CABINET	Agenda Item 135 Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:		**Response to the report of the Environment & Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 'Older People and Community Safety'**
Date of Meeting:		**9 December 2009**
Report of:		**Director of Environment**
Contact Officer:	**Name:**	**Linda Beanlands** **Tel: 29-1115**
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Key Decision:	**No**	
Wards Affected:	**All**	

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 Age Concern is one of a number of co-opted organisations to the Community Safety Forum. In October 2009, the Director of Age Concern raised the importance of fear of crime to older people in the city and that improved information was needed to older people about the effectiveness of work undertaken. The Forum acknowledged the importance of this issue and referred the matter to the Environment & Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Committee established a scrutiny panel to investigate:

- The extent to which the views of older people on community safety are known
- The specific community safety concerns of older people
- How older people can be helped to feel safer in the community.

1.2 The full report (appended), which describes the scrutiny process and summaries evidence, findings and recommendations, was considered by the Community Safety Forum at its meeting on 19 October. The Forum welcomed the report and endorsed all of the recommendations, requesting that they be brought to Cabinet for approval. To assist in that process, a draft implementation plan is also appended which when complete, will assist monitoring and review of progress in delivery of the recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Cabinet notes the evidence, findings and recommendations of the Environment & Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee and its scrutiny panel, in relation to Older People and Community Safety.

2.2 That Cabinet agrees the actions as detailed in the implementation plan.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 For the purposes of the scrutiny, an older person was identified as anyone over 50 years of age. According to the mid year population estimates (2007), 29% of the population in the city is over 50 years of age. However, according to police recorded data in 2008/09, they experience 12% of all crime in the city showing that older people are less likely to be a victim of crime. Other information provided conclusive evidence that older people experience less crime than the rest of the population and that the likelihood decreases even further in each older age group.

3.2 However, while this information is reassuring, issues were identified about particular vulnerabilities of older people in their homes which gave cause for concern. The number of older people who experience domestic violence and who have increased vulnerability because of dementia are two examples. There are recommendations contained within the scrutiny report which specifically set out actions which are to address those and other specific concerns.

3.3 The significant finding, was confirmation of the extent to which older people's perception of crime is very much at odds with the low likelihood of being a victim or having direct experience of a crime. Feeling safe is very important to older people's quality of life and their overall health and welfare. Changing perceptions of older people, increasing their awareness of their actual level of safety and reducing their fear is therefore a high priority of the scrutiny panel and one which fully accords with the priorities of the Partnership Community Safety Team. The Team, together with Adult Social Care, will take the lead in implementing the recommendations from the scrutiny report that set out to address this issue.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 Four of the scrutiny panel meetings were advertised as public meetings and provided opportunities for residents of the city to share their views and experiences. Their information was taken into account as evidence. At an early stage the panel invited a range of organisations, including the Older People's Council to give evidence and to respond to questions from panel members. Community Safety Forum meetings provided further opportunities for consultation.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

5.1 The overall approach is to deliver the recommendations within existing resources. However, the implementation plan (draft appended) will be the mechanism through which any necessary additional resources are identified. Should that be the case, the timescales of implementation will be set accordingly and a commentary included within future progress reports.

Finance Officer Consulted: *Patrick Rice* *Date: 25/11/09*

Legal Implications:

5.2 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gives the police and local authority an equal duty to reduce crime and disorder and fear of crime and improve community

safety. Requirements are also placed upon partners within the Crime and Disorder reduction Partnership by this and subsequent legislation and guidance. The scrutiny process and the recommendations further the delivery of these legal provisions and convenience of users; any other matters that appear relevant to the Council.

Lawyer Consulted: *Simon Court* *Date: 02/11/09*

Equalities Implications:

5.3 The implementation of the recommendations will improve the lives of those who are vulnerable either because of older age, disability or ill health. The effect of policies and practices on older people are to be included within the impact assessments for some service areas, including community safety.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 Implementation of the recommendations to address the findings of scrutiny will greatly assist in the overall delivery of the Community Safety, Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy 2008-2011 in which a number of sustainability objectives are identified.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 The overall purpose of the scrutiny process which is the subject of these reports was to reduce fear of crime, increase understanding of effective action taken by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and to increase the safety of older people.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 The recommendations are designed in some cases, to reduce actual risks that may be experienced by older people as well as to reassure them that are in fact, safer than they perceive. However, reducing fear of crime is in itself of benefit to the welfare of older people and therefore results in risk reduction.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 The recommendations will bring benefits for all of those in the city who are over 50 years of age.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 The full submission of analysis reports and evidence by the scrutiny panel facilitated consideration of options in how to address concerns that were raised. The final recommendations proposed by the panel are the final outcome of the options considered.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The recommendations for which consideration and approval is sought are as the result of scrutiny of which the Environment & Community Safety Overview &

Scrutiny Committee has had oversight. Considerable supporting evidence was provided to inform the process from the start, including an analysis report carried out by the Crime and Disorder analyst within the Partnership Community Safety Team.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Report of the Older People and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Panel: August 2009

2. Implementation Plan

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. Report of the Older People and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Panel: August 2009

Background Documents

1. Scoping and Analysis Reports on Older People and Community Safety: March 2009. Prepared by Partnership Community Safety Team

2. Community Safety, Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy 2008-2011