

Report To: Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Date: 28 June 2005

Report of: Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives

Subject: Crime & Disorder Strategy 2005-08

Ward: All

1. Purpose of Report

To provide the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Easington Community Safety Partnership's Crime & Disorder Strategy 2005-08.

2. Consultation

The Strategy has been subject to extensive agency and community consultation. Agency consultation has included Police, County Council, Fire Service, PCT, Youth Engagement Service, DAT and Probation Service. Community Consultation has been undertaken in respect of the Audit findings which underpin the Strategy. Community consultation has been undertaken via focus groups, newspaper and radio campaigns, ballot boxes linked to LSPTv, Neighbourhood Watch Groups and the Youth Forum. A full list of consultation mechanisms is listed in the Strategy document.

3. Background

Under the provisions of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 District Councils are identified as "responsible authorities" is preparing a three year Crime & Disorder Strategy for their locality. Other responsible authorities include the Police, Fire & Rescue Service, the County Council and the PCT. The 2005 Strategy is the third Strategy to have been produced for the District.

4. Position Statement & Option Appraisal

4.1 2004 Audit

The Strategy is informed by a Crime & Disorder Audit which covers the period 2001-04. This Audit has identified the following crime and disorder trends for the district:

- Total recorded crime increased by 7.9%. This is very much in line with the national picture which showed a 7% rise. Disappointingly however, the increase is against the trend for the rest of the county with all of the other district areas experiencing falls in crime.
- The breakdown of recorded crime provides interesting reading. The increase is not across the board covering all crime types but is concentrated towards high volume low level crimes. In terms of headline property crime the trend is good. We have achieved a 27% reduction in House Burglary and a 22% reduction in Burglary Other (sheds, garages etc) whilst thefts of cars has fallen by 15%. This success is offset however with large increases in criminal damage (40%) and theft from cars (58%).

- Disorder problems have also increased. Changes in counting rules have made comparisons very difficult. Youth Causing annoyance complaints, a category unchanged by counting rules only increased by 0.5% but the overall increase of 25% across all categories illustrates why anti social behaviour remains a major source of concern
- An area of constant concern is drug and alcohol misuse. There is strong police anecdotal evidence backed by prisoner surveys that much of our acquisitive crime is fuelled by a need to feed drug habits. Possible links may be found here with the sharp increase in theft from cars, an easy crime to commit to raise quick money for a drug fix. There have been significant falls in both drug seizures and dealer arrests during the audit period but this is not seen by the Partnership as evidence of reduced drug activity in the district. Supplying Heroin (28%) was the most common charge for dealer arrests.

4.2 2005 Crime and Disorder Strategy

The 2005 Strategy is driven by two fundamental changes. The first is the requirement to work towards agreed targets set with Government Office. The second is recognition by the Partnership that it needs to develop its reactive capabilities to respond to issues as and when they arise rather than concentrating solely on long term strategic planning

Targets

Targets have been set with Government Office. Our headline target of a 15% reduction in crime is set centrally and is non negotiable. The targets below have been set by the Partnership from a basket of indicators to achieve the 15% target:

Theft of a Vehicle	25% reduction
Theft from a Vehicle	30% reduction
Vehicle Interference	25% reduction
Domestic Burglary	25% reduction
Theft of a Pedal Cycle	10% reduction
Theft from a Person	10% reduction
Criminal Damage	6% reduction
Common Assault	10% reduction
Wounding	10% reduction
Robbery	4% reduction

Tactical & Strategic Operations

The two previous strategies have been delivered via a structure of Strategic Task Groups which meet every 8 weeks. There are groups for Burglary, Vehicle Crime, Substance Misuse, Anti Social Behaviour, Violent Crime, Young People and Communications. These groups then reported up through an Operational Group which consists of all the Task Group Chairs and a full Community Safety Partnership which draws representation from a wide variety of public and voluntary sector bodies.

This structure worked well to begin with but as the demands on the partnership increased it has become less able to facilitate cohesive and responsive action. As a means of planning proactive strategic operations such as target hardening long term hot spot areas,

planning educational work in respect of substance misuse or developing response protocols for domestic violence it has worked well. However, the structure has no capacity for dealing with more immediate issues as they arise such as the development of anti social behaviour problems on a Friday night in one of our villages, the need to respond quickly to a series of House Burglaries or a sudden increase in heroin usage in a particular area. Under the previous structure these issues have been addressed either independently by the police or other agencies or through ad hoc partnership working.

The partnership needs to improve its reactive response to issues such as those outlined above. It is particularly important when the audit findings are considered. The effective tackling of low level crime and anti social behaviour in particular, require a strong reactive capability.

At the heart of the new structure lies the NIM (National Intelligence Model) and the PPO (Priority and Prolific Offenders Strategy). This is about better intelligence leading to targeted action against priority offenders. The Partnership will be re structured to include a "Tactical Planning Meeting" which goes ahead every 2 weeks. This meeting will involve the police, council and other partners discussing the latest intelligence from the NIM and emerging issues of crime and ASB. The Tactical Group will drive the day to day operational work of the partnership.

The strategic element of the Task Groups will remain but they will be amalgamated into two groups. One for crime (chaired by the police) and for anti social behaviour (chaired by the council, Officer to be agreed). The format of the full partnership will also change from quarterly meetings of a reporting nature to a twice yearly development day. The principle behind this to move away from the reporting back style of meeting to a more involved consultative, review and development session. Reducing the burden and repetition of meetings has also been a driving factor.

The new structure will increase joint working across agencies and become a particular force in directing the work of the Street Wardens and the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team. The integration with the NIM and PPO, together with the further development of the Partnership Base and the innovative projects which are coming forward this year will keep the Partnership at the forefront of regional and national partnership working. The key point however remains the impact at street level and there is much work to be done to achieve the stretch targets that have been set.

4.3 Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications arising from the report. The council agreed to mainstream the Community Safety Team in 2004. Partnership initiatives are supported through a range of external funds and the mainline resources of the partner organisations.

Legal

There is a legal obligation under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 for the council to work in partnership to produce a Crime & Disorder Strategy 2005-08

Policy

The Strategy sets out a framework for the councils role in partnership working to reduce crime and disorder in the district.

Risk

A Risk Assessment using the STORM methodology is attached.

Communications

The Strategy will be made widely available to the public. The full document will be available on the council web site, summaries will be reported through the local press and presentations will be made at various community fora including the Area Forums, Residents Groups and Neighbourhood watch Meetings. A summary leaflet of the main findings will also be made widely available.

4.4 Corporate Implications

Corporate Plan & Priorities

The Strategy outlines partnership working to support the corporate objective of Making the District Safe.

Equality & Diversity

The Strategy recognises that the most vulnerable groups in our community often have an increased fear of crime and in some instances the risk of actual crime can also be higher.

E Govt

The Supporting Young People Programme which is being delivered under the Strategy supports the delivery of RO4 "Local Authority and Youth Justice Agencies to co ordinate secure sending, sharing and access to information"

Procurement

There are no procurement implications attached to the report.

5 Recommendations

That the Committee consider the Easington Crime & Disorder Strategy 2005-08 and provide feedback prior to the Strategy being presented for consideration by full council in July.