

**Increasing the effectiveness and impact of Community Safety Partnerships
in two London boroughs: Practitioners' Perspectives**

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Declaration

I confirm that, except where indicated through the proper use of citations and references, this is my own original work. Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

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List of abbreviations

ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
BCS	British Crime Survey
CADA	Crime & Disorder Act 1998
CDRP	Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership
CRP	Crime Reduction Programme
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
ED	Emergency Department
ESRC	Economic Social Research Council
GLA	Greater London Authority
GOL	Government Office for London
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
HOC	House of Commons
IDeA	Improvement, Development & Efficiency Agency
IOM	Integrated Offender Management
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LFRS	London Fire & Rescue Service
LGA	Local Government Association
LGC	Local Government Chronicle
LGG	Local Government Group
LIT	Local Immigration Team
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MARAC	Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference
MOPAC	Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime
MP	Member of Parliament
MPA	Metropolitan Police Authority
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
NI	National Indicator
NPM	New Public Management
ONS	Office for National Statistics

PA	Police Authority
PCC	Police & Crime Commissioner
PCP	Police & Crime Panel
PSA	Public Service Agreement
REA	Rapid Evidence Assessment
Safer Newham	Newham CSP
SNT	Safer Neighbourhood Team
SSP	Safer Southwark Partnership, (Southwark CSP)
UKBA	UK Border Agency
VAP	Violence against the person
VOLT	Victim, Offender, Location, Time

Abstract

Community Safety Partnerships were introduced through the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 by the New Labour Government as a vehicle to address local crime and disorder issues. They have a statutory footing and the responsible authorities that make up their membership include the Police, Police Authority, Local Authority, Fire & Rescue Authority, Probation Trust and the Health Sector. Through identifying levels of crime and disorder Community Safety Partnerships are required to devise strategies to address these issues along with a range of interventions. Since their inception there have been many changes to these partnerships facilitated largely by the Home Office. Research has been conducted on Community Safety Partnerships however there is an absence in the literature and research on their impact within the community. Along with this gap in knowledge has been a changing political and economic environment. This presents an opportunity to review how community safety can be delivered now and in the future.

The purpose of the research was to examine the impact of two Community Safety Partnerships in London and to also identify areas for improvement. The aims of the research were to determine practitioners' views of the impact of these partnerships in dealing with crime and disorder at the local level and to examine practitioners' wider perspectives on the utility of these partnerships now and the future. Finally, on the basis of the evidence generated by the research it makes recommendations for improvements in the work of Community Safety Partnerships.

The research involved 18 semi-structured interviews with community safety practitioners across the two sites along with this a review of key documents, recorded crime figures and partnership records was undertaken. This then became the basis for identifying areas for improvement. The research established that both partnerships had no common agreement as to how to measure 'effectiveness'. There was moreover an overreliance on using recorded crime data as the sole measure of partnership effectiveness. This appeared to be heavily influenced by central

government and their comprehensive performance management regime. If effectiveness was to be measured solely on crime rates it was evident that both partnerships had some impact. The research also demonstrated that community safety partnerships were engaged with heavy workloads however a large proportion of work undertaken by Community Safety Partnerships was not evaluated. Evaluation was indeed minimal. This was an acknowledged weakness identified amongst most practitioners interviewed.

The local authority played a crucial role in partnership business undertaking a disproportionate amount of work compared to the police and other responsible authorities. There was an overreliance on perceived benefits of partnership working by practitioners. Also potential benefits were to be highlighted rather than actually being achieved. Cost effectiveness and achieving value for money was also an area which both partnerships failed to progress. This was clear when reviewing governance structures, meetings, reports produced and time spent on these activities. All of these could have been streamlined and made more effective. Finally, it was evident that personalities played a key role in community safety partnerships. They could significantly influence the work Community Safety Partnerships undertook including their overall effectiveness. The disadvantage of this however was that good relationships amongst responsible authorities led to a lack of challenge in partnership business.

Finally, in terms of continued government support, the future of these statutory partnerships is far from clear. Significant cuts in grant along with the introduction of Police & Crime Commissioners raises questions about the future of Community Safety Partnerships. An important consideration will be a future focus on improvement and demonstrating value for money. In light of this, and in light of the research findings a number of recommendations are made. These include a view that a strong evaluation ethos is introduced to Community Safety Partnership work and also adopting a performance management framework which can be used to measure these partnerships more robustly. It recommended that the role played by the local

authority requires to be rebalanced along with improving and enhancing community engagement. Lastly, the key areas identified by the research echo the findings of earlier work undertaken thus questions the degree of progress made by these partnerships, not necessarily due to factors within their control.

Chapter 1: Introducing the research

Introduction

Research into tackling crime and disorder has been an area of continued interest since the 1980's, with it becoming more popular in the last thirty years. It has close links to political processes due to the importance placed on it by political parties and also the electorate. Community Safety Partnerships, (CSPs)¹ were introduced through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, (CADA) as a vehicle to address local crime and disorder issues. The legislative focus came from the Morgan Report 1991 which advanced the idea and importance of partnership working and the need for key agencies to come together. This was against a backdrop of evidence that partnership working was patchy and only existed in some areas of the country.

CSPs have statutory responsibility to address local crime and disorder issues (Home Office, 2009a). Membership consists of six responsible authorities, the police, police authority, probation, local authority, fire and rescue authority and health sector to work together to reduce crime and disorder within a locality. In addition to this core group, other agencies are involved although these can differ across localities. The Home Office (2009a) describes the role of CSPs as tackling crime and disorder through identifying levels of crime and disorder problems in the area and devising strategies to address them which include a range of interventions. The agenda has been heavily influenced by central government by way of various legislative mandates, funding opportunities (mainly ringfenced) and a rigorous performance management framework. This has changed recently with the Coalition Government. In the summer 2011 they closed down many performance requirements including the

¹ From 1st April 2010 the Home Office renamed Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, (CDRPs) across England as Community Safety Partnerships, (CSPs).

place survey and comprehensive area assessments, (Local Government Group, 2010 p. 3).

Purpose and research aims

The purpose of the research was to examine the impact of two CSPs in London, their utility and to formulate recommendations for any improvement. This was undertaken by asking community safety practitioners their perspectives on the effectiveness and impact of CSPs and the work of their respective CSPs. It was also used in a review of key documents and records held by CSPs. This provided the basis for identifying areas for improvement in CSPs. The aims of the research were three fold. They were:

1. To determine practitioners' views of the impact of CSPs in dealing with crime and disorder at the local level.
2. To examine practitioners' wider perspectives on the utility of CSPs now and in the future.
3. On the basis of the evidence generated by the research, to make recommendations for improvements in the work of CSPs.

The research design focused on practitioners' perspectives that had a specific view as a result of their direct involvement in these partnerships. They provide a voice that is underpinned by practical experience. Practitioners not only bring their viewpoint from a professional perspective but also from the organisations they represent. The key audience for the thesis is both academic and practitioner based. The research is timely and the political and economic conditions that have recently developed will impact on these partnerships along with the agencies which make up their membership. For the future perhaps one of the most significant considerations for these partnerships is a cut in the grant funding they receive along with a reduction in expenditure of up to 40% for councils, the police and probation, (Local

Government Group, 2010, p. 2). The research arguably presents an opportunity for the research findings to inform practitioners at this vital stage of their future.

Structure of thesis

The remaining section of Chapter One outlines the reasons for the choice of research area. It also includes the author's role as a practitioner- researcher. It documents the research approach, an outline of the London landscape and also a background to community safety and CSPs from their creation to the present day. This will provide the reader with an understanding of the context in which the research was undertaken. Chapter Two provides a critical analysis of the existing literature, locating the need for the research into CSPs. Chapter Three provides a theoretical framework and the chosen methodological approach. It also outlines the research design and fieldwork. It describes the data collection methods used, how and why they were used and assesses the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. It provides the rationale for selecting the two CSP sites and their approach to community safety. It also outlines the analytical approach and ethical issues. Chapter Four presents an analysis of the fieldwork conducted and a discussion of the research findings that engages with existing literature. Chapter Five presents a number of recommendations for possible improvement of CSPs. Chapter Six presents a section of reflection based on undertaking the professional doctorate thesis from planning through to completion.

Why this research area?

There were several reasons underpinning the choice of research area. Community Safety Partnerships, (CSPs) have been firmly embedded into the local delivery structures of all those involved in the community safety agenda, and are based on a statutory footing. As is made clear within the review of existing literature, there is minimal contemporary research available on the effectiveness and impact of the CSP, in England & Wales. Since their formal introduction with the Crime and

Disorder Act 1998 they have evolved and matured although there is still recognition that some are stronger than others, (Local Government Group, 2010, p.3). More recent research commissioned by the Home Office highlighted that to date there have been no systematic attempt to review the social research evidence around partnership working, (Berry, Briggs, Erol & van Staden, 2011, p. 1). Moreover, their recent attempt to change this through the use of a rapid evidence assessment, (REA) focusing on the effectiveness of partnership working in a crime and disorder context only included studies in the US, (Berry, Briggs, Erol & van Staden , 2011, p. 8). Coupled with this gap in knowledge and the changing political and financial environment there is a need to review how community safety is delivered. Therefore, this research also attempts to offer some value to practitioners and policy makers in future decision making. Finally, having access to practitioners and key documentation in the London area, namely one of the London Boroughs was also a key contributing factor in selecting the research topic. The author's own observations as a practitioner in the field prior to undertaking the fieldwork, included practitioners' assumption that CSPs are effective as they deal with the complex issue of crime and disorder and that 'many agencies are better than one'. This is a point already identified by commentators, (Liddle, 2001, p. 50, Rosenbaum, 2002, p. 177). This along with what appears to be large staffing structures and resource intensive processes were regularly justified by practitioners by the statutory obligations placed on a CSP.

The author as a Practitioner-Researcher

The author started working in London local authorities in the late 1990s and has worked as a community safety practitioner in a variety of roles over the last decade. The current role is in the capacity of a Service Manager within Southwark Council, managing a collection of community safety related operational services and the strategic development of service delivery. This involves regular contact and engagement with the community safety partnership although not having any direct responsibility for its management or co-ordination. Where appropriate throughout

the research the author has integrated their own professional observations as a means to provide an additional dimension to interpreting the evidence collected for the fieldwork.

The author's professional position provides advantages in undertaking the research through the use of existing professional knowledge networks and observing first hand policy change and snapshots of how CSPs operate. There are some disadvantages to this position and these are discussed at various stages in the text and specifically in Chapter Six offering a reflection on the research process.

Research approach

The research involved developing a research question rather than a formal hypothesis. This was due to the nature of the research area which involved investigating the effectiveness of the CSPs and their impact. According to Robson (1993, p. 41) enquiries can be defined in terms of their purpose along with the research strategy used. He outlined a classification commonly used which distinguishes between exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory approaches with enquires in some cases having a mixture of each but with one that pre-dominates. Using Robson's (1993, p. 42) classification, the purpose of the enquiry was both exploratory and descriptive. It attempted to gain an insight along with a more accurate view of a situation, the impact of CSPs as a vehicle for tackling crime and disorder along with practitioners' wider views of CSPs.

There is no universal view held on how research should be undertaken in terms of approach, methods employed, and the sequence of events and the relationship with theory. As Robson, (1993, p. 18) notes there are two different approaches, hypothetic-deductive, positivistic, and quantitative which is scientific based and the other, interpretative, ethnographic or qualitative. He also notes that such distinctions are not necessarily always employed within research strategies. The qualitative

approach through the use of case studies along with the inductive nature of this research will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

The research inquiry focused on two London CSPs. The first was the Safer Southwark Partnership, the Community Safety Partnership in Southwark. The Inner London borough, positioned in South London has high levels of recorded crime compared to the London average and some of the most challenging social economic dynamics within the capital. The second borough of focus was Newham. The East London Borough is an outer London borough which has similar crime and social deprivation levels to Southwark. Both partnerships operate within a single tier local authority structure. A more detailed social and economic profile of both areas along with the reasons for selecting these particular CSPs as 'sites' or 'cases' are outlined further in Chapter Three and Four. The geographical locations of these areas are positioned in appendix 4.

The London landscape

There have been significant changes in the community safety field since the implementation of the CADA in 1998. Coupled with this, London has unique characteristics, with 33 London councils, all with CSPs and the same number of coterminous Police Borough Command Units. Structurally, the capital has a plethora of quangos involved and influencing the community safety agenda. Some practitioners have argued the landscape in the past has been too crowded with the Greater London Authority and the Mayor, central and regional government office, all heavily involved in the crime and disorder agenda. Under the new coalition government changes will occur so the area provides an interesting focus for research. Some changes planned at the time of the fieldwork have already been implemented. These include the abolition of regional government offices along with the creation of elected Police & Crime Commissioners, (PCC) which replace police authorities across the country as a result of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

Defining key terminology

There is a recognition that terms such as 'crime prevention', 'community safety' and more recently 'crime and disorder' and their use by successive governments and officials are directly linked to crime control policy, (Crawford, 1998, p. 8, Hughes & Edwards, 2005, p. 18). Further discussion and clarification of these key terms will be undertaken in Chapter Two. The two other key terms used within the research aims, were 'effectiveness' and 'impact' which require further exploration.

The term 'effectiveness' is commonly used across the public sector although is widely and differently defined by those using it. It has also been highlighted that the term efficiency can also be considered within the concept of effectiveness. Both terms however have different meanings which need to be clarified at this stage. Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert, (1995) define effectiveness as:-

“the ability to determine appropriate objectives: 'doing the right thing' in order to achieve them”. (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert, 1995 p. 9).

Efficiency is defined by the same authors as:-

“the ability to minimize the use of resources in achieving organizational objectives: 'Doing things right' ”, (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert, 1995: p. 9).

A number of authors define effectiveness using the approach of Peter Drucker which is:

“Effectiveness is the ability to choose appropriate objectives and the means of achieving them” (Hodgets & Kuratko, 1991, p.15, Stoner, Freeman & Gilbert, 1995. p. 9).

According to these authors effectiveness is important as is the term efficiency although the former more so. According to Peter Drucker's statement:

“the pertinent question is not how to do things right but how to find the right things to do and concentrate resources and efforts on them”, (Stoner et al, 1995, p. 9).

In reviewing the literature on organisational effectiveness there were a number of problematic areas linked to definitions and assessment criteria of effectiveness. The point of note here was that complexity existed in terms of measurement of effectiveness and that this was also apparent later when determining how practitioners defined effectiveness of CSPs when dealing with crime and disorder.

History of community safety partnerships

A review of the literature of CSPs cannot be undertaken without first providing a background of the history and context of CSPs. This will be the initial focus of the following sections along with a summary of developments over the last two decades. The purpose of which will be to provide a back drop to Chapter Two.

The Morgan Report: Safer Communities (1991)

The Morgan report published in 1991 recommended that local authorities should have lead responsibility for community safety although this was rejected by the police so joint responsibility was legislated (Home Office, 1991). The purpose of the report was to look at local arrangements for the delivery of crime prevention and community safety. It introduced the concept of 'community safety' and noted that that crime reduction was a peripheral issue for key agencies and core activity of none of them, (Home Office, 1991, p.3). According to Loveday (1994, p.183) the report critically commented on earlier crime prevention programmes managed by central government departments highlighting confusion and duplication of initiatives along with the absence of any permanency. It also recommended that additional core

funding should be provided to partnerships, a proposal never actually implemented. At the time there was a perception in criminal justice that ‘nothing worked’ coupled with growing crime rates and a lack of policy direction from the government. The then conservative government ignored Morgan’s recommendations and was reluctant to hand over power for crime prevention to local councils who were mainly Labour controlled, (Button & Loveday, 2010, p.157). It was not until New Labour came into office in 1997 and the enactment of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 creating local statutory community safety partnerships that these recommendations were implemented. At this time local authorities were given shared statutory responsibility jointly with the Police. Following some internal debate, the Home Office rejected sole local authority leadership, opting for shared responsibility between the police and local authority for CSPs, due to the police objections.

Partnership working did however exist prior to New Labour's legislation and local authorities. This was especially the case in Labour controlled areas which were working in partnership on the crime and disorder agenda at a local level. From a central government policy approach Gilling, (2005, p.739) outlined prior to the establishment of CDRPs central government operated through the use of Home Office circulars and the dissemination of an evidence base. This was provided by the Crime Prevention Unit and by several funding initiatives, the largest in scope being the Safer Cities Programme, (Gilling 2005, p. 739).

The direction of CSPs post Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Over the last decade there have been amendments to the CADA through legislation and guidance documentation leading to changes to CSPs. The previous government outlined the need to improve local outcomes and build on the good work already being undertaken by CSPs. Some academics saw the review of partnership provision and the resultant reforms set out in the Police & Justice Act 2006 as recognition from central government that not all partnerships were operating as they should, (Gilling, 2008, p. 41). This legislation added to the list of responsible authorities and

widened the scope of section 17 responsibilities of the CADA, (Home Office, 2007, p. 26). Under New Labour in April 2010, partnerships were given a statutory responsibility to reduce re-offending. All of this provided over time a wider scope and responsibilities for partners to lead on a number of complex social issues with no extra funding.

A key focus of the Labour Government at the time was to closely monitor performance of partnerships and determine to what extent they were addressing crime and disorder. CSPs came to be seen by practitioners, central government departments and academics as the vehicle for central government community safety initiatives to be implemented locally. Critics have argued that CSPs have been used as the central hub in which central government channelled their national crime and disorder agenda, using a 'back seat driver' approach, (Gilling, 2008, p. 41, Hough, 2005, p. 22). According to the Audit Commission in 2002, the Government had already targeted an additional £8.7 billion for community safety and related issues since 1999, (Audit Commission, 2002, p. 1). It is difficult to determine over time how much money has been channeled through CSPs although according to the Audit Commission, (2006, p. 33) considerable crime fighting resources have been provided to these partnerships, with the Home Office providing grants of nearly 1 billion since 1999 to fund crime reduction initiatives, with £70 million each year going directly to CSPs.

At the time of the fieldwork there were approximately 340 CSPs operating across England and Wales, (Home Office, 2009b). Originally, 376 CSPs were created by the CADA, (Audit Commission, 2002, p. 5). The reduction demonstrated a degree of partnership amalgamation in areas and typically in two tier authority areas. It is interesting to note here that to date there has been no similar merging of London based CSPs.

Since the introduction of CSPs there have been changes to the partnership landscape and public sector reform including the introduction of Local Strategic Partnerships,

(LSPs) and Local Area Agreements, (LAAs). These provided the framework at the local authority level to deliver better outcomes around the four key blocks of children and young people, safer and stronger communities, healthier communities, older people and economic development. The safer and stronger LAA was delivered by the local CSP, aligned to a crime and disorder strategy. Overall LAAs provided a clear focus for delivery of bureaucratic targets locally agreed between the local LSP and central government. The coalition government have now ended both LAAs and national indicators. However some authorities including those selected as research sites initially kept these in place choosing to simplify the set of indicators that they measure performance against. In addition, changes to the criminal justice system and Police Reform has impacted on how CSPs operate and their areas of responsibility. Also identifiable in the local delivery landscape along with CSPs and LSPs were Children's Trusts and Local Criminal Justice Boards. This landscape has been simplified under the coalition with less rigorous top down performance management. This coincides with the localism agenda, a less prescriptive government and significant reduction in public spending.

Historically, there has been indirect recognition from central government that some CSPs have achieved significantly better results than others, (Home Office, 2006, p. 5). This led to the review of partnership provisions of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 between 2004-2006. The key findings of the review led to the creation of LSPs, (who had strategic responsibility for Local Area Agreements) taking the strategic lead for crime and disorder with CSPs delivering the operational focus. As will be explored in later chapters the entwining of 'strategic' and 'operational' focus by practitioners could in fact stop the CSP from having a clear mandate. In 2007 the government introduced a set of national standards, (referred to as Hallmarks of Best Practice). These clearly intended to map out the expectations of all agencies involved and provided a benchmark which CSPs to date have been judged upon by Government, (Home Office, 2007). These focused on improvement of local outcomes while driven by central Government through governance arrangements (Home Office, 2007).

The review of partnership provision set out key recommendations, all of which had as an aim the strengthening of arrangements, (Home Office, 2006). According to the government at this time, (Home Office, 2007. p. 3) partnership working had played a significant role in reducing crime rates from 1997. It maintains that this was central to the successful delivery of the governments new Crime Strategy published in July 2007 entitled 'Cutting Crime: A New Partnership 2008-11. This view is contested by some academics and is seen as the government justifying its approach and its specific focus on community safety, (Hough, 2005, Gilling, 2005). Some academics still contend that minimal evaluation and/or evidence of impact has been undertaken on CSPs, (HMIC, 2010, p. 40). Coupled with this is the question of how successful CSPs have been in engaging with local communities.

The new coalition government

The new coalition government along with the current fiscal climate has implemented the largest cuts to public services since the 1980s. It was evident even at the earlier stages of the fieldwork that this would impact on all responsible authorities involved in CSPs. Most notably this included the police and local authorities as organisations. Their capacity and scope for partnership involvement and delivery can be expected to be different. On completion of the research, reform was being implemented across all of the RAs apart from the London Fire & Rescue Services. At the same time the coalition government was developing in parallel the concept of the 'Big Society' which is focused on decentralisation and the re-distribution of power to communities. In essence this is handing down power to local authorities and the communities they serve. It also seeks to engage with the voluntary sector much more than before.

The research area cannot be divorced from the fact that CSPs have had to date strong government support across the political spectrum as a mechanism to reduce crime and disorder. This support demonstrated through government retaining CSPs along with providing a number of funding initiatives. It is less clear what drove this

sustained support as early official reporting tended to argue their contribution was minimal, (Audit Commission 2002, p. 1, Home Office, 2004, p. 151). It is acknowledged however, through academic research that some practitioners working for and with CSPs and police authorities that the creation of CSPs to tackle crime and disorder had been one of New Labour Government's most significant success, (Button & Loveday, 2010, p. 162). The question posed however is in practice how effective they are and what impact they have and if so how this could be increased? The Local Government Group, which represents local authorities nationally highlighted that they have become the standard benchmark for thematic partnerships, (Local Government Group, 2010, p. 3). This signifies a degree of collective success compared to other partnership arrangements enacted by central government in such areas as health and education.

Comments made by MP Nick Herbert the Minister for Policing support partnership working although with a commitment to their future improvement. At the National Community Safety Network Conference in March 2011, the Minister confirmed that CSPs would stay and provide the partnership framework for addressing crime and disorder at a local level, (Herbert, 2011). Despite this support, however, there was also confirmation that partnerships had to be more effective with 'more action and less meetings'. They had to be clear about the fact that there would be no magic chequebook, (Herbert, 2011).

To provide more flexibility and freedom the coalition government has reduced the number of regulations placed upon each CSP. This follows on from July 2010 when the Government outlined its proposals for police reform in the consultation document, 'Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting police and the people'. A key section 'Tackling crime together', sets out the Government's commitment to improving the partnership between the police and the public and helping partners work together to solve local issues. This shows further evidence of the government approach to reducing prescription and bureaucracy. One of the coalition's key structural reform priorities includes the introduction of directly elected Police &

Crime Commissioners, (PCCs), (Home Office, 2011a). The key messages from central government currently include CSPs having no national targets and relying more on their local communities, rather than Whitehall for advice on prioritising crime issues. Moving forward it appears that there will be no external quality assurance with the PCCs having a monitoring role and being used to get the public more involved along with a scrutiny role given to local councilors, (Local Government Association, 2012).

This section of the chapter has provided an overview of CSPs along with the current political setting. The next chapter presents a critical review of existing literature on partnerships and also provides the rationale and positioning of the research.

Chapter 2: Reviewing the literature

This chapter focuses on a critical analysis of the existing literature, locating the positioning and justified the need for research to be undertaken into assessing the effectiveness and impact of the two CSPs. It also covers the theoretical structure behind partnership working.

According to Murray, (2006) there are many definitions of what constitutes a literature review. She summarises this by suggesting that:

“a review is an interpretation, a synthesis, a project, a task and a new ‘look’ at a new source. The purpose intends to demonstrate how and in what way the research will add value and contribute to new knowledge in the field” (Murray, 2006, p. 108).

It must be noted that the term ‘community safety’ is used here to include all crime reduction activity which attempts to address crime, disorder and the fear of crime. This does not ignore the tension between the terms ‘crime prevention’, ‘community safety’ and ‘crime reduction’ highlighted by some academics, (Crawford, 1998, p. 8, Gilling, 2005, p. 738, Hope, 2004, Hughes, 2002, p. 1). Partnership working is not exclusive to the field of crime and disorder. However its theoretical nature can be overshadowed by the complexities which are associated with tackling crime. In light of this and its centrality to this research, the theoretical nature of partnerships will be considered in this chapter.

Multi-agency partnership working to address crime and disorder in England and Wales is not new and has been operating more explicitly for the last two decades, (Hughes and Gilling, 2004, p. 133). As noted the Government has continued to actively influence this agenda through its direct involvement, (and not just through statutory requirements). However the current coalition government which intends to step aside and further devolve power to local authorities and the community is taking a different stance. Interest in partnership working was felt back as early as

1965 when the Home Office set up the Cornish Committee on the Prevention and Detection of Crime. An early declaration of the committee suggesting that effort should be made to liaise with other organisations other than the police in order for them to take on responsibility for crime prevention, (Crawford, 1997, p. 26).

Literature review

Due to the nature of CSP work and the fast changing agenda the literature review relies on peer reviewed journal articles and unpublished doctorate level research which offer more up to date research and discussion on the subject area. Government commissioned reports have been included which do have many benefits although arguably are not always the most comprehensive or objective source. What does exist in terms of the body of literature differs in terms of approach. Arguably it reflects different practical uses for central government departments, academics or CSPs. Research on CSPs and community safety could also be viewed in terms of the interest from the various political parties and also available funding. This to date understandably has shaped and dictated their development direction and quality.

