

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Corporate Services and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Committee 2nd March 2010
Report Title A Public Confidence Strategy

Summary This report offers members the opportunity to comment upon a draft partnership strategy for increasing levels of confidence and reducing fear of crime in Warwickshire.

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Would the recommendation decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision]
 No

Background papers

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s) Not applicable
- Other Elected Members
- Cabinet Member Cllr Hobbs
- Chief Executive
- Legal
- Finance Chris Kaye
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority

Police

Other Bodies/Individuals The strategy has been developed by a sub group of the Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (WSCP) which includes all key crime and disorder partners.

FINAL DECISION YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee

To Council

To Cabinet

To an O & S Committee

To an Area Committee

Further Consultation The paper will go to WSCP in April. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are being consulted in the meantime.

**Corporate Services and Community Safety Overview and
Scrutiny Committee
2nd March 2010**

A Strategy for Community Confidence

**Report of the Strategic Director for Customers, Workforce
and Governance**

Recommendation

That Members comment on the draft strategy and on key issues arising from the report.

1. Background

Until the introduction of the Local Area Agreement, public confidence in relation to community safety was measured through questions relating to the fear of crime which were included in the Warwickshire Citizens' Panel survey.

In the years 2001 – 2007, the results from these surveys showed a steady reduction in fear of crime across the county and between 2004 and 2007 this was broadly in line with a reduction in overall crime. In 2007/8 and in 2008/9 fear of crime went up across the county, in spite of the fact that there had been significant decreases in overall crime in those years.

Since 2008, partners in Warwickshire have included within the Local Area Agreement (LAA), National Indicator 21: 'Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police.' Performance is measured through the Place Survey and the 2008/09 results were disappointing, with only 23% of those questioned agreeing that agencies successfully dealt with the issues in their area. This has risen to 25% in the most recent WCC survey.

In 2009, the Home Office introduced a new single 'confidence' measure of police performance. The measure, assessed through the British Crime Survey (BCS), asks respondents whether they "agree that the police and local council are dealing with the crime and anti social behaviour issues that matter in their area". Most recent BCS figures (to Dec 2009) show confidence levels at 47.5%, which places Warwickshire 32nd out of 42 forces nationally. This measure shows a rise in confidence of some 5% since June 2009, just slightly better than the national rise of 4% over this same period.

Members will note that there is a subtle but important difference in the wording of these two questions. There will also be a difference in response according

to the methodology and context in which these two questions are asked. Warwickshire Police are currently conducting their own detailed telephone survey – and on this survey an even higher percentage of respondents - 51.8% - agree that the local council and police are dealing the ASB and crime issues that matter in this area. (This survey is ongoing and final results may therefore be different).

Furthermore, when questions are posed more positively the answers give a significantly different picture of people's confidence levels. In the 2009 Place Survey, residents were also asked how safe they felt in going about their daily business. Over 90% of residents reported feel safe or very safe in the day time and just over 50% say that they feel safe at night too.

These different perspectives are referred to briefly simply to illustrate that we are dealing with a complex set of indicators which do not give entirely consistent messages and which are therefore quite difficult to interpret and to turn into a clear programme of action.

2 Introduction

Following our receipt of the disappointingly low confidence scores from the Place and BCS surveys, a seminar took place last June to consider the various factors which impact upon confidence, local and national research into best practice and to audit our current activity.

This seminar reported to WSCP in September and a task and finish group was established to draw up a strategy and action plan to take this work forward. The draft strategy is attached for Member comment before it goes to the WSCP for approval in April.

It is important to note that while there is not always a direct correlation between crime levels and levels of fear or confidence, it remains our fundamental belief that the best way of increasing confidence is to continue to reduce crime. So, while this strategy focuses on particular campaigns and activities, it is also true that all of our crime reduction activity should also be contributing to the achievement of our confidence targets.

3 Work undertaken already

Work to address confidence and fear of crime issues has in the past included campaigning work, work undertaken in liaison with Neighbourhood Watch and other watch schemes and work targeted at particular groups, for example work to prevent distraction burglary among older people.

The separate report to this meeting (Community Safety Agreement progress report) gives a little more detail on work which is already underway.

4 Recommendation

That Members comment on the draft strategy and on key issues arising from the report.

DAVID CARTER
Strategic Director for
Customers, Workforce and
Governance

Shire Hall
Warwick

27 January 2010

Draft Warwickshire Public Confidence Strategy

Introduction

Performance on reducing crime and anti social behaviour across the county is strong; but public perceptions are disappointing. When Warwickshire Police survey residents who have used their services, satisfaction levels are generally high. This suggests that there is a large group of residents who have no reason to contact agencies about crime or anti-social behaviour, yet have low levels of confidence in the local councils and police to deal with these issues.

This strategy sets out the commitment of all community safety partners in Warwickshire to work towards improving public confidence. These partners include all local authorities and criminal justice agencies, Police, Fire and Rescue and the Probation Service. Providing high levels of service, building a strong reputation and addressing the poor perception apparent amongst the wider communities will all be vital in achieving this goal.

Key Features of Public Confidence

We recognise that people's confidence in the police, local agencies and the criminal justice sector is affected by a range of issues. These include:

- People's experience of crime
- What people see in the local area
- Personal background
- Broad social factors,
- Media representation - especially at the national level
- Perceptions of the causes of crime
- Perceptions of society in general
- People's awareness of, satisfaction with and willingness to engage with the police, criminal justice system and the response to crime

Current Position

Partners in Warwickshire are signed up to National Indicator 21 within the LAA: 'Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police.' Performance is measured through the Place Survey and the 2008/09 results (the first time this indicator has been measured) were disappointing, with only 23% of those questioned agreeing that agencies successfully dealt with the issues in their area. This has risen to 25% in the most recent WCC survey.

Warwickshire Police are also assessed in respect of public confidence and the Home Office have introduced a new single measure of police performance. The measure, assessed through the British Crime Survey (BCS), asks respondents whether they "agree that the police and local council are dealing with the crime and anti social

behaviour issues that matter in their area". Most recent BCS figures (to Dec 2009) show confidence levels at 47.5%, which places Warwickshire 32nd out of 42 forces nationally.

Aim

The overall aim of this strategy is to improