



# Developing a Strategic Assessment

An effective practice toolkit for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships  
and Community Safety Partnerships

**October 2007**



# Table of contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1 The purpose of the toolkit	3
1.2 The legislative framework	4
<b>2. All about strategic assessments</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 What is a strategic assessment?	6
2.2 Why have partnership strategic assessments been introduced?	7
2.3 An approach for two-tier authority areas in England	8
2.4 Is a strategic assessment the only analysis and research a partnership needs?	10
2.5 Who is responsible for producing a strategic assessment?	11
2.6 What does it mean to the partnership?	11
<b>3. The structure of a strategic assessment</b>	<b>14</b>
3.1 What does a strategic assessment look like?	14
3.2 Two suggested outlines of content for a strategic assessment	16
<b>4. The process for producing a strategic assessment</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1 What are the steps in producing a strategic assessment?	22
4.2 More about datasets	27
4.3 Engaging communities	29
4.4 Some hints and tips on data analysis	30
4.5 How to identify priorities in a strategic assessment	35
4.6 What next? Making the process easier in the long term	37
<b>APPENDIX 1: Frequently asked questions</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: A tool to help plan the production of a strategic assessment</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: A tool to identify priorities</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4: Some approaches to intelligence-led business planning</b>	<b>47</b>

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 The purpose of the toolkit

This toolkit has been produced to assist local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships<sup>1</sup> in developing the strategic assessments that will drive forward the 2008 partnership plans. It is intended to complement the information provided in the Home Office publication 'Delivering Safer Communities; A guide to effective partnership working' published in September 2007<sup>2</sup>.

The toolkit is aimed at practitioners, the people responsible for overseeing or preparing the partnership's strategic assessments. Given this year's shortened timeframes and the requirement to publish a partnership plan by 1 April 2008, most partnerships will already have started this process. This toolkit will help practitioners to produce this first strategic assessment. It will also point the way to other documents and websites that can provide further detail on how to undertake analysis or develop an assessment.

The toolkit is split into sections for easy reference. Throughout the toolkit, there are:

- green boxes start and finish each section summarising what is included;
- blue boxes giving tips and advice on the main things to do; and
- purple tables are step-by-step guides and timetables.

The Home Office will further develop the toolkit in the future based on practitioners' feedback and experience of producing their own strategic assessments. Feedback can be sent directly to [cdrpreform@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cdrpreform@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

The toolkit is divided into two broad parts:

- the first is about the strategic assessment as a product; and
- the second describes the process that needs to be followed in order to get the desired product.

In the first instance, it would be helpful to the partnership if the toolkit was read by the partnership chair and any community safety manager (or equivalent) working to the partnership. Once the process is started, it will also be useful to members of the strategy group and the analytical team.

---

<sup>1</sup> In this toolkit 'partnership' refers to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in England and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in Wales.

<sup>2</sup> 'Delivery Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working. Guidance for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Partnerships', September 2007  
[http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/guidance\\_for\\_effective\\_partnerships.pdf](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/guidance_for_effective_partnerships.pdf)

## 1.2 The legislative framework

In 2006, a review of the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998<sup>3</sup> and the Police Reform Act 2002<sup>4</sup> lead to a series of recommendations. The 1998 Act included the requirement to produce a detailed crime and disorder audit; consult with key agencies and the wider community; use the findings to identify strategic priorities and set targets and performance measures. The review sought to strengthen and extend these requirements further based on the experience gained through partnership working. As a result, a new set of national minimum standards came into force in England in August 2007 and is scheduled to commence in Wales in November 2007.

These new statutory requirements form part of the Hallmarks of Effective Partnerships and have been informed and influenced by key stakeholders. They represent the key aspects of partnership working that underpin effective delivery. Each Hallmark comprises two elements:

- statutory element for partnership work: the key requirements that have been introduced as a result of the Police and Justice Act 2006 provisions; and
- suggested practice to achieve improved partnership effectiveness, using the statutory requirements as a foundation.

Responsible authorities have a legal obligation to comply with the requirements, which include the placing of the duty on the strategy group to prepare a strategic assessment on behalf of the responsible authorities. Partnerships may also use the hallmarks to assess their own effectiveness and to identify areas for improvement.

The six Hallmarks of Effective Partnerships are:

- Empowered and Effective Leadership;
- Visible and Constructive Accountability;
- Intelligence-led Business Processes;
- Effective and Responsive Delivery Structures;

---

<sup>3</sup> The Statutory Instrument for this piece of legislation is referred to as 'The Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2007. This instrument can be viewed at <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/regions/regions00.htm> under the link 'National Minimum Standards' set out in detail in 'Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working', 2007.

<sup>4</sup> The provisions contained in the Police Reform Act 2002 extended the responsible for producing the partnership plan to include the police authorities, fire and rescue authorities and also set out provisions to allow the Home Secretary to expand the composition of partnerships.

- Engaged Communities; and
- Appropriate Skills and Knowledge.

There are a number of specific statutory requirements that relate to the development of strategic assessments:

- duty to set up a strategy group and its composition;
- duty to prepare strategic assessment;
- outline of what a strategic assessment must contain;
- information sharing;
- arrangements for two tier authorities in England;
- community engagement in preparing the strategic assessment; and
- requirement to have regard to any guidance issued.

'Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working' outlines how the Hallmarks of Effective Partnerships and the new statutory requirements can assist all partnerships in improving performance. This guidance also describes the relationship between the partnership and the police strategic assessment; partnerships may if they wish, choose to produce a joint strategic assessment with the police providing that both the statutory requirements for partnerships and the requirements of the National Intelligence Model (NIM) process can be satisfied in one document. For the purposes of the toolkit the 'Delivering Safer Communities: A guide to effective partnership working' will be referred to as the CDRP/CSP guidance document.

## 2. All about strategic assessments

**This section provides information on:**

- **What a strategic assessment is**
- **Why partnership strategic assessments have been introduced**
- **What the purpose of a strategic assessment is**
- **Whether a strategic assessment produces all of the research and analysis needed**
- **Who is responsible for producing the strategic assessment**
- **What a strategic assessment means to your partnership**

### 2.1 What is a strategic assessment?

A strategic assessment presents and interprets the summary findings of an intelligence<sup>5</sup> analysis. As set out in the regulations<sup>6</sup>, the purpose of the strategic assessment is to “assist the strategy group in revising the partnership plan”. It is an internal document for the partnership; to inform the partnership plan and does not need to be published.

The statutory framework requires partnerships to include the following components in the strategic assessment:

- analysis of the levels and patterns of crime, disorder and substance misuse;
- changes in the levels and patterns of crime, disorder and substance misuse since the last strategic assessment;
- analysis of why these changes have occurred; and
- assessment of the extent to which last year’s plan was implemented.

The purpose of the strategic assessment is to provide knowledge and understanding of community safety problems that will inform and enable the partners to:

- understand the patterns, trends and shifts relating to crime and disorder and substance misuse;

---

<sup>5</sup> To ensure consistency, the toolkit uses the term “intelligence”, when others could use “information” or “data”. This is also to illustrate the alignment between partnerships and police businesses but does not in any way indicate that the minimum standards would be met if the partnerships were to use only the work produced by the police.

<sup>6</sup> Please refer to <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/20071830.htm>

- set clear and robust priorities for their partnership;
- develop activity that is driven by reliable intelligence and meets the needs of the local community;
- deploy resources effectively and present value for money; and
- undertake annual reviews and plan activity based on a clear understanding of the issues and priorities.

**A strategic assessment identifies current and possible future crime, disorder and substance misuse issues from sound evidence and robust analysis.**

## **2.2 Why have partnership strategic assessments been introduced?**

The introduction of strategic assessments is intended to move partnerships to a more intelligence-led business planning approach. By removing the requirement on partnerships to produce a three year audit and replacing it with strategic assessments that must be conducted at least annually, in accordance with statutory requirements, partnerships will improve their understanding of problems and their potential causes. They will therefore be able to respond more effectively to the communities they serve.

The strategic assessment is intended to align with the NIM and the police process of producing strategic assessments that have been successfully used by the police to address crime issues. It makes sense to ensure that where possible, the processes are closely aligned.

