co-ordination and servicing of the Board and would report directly to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson respectively.

A **Combined North Worcestershire CDRP Strategic Team** would be established and comprise of local authority, Police and other specialist agency personnel , including:

- Community Safety Manager;
- Data Analysts
- Administration Support

- Police Inspector;
- Police Sergeant;
- Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator;
- Police Anti-Social Behaviour Officers;
- Police Diversity Officer; and
- Police Youth Liaison Officer.

The primary responsibility of the Combined North Worcestershire CDRP Team would be to develop and implement strategic policy to meet crime and disorder legislation and to support the delivery of North Worcestershire wide community safety initiatives. The Team, which will be co-ordinated by the Community Safety Manager, would also provide specialist support to the three Local Delivery Teams.

In each of the three Local Authority areas, a **Local Delivery Team** of community safety practitioners would be established and comprise of a:

- Community Safety Officer;
- Police Crime Risk Manager;
- Licensing Police Constable;
- Police Constable; and
- Administration Support.

It is hoped that other community safety partners may be in a position to add their personnel to the Local Delivery Team.

The Local Delivery Team would be responsible for managing the **District Tasking Forum**, which is already operational in each district area and brings together a wide range of community safety practitioners for delivering a programme of activity to meet the needs of local communities.

The District Tasking Forum would link directly into the Local Strategic Partnership for the area, in addition to other community safety or neighbourhood action groups e.g. Partners and Communities Together (PACT). The Local Delivery Team would be responsible for enhancing existing relationships with these groups to ensure community engagement and consultation on community safety matters are maximised.

It is envisaged that other Responsible Authorities and community safety partners will see the benefits of integrating their own staff into the proposed structure for securing more effective community safety outcomes.

Feedback from this consultation paper will be used to further develop the proposed merged CDRP structure, which will be reflected in the Terms of Reference and governance arrangements that will be drafted.

6. Where will the different teams of the proposed structure be located?

It is proposed that the Local Delivery Teams would be located somewhere within the authority area they serve. No specific premises have been discussed and again we would welcome partners' views and suggestions on this matter. Likewise, the Combined North Worcestershire CDRP Strategic Team shall need an office base, however this wouldn't necessarily need to be with the Host Authority as their day to day work should be fairly mobile due to working with and supporting the Local Delivery Teams in the three authority areas.

7. Which organisation would be the Host Authority for a merged North Worcestershire CDRP?

If the CDRPs in North Worcestershire were to merge, there would need to be a Host Authority to act as the financial accountable body as well as being the employer for CDRP staff (not Police personnel or other staff from Community Safety partner organisations). No discussions on this matter have been undertaken and again we would welcome partners' views and thoughts.

8. Is there a proposed 'go live' date if a merged North Worcestershire CDRP is agreed?

If following consultation with staff, stakeholders and our local communities there is the agreement to apply for a formal merger, it is proposed that an application would be made to the Secretary of State in April 2008. This is a fairly tight timetable so if there is any slippage it would be a later date. We have been advised that it could take up to four months for the application to be considered by Government. Based on this information and with no slippage to the timetable, we wouldn't expect to hear the outcome of the application anytime before August to September 2008. From a legislation perspective, the merged CDRP would come into effect from the date that the Government advise us that the application has been successful.

9. What will happen to the current North Worcestershire Responsible Authorities Group?

The North Worcestershire Responsible Authorities Group would be formally disbanded and replaced by the proposed North Worcestershire CDRP Board as described earlier.

10. What difference will be seen to the existing CDRP structures in each of the Local Authority Areas?

Currently, the CDRP structures in each local authority area do differ slightly, so the new proposed merged structure would bring forward a common and standard structure to each, as set out in Appendix 2.

The main focus of the proposed new structure is the establishment of a Local Delivery Team in each authority area, which would be responsible for the development and implementation of community safety initiatives, through the existing District Tasking Forum. In other words, the Delivery Team and District Tasking Forum would be the operational arm of the proposed North Worcestershire CDRP structure. It is not proposed that there be any changes to the membership of the existing District Tasking Forums.