Research has been undertaken in other countries on community safety and partnership working but will not feature here, (for further reading see Bradley & Walters, 2002, van Swaaningen, 2002, Crawford, 2002). There is a range of academic literature on partnership working and 'community safety' from a number of authors, (Pearson, Blagg, Smith, Sampson and Stubbs, 1992, Phillips, Jacobson, Prime, Carter and Considine, 2002, Crawford and Jones, 1995, Crawford 1997, 2002, Hough, 2005, Gilling, 1994, 2005, 2008, Liddle and Gelsthorpe, 1994, Loveday, 1994, 2003, 2004, 2006, Tilley, 2005). There is relatively little contemporary academic research available which specifically focuses on CSPs in their more mature developed state, from a holistic viewpoint. It would be fair also to say that very little research has been undertaken on the effectiveness and impact of CSPs as stand alone entities.

Early research into CSPs

The implementation of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 was the key legislation which provided the statutory footing for CSPs. According to Hough (2005, p. 2) at the time it also was one of the most welcome crime reduction measures. Hough, (2005, p. 4) states that there was general agreement that partnership working was hard to do well. The earlier literature focused on the government's approach of devolving responsibility for this agenda to CSPs at the local level while still 'steering' the agenda through funding streams and rigorous performance management. Other research focused on the complex dynamics of partnership working at the earlier stages of CSP implementation, (Phillips, Jacobson, Prime, Carter and Considine, 2002). Due to the fast changing landscape this has become dated although it provides a valuable insight into key issues, some of which remain current. From reviewing the literature it is evident that previous work focused on policy analysis and the government's approach to dealing with the highly politicised nature of crime and disorder at a national level whilst also still influencing the agenda at the local level.

A number of academics have been involved in providing advice and undertaking thematic research locally for CSPs, (Crawford, 2002, Loveday, 2003, 2006). For some there is a common voice that partnership working as an agenda driven by central government is not always effective as it focuses on short term strategies which exclude longer term planning and outcomes, (Maguire, 2004, p, 225, Gilling, 2008, p. 45). Other criticism leveled at the government's crime reduction approach and partnership working has been linked to the ever changing public sector environment which creates difficulties in evaluating the success of key initiatives, (Maguire, 2004).

The Policing & Reducing Crime Unit located within the Home Office carried out an in-depth study of partnership working across three sites. This focused on the first round of crime audits and associated strategies undertaken in 1999/2000. The aim

was to document how these partnerships approached the task and the challenges they faced, (Phillips, et al, 2002). The fieldwork approach, commonly used in other studies, (Liddle, 1997, Skinns, 2005) entailed reviewing documentation, observation and carrying out interviews with those representing partnerships. In terms of partnership structures pre CADA, partnership working had already existed at all three sites. Involvement in partnership working by businesses was limited and so was engagement by the health sector. There was a clear perception that police and local authorities were regarded as the lead agencies although there was some tension regarding power differentials between statutory and non statutory partners. Positive relationships had been built between practitioners that had not traditionally worked with each other in the past. The prominent role played by the Community Safety Officer in facilitating the working across partnership agencies was also indentified. In addition, there was the clear indication of competing and high volume workloads as a key challenge to action-orientated partnerships. This was highlighted in later survey work commissioned by the Local Government Association which featured local authority employed community safety practitioners, (LGA, 2009, OPM, 2009, 2010). The degree to which this affected the effectiveness, impact or outcome of the partnership unfortunately was not a feature of the research.

A plethora of problems were identified at the three sites in relation to auditing crime and disorder. These ranged from timescales through to the lack of resources to undertake the work:

*“Resources, contracting, data and information sharing presented a problem”,
(Phillips et al, 2002, p.7).*

Other aspects highlighted proved to be underdeveloped approaches to consultation with the community and difficulties with strategy development. The research concluded that there were three major issues experienced within these earliest stages of partnership working. These were commitment, involving a wider ranging support to the idea of partnership working; limited resources and lack of skills being

detrimental to any related positive outcomes. Finally the pressure of partnership working and the unequal contributions of all partners involved added to the problem, (Phillips et al, 2002, p. 9).

Research undertaken by the Audit Commission after two years into the CADA highlighted that CSPs had not made an obvious impact. It called upon the government and regulators to work with partnership agencies to address this, (Audit Commission, 2002, p.5). It noted that performance was hard to assess due to complexities of all agencies involved and how their own organisation impacted on this. It showed that any assessment was difficult due to the lack of performance measurement linked to outputs of partnerships. Three areas of improvement were identified. These were leadership and respective partner agencies taking ownership and mainstreaming community safety to become a core business. Additionally sustaining a focus on more limited priorities, balancing the national with the local need and engaging communities were needed. Finally, CSPs needed to use their capacity more effectively. This work was undertaken in the early stages of implementing the CADA and there have been significant developments in government policy since this time which sought to address these issues. Despite this the research provides a useful backdrop to early observation of CSPs.

Recent research on CSPs

More recently the Home Office has commissioned a range of research projects that focus on elements of partnership working. The rationale for this could be recognition of the previous gap that existed in determining the effectiveness of partnership working. One of these studies, undertaken by Berry, Briggs, Erol, & van Staden (2011) noted that:-

“There has been no systematic attempts to review the social research evidence base around partnership working”, (Berry et al, p.1).

The research involved using a rapid evidence assessment (REA) and sought to look at the question of whether partnerships were more effective and efficient in achieving crime-related outcomes than alternatives. It also looked at what factors had been identified as making partnerships work effectively and efficiently in delivering crime related outcomes. The REA involved a systematic review method to critically appraise research using set quality criteria. From the 217 research papers/evaluations that were reviewed, (or appeared to be relevant to the research questions), 9 studies met the quality criteria. All were evaluated in the US between 2001 – 2009 and all included partnership working as a central element of how crime was tackled but did not relate to formal statutory community safety partnerships.

In terms of the research question pertaining to effectiveness and efficiency the key findings were mixed. Berry et al, (2011) however concluded that the evidence suggested that applying the principles of partnership working to tackle complex crime and disorder problems was effective (Berry et al, 2011, p. 23). What this work indicated was the need for more detailed research in the area and while it provided findings which were useful they were all based on US examples. It made the assumption that key concepts and working were directly transferable from one continent to another. The studies using the REA also heavily featured violent crime initiatives, which do not reflect partnership working in its broadest sense. It focused on multi-agency partnership working to tackle violent crime but did not include other community safety related issues.

Davison, van Staden, Nicholas and Feist, (2010, p. 1) undertook a process evaluation of data sharing between Emergency Departments and CSPs in the South East of England. It aimed to look at what approaches were being used to share data and how this was being used by CSPs to guide responses around violent crime. A key focus was to assess overall progress of the regional government pilot initiative in the area which was directed at enhancing data sharing. A key benefit often cited by practitioners working in partnership is the benefit of data sharing and using this as part of the problem solving process. The report provided a range of

recommendations that included, ensuring accurate data at the local key location level was collected, and development of an analytical package demonstrating how ED data could be used creatively to supplement police recorded crime data. Finally, it highlighted that further research was required to better understand the relationship between ED data and police recorded crime data, (Davison et al, 2010, p. 4). The initiative was intended to provide a more in-depth picture of violent crime in areas which could be used to target police and partnership resources more effectively.

Skinns, (2005) undertook doctoral research funded by the ESRC which involved critically reviewing 3 CSPs, (Birmingham, Cambridge and Lincoln). The specific areas were chosen to facilitate comparability, with the research strategy being based on in-depth interviews, observation at partnership based meetings, police data and a review of documents. Fieldwork was undertaken during 2002 - 2004, which due to the changing nature of community safety work needs to be considered in relation to the context of the research.

Skinns, (2005) research suggested four key challenges. The first was the degree of differences across areas on the purpose, structure and processes of partnerships post the 1998 period. In Birmingham, the CSP struggled to develop appropriate structures because of its size and devolution of local authority services. In all CSP areas practitioners interviewed identified a lack of decision making and delivery implementation, which Skinns, (2005, p. 176) highlighted questions the purpose and achievements of the CSPs beyond 'talking shops'. Community involvement appeared to be the second challenge, with it being more symbolic than real. This restricted initiatives and illustrated the problem with communitarianism, the interaction between the CSP and the community.

Following on from this, Skinns, (2005, p. 225) found that practitioners identified with complexities linked to funding and performance monitoring arrangements and noted the influence of bureaucracy and 'short-termism'. The experience of increasing managerialist pressure was evident but despite this any real evidence of

partnership success was at best minimal. Finally, (and an issue which was found as an underlying element of the two London CSP case studies) Skinns, (2005, p. 66) referred to several inherent difficulties in assuming that 'many agencies are better than one' (Liddle, 2001, p. 50). The point being that this assumption could mask underlying tensions between different levels. She found there were power struggles, at the interagency level and tensions at both local partnership and national level. Skinns (2005) research suggested that some recommendations within the Morgan Report had not been addressed and that the flagship CADA had not served to standardise community safety processes and practices. It further highlighted the governments' role in seeking to 'steer' each of the partnerships which restricted practitioners' roles. These issues identified within the research were not necessarily new. But the research provided a valuable insight confirming that issues identified by Skinns, (2005) still existed within these three specific partnerships.

Research undertaken with the Police Superintendents Association revealed real support for CSPs among senior police officers. A survey of Basic Command Unit, (BCU) Commanders in 2007 found 81% of respondents outlined the degree of co-operation with local crime reduction partnerships was the most influential on police performance after staff competence, (Loveday & McClory 2007, p. 31). This denoted the growing importance in these partnerships of local police service delivery. According to Loveday et al (2007, p. 32) in the same survey 80% of respondents said that their CSP's action plan had a great or fair impact on their role as a BCU Commander. Nearly 80% of respondents reported a lack of support and interest from their Chief Officer Team on CSP strategies. This provided challenges at the local delivery level, (Loveday et al, 2007, p. 28). All of these findings strongly indicated that operational police officers at Superintendant level viewed these partnerships as having a great deal of impact in reducing crime and disorder.

From a police focus, partnership working was raised by a Home Affairs Committee Report on Police Funding in 2007. This highlighted evidence from the Audit Commission, those responsible for assessing the use of police resources which

formed part of the statutory audit of police authorities. The evidence identified key improvement areas for police authorities. These included working with partners to improve data and financial performance management systems to understand value for money. It also saw a need to direct resources more effectively and develop mechanisms to assess savings and value for money from partnership and collaborative working, (Home Affairs Committee, 2007, Evidence 35). This highlighted the need for further work to assess the value for money aspect of partnership working.

Recent research undertaken for HMIC, (2010) into policing and ASB provides some contemporary assessment on CSPs and their effectiveness. Their report claimed that there was a strong case for conducting further and more detailed research into the relative performance and cost effectiveness of partnership working, (HMIC, 2010, p. 7). The issue of value for money was in fact raised even earlier than this by the Audit Commission in 2006, (Audit Commission, 2006, p. 4). Together this provided further evidence that the effectiveness of CSPs as a research topic had been under explored.

HMIC's research found that structures were too inwardly facing and focused more on long term problem solving based interventions. This approach was taken without considering the implications for public facing outcomes, with more focus on horizontal, (working with agencies) rather than vertical (working with the community) impact. The research also identified the importance the police placed on partnership arrangements which became apparent within the inspection fieldwork, (HMIC, 2010, p. 40). This replicated the findings of earlier research by Loveday & McClory, (2007, p. 31).

Through qualitative content analysis of CSP minutes over a 12 month period in 2009 Innes and Weston also attempted to determine what these partnerships were delivering, (HMIC, 2010). Although the authors only provided indicative findings they outlined some interesting issues which they argue require further research. The

first of these was the degree of variability of performance across CSPs which was a key finding of the review highlighted earlier of partnership provision undertaken by the Home Office. The research found evidence of too great a focus on partnership working across agencies as opposed to working with the public, highly bureaucratic processes and a cluttered local landscape. The issue of working closely together across agencies leading to inhibiting a sufficient level of challenge internally around performance was another aspect identified (HMIC, 2010, p. 40). The issue of CSPs focusing more on strategy than operational delivery and also how some interventions had a long timescale for delivery was also apparent from partnership minutes, (HMIC, 2010, p. 40). Finally, the research found little evidence of value for money from partnership working nor whether the activity undertaken was the most cost effective option when compared to alternatives. To conclude, the research challenged a number of assumptions surrounding partnership working and the supposedly positive view placed upon CSPs as an effective mechanism to tackling crime and disorder, (HMIC, 2010, p. 41).

Existing survey work undertaken with practitioners

A number of surveys have been undertaken focusing on local authority employed practitioners involved in community safety. Although differing in scope all involved local authority respondents. They provided some interesting contemporary insights into partnership working. It is important to note however though that the purpose of these studies focused on the improvement of CSPs in their current form and were undertaken prior to the arrival of the coalition government.

The first, a Local Government Association, (LGA) led online survey of CSPs in England & Wales involving 171 local authorities was undertaken between May – July 2009, (47% response rate). This was aimed at providing an insight into community safety work, partnership working, the impact of the recession and to establish what problems might arise between the police and local authorities, (LGA, 2009. p. 7). The LGA represents local government and acts as a pressure group to influence policy, legislation and funding at the national level. They operate on behalf

of member councils and local authority personnel. This point requires to be borne in mind when using the results of the survey.

The research concluded that practitioners felt the police had the greatest effect on reducing crime locally, (LGA, 2009, p. 5). One interesting point was that when questioned about public sector organisations/areas having the most effect on crime reduction, (apart from the police) all those referenced were within the remit of local authorities e.g. Youth Offending Team's, Youth Services. Academic research, (Skinns, 2005, p. 180) along with other research undertaken, (Audit Commission, 2002, Phillips et al, 2002, McManus, 2003, Jamel & Mair, 2003) has to date identified minimal involvement of health authorities to CSPs. This is arguably something which central government intended to change through the merging of CSP and Drug Action and Alcohol Teams, (Home Office, 2007).

The LGA research also highlighted that police play a central leadership role in chairing CSPs, (21%) along with other local authority chief officers 52%, (LGA, 2009, p. 8). The survey found a high number of respondents describing their relationship with the police as 'fairly' or 'very good' and more likely to have improved over the last year, (LGA, 2009, p. 5). Two thirds, (63%) of the local authorities confirmed that they had joint funding arrangements in place, (LGA, 2009 p. 6). The survey also highlighted that cut backs had taken place. However two thirds of respondents had indicated that the recession had not yet caused cut backs, (LGA, 2009, p. 4). This may have changed due to the current financial climate. The issue of funding provided by central government through a grant mechanism to CSPs was a major issue. This to date had been targeted as a key feature at the partnership approach. Grants were severely reduced for community safety and partnerships. From April 2011 onwards CSPs continue to have difficult decisions to make and this will run parallel to spending cuts for the police, local authorities and all other RAs.

In early 2009 the Improvement & Development Agency, (IDeA) commissioned a review of capacity for local government to deliver the emerging community safety agenda. Respondents were community safety managers, (or equivalent) working for

local authorities across England. The review used an online survey and twenty in-depth interviews with the purpose of identifying future support needs. The research showed these professionals had a high level of confidence in their own knowledge of delivering the community agenda, (Office for Public Management, 2009, p. 1). Despite this, key challenges were identified including high levels of bureaucracy and a slow moving culture in relation to decision-making and action within CSPs and local authorities, (OPM, 2009, p. 1). Relevant to this research was that London based community safety managers proved to be the most confident about the capacity of their CSP to deliver the agenda. The research also showed that police were seen as the most effective chairs of these partnerships due to their high level of local knowledge, influence and leadership skills, (OPM, 2009, p. 2). It also highlighted that as an organisation the police had higher levels of both strategic and operational involvement compared to other partnership agencies, (OPM, 2009, p. 2). What was recognisable within the research was that its aim was not to drill down further to explore why some partners were more involved than others. As with the LGA, (2009) survey the respondents were all local authority officers demonstrating a one partner perspective.

In 2010 the IDeA and the Home Office commissioned further research using the Office for Public Management. This research in essence repeated the 2009 work undertaken using an online survey with a slightly wider focus. Due to the low response rate some caution is needed about the headline findings. Yet the survey still provided some interesting information. In relation to police effectiveness and involvement there appeared to be no change found from the previous survey. The survey identified a decreasing number of senior police officers undertaking chairing arrangements, (OPM, 2010, p. 1). Involvement and sharing of the workload across partner agencies was identified as a key support requirement. Funding was seen as a key barrier to effective partnership working, (OPM, 2010, p. 3).

Theoretical basis for partnerships

One view held about 'partnership working' is that it can bring flexibility and innovation along with the ability to pool financial and human resources. A common view held on partnership working is that more than one agency is better than one, (Rosenbaun, 2002, p. 177). This meaning that several different agencies working together are more effective than one in isolation. There is also reservation made by some commentators on relying on the assumption, (Liddle, 2001, p. 50). This referred to by other commentators as a 'quest for unity' (Crawford and Jones, 1995, p. 31), an assumed consensus within inter-agency relations. Theoretically, the merits or benefits of partnership working are quite clear however, at the practical implementation level these sometimes do not translate, (Audit Commission, 1998, p. 6). There is firm agreement that there are a number of ways to define a partnership approach, (Rosenbaum, 2002, p. 172). Berry et al, (2011) make reference to a simple term:-

“as a co-operative relationship between two or more organisations to achieve a common goal” ,(Berry et al, 2010 p.1).

A theoretical perspective on multi-agency models of crime reduction from the US can be usefully found in the work of Rosenbaum, (2002). He identified a range of possible benefits which partnership working can bring. Those included the need for crime issues being complex thus requiring complex solutions. As already identified partnerships can be better than individual agencies in identifying and scoping out crime rate issues. The benefits achieved can be due to their diversity in creating innovative responses to partnership interventions. They are more likely to be effective compared to activity undertaken by single agencies as partnerships can pool resources and bring new ideas to the problem solving process. Multiple interventions can also increase the impact of specific outcomes and lead to other new benefits, (Rosenbaum, 2002, p. 177).

Theoretically, partnerships according to Rosenbaun, (2002) are expected to achieve a number of objectives. They cover increased accountability of organisation involved, more joined up working that reduces duplication, building links between different sectors, increasing public awareness, serving to strengthen local community organisations and leading to improved ways of working through better data driven decisions, (Rosenbaun, 2002, p. 178). These additional benefits adding value to the outcomes produced by effective partnership working have in part been identified in previous research undertaken thus arguably have been tested as to whether they work in practice within England & Wales.

The chapter has highlighted a number of research studies undertaken into partnership working and CSPs from both government led sources through to academic literature. All exhibited different approaches and were located at different timeframes post implementation of the CADA, (1998). It concluded with a brief outline of the theory of partnership working and the benefits this activity can have specifically in responding to crime and disorder. It is clear that partnership working can be effective in the field of community safety. However most of the research suggests that many assumptions around key benefits are made and which include an assumption that 'partnership' is always the best approach. Despite this, government support for further research is needed amongst CSPs. In addition to this, it is also unclear whether some of the issues identified in early research into CSPs have been subsequently addressed. It is against this background that the research is located which seeks to examine both impact and utility of CSPs. The next chapter details both the research approach and methodology adopted for this study.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This chapter considers the chosen methodology, design of the research strategy and the fieldwork. It includes the use of a case study as a research strategy, the methods of data collection used and an explanation of how and why they were used. This leads on to a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of using this approach. The chapter considers why the two different 'sites' were selected and their approach to community safety. It outlines how the interview schedule was developed as a primary mechanism for achieving the research aims. It concludes by describing the analytical approach undertaken and the ethical issues.

Theoretical nature of chosen methodology

Historically the selection of specific research methods to undertake an enquiry has been dominated by the debate between the use of quantitative and qualitative data sources, (Noakes, & Wincup, 2003, p. 8). The dialogue has involved those who hold a positivist or a post positivist perspective and who advocate the use of quantitative methods of data collection and those who adopt an interpretative/social constructional approach and who are more closely aligned to the use of qualitative methodology.

King and Wincup, (2008, p. 82) claim that the distinction between the two paradigms can be readily identified. There are moreover advocates who use mixed methods and which has been associated with the term 'pragmatism, (Johnson, & Onwuegbuzie 2004, Creswell, 2007, p. 22). The use of mixed methods can be through a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data. There is equally a recognition by some commentators, (Noakes & Wincup, 2003, p. 8) that both types of data can be converted into either numeral or word narrative. This is reinforced further by Harden & Thomas, (2005, p. 265) who claim that the use of the term qualitative and quantitative to describe a research study is inaccurate as when broken down, most research at some stage uses a mixed methods approach. The case study

draws on both quantitative and qualitative source of data for analysis and was the approach taken for this study. These sources are discussed in the next section.

Embedded within the different methodologies are both strengths and weaknesses along with ontological claims that can be made about the production of new knowledge. These will be illustrated where relevant throughout the next several chapters.

Using qualitative data

On a simplistic descriptive level, qualitative methods of data collection can be defined as producing new knowledge, which takes the form of words and provides more in depth information compared to quantitative data which is numerical, (Bryman, 2004, p. 19). The qualitative approach is aligned to a constructionalist, humanistic, interpretative research paradigm. It describes reality in relation to there being multiply realities which are perceived and experienced, (Squirrell, 2012, p. 6). Creswell, (2007, p. 3) highlights the fact that interpretative qualitative research focuses on the self reflective nature of how it is conducted, emphasizing the role of the researcher and those researched. This is however also something that is seen as a weakness which is due to concerns surrounding researcher bias. This is explored at greater length below with specific reference to researching the authors own area of professional practice. It is also considered through designing and implementing the qualitative interview aspect of the research strategy.

Designing the research strategy

As outlined above the key aims of the research were three fold. They were to:-

1. To determine practitioners' views of the impact of CSPs in dealing with crime and disorder at the local level.

2. To examine practitioners' wider perspectives on the utility of CSPs now and in the future.
3. On the basis of the evidence generated by the research, to make recommendations for improvements in the work of CSPs.

A further rationale for undertaking research into these CSPs proved to be the current political and economic climate. This served to further justify the chosen research approach. By using a 'case study' layers of data and sources could be collected and used to achieve the research aims. Due to the complexities and nature of 'community safety partnerships' and the work they are involved in a strategy was needed that provided multi layered information in order to robustly review the two CSPs.

As noted, at the time of the fieldwork there were 340 CSPs across England & Wales, with 33 operating in London, (Home Office, 2009a). It was important to obtain a detailed account from community safety practitioners and also to review key documents and strategies in order to examine the business undertaken by these CSPs. The data obtained by interview could then be compared by way of documentary analysis to either validate or question accounts and build up a richer picture. In terms of the number of 'sites' (CSPs) to focus upon it was concluded that with increasing the number of CSPs, would provide breadth it would however fail to achieve depth. Given the time constraints it was also not practical to focus on more than two sites. Each partnership had six Responsible Authorities and all were included into the schedule. In addition to this, those interviewed also included co-opted members of the partnership who were not statutorily involved.

Research undertaken into CSPs highlighted above adopted a similar research methodology by using 'case studies'. Techniques employed within a case study approach have included participant observation at CSP meetings and related thematic meetings, (Phillips et al, 2002, Skinns, 2005). The author did not include this research instrument for several reasons. The primary reason was that as a practitioner the author had attended numerous community safety related meetings

and felt that document analysis would provide the required data and was also a more practical use of time.

Undertaking the fieldwork

For the research a series of semi structured interviews were undertaken over a 10 month period, (January 2011 through to October 2011). Senior practitioners involved in CSPs within the two London boroughs of Southwark and Newham were the key participants. The choice of these two boroughs and the respondents are detailed below. Eighteen practitioners were interviewed and over 20 documents produced for the respective CSPs were reviewed along with minutes of meetings over a period of 12 months between April 2010 until March 2011. This provided a sufficient length of time to review CSP activity. Finally, recorded crime data in each area was reviewed. The schedule of interviews is documented in appendix 3 with the list of core documents reviewed listed in Table 1.

Using a case study as a research strategy

According to Robson, (2002) Robert Yin (1981, 1994) has revived the case study as a serious option of social research:

“ ... A case study is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon in its real life context using multiple sources of evidence”, (Robson, 2002, p. 178).

A key characteristic of using this approach is the value of multiple data sources that can be used to validate the findings of singular sources of data collection. A disadvantage however is not being able to provide generalisations from the research findings due to the low number of sites involved. At the design and planning stage, this was considered and due to the nature and scope of the research question it was decided that generalization was not required to fulfill the aims. Case studies

however, can still be used to convey lessons which may be relevant to other areas, which here are 'CSPs'. This research could also provide a direction for future research investigation.

A point worthy of note is the context within which CSPs operate and which also supports the case study as a research approach. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that:-

“ in some circumstances the term ‘site’ might be preferable, ‘because it reminds us that a ‘case’ always occurs in a specified social and physical setting: we cannot study individual cases devoid of their context in a way that a quantitative researcher often does”, (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 27).

The research sought to look at CSPs in two London boroughs which involved considering them as case studies within their own specific economic and social setting.

It was evident from the existing literature, (Gilling, 1994, 2005, Hughes, 2002, Crawford 1994) and the material on the theoretical nature of partnerships, (Rosenbaum, 2002) that CSPs can be effective. However their mere existence does not automatically guarantee this, (Berry et al, 2011). It was also evident from the existing literature that commentators share a view that partnership working is difficult to do well, (Audit Commission, 1998, p. 5, Hough, 2005, p. 4). It is for this reason that the research focused on increasing the effectiveness and impact of CSPs. The research framework also aimed to explore historical issues already well documented by other research. According to a number of commentators, (Gilling, 2008, p. 41) this led previous governments to progressively reform CSPs and indirectly shape them through grants and rigorous performance management.

The semi structured qualitative interview

One of the research instrument employed for the enquiry was the face to face semi-structured interview. Robson, (2002, p. 270) defined this as having:

“...predetermined questions, but the order can be modified based on the interviewer’s perception of what seems most appropriate. Question wording can be changed and explanations given; particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee can be omitted, or additional ones included”,(Robson, 2002, p. 270).

