

DECISION-MAKER:	SCRUTINY PANEL A		
SUBJECT:	PUBLIC REASSURANCE		
DATE OF DECISION:	2 ND SEPTEMBER 2010		
REPORT OF:	SAFE CITY PARTNERSHIP		
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

SUMMARY

This report outlines the current approach taken by the Safe City Partnership to improve public perception of crime and anti-social behaviour in Southampton and in so doing, increasing public confidence in partnership work to tackle crime in the city. It then identifies the policy changes that will impact on this area of activity and seeks views on how the Partnership should approach communications and public reassurance in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To comment on the level of priority and preferred approach to partnership delivery of public reassurance in the future.
- (ii) To identify any specific topics or areas of focus that the Panel consider particularly important for the Partnership to address over the next 12 months.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Scrutiny of the Safe City Partnership (SCP) is a statutory duty; public reassurance is one of three top priorities for the Partnership and this is an area of considerable policy change – therefore Scrutiny can influence the way this issue is delivered in the future.

CONSULTATION

2. All members of the SCP Communications and Reassurance Group including communications officers for all key partner agencies.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

3. Options for future changes in approach to public reassurance are still open for consideration so no specific options have been rejected.

DETAIL

4. See Appendix 1.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital

5. Not applicable.

Revenue

- 6. For 2010/11 £10,000 from the Safe City Partnership budget has been allocated for communications. Additional contributions come from partner agencies depending on the campaign. In previous years external (government) funds were used to support this activity but there is no new funding identified specifically for public reassurance campaigns in 2010/11.

Property

- 7. Not applicable.

Other

- 8. None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

- 9. Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 requires every local authority to have a crime and disorder committee with the power to review or scrutinise decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.

Other Legal Implications:

- 10. None.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

- 11. Links to delivering objectives within the Safe City Partnership Plan.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1.	Safe City Partnership: Delivery of Public Reassurance
2.	'You said, we did' example letter

Documents In Members' Rooms

	None.
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Background Documents

Title of Background Paper(s) Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)

Background documents available for inspection at:

KEY DECISION? No

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED: All

Safe City Partnership: Delivery of Public Reassurance

Public Reassurance: Why is it important?

1. Increasing public perception of Southampton as a safe city with reducing levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, and in so doing, improving public confidence in the council, police and partners tackling crime and ASB is one of the three top priorities for the Safe City Partnership.
2. Public reassurance is particularly important because crime consistently remains one of the top public concerns as evidenced in national surveys and polls. How people feel about crime and safety in their area impacts on their perceptions and levels of satisfaction about where they live. While, public confidence in partners tackling crime and ASB at a local level has direct influence on the willingness of residents to work together to help tackle crime – from reporting and providing evidence to volunteering in local activities such as Neighbourhood Watch. 'Crime is tackled most effectively when the law abiding majority stand together against the minority who commit it'¹ The ability of people to 'take a stand' is closely linked to their confidence in partners tackling crime and confidence in the criminal justice system.
3. A partnership approach to improving public perceptions of crime is crucial because national and local analysis consistently shows a gap between the perception of crime and ASB, and the actual position. This is particularly prevalent at national level – whereby people perceive crime increasing nationally more than in their own area. For example, in the latest British Crime Survey 2009/10² 90% of people said they thought knife and gun crime increased but only 27% thought it had gone up in 'their area'. Generally, the gap between public views of local crime is closer to reality than a wider national perspective, but there still remains a gap. Similarly, year-on-year disparity remains between perceived likelihood of being a victim of crime and the actual risk. For example 15% of people think they are fairly or very likely to be a victim of burglary in the next year compared to the actual risk of 2%³

What works best?

4. The British Crime Survey identifies that perceptions of crime are affected by media coverage but also vary by personal and household characteristics, those most likely to have negative perceptions of crime in their area are:
 - people who have been victims of crime or ASB
 - those aged between 16 and 24 years
 - people who live in areas of high 'physical disorder' – environmental decline
 - people who live in areas with higher levels of anti-social behaviour
 - older people

1 Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime 2008 – this was the biggest national audit of public views on crime to date involving 13,000 respondents.