Any strategic and policy matters which are currently managed at a local authority area level would become the responsibility of the Combined North Worcestershire CDRP Strategic Team. In essence, this would free up the time of the Community Safety Officer in each authority area to focus on operational and delivery issues. That said, each Community Safety Officer will feed into the strategy development process ensuring their authority area's needs are fully represented, however the North Worcestershire Community Safety Manager would be responsible for the development of the respective policy and strategy. To give an example, currently, the three CDRPs have their own Information Sharing Protocol, Communications Strategy, ASB Strategy and so forth. If the new structure were to go ahead there would be just one North Worcestershire Information Sharing Protocol, Communication Strategy etc. In view of this, any Strategy or Steering Groups within the existing CDRP structures would be disbanded as the function would be managed at a North Worcestershire wide level. The North Worcestershire Community Safety Manager would also be the joint block lead for Block A of the Local Area Agreement for Worcestershire.

The Combined North Worcestershire CDRP Team would also support the Local Delivery Teams in the implementation of North Worcestershire initiatives where there are common issues across each of the three authority areas. This will help to better use limited resources and maximise the impact of joint community safety initiatives by reducing the potential displacement of the problem from one authority area to another.

With regard to monitoring and performance matters, this role would be split between the Local Delivery Teams through District Tasking and the North Worcestershire CDRP Board. Monthly monitoring at an authority area level will be undertaken through the District Tasking Forum, whilst quarterly monitoring of performance for North Worcestershire would be responsibility of the North Worcestershire CDRP Board.

The North Worcestershire Community Safety Manager would be responsible for working closely with the Community Safety Officers in each of the Local Delivery

Teams to ensure performance in the delivery of targets is kept on track and if performance does fall that appropriate measures are put in place to address this.

It is proposed that each Local Delivery Team would have an operational budget for supporting the delivery of projects. The exact arrangements for the budget, including the source of funding are still to be determined, however will form part of the Finance and Asset Management Strategy that is currently being drafted for the proposed merger.

11. What are the financial implications if the three CDRPs were to merge?

The overall aim of a proposed merged North Worcestershire CDRP would be to create long term financial efficiencies and to generate economies of scale through the pooling of financial budgets and smarter and more streamlined working practices.

Partners will be aware that currently the three CDRPs are co-ordinated and serviced by their respective local authority's Community Safety Department and supported by the Council's associated mainstream budgets. Other financial assistance has to date been provided by the Safer Communities Block of the Worcestershire LAA, which is currently used to support community safety projects and also the salary costs of some of the employees who work directly for the CDRP's. In addition, a number of partner agencies provide funds to support the work of projects for individual CDRPs.

It is acknowledged that for a merged CDRP to succeed there is the need for a sustainable finance strategy to be developed. This is particularly important as from 2008/09 there shall no longer be any ring fenced funding for community safety activity from the Worcestershire LAA, which is currently the funding source for just over 67% of the staff in the existing CDRP structures for North Worcestershire. It is hoped that funding from the Worcestershire LAA will be made available to the CDRPs to help support the continuation of the excellent work that has and is being progressed across North Worcestershire, including the delivery of the Local Public Service Agreement Targets, which if achieved in North Worcestershire would bring in just over £2 million for Worcestershire.

Due to the complexity of budgetary arrangements, a Working Group of Finance Officers from each of the three North Worcestershire Councils has been set up to consider the financial implications associated with the proposed merger and how best budgets and external funding can be pooled. It is hoped that in addition to Council budgets, other community safety partners may be in a position to pool some of their financial resources too. A finance and asset management strategy shall be drafted to set out the financial implications and options that need to be considered.

12. What are the risks in merging the three CDRPs into one for North Worcestershire?

The principal risk in pursuing a merger is the loss of control of the local community safety agenda. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring that the District Tasking Forums for each authority area continue to meet, that crime and disorder issues are still reported within a District framework, the development of locality action plans, ongoing communication with Elected Members and partners, and ensuring clarity of focus on respective community strategies is maintained.