There are different types of interviews a researcher can employ. But as a technique it is often the most favoured by criminologists, (King & Wincup, 2008, p. 31). They are able to produce a range of data both quantitative and qualitative. The author had a list of practitioners from each CSP to contact from both sites so a sample frame already existed for the minimum to be interviewed which was one representative from each Responsible Authority.

There are both strengths and weaknesses in using interviews to collect primary data. Specifically this relates to face to face as opposed to other types of interviewing, such as telephone, electronic or group interviews. Robson, (1993) documents that:

“the interview is a kind of conversation with a purpose”, (Robson, 1993, p. 228).

This is a basic and general definition providing a somewhat relaxed picture and refers to more ‘open ended’ interviews. The type of interview selected for this research is explored below. However, structurally a semi-structured format was adopted to establish some uniformity across interviews. At the same it provided flexibility for respondents to disclose their views and attitudes on CSPs. Flexibility is something that a less structured interview format method can provide, (Robson, 2002, p. 270). In terms of design, this type of interview allows the interviewer to

obtain the information that answered the research question in the most focused way. This is a factor which Creswell, (2007, p. 132) suggests is the main consideration when selecting the interview type. As is evident from the review of literature interviewing is a common technique used for a range of academic and professional research into partnership working and CSPs and arguably reinforces its suitability as a research method. According to Robson, (2002, p. 270) it also lends itself well to a mixed method approach which was the intention of this research approach.

Bryman, (2004, p. 28) document's that the quality of social research is evaluated by way of several criteria which include reliability, replication and validity. These will be explored in more detail as this chapter progresses although at this stage, they warrant further clarification. Bryman, (2004, p. 28) defines these terms in the following way. Reliability is related to whether the results of a study can be repeated and if so, whether the results are consistent. Replication relates to research assessed on the merit of whether research has been designed with the capability of replication. Finally, validity is linked directly to the integrity of the research findings and conclusions that are derived from the research. There are several types of validity, internal, external, measurement and ecological, all of which can be used to assess the quality of research, (Bryman, 2004, p. 28). Consideration of these criteria against different research methods highlights both their strengths and weaknesses.

A key advantage to undertaking the semi-structured interview as part of the research was that it provided an opportunity to use this approach with the participant face to face. This enabled the interviewer to ensure that interviewees were clear about the research area and all of the questions, and could observe firsthand that the interview process was being taken seriously. By using a face to face interview method interviewees were able to seek clarification of any questions and equally, the interviewer could ensure that comprehensive responses were provided so that the research question was fully answered. Compared to other research instruments relying on self completed responses, face to face interviews are seen due to the presence of the interviewee as more valid. Interviewing senior professionals can be

difficult to arrange due to their busy workloads and potential demands and priorities. By adopting the face to face interview, the author could ensure that it was them who were responding rather than somebody on their behalf. This further enhanced the reliability of the data.

There are a number of weaknesses associated with using semi-structured interviews. They can be time consuming as Robson, (2002, p. 273) highlights. All of the interviews undertaken lasted between 90 and 120 minutes. The schedule design planned for each was to take no more than 90 minutes and although in the main the interviewer managed the time, there were respondents who wanted to take the interview as an opportunity to reflect on work and CSPs. Some interviewees even thanked the interviewer for what they saw as such a positive experience and time/space and which helped them assess and re-evaluate their involvement in CSPs. These time constraints were also recognised at the planning stage of the fieldwork. Moreover, arranging time to interview practitioners proved also to be time consuming. Due to their senior level, appointments with respondents had to be booked well in advance. At times these were postponed or cancelled at short notice due to other work commitments.

One key criticism leveled at qualitative research and in this case the semi-structured interview, is the inability to make generalizations from the findings. The choice of research approach and associated research methods were selected because the data provided a rich picture. Being able to generalize from the research findings was not however an expressed purpose. The findings may however provide some initial thoughts for other CSPs operating in London but the primary application of the results are directed to the two CSP sites.

All interviews were taped and transcribed in full. As a safeguard against any recording issues discovered during and after the event detailed notes were also made throughout the interview process. Consent for taping the interviews was obtained from all interviewees. Transcribing the interviews proved to be extremely time

consuming due to the duration of the interviews. The pro-activeness of the interviewees did however provide very detailed responses to the interview questions. While not all of the data obtained was useful when the interviews were fully transcribed the overall narrative included an estimated 1000 words per interview. This produced a significant amount of data and some of the data could be used as a basis for further research. This is explored further in the concluding chapter.

It was not the interviewer's intention to remain completely neutral within the interview process. Robson, (1993) has highlighted that:-

“the presence of the interviewer opens the door for factors to do with the interviewer's skills, experience, personality and degree of involvement in or alienation from the research to name but a few”. Robson, (1993, p. 237).

The relationship between the interviewer and interviewee is seen as of paramount importance when undertaking qualitative interviews. There is no expectation that one reality expressed by an interviewee is greater or more valid than another. Neither is it the case that the interviewer exists as a neutral figure within the process. This stems from the constructivist paradigm and as highlighted by Squirrell, (2012)

“Researchers are people and all human actors will bring their concerns and interests to work with them”, (Squirrell, 2012, p. 6).

This contrasts strongly with positivist or scientific approaches to research which try to understand reality as something that is object and value free.

Adjusting the face to face interview due to time constraints

The primary fieldwork involved face to face interviews with senior practitioners at both sites. There were however four interviewees that could not spare the time to be interviewed face to face due to operational commitments but offered either a

telephone interview or to complete the questions in writing. Although this would not have been the author's preference, this alternative had to be accommodated due to the practical constraints of the research while also ensuring that as many responsible authorities featured within the fieldwork.

The Metropolitan Police Authority representative for Southwark who was contacted to be interviewed was unable to participate for example due to the time constraints. As one of the six responsible authorities, their involvement was seen as extremely important. The author managed to arrange for the representative to undertake the interview using an electronic format. However, while this response was useful it also illustrated the weaknesses of using this approach. It was evident for example that they did not understand the questions in full and this affected responses to the questions. Compared to those interviewed face to face, they also did not provide comprehensive answers to the questions. Their counterpart in Newham provided (in contrast) a very detailed face to face interview which also had the benefit of reflecting on using experiences with all the other CSPs they attended.

Using documentary analysis

Documentary analysis was also one of the techniques used as part of the case study approach. CSPs produce many documents that detail their work both internally and externally to various audiences. Although the reliability and validity of using documents is debated they can be useful in supporting other sources of data. According to Robson, (2002) the technique differs in so far as it is indirect and produced for some other purpose:

“ It is unobtrusive measure which is non-reactive, in that the document is not affected by the fact that you are using it”,(Robson, 2002, p. 349).

The case study approach for both sites used two types of documents and for differing purpose. These are outlined in the table below. The first were delivery plan and strategy type documents while the second were minutes of meetings.

Table 1 – Southwark & Newham key documents

Document Title	Author	Purpose of Document	Use in CSP Research	Access	CSP
Strategic Assessment	Local Authority Analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review previous 12 months performance • Priority setting for preceding 12 months 	Cross validate interview data Source for descriptive data	Restricted	Both
CSPs Rolling Plan	Local Authority Analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review previous 12 months performance • Priority setting for preceding 12 months 	Cross validate interview data Source for descriptive data	Restricted	Both

Document Title	Author	Purpose of Document	Use in CSP Research	Access	CSP
SSP ASB Strategy	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details SSP approach to ASB 	Cross validate interview data Source for descriptive data	Open	SSP
SSP Violent Crime Strategy	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details SSP approach to violent crime 	Cross validate interview data Source for descriptive data	Open	SSP
SSP CCTV Strategy	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details SSP approach to CCTV 	Cross validate interview data Source for descriptive data	Open	SSP
SSP PTG Minutes & supporting documents	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of discussion action points and membership 	Review of activity and membership of meetings	Restricted	SSP
CSP minutes & supporting documents	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of discussion action points and membership 	Review of activity and membership of meetings	Restricted	SSP
CSP minutes & supporting documents	Local Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record of discussion action points and membership 	Review of activity and membership of meetings	Open	Newham CSP

Document Title	Author	Purpose of Document	Use in CSP Research	Access	CSP
Recorded crime statistics	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded crime performance 	Review performance	Open	Both

Advantages and disadvantages of using documents

An advantage of the author being a practitioner-researcher in the field of community safety was the exposure to and knowledge of a range of documents used as part of the research. The core documents are listed in Table 1. Most of the documents were written by local authority officers and although they are CSP documents they require ratification from the CSP Board and/or a political sign off from the local authority. Much more caution is exhibited in document production which has an external audience. This insight is not always apparent to others it was however to the author which provided an additional matter for consideration when using these documents in terms of their reliability.

Police recorded crime - partnership performance

Community Safety Partnership's are measured in terms of performance by the Home Office by way of crime rates per thousand population. Crime rates as a management information mechanism have a linked purpose of providing the opportunity to compare areas. Crime rates are reported using iQuanta, [Internet Quantitative Analysis Tool], (Home Office, 2011b). Local boundaries for local authorities and CSPs in London are coterminous.

In early 2010 the Home Office started reviewing crime statistics at the Borough Command Unit, (BCU) across England and Wales. Later that year work was undertaken to list all CSPs into groups and families which were based on socio-

economic and demographic factors relating to the level of crime and disorder within a locality, (Sheldon, et al, (2002, p.1). As is evident from Table 2 CSPs both Newham and Southwark are based within Group 2 family which reinforces the level of comparability achieved when considering the research findings.

Table 2 : CSP – MSF, (Most Similar Family) group 2

1. Leicestershire
2. Central Leicestershire
Metropolitan Police - Brent, Ealing, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, West Midlands
D1 – Erdington / Aston /Nechells / Saltley / Ward End
E3 - Acocks Green /Sparkhill / Sparkbrook /Edgbaston / Balsall Heath / Selly Park / Moseley
F1 - Birmingham City, Centre / Digbeth
F3 - Soho / Handsworth/ Sandwell / Perry Barr/Aston (part)

Source – (Adapted from Sheldon, Hall, Brunson, Charlton, Alvanides & Mostratos, 2002, p. 4).

Other research methods considered as part of the case study framework

Other types of interviews such as electronic or online, telephone, and group interviews, were considered as possible methods of data collection. All variants of the face to face qualitative interview however were initially rejected. The researcher felt that due to the exploratory nature of the research it was prudent to adopt the face to face interview approach as it provided a flexible instrument in which to illicit detailed information from interviewees.

Although these alternative types to the face to face interview tend to be quicker to undertake and are less expensive, both could be seen as advantageous. As Bryman (2004, p. 477) identified, there are a number of advantages of online focus groups and telephone interviews compared to face to face interviews. These fall loosely under costs, accessibility, post verification of responses, preparing data for analysis, identifying concealment, ease of interviewee in terms of open discussion and dealing

with shyness. There is also less interviewer bias and it provides a safe and anonymous environment.

The disadvantages to the approach include a lack of access to facilities and equipment which leads to not being in a position to participate, (linked to group interviews) difficulty in establishing a rapport and ensuring engagement by all is maintained. There is also a problem with higher non-response rates, (Bryman, 2004, p. 477). These cover the key issues when selecting, non face to face interview formats. The major consideration when designing a research strategy is to ensure each instrument provides a rich picture of information from every participant. The face to face format provided this and made supported achieving the research aims more likely.

Selecting the sites for research

The primary reason for selecting the Safer Southwark Partnership as one site was due to the author having agreed access to data and respondents, permission for which was granted by Southwark Council at the early planning stages of the research. In addition to this, approaching and gaining access to other responsible authorities and (non) responsible authorities was still needed and their participation was entirely voluntary. There were several 'gatekeepers' to the research. Problems were envisaged in getting access to senior police officers within the MPS as there can be restrictions around accessing police officers. This usually has to be verified by the central research unit within the MPS. Fortunately the author did not find a problem, and interviewees were of experienced senior rank, (i.e. Chief Inspector upwards).

While access to CSP practitioners within Southwark was agreed in some areas problems remained. Arranging interviews, namely with the Health representative and the MPA proved difficult. However the level of access to documents provided

one way to review the CSPs. In the past this has proved difficult due to problems of access to data and other partnership information, (Skinns, 2005, p. 317).

The debate about what makes a successful partnership, or an effective partnership is ongoing. Commentators have explored this elsewhere, (Gilling, 2005, p. 737, Skinns, 2005, p. 219). Is effectiveness a progressive reduction in recorded or reported crime within an area? Commentators, (Reiner, 1992, Maguire, 1997, Loveday, 2000) who question the validity of police crime data would question this as an absolute measure. So does effectiveness mean a partnership which uses its resources effectively, efficiently and proportionately with modest outcomes? Is it about winning prestige awards which it is claimed demonstrate 'best practice', often ratified by central government? This may tell the observer more about a CSPs 'reputation management' skill to external stakeholders than about local delivery.

Considering this, the Safer Southwark Partnership, (SSP) provides an example of a CSP operating within an inner London borough which has challenging issues to deal with. Southwark is considered worthy of recognition in undertaking strategic assessments through to advising other local authorities and tackling young violent crime, (LGC Award Winner 2010). The initial research proposal intended to focus on one CSP. However, after completing several interviews and reflecting on collected data it was decided to include an additional CSP as a second case study. This was a difficult decision due to time constraints. It however was felt that the second CSP would really add value to the research. There were also risks attached to the second CSP as pre agreed access to interviewees and documents had not been secured.

The Safer Southwark partnership & their approach to community safety

The Safer Southwark Partnership is the Community Safety Partnership of the London Borough of Southwark. The structure of the partnership is positioned within appendix 2 and core members include all Responsible Authorities, (RA). Further to

this, there are a number of representatives that do not full under the 6 RAs which attend and do on a regular basis as demonstrated by the minutes.

The delivery support team for the SSP, as with Newham provided by the local authority. The structure of the SSP and all the relating work programmes are listed within appendix 2. The partnership encompasses the CSP and the DAAT. The SSP board is the decision making body and is responsible for developing the rolling and commissioning plan, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a). Membership consists of all RAs and additional partnership agencies. These include the court services, crown prosecution service and other voluntary sector organisations such as victim support.

It was clear from the rolling plan that the SSP monitors itself on crime reduction performance and the progress of programmes and projects within their delivery plans. The approach taken for tackling crime and disorder' is referred to as a 'Whole systems approach'. This was based on:

- Prevention
- Early Intervention
- Intensive Support and Intervention
- Enforcement

(Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a, p.7).

Programmes and projects therefore cutting across all four tiers of action detailed above.

The Newham partnership & their approach to community safety

The CSP selected for the second site was the Newham Partnership. As an outer East London Borough Newham in terms of population, deprivation and recorded crime types it shared similar characteristics to Southwark. Both London boroughs operate a one tier unitary structure which works from a contextual position. A further

consideration that affected how the partnership operated was that Newham has an elected Mayor which may influence how business is conducted. This was evident in initial web based research on the Newham CSP², where documents and delivery had a more centralised corporate approach than Southwark. The intention here was to also test the findings of each area on a comparability basis.

The Newham CSP is administered and coordinated by Newham Council. This is not an unusual arrangement for CSPs. All of its meetings were arranged by a delivery support team consisting of four staff, employed by Newham. Although there are nominated chairs of the thematic groups from the CSP through to specific groups, the support to meetings is undertaken by the council team with the involvement of constitutional support. It became evident through interviewees that during 2010, structural changes were also made to the Newham Partnership. It was important to consider these especially given that one of the research aims was to make recommendations for future improvement. The structure and governance arrangement of the partnership is located within appendix 2.

Developing the interview schedule

The interview schedule included a guide of 17 questions, [these are located in appendix 1]. The design of the interview questions was aimed at eliciting the views, (or what can be said to be beliefs or attitudes) of community safety practitioners. As a practitioner-researcher the interviewer had detailed knowledge in the field and this led to the ability to design open questions while also helping at the analysis stage. It also provided an opportunity when interviewing to move among the questions. It was also possible to collect a range of relevant core documents, (see Table 1) that provided a background information on the two CSPs. These did not have to be discussed in detail at the interview unless absolutely necessary. An additional

² Despite from 1st April 2011 the government refers to all community safety partnerships as CSPs Newham continues to refer to their partnership as a CDRP. It is for this reason that in the analysis chapter the CSP is sometimes referred to as a CDRP.

advantage of having prior knowledge of the community safety field came from knowing what documents were mandatory to submit to central government. It provided an underpinning knowledge of how and in what way documents were produced and for what audiences. Some documents, (depending on the intended use of the material) proved to be useful even though they were directed at specific audiences.

The question design required not just a response but for the interviewee to provide evidence of their view. An example of this would be, 'As a practitioner do you think CSPs are effective as a mechanism of tackling crime and disorder? And if so how would you quantify this?'. The reasoning behind this was to attempt to increase the value of the respondent's comments. It must be recognised that the whole complexity of partnership working is very much embedded within a timeframe yet this provided a snapshot which can be influenced at both the micro and macro level in relation to the political, social and organisational environment. The micro level for example relates to changes at the local level such as a change in the party political or organisational level of those involved. The macro level relates to wider influences such as central government policies or the economy.

The author's prior experience of undertaking interviews in a number of professional and academic settings reinforced the need for the interview schedule to be piloted at an early stage. Based on experience, the aim was two fold. First to ensure that the questions would elicit the information needed to address the research aims. Second to ensure that the questions were understood by the interviewee and did not generate any problems with terminology or lack of clarity. This proved to be even more important as several interviews had to be conducted either over the phone or electronically.

The interviews initially sought to identify the organisation's involvement in the CSP. It then sought to establish interviewee involvement and his/her own role and contribution to the CSP. The aim was to compare this information inline with their

statutory duties and to confirm what levels of resource were put into the CSP. As the author was also a practitioner, it was however important not to make assumptions about roles, contributions and wider involvement. The information was validated through the use of documents which evidenced involvement.

The schedule then moved onto to ascertain the views about the key aim/s of each community safety partnership. It was important at an early stage of the process to gain an insight into practitioner views on this and to look at whether at a wider level, this was in their view achieved and if so whether this was explained by effective partnership working. As outlined the key challenge within the field of community safety is measuring the success of initiatives and/or attributing any reduction in reported crime types to a specific activity. This is a complex area and many factors can have an impact. The primary purpose was to investigate practitioners' views on the impact that partnership working was having on achieving partnership aims.

The schedule moved on to look at what if any added value the CSP had brought to the practitioners own organisation. This was a key question to establish whether the 'partnership' actually contributed to the work of responsible authorities. Earlier research, (Gilling, 2005, p. 736) suggests that in the early stages CSPs work was done in addition to the day job. The interviews attempted to review this and identify to what degree the CSP contributed to each RA. Due to the current fiscal climate, all RAs will now look at all work streams to decide to what extent this provides value to their own core organisational priorities. A further point is the statutory duty of RAs to their local CSP. The statutory obligations are identified below:

1. To have a statutory group to formulate and implement a community safety plan for each local authority area, (including representation of the six RAs)
2. Production of annual strategic assessment which includes evaluation of previous year and priority setting based on public consultation

3. An agreed information sharing protocol with a designated Liaison Officer in each RAs shared quarterly
4. Annual face the people session

(LGG, 2010, p. 4).

In light of this statutory obligation a question was intended to assess the level of contribution provided by the RA. Consideration had to be given here to the reduction in resources of both CSPs at the time of the fieldwork. It was also important to establish practitioner views on the impact of the both policy and financial changes which occurred over the period of the research. This assisted the researcher with the latter research aim which was to formulate recommendations for future improvement. As the research audience included both academics and practitioners the context had to be carefully considered. However it was the intention that the research would primarily benefit practitioners at a practical level.

As the interview schedule progressed, practitioners were asked whether they thought CSPs had proved effective as a mechanism to tackle crime and disorder, and if so how they would quantify this. It was also important to establish a more general viewpoint on CSPs and to explore the connection between effectiveness and its quantification from the practitioner viewpoint. What became evident through the interviews was that a majority of practitioners had worked for more than one CSP. This also provided some comparability upon which to base their observations of their current CSPs. As with the specific question related to their CSP and its effectiveness, it was also important to determine how these practitioners actually defined effectiveness.

The next section of the interview focused on 'successes' and how practitioners viewed their CSP in terms of this. Interviewees were given the opportunity to define what they thought success was and also what they thought made a successful CSP. Viewing the changing backdrop to community safety, it asked how practitioners

thought the CSP should measure success in the future. It also asked whether those measures should remain the same or be changed.

Since the implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, performance targets and monitoring at the local level by central government had been a central feature of delivery. At an early stage in the fieldwork, the coalition government announced that they would abolish national targets and indicators. This was timely in terms of seeking views on future performance management frameworks for CSPs and how to measure future 'success'. Further to this, in the past CSP were benchmarked in MSF, (Most Similar Families) and although these still exist and are central to governments performance monitoring it was not clear at the time what the future position might bring. With the change of government and relaxing monitoring arrangements with CSPs future arrangements were likely to be very different to those that operated in the past decade. Other questions posed here at this point related to possible future targets linked to benchmarking and what practitioners' thoughts were in terms of benchmarking achievements. Again, the aim and intention of the question was to explore a 'standard' of excellence for CSPs.

The next section of the interview schedule focused on whether practitioners thought CSP work could be improved. This was linked to the third aim of the research which sought to identify improvements in CSPs delivery. It was important to seek the views of practitioners as to where improvements could be made. This section of the research led to a series of recommendations framed by the research findings for both CSPs. Although as a community safety practitioner the author had detailed knowledge of community safety practice and could reflect on both the primary and secondary data sources it was important that practitioners given the opportunity were able to identify those aspects that needed improvement. This was to ensure that each of the responsible authorities provided their perspective on improvement. A central question relating to CSPs was whether they would still exist if the statutory footing was removed. This question was asked in relation to the impact on responsible authority involvement if CSP lost their statutory footing.

The concluding section of the schedule focused on the views of responsible and non responsible authorities and which agencies added value to the CSP and which did not. This was probably the most challenging question and often one where interviewees wanted to cross check confidentiality with the interviewer. Shortly, after the coalition government took office legislation on Policing Reform and Community Safety was tabled in the House of Commons. This specifically detailing the introduction of directly elected Police & Crime Commissioners, (PCCs). This is discussed in Chapter 4 where views were sought to determine how practitioners responded to the suggested role/s of the Police & Crime Commissioners and the impact this might have on community safety.

Qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts

Several options were considered for the analytical stages of the research process. This involved both manual and computed assisted qualitative data analysis, (CAQDAS). Writers such as Creswell, (2007, p. 4) have acknowledged many advances in the technical development of software packages designed purely for the analysis of qualitative data sources. These included packages of ATLAS, QSR, NUDIST, and NVivo to name a few. A key issue with raw qualitative data collection is the lack of standardisation. As already highlighted undertaking 18 interviews had produced a vast amount of raw data of approximate 18,000 words. Despite the use of a semi structured approach, not all interviews followed systematic flow while some responses flowed into others. The semi structure approach did provide a format in readiness for the analytical process. The analytical process did not neatly commence on completion of all the interviews or on receipt of the documents but was a continuous process through out the research. This was something which is identified by a number of commentators (Basit, 2003, p. 144). Kelle, (2004, p. 473) highlights that CAQDAS clearly has efficiency gains in terms of time and analytical approach when dealing with qualitative data. From a critical perspective computer assisted analysis has generated concerns about disconnection between the researcher and the data. This creates a distance from the theoretical and methodological merits of

qualitative research which sees the connection between the researcher and their data as an advantage (Kelle, 2004, p. 473).

Although the interview transcripts were lengthy, the raw data was analysed manually. This approach is most often used by qualitative researchers, (Basit, 2003, p. 143). A word document template was designed to capture the responses to all of the key questions. This then provided the option to compare question responses across interviewees, CSPs and responsible authorities and to search key words and phrases. The secondary stage was to identify key themes which are explored in more detail in the later chapters. This approach was slightly overwhelming to start with and was very time consuming. However it did mean that all of the transcript data had been interrogated in detail by the researcher.

Access & ethical issues

There are a number of ethical considerations when undertaking research, especially collecting primary data through fieldwork. According to Kvale, (1996):

“ethics is not restricted to fieldwork, but refers to all stages of the research process, including (field relations and) writing up the report” ,(Kvale, 1996, p. 10).

A full research proposal was submitted to the University of Portsmouth’s Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Committee for ethical review. This was approved favourably, subject to compliance with the general conditions. These fall under conflict of interest, access to data, storage/disposal of data, briefing participants, consent. Although, the author felt that the research area was not a controversial area, there were key ethical issues that required consideration at each stage of the research. One of the key noticeable areas for the author as a researcher was ensuring that at every stage of the research that they were acting in a research capacity and not in their professional capacity.

Consent to undertake the research

Seeking consent to undertake the research was sought by all participants involved and senior representatives of both Community Safety Partnerships. The research focused on a 'partnership' which operated over a specific geographical area, and it was in fact the CSP which was the primary focus however it was necessary to obtain agreement from everyone linked to the research and outside of the CSP. Information explaining the research aims and seeking their involvement was the initial approach. It was clearly communicated to interviewees that the doctoral research was being undertaken in the name of the University of Portsmouth and in the capacity as researcher and not in a professional capacity. Other ethical issues such as confidentiality were discussed and detailed at the actual interview stage and with every interviewee.

Access to participants and other data sources

Access to participants was not necessarily initially problematic, as the senior representatives of all six Responsible Authorities were quite easy to locate through the respective local authority websites. Also, as a practitioner, the author had access to a range of documentation from Southwark which they had been granted access to at an early stage. Moreover, a majority of the documents required to assess the effectiveness and impact of the CSP were already in the public domain, and where there was restricted access, this had been granted. There was therefore no need to formally request information from specific data custodians.

Storage & disposal of data

The interview transcripts were lengthy and a majority were recorded along with being accompanied with detailed notes taken at the actual interview. The author transcribed all voice notes and these have been confidentially stored over the duration of the research. The storage and disposal of data was also covered at the

interview stage with all participants, including interviewees being informed that interview transcripts would be stored securely, password protected for all electronic copies and then destroyed on award of the professional doctorate.

