

## Step five: Establish governance arrangements

Step five seeks to locate tension monitoring clearly within the partnership governance structure. It could be deemed more appropriate to establish governance arrangements at an earlier stage – this is absolutely possible and some may prefer to set this in place at the outset, at the same time as setting up the tension monitoring group. It will depend on how established local partnerships are, their experience of the issues involved and the flexibility of existing arrangements.

The reason it is included at this stage is to give the Tension Monitoring Group the opportunity to understand the process, learn the techniques and establish a system and then recommend the most appropriate governance arrangements for the area, based on their knowledge of what is entailed.

In either event, governance arrangements should be in place within three months of establishing the system.

### What are the governance arrangements for?

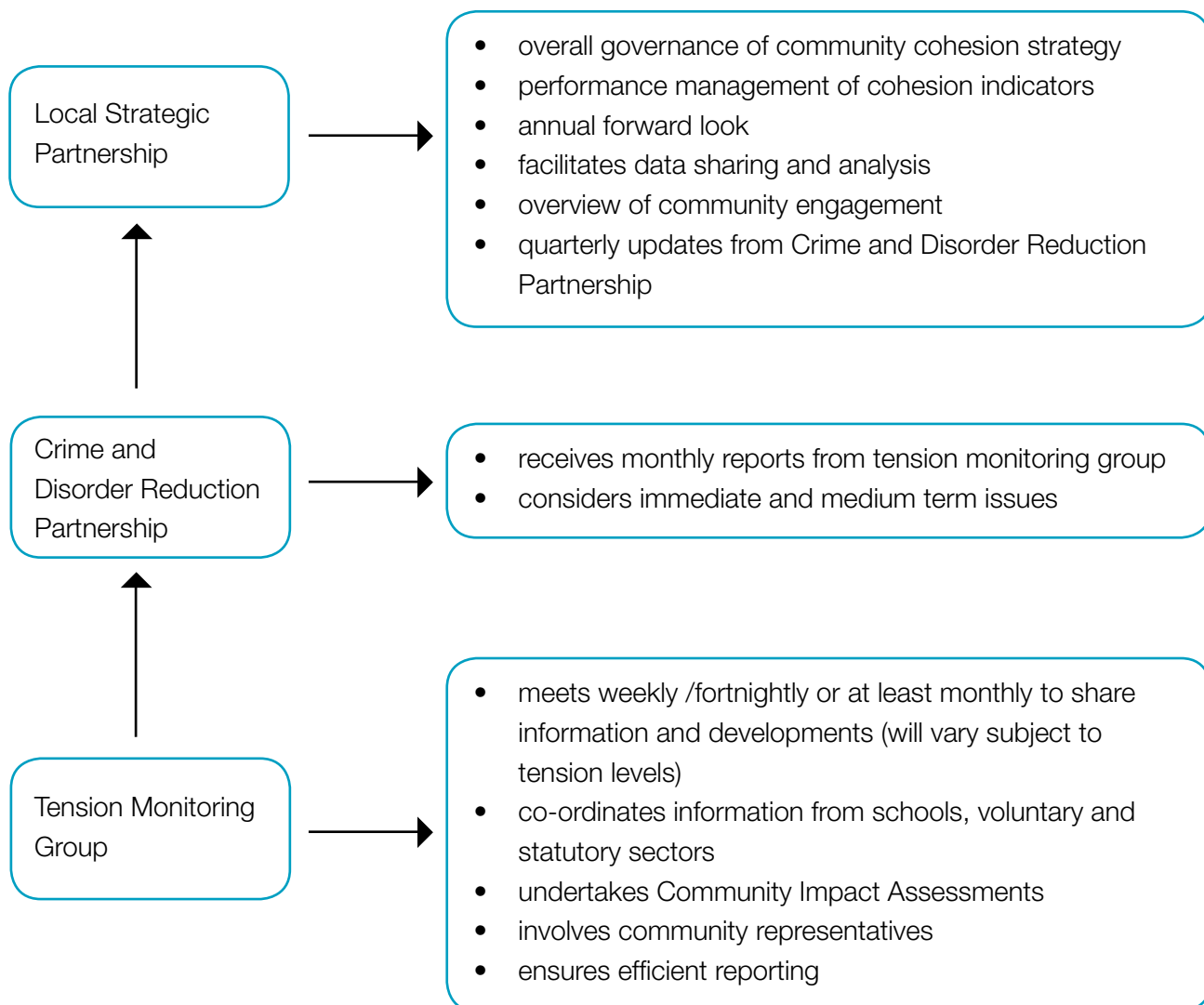
These are necessary to:

- Ensure that information is collated to present to and advise the Chief Executive, Borough Commander, Leader and other lead partner representatives
- Inform and advise key services
- Set clarity around the values and ensure they are upheld
- Ensure accountability and that the processes are legal
- Open the process to scrutiny
- Keep key players informed and involved
- Enable all relevant and related information and issues to be brought together
- Maintain an effective overview and build the lessons and experiences into other plans and strategies

### Suggested governance of tension monitoring reporting

Below is a simple structure which could apply – it is one option. Many Local Strategic Partnerships and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships have professional Executives or partnership groups who handle the business and performance management, with policy and strategy being the function of the Board of each partnership. The tension monitoring process would initially go to the respective boards for endorsement, then to the executives for regular monitoring.

## Suggested governance structure



### Tips:

- ▶▶ design the governance arrangements which work best for your area – build on existing effective groups if they are relevant
- ▶▶ ensure that all related meetings/processes are connected – eg racial incident monitoring of schools, housing departments, Race Equality Council and other partners
- ▶▶ in some areas, Tension Monitoring Groups report to a Community Cohesion Strategy Group then in to the Local Strategic Partnership – this is one alternative

## Links to other related functions

It is important that governance and operational arrangements pay due regard to other related functions including:

- Emergency planning
- Civil Contingencies planning – risk assessment framework and regional resilience forums
- Cohesion Contingencies planning (Department for Communities and Local Government guidance)
- Gold and silver command structures operated by the police service

## Ensure the arrangements are lawful

Local Authorities and their partners will need to take legal advice to ensure that their local tension monitoring arrangements are lawful. Some of the relevant legislation is listed in Step Two but also of particular relevance are:

- The Data Protection Act 1998 – this sets out rules governing the processing of ‘personal data’. As far as possible, the data provided under tension monitoring arrangements should not be ‘personal data’ – it does not identify individuals. If reports do identify individuals, then data protection principles apply.
- Freedom of Information Act 2000 – this generally requires information to be disclosed unless it is not in the public interest to do so. The Act defines circumstances for exemption to disclosure. Information obtained during the course of tension monitoring may be sensitive and, if disclosed, could cause harm or potentially increase the risks.
- Monitoring political extremism – where the activities of a political group increases community tension, the gathering and use of information for tension monitoring purposes should comply with relevant legislation, such as the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act and the Data Protection Act, and relevant Codes of Practice.

Seek legal advice on your procedures and specific issues as they arise.