2 BCS is an annual analysis of crime figures correlating police recorded crime and interviews of a representative sample of people

3 National figures from BCS 2009

5. There is clear national research that shows 'local' information and community engagement has greatest effect on perceptions. Where-as the public do not tend to believe more generic information such as crime statistics. Local analysis undertaken by Hampshire Police Authority⁴ confirms key national data that shows the top drivers of public confidence (in partners tackling crime and ASB) are community engagement and perceptions of fair treatment, as well as Effectiveness (in service delivery) and alleviating local ASB. That analysis concluded that the key actions to building public confidence are:
- Taking action to tackle the things that matter
 - Better support for victims
 - A clear service to the public
 - Better information for the public
 - Visible criminal justice
6. Evidence also shows that building effective partnerships and developing an empowered, engaged, confident workforce will impact positively on public confidence.

What are partners doing to improve public perceptions?

7. The Safe City Partnership Plan 2010/11 identifies the focus for joint action in 2010/11 as:
- Ensuring key messages about the local actions taken by the council, police and partners to tackle crime and ASB are regularly given to residents using a range of methods including direct mailing in localised areas and using a 'You Said: We Did' format. An example of this format is shown in Appendix 2.
 - Delivering a single Public Reassurance campaign to raise awareness in the city about reducing crime and increasing safety for example campaigns linked to the night time economy and reducing ASB in neighbourhoods.
 - Improving internal Partnership communications to ensure the workforce within the broad Partnership pass on positive messages and confidence in what is happening in their local area.
 - Promoting and supporting neighbourhood policing and effective working at ward based and District levels (the city is divided into 3 Districts [East, West and Central] based on the 22 Neighbourhood Policing Teams) as well as pro-actively supporting neighbourhood management. In so doing, we will actively seek out the views and experiences of local residents on issues that matter to them.
 - Working with local communities to promote citizen involvement in reaching the SCP targets. For example we will promote 'Crimestoppers', Neighbourhood Watch, volunteering and 'self help' safety measures.

4 Hampshire Police Authority Confidence group Feb 2010

8. The delivery of the partnership actions is led by the Communications and Public Reassurance Group (C&PR), which is a sub-group of the Safe City Partnership. The membership of the sub-group includes communications officers and other representatives from the key partners. It is chaired by Jon Dyer-Slade, Head of Neighbourhoods.
9. Each partner agency has a clear role in responding to media enquiries and raising awareness of issues or actions as they occur, but this is often done jointly with partners. For example media coverage this year has covered issues from profiling concerns about alcohol-related violent crime to responding to current issues like the increase in burglary. However, the focus of this paper is the pro-active measures taken to promote public reassurance.
10. In delivering the SCP key actions, partners join-up to support each others' programmed activities as well as delivering SCP-led campaigns. In particular, the SCP supports delivery of the council's Community Reassurance Campaign that forms 1 of 17 priority campaigns for the Authority. The campaign brief states the objectives as set out below;
 - To improve public perception as measured by the Place Survey 2010 to show;
 - NI 17 – 5% reduction in % of people stating ASB is a problem in their local area – 30% to 25%.
 - NI 21 – 5% increase in no people feel Crime and ASB tackled effectively by Council and Police – 23% to 30%.
 - NI 25 – 5% increase in people who feel that SCC and the Police seek views of local people about ASB / Crime – 21% to 26%.
11. However it is noted that the Place Survey will no longer be a government-led measure so the objectives and measures will need to be reviewed in light of recent changes in national policy in this area. In addition, due to the restructuring of the SCC Corporate Communications team and consequent lack of resource the development of a professionally researched Community Reassurance campaign has not been possible. With the arrival of a dedicated resource within the SCC team (Marketing Officer and Media Officer) the Corporate Communications Team is now in the process of reviewing and delivering the Community Reassurance Campaign Plan. This will very shortly result in a revised plan that will include more specific marketing objectives such as how marketing practices can effect behaviour change and measurable outcomes from communications activities. Nevertheless, the main strands and key actions for this year are likely to remain relatively unchanged.
12. There are 3 main strands in the current Public Reassurance Campaign:
 - 'You said we did' 'Together we can improve your local area': letters, newsletters and other activities to raise awareness with residents on a street or neighbourhood of partners taking local action to tackle local issues
 - Working together to reduce the impact of irresponsible drinking: this is a key priority area for the partnership and subsequent campaigns seek to raise awareness of positive actions taken by partners to reduced alcohol-related crime and safety messages

- Series of positive images/messages about reducing crime achieved by local people taking action: this is the 'working together' message and seeks to increase involvement and engagement of resident in preventing crime e.g. volunteering or Neighbourhood Watch.