Briefing participants and consent

Although agreed consent had been obtained from all those who participated, and all had agreed for the interviews to be tape recorded, there was a concern by the author about the small number of case study sites and interviewees which led to the ability to work out who had participated in the research. This was overcome by keeping the interviewees anonymous across both sites. Moreover, the research was not considered to be controversial in anyway and the views given by practitioners were not voiced on behalf of the organisations that they worked for but instead personal views. These things considered however all responses given by interviewees used in Chapter four were coded therefore maintaining confidentiality.

This chapter has outlined the chosen methodology, the design of the research strategy and the fieldwork undertaken. It explained the reason for selecting the two different 'sites' and their approach to community safety. It outlined how the interview schedule was developed as one of the mechanism for achieving the research aims. It concluded by describing the approach undertaken for this analysis and a discussion of ethical issues considered throughout the research. Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis and discussion of the collected research data.

Chapter 4: Analysis

This chapter presents a comprehensive picture of the fieldwork undertaken, the results and a discussion which engages with the existing literature in the field. As outlined the purpose of the research has been to examine the impact of two CSPs in London, their utility and also to identify recommendations for improvement. The purpose was achieved by asking community safety practitioners their perspectives on effectiveness and impact and evaluating the work of their respective CSPs. It also reviewed key documents, official statistics and other records. This was the basis upon which areas for future improvement were identified. As a short summary the aims of the research were three fold. These are identified below:-

1. To determine practitioners' views of the impact of CSPs in dealing with crime and disorder at the local level.
2. To examine practitioners' wider perspectives on the utility of CSPs now and in the future.
3. On the basis of the evidence generated by the research, to make recommendations for improvements in the work of CSPs.

When considering the research findings it was important to appreciate both the socio-economic and overall context of the areas the Southwark and Newham CSPs served. This was important because the data demonstrated that these areas are extremely challenging in nature. In terms of tackling crime and disorder they represent some of the poorest and most problematic areas in the country. This clearly impacted on the work of the two CSPs and how they operated for example in terms of volume of crime. They also embraced more complex crime based issues compared to non inner city metropolitan areas.

Southwark profile

The Office of National Statistics, (ONS) estimated for 2009 that Southwark had an approximate population of 285,631, (Newham, 2010). This figure had increased over 30,000 since the 2001 census. A breakdown by broad ethnic group showed that the larger % groups are people in white ethnic (65.97%), white British ethnic (56.06%). Further to this, key low income indicators from the Department for Work & Pensions, (DWP) for the last quarter of 2010 showed that 16.06% of the boroughs population are of working-age DWP benefit claimants again higher than the London average of (14.77). Key worklessness indicators for the same period revealed that the 4.6% of the population were jobseekers allowance claimants, compared to 4% for London.

The proportion of pupils achieving expected targets at Key Stage 4 (GCSE) A* - C is 79% although this fell to 7.85% when Maths and English was included. Both figures however, lower than the London rates. The % of working age adults with no qualifications in 2010 was just under 10.2%, higher than the London average which was 10%. Notifiable crime types per 10,000 population in Southwark was slightly different compared to Newham with higher rates in all five offence areas excluding residential burglary, theft from a motor vehicle and criminal damage compared to the London average, (Newham 2010).

Locally, the political composition of Southwark was Labour. This was at the time of the fieldwork a relatively new arrangement as of May 2010. The executive decision making is undertaken by a local cabinet headed by the leader of the council and ten councillors each holding a special 'portfolio' of responsibility, (Southwark, 2012). The community safety priorities of the local authority were sharpened and linked to pledges that the local political party based their election upon. These as expected were linked to the priorities identified within the SSPs strategic assessment – 2008-12.

These were:-

- Violent crime
- Preventing youth crime
- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Drugs and alcohol
- Reducing re-offending
- Safer communities and communication

(Safer Southwark Partnership, 2010, p.13).

In addition to the above the council plan outlined the administration's specific approach to community safety. It pledged to increase the effectiveness of CCTV through the detection of crime. It also identified a target with:

“ a 2 percent value for money saving through effective partnership working to reduce violence, calculated using the financial information provided by the Home Office economic cost of crime survey”, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a, pg. 7).

This is based on the assumption that any reduction of violent crime will be due to effective partnership working which can then be financially estimated using the work of Brand & Price, (2000) and Dubourg & Hamed, (2005). Specific crime reduction targets included increasing public confidence in the council and police in tackling anti social behaviour. There was however also reference made to improving the effectiveness of drug treatment services through increasing by 47% the number of problematic drug users leaving treatment in a planned way. This approach to ‘effective’ partnership working is explored in more detail below due to its centrality to the research aims.

Newham profile

The ONS estimated for 2009, that the borough of Newham had a population of 241,212, (Newham, 2010). This figure has not significantly changed since the 2001 census. A breakdown of broad ethnic group illustrated that the larger % groups are people in white ethnic (44.65%), white British ethnic (38.27%), Asian or Asian British (30.27) category. Further to this, key low income indicators from DWP for the last quarter of 2010 demonstrated that 21.76% of the boroughs population are of working-age DWP benefit claimants which at (14.77) is higher then the London average. Key worklessness indicators for the same period revealed that the 6.25% of the population were jobseekers allowance claimants, compared to 4% for London.

The proportion of pupils achieving expected targets at Key Stage 4 (GCSE) A* - C was 69% although this fell to 47.5% when Maths and English were included. Both figures were again lower than the London average rates. The percentage of working age adults with no qualifications in 2010 was just under 16%, higher than the London average at 10%. Notifiable crime types per 10, 000 population in Newham in 2010 was higher in all five offence categories compared to the London average. These categories included all violence categories, (Violence Against the Person, Common assault, wounding and other wounding, non residential and residential burglary, theft from a person, theft from and theft of a motor vehicle and criminal damage (Newham, 2010).

Local political arrangements in Newham proved to be different from those in Southwark, and indeed most other London boroughs. The borough has a directly elected Mayor who has full executive decision-making authority. There were directly appointed cabinet members holding specific portfolio areas although their role was advisory, (Newham, 2009). The mayoral system has been in place since 2002 with the same Mayor currently in his third term of office. This local political system of having a directly elected Mayor based on the Local Government Act 2000 replaced the 'traditional' committee system. From the Mayor's nineteen promises to

residents, four specifically related to community safety. They related to making the streets safer, getting tough on crime, increasing CCTV coverage and cracking down on anti-social dog owners, (Newham, 2011, p. 4). The Mayor's involvement and influence in the CSP and the community safety agenda was visible throughout the interviews with practitioners. This will be explored in more detail below.

Results

Determining practitioners' views of the impact of CSPs in dealing with crime and disorder at the local level

Prior to determining practitioners' views of the impact of CSPs it was important to identify through both the interview data and documentary evidence what the key objective of the respective CSPs were. The statutory obligation of a CSP includes formulating and implementing a community safety plan, (LGG, 2010, p.4). These plans are referred to by practitioners and government officials as 'Rolling Action Plans' and are statutory documents under the Police & Justice Act 2006. Through the interview data it became clear that most practitioners personalised the key objective of their partnership from both a 'local' and their 'organisational' standpoint. Although enhancing safety was to be referred to by a majority of interviewees, most had wider definitions of what was expected of their CSP. Examples of this included using terms such as 'liveability', 'cohesive local residents' as well as more obvious terms such as 'reducing crime and the fear along with anti-social behaviour'. The link between achieving the objective of the CSP and requirement in the delivery of the vision was also identified. In Southwark for example the partnerships vision was:

"to make Southwark a safer and healthier place to live, work and visit", (Safer Southwark Partnership, (2011a, p. 4).

When comparing the views of interviewee's on the key objective of the CSPs with their respective strategic assessments, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2010, Newham CDRP, 2010) interviewees demonstrated an appreciation that was much more sophisticated than that documented. For some the interpretation tended for example to be driven by their own organisational priorities. This was especially the case for two Responsible Authorities, the London Probation Trust and Health. Further to this, 'fear of crime' or 'public reassurance' was commonly referred to as complex and

having significant importance, sometimes greater than that of recorded crime figures. There were clearly two reasons for this. Firstly, it reflected the one dimensional nature of recorded crime statistics and the limitation these had on presenting a true picture of the impact of crime. Secondly, it allowed for disproportionate levels of fear associated with certain types of crime relating to certain areas.

The research sought to establish whether any set measures to evaluate effectiveness of the CSPs had been devised. Practitioners were asked what they thought the key objective/s of their CSPs was and whether those had been realised. If it was, they were asked a follow up question as to how much this was due to effective partnership working. In addition to the interview data, partnership documents authored by practitioners were reviewed for additional evidence in defining 'effectiveness'. This material was reviewed alongside the interview transcripts.

The Safer Southwark Partnership (SSP) - Perceived effectiveness and impact

Reviewing the Safer Southwark Partnership Rolling Plan, the delivery plan formulated from the strategic assessment undertaken by the CSP, it was claimed that:

“Southwark is recognised as one of the most effective crime reduction partnerships in London”, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2010, p. 3).

Thereafter the plan details government beacon awards along with local authority sector led awards. In addition to this, there were a number of comments made by interviewees that clearly suggested the partnership was seen as:

“one of the stronger ones”, (Interviewee, A11, 10/01/11, Southwark).

It was in fact used by the Home Office as an example of 'best practice'. The Strategic Assessment was an example of this as was a visit by the Scottish Government to review the process the SSP used. This support for the strength of the SSP also resonated from more newly appointed practitioners involved in the SSP. This can be seen in the following comment:

“I have been in post for 4 months. What I have seen is very good. It is successful in terms of the relevant senior people involved and others engaged. Operational management and frontline is also good”, (Interviewee A2, 26/01/2011, Southwark).

It was recognised by most that linking crime rates or patterns of crime and disorder to the work of the partnership was a difficult if not an impossible task. This was due to the many factors that can influence crime and disorder and illustrated by a comment made by one community safety practitioner:

“How crime and disorder links to the effectiveness of or lack of effectiveness of CSP is very complex. There are issues and we do not have all of the answers, in terms of what works, value for money”, (Interviewee A1, 12/01/2011, Southwark).

Despite this recognition and understanding of complexity the transcript evidence illustrated that there was still a tendency to over rely on crime reduction performance as a measure of partnership effectiveness. This was also clear from the targets set within the Rolling Plan and the action plans of the SSP sub groups, (the structure and governance of these are featured in appendix 2). At the borough level, recorded crime had fallen consecutively over the previous 6 years, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a, p. 5). This was confirmed by the documents reviewed for the SSP, with a 2% reduction in recorded crime in 2010/11 compared to the previous year, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a, p. 5). However according to practitioner transcripts this was not the only measurement of partnership effectiveness to be considered. It did not identify issues highlighted within the SSP Action Plan 2011/12 such as increases in certain offence categories such as Personal Robbery, (19%).

This equated to just over 250 offences, (Compared to a London wide increase of a 9%), and an increase in Youth Violence of 5%, (50 offences) and finally a 10% increase in acquisitive crime³, (550 more offences). One practitioner raised concern about using iQuanta and recorded crime rates in terms of measuring partnership activity:

“CSPs use MSF groupings through the use of iQuanta to determine crime rates. iQuanta manipulates crime figures, you have to ask what is recorded crime? Policing priorities dictate crime figures”, (Interviewee A2, 26/01/2011, Southwark).

This placed doubt on the degree to which the CSP and its work could be responsible for any reduction in recorded crime if much of this was influenced by policing priorities.

The importance placed on the measurement of 'fear of crime' was also evident from the frequency it was mentioned within practitioner interviews. This was reflected in the comment by one respondent:

“It is to make Southwark a Healthier, Safer place to live, work and visit. The community needs to feel safer which is the ultimate aim”, (Interviewee A11, 09/02/2011, Southwark).

And by another:-

“In some instances, performance indicators measure success. What we should be asking is, do people feel safer? i.e. people’s perception. What types of crime do we need to focus on?”, (Interviewee A6, 13/04/2011, Southwark).

³ Serious acquisitive crime included offences such as robbery, residential burglary and vehicle crime.

The timing of the fieldwork was significant as at this time public reassurance was a key agenda item for government and key agencies primarily the police. This was evident through the introduction at the time of Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the induction of a national policing pledge and confidence targets. The latter initiative was to be scrapped by the coalition government shortly after taking office, (Home Office 2011c). Also evident from the interview data were the complexities surrounding the 'fear of crime' measure and dependency on media coverage and individual high profile incidents. These significantly affected the fear or crime quite independently of any community safety intervention. This point and its link to partnership working were best summarised by one respondent who argued that:-

“Public confidence in areas such as Peckham is still difficult to deal with due to several complex factors. Affecting how people feel in an area can be heavily influenced by the media and can show how partnership work can be undone very quickly through critical incidents such as shootings/murders.”, (Interviewee A1, 27/01/2011, Southwark).

This was also highlighted through regular tabloid press coverage featuring the extent and nature of violent crime across London.

Measuring effectiveness

There was no evidence of any agreed measurement of effectiveness across the partnership however practitioners individually provided their own interpretation of effectiveness. One practitioner who was relatively new in post to the SSP noted that:

“ ...effectiveness is what money is spent on and what impact this is having”, (Interviewee A2, 26/01/2011, Southwark).

Another respondent commented:-

“It is difficult to review effectiveness as this is the softer side”. “How does it feel amongst partners, - progress”, (Interviewee A5, 27/01/2011, Southwark).

Several interviewees highlighted a future need to look in more detail at effectiveness and what it actually meant for their partnership. This was especially the case in relation to exploring ‘cost effectiveness’. It was evident that future development of the SSP would need to include an assessment of the cost of crime and cost effectiveness of activity commissioned by the partnership. This was voiced by several of the responsible authorities. Comments such as the following were not uncommon:

“ I am not convinced that all work commissioned has been effective, an example of this being the ETE, (Education, Training & Employment) project which was a drug project, I have not seen any return or outcome here”, (Interviewee A4, 18/01/2011, Southwark).

At the time of the fieldwork neither CSPs had undertaken any comprehensive cost effectiveness or value for money exercise in relation to partnership activity. This demonstrated through comments such as:

“Looking forward it is about looking at the costs of crime and also more detailed cost benefit analysis”, (Interviewee A11, 09/02/2011, Southwark).

And:

“We need to look at a range of data to look at effectiveness – statistics, cohort studies to get a rich picture of data, displacement”, (Interviewee A1, 27/01/2011, Southwark).

What had been referenced on several occasions by the SSP was the Home Office cost of crime estimates, (Dubourg & Hamed, 2005). These were being used to estimate a crude cost saving against several declining crime categories. The rolling plan also reflected the amount of money being spent on these priorities. This illustrated that the partnership was beginning to look at cost savings for specific crime types and demonstrated that when crime fell savings were made. With the complexities surrounding the use of recorded crime rates it was impossible for the partnership to align specific activities to these successes. This approach was not linked either to the evaluation of projects and the impact they were having against intended objectives and outcomes.

What became apparent was that the cut in funding had forced both CSPs to be more focused. This may ironically have been beneficial. The research showed this had led to more self scrutiny, by practitioners of work/activity and a justification from some responsible authorities for ending some work programmes. Thus, apart from monitoring recorded crime figures and other quantitative performance figures minimal evaluation of projects were being undertaken on a routine basis. The lack of evaluation and its impact on CSPs is explored in more detailed below.

Of interest was the fact that several interviewees had identified that community safety funding was being used to finance core business of some RAs. They felt this was inappropriate and wrong. Examples of this included, funding for police involved in gang related work which some viewed as core business for the police.

“An example of this is HAMROW which is an information forum on gang members where the SSP funds police officers. This is core police business 95% and should not be funded by the partnership”, (Interviewee A4, 18/01/2011, Southwark).

A reduction in funding also meant that it would avoid the need to have difficult conversations with partners on this subject that could potentially damage relations. These would involve a certain degree of individual challenges between agencies

which could impact on relationships. It was felt that the reduction in funding could be used to justify stopping initiatives without the scrutiny and discussion with certain partners.

The popularity of the CSPs in Southwark was highlighted by a senior police officer. He noted that:

“They must be effective. There is an element of them working. There would be a Hue and Cry if we got rid of them”, (Interviewee A5, 27/01/2011, Southwark).

This demonstrated that although not all of the partnership was effective its popularity was still very high and this was in part linked to personalities. Practitioners indeed made a common justification for the continued existence of the CSP. This was based on the understanding that the community safety agenda could not be delivered by individual organisations. This due to the complex nature of community safety along with the range of activity involved and the need for a collective strategy.

In reviewing the documents produced by the SSP, particularly the most recent Rolling Plan 2011/12, one of the key targets was improving the effectiveness of drug treatment services through increasing the number of problematic drug users leaving treatment in a planned way, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a). Here the partnership document demonstrated ‘effectiveness’ through clients leaving drug treatment services in an organised way. This indeed highlighted a very ‘outcome’ focused definition of measuring effectiveness.

Benchmarking

At the time of the fieldwork there was no benchmarking framework available for ranking CSPs other than that used by government by way of performance groupings through crime rates, per thousand population. The Home Office referred to these

groupings as Most Similar Families, (MSF). IQuanta, (Internet Quantitative Analysis Tool) is how central government communicate crime rates to partnership agencies. There is also a section on the website that details best practice projects, (Home Office Mini-Site, 2011d). This MSF approach worked purely on crime rates with comparable areas. Evidence suggested that a more informal mechanism of endorsement also existed. Here the Home Office used selected CSPs as best practice sites for specific community safety activity. The strategic assessment of the SSP detailed above indicated a definition of 'effectiveness' that related to external recognition of work by stakeholders and which was entirely reputational and also entirely subjective. Further analysis of these awards, show that they were either dated and or related to specific activity, i.e. Preventing Violent Extremism and gun, gang and weapon crime. They were not holistic and can not be perceived as particularly robust as evidence of effectiveness.

The researcher's practitioner experience resonated with these observations. In particular, it showed the reputation of the SSP and CSPs can be built or linked to personalities and personal relationships between central government and CSP practitioners rather than the implementation of community safety programmes.

According to the police the effectiveness of the SSP was closely linked to tasking and tactical meetings via the Partnership Operations Group (POG). This now called the PTG (Partnership Tasking Group) and the TTCG (Police led fortnightly tasking group). This refers to the activity and processes linked to operational deployment activity. The PTG is positioned beneath the CSP at an operational level with meetings alternating between a full problem-solving working group, and a smaller catch-up meeting with only exceptional reporting. This equates to one full meeting a month and one exceptional meeting, co chaired by a senior operational police officer and the Head of Community Safety. This operational deployment via a multi-agency group was identified as extremely beneficial by many of the responsible and non authorities interviewed. The purpose of the PTG as identified within the partnership documents was:

“The PTG has been established to provide effective and coordinated tasking of partnership resources with a problem solving focus. This is based on intelligence and analysis of crime, with a particular focus on targeted issues highlighted in the priority crimes matrix”, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a, p. 9).

According to the terms and reference the PTG intended to:

“aide the current TTCG process by focusing on medium to long term problem solving issues”, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011b, NP).

Fortnightly meetings involved representatives from both responsible and non responsible authorities. According to practitioners it provided many specific benefits. These included, pooling operational resources to tackling multi-faceted issues, sharper information sharing enabling a more accurate problem solving process to take place and establishing short term operational priorities. These benefits however were balanced by a view described by some practitioners that the PTG was too focused on short term objectives. When previously reviewed and renamed it was initially designed to be engaged in more medium to long term planning for pro-activeness rather than being entirely reactive.

Through reviewing a selection of PTG meeting minutes and attendee records over the course of 6 months the exercise confirmed that duplication could be reduced through partnership agencies jointly deploying resources on a regular basis. This however, would be dependent on all agencies and practitioners agreeing to use this type of tasking process to deploy resources. What was evident through the review was that a majority of attendees were local authority officers. Average attendees over the course of the meetings showed roughly 50% local authority officers from an average attendee number of 20 officers. Reviewing minutes of the meetings over the 6 month period confirmed that specific benefits highlighted did arise. This specifically related to the meeting being used to share sensitive information about

specific individuals and crime analysis and agreeing a course of action. To provide a rough cost of those attending the meetings an hourly rate of £25⁴ was used to calculate the estimated costs of those attending the meetings each month. This equated to roughly £1.5k per month⁵. This cost could be reduced by reviewing the local authority membership of the group and therefore increasing efficiency. This was very disproportionate when compared to other RAs attending the PTG despite the recognition that the local authority was a large organisation. On a final note, the reviewed minutes and associated paperwork of the PTG made it clear that the group focused more on short term problem solving issues than medium to long term problems. Coupled with this, the local authority administered and produced the paperwork for all meetings.

At a senior police level the difficulty in reviewing effectiveness was to be highlighted:

"This is the softer side of our work; it is about how it feels – progress that is", (Interviewee A5, 27/01/2011, Southwark).

This definition of 'effectiveness' is linked to the CSP developing collectively and working well in the face of challenges of differing organisational cultures and practices. These are evident across the different agencies involved. In addition to this, reference was made to informal relationships and how they impacted on the work of the partnership. This is explored in more detail below. It is a key theme identified throughout the research.

An example of professional differences across key agencies, i.e. between the Police, Probation and the CPS was also identified. It became evident even though in Southwark the partnership was trying to facilitate a better working arrangement

⁴ This calculated using an average annual salary cost of £48,500

⁵ This excluded work undertaken between meetings which were set.

amongst those involved. This was clearly illustrated by the fact that the Borough Commander chaired a ‘reducing reoffending’ sub group which arguably could be seen as core business for probation. Another reason explaining why the SSP was effective and was seen as a strong partnership by the lead Community Safety Analyst was because senior officers chaired sub groups. In this case the Borough Commander provided an example and considered his role as the chair of the CSP to be very positive. He also chaired other sub groups. When reviewing the membership and chairing arrangements of the other sub groups it was found that they were also chaired by Senior Officers, e.g. for the ASB strategy group, the Borough Commander of the LFRS. This along with the seniority of those engaged within partnership business was used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Board. Though the Borough Commander’s highly valued reputation was recognised the issue of a high turn over of police officers at the Superintendent and Chief Inspector rank was to be raised. Some practitioners felt this had an impact on the work of the partnership. This point was identified by one representative who said:-

*“We have a strong partnership although it will depend on personalities”. We have a new partnership inspector and we worked extremely well with the old one”,
(Interviewee A1, 27/01/2011, Southwark).*

Internal workings of the SSP

Personalities

As identified earlier the reduction in recorded crime or the fear of crime was not the only measure considered when practitioners sought to define the effectiveness of the partnership. For some it also included the internal workings of the CSP and how business was conducted, what business was done and what value this provided to the overall objective/s of the SSP, governance structures, meetings, work programmes, decisions and key achievements. This was probably the earliest stage where the impact of individual personalities on partnership working and perceived effectiveness was identified. It provided a strong theme throughout the research.

Reference to relationships amongst individuals within partnerships was a prominent theme throughout the interview process. As one senior police officer highlighted:

“Ego’s do exist but are pretty low in terms of the impact they have..... Trust is really important...Leadership, in terms of influencing and negotiating is very important. You cannot be possessive with resources or agenda’s”, (Interviewee A9, 14/01/2011, Southwark).

In addition to this, comments were made alongside the positive relationships that existed amongst partnership agencies. These could be seen as a bi-product of this and one respondent noted:

“There doesn’t seem to be the level of challenge that is required/critique by the SSP partners. We are used to people nodding, not challenging enough”, (Interviewee A11, 9/02/2011, Southwark).

The impact of personalities is explored in the discussion section later as it becomes a central theme throughout the transcripts.

The LPT felt that there was a distance between the Safer Southwark Partnership and the Chief Executive of the Local Authority. This officer was too far removed from the partnership and held power as demonstrated in the comment below. The probation representative had as their main contact the Head of Community Safety who was highly regarded. However, they felt the lack of visible support for the SSP from the Chief Executive weakened it and made it less effective. Their view is illustrated in the following comment:

“From a probation point of view the CSP operates within a vacuum with the local authority and the police. No leadership from the top at the borough level. We could do better in terms of achieving things, e.g. being more plugged into the top management team of the local authority”, (Interviewee A4, 18/01/2011, Southwark).

An area of progress, albeit limited was linked to cultural and organisational differences amongst responsible authorities and was provided through the 'reducing reoffending agenda'. An MPS Senior Officer who became more involved from April 2010 in this agenda stated that:

"This has led me to work more closely with the Probation Trust who deal with offenders in the main after we have processed them, 'so cause and effect'. For both parties it's been effective to see how decisions affect each other", (Interviewee A4, 18/01/2011, Southwark).

There was a recognition on the part of some practitioners that the SSP produced many reports and action plans and also facilitated a high number of meetings. [Positioned within appendix 2 is a structure diagram of the SSP and all the related sub groups]. This excluded any meeting activity taking place outside of formal meeting schedules.

On closer examination of the key strategy documents produced for the SSP, (which totalled over 20) it was evident that a number of these documents had to be ratified internally by the council's internal constitutional processes. Examples of this included the Strategic Assessment & the Rolling Plan 2011/12. This arguably justified their production from a local authority perspective but this could not be justified on a partnership basis. From a partnership position however practitioners interpreted this as a weakness. This was due to the time taken to produce them and the number actually presented as a means of written communication. Identifying the authors of these reports, strategies and action plans it became clear that local authority officers produced all of these reports. In relation to this, one practitioner made the following comment:

“Operational officers of the local authority community safety section writing reports that don’t always get read, danger that our reports are used to self justify. Rather than this the board’s ongoing business should be task and finish groups”, (Interviewee A2, 26/01/2011, Southwark).

Further to this a negative comment was made as to the bureaucratic nature of the local authority and how this impacted upon communication with communities. Contact and engagement with the local community was referenced by several practitioners in the sense that more was required and was an area of weakness. Specific links between engaging with the community and the council’s communication approach which runs annual pre-planned thematic campaigns was identified by one local authority practitioner:

“ There is a gap between communities and what we do. I do think though that we are caught up with a lot of red tape especially with the councils communication approach”, (Interviewee A11, 09/02/2011, Southwark).