There would be a significant financial risk to the three CDRPs if the merger does not go ahead. Over the last twelve months, they have individually received between £107,000 and £124,000 of grant funding from the Worcestershire LAA. However, as mentioned previously, from 2008/09 community safety funding from the LAA will not be ring fenced and will be pooled with all the other funding streams. A North Worcestershire CDRP should have a stronger strategic voice for bidding for monies than an individual district CDRP.

From an employee perspective, there could be a risk to the posts of some of the existing personnel across the current three CDRPs. However, until a CDRP structure has been agreed it is too difficult to identify the exact level of risk. Full consultation with Trade Unions and all those affected employees is currently being undertaken by the Chief Officer Group of Responsible Authorities who are leading the proposed merger project.

13. Conclusion

The proposed merger of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest CDRPs represents an opportunity to improve community safety practice and outcome across North Worcestershire. It has the secondary benefit of providing the opportunity for significant efficiency savings and smarter and more streamlined working practices. Risks are evident in the proposed merger, however these can be mitigated through excellent project management of the process and effective and ongoing communication and consultation amongst all stakeholders.

14. Partner Comments

The Chief Officer Group of Responsible Authorities welcomes comments from all community safety stakeholders on the proposed merger of the three CDRPs. Your views are needed to help shape a North Worcestershire CDRP, subject to a formal merger being agreed.

We would also be grateful if you could give consideration to the attached stakeholder feedback questions. All comments should be forwarded to:

Grahaeme Dodge
Temporary Project Manager
c/o Wyre Forest District Council
Civic Centre
Stourport-on-Severn
Worcestershire
DY13 8UJ

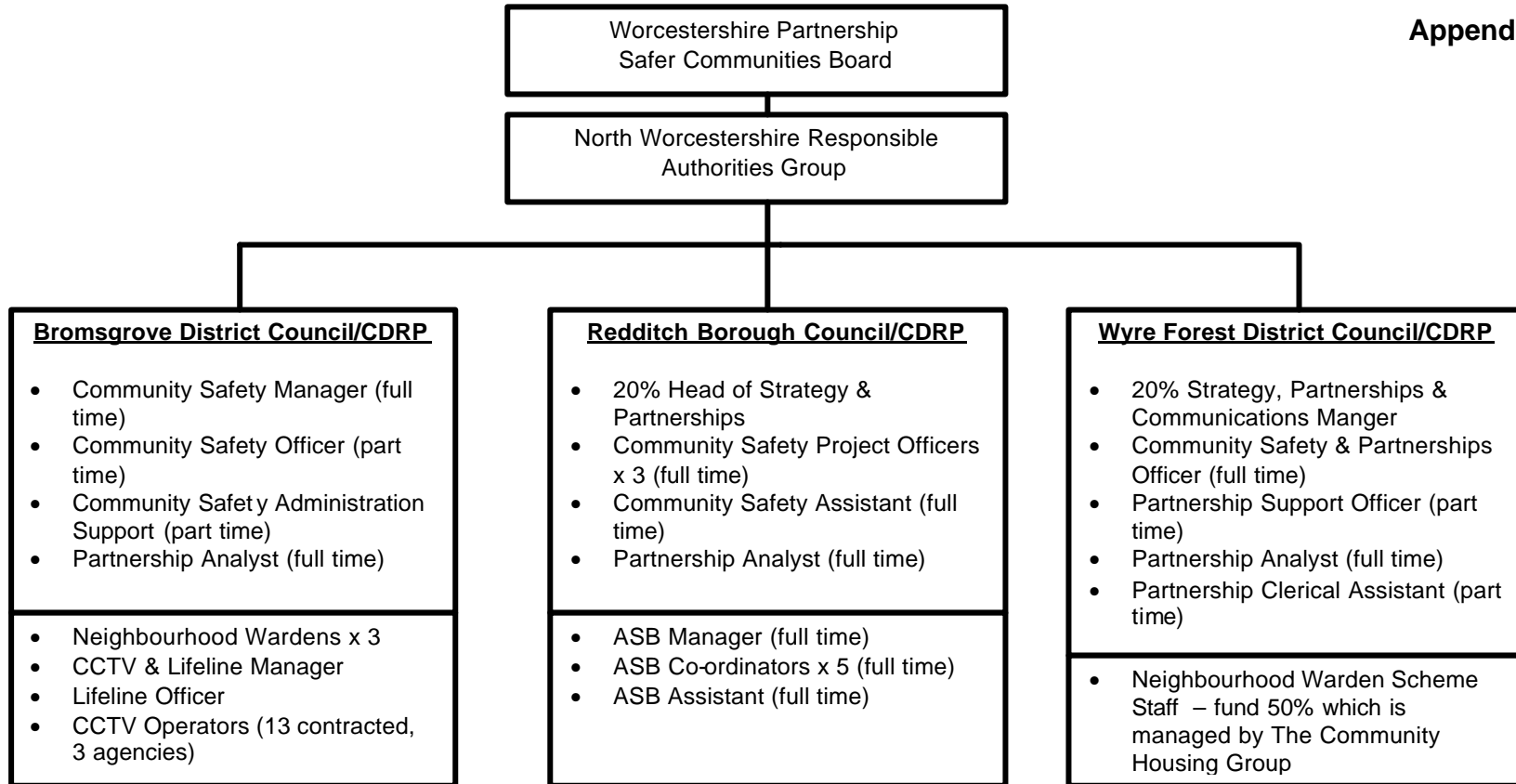
By email – grahaeme.dodge@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