As with NIM strategic assessments, the partnership process of conducting a strategic assessment is intended to enable the partnership to respond more effectively to the communities they serve. The nature, extent and causes of local community safety problems can be better understood by:

- working with a wide range of relevant datasets and intelligence;
- developing expert opinion and sources of community intelligence; and
- interpreting what this means.

This will drive forward the process of:

- agreeing priorities; and
- identifying meaningful outcomes.

This will, in turn, help each partnership to:

- plan activity;
- allocate resources; and
- deliver activities that will focus on priorities and achieve results.

For the strategic assessment to be a document that best reflects the most up-to-date needs of the community, it is important that intelligence from a wide range of partners is considered<sup>7</sup>.

**Every partnership must complete a strategic assessment. This may be a joint report with the police strategic assessment or a partnership only report.**

## 2.3 An approach for two-tier authority areas in England

In two-tier authority areas, each county area is required to have a county strategy group, whose function “shall be to prepare a community safety agreement for the county area on behalf of the responsible authorities in that county area”<sup>8</sup> which is responsible for producing a county community safety agreement. The community safety agreement must be published before the end of each year. It also must be based on the strategic assessments for that year prepared by the strategy groups for the areas in the county area.

It will:

- identify countywide priorities (or shared priorities);
- set out a joint approach for tackling these priorities; and
- agree how resources will be deployed to do so.

This process links into the Local Area Agreement (LAA) process negotiated at county level.

The process for co-ordinating county community safety agreements ensures that each district partnership retains autonomy and the ability to respond to local needs. There are some suggested approaches for achieving this outlined below.

A first suggestion is that the partnership could consider bringing together the lead officers or analysts from across the county to agree a shared approach to producing the district level strategic assessments. This will enable partnerships to agree:

- a template for producing each district strategic assessment;

<sup>7</sup> Please refer to the section 4.2 on datasets for further information.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/20071830.htm>

- the type and level of intelligence that will be requested from countywide organisations for each strategic assessment; and
- approaches to accessing, analysing and disseminating intelligence to partnerships.

The benefits of this approach are that the county strategy group will:

- be able to easily identify shared or common priorities that will form the basis of the county community safety agreement;
- be able to compare intelligence across areas; and
- have access to common datasets and analytical techniques/approaches for assessing performance over time.

Countywide organisations will also have a set format for providing intelligence to individual partnerships making the intelligence and analysis process more straightforward and achievable.

Alternatively, partnerships could consider producing a single strategic assessment at a county level where each chapter represents a district partnership strategic assessment. If this approach is adopted, the district partnerships need to ensure they are directly involved in preparing and assessing their chapter and in making decisions relating to selection of priorities, outcomes and delivery against those priorities.

### **Decision-making processes to be aware of when setting priorities in the LAA context**

√ **The involvement of district level partners in two-tier areas should remain central throughout the LAA process.**

√ **The duty in the Local Government Act 2000 to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) applies to both district and county councils.**

√ **Although LAAs will be agreed at county level, they should reflect the key issues and priorities of districts and counties.**

√ **It is likely that LAA priority outcomes may be particular to some districts and not others, and areas are able to set specific targets relating to districts or smaller geographic areas where they deem it appropriate and where the intelligence allows for this.**

√ **There is an expectation that district-level Local Strategic Partnership (LSPs) be a full partner in the County LSP and thereby in the development of the LAA local narrative and priority setting process.**

√ **District councils and their elected councillors, their partners and thematic partnerships will have a crucial role in developing the**

**knowledge of their area and setting out local ambitions and ensuring this is reflected in the overall county narrative, or story of place.**

## **2.4 Is a strategic assessment the only analysis and research a partnership needs?**

The strategic assessment is intended to provide the partnership with the core planning material to inform the partnership plan. It doesn't replace the need for partnerships to develop more of an understanding of the issues. Strategic assessments are only a part of the intelligence-led business process. Partnerships will still need to produce further analytical work during the course of the year including:

- further in depth analysis associated with priority problems
- routine evaluation of interventions to assess effectiveness; and
- performance management processes including some level of analysis and interpretation to present the intelligence in a meaningful and informed way.

Intelligence generated from the above may be useful at recurring points throughout the year to support partnerships continue to make effective decisions. Further information about performance management for partnerships can be found in the CDRP/CSP guidance document.

**A strategic assessment is the document in which all the analysis in the partnership is brought together to drive the business. It is not the only analytical product a partnership will use during the year and there will be additional research, evaluation and performance processes that inform the partnership. The main difference is that the strategic assessment drives the partnership plan.**

In addition, if this year, all of the detailed analysis required to identify interventions prior to the deadline for the production of the first partnership plan is not available to the partnership, a pragmatic approach is required. This includes:

- commissioning further analysis that can realistically be completed within the timescales currently available;
- drawing on problem analyses produced in the last year that are still considered relevant; and
- building action points into the partnership plan for additional analysis to be undertaken before developing specific interventions.

## **2.5 Who is responsible for producing a strategic assessment?**

The minimum standards introduce the requirement for every partnership to have a strategy group which is responsible for:

- preparing the strategic assessment; and
- preparing, and implementing a partnership plan.

Requirements relating to the composition of this group can be found in the CDRP/CSP guidance document. Partnerships may find they already have a group that could act as a strategy group, e.g. an existing sub-group of the main partnership such as a responsible authorities group or executive. In some cases, it may be the main partnership itself.

Partnerships may want to consider delegating a member of the strategy group the lead responsibility for co-ordinating the production of the strategic assessment. This may be a lead analyst or the community safety manager (or equivalent). In some instances, they may be supported by a team of analysts or the project might be overseen by a working group. In all cases they will report back to the strategy group on a regular basis.

The crucial role the analytical group or individual analyst in the production of the strategic assessment cannot be underestimated. Therefore it is important that they are suitably briefed and appropriately trained. However, the analysts do not have the responsibility for delivering the strategic assessment. In order to ensure that the skills and knowledge that the analyst(s) brings to the team are appropriately utilised the partnership need to consider how they will manage both the analyst(s) processes and outputs.

Regardless of the decision made by partnerships with regards to fulfilling their requirements partners will need to consider how the individual or groups will report back to the strategy group and the mechanisms for facilitating intelligence sharing.

**Legal responsibility for producing the strategic assessment on behalf of the responsible authorities lies with the strategy group.**

## **2.6 What does it mean to the partnership?**

The minimum standards have been developed in such a way as to support partnerships be more informed about local crime, disorder and substance misuse issues, have more up to date intelligence on changing patterns and trends, and to be more responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. In business terms this will offer partnerships the ability to plan long-

medium and short-term responses to dealing with the problems faced by their local communities.

## **Checklist**

### **Partnerships**

- ✓ Do you have an existing group which could act as your strategy group?
- ✓ If not, how are you going to form your strategy group?
- ✓ Does the group include senior representatives from all the responsible authorities?
- ✓ Do you have a clear reporting structure?
- ✓ Do members of the strategy group understand their core responsibilities for preparing and implementing the strategic assessment and partnership plan?
- ✓ Is there a clear understanding amongst all partners about the strategic assessment and partnership plan; what each is and how they relate to each other?

### **Analysts**

- ✓ Does the group have the necessary skills and expertise to undertake the work?
- ✓ Do you need to run additional training or briefing sessions to ensure partners understand the new requirements and processes?

### ***At county level (in two-tier areas):***

#### **Partnerships**

- ✓ Is there a county strategy group with partners from all of the responsible authorities at county level and the chairs of all the county-wide partnerships?
- ✓ Have you agreed as a partnership how you will work with the county strategy group to produce your strategic assessment?
- ✓ Does the county strategy group understand their core responsibilities for preparing and implementing the county community safety agreement?
- ✓ Is there a clear understanding amongst all partners about the district strategic assessment and partnership plans and how these feed into the county community safety agreement?

#### **Analysts**

- ✓ Is there a clear understanding how the intelligence collected and analysed will be presented to county strategy group
- ✓ Is there a clear understanding how the intelligence collected and analysed will be presented to partnerships
- ✓ Does the group have the necessary skills and expertise to undertake the work?
- ✓ Do you need to run additional training or briefing sessions to ensure partners understand the new requirements and processes?



## 3. The structure of a strategic assessment

This section describes:

- What a strategic assessment may look like and
- Two possible templates that may be useful

### 3.1 What does a strategic assessment look like?

The minimum standards that relate to the production of strategic assessments have been developed to offer partnerships the flexibility to develop their strategic assessments in line with local practice and to fit with the partnership's values and style. Partnerships must include the following elements in their strategic assessment:

- analysis of the levels and patterns of crime disorder and substance misuse in the area;
- an analysis of the recent changes in those patterns;
- an analysis of why the changes occurred;
- what matters the responsible authority needs to priorities;
- the results of the community engagement exercise on prioritisation;
- an assessment of the previous partnership plan; and
- (where applicable) the matters that need to be taken to the county group.

These components are the minimum requirements for what the strategic assessment must contain. However, partners may wish to consider additional intelligence that will support the process of making effective decision making. The process of identifying priorities needs to be the key driver in partnerships' decision to use any additional form of intelligence. The overall format of the report is at the discretion of the partnerships. It is however suggested that if partnerships still wish to include some more intelligence to the strategic assessment, they could consider adding it as an appendix.

There are some key aspects to consider in producing a partnership strategic assessment:

#### 1. Make sure it is a user-friendly report.

Keep it simple and clear. It needs to be fit for purpose, readable and needs to consider the audience it is being produced for. It doesn't need to be too long but it still needs to successfully demonstrate the rationale behind the recommended priorities. It can refer to other supporting documents that provide additional detail, or additional intelligence could be put in appendices. Some partnerships have produced different versions of the strategic assessment for different audiences, for example to share with the community.

**2. The strategic assessment is about showing that the partnership understands the crime and disorder and related issues in their locality.**

Producing an assessment is about presenting an analysis of the intelligence rather than presenting intelligence. The strategic assessment should not just present lots of charts and tables, but a summary of what the intelligence is saying – the story behind it.

**3. Include information about the approach taken and the intelligence used.**

The document will benefit from a brief section on the approach or methodology used to produce and analyse the datasets. This can then be reproduced on a regular basis to a set format.

This year (2007/08) is the first time that partnerships have been required to produce strategic assessments and it is likely that some will identify gaps in intelligence, analytical capacity and capabilities, and community engagement mechanisms. These could be acknowledged and recorded to be used by partnerships to develop the strategic assessment further in future years. Partnerships may also want to consider including this information in the strategic assessment to monitor changes overtime.

**4. Create a template.**

Develop a methodology and template for producing the strategic assessment and then adapt this with experience as the standard approach for the partnership. This can then be replicated and will ensure that the approach is consistent and comparable over time. The template can be developed as knowledge and skills increase.

**5. Incorporate community information and intelligence.**

It is a statutory requirement that community intelligence is incorporated in the analysis. This will lead the partnership plan eventually to reflect the concerns and priorities of the local community (see section on engaging communities).

**6. Ensure the document makes it very clear what the identified priorities are and why these have been selected.**

Throughout the process, potential priorities will emerge. These will not necessarily form the final priorities but will be tested out through further analysis to see which will become the priorities for the next three years. It is recommended that the strategic assessment includes a section specifying the priorities and the criteria or process used for their selection.

## **7. Avoid putting in too much additional intelligence and include appendices.**

Include additional information in the appendices of the strategic assessment.

Try not to include all of the reports referenced in the main document; simply refer to these and include a sources page that tells readers where to get copies if required.

## **3.2 Two suggested outlines of content for a strategic assessment**

The tables below set out two possible outlines of content for the structure of a strategic assessment. The first is a draft Home Office outline produced for this toolkit and the second is based on one produced by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) as a template for joint strategic assessments. Partnerships may wish to consider both when they are planning their strategic assessment.

## Example A

<b>Suggested content for a partnership strategic assessment document</b>	
Title page	Include partnership name, if joint assessment name of relevant police force, county group where applicable, lead officer (name and organisation), planning year relates to and date produced
Executive summary	Summary of the priorities selected and anticipated impact
<b>Section 1: Introduction</b>	
The introduction	A brief paragraph setting out the background, purpose and scope of the strategic assessment. Refer to county strategic assessment if applicable and highlight if joint strategic assessment with police.
The team	Summary of who produced the report, include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• names,</li> <li>• role in team</li> <li>• organisation</li> <li>• acknowledgements (for example of any consultants used)</li> </ul>
Methodology	Set out the approach used to produce the assessment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What data was actually used</li> <li>• The timeframe for collecting and comparing data</li> <li>• How the analysis was undertaken</li> <li>• Details on any issues relating to specific data sets</li> <li>• The community engagement approach including how it informed the assessment</li> <li>• Any issues relating to analytical capacity and resources.</li> </ul>
Data sources	Set out what data and information was available to inform the strategic assessment. This can include what agency provided the information, which data used and what timeframes. Include some commentary on the reliability and validity of data and any problems faced in analysis of the information such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gaps in information</li> <li>• Accuracy in data collection and recording</li> <li>• Non comparable data sets</li> <li>• Data only collected recently</li> <li>• Changes in the way that data has been recorded.</li> </ul> <p>Reference data sharing and data protection protocols.</p>

## Section 2: The Analysis

Contextual information	An overview of the partnership area including relevant geographic, demographic, socio-economic factors and unique issues that might impact on this strategy such as population change, housing growth, large scale planned events, regional or cross-border issues.
The scanning exercise	<p>The scanning exercise reviews and summarises the levels and patterns of crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour (including behaviour negatively impacting on the environment) and substance misuse. The exercise should refer to data from all sources, not just crime data. The scanning exercise will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An assessment over time: this shows trends and patterns over time e.g. change since the baseline year of 2003/04</li> <li>• Recent assessments exploring changes in the levels and patterns over the last year or since the last assessment</li> <li>• A review of existing community engagement findings or other local public opinion information</li> <li>• A review of performance against current targets with comparisons (for example most similar group)</li> <li>• Summary of emerging long list of priorities</li> </ul>
The analysis	<p>A summary of in-depth analysis of the priorities emerging from the scanning exercise. The strategic assessment needs to include sufficient analysis for the partnership to start to identify their priorities and associated response for the partnership plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set out the topics that require further analysis and why</li> <li>• Produce profiles of these topics that will inform the strategic assessment. These should contain:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Scale of the problem (numbers and proportions) and any reasons for changes</li> <li>b. Suggested causes of the problem</li> <li>c. Relevance of location, victim and offender in addressing the problem</li> </ol> <p>These can be written from:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Additional analysis from data sources (which may include the wider context)</li> <li>b. Recently completed local analysis, research and evaluation</li> <li>c. Evidence from national research or examples of effective practice elsewhere</li> </ol> </li> <li>• List which additional relevant analysis cannot be undertaken and the reasons for this. 'Known unknowns' are</li> </ul>

	<p>important in deciding the response and planning for next year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarise the findings within this section of the strategic assessment and list which require further analysis before the partnership approves delivery.</li> </ul>
<b>Section 3: Priorities</b>	
The priority selection process	<p>Set out what process was used to select priorities, what criteria were chosen and why</p> <p>Set out what the community considered were the priorities that need to be addressed and how these have been dealt with</p>
The strategic priorities	<p>Set out the full list of recommended priorities</p> <p>Include what needs to be addressed and what the expected outcomes of this could be in terms of outputs and outcomes.</p> <p>The priorities need to be considered by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the partnership itself</li> <li>the responsible authorities in their work</li> <li>where relevant, county strategy group</li> </ol>
<b>Section 4: Current Activity and Provision</b>	
Current activity that addresses priorities	<p>Summarise current activity from the most recent partnership plan which relates to the emerging priorities.</p> <p>Review the impact of these.</p> <p>Recommend whether these activities should continue, be changed or cease.</p>
Local experience	<p>Summarise local knowledge of what works well in this context in tackling the problem</p> <p>Identify any gaps in local provision.</p>
<b>Section 5: Conclusion</b>	
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set out a process for producing the partnership plan based on the strategic priorities</li> <li>Set a strategic assessment review date/s</li> <li>List recommendations for future strategic assessment process</li> <li>Record identified development needs within the partnership including gaps in analysis and analytical capacity.</li> </ul>
<b>Appendices</b>	
	<p>Optional but might include</p> <p>Data sharing protocols</p> <p>Detailed analysis</p> <p>Detail of community engagement prioritisation process</p>