This suggested it was not conducive to the community safety agenda, with its fast pace of activity much of which could not be pre-determined. Here practitioners either chose to avoid communication or requested that another RA took the lead. A number of practitioners felt that this had an impact on how the CSP interacted with the community. It was also noted that a difficulty with communication was due to the councils pre planned annual communication strategy. Engaging with community existed prior to this specific council’s media approach. Therefore, this could not and should not be seen as the sole reason for the lack of interaction with the community. Community engagement along with the related challenges is explored in more detail later in the chapter.

Following a review the structure and governance of the SSP was streamlined in 2010 with less sub groups and a change in chairing arrangements and membership. Despite this practitioners still felt that SSP business was ‘meeting intensive’,

particularly as according to most practitioners, the purpose was to add value to core work. In addition to this, practitioners still felt duplication was too common. As summarised by one practitioner:

“Too many boards, meetings which leads to duplication of membership. Business is too meeting focused .Very senior people attending these meetings and they still have a day job to do”, (Interviewee A2, 26/01/2011, Southwark).

As part of the documentary analysis the nature frequency of partnership related meetings were reviewed, see Table 3 below.

Table 3: Estimated officer costs for attending CSP related meetings⁶

Meeting Name	Frequency of meeting per year	Average number of attendees	Estimated cost	Unit Cost (meeting)
Safer Southwark Board Meeting	4	16	£3,200	£800
Reducing Harm Board including serious ASB	4	12	£2,400	£600
ASB Strategy	6	8	£2,400	£400

⁶ A description and purpose of the meetings are listed in appendix 2 after the governance structure of the SSP.

Meeting Name	Frequency of meeting per year	Average number of attendees	Estimated cost	Unit Cost (meeting)
MARAC	12	7	£4,200	£350
Domestic Abuse Commissioning Group	4	12	£2,400	£600
Dog Action Group ⁷	4	14	£2,800	£700
Reducing Reoffending Board	12	8	£4,800	£400
RADAR Project Board	12	10	£6,000	£500
Building sustainable communities/public confidence	4	12	£2,400	£600

⁷ The Dog Action Group is not featured in the structure and governance diagram in appendix 2 and reports to the ASB strategy group.

Meeting Name	Frequency of meeting per year	Average number of attendees	Estimated cost	Unit Cost (meeting)
DAAT Board	4	14	£2,800	£700
Joint Commissioning Group	4	12	£2,400	£600
Alcohol Steering Group	4	12	£2,400	£600
Officer Performance Management Group	4	8	£1,600	£400
PTG	24	20	£18,000	£750
Total	-	-	£57,800	-

Source: Review of meeting minutes across CSP work programme

(Average length of meeting was approximately 2 hours, with the exception of the catch up PTG meetings and assumes all went ahead as scheduled).

Over the course of 12 months working purely on the time spent by practitioners attending formal meetings listed practitioners spent over 200 hours in formal

meetings, with an average of 12 officers in attendance, estimated to cost an average of £25 per hour⁸, this equated to a total spend of £57,800. This was less than the figure referenced within the Local Government Association's guidance in assessing CSPs, (LGG, 2010, p.7) but it was still a significant cost. An important point to note was that the local authority administered all of these meetings. Further to this, and worthy of consideration was that meetings such as the SSP board meeting was used more as an updating mechanism than an arena for decision making indicating it was a costly exercise. It was clear from the transcripts that a more robust approach to work programmes had started through the development of a commissioning framework. This in part had been stimulated by the economic climate and initially as a result of a Domestic Violence Review requested by the SSP. The latter provided a commissioning framework across partnership agencies. This could be adapted to ensure funding was directed to key priorities and to add value to and not replace core business. This was best summarised in the following statement:

“CSP forced to reduce what they do so the question should be why are we commissioning and how does it add value to core business. In the past we have developed ideas with no real process apart from the crime statistics”, (Interviewee A4, 18/01/2011, Southwark).

Decommissioning of services due to reduction in funding also provided an opportunity to assess the value of services being delivered even though this was driven by a climate of spending cuts. There was also wide recognition for the need to be more focused in assessing the impact of individual community safety initiatives. The lack of evaluation undertaken to date was a common theme mentioned by most practitioners. This was especially the case at the smaller project level and/or crime area. There was also an awareness within the professional group that central government was very focused on crime performance indicators with the PSA, (Public Service Agreement). The evaluation of projects and programme funding had

⁸ This calculated using an average annual salary cost of £48,500

much less of a focus. This left practitioners and the CSP primarily responsible for evaluation.

Government influence

Frequent reference was made to the influence of central Government and the impact this had on CSPs. This related primarily to short term funding, which was provided for specific problems within set timescales. This did not include however funding for any evaluation of the work undertaken. This was referred to by one practitioner as CSPs 'chasing the money'. This led, at times, to a lack of scrutiny at local level as to why such activities were being undertaken. This was demonstrated by one practitioner who argued that:-

“Sometimes we work on gut instinct before looking at money and resources. This was influenced by certain government departments, eg. Home Office which throws us money to spend on issues that they think are a concern to spend quickly. No money for evaluation provided in these funds” (Interviewee A1, 27/01/2011, Southwark).

Because of its inability to evaluate initiatives imposed by central government, the absence of evaluation was a factor that certainly questioned CSP effectiveness. Practitioners felt that the purpose of these programmes managed by central government was to produce a quick impact on specific crime categories.

Information sharing across the SSP

Several practitioners felt that the strategic assessment process was very comprehensive for the SSP and a particular strength of the partnership. However, it was also noted that sometimes problem solving activity/priority setting undertaken by the partnership was too data rich which led at times to over complication. A specific example reflecting this arose with probation. They experienced meetings

where data analysis tended to become the primary focus and where far less business was conducted. As was agreed by one respondent:-

“I attended a planning meeting recently to agree priorities for the forthcoming strategic assessment. We started looking at statistics and current cohort group’s work. Sometimes we get too involved in too much detail”, (Interviewee A4, 18/01/2011, Southwark).

Other local authority practitioners identified the challenge of being over reliant on data which on occasions impacted on decision making. There was a need to keep data simple and more manageable. In addition to data overload it was noted by a lead analyst that the partnership had a short term focus as opposed to looking at long term objectives and types of measurement required in assessing the long term impact of community safety initiatives. This had started to happen through more targeted cohort studies, such as those involved in more serious violent crime. Several practitioners made reference to this cohort research and it was also evident through documentary analysis of the Violent Crime Strategy produced by the SSP, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2010, p. 56).

The SSP had a signed comprehensive information sharing protocol (Safer Southwark Partnership 2010a) which set out in some detail the principles and procedures for information exchange. Despite this there were still reported problems with accessing information from the police via the Borough Intelligence Unit and the lead local authority analyst. The arrangement in Southwark involved a dedicated analytical team based at the police station Head Quarters within the Borough Intelligence Unit, (BIU) This comprised of a lead analyst, and two other analysts all employed by the local authority. Through reviewing meeting minutes it became clear that the MPS crime analyst team based within the BIU were not involved in partnership meetings. An example of this was their attendance at the TTCG meeting which was a tactical tasking for police but not at the PTG which directly followed and as already outlined was a partnership tasking process. Access to data did not appear to present problems

for the local authority analyst team due to their co-location with the BIU and close relationships with it. This has already been highlighted as a key strength of the PTG model discussed above. There was however the issue of data sharing in other areas of the partnership arrangements, namely those away from meetings involving operational staff.

It was evident that personalities and co-location of staff at the police station improved relationships and contributed to both the access and flow of information. Data sharing when considered at different levels of partnership activity (strategic and operational) were reported at times as patchy, specifically at a day to day level that involved more junior staff.

Despite the strong sense of partnership exhibited across the responsible authorities, what became apparent for reporting was reliance on trust and the pro-activeness of police to share data. This was linked to personalities and not all practitioners shared a similar view on the extent and scope of information to be shared.

There was still reluctance on the part of the police to readily share more personalised data with the local authority frontline operational staff because of the need to maintain confidentiality. This is a matter that the author in a practitioner capacity has experienced with some Safer Neighbourhood Teams, (SNTs). These have been reluctant to share information with other frontline officers due to a concern that intelligence would not be handled or dealt with competently.

After the completion of the fieldwork it became evident that as part of the MPS efficiency programme the organisation was looking at centralising the BIU function away from BCU areas. This could present potential challenges for the SSP and the current strength they have in relation to data sharing

General views on CSPs

Practitioner's views were sought more generally on whether CSPs were an effective mechanism to tackle crime and disorder and how they quantified this. A majority of practitioners interviewed had worked within the field of community safety and partnership working for a number of years. The SSP was not their first experience of partnership working and CSPs which is common in the field. All practitioners in Southwark felt that CSPs were an effective mechanism although they also stated that they could be a lot more effective. Evidence to support the need for improvement varied. As already highlighted partnership working is not a new concept and CSPs were introduced on a statutory footing as part of the CADA 1998. In light of this, and their longevity, it was not surprising that they were viewed as positive. Both the previous Labour government and current coalition government decided to retain them. The governments' policing reform and the development of the PCCs and their impact on the future of CSPs is discussed later.

Responsible authorities and Non-responsible authorities

Due to ease of access in Southwark, an additional interview was conducted with a non-responsible authority that had membership of the SSP. The agency was the UK Border Agency. They were included in order to review their standpoint on the effectiveness and impact of the SSP from a different non statutory perspective.

UK Border Agency, (UKBA)

The SSP's representative from the UK Border Agency interviewed was a senior representative from one of the Local Immigration Team's, (LIT's) covering the borough of Southwark. These teams work with a range of agencies and local partners with the aim of ensuring compliance of immigration through enforcement (UK Border Agency). It was evident that their involvement in the CSP and associated sub groups was relatively new. Their involvement included attending the

CSP and colleagues attending relevant sub groups along with the Partnership Tasking Group. Part funding with the local authority had also enabled a UK Border Agency Officer to be seconded to the local Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

The interviewee was clear about the overall objective of the SSP, providing a wider definition that incorporated reducing risk with more vulnerable members of the community:

“It is crime reduction, hopefully it should do what it says on the tin, improving the environment, covering the residential aspect, reducing risk in the most vulnerable people, building relationships and improving the confidence of the public”, (Interviewee A8, 12/04/2011, Southwark).

Due to the period of their engagement they were unable to confirm that this objective had been achieved or that it was due to effective partnership working. Specific comment was made to the fact that good relationships existed and the SSP appeared to be working well.

Specific benefits highlighted by the UK Border Agency representative were similar to those outlined by the six RAs. Those were seen as including building relationships, shared problem solving of issues and resources outlined as key benefits identified. Other practitioners saw these benefits of operationally sharing resources and information had led to priorities and outcomes. This was seen as being achieved through the agency’s involvement within the SSP along with other indirect benefits. These included being informed of tactical police and enforcement activity being planned that usually had an immigration element due to the geographical location. The UK Border Agency despite not being a Responsible Authority were thought of by other RAs as key players especially in relation to work undertaken with the Police on illegal immigration. One senior police officer made acknowledgement that:-

“A good player is the UKBA even though they are not a Responsible Authority. There are real benefits here and we have done some great work recently to tackle illegal immigrants due to them being on board”, (Interviewee A5, 27/01/2011, Southwark).

There was also an acknowledgement that the agency was in fact benefiting more from their involvement in CSP business when assessing their investment in terms time and finance afforded to the SSP. At the time of the fieldwork it included part funding an enforcement post attached to one of the local authority teams and for the UKBA attending both the SSP board and other related sub groups.

When directly asked about the added value that the SSP provided the UK Border Agency, this was linked to the networking opportunities with key agencies. Specific reference was made to the LPT linked to offender management and local team meetings. The benefits included were linked to identifying opportunities, sharing resources leading to greater effectiveness and efficiency. However it was recognised that the future presented big challenges for all partnership agencies. At the time of the fieldwork, it was emphasised that since 2009 the London boroughs of Southwark and Croydon were the only boroughs with LITs. This reflected concerns about reduced finance and the impact of this on future joint working.

The success of the CSP was defined in terms of accurate intelligence, effectively bringing together the strategic assessment and spending resources. It was also linked directly with how people felt within their areas, crime reduction and wider public protection. Despite the limited time of their engagement with the SSP the interviewee felt that the SSP was a success as it was really focused and had a positive strategy. A more direct description of success identified in relation to the UK border agency was to be noted by one interviewee who stated that:

“Removing illegal immigrants involved in offending that pose the most harm to our communities”, (Interviewee A5, 27/01/2011, Southwark).

To conclude, it was argued that the fact that the UK Border Agency was committed to the SSP in the absence of any statutory requirement illustrated its value. It was felt that it helped and supported a range of responsibilities, e.g. safeguarding through to working with peers and providing a different perspective.

Assessing recorded crime performance within Southwark

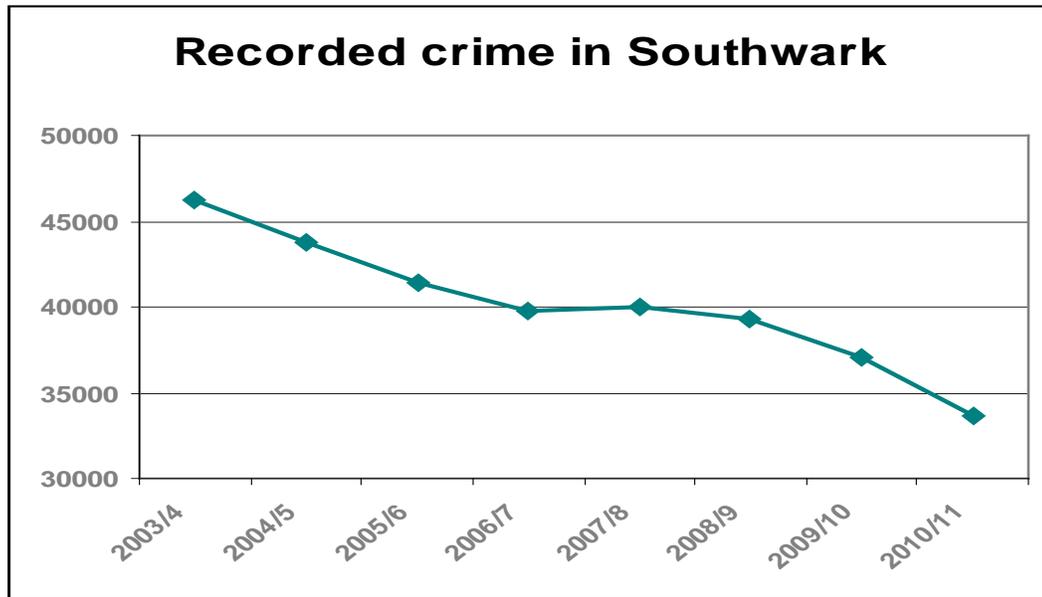
As highlighted within the previous chapter there are a number of drawbacks using recorded crime figures as a reliable source of data. However, considering these and the focus placed on recorded crime rates by both central government and by the partnership the next section discusses in more detail the CSPs performance in Southwark. Several headline recorded crime figures were provided presenting a mixed picture of performance for the SSP if recorded crime was the only focus for measuring effectiveness of the partnership.

At the time of the fieldwork the SSP was measured through the national Public Service Agreement, (PSA) 23 which was ‘Make Communities Safer’. PSA set out the governments expectations and achievements for the spending period of the time which was, (2008- 11). PSA 23 as would be expected is linked to various other PSAs and a number of associated performance indicators which at the time linked directly to LAAs. The SSP inline with the national trend had experienced an overall reduction in recorded crime.

Recorded Crime Performance in 2010/11

Recorded crime in Southwark had decreased for the last six years as is demonstrated within Table 4 below. This reduction trend continued into 2010/11 with a reduction in crime by 2% compared to 2009/10.

Table 4: Recorded Crime in Southwark



Source: Data taken from the SSP Rolling Plan 2011/12, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a, p. 5).

Specific recorded crime categories fell over the same period. These included, most serious violence (MSV) which included a reduction of 34%, (250 offences), gun crime, 6.6% which equated to 15 fewer offences, a reduction in domestic violence by 5%, (135 fewer offences), (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a, p. 5). Further to this, public confidence in the both the police and local authority increased by 6% in 2010/11 compared to the previous year, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a, p. 5). What was evident when reviewing the documentation across the SSP was the historical issues in dealing with problematic drug users in effective treatment leaving in a planned way, (one of the lowest performing CSPs). However, what was also clear within the strategic assessment was that this number had started to increase in 2010/11 from 21% to 35%. Despite successes in some areas, some crime types had increased, Personal robbery for example rose by 19%, (250 offences), Youth Violence by 5%, (50 offences) and also serious acquisitive crime by 10%, (almost 550 offences), (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a, p. 5).

The figures above present a mixed picture of performance and according to the CSP documentation provide a clear focus for improvement moving forward over the following 12 months. It is interesting to note that the increases in specific recorded crime categories are not unique to Southwark but London wide. Moreover, although it has been emphasised the health warning attached to recorded crime data it is still alarmingly the measure that central government uses to assess CSP performance against as increasingly does the public.

Further observations on the SSP

On completion of the fieldwork of the SSP and the analysis in late 2011, several practitioners in Southwark were re-contacted in a more informal manner. What became evident from later discussion was the distinctive change at local level to the police operationally following the appointment of the new Police Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police Service. It was clear that the new MPS Commissioner would impact on partnership working. One of the Commissioner's comments relating to partnership working at an early stage of his appointment questioned partnership work. The Commissioner stated that:-

"I think that in the past the police service has got trapped into some partnership working which is not always about fighting crime", (Grossmith, L, 2012, p. 1).

This arguable provided an early indication of the chief of police's initial viewpoint of partnership working. Other comments included:-

"I am trying to get the police to concentrate on our strengths. We are good problem solvers. We go in, sort a problem out quickly and move on", (Grossmith, L, 2012, p. 1).

This represented a reactive stance which clearly undermines any medium to long term focus on tackling crime. This can be viewed as being at odds with the origin and nature of partnership working especially in relation to its mature format.

In addition to this, a new borough commander for Southwark was imminent for 2012. This put in the forefront the CSP reliance on individuals and personalities especially at senior staff level.

The Newham partnership - Perceived effectiveness and impact

As with the Southwark CSP, practitioners were asked about the key objective, effectiveness and impact of their partnership. As with the SSP, practitioners within the Newham Partnership provided varying interpretations of the key objective of their CSP. This denoted that the Rolling Plan was more symbolic. The key focus was however tackling crime and disorder and making Newham Safer. Important to note was the recognition that several practitioners felt that the focus was on 'Safer' rather than 'Safe' reflecting the fact that the objective was not definite and the outcome needed to be realistic for those it affected. This was noted by the Newham Borough Commander of the LFRS who stated that:-

“the objective is – reducing crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour and to what extent people feel it is an acceptable level, crime will never go away, so its about how the partnership can help” ,(Interviewee B5, 25/08/2011, Newham).

And

"Essentially it is making Newham a safer place. It is about the community's priorities - ASB/Nuisance. Newham is a 2012 borough so this is also a focus. We have a huge responsibility from a worldwide basis", (Interviewee B4, 25/10/2011, Newham).

This degree of reality about the objective of the Newham CSP and the actual impact the partnership could have, may have been a characteristic of those partnerships operating in more complex and challenging areas with high crime rates. This difference would not necessarily be apparent through the research as both sites were challenging areas dealing with multiple complex issues. It would however be fair to say that no CSP or any responsible authority could realistically aim to eradicate crime due to its complex nature. In outlining the key objectives of the partnership some practitioners focused on the process of achieving the objective one argued that:-

“ If there wasn't a CDRP, there wouldn't be the links. The CDRP provides a legitimate reason for all organisations to look at a problem/issue collectively. This wouldn't happen if it didn't exist”, (Interviewee B2, 26/08/2011 Newham).

Achieving the objective

There were a range of practitioners' views on whether the objective was achieved and whether this was due to effective partnership working. This ranged from not being able to respond either way to 'yes' and 'it is achieved to an extent'. 'Primarily due to partnership working but cannot say to what degree' along with the recognition that sizeable achievements had been made. One senior practitioner stated the CSP achieved its objective through a specific measurement:

“I do think it is achieved although it depends on the definition of achievement. It is achieved by partnership working if it is about pro-activeness and continuous review”, (Interviewee B6, 25/08/2011, Newham).

They emphasised the lead role that the local authority played in this activity through pro-active contact with RAs. As both CSPs had local authorities heavily engaged in coordinating and reviewing CSP business this point is discussed in more detail later. The SSP through an analysis of minutes of meetings for the SSP, along with the

review of their reports, strategy and action plans showed a significant engagement by the local authority CSU team. Because of limited access to documents at the Newham site it was only possible to review minutes of meetings of the CDRP, primarily the board and not the executive group. However, from the analysis that was undertaken it became apparent that the local authority took a lead role. The unique role or perhaps pro-active approach is also demonstrated in the following statement made by one respondent:-

“Very strong partnerships exist in Newham, although not always best partnership links. Spin off outside CDRP. In terms of my team, they have an open conversation with all partners to try and create these links”, (Interviewee B2, 26/08/2011, Newham).

The degree of reliance and support afforded to the CDRP by the local authority may have implications for the future. If this support impacts on effectiveness of the CSP then future contraction of local authorities due to financial cuts would have a knock on effect on the work of the CDRP.

The key objective of the partnership as outlined by practitioners was wide ranging. This varied from the basics of tackling Crime and Disorder collectively across the key agencies involved through to a wider ‘liveability’ agenda. Due to the timing of the research Newham was planning London 2012 and most practitioners mentioned this in the context of its relationship with crime and disorder issues. Newham will be playing a key host role to London 2012 with the main Olympic Athletes village and site situated within Stratford. These issues and planning evidenced within the strategic assessment, ranged from recognition that the borough itself was responsible from a reputational standpoint for the Capital as the main host borough for 2012. The question of the Newham CDRP achieving its key objective and whether this was due to CSP effectiveness again as with the SSP was far from conclusive.

Measuring effectiveness

A statement linked to the CSPs objective, meetings and effectiveness made by a practitioner included:

“ Reducing crime and disorder through mainstreaming activity, in the past not all parts have been effective due to being a talking shop”, (Interviewee B2, 26/08/2011, Newham).

Another practitioner outlined that:-

“Effectiveness depends on the measure used .You have the hard facts (reduction of crime) however it's about how people feel, public perception. Young people hanging around seems to be a big issue”, (Interviewee B4, 25/10/2011, Newham).

Particular reference was made by one practitioner to the operational workings of the Newham CSP:-

“In the past we have had significant blockages at the operational level. The buy in at the strategic, senior level has been there but it then needs to be passed down, and translated to the operational level. Newham Council haven't in the past done this well”, (Interviewee B2, 26/08/2011, Newham).

What was apparent across both CSPs was the recognition that elements of partnership working was effective and that various improvements were still required. However, as was the case with the Safer Southwark Partnership, the Newham CDRP was referred to as ‘one of the better ones’. The initial acknowledgement of this was through the link officer of the MPA who supported seven other CSPs within London, and used other boroughs as a baseline. Reference was also made to attendance at Joint Engagement Groups facilitated by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of London. Similar to the SSP, practitioners had experience of working within a CSP

environment outside of London and commented that Newham in their experience was more functional. Following on from this and linked to the theme of personalities one practitioner was to state that:-

“It is the basic things around behaviour, respect re other organisation, enabling other partners to take part. I have been involved in CSPs in the past, chaired by the Mayor. The chair was a bully and this created an environment that excluded partnership working”, (Interviewee B6, 24/10/2011, Newham).

Internal workings, structures and governance

As with Southwark there was distinct recognition that the CDRP could be better and that it could in some aspects be more effective. This was demonstrated in the comment from one respondent that:-

“ In the past the CDRP could get side tracked”, (Interviewee B2, 26/08/2011, Newham).

The perceived lack of challenge was linked to CSPs having good relationships amongst RAs. This, some practitioners felt, while beneficial at times, led to a reluctance to challenge through fear of upsetting others. As one respondent noted:-

“ I think there are good relationships amongst responsible authorities although I think that at times there is not enough challenge”, (Interviewee B2, 26/08/2011, Newham).

This absence of challenge can be a result of professional relationships within a partnership environment when it becomes too close and comfortable.

One of the responsible authorities highlighted that the partnership could not be totally effective as it would not exist otherwise. This provided a very different

perspective to other respondents interviewed. They acknowledged that the CSPs key objective was not to provide a state of utopia. As one cited:-

“It does however achieve a lot. I support a number of CDRPs and Newham is one of the better ones”, (Interviewee B7, 4/10/2011, Newham).

When asked to elaborate on this statement they replied:

“There is a willingness from those around the table to be there. The Borough Commander is very committed, he doesn’t pay lip service”, (Interviewee B7, 4/10/2011, Newham).

Interestingly, the reference made here is linked to the individuals involved and again highlights personality and also that the CSP can be led by the individual.

Effectiveness and deployment of resources

The subject of effectiveness linked to operational deployment of resources was raised. This measure was linked to a number of successful community safety interventions such as tackling the illegal economy, alcohol related violence and other forms of ASB. This was referred to as ‘total partnership’ indicating that, as with the SSP, joint operational activity was evidence of an effective partnership as results were achieved. There was also evidence from both practitioner’s transcripts and the document analysis, particularly the review of partnership tasking minutes that this process was effective.

Following on from this reference was made by the local authority to its own organisation and the challenges of staffing and governance hierarchy, (vertical support). This was linked to communication, to translate what is agreed and supported at the senior strategic level down to the operational level. A contrast was identified between the local authority and the police. The latter was highlighted as an

organisation doing this particularly well due to its command structure. A different stance on effectiveness was provided by a senior health official who linked this directly to specific measurement. This official argued that:-

“Effectiveness is linked to the question of what sense is there of the community? Has this increased from last time we measured?... it’s about the perception of the community, what is key is what we the CDRP are doing? And what is it for? Do people feel safe? Do their kid’s go out? this is difficult to assess”, (Interviewee B6, 24/10/2011, Newham).