For further information please telephone: 01562 732756

The deadline for receipt of feedback is Thursday 31st January 2008.

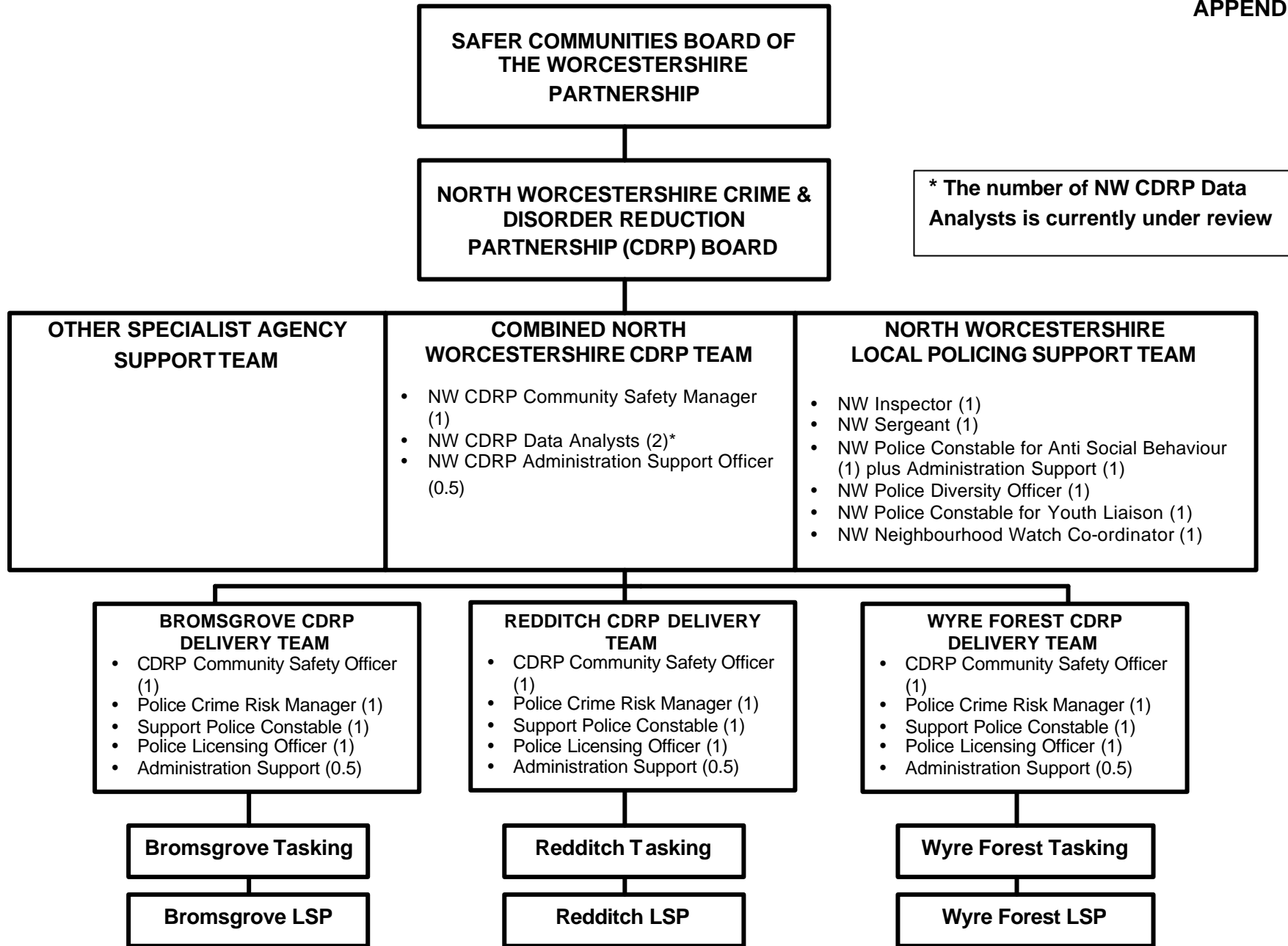
**CURRENT STAFFING STRUCTURE OF CDRPS / COMMUNITY SAFETY FUNCTIONS ACROSS NORTH
WORCESTERSHIRE COUNCILS**