## Example B

NPJA outline for content for Joint Strategic Assessments		
Section	Content	Role
Introduction and scope	Aim; purpose; time period covered; data sources used; methodology; any sensitivity issues; geographical location covered; limitations of report (data quality, availability, legislative restrictions).	Lead Officer for Strategic Assessments/ Analyst
All crime/incidents	Current position on all crime / incidents; objectives set / met; trends; predictions; current priorities (national, CDRP, partnership organisations and local community); current problems.	Analyst
Major areas of concern	Objectives set / met; progress since last assessment; patterns / trends; cross-border issues; impact of criminal organisation locally; draw on results and recommendations of analytical products e.g. market profiles; predictions; early warning indicators (factors which can be monitored and are indicative of progress towards a particular future scenario).	Analyst after agreement from the Lead Officer for Strategic Assessments based on 'all crime' findings
PESTELO issues (Political / Environmental / Social / Technological / Economic / Legislative / Organisational issues)	Environmental scanning concerning future threats e.g. housing estates, public disorder, demographic changes; what, when, why, how, where; predictions, early warning indicators.	Strategic Assessment Team including the analyst
Recommendations	Intelligence requirement; enforcement; crime prevention priorities; what should be kept under review; significant dates; should the partnership plan be altered.	Members of Strategic Assessment Team including the analyst
Appendices	Detailed analysis including previous and current trends, partnership plan review process; dissemination/access list.	

**The community strategy can provide intelligence needed on the local context. Most intelligence for the scanning exercise will already be available and part of the on-going analysis and performance process.**

**When reporting on performance against current targets, just summarise how this is going; don't be tempted to reproduce existing balanced score cards or similar in the strategic assessment document.**

**Identifying clear priorities, outcomes and targets<sup>9</sup> will make it easier to identify appropriate responses and develop a performance management system.**

**Methods of illustrating the assessment will vary and may include charts, tables and graphs. These need to be salient and clear and above all include some explanation so that diagrams are interpreted and important issues are highlighted to help the decision-making process. An executive summary has not been included as it is felt that it is important to read the entire document.**

## **Checklist**

### **Partnerships and Strategy Group**

- ✓ Have you decided what template you are going to use for your strategic assessment?
- ✓ Have you checked the emerging priorities with your communities?
- ✓ Are you clear what your priorities are from this document?

### **Analysts**

- ✓ Have you taken the draft strategic assessment and emerging priorities to the partnership to ensure they agree final priorities before you develop the final sections on what you are already doing in relation to those priorities?
- ✓ Have you included community engagement findings in the strategic assessment?
- ✓ Have you made sufficient links with other strategic assessments in your area?
- ✓ Is there the necessary capacity to produce the document to the agreed timescales?
- ✓ Have the partnership and strategy group given clear direction on outputs and requirements?

---

<sup>9</sup> An example of a priority, outcome, target and measure: domestic burglary might be identified as a priority. The outcome would be a reduction in domestic burglary; behind this would be specific targets such as an x% reduction or a reduction in domestic burglary in a specific hot-spot location. The measure would be police recorded crime data.

## 4. The process for producing a strategic assessment

This section describes:

- A step-by-step guide to producing a strategic assessment
- Which intelligence and what to consider, including timeframes
- How to engage communities in identifying priorities
- Some hints and tips on analysis, including timeframes
- Selecting priorities

### 4.1 What are the steps in producing a strategic assessment?

Producing a fit for purpose strategic assessment requires a strong project management approach, with clear objectives, milestones, owners and risk management strategies. There are a lot of web based and other resources that can support partnerships develop such an approach.

The following is a 'walk through' the basic stages of planning, preparing and producing the strategic assessment. By highlighting who should be involved and how the partnership can ensure how the tasks can be completed this chapter will offer a step by step approach to producing a strategic assessment.

#### 1. Agree who is responsible

##### Who? The partnership

How? Start by identifying the partnership strategy group. Details of the group's responsibilities are detailed in the Home Office CDRP/CSP guidance document. It may be a newly formed group, the partnership or a smaller strategic group such as an executive or responsible authorities group.

#### 2. What needs to be considered before starting?

##### Who? The strategy group

How? The group could hold a meeting to agree and identify the following:

- the lead officer responsible for producing the strategic assessment;
- supporting officers, the people who will work alongside the lead officer to produce the analysis;
- how the production of the strategic assessment fits in with other relevant processes including:
  - the county community safety agreement (where relevant)

- the police strategic assessment
- the Local Area Agreement (LAA)
- budget setting deadlines for relevant partners.

**In England, districts in two-tier areas need to consider how they are contributing to the Local Area Agreement and timeframes for the developing community safety agreement.**

### **3. Who is going to produce the strategic assessment?**

#### **Who? The strategy group**

How? Assign a person with lead responsibility for analysis and production of the strategic assessment. This might be a senior analyst or the community safety officer or manager. Agree and release officers to be part of the team responsible for producing the strategic assessment and supporting the lead officer. Each partnership will have a team who are working on the strategic assessment and this will vary from area to area, but will probably consist of the partnership community safety officer/s and partnership analyst/s. The composition of the team will reflect the available resource and analytical capacity and may highlight the need to review future requirements.

**In assigning a lead officer, think about the skills, knowledge and powers that this person will need to be able to deliver a good product, accepted by the strategy group, and on time.**

### **4. Brief the team**

#### **Who? The lead officer**

How? Hold a briefing meeting to make sure everyone understands the background to this; what a partnership strategic assessment is and the local approach. It cannot be stressed enough how the analytical team is crucial in developing a strategic assessment. Its members need to be briefed in detail to ensure the process runs as smoothly as possible and to develop a fit for purpose document. The designated liaison officer could be invited to this meeting to start thinking of getting access to the required intelligence.

### **5. List all the stages needed up to the publication of the partnership plan on 1 April 2008**

#### **Who? The analytical team or steering group**

How? Hold a meeting to run through all of the necessary steps before producing the partnership plan so that a realistic timetable can be drawn up. There are a number of stages that each partnership will need to go through before it can publish its partnership plan on 1 April 2008. It is a good idea to

list all of these including any existing dates. There is a tool in Appendix 2 that can assist with this process.

## **6. Set out the timetable**

### **Who? The strategy group**

How? At an early meeting run through the task list (as mentioned above) and set out a timetable for producing the strategic assessment. Ensure this fits in with the process of producing and publishing the partnership plan by 1 April 2008. On this basis, it is important that partnerships produce a timetable for their own use based on the tasks they need to complete and which allows sufficient and appropriate time for all of the elements. When setting timetables, partnerships need to consider local decision-making processes, for example if the partnership plan needs to be ratified by the full council, a cabinet, the Local Strategic Partnership or by other local bodies.

**The strategic assessment informs the partnership plan that must be published by 1 April. Take that into account when deciding when the strategic assessment needs to be completed.**

## **7. Organise the analysts' group**

### **Who? The lead officer**

How? Hold a planning meeting to:

- check that everyone has been allowed dedicated time by their respective organisations to work on this project;
- assign tasks which might include the overview or scanning exercise or producing a topic profile report;
- give a timeline for any work – this could include deadlines for producing topic profile reports (if being used) and time for amendments and redrafting; and
- produce a template for officers to use for writing reports to ensure these are consistent and comparable. As a minimum this could include:
  - timescales for when intelligence will go back to;
  - timescales for most current intelligence; and
  - steps in analysis and presenting intelligence.

**The commissioning process of the analysis for the strategic assessment is crucial. Ensure the analysts have a clear set of parameters within which to work.**

## 8. Consider and list the datasets

### Who? The analytical team

How? At the first planning meeting draw up a list of potential datasets and assess how each could contribute to understanding the local community safety problems. This will include the information which the responsible authorities have a duty to share. Check this includes intelligence from the sources required as well as other relevant intelligence pertinent to the locality. The designated liaison officer will be able to help with this list.

The strategic assessments must be able to demonstrate a wider focus than purely intelligence about crime, especially in considering how intelligence relating to anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse will be used. Set out the datasets available and consider any significant gaps. Take a view on whether this needs to be collated before the assessment process or whether it needs to be listed as an improvement need over the next 12 months.