So effectiveness in this instance was defined as a combination of several aspects but central to it was the concept of community. Due to its prominence the theme of community involvement within partnership working and CSPs is explored in more detail later in the chapter.

Assessing recorded crime performance in Newham

Despite the shortcomings highlighted in the use of recorded crime statistics some initial top level crime figures for 2010 have been provided for Newham. These demonstrated that the area experienced higher levels of all key crime categories compared to the London Average, (Newham, 2010). The crime reduction target set for Newham for the period 2005 to 2008 was to reduce crime by 23.4%. During this time crime in Newham fell by 11% over the three years, (Newham CDRP, 2010, p. 5). This indicating a reduction but falling short of the target.

The Newham Partnership had made mixed progress across the key performance indicators, with a reduction in Serious Violence of 21.7% in 2010/11 compared to the previous year and a reduction in assault with injury by 8.6%. Similarly, for the same period there was a reduction of 1.4% in serious acquisitive crime. The Newham Partnership saw an increase in certain crime categories, such as serious knife crime, (an increase of 1.8%), an increase in gun crime of 20.3%, (28 offences)

compared to the previous year and finally, a 9% increase of serious youth violence, (Newham 2011a). These recorded crime figures show similarities to the SSP and clearly presented challenges in terms of effective interventions to the workings of the CSP.

The SSP & Newham Partnership -The extent of community engagement

Through reviewing the statutory requirements and documents, processes and governance structures it became clear that community engagement should be integral to CSP work. At the time of conducting the fieldwork the government's guidance on community engagement or what they termed the 'communities agenda' was reinforced by the hallmarks of best practice. These were set out by the Home Office and are the minimum standards for CSPs. One of the standards is 'Engaged Communities', (Home Office, 2007, p. 4).

'Community Engagement' or 'Communities' was highlighted for different reasons among all practitioners interviewed across both CSP sites. The key themes that emerged from the transcripts ranged from the lack of community impact through to a lack of outward facing identity of CSPs to their communities. This was made evident in the following statements made by respondents:-

"The SSP needs to communicate to communities more on the work which we do as this is lacking. There is gap between communities and what we do", (Interviewee A11, 09/02/2011, Southwark).

And

" Problem solving is the process including VOLTs and achieving Hallmarks. These are broadly similar, common sense principles although we as the CDRP have had minimal success on the communities' hallmark", (Interviewee, B2, 26/08/2011, Newham).

Clearly engagement with the community did exist through consultation and the strategic assessment process. However this could be described as a 'light touch'. Despite this practitioners did emphasize the importance of engaging with the community. One respondent commented that:-

“Defining success of a CSP...it is also about the community’s point of view and the impact of our work on them, especially the vulnerable and most at risk. It is not just about the reduction in crime but the delivery of services and what the community wants”, (Interviewee A11, 09/02/2011, Southwark).

At the local level what the Southwark Rolling Plan of 2008/12 identified as a priority was:-

“..working in partnership with communities to empower and enable delivery of local solutions for local problems”, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2010, p.4).

This was one of the clear objectives evident when reviewing the SSP documentation. However when comparing this with the transcript data it highlighted the fact that this was the intention of practitioners yet it was an area that required big improvement. This was reflected in comments such as:

“Asking the community what they want and their priorities are key and we still need to get better at this”, (Interviewee A1, 27/01/2011, Southwark).

One potential assessment of community engagement has been through measuring whether the community believes that the police and council seek their views about local crime and anti-social behaviour, (ASB). In Southwark this percentage had increased in 2010/11 by 5% from 53% to 58%, (Safer Southwark Partnership, (2011a, p. 5). It was however still not possible to determine what impacted on this relatively small increase.

Evaluating evaluation - Viewpoints from both CSPs

A reoccurring theme throughout the fieldwork undertaken across both sites was the lack of robust evaluation. This directly affected the extent to which practitioners' could determine the overall impact of their respective CSPs. Documentary evidence suggested that statistical performance indicators were routinely monitored inline with the governments Performance Indicators, (NIs). This process took place for both Southwark and Newham through individual Boards accountable for specific crime targets and at the overall governance level via the CSP Boards, (Safer Southwark Partnership, 2011a, Newham CDRP, 2010). It was through these processes that performance was monitored and progress tracked and how and to what degree success was itself determined. This was usually through the dedicated crime analysts who were also able to provide commentary on changing trends or reporting procedures that might impact on reported and recorded crime.

In the interviews, practitioners highlighted that the sheer volume of work undertaken had led to it not being focused on evaluation. As one respondent was to argue:-

“We have a number of successful programmes, we have won awards, like the LGC. We don't evaluate stuff. Empirical evidence, e.g. indicators, fear of crime, massive weaknesses for the SSP and all CSPs really”, (Interviewee A11, 09/02/2011, Southwark).

And

“The other thing is that the SSP is doing too much and doesn't have time to publicise and think about things. We need to be looking at the community impact our programmes are having”, (Interviewee A11, 09/02/2011, Southwark).

A further comment made by a respondent was that:-

“Yes CSPs are effective, although we need to get better at assessing impact and evaluation”, (Interviewee A1, 27/01/2011, Southwark).

In addition to this another respondent commented that:-

“Yes the SSP is effective if you solely focus on crime statistics. We need better evaluation although this is a big area of work. Not robust in terms of interventions which we undertake and how we measure them. We are still not universally agreed with what works and what doesn’t work, the partnership tends to fire fight”, (Interview A3, 18/01/2011, Southwark).

When interviewed, practitioners from Newham Partnership were less vocal about the lack of evaluation yet their comments were relevant. As one respondent noted:-

“we very much measure crime rates as opposed to more individual evaluation of projects which definitively needs to be a future focus especially with the current financial climate”, (Interview B2, 26/08/2011, Newham).

When reviewing documentation there was no further evidence suggesting that evaluation was an integral element of partnership work.

Central government evaluation

It was evident that some evaluation undertaken had been conducted by the Home Office at a national level. This featured local borough programmes, referred to as evidence based practice. This was updated and overseen by the Home Office and through government offices regionally.

A majority of practitioners interviewed emphasised that more evaluation of community safety initiatives was needed to provide a better understanding of ‘what actually works’. This was required not just at the macro level but at the local

community level. This would be similar to a Meta analysis approach but with a criterion of localism. Given the complexities and dynamics of communities and crime and disorder, interviewees were to advocate the need for all community safety delivery to be subject to an evaluative framework by which to assess outcomes. This would cover the impact on communities through to cost effectiveness.

Open access to documents from the SSP also afforded the opportunity to review funding streams for the community safety programme. For the Southwark Community Safety Partnership the total budget for 2010/2011 was £6.4 million. Funding streams ranged from Department of Health, Home Office funding through to core council funding with 90% made up by Central Government funding. (Southwark, 2011b). The same level of information/access was not unfortunately available at the Newham site. However what follows is a single site analysis designed to provide an insight into community safety funding which arguably does not significantly differ for similar London Boroughs.

During the course of the financial year 2011/2012 an estimated £6.8 million was spent on SSP initiatives. Just over 10% of the total amount was not ringfenced from the Council or grant from the Greater London Authority (Southwark Commissioning Plan 2011c, p.2). In addition to this, a further £106k existed for non time limited funding streams. This signifying a sizable amount of money spent on community safety initiatives. It was also clear within the documentation that the figures provided above did not include central government funding to tackle youth crime. This was allocated to children services.

Examining practitioners' wider perspectives on the utility of CSPs now and in the future.

Measuring the success of the CSPs

When asked whether the SSP had proved to be successful, there was a general perception that CSPs were very successful although this was based on a broad spectrum of definitions of 'success'. These ranged from structural relationships through to whether CSPs achieved the outcomes and priorities set for them. There were clear linkages to how practitioners defined being 'successful' and 'effective'. For some, success was in effect just a by-product of partnership. Success was also explained in terms of perceived benefits whether 'direct' or indirect'. Despite positive comments, there was also recognition that the SSP could prove more successful by becoming more strategic and getting less engaged in operational detail.

Success was also recognised through practitioner's perceived reputation of the SSP at both the national and regional level. As noted earlier this at times was more a perception than a reality. This in turn was linked to personalities involved in the SSP and their profile outside of the partnership particularly with central government. This perception of profile and success impacted to such a degree it questioned whether success could be ever achieved. There was also a sense that the partnership was mature enough to have open and honest discussions about key issues that affected the borough. There was, however, minimal evidence suggesting any internal challenge amongst key partners. This is something that had been recognised in more recent research, (HMIC, 2010, p. 40).

Newham Partnership CSP success was defined in several ways. It included reduction in crime rates, successful delivery of projects and forming relationships and bridges between partnership agencies. A local authority interviewee provided a more robust outline of this aspect and in particular commented:

“It is a reduction in crime and disorder/substance misuse/offending. Communicating success to different audiences”. (Interviewee B2, 26/08/2011, Newham).

All those interviewed confirmed that they thought the CSP was either ‘successful’ or ‘partially successful’. Changes in Newham had been implemented with structure and governance refreshed along with membership. Reference was made to the CSP being a ‘talking shop’ in the past, even where people around the table did want to make a difference. The cuts in funding had led to the partnership implementing a challenge panel and bidding process for those aiming to secure community safety funding for 2011/12. This was in effect an attempt to increase clarity and ensure those funded delivered what was required. It was accepted that in the past initiatives had been ‘fluffy’ and that practitioners who had submitted funding applications had struggled with new procedures.

When asked what made a CSP successful heavy reliance was placed by practitioners on identifying clear processes and asking what the partnership was achieving. Of interest here to note was that both of these were lacking across both sites. Measuring future success of the CSP focused on how the partnership could adapt to trends, the financial climate and focusing on where gaps exist. These gaps being community safety work not funded by mainstream activity through RAs.

CSPs adding value to responsible authorities

All responsible authorities were asked whether their CSP added value to their organisation. Most responded that their partnerships contributed positively to their organisations. The value was linked to the benefits which were provided through the CSP. These ranged from information sharing, reducing duplication and joined up service delivery. These benefits are explored in more detail later in the chapter. There was however, equal recognition that their host organisations were going through significant change and that future structures, resources and service delivery were uncertain. These in turn generated mixed views on what they felt their future

engagement might be. These ranged from less involvement in the CSPs through to more ‘partnership working’ being undertaken as a result of severe financial cuts. As one respondent noted:-

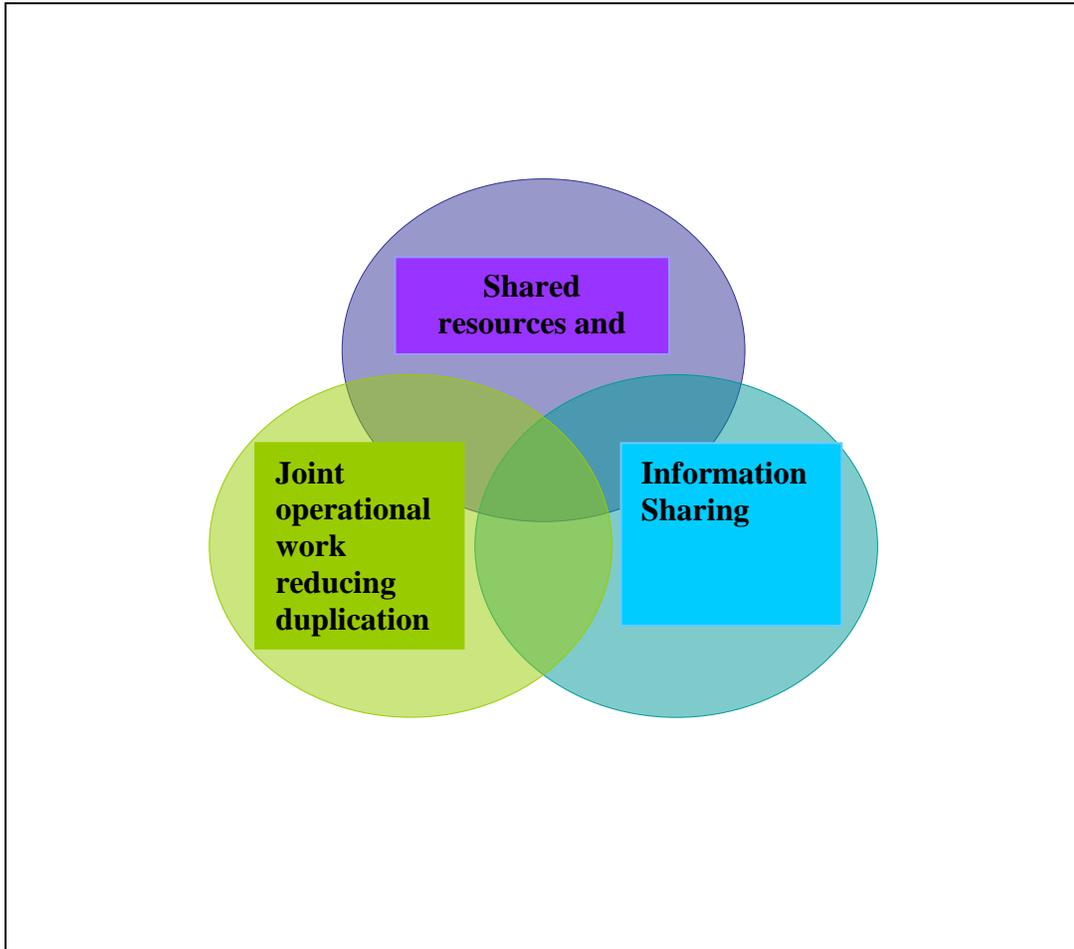
“I feel we (I) would struggle as a local authority without partnership working. My team are based at the police station and we have access to systems there”.
(Interviewee A11, 09/02/2011, Southwark).

Reviewing the perceived benefits of CSPs

One of the key theoretical underpinnings of partnership working highlighted was the benefits to partners involved. Due to the importance of reviewing the benefits of CSPs and previous research these can often be more of a perception than a reality and this issue was explored in detail through the data. Interviewees were afforded the opportunity to list what they thought to be the key benefits of their CSP. A number of benefits were listed by practitioners. It was not possible to compare every benefit listed by each CSP as not all responsible authorities were interviewed across both sites. However the top three perceived benefits identified by responsible authorities of both CSP are illustrated in figure 1.

The most commonly identified benefit proved to be shared resources and skills that was not exclusive to the CSP board and included all activity linked to the partnership. It also related to a wide definition of resources, e.g. finance, staff time and skills. Joint operational work reducing duplication proved to be the second common benefit. The descriptive nature of these has already been explored and to some degree this is linked to sharing resources amongst agencies. Information sharing was the third benefit and for both CSPs this was directly linked to the strategic assessment process. This drove activity and was linked to data which aided problem solving in specific crime based issues.

Figure 1: Top three perceived benefits of CSPs



The fourth most commonly perceived benefit of CSPs identified was ‘cost and time effectiveness’. This was of particular interest considering the linkages to specific questions asked on ‘effectiveness’ and measurement. The responses suggested that this was an area for improvement for both CSPs.

Responses were then compared with documentary material produced by the respective partnerships to determine whether there was evidence of these benefits actually being achieved. As documented earlier partnership working can be effective although the mere existence of a ‘partnership’ cannot automatically guarantee this. In establishing the numbers of meetings held, time spent through the analysis of minutes of meetings and involvement of practitioners the conclusion was that what

was in place was neither cost or time effective. This demonstrated that the benefits were not actually real across both CSP sites.

Further to the identification of benefits, practitioners were to be then asked whether the benefits identified outweighed the resources put in by their RA. A consideration here was that practitioners may not have listed all of the benefits. Thus the list is not necessarily comprehensive. It did however provide an indication of the most commonly perceived benefits of the six responsible authorities. Again most practitioners from both CSPs felt that the benefits outweighed the investment costs that each RA (and non RA) put into the partnership.

Due to the statutory nature of CSPs and the six individual responsible authorities involved their value and effectiveness is not subject to effective scrutiny. In relation to this, practitioners were asked if the statutory basis was removed what impact might have on CSP involvement. All RA members within the SSP felt that if the statutory footing was removed it would impact on their involvement. However, they would all still be engaged in partnership working which they felt would be more focused, with much reduced governance arrangements. Practitioner involvement would also be based more on their organisation's priorities. For the local authority these would include political priorities. This suggested that all Responsible Authorities find 'partnership working' valuable. This was evident through both the analysis of minutes and documents where actual benefits were identified.

Partnership activity does not necessarily need a CSP to exist or require the extensive governance structures that both partnerships currently operate. Reference was made for the need for a more informal mechanism to drive work, such as goodwill which was dependent on personalities. According to practitioners it was these personalities that made partnerships work. The LPT at one site in particular felt that there would be more power struggles within the partnership arena if the statutory footing of the six RAs was removed. This in turn would directly impact on the effectiveness of arrangements. This view could be due to the relatively new statutory requirement of

reducing reoffending introduced through the Policing & Crime Act 2009 and the change in legal status of the LPT from co-operating body to a RA from April 2010. This according to one LPT practitioner formalised the importance of the reducing reoffending agenda within the CSP arena.

Through reviewing interview transcripts and other documentary evidence it was evident that CSP business at both the strategic and operational level heavily engaged non responsible authorities. These ranged from housing associations that attended meetings and were involved in partnership working to academics in an advisory capacity. As is clear from the involvement of UKBA, the statutory footing was not necessarily required for their involvement in the SSP.

One identified issue was a lack of awareness that practitioners had of the minimal statutory obligations of a CSP. As noted earlier these are:-

- To have a statutory group to formulate and implement a community safety plan for each local authority area, (including representation of the six RAs)
 - Production of a Strategic Assessment, (including evaluation of previous years work and priority setting based on public consultation)
 - An agreed information sharing protocol with a Designated Liaison Officer (in each RA)
 - An annual 'Face the People' session
- (LGG, 2010, p. 4).

What was evident from reviewing SSP documentation was that partnership governance, groups and work programmes were extensive and went beyond any statutory requirement. This appeared to be historical. The groups had action plans detailing work along with regularly meetings to review progress. Diagram 1 and 2 in appendix 2 outlines the structure and governance. When practitioners were asked where improvements could be made, streamlining groups and less frequent meetings proved to be a common response. These changes did not require a change in

statutory compliance for the CSP as some practitioners appeared to think. When reviewing the Newham CSP there was a similar picture. There didn't appear to be any real degree of challenge in this area although some changes had started to take place with less groups and meetings. They had specifically moved to holding their CSP from quarterly to twice yearly.

Cross border working across London CSPs

It was evident from practitioner's interviews that minimal cross borough working appeared to exist. From the authors own experience there are different types of cross border working which range from joint working and delivery through to sharing best practice. Where it did exist this tended to be small scale and related to border issues or where a borough had a particular expertise within an area. As is evident in appendix 4 the practicalities and ease of working across boroughs does exist, probably more so due to the close proximity of areas. The MPA representative of one of the partnerships specifically stated that:

“In terms of sharing best practice, this doesn't appear to happen and there seems to be no rhyme or reason for it. An example of this was Brent which made a great DVD on stop and search. This not shared across other boroughs. Currently silo working and not cross boarder working”, (Interviewee B7, 4/10/2011, Newham).

From the researchers own practitioner experience this issue can be interpreted or defined in different ways. Pan London practitioner groups for community safety do exist and those are used as a forum in order to share best practice. There is also the matter of joint delivery of services across one or more CSPs. This is sometimes referred to as 'Shared Services'. Due to the reduction in resources this has forced some local authorities to explore this approach much further. This arrangement is not exclusive to the community safety agenda and local authorities have for several years been testing the joint procurement of services. More recently this has seen the joint appointment of Chief Executive Officers covering more than one London

borough. This concept in relation to community safety is considered in the concluding chapter.

Discussion

A number of key themes arose from the fieldwork across both CSP sites which will be discussed in this section in more detail whilst engaging with existing literature in the field. At the time of the fieldwork central government had begun to develop a more 'arms length' approach to CSPs, a significant change to the past arrangements. Despite this it was clear that to date they had had a strong influence on CSPs since their introduction and in many respects had been responsible for how CSPs had developed and to a large degree their current entity.

Measuring effectiveness & impact

The interview data revealed that independent of their statutory nature CSPs were very popular amongst practitioners as a mechanism to tackle crime and disorder at the local level. It was clear from a profile and reputational view both partnerships were strong and effective and highly rated by both internal and external stakeholders. It was also evident that practitioners' defined 'effectiveness' within the partnership environment in a number of different ways. There was no commonly agreed measure from either CSP. In addition to this, was the complexity that CSPs were trying to achieve an objective which was about change, i.e. people feeling safer, less recorded crime and improving the current situation. Equally, they were trying to measure activity that doesn't happen, referred to by some commentators as a 'non-event' or 'non-crime' and is complex when trying to demonstrate that any community safety initiative has had this effect (Crawford, 1998, p. 8). There was also an implied assumption that these objectives could be achieved most efficiently and effectively exclusively within a partnership environment. This was specifically the case for one CSP, (the SSP) where the local authority had produced guidance to aid effective partnership working (Southwark Council, 2010). It was evident however that the latter was not necessarily an underlying focus for practitioners although there were pockets of practice where this had started at the project and

programme level, (e.g. IOM initiative) along with acknowledgement from a majority of practitioners interviewed that this was an area for future improvement.

The absence of review of effectiveness and efficiency was not intentionally ignored by practitioners. Improvement required in this area was in fact regularly mentioned throughout the interviews. The existence of complex governance structures, a number of sub groups with the absence of any real evidence of impact demonstrates the lack of focus to date in these matters.

These findings are not new and support both earlier and more recent literature that questions the degree of impact and effectiveness of partnership working through CSPs to tackle crime and disorder, (Audit Commission, 2006, HAC, 2007, HMIC, 2010). The issue of effectiveness highlighted in the HMIC research detailed that they were unable to find any progress in assessing effectiveness of partnership working (HMIC, 2010, p. 7). Innes and Weston concluded that there was a strong case for conducting further research into the relative performance and cost effectiveness of partnership working (HMIC, 2010, p. 7). This weakness and the lack of addressing the issue considering the longevity of CSPs could be a consequence of the significant influence that central government has had on CSPs.

Crime reduction performance

The over-reliance on crime reduction performance as a measure of ‘effectiveness’ or ‘success’ despite explicit recognition of the weaknesses was evident across both partnerships. In part this was arguably due to sustained involvement of specific government departments and performance indicators, shaping these partnerships from the onset. Specifically the previous government’s performance management regime and comparable benchmarking through recorded crime rates. Foster, (2002) in her focus on researching through ethnography some of Britain’s poorest communities highlighted,

“Lack of creativity, the relative ease of situational crime prevention, the growth of managerialism and crude performance indicators have led agencies to focus on ‘quick’ and visible fixes often with little discussion or appreciation of their likely impact (witness the proliferation of CCTV)”, (Foster, 2002, p. 167).

Despite the shortcomings of focusing on crime reduction as a measure of effectiveness both were achieving positive outcomes even if these were minimal considering the resources channelled into both CSPs. These were demonstrated in the overall reduction in crime over the last 6 years for the SSP and also a reduction in some recorded crime categories. For Newham there had been a reduction of recorded crime of 11% between 2005 and 2008. Yet despite these successes the crime reduction figures can not in any clear way be solely attributed to the work of the CSPs. As one practitioner interviewed highlighted recorded crime rates are dictated by policing priorities. This questioning the degree of impact that partnership working has had on addressing crime and disorder through the use of crime data.

Benefits of partnership working

Similar to the assumptions made by practitioners’ on partnership working being the most effective and efficient approach to tackle crime and disorder locally there were also assumptions about the actual benefits achieved. The most popular benefits being shared resources and skills, followed by joint operational work reducing duplications and information sharing. It was clear through documentary analysis that these were not always realised thus were more perception than reality. Both CSPs relied too heavily on the perception that their partnership arrangements yielded many benefits without any real evidence existing. Earlier work into CSPs specifically highlighted the difficulties that can exist when assumptions are made ‘that many agencies are better than one’, (Liddle, 2001, p. 50) This referred to by other commentators as a ‘quest for unity’ in which inter-agency relations have an assumed consensus or are ends orientated, (Crawford and Jones, 1995, p. 31).

As already outlined within the literature review theoretically, the merits or benefits of partnership working are quite clear and have been well documented, (Rosenbaum, 2002) and this was evident through the interview transcripts. Practitioners had no difficulty listing many benefits. However, at the practical implementation level these sometimes did not translate into practice for either CSP. This supporting what had been identified earlier by the Audit Commission, when mandatory partnership working was set to expand (Audit Commission, 1998, p. 6). This paper was prepared at the time against a backdrop of the growing number of partnerships and the recognition that this activity is difficult to do well. The Audit Commission, (1998) at this very early stage outlined,

“...Partnership working can be justified only when their achievements outweigh the resources that they consume” (Audit Commission, 1998, p. 5).

With this in mind although the CSPs had through the use of recorded crime rates achieved some results, to what extent considering the resources was still questionable.

Information sharing was one of the top three benefits identified by practitioners. Earlier research undertaken by Phillips et al, (2002, p. 7) outlined that data and information sharing was a key problem amongst CSPs within their early development. The government has done much to try and improve information sharing specifically by reinforcing as a statutory obligation that each CSP should have an agreed information sharing protocol with a designated liaison officer in each RA, (LGG, 2010, p. 4). Interesting to note that although there were no significant issues raised by either CSPs there were still some difficulties at the less senior operational level around trust and sharing information and that personalities could in fact impact on the success of information sharing. The issue of decisions being made at a more senior level requiring renegotiation at a lower level had already been identified in previous literature, Crawford, 1988, p.177).

Joint operational work or deployment of resources was another popular benefit listed by practitioners and was directly linked to what some practitioner's defined effectiveness. It was clear through reviewing documentation across both partnerships that this benefit was realised although considering the evidence through the PTG meetings in Southwark, there was no requirement to have such a heavily attended tasking group which was extremely resource intensive specifically with local authority involvement. This activity in Newham also was identified as a key benefit of the CSP and was delivered although due to a lack of access to documentation it was impossible to determine what processes were in place to implement arrangements.