13. Priority elements of pro-active communications by other partners in 2010/11 include:

- HFRS – High Rise safety campaign – fire safety in tower blocks
- Police – ASB summer operation runs from June to the end of August 2010. During the first month of the campaign Southampton OCU saw a reduction of 19% in criminal damage and a reduction of 14% in rowdy and inconsiderate calls. Information about the summer ASB campaign has appeared on the constabulary's Safer Neighbourhoods web pages, on social media channels such as Facebook/Twitter and in the force-wide 'Confidence' newsletters being distributed by the constabulary across Southampton OCU in September. Safer Neighbourhoods Sgts have also been discussing the campaign at local Police and Community Together (priority setting meetings) and Southampton's successful ASB results will form part of this year's Safer Southampton Week information packs.
- Police – Smartwater anti-burglary initiative launched in May to tackle dwelling burglaries across the city as these tend to rise during summer months. This initiative has involved property marking kits being distributed across the city with intelligence analysis and evaluation due in September. The start of the initiative was marked with a multi-agency media launch attended by the police, city council and smartwater representatives, as well as a burglary victim who endorsed the campaign. Good coverage received via local print and radio media.
- Police – ongoing knife crime campaign. Work is continuing in the city to warn young people of the dangers of carrying blades. Anti knife crime click through adverts will appear on social media (Facebook and Google sites) in the autumn, linking to a dedicated anti knife crime Hampshire Constabulary web page so that we can measure hits. Information about knife crime will also appear in Safer Southampton Week literature.
- Police – In September Hampshire Constabulary will roll out its latest round of public confidence newsletters being distributed to homes across the OCU. These contain information about local neighbourhood policing priorities, how these have been met, work being done in neighbourhoods to tackle crime and ASB, Justice Seen, Justice Done information, as well as contact details and photos of local Safer Neighbourhoods teams.

Examples of recent activities:

14. To illustrate the range of communications and engagement activities undertaken by SCP partners the following examples are given but are by no means exhaustive;

- 'WOW' campaign: positive messages about reducing crime and improved safety measures in the night time economy. Bright, positive messages on taxis, in buses, in clubs and pubs and on promo-boards in the city centre
- Yellow Card Scheme: raising awareness of the scheme to tackle offenders in the night time economy. Posters, beer mats, media coverage.

- 'You said we did': letters, newsletters, door-knocking in small areas to raise awareness of actions taken to tackle local problems
- High Rise Safety Campaign: raising awareness of fire safety in high rise buildings
- Community events: SCP presence at events such as Fresher's Week, Mela, over 50's festival
- City View: regular articles using case studies to get across positive messages
- SCP E-bulletin: new newsletter for partners and employees
- Safer Southampton Week: focused week of activities across the city, covering 5 themes to promote crime prevention and positive safety messages
- Published information about sentencing of offenders and Community Payback (as part of 'Justice Seen: Justice Done agenda)
- Stakeholder days
- Weekly policing 'slots' on Unity 101 community radio station continues.

Measures of Success

15. Until recently the national measure of public perception was the bi-annual Place Survey where residents were surveyed about their views on various crime issues and responses measured against national indicators. The most of important of these is NI21 – which measured the percentage of those surveyed who felt 'the council and police tackled crime and ASB in their area'. The Place Survey has been abolished and is likely to be replaced by local mechanisms for measuring perception. However, these measures remain the only key indicators of public perception and therefore remain valid.
16. The first Place Survey was held in 2008 and from that it was identified that 23% of those taking part felt 'the police and council are tackling crime and ASB in their area', compared to the national average of 26%. However there was a high proportion (25%) of residents saying 'don't know' to this question. There are a number of other indicators covered in the Place Survey such as views on ASB as 'a problem' locally, parents taking responsibility for their children etc. Notably, 45% of people said 'people being drunk and rowdy in public places' is a problem in Southampton compared to the national average of 29% (NI41). The following table provides a detailed breakdown.

Appendix 1

National Indicator	BVPI 2004/5 %	Place 2008 %	Nat. Unitary Ave	LAA Target 2010	EDMG East District	CDMG Central District	WDMG West District
NI 1 - % of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well	74	73	73		73	81	69
NI 4 = % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	36	28	28		26	33	24
NI 5 – Overall satisfaction with the local area	67	74	77		72	78	71
NI 17 – Perceptions of ASB		29	22				
NI 21 - % of people who think that ASB is tackled effectively by SCC & Police		23	26	30	23	26	20
NI 27 - % of people who feel that SCC and Police seek views of local people about ASB / Crime		21	25		19	29	16
NI 41 – Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem	40	45	31		39	53	45