Appendix 1



Proposed Structure for a North Worcestershire Merged Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

APPENDIX 2



Stakeholder Feedback Questionnaire

In order for the Chief Officer Group of Responsible Authorities to clearly understand and consider the wishes of stakeholders and the community on the proposal to merge the CDRPs for the local authority areas of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest, could you please spare a few minutes in completing the following questionnaire.

Could you please circle your response and/or add your comments in the space provided.

a) Consultation Paper

Do you believe that the paper provides sufficient information for you to understand the rationale behind the proposed merger?

Yes No. (If no, could you detail your concerns in the box below)

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b) Merger Benefits

Do you believe the benefits described in Section 3 of the paper are achievable and clearly defined?

Yes No. (If no, could you detail your concerns in the box below)

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e) The Proposed Structure (2)

After reviewing the proposed structure do you believe it will be able to maintain and improve upon its current performance in the delivery of North Worcestershire wide community safety initiatives?

Yes

No. (If no, could you detail your comments in the box below)

f) Location of the Local Delivery Teams

Where do you think the Local Delivery Team for your District should be based?
(Could you please provide the reasons for your proposal)

g) Organisation to act as Host Authority

Have you any preference as to who the Host Authority organisation should be? If yes, could you identify your preference and explain the reasons behind your selection.

Yes No.

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h) Introduction of Standard CDRP Structure for each Local Authority area

Do you believe that the proposed structure will enable more resources to be applied in focusing on operational and delivery issues?

Yes No. (If no, could you detail your comments in the box below)

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i) Strategic and policy matters

Do you have any concerns with the change of management of strategic and policy matters being transferred from local authority level to the Combined North Worcestershire CDRP Strategic Team?

Yes (If yes, could you detail your concerns in the box below) No.

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j) Risks of a Merger

Do you believe that all the major risks for a proposed merger have been identified?

Yes No. (If no, could you detail your comments in the box below)

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k) Your organisation's support

The proposed merger provides some significant opportunities for pooling our resources (e.g. finance, employees, in kind (premises etc) to greater effect. We would be grateful if you could identify any resources that you may be in a position to pool to further strengthen the proposed merged structure.

l) General Comments

Name.....

Representing (Organisation).....

Date.....

Could you forward your feedback by 31st January 2008 to:

Grahaeme Dodge
Temporary Project Manager
c/o Wyre Forest District Council
Civic Centre
Stourport on Severn
Worcestershire DY13 8UJ

Or send via e-mail to - grahaeme.dodge@wyreforestdc.gov.uk