Personalities

The existence of CSPs as a vehicle to tackle crime and disorder at the local level were very popular amongst practitioners with most feeling that their statutory status or government influence did not affect their involvement. Further to this, it was evident that personalities heavily influenced how effective and useful CSPs could be. Not all practitioners within RAs were fully supportive of partnership working as an activity. This in itself can provide issues especially when personnel change which was and is still is a common occurrence for the police and was referenced as an issue by local authority interviewees. This denoting how fragile partnership effectiveness and impact can be and how this environment can quickly change irrespective of the work undertaken. Earlier commentary highlighted the consequences of the personal dimension to informal relationships within partnerships and their susceptibility to the negative impact of staff turnover, (Crawford, 1998, p. 176).

What was equally clear through the interviews was good relations and personalities amongst practitioners sometimes led to a lack of challenge and at times working relationship becoming too comfortable. This matter was identified earlier by the Audit Commission who highlighted the risk of being too focused on maintaining good relationships which could lead to losing sight of external objectives, (Audit Commission, 1998, p. 26). Crawford & Jones, (1995, p.31) refer to this as 'conflict

avoidance strategies' and outline that these leave any structural conflict or power relations unaddressed. More recently this was identified by the HMIC, (2010, p. 40) report into policing and ASB which found the sensitivities of sustaining different agencies working together seem to inhibit a sufficient level of challenge about performance. It was also found in the work of Skinns, (2005).

The research findings highlighted a new dimension to managing relationships linked to partnerships working. This was the impact that the financial climate was having and the fact that significant reductions in funding for community safety were being used to kick start difficult conversations with partnerships about what initiatives warranted continuation. This process led even further due to pending financial constraints and loss of government grants to some activity being stopped that some practitioners clearly felt had never warranted partnership funds. These being initially funded in the spirit of partnership working or to pilot projects and seem to benefit the more dominant agencies in the partnership such as the police.

It was apparent that both CSPs were strong and functional compared to other CSPs and among responsible authorities they were valued as a means and mechanism to locally tackle crime and disorder. As noted earlier effectiveness was also defined by practitioners in other more sophisticated ways. This included public perceptions of the partnership by both external and internal stakeholders and the dynamics within the partnerships. Again personalities within the two CSPs impacted on both of these which demonstrated with differing personnel this could easily change at anytime.

Earlier research found some tension regarding power differentials between statutory and non statutory partners, (Phillips et al, 2002, Skinns, 2005). This was not evident through the research although only one non statutory partner was interviewed which could have depressed the identification of any issues that may have existed.

Empirical research have already identified the dynamics of partnership relationships in crime prevention and community safety outlining the importance of inter-organisational conflicts and power relations across partnership agencies, (Blagg, Pearson, Sampson, & Smith, 1988, Pearson et al, 1988, Crawford & Jones, 1995,

Crawford, 1997). Conflict and power struggles were not particularly evident across either site. It is important to note however that these could have existed below the surface due to the environment largely being non confrontational. Equally, the dominance specifically in terms of involvement of the local authority in both CSPs and seeming acceptance of this position from other partners could have masked any power struggles. As Crawford, (1998, p.172) details power relations are to some degree context specific. As outlined there was a tendency for agencies to avoid conflict amongst partners. An example of this would be to avoid having difficult conversations around initiatives choosing the change in financial environment rather than delivery issues as a mechanism to redress. This conflict avoidance is an issue that was found to be a prominent feature within earlier empirical research into inter-agency relations, (Crawford & Jones, 1995).

Evaluation

A majority of practitioners interviewed emphasised that more evaluation of community safety initiatives was needed to provide a better understanding of ‘what actually works’. This was required not just at the macro level but at the local community level. This would be similar to a Meta analysis approach but with a criterion of localism.

Having established how practitioners’ defined effectiveness along with evidence generated through documentary analysis it was clear that the effectiveness of the CSP cannot be established uniformly. High volumes of work were channelled through the CSPs. According to a number of practitioners this has impacted on evaluating initiatives and the work programmes. The lack of evaluation was a clear identifiable weakness. Practitioners were fully aware of this as a shortcoming and were also aware of evidence based approaches to community safety researched by both central government and academia. Evidence base approaches were however minimal and patchy within their own CSP. As is illustrated in a LGG guidance document on efficient CSPs, a key consideration for operating in the future climate

of austerity will not just require consideration of evidence based approaches of 'what works' but 'what works best at the lowest cost', (LGG, 2010, p. 5).

Reviewing the documentation suggested that a considerable amount of work was being undertaken yet with minimal evaluation undertaken and this was mainly through monitoring of recorded crime rates. The inability to determine the effectiveness of the CSP and related work streams requires a refocus for the future work for CSPs. Clearly there is value in partnerships and pockets of effectiveness. However as detailed earlier considering the resources being consumed what was being delivered across both sites was questionable in terms of value for money.

Although government influence over CSPs is detailed below it is worth noting that criticism was levelled at the Home Office by practitioners about short term funding which did not include any provision for evaluation. Along with this was a question of how community safety was measured by the Home Office itself. This was ironically measured through the use of recorded crime data. This was evident from the authors own experience as practitioners where managing the street crime initiative. Here funding was received by CSPs to address locally the spike in street crime in 2002 in a number of areas of the country. Partnerships were initially monitored fortnightly by government to ensure reductions occurred as quickly as possible so that the latter could reassure both the public and media. By the end of the initiative in 2005, robbery had dropped by 32%, (32,527 fewer street crime offences) in the last year.

Roles & involvement of Responsible Authorities

The research across both sites demonstrated that high volumes of work were being undertaken. This to some extent was due to the community safety agenda being extremely diverse and wide ranging. Also evident and in part identified by interviewees was why robust evaluation was not undertaken. This issue had already been identified by (Phillips et al, 2002) and more recent research undertaken with practitioners, (LGA, 2009, OPM, 2009, 2010). Both demonstrated the challenge for

community safety practitioners was the effective management of high volume workloads.

Across both sites the local authority community safety team played a significant role in their CSP. The SSP had a large number of support staff delivering projects and programmes for the CSP, the majority of whom were employed directly by the local authority. Governance structures and bureaucratic delivery mechanisms were extensive, (specifically the number of meetings and reports) especially when considering the minimal statutory requirements of a CSP. In contrast the Newham Partnership appeared however to have more streamlined structures which included staff supporting some CSP business. That said it was still unclear at the time to what degree resources could continue, due to grant future funding reduction. The role of coordination is acknowledged by some commentators as a key feature of a good partnership, (Crawford, 1998, p.178) thus any change to this is likely to have an impact.

The bureaucratic nature of the local authority and how it operated especially in relation to the SSP appeared to impact on governance arrangements and also the increasing number of reports produced. This is an important issue considering the prominent role of the local authority in partnership working.

The work and scope of both CSPs was heavily reliant on the local authority which contributed to the effectiveness and its impact. Involvement in certain groups in the case of the SSP meant less effectiveness as the authority was over-represented, this denoted 'overkill' and 'efficiency issues'. This was specifically the case for the PTG meetings.

Practitioners interviewed across both sites also made reference to partnership working, as an activity outside the high level membership of the CSPs, which should hold a strategic level overview of priorities. For most practitioners much business was conducted through separate conversations and often planning was undertaken outside of the CSP. As a result partnership meetings were more formal where

updating on performance and activity was undertaken. This was also evident through reviewing minutes of the CSP meetings. Considering this, the heavy workload and the lack of evidence of the impact of these partnerships it would be fair to conclude that within the current climate clear consideration should be given to reviewing these arrangements.

The research found that the local authority and police were still the lead agencies in terms of attendance at meetings with the Probation Trust being more significantly involved. Arguably the latter maybe due to their more recent status as a RA or as the interview data seem to suggest was due to the closer working and piloting at the time of new Integrated Offender Management Programmes, (IOMs).

Government influence

Another clear and consistent theme arising from the research was the influence that central government had on CSPs, specifically the Home Office. With the CSPs acting as central government's local vehicle to implement community safety interventions. This arrangement until recently clearly had impacted on how the CSPs had developed and how they operated. Evidence of central government's intentions to influence CSPs can be illustrated through the duty as of April 2011 placed on them to conduct domestic violence homicide reviews as part of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004.

As already detailed both CSPs were over reliant on crime reduction performance as a measure of effectiveness despite the awareness of their limitations. This was heavily influenced by central government, primarily the Home Office which until recently closely performance managed CSPs through recorded crime rates. These were also linked to accessing specific funding grants. This problem was raised in earlier research on CSPs and the Government's Crime Reduction Programme, (Hough, 2005). It appeared to be still evident when speaking to practitioners from both partnerships with some anxiety shown around recent developments with central government having a more hands off approach. This may prove to be even less

salient in the future due to more freedom and flexibility being provided through the decentralised agenda and budget reductions and also through the role of the new PCCs.

Community engagement

The research showed that CSPs operated with minimal contact with communities. This being at odds with the remit of CSPs and the coalition government clearly views it as one of the biggest challenges for the future. Within inner city areas where these two CSPs operate, certain communities, namely those that are most vulnerable and at risk rely heavily on the authorities to solve problems and do not see themselves or feel they could or even should be part of the solution. This impacts on the extent of successful engagement and to some degree the type of engagement that CSPs can undertake with their 'communities'. From reviewing the evidence both CSPs were also distanced from the community it served as most of its work was 'inward facing'. A realist view means that a balance of being effective and achieving meaningful and productive engagement has to be accepted. Coupled with this are the complexities of defining the word 'community', (Foster, 2002, p. 174).and often the assumption made that it is always a good thing, (Hughes, 1998, p.105). Crawford, (1998b, p. 243) highlighted the confusion over the role and nature of 'community' which includes the assumption made that more community equals less crime.

The research findings detailing issues with the community are similar to those identified by Innes & Weston, (HMIC, 2010, p. 40). They found evidence of too great a focus on partnership working across agencies as opposed to working with the public. This created highly bureaucratic processes and a cluttered local landscape. Further to this, research undertaken by Charlton, Morton & Ipsos MORI, (2011, p. 7) with local residents across England & Wales found participants had low levels of awareness of partnership working across the police, council and other agencies. It concluded however that participants were unconcerned with the mechanics of the local partnership and more interested in outcomes, (Charlton et al, 2011, p. 4).

Despite this the research did provide key points which could prove useful for CSPs with a specific target (as was the case for the SSP and Newham Partnership) of increasing the public confidence in both the police and the council in tackling crime and disorder. These ranged from the basics such as increasing awareness of the role and work undertaken by the police and local authority to community engagement. This will be achieved through existing channels or within their own community environment, (Charlton et al, 2011, p. 15).

The work of Foster, (2002) in high crime communities identified some important points on crime and offending and also how often these localities are perceived to comprise of ‘problem people’ not ‘people who may have problems’, (Foster, 2002, p. 168). With the lack of community engagement and inwardly facing agencies of CSPs there is a need to consider what Foster, (2002) refers to as the ‘people pieces’ when developing local community based approaches to crime, (p. 169). That is the experiences, life histories of these people along with their locality, and how this is perceived and impacts on opportunities open to them.

The future of CSPs

The interview data provided a range of opinions on the future of CSPs. There was understandably an acknowledgement that further significant cuts to all responsible authorities along with cuts to community safety budgets were imminent. It was also clear that some practitioners, when speaking about the future felt that due to reductions in budgets which would affect both community safety and also responsible authorities partnership work would in future have to contribute to delivering core business. It would no longer be acceptable for the CSP just to add value. This contrasted in fact with earlier views that partnership activity should be clearly outside of core business and demonstrates the future could mark the arrival of a new type of ‘partnership working’ which would be time limited and more streamlined in terms of governance. The primary benefit identified by respondents was ‘shared resources’ which could lead to significant changes for both the SSP and the Newham Partnership. It was evident that despite the cuts minimal future

proofing through evaluation of work streams and activity was being undertaken across either partnership.

Practitioners from both CSPs commented on the distinct change in central government behaviour and the perceived lack of interest in CSPs. This became more evident following the disbandment of GOL in 2011. This observed change was reinforced in the government's communication to CSPs, (Herbert, 2011) that CSPs needed to look to their 'communities rather than Whitehall'. This shift potentially poses both problems and challenges to CSPs especially for those seen to be weaker and requiring closer directions from government. Even for the most robust CSP any commitment to community involvement and engagement has not been central to their operation and in practice has often proved to be difficult. As noted earlier research (Hough 2005, Gilling, 2005) had identified the government's desire to 'steer' CSPs which complicated and weakened practitioner's roles. This apparent change indicates that the government has 'handed over control of the boat to practitioners' who now are being told they need to engage with the community to seek support and direction. If this is now the expectation from government then CSPs will struggle and for some this will lead to 'drifting'. Further to this is the impact of the introduction of Police & Crime Commissioners which is discussed in the next section.

Police & Crime Commissioners

Police & Crime Commissioners, (PCC's) were introduced by the Police Reform & Social Responsibility Act 2011. From late 2012 police authorities have been abolished and replaced by (PCC's). This new arrangement not only demonstrates a significant change to police accountability, (Loveday, 2012) but also for CSPs. PCC will not replace Police Authorities, (PAs) as a responsible authority under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. However the most fundamental changes include the Secretary of State transferring power to require a partnership to produce a report to a Commissioner along with PCCs now holding a range of funding streams. The PCCs will themselves decide what community safety services will be commissioned and

who will deliver these. In London the arrangements came into force in January 2012, through the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, (MOPAC). This function delegated to the deputy mayor for policing and crime. This excludes the City of London which retains as a police authority, (LGA, 2012, p. 5).

The coalition government's policy intention surrounding the introduction of PCCs is to increase police accountability to the community through direct election where the PCC will hold the police to account. The role of PCCs will be similar to PAs as their main function will be to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the police, appoint and dismiss the chief constable, set the police and crime strategy and produce a police and crime plan in consultation with the chief constable. They will also set the budget and police precept and produce an annual report. Additionally, they will cooperate with the criminal justice system and work with partners to fund community safety activity, (LGA, 2012, p. 5). The scrutiny of PCCs will be through local police and crime panels, (PCPs) set up by councils with membership across every local authority. For London the police and crime panel will be the Greater London Authority, (GLA) as a special authority of the London Assembly. (LGA, 2012, p. 6).

The potential impact of PCCs on CSPs at the time of the fieldwork had not for obvious reasons been assessed by practitioners. Most were aware of the proposals in London, with the Mayor of London's Office as the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). There was little recognition that future community safety grants would be transferred to the PCCs and that CSPs would be required to compete for funds with the voluntary sector and other providers. This was understandable as at that time minimal information was made available by government on the implementation of PCCs. MOPAC will in relation to their police and crime plan need to consult with London Boroughs and 'have regard' to the priorities of individual CSPs, (LGA, 2012, p. 8).

It is clear through the responsibilities of PCCs that they will have a significant impact on the future of CSPs. Yet it is still not clear what the coalition's plans are

for the partnerships and the recent silence on this issue should be noted. The fact that community safety funds will be channeled through PCCs with CSP required to compete with other organisations to deliver services will mean that being able to demonstrate that initiatives lead to effective outcomes will become much more crucial. Arguably it may become evident that community safety funds will be used to finance initiatives that tackle pan London crime and disorder issues such as for example most serious violence. PCCs will not be a responsible authority on the CSPs but there will be a mutual duty for them to cooperate with RAs to tackle crime, disorder and reoffending. It is however a less formal arrangement which will be dependent on partnership working and personalities of those actors engaged in the delivery of community safety.

Conclusion

A number of key themes were drawn from the analysis of the interview transcripts, documentary analysis and crime statistics. These included complexities which arise from the practitioners' methods of measuring effectiveness and the impact of CSPs, the actual benefits, the influence of personalities, lack of evaluation, roles of RAs, government influence and finally the lack of engagement with the community. Some of these themes will be developed further in the concluding chapter which offer recommendations for future improvement.

A key weakness of the two CSPs was their lack of focus or agreement on measuring the effectiveness of the partnership. Taking account of all of the fieldwork data along with the researcher reflecting on her own practitioner experience, it would be fair to say that this position has been heavily influenced by central government. It has also been influenced by a new public management approach to public service delivery which has now notably changed. The over reliance of the two partnerships on recorded crime rates was probably the most noticeable feature and yet despite their shortcomings these can still play a role in the partnership landscape. As important, the same crime rates are used widely by central government and the police and have arguably been a big influence on public perceptions of crime

reduction. This may have been reinforced as a result of universal access being made available by the Home Office. The following chapter provides a number of recommendations for improvement of the two CSPs. It also includes a proposed framework for measuring future effectiveness.

The high volume of work undertaken by the CSPs and those working within local authority community safety sections became very evident. It illustrated and reinforced aspects of previous research undertaken, (LGA, 2009, OPM 2010, 2011) which identified high workload levels. This was the case even though it appeared to affect the ability of practitioners to undertake some of the basics including evaluation and led to the local authority undertaking a disproportionate amount of the work when compared to the police and other RAs.

In terms of the CSPs impact on tackling crime and disorder the research also demonstrated an over reliance on perceived rather than proven benefits. These were more potential than actual benefits. Practitioners were not routinely assessing whether they were being regularly achieved rather just assuming that they were. There was however clear evidence that some benefits were realised. The best example across both CSPs was the joint tasking groups set up to deploy resources through shared information and problem solving. The processes associated with this activity nevertheless required further streamlining.

The lack of any formal commissioning framework had led to a lack of prioritisation when agreeing funding across both partnerships. This was beginning to be addressed as a result of the big cuts in grant to CSPs. Accountability to central government has been significantly reduced over the last 12 months and this will be the real test of how effective CSPs are in moving forward and delivering and maintaining their statutory requirements to deal with crime and disorder. In addition to this, what contributes to the difficulty of measuring effectiveness has been the lack of evaluation across the whole partnership. There is a multitude of research studies and best practice examples which can provide an indicator of 'what works'. Yet there remains a need for all community safety programmes and projects to be evaluated to

assess their impact. Evaluation will become even more important with the introduction of PCCs, when stakeholders including CSPs will have to compete for funding.

Cost effectiveness and value for money remain on the agendas of both partnerships. However no specific attempt to measure this had been undertaken to date. A number of issues were raised by practitioners which included over burdening governance structures, too many meetings, too much report writing and duplication, some of which were required to satisfy local authority governance. All of these functions could be reviewed by a cost effectiveness exercise across both CSPs. As part of the document analysis, the two exercises undertaken to scope out meetings and associated costs demonstrated that at a basic level, streamlining was needed. Independent of achievement, meetings were costed in the region of £ 350 - £800 which depending on what is achieved is a costly activity for practitioners.

One of the most striking themes raised by all respondents was the impact of 'personalities' on partnership working generally and the significance of this on the work of the CSPs. This was linked to effective partnership working and it became clear that the effectiveness of the CSPs was linked to personalities and agency relationships. This perhaps is not surprising when the dynamics and type of activity involved are considered. What became evident from the interview data was the degree and extent to which this could impact positively on the effectiveness of individual CSPs. Their impact actually increased where certain personalities and good working relationships existed. This involved specifically the police or local authority which demonstrated the pivotal role they both played within the partnership. It was also found that working relationships at times if too good could actually hinder the ability to accept challenges amongst partners.

It was evident from the interviews and document analysis that the local authority played a key role in terms of coordination, document and strategy production at both strategic and operational sub group level. If such resource was removed and not replaced this would significantly affect CSP business and what could be achieved.

This may not be viewed necessarily as a negative outcome considering the lack of evidence of the impact CSPs were having. Reviewing the level of resource required to facilitate the breath of partnership work revealed that the local authority was heavily involved in the planning and development of groups irrespective of whether the group was chaired by a local authority staff member. All minutes were taken by the Council's or Community Safety Partnership Team rather than a representative of the RA chairing the meeting. One responsible authority within the Newham CSP provided a particular view on local authority involvement in terms of future improvement and wanted them to play a less dominant role. If implemented these provide a different perspective and one which would significantly change the dynamics of partnership working amongst CSPs.

The next chapter provides a range of key recommendations for improvement of the CSPs based on the evidence generated by the research.

Chapter 5: Recommendations for improvement

The chapter concludes the research by providing a number of recommendations for improvement for CSPs. The first summarises areas of improvement identified by practitioners based on evidence generated by the research and with linkages to existing literature. Second, six priority areas are identified which if implemented would increase the impact of CSPs.

CSPs improvements proposed by practitioners

The third aim of the research was to identify recommendations for improvement in the work of CSPs. This was to be achieved through a consideration of all of the fieldwork undertaken, practitioners were also asked to identify what aspects of their CSPs could be improved. It was clear that practitioners felt a number of areas of the CSP could be improved and some activity undertaken differently. Over thirty areas for future improvement were highlighted by those interviewed. These and the fieldwork data supported six specific priority areas for improvement as highlighted in figure 2. These translated into five key recommendations identified below.

Recommendation 1: Evaluating community safety programmes

The dearth of evaluation associated with community safety initiatives or programmes at the local level is not a new issue identified by the research findings but a problem which is well rehearsed already, (Home Office 1990, Pease 1994, Crawford, 1998, Maguire, 2004). Where evaluation has taken place it is recognised that this has been more to justify policy rather than as a progressive activity, (Crawford, 1998, p. 196). Similarly the interview data collected demonstrated that practitioners saw the importance of evaluation largely through identifying its complete absence. The need for it to be more prominent as a mechanism to assess community safety programmes other than the use of recorded crime data was a key

acknowledgement by practitioners interviewed. This underlined the fact that after a long period of time in which CSPs have been operating evaluation remains a significant issue which still has to be addressed.

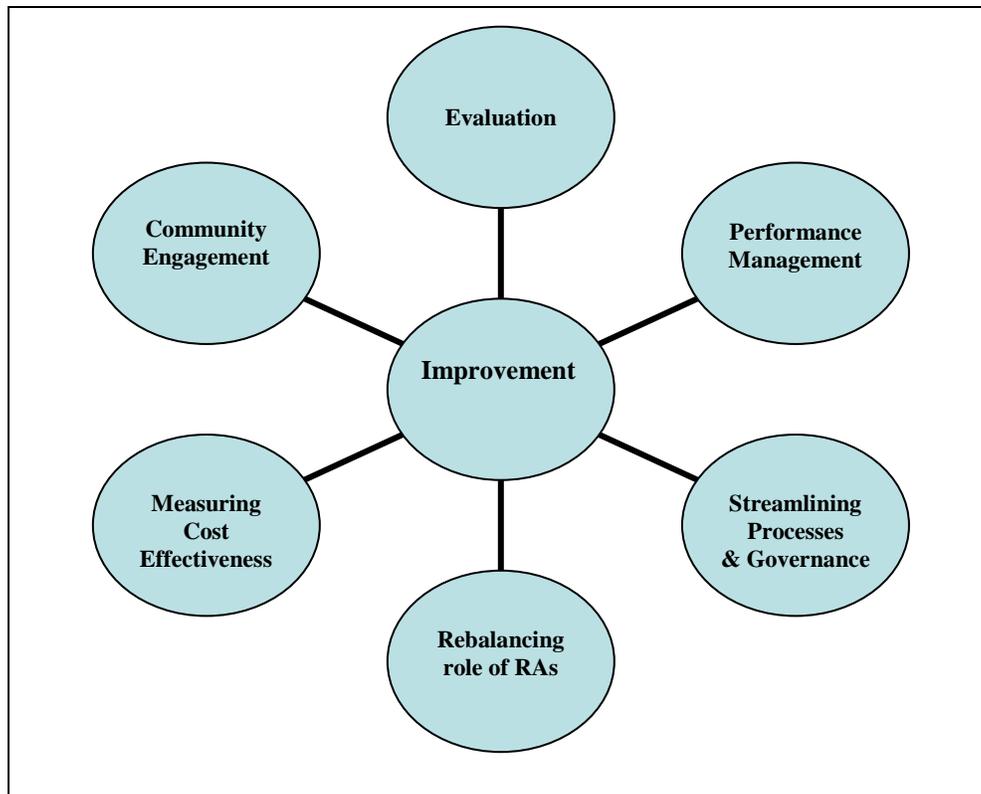
There are various reasons for undertaking evaluation .However due to time constraints it is not possible to provide an extensive commentary on the subject here. Crawford, (1998, p. 196) highlighted pre-implementation of the CADA 1998 that the absence of evaluation leads to a lack of knowledge about what ‘works’ under what conditions and the ability to transfer initiatives across different contexts. What is clear is that there are a range of models and frameworks and CSPs can make use of these to evaluate their own work. Along with the absence identified from the fieldwork it was also possible to extract an explanation as to why it had not been addressed before. These differed in scope but included reference to a lack of funds from central government for evaluation, high volumes of work resulting in lack of time and an absence of a robust evaluation framework. The latter may have been due to practitioner’s lacking the skills associated with evaluation generally.

For CSP there is a real need to evaluate the work of partnership funded initiatives to assess their impact and efficiency. What is required is the introduction of an evaluation framework for all projects and programmes built into implementation and delivery including a value for money element. The approach requires focusing not only at evaluating the work commissioned by the partnership but also whether the deliverables improve financial efficiency. It also requires a focus on evaluating both ‘outcome’ and ‘process’. The complexities that surround evaluating community safety initiatives do need recognition. This arises specifically when measuring a ‘non-event’ and being in a position to claim that this is due to specifically CSP initiatives.

It is equally important is to consider the implementation of the framework against a backdrop of why such activity has not been successfully adopted to date. This would also include the methodological, politically and practical issues academics have

already identified and that may impact on any evaluation undertaken, (Crawford, 1998, p. 197). These issues will always be part of an academic dialogue but should not serve as a justification for practitioners not to implement an evaluation process.

Figure 2: Key improvement areas



As is indicated by the LGG (2010, p. 5) evidence based approaches to community safety have been widely accepted. However, these are often in the context of ‘what works’ not ‘what works at the lowest cost’. This should be a crucial starting point to assess the impact of projects and programmes that are viable for future commissioning. Given current budget reductions within community safety field this is entirely appropriate. Evaluation will be even more crucial with the introduction of PCCs who will oversee community safety grants and decide how these are spent. Other than reducing crime there will be an expectation that projects can demonstrate specific outcomes. This will also be the case to justify to RAs that investment into specific areas is having a positive or desired impact. As noted earlier the high

volume of work was identified as a reason why evaluation was not undertaken by practitioners. Perhaps the current and future financial climate will lead to fewer initiatives but a greater focus evaluation.