National Indicator	BVPI 2004/5 %	Place 2008 %	Nat. Unitary Ave	EDMG	CDMG	WDMG
NI 42 - % of people who think there is a problem with people using or dealing drugs in their area	37	35	33	35	39	27
NI 3 Level of Civic participation in the local area		13				
% of residents who want to get involved		29				
% satisfied with how the LA is keeping the land clear of litter and refuse	71	53	54	53	56	50
% of people who think litter lying around is a problem in their local area		43	43	41	43	46
% of people who think noisy neighbours and loud parties is a problem in their local area		24	17	18	36	18
% of people who think teenagers hanging around on the street is a problem in their local area		56	48	60	60	57

17. In addition, until recently the police had a single national performance indicator which was the near equivalent of NI21 and thus measured the extent to which the public feels police and partners tackle crime and ASB in their area. This is often called the public confidence target. This indicator was measured nationally but, the police also undertake a local survey of residents views every 6 months. This public confidence indicator has also recently been abolished. It is proposed the police will continue with local measures of confidence.
18. The recent results from the police surveys show a consistent level of public confidence in, and perception of, the manner in which the police and local council are dealing with anti social behaviour and crime issues in the city. This compares favourably with other parts of the county where areas have seen a significant drop in confidence levels.

The results for Southampton in the last four quarters are below:

Q. The police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area:

July - September 2009	61%
October - December 2009	59%
January - March 2010	60%
April - June 2010	59%

Figures relate to the percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with the above question. Hampshire's local surveys have a confidence level of +/-4%. This means that changes of less than 4% may not reflect a real change in performance.

19. As well as these broader measures of success, each substantial campaign or event is evaluated. For example Safer Southampton Week will measure the number of public contacts, number of enquiries and hits on the website, but will also be followed up by a snapshot survey in target areas to gauge behaviour changes, such as, if residents have taken any steps to improve crime prevention or safety as a result of the SSW messages.
20. A recent development is the production of Community Intelligence reports for the C&CE sub-group that provide a quarterly track of media and web 'hits', campaign and community engagement activities. A sample of the most recent quarterly report will be provided to the Panel at the Scrutiny meeting.

What's new and where are the gaps?

21. A number of changes have occurred recently as a result of Coalition Government policy and austerity measures that directly impact on this area of work. These include:
- Removal of the Place Survey and Single Public Confidence Indicator for the police. This will require consideration of what should be done locally to measure public reassurance and perceptions.
 - In recent years Home Office funding has been provided to promote communications directly and/or as part of other funding received – for example bids for external

funding to develop projects such as the Yellow Card Scheme often included ring-fenced funds for campaigns / communications. All of the recent bigger campaigns in the city were not funded by the council or local partners. As resources reduce in response to the economic situation, there is unlikely to be any external funds for communications. This will require a review of what is affordable and what should be prioritised with limited budgets.

- Pressures on services as a result of budget reductions are also likely to impact on officer time and the ability of partners to allow engagement activities to feature as part of mainstream activity. This requires an assessment by partners of the priority given to communications and engagement.
- The Big Society agenda and related government policy, as outlined in the Policing in the 21st Century paper, clearly seeks mobilisation of residents and communities to actively support tackling crime in their neighbourhoods and taking responsibility for crime prevention. Supporting this agenda needs to be considered in the new vision and approach for communications by the SCP.

22. Local changes also impact on this agenda, for example:

- As already noted, the council has a re-shaped communications team with a stronger focus on prioritised, pro-active campaigns
- Joint funding was historically identified between police and Safer Communities team to fund a Communications Officer. This post was intended as a mechanism for proactively marketing and promoting the good work of the police and partnership in reducing and detecting crime and making Southampton a safe place, thus giving public reassurance. When scoping this initiative it was decided not to continue this funding and rather invest in the synergies between existing SCC communications dept resources and Southampton Police media dept to bring about the same outcomes.
- Police communications team started bi-weekly meetings with the Southampton City Council Corporate Communications Team to discuss opportunities to continue to work together to promote the work of the partnership, promote our brand identity and seize opportunities to show how the police and council are working together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Police and council attendance at the partnership sub-group is working effectively. At a recent meeting, information was disclosed by the police media team about the positive reduction in crime in Southampton – a greater reduction than anywhere else in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This was exploited and information issued to media by the Partnership and it also contributed to the key messages in the WOW campaign.

Conclusion

23. In view of the significant effort the Safe City Partnership (SCP) puts into public reassurance as a priority area and the changes that are impacting on that agenda, the SCP will be reviewing how to approach this issue in the future and welcomes comments and feedback from Scrutiny to shape that. In particular, consideration needs to be given to the level of priority and the areas of focus for SCP public reassurance given reducing budgets.