**Go beyond raw crime intelligence only. Other intelligence can be used to develop an informative picture in the strategic assessment.**

**Where gaps exist, these could be included as an area for development in the strategic assessment or your partnership plan.**

## 9. Run the scanning exercise

### Who? The lead officer

How? Assign a team or an individual to run the scanning exercise. This is an overview of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse raw intelligence together with current performance analysis to identify:

- ✓ the key problems;
- ✓ problematic issues; and
- ✓ emerging issues.

The scanning exercise interprets what the intelligence is telling us and needs to include:

- an assessment over time showing trends and patterns since a chosen baseline;
- a recent assessment, exploring any changes in the levels and patterns over the last year, last quarter or since the previous strategic assessment;
- a review of existing community engagement findings;

- a review of performance against current targets; and
- from this, present emerging strategic priorities.

#### **10. Identify who is going to produce the topic profile reports, the process and template for these**

##### **Who? The analytical team**

How? The lead officer will present the emerging strategic priorities and assign members of the team responsibility for the more in-depth analysis on these topics.

This analysis needs to be manageable. It may include additional analysis where possible but can also be based on existing analysis and research (where this has been undertaken within the last year and is still relevant).

The lead officer could list which additional analysis cannot be completed in this timeframe but will be needed before agreeing a response.

**If all the desired analysis can not be produced or previous analytical products used, draw an action plan showing the different pieces of analytical work required. This can be a recommendation in the strategic assessment with deadlines and a named lead for each piece.**

#### **11. Produce the draft strategic assessment**

##### **Who? The lead officer**

How? Summarise the findings of the scanning exercise and the topic profiles. Do not reproduce them in full. Draft the strategic assessment in line with the model adopted by the partnership. Make it clear how priorities have been selected and what these are. At this stage they are recommendations to the partnership.

#### **12. Take the draft strategic assessment to the partnership for amendment, comment and approval**

##### **Who? The lead officer**

How? At this stage, the strategic assessment is only a draft. The partnership needs to approve its priorities for inclusion in the partnership plan. The lead officer's role is to present the intelligence and give advice on direction and priorities.

**The strategy group holds statutory responsibility for the strategic assessment and the preparation and implementation of the partnership plan.**

**Individual partners may take the recommendations through their own agencies but as the legal responsibility lies with the partnership strategy group, it is not appropriate for individual agencies to change the fundamental agreement on priorities.**

### **13. Produce the final strategic assessment document**

#### **Who? The lead officer**

How? Finalise the document and add in the final two sections on current activity and the next steps. The final document should be taken back to the strategy group when presenting the draft partnership plan.

**Consider using critical readers either from the community or from interested groups to help finalise the document.**

### **14. Review the process and set up a local template for future use**

#### **Who? The strategy group**

How? Crucial lessons can be learned by reviewing how the process went and by talking to the main stakeholders.

The process used this year will also help in drafting a template for future strategic assessments,

## **4.2 More about datasets**

Prior to analysing the intelligence, analyst may want to consider listing possible datasets and information sources they may require to address the key questions outlined by the strategy group and/or partnership. This will allow the analyst to identify areas of possible disparity between what is required and what is available from key agencies in terms of intelligence and information.

Information sharing within partnerships has often been sporadic even though it has been permitted under section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Police and Justice Act 2006 introduces a new duty on specified agencies to disclose certain sets of depersonalised information at least quarterly in electronic form to the other section 115 relevant authorities<sup>10</sup>. More detail and information about the datasets that are included in this provision can be

---

<sup>10</sup> The Section 115 responsible authorities are: police; police authority; local authority (including district, county, London borough, parish council, community council and county borough council), registered social landlords; local probation board; local health board (in Wales); primary care trust; strategic health authority and fire and rescue authority.

viewed in the CDRP/CSP guidance document. The provisions relate directly to depersonalised data that must be share at least on a quarterly basis in an electronic form. This duty ***only applies when the authority already holds the information so it does not require the collection of any additional information***

The purpose of revising the information sharing provisions is to enable the profiling of crime and disorder trends and patterns within the respective CDRP/CSP area. For this reason, in most cases, it is the record level data that is specified rather than aggregate data or statistics.

In practical terms the partnership will need to consider how it could access the following information:

- information provided to it by the responsible authorities;
- information provided to it by co-operating persons and bodies;
- information provided to it by participating persons and bodies;
- information provided to it by the crime and disorder committee for the area;
- the partnership plan for that year; and
- any other information relating to crime and disorder and substance misuse in the area given to the responsible authorities by persons living and working in the area.

**Look at a broad a range of datasets but bear in mind that it is much better to be able to conduct a robust analysis from some good quality intelligence than to produce a poor quality analysis from a lot of poor datasets.**

Intelligence from different organisations or agencies will be collected in different ways, to different definitions and with varying levels of reliability, creating potential problems. These include:

- some raw intelligence is not comparable; the data is often collected for a specific purpose. It cannot simply be overlaid as it could create duplication of recording. Analysts need to be clear about why the information was collected prior to considering using the data ;
- some agencies will not have cleansed raw intelligence – in other words they will not have checked issues such as double counting or problems with location recording;
- some raw intelligence is only collected in a few locations and so may distort geographical mapping if simply added in to the process, producing perverse hotspot locations. For example, community wardens or police community support officers may only operate in some wards or neighbourhood policing areas, social housing providers may only operate

in some wards. These datasets are valuable but the limitations need to be considered;

- if some intelligence fields have not been collected in full, it may not be possible to draw conclusions from this.

Consequently, the analysts need to talk to the organisations' data officers to understand how the raw intelligence is collected and any issues arising.

**It is viewed as good practice for the strategic assessment to include a list of all datasets (this could be an appendix) and information on gaps in intelligence and what needs to be improved or developed before the next strategic assessment.**

### 4.3 Engaging communities

Local communities are an essential part of the planning and should be involved in the process of choosing priorities. The minimum standards require that the strategy group ask the community for their views about the levels and patterns of crime and disorder and substance misuse in their area and what the partnership should prioritise to tackle these.

Local people are an important source of intelligence as they experience the crime and community safety problems in their area. As such local communities must be part of the strategic assessment process.

There are different ways which can be suggested to gather the different views present in the community. For example:

1. Community intelligence is specific information relating to local crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse issues that can feed into the analysis process. This might be collected through community-based tasking and co-ordinating groups or through agency systems for collating community intelligence such as police or crime information management units.
2. Ask people about their personal experiences of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse through a local survey. To use this as an indicator of the scale of the problem locally make sure that:
  - the survey is robust and statistically relevant – the sample population should be of adequate size and free from bias (so representative of the population). Survey specialists within partner agencies such as the local authority or national polling organisations can advise;

- this is set within a timeframe so that it is current, relevant and comparable – for example, experience of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse within the last 12 months;
  - consider asking the same questions as the British Crime Survey to see how the area compares.
3. Community views and opinions can provide intelligence about people's fears and concerns and their knowledge of what is being done to deal with these issues. This sort of intelligence can come from surveys, day-to-day engagement activities or public meetings where concerns are expressed and personal experiences are disclosed.
  4. Local communities will probably have clear priorities, ideas on how the partnership should respond and views on partnership performance and effectiveness. When potential priorities have been identified, check these out with the communities and get their comments and views. This could be done through existing mechanisms such as Neighbourhood Policing Groups, community forums, newsletters, citizens' panels and by asking respondents:
    - whether there are other priorities not currently included and why these should be on the list; and
    - what issues the partnership members need to give highest priority to and why – for example, simply ask them to list their top three concerns.

Crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse impacts on some members of the community more than others. Take steps to engage with those groups whose views are often under-represented.

**Ensure steps are taken to engage with all sectors of the community living and working in an area but particularly those most likely to be affected by crime, disorder and substance misuse.**

The strategy group must publish a summary of the partnership plan for the local community. It is thought that this could make the process of gathering community views more straightforward in future assessments.

#### **4.4 Some hints and tips on data analysis**

This section sets out some points to consider when planning the analysis. It is not intended to be a definitive guide to crime analysis; there are many other resources available including:

[www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/p0312.htm](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/p0312.htm)

[www.popcenter.org](http://www.popcenter.org)

[www.jdi.ucl.ac.uk/downloads/publications/otherpublications/55steps/Prelims.pdf](http://www.jdi.ucl.ac.uk/downloads/publications/otherpublications/55steps/Prelims.pdf)

[www.npia.police.uk](http://www.npia.police.uk)

## 1. Brief your team

If a team of analysts are working on the strategic assessment make sure they are all briefed on the approach and principles that will be used or give them a template to work to, to ensure consistent and comparable analysis. If following a specific approach such as Scanning Analysis Response Assessment (SARA) process or using the NIM, make sure they are all working to this and understand what is expected of them.