Recommendation 2: Meaningful performance management

The negative impact on CSPs of central governments performance management was a key feature of the research and underpinned the environmental in which they worked. This serves to reinforce criticism levelled by academics, (Crawford, 1998, Hughes & Edwards, 2002, Hough, 2005, Gilling, 2005) about CSP ability to be 'successful' as local entities. On completion of the fieldwork the government had disbanded a central performance management regime which consisted of a large number of crime targets against which CSPs were assessed by central government. Practitioners were very vocal about both the breadth of work that they had to report on and also the shortcomings of recorded crime statistics which were the main focus for measuring the success and effectiveness of the partnership. It was clear that the two partnerships were beginning to reduce the number of targets being measured. This new 'light touch' approach by central government was however a new way of working which across RAs would require time to be fully implemented.

In the light of the findings and the new increased flexibility afforded to partnerships by government there is a need for the CSPs to develop a new performance management framework. This might cover the following:-

- A maximum of six recorded crime categories
- Assessment framework which details the contribution/added value and monitoring of all responsible authorities
- Development of a public confidence target which is linked to partnership activity

The assessment framework identified above would also serve to support and reinforce the expectations of all RAs in the partnership. This reflects the fact that senior police officers involved in the partnership environment are continually changing and the impact personalities can have on the partnership. Due to cuts in funding and contraction of the public sector the local authority will not be in a position to invest the current level of resource into the work of the CSP. It is with this in mind that each activity requires focus.

As the general public are aware of and are influenced by recorded crime figures they should still be considered by the partnership but they should not have the predominance they currently enjoy. Other measurements should include cost/benefit analysis of all activity/. This should be led by the finance officer from one of the lead authorities. This would provide a level of independence required between the process and the community safety practitioner. It would also need to commence from a realistic position in terms of future funding for community safety.

An ongoing issue for London local authorities who experience similar complexities has been cross borough working. Realising the political sensitivities attached to this type of work it does warrant further investigation especially in terms of efficiency. This could be considered at tri-borough level for more complex issues such as violent crime and maybe a matter which is promoted through the pan London structure of the PCC and their Police and Crime Plan.

Recommendation 3: Streamlining the implementation of community safety

Both CSPs during the fieldwork had started to reduce the large infrastructures that surrounded both partnerships. As discussed both CSPs had complex governance structures in place despite minimal statutory requirements for this. This would lead to significant resources being directed to ‘implementing’ initiatives and for the ‘strategy’ element of the work. This aspect had been identified with CSP work through previous CSP research, (Skinns, 2005, HMIC, 2010). Practical guidance

from the (LGG, 2010) already exists on reviewing partnership activity with a view of including efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. Despite this it was clear that leaner structures could and should exist along with fewer meetings with fewer attendees. A good example of where partnership working was demonstrating clear benefits was the PTG within the Southwark CSP. Further improvement was needed as over half of the attendees, (estimated 12) worked for the local authority which was disproportionate and could be substantively reduced.

It is evident that historically partnership working has been undertaken through the 'meeting' mechanism which is not always an effective and efficient means in which to conduct business given the resource cost. This approach appears to be culturally embedded within CSPs and public sector organisations so any departure may need to be subject to medium term planning as part of a transition process. Other areas for considerations would include,

- Time limited thematic action groups replacing sub groups
- Sub regional CSPs and thematic groups with neighbouring London boroughs
- Reviewing all report and strategy production to reduce work streams

Recommendation 4: Rebalancing the role of Responsible Authorities across the partnership

It was evident from the research evidence and practitioner experience that the local authority in both partnerships played a dominant role within the CSP. This is inline with 'the local authority based' model that Morgan, Report 1991 refers to, (Home Office, 1991, p. 46) which is one of five basic models identified. This was more so for the SSP which provided significant support, and co-ordination for all partnership activity. It also had a team of over 12 community safety staff supporting the work of the partnership compared to just four who worked for the Newham Partnership. The staff had minimum involvement in delivering services and more so in supporting the delivery of the community safety governance. Within the current climate and the

comprehensive spending review this level of resource is unlikely to be sustained in core council budgets. It is also questionable whether the local authority would need to play such a significant role in CSPs in the future. Although not highlighted in the fieldwork this commitment had become a comfortable position which as a result remained largely unchallenged. This over-reliance had already been identified as a potential problem leading to challenge to a partnerships collective entity, (Crawford, 1998. p.179).

According to some commentators, the role of co-ordination and that of a 'co-ordinator' can act as motivation, (Liddle & Gelsthorpe, 1994, p. 18). Early research into the work of CSPs, (Phillips et al, 2002) also emphasised the local authority employed Community Safety Officer having a prominent role in facilitating work across partnership agencies. This similarly found in the review of the first phase of the Safer Cities Projects, (Tilley, 1992). The research thus demonstrating that this still exists although in the case of one CSP this role was associated with a significant resource with its impact being questionable. Phillips et al, (2002, p. 9) also found that unequal contributions by partner agencies provided added pressure to the success of CSPs.

In relation to the local authority's involvement in both CSPs it was clear that the police were also a key contributor. This was followed by the LPT, which had increased since their new RA statutory status. Health had less of a role and was linked to the drugs and alcohol agenda. The contribution made by health was also identified by Skinns, 2005, p. 180, Audit Commission, 2002, Phillips et al, 2002, McManus, 2003, Jamel & Mair, 2003) suggesting that little had changed over time. In addition to this, personalities involved in both partnerships impacted on their degree of involvement. This as already identified is not necessarily a robust position and is not conducive to partnership working.

Implementing a framework which details the contribution/added value and monitoring of all responsible authorities already recommended could readdress this

imbalance in a holistic pragmatic way arguable providing a more equal and stable situation.

Recommendation 5: Engaging with communities

Community engagement was probably one of the weakest elements of the CSPs. and common characteristic of previous research undertaken, (Phillips, 2002, Skinns, 2005, HMIC, 2010. Effective community engagement targeting all key sectors and groups within inner city areas is very difficult to undertake well, which in part may explain why CSPs notoriously struggle with this interaction. There is also the question of what is a ‘community’ and ‘effective community engagement’ and what do CSPs wish to achieve by the latter activity and likewise the beneficiaries of such activity . Within the arena of community safety there are a number of different reasons and rationales for engaging with local communities. One discovery made by some academics has been the assumption that engagement is always a positive feature (Hughes, 1998, p.105) and that engagement brings success through a reduction in crime, (Crawford, 1998b, p. 243).

The basic statutory requirement includes priority setting based on public consultation and an annual ‘Face the People session, (LGG, 2010, p.4). Although these are the minimal requirement to undertake more targeted engagement especially linked to public confidence indicators could prove to be advantageous especially if it reinforced the role of the partnership and its achievements. Equally effective engagement could involve communities and develop responses to community safety that include individuals that associate themselves as part of different ‘communities’. Any successful approach would be heavily reliant on the profile and type of community the respective CSPs serve. A robust partnership communication strategy denoting the work, (including all engagement work) of the partnership to various audiences would be critical here to increase the impact of initiatives and overall effectiveness of the partnerships.

Conclusion

This research has demonstrated that community safety practitioners working across both sites are dedicated and are engaged across their partnerships in a wide range of work which is of a high volume nature. All of this has the aim of improving the quality of life of those who live, work and visit their boroughs through making each area safer. The main vehicle used to undertake this was the local CSP and related governance structures. Yet as the evidence reveals, this requires further work to enable them to enhance their effectiveness and impact on crime and disorder. Perhaps one of the most striking features of the research was the lack of shared understanding of effectiveness and the absence of a robust measurement of effectiveness and evaluation. There was instead an over reliance of measuring activity through official crime reduction data.

One of the elements of the research findings was the commonality they demonstrated with earlier research studies. These included the perception that the partnership activity across both CSPs had many benefits which when reviewed were not always so evident in practice. This suggests that having more than one agency does not guarantee effectiveness. Further common ground included an obsession with meetings to conduct partnership activity. These were excessive and encouraged overcomplicated governance and delivery structures. Furthermore, partnership success appeared to be very dependent on certain personalities which pro-actively drove partnership work. This provided a rather fragile environment within which the partnership operated. Another further finding was the crucial role and resource provided to the partnerships by the local authority, primarily the community safety teams which if cut back would significantly affect CSP business.

The research also showed the degree to which central government had influenced the two CSPs, specifically their development, or lack of it, within some areas. Until recently CSPs have been tightly control through government which has provided real challenges for these partnerships. What also needs to be recognised is the

amount of work undertaken although the research findings suggest the strategy adopted has to date been about 'quantity' rather than 'quality' and this needs to be addressed.

Areas for future research

As the research undertaken on the effectiveness and impact of CSPs in tackling crime and disorder is under researched it demonstrates the need for further research. This research presents an insight into two London CSPs operating with London. The social and economic profile of both Southwark and Newham were very similar, particularly recorded crime rates with certain crime types such as Most Similar Violence, (MSV) both operating in very complex and challenging environments. The identification of sites was intentional as it provided an opportunity to identify similarities and also differences. What these results raise however are further questions. These include whether the work of CSPs in the most problematic areas has the potential to be either more effective, or have more impact than CSPs in less problematic areas. A question remains as to whether CSPs are more effective focusing on more complex community safety issues which benefit from the engagement of several agencies, shared resources and deployment. Given the nature of partnership working it might be asked if CSPs provide more value in inner city high crime areas than those in less urbanised/rural areas?

The purpose of this research was to identify the effectiveness and impact of two CSPs in London. The result was to identify common themes which could be separate and productive areas for future research.

Chapter Six: Reflecting on undertaking the Professional Doctorate

The final chapter considers some salient reflective points from the journey undertaken for the final thesis requirement for the professional doctorate. This is informed through a reflective journal which was kept throughout the research programme. The purpose of this was in support of potential development, dealing with issues and challenges that were faced and also as an aid to decision making at different stages of the process. This was achieved through a reflective thinking process. I used what Schon, (1983, p. 50) refers to as 'reflection in action', reflecting at the time of experience and 'reflection on action', (Schon, 1983, p. 277) reflecting after the experience throughout the research process. These approaches were used interchangeably throughout the duration of the research. I am not able to cover all of the reflective points due to space however the statement below provides some of the most critical from issues arising from this work.

The decision and reasoning behind undertaking the doctorate was directed at developing my ability to contribute to my own area of professional practice. Four and a half years later this has been achieved beyond any expectation. The reasoning behind undertaking the doctorate provided the motivation to continue when faced with the challenge of pursuing the professional doctorate alongside an already demanding role within the field of community safety. Sustaining motivation was at times very hard although it was influenced by my interest in the field of community safety, something that is highlighted as a key factor when deciding on this particular study route, (Murray, 2006, p. 36). Further to this, the research was undertaken within a strict academic framework. This ensured that it was robust and would exhibit both the degree and level of scrutiny required.

Throughout the duration one of the most enriching parts of the experience has not only been learning to reflect as a practitioner-researcher but also using the shared lens of being a 'practitioner' and 'researcher'. This has led to being more critical and objective in relation to my professional area and its related activities. This became

particularly apparent when reflecting on my research findings, which found very little challenge as to the effectiveness measures that existed amongst practitioners within the field. This was something that I had observed on numerous occasions prior to the fieldwork. This led to me being more aware in the role as a practitioner-researcher and to also process and self questioning. One of the most challenging aspects was the continual policy change in the community safety area and the impact this had on my research work. At times, I felt that I became overly concerned and focused on this change and that it also affected the fieldwork undertaken.

A decision on the research topic was the most problematic issue and a lengthy stage of the process. In part this was due to concern about whether the research would attain the 'originality' criterion for doctoral level work. This is something (Murray, 2006, p. 58) explores using the work of Phillips & Pugh, (2000, pp.63-4) which was very useful to work through. It challenged an assumption that I had made that 'originality' was more aligned to being groundbreaking research which was unlikely at the time of undertaking the research. The fact that I used a 'case study' approach also provided a framework in which to focus on specific context and setting of the two cases. In addition to ensuring originality as a practitioner-researcher it was also imperative for the research to be beneficial for practitioners to use to encourage development and improve effectiveness.

At an early stage of carrying out the interviews I made the decision to focus on a second CSP in order to provide a degree of comparability in the research. This did impact on time, resources and costs but provided additional value. It was time consuming and also a complex task to arrange interviews with senior officers who were busy. Until directly spoken to they did not understand the purpose of the research. It was unfortunate that I didn't have the same level of access to documents at the Newham site. However the interview data provided some very useful and interesting findings.

As is evident from Chapter Four, I opted to transcribe the interview data myself and analyse the data manually. Despite the practical constraints and the weaknesses highlighted by the researcher manually analysing data I found this extremely helpful. Although initially overwhelming it provided an opportunity to immerse myself in the data and feel confident when identifying the key themes and findings. It was also useful when working with other sources of data which in this case was the use of documents and recorded crime data.

It might be worth noting that both Southwark and Newham proved to be interested in the outcome of the research. They saw that any findings and recommendations could potentially contribute to future improvements. As the research acknowledged practitioners are challenged through managing high volume workloads which appear to have impacted on the ability to review the work undertaken by the respective CSPs. This in its self provided further reassurance that the research findings might prove beneficial. Many practitioners stated that the opportunity of being interviewed provided an experience to reflect away from the partnership environment and look at some of the key issues surrounding the effectiveness of CSPs and their future in an age of austerity.

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Appendix 1 - Semi structured interview questions

Pre interview Information

Name -

Organisation -

Contact details -

Checklist to go through with interviewee

- Interviewer to cover background to research– DCrimJ/purpose of research along with UOP IP
- Confidentiality
- Tape recording authorisation

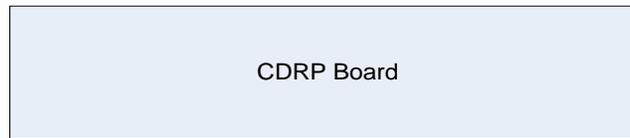
-
- 1.) What is your organisations involvement and contribution in the CSP?
 - 2.) What is your specific involvement/contribution in the CSP?
 - 3.) In your view what is the key aim/s of the CSP? Is this achieved? And if so is it due to effective partnership working?
 - 4.) Are there benefits of the CSP? And if so do they outweigh the costs put in by (your organisation) and other partnership/agencies?
 - 5.) Does the CSP add value to your organisation and if so how?
 - 6.) Do you envisage this changing in future due to financial and policy changes? If so how?
 - 7.) As a practitioner do you think CSPs generally are effective as a mechanism of tackling crime and disorder? if so how would you quantify this?
 - 8.) In your view is the CSP successful? And if so how and why? How would you define success?
 - 9.) What makes a CSP successful?

- 10.) In the future how should CSPs measure success?
- 11.) How should the CSP set targets in the future? and what should the baseline be to measure success against?
- 12.) What will the process for benchmark look like in the future? and who will CSPs benchmark against?
- 13.) Are there are aspects of the CSP that could be improved? If so what and how?
- 14.) What do you think the key challenges will be for the CSP over the next 12-18 months? And for your organisation?
- 15.) If the statutory footing was removed for CSPs would this have an impact on your involvement?
- 16.) Responsible Authorities – In your view who adds value and who doesn't? What are some of the challenges?
- 17.) What are your views on the changes to community safety within the PRSR bill?

Any other comments/views to add?

End

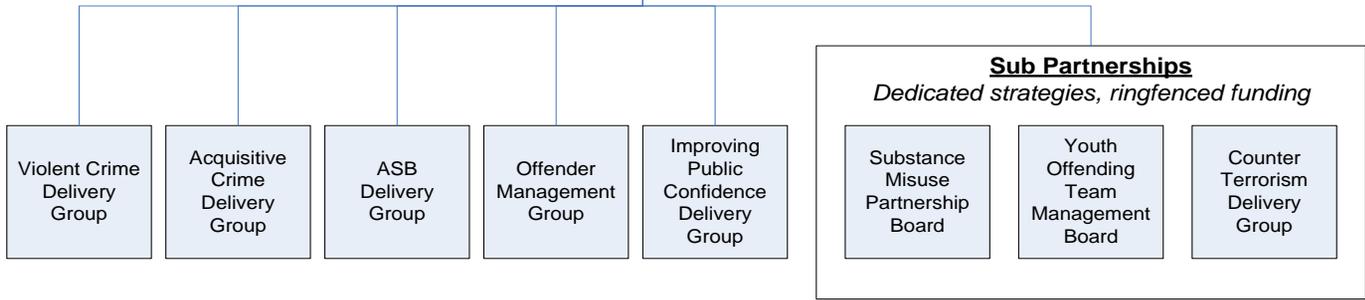
Policy & Strategy
Presides over all new policies and changes to existing policy, funding allocations and performance accountability



Performance & Budget Management
Sets operational policy (i.e. how ASB powers will be used), monitors performance and delivery group budgets.

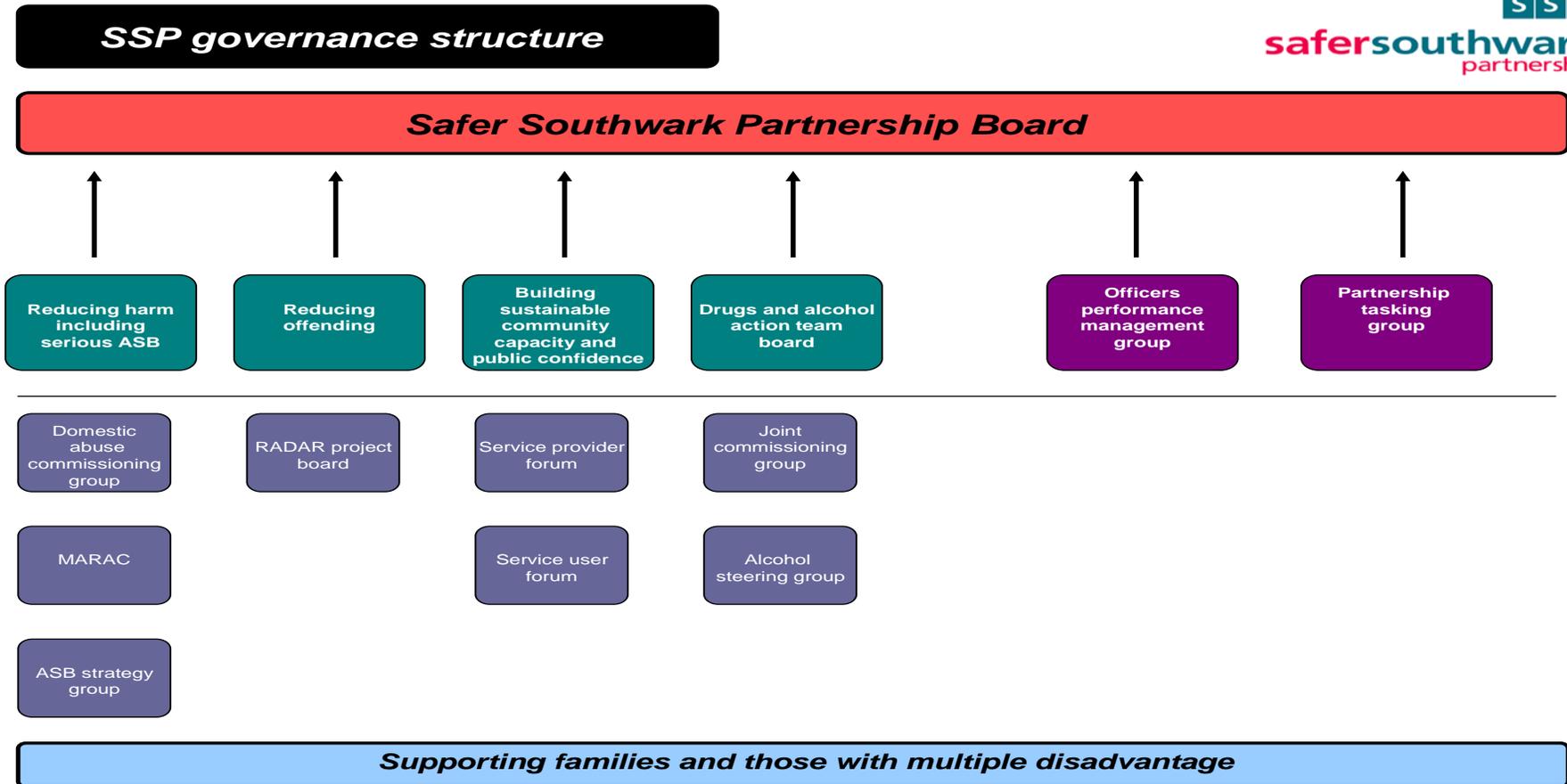


Operational Policy
Action planning, operational deployment, problem solving.



Appendix 2: CSP Structure & Governance - Current Newham CDRP Delivery Group Structure as at 25.05.10

Appendix 2: Structure & Governance - Current Southwark CSP Delivery Group Structure



Description of CSP, (Southwark) related meetings

Drugs and alcohol action team (DAAT) board

The DAAT board produces the substance misuse needs assessment and treatment plan, which outlines how substance misuse provision will be commissioned and delivered across the borough.

Officers' performance management group

The function of the officers' performance management group (OPMG) is to develop and monitor the performance management framework for the SSP, including that performance of commissioned services.

Partnership tasking group

The partnership tasking group (PTG) has been established to provide effective and coordinated tasking of partnership resources with a problem solving focus. This is based on intelligence and analysis of crime, with a particular focus on targeting issues highlighted in the priority crimes matrix

Reducing harm including serious ASB group

The reducing harm group delivers the recommendations of the violent crime strategy 2010/15 and addresses the priority crimes types, including serious anti social behaviour.

Reducing reoffending board

Southwark Council and partner organisations through the Reducing Offending Board (ROB) maintain strategic oversight and responsibility to reduce offending and reoffending in the London borough of Southwark. The ROB is also the decision making body representing key agencies who work in Southwark to reduce offending.

RADAR project board

Southwark's multi-agency RADAR team was formed in June 2010 following the end of the two year Diamond Initiative pilot. The aim of RADAR is to provide short term, intensive intervention for those offenders who cause the most amount of crime in the borough to stop them reoffending and in turn, reduce demand on the criminal justice system. The board oversees the service in terms of performance and development.

Building sustainable community capacity and public confidence sub group

This group will champion the priority across all other areas of SSP work. This sub group will work to bring the community into the decision making processes of the SSP and

explore how the localism agenda affects the work of the SSP and community responsibilities.

MARAC, (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

The Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) is part of a coordinated community response to domestic abuse, which aims to:

- Share information to increase the safety, health and well-being of victims/survivors - adults and their children;
- Determine whether the alleged perpetrator poses a significant risk to any particular individual or to the general community;
- Construct jointly and implement a risk management plan that provides professional support to all those at risk and that reduces the risk of harm;
- Reduce repeat victimisation;
- Improve agency accountability; and
- Improve support for staff involved in high-risk domestic abuse cases.

ASB Strategy Group

The ASB Strategy group is responsible for the operational delivery of the SSP ASB Strategy 2011-2015. The strategy outlines the direction of travel in the evolving field of antisocial behaviour particularly the changing national landscape which is moving towards more citizen-led priorities.

Joint Commissioning Group

The Joint Commissioning Group, (JCG) is responsible for jointly commissioning substance misuse treatment services for adults in Southwark. Its representatives are from all necessary commissioning partners.

Domestic Abuse Commissioning Group

The Domestic Abuse Commissioning Group is responsible for commissioning domestic violence services within Southwark.

DAG, (Dog Action Group)

The purpose of the Dog Action Group is to develop a functioning partnership with key stakeholders within Southwark to develop a framework and strategy around the multi-faceted issues involving dogs, and to support and share resources between the partnerships where identified and as become necessary.

Appendix 3: Interview Records
Safer Southwark Partnership

Organisation	Name	Role	Date	Code
Southwark Council	-	Community Safety Partnership Service Manager	12/01/2011	A1
Southwark Council	-	DAAT Manager	26/01/2011	A2
Southwark Council	-	Commissioning & Improvement Manager – Community Safety	19/01/2011	A3
London Probation Trust Southwark lead	-	Assistant Chief Probation Officer	18/01/2011	A4
Southwark BCU MPS	-	Borough Commander	03/02/2011	A5
London Fire & Rescue Service	-	Borough Commander	24/03/2011	A6
MPA – Southwark lead	-	MPA Lead Officer	25/01/2011	A7
UK Border Agency	-	Group Manager	08/02/2011	A8
MPS – Southwark BCU	-	Partnership Inspector	14/01/2011	A9
Southwark Council	-	Youth Offending Service Manager	22/03/2011	A10
Southwark Council	-	Senior Crime Analyst & Business Unit Manager	10/01/2011	A11

The Newham Partnership

Organisation	Name	Role	Date	Code
Local Authority - CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer – Co-Chair	4/10/2011	B1
Local Authority – Operations Manager	-	Community Safety Manager	26/08/2011	B2
Newham Police	-	Member	16/09/2011	B3
London Probation Service	-	Member	25/10/2011	B4
Newham Fire Service	-	Borough Commander	25/08/2011	B5
Newham Primary Care Trust - Interim Director – Public Health	-	Member	24/10/2011	B6
MPA	-	Member	4/10/2011	B7

Other interviews undertaken during the fieldwork

Name	Position	Organisation	Date
Chris Williams	NPIA Advisor	National Police Improvement Agency	March 2011
Mark Norris	Senior Policy Advisor	LGA	September 2010
Susan Crisp	Community Safety Officer	Greater London Authority	October 2011
Jonathon Toy	Head of Community Safety	Southwark Council	October 2010

Appendix 4

Map of 33 London Boroughs



Source:<http://www.comersis.com/c-images/GB/Greater-London-borough-sn.jp>