## 2. Agree the timeframes

Before starting, agree the timeframes. Ensure that the right datasets are being examined so that the analysis is fit for purpose. Much will depend on the particular trends that the partnership needs to understand as well as some of the characteristics of the issue being examined. For instance, low volume crime is likely to be subject to relatively bigger variations than high volume crime so will need to be examined over longer time periods.

When analysing data, looking at different timeframes will help to identify patterns, trends and changes over time and assess problems and priorities. This could include:

- intelligence from the past three months compared to the same quarter last year;
- intelligence from the past 12 months compared to the previous 12 months; and
- historic intelligence going back at least three years. For this first strategic assessment, the previous baseline of 2003/04 could be used.

**Historic data:** Looking at historic data allows us to look at long term trends, and to identify if there are any on-going problems.

**Recent datasets:** The three-month and 12-month datasets will identify more recent shifts and trends. This can highlight recent improvements to an ongoing problem (which together with other intelligence might show that the curve is turning). Conversely, this might indicate potential new problems, areas of increase where previously performance has been good. Quarterly intelligence can be helpful to look at recent trends but it is important to compare quarterly data to the same quarter a year earlier in order to factor out seasonality. So for example, a partnership may have an on-going problem

with a particular crime issue and over the last twelve months has started to see a down turn. Using previous quarterly data, you may identify a specific quarter which has routinely been higher than others. You might then be able to predict that despite the current years' decrease, you could see an increase during that quarter that may not be a significant cause for concern. IQuanta is a useful resource for looking at whether changes are significant or part of normal variation.<sup>11</sup>

More analysis will be needed to find out what is going on behind the figures but using a variety of datasets will give a good overview of trends and patterns over time. There may well be other time periods that may be helpful for each local area to look at for planning periods. For example, the period called 'financial year to date'. Looking at these timeframes is the minimum level needed to complete an initial scanning exercise.

Looking at these datasets will help in making informed decisions. Recent intelligence can highlight current trends but care is needed not to divert resources to focus on minor shifts or changes. This is why interpretation of the intelligence is important. Historic data on its own can mean that the partnership misses important current shifts which might enable them to respond to a rising problem before it becomes an entrenched issue.

**iQuanta offers a lot of explanation on the different ways crime levels can be analysed. Be sure to make best use of the vast resources available.**

Not all datasets will go back to the agreed baseline. This may be because the raw intelligence was not collected then or the raw intelligence was not collected in a routine or robust way. Make a judgement about whether to include the data, record what timeframes are being used and why, and make clear the limitations.

### **3. Some issues relating to historic datasets**

When using any raw intelligence, be aware of any changes that might have an impact on the analysis. These might include:

- changes to recording practice (local or national);
- changes in the way raw intelligence was collected or who was collecting it;
- points when new powers or new legislation came into effect which might have impacted on recording;<sup>12</sup>
- local operations that may have led to an increase such as public awareness campaigns on how to report incidents, policing operations etc.

<sup>11</sup> To find out more, please refer to <https://www.iquanta.net>

<sup>12</sup> One example would be the introduction of National Crime Recording Standard in 2002/2003.

Any such change, however, needs to be evidenced and not simply assumed. A simple way to assess this would be to draw a timeline and put markers in to indicate when these changes happened to see whether they have impacted on the figures.

#### 4. Comparing crime levels

Intelligence from other areas specifically national or regional averages can show how partnerships are performing in comparison to others. Comparing crime trends against those of partnerships in the 'Most Similar Group'<sup>13</sup> is a key part of the Home Office benchmarking methodology and represents one of the best ways of undertaking any sort of benchmarking. Partnerships are recommended to use most similar groupings when comparing crime levels with other areas. This helps to put the intelligence into context. For example, the exercise may show:

- decrease in a particular problem which might be considered to be positive. However, if a comparison with other partnerships in your most similar group shows that those areas have seen a more substantial decrease then this might still be a cause for concern,
- substantial decrease in a problem where it is still significantly above the national average and above your peer groups might mean it need to still be a priority.

#### 5. Interpreting intelligence

The strategic assessment provides a summary of what the intelligence is telling us. It is all about interpretation, not about presenting intelligence.

At the scanning stage, this means having a good understanding of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse to tell us what is happening behind the figures. This will ensure that the topics picked out for more in-depth analysis are the ones to focus on. To do this take into account:

- change over time, recent changes and comparators (see sections above);
- volume issues, those types of crime and anti-social behaviour and substance misuse that are most prevalent;

---

<sup>13</sup> You can find out more about your most similar group on <https://www.iqanta.net>. Be aware that the methodology to identify most similar groupings is changing. The iQuanta website provides you with further information on the changes too.

- severity and harm;
- disproportionate impact on specific sections of the community. There may be certain locations, age groups, or sectors of the community that experience higher crime and anti-social behaviour or live in areas where drug or alcohol misuse is prevalent;
- assessments of the impact of hidden crimes such as domestic violence or hate crimes and how these can be brought into the equation;
- incident types – these need to be broken down. For example, do not just refer to changes in violent crime by crime categories such as common assault or wounding. Break this down by type such as domestic violence, alcohol-related violence in the city centres, violence associated with licensed premises outside of the main city centres, young people being violent, racial harassment, homophobic crime.

Apply the prioritisation process to identify emerging priorities for further analysis. This further analysis will test out any hypothesis and ultimately confirm that the right priorities have been chosen; refine the choice and then identify an appropriate response for inclusion in the partnership plan.

## 6. Some tips on presenting data

When presenting intelligence there are some basic guiding principles that analysts may want to consider:

- rather than referring purely to changes always show this numerically and by percentage;;
- reference the data source (for example, when referring about police intelligence, use the specific offence name and where relevant mention the offence code);
- charts can be a useful way to show complex intelligence in a simple and readable way as long as they are used to help interpret what intelligence indicates. Ensure the graphs are clearly labelled and fully titled;
- always ensure that all the intelligence is there and there is a clear description of what analysis has been undertaken for the next person to be able to duplicate it. The methodology will need to be the same so that comparisons can be made for benchmarking purposes; and
- mapping intelligence is also useful and showing a map can quickly demonstrate how some communities suffer disproportionately from crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse. However, mapping methodology needs to be robust and location sources accurate. Quality checking intelligence collection and how location is recorded by an agency is essential before using the findings to interpret hot-spots. Do not overlay datasets that might duplicate recording of incidents. Do not include datasets where only some areas have incidents recorded to highlight a

partnership area wide distribution although this could be used to look at a specific location.

## **7. What about the causes of crime, disorder and substance misuse and risk and protective factors?**

The strategic assessment is about crime, disorder and substance misuse issues. But in order to understand what is really happening, that is to really identify the causes and roots of the issues, partnerships will need to use several datasets. Some datasets or sources may even appear unimportant or unexpected at first, but when considering issues, partnerships need to take a holistic approach to try to get to a level where they develop a better understanding of their issues.

It may be that partnerships also wish to focus on offenders such as young offenders or specific victim groups. Therefore the risk and protective factors related to these issues need to also be considered.

The most appropriate stage to incorporate this into the analysis is in the more in-depth analysis. Having identified emerging priorities and commissioned a topic profile, task the analysts to ensure that they include something on the causes, risk and protective factors.

### **4.5 How to identify priorities in a strategic assessment**

The strategic assessment is simply a tool for identifying the priorities for further action. With finite partnership resources, it is recognised that some local problems need to be given more attention than others. As such, the purpose of the strategic assessment is to provide sufficient intelligence to decision-makers about which crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse problems need to be the focus for the partnership. This is where a prioritisation process is needed.

There are five key aspects of local problems to consider in the prioritisation process.

- **How big is the problem compared to other problems in the area?** Some crime, anti-social behaviour, alcohol and drugs problems occur in greater volume than others. Obviously, the greatest impact on a partnership's overall performance will be achieved by reducing the most prevalent problems. For example, a ten per cent reduction on 1,000 incidents has a larger overall impact than a ten per cent reduction on 100 incidents.
- **How big is the problem in the area compared to other areas?** Where the likelihood of a problem is concerned, this will usually focus on the rate (i.e. the number per household or per head of population) at which it

occurs within a given population. However, one also needs to know whether that rate is unacceptably high for the population. This will require comparisons to be made to other populations, such as the most similar group, the region, or national populations. This is where benchmarking is used to determine whether the rate of a particular type of problem is greater than might be expected.

- **What is the harm caused by the problem?** Where the *harm* associated with a problem is concerned, the extent to which the problem causes damage (physically, psychologically, socially, or economically) needs to be assessed. This to a large extent may be a judgement call by the partnership, but there are methods that can be used to assess this in a more objective way. For example, community consultation could be used to gauge the feeling about the harm caused by particular problems. In addition, information on the costs of crime produced by the Home Office<sup>14</sup> could be used to provide a notional value of harm and so to rank local problems but it has limitations. Also look at whether a problem is affecting a small part of the community but in such a disproportionate way that it really needs to be addressed – for example, hate crime.
- **How is the problem changing over time?** Some large problems may be reducing rapidly over time but are still a priority by virtue of their size. However, there may be some much smaller emerging problems that need to be a priority because they show signs of rapid escalation.
- **To what extent do the public expect something to be done about the problem?** Priorities need to be focused on the problems that the public would like to see addressed. Indeed, there may be some large problems in an area that are considered a low priority to the local community. This is something that can be checked through community engagement.

Addressing these five issues is likely to provide sufficient information for the partnership to decide on priorities. Other types of information can of course be included in the strategic assessment and additional analysis *will* be required for the development of interventions. But from a strategic, priority-setting perspective, this represents the minimum that can be expected for the decision-making process. High priority needs to be given to the views of the local community when setting priorities. While it is not recommended that these views override the priority setting process, partnerships must demonstrate that they have considered the views of the local community. Different forms of risk matrix can be used to assist partnerships in setting their priorities. There are a number of websites that provide information on the risk assessment matrix including:

[http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documentation\\_and\\_templates\\_risk\\_management\\_strategy\\_.asp](http://www.ogc.gov.uk/documentation_and_templates_risk_management_strategy_.asp)

**Clearly indicate in the strategic assessment how the issues recommended for consideration for the partnership plan have been prioritised. Every partnership will agree a rationale, based on their**

---

<sup>14</sup> To find out more about the cost of crime, please go to [http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/ecom\\_soc\\_cost.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/ecom_soc_cost.html).

**knowledge of the locality. It is most important to be clear and transparent about it.**

#### **4.6 What next? Making the process easier in the long term**

It is a statutory requirement that strategic assessments are carried out annually in time to refresh the partnership plan.

If partnerships wish to, this could also be done more frequently. This year a pragmatic approach is needed to produce the first strategic assessment but this will not continue to be the case.

There are a number of tasks that the partnership will need to undertake after completion of the current strategic assessment and for inclusion in the partnership plan under partnership development needs.

- Hold a review of the strategic assessment process:
  - What worked? What didn't?
  - What has been learnt?
  - What needs to be improved?
  - How can the process be streamlined for replication?
- Create a template for the partnership on developing strategic assessments. Use experience from this process to refine the template for next time. This might include datasets, methodology and product.
- List the intelligence gaps and improvement needs and set out a process for improving routine raw intelligence collection, cleansing and analysis.
- Review the partnership's analytical capacity and capabilities and recommend how this can be improved.
- If not already in place, recommend an approach to routine performance monitoring and management.
- Agree how often the strategic assessment needs to be refreshed. This must be annually.
- Set time tables for the production of future strategic assessments.
- Evaluate activities, ideally including a cost-effectiveness element.

#### **It is recommended to:**

- **start the process of producing strategic assessments by listing:**
  - **the steps to take**
  - **by when?**
  - **by whom?**
- **run the analysis, start by listing available intelligence (checking**

that intelligence from all of the required sources has been considered). Record any gaps or problems with the data.

- ensure compliance with the requirement that community intelligence is incorporated into the analysis.
- agree the methodology, including timeframes and approach, and have an agreed process for selecting priorities.
- finish by reviewing and quality assuring what has been done and drafting a template and process for future strategic assessments.

## **Checklist:**

### **Partnership/Strategy Group**

- ✓ Have you checked how the production of the strategic assessment fits in with other relevant processes, most importantly the development of the Local Area Agreement?
- ✓ Has the strategy group identified someone with lead responsibility for producing the strategic assessment?
- ✓ Have you identified a team of supporting analysts?
- ✓ Have you drafted a timeline for production of the strategic assessment allowing for redrafting and amendments?
- ✓ Have you agreed a process for selecting priorities?
- ✓ Have you planned a review process to learn from this year's process and develop a format and template for production of future strategic assessments?

### **Analysts**

- ✓ Have the relevant analysts been released to work on this project?
- ✓ Have the relevant analysts been fully briefed and are they clear on the process, approach and their individual responsibilities?
- ✓ Are partner agencies geared up to provide relevant intelligence within the necessary timeframes?
- ✓ Does your team have the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake the necessary analysis?
- ✓ Do you have members of the team able to plan and analyse community data?
- ✓ Does your lead officer have the necessary skills to project manage this process?

# APPENDIX 1: Frequently asked questions

## How detailed should a strategic assessment be?

Section 3 sets out what is required to be included in a strategic assessment.

Beyond the minimum standards, it needs to be a usable document so is more about presenting an overview analysis that will inform and enable the strategic partners to set clear and robust priorities. More in-depth analysis needs to be available in addition to the main document where necessary.

The initial overview (or scanning exercise) is going to be crucial in making this an effective document. This exercise will identify adverse trends or shifts that need to be considered. An initial prioritisation exercise will then identify which problems will need to be analysed in more detail.

This additional analysis will either already exist or need to be commissioned and completed.

## How does this differ from the three-year audit process?

This process has developed out of the lessons learnt from the audit process to make analysis more frequent, responsive, detailed and replicable. Strategic assessments are significantly different from audits and need to be clear, succinct and focused on problem or priority areas.

The overview or scanning section need only be brief and, alongside existing performance data, will identify the potential priority areas where more detailed analysis is required. This analysis will often already be available, or at least partly available. Unless the scanning process highlights a previously unseen problem, it is likely that additional work will already be underway to analyse the issue.

The CDRP Reform Programme represents a move towards an ongoing intelligence-led business process with ongoing analysis supporting this.

## Is it possible to use the police strategic assessment as the basis for the CDRP one?

The police already carry out strategic assessments as described in the NIM. This strategic assessment specifies some minimum standards for production that do not apply to partnerships strategic assessments. However, the purpose and the process to produce both strategic assessment documents are very similar. It would make sense in terms of sharing information and resources if the partnership strategic assessment was closely aligned with the

police strategic assessment. Police and partnerships may choose if they wish to produce a joint strategic assessment where it is felt that both the requirements on partnerships and the minimum standards for NIM can be satisfied in one document. At the very least, intelligence from a police strategic assessment can usefully inform the partnership strategic assessment process.

The audience for the partnership strategic assessment will not necessarily be familiar with police terms and it will be necessary to consider the use of language if a joint report is produced. It will not be appropriate to use the police strategic assessment in lieu of a partnership model and would fail to engage partners fully in a crucial part of the intelligence-led business process.

### **What about regional or cross-border issues?**

Clearly county community safety agreements will assist in pulling together this level of intelligence in two-tier authority areas. However, all partnerships need to consider possible cross-border or regional issues. Most will already have some understanding of these and will have links with neighbouring partnerships. It would be beneficial to meet with those partners and share intelligence emerging from the strategic assessments where cross-border issues exist and consider how to work together to resolve the problems, including use of shared resources.

### **How should the priorities that the partnership identifies through the analysis conducted for its strategic assessment reflect the national PSAs and the LAAs?**

The strategic assessment identifies the crime reduction and community safety priorities for the area. When carrying out the assessment, intelligence that places the issues for the area in the wider county, regional or national context need to be taken into account. This context can, at least in part, be provided through national performance assessment frameworks. For Partnerships, the Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) framework will collect together assessments of the performance of each local area against a variety of nationwide community safety objectives (including the government's PSA objectives). This will allow partnerships to see how they compare against similar areas elsewhere on many core areas of responsibility and thus factor this into the analysis underpinning the strategic assessment.

Government Offices and the Welsh Assembly Group will also use APACS analysis (particularly as it relates to PSAs) to support the government's position in LAA negotiations, and can be expected to challenge LSPs to *consider* setting LAA targets around any areas of apparent weakness that are suggested by that analysis. If the partnership's strategic assessment takes into account this same information, this should facilitate effective negotiation of appropriate LAA targets for the LSP (regardless of whether the LAA is negotiated at unitary or top tier level).

APACS is not formally introduced until April 2008. However, the PSAs (and the National Indicator Set that will support LAAs, which will include some indicators shared with APACS) are expected to be announced in autumn 2007. Over the remainder of 2007/08 the Home Office intends to provide on an ongoing basis some “best guess” analysis of the performance of each CDRP as it *might* be reflected in the final APACS framework (accepting that APACS analytical and assessment methods are still in discussion) to support partnerships and LSPs in setting priorities. In the first instance, this will be similar to much of the analysis already available through the iQuanta website, and will be developed further.

## APPENDIX 2: A tool to help plan the production of a strategic assessment

You can use this document as a tool in your planning process to produce your strategic assessment. We have identified the steps which we felt you might need to think about but, depending on your local circumstances; they may not be all relevant. Alternatively, you may feel that you want to include some additional steps to ensure you have a more complete picture. The main thing is that this tool becomes something useful for you to work with. In order to identify the deadlines, you might find it easier to start at the end – that is the publication of the partnership plan on 1 April 2008 – and work backwards from then.

ACTION TO BE UNDERTAKEN	NAMED LEAD	DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION
Identify your strategy group		
Identify your lead officer responsible for the production of the strategic assessment		
Brief the partnership group		
Brief the strategy group about roles and requirements in relation to the strategic assessment and agree the local approach		
Agree as a strategy group to commit time and resources (including analytical resources) to produce the strategic assessment		
Identify your analytical capacity		
Check completion dates for relevant reports such as the police strategic assessment. Two-tier authority areas should check when they need to submit their priorities to the county strategy group for inclusion in the community safety agreement		
Identify milestones for the production of your strategic assessment around the dates identified in stage 7 and around the dates which are already fixed in the calendar (e.g. partnership meetings)		
Meet the people involved with producing		

the strategic assessment to clarify the process and assign tasks		
Identify your datasets and secure their access		
Ensure your datasets are clean		
Scanning stages		
Identify the topics for further focus and for which you wish to produce deeper analysis		
Produce topic profile reports (if being used)		
Decide how your draft priorities fit with your LAA		
Decide whether your local priorities reflect national priorities		
Lead officer to produce draft strategic assessment		
Meeting of the strategy group to agree priorities		
Community engagement process to check out priorities with the community		
Formal approval of priorities and draft outcomes and targets		
Review work to date and identify what works		
Partnership meeting to approve outcomes, targets and the final strategic assessment document		
Commence production of the partnership plan ensuring relevant partners are engaged with this process		
Draft partnership plan (which includes how the partnership intends to achieve outcomes – the action plan)		
Take draft to the strategy group and the partnership (build in extra time to allow for changes and amendments)		

The partnership plan may need to go through individual partner agencies approval process		
Publish partnership plan on 1 April 2008		
Review how the strategic assessment was produced to improve the process for the following year		

## APPENDIX 3: A tool to identify priorities

This table can be used as a tool in developing your own matrix that will help you to identify your priorities. It is largely inspired by section 4.5.

You can use this table in different ways. For instance, you could simply put a tick or a cross in a cell to summarise what your analysis tells you and count the number of ticks and crosses to help in your prioritisation process.

You could also use more sophisticated weighting with scores such as:

- 0= this is not at all the case in our area
- 1= there is some small evidence that this is the case in our area
- 2= there is moderate evidence that this is the case in our area
- 3= there is substantial evidence that this is the case in our area

This is obviously one example of how you could weigh the issues and you can adapt it to reflect your needs.

There are also other tools which you may find useful in your prioritisation process. These are:

- the Balance Score Card
- the Matrix for Risk Assessment.

More information is available on the internet.

THE ISSUE OR PROBLEM	The problem is bigger in our area than other problems	The problem is bigger in our area than in other areas	The problem causes significant harm	The problem is deteriorating	Community engagement indicates this problem is a real concern	Other considerations	Overall score
List in this column your problems, for instance:							
Burglary dwelling							
Theft from vehicle							
Criminal damage to dwellings							
Noise nuisance							
Alcohol-related crime							
Fly tipping							
Drug misuse such as crack cocaine use							
Other local issues							

## APPENDIX 4: Some approaches to intelligence-led business planning

Behind the new legislation is an intention to move away from descriptive and long-term strategies to become more focused on ongoing intelligence-led business solutions. The partnership plan will set out three-year priorities and as such has a short- and medium-term focus. However, the intention behind strategic assessments (that must be produced annually) is to ensure that these plans are responsive to shifts and changes in crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse and enable the delivery of effective solutions to emerging problems.

There are different problem-solving approaches that could be used as *part* of the analysis. This section provides some additional information about two of these:

- SARA
- The Problem Analysis Triangle

The NIM is another useful approach. An introduction on the NIM is available in the CDRP/CSP guidance document and more can be found on the NPIA website.<sup>15</sup>

However, these are not the only methodologies and perhaps more broadly a good analysis needs to use and deploy models of working that can demonstrate intelligence-led analysis.

### SARA

SARA stands for:

- **Scanning:** the process of identifying and prioritising problems to be addressed
- **Analysis:** the detailed investigation of the problem to identify the most appropriate means to address it
- **Response:** the interventions and activities that are undertaken to tackle the problem
- **Assessment:** the process of evaluating whether the problem has been sufficiently addressed, or whether further action is required

SARA is a problem-solving methodology originally derived from problem-oriented policing. It is most commonly employed in the UK by Neighbourhood

---

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.npia.police.uk>

Policing Teams as a means of identifying and addressing local problems. However, this has also been used by many partnerships as a means of delivering their strategies. It provides a framework for identifying the problems to be addressed, undertaking detailed analysis of those problems, developing intelligence-led approaches to tackling the problems and assessing whether these have been effective.

This approach can form the basis of an intelligence-led business process for a CDRP, with all work undertaken by a partnership covered by one of the four stages of SARA. Indeed, the strategic assessment itself can be viewed as a scanning exercise in which local problems are identified as priorities for action. This will subsequently lead further analysis of those priorities and responses to deal with those problems.

For further information see:

<http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/learningzone/sara.htm>

### **Problem Analysis Triangle**

The Problem Analysis Triangle is a tool that can be used in analysing identified problems. It can be used in both the SARA and NIM intelligence-led business processes and is derived from Routine Activity Theory.

Routine Activity Theory provides a framework for understanding the circumstances in which many forms of crime occur. It states that for a crime to take place there needs to be:

- a suitable victim;
- a motivated offender; and
- the absence of a capable guardian.

These three factors need to come together in time and space for a crime to occur. From a problem-solving perspective, tackling one or more of these factors should reduce the likelihood of crime occurring.

The Problem Analysis Triangle uses this theoretical basis and identifies three features of a criminal event that should be understood. These are the target/victim, offender and place, as set out in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Problem Analysis Triangle <sup>16</sup>



For more information on the Problem Analysis Triangle, please visit: <http://www.crimereduction.gov/learningzone/rat.htm>

By understanding the features of each side of the triangle, it should be possible to identify ways in which the problem can be tackled. This will involve addressing one or more of the sides of the triangle.

Figure 1 also identifies individuals associated with each side of the triangle who might be enlisted to help in tackling the problem. For example, targets/victims can sometimes be protected by other people (called guardians here), offenders can sometimes be influenced by others to stop offending (called handlers here) and places usually have someone who is responsible for them (called managers here).

**Use the triangle to check every aspect of the problem profile has been covered.**

<sup>16</sup> This triangle comes from Eck, J. & Clarke, R. “Become a problem solving analyst in 55 small steps” accessible at <http://www.jdi.ucl.ac.uk/downloads/publications/otherpublications/55steps/Prelims.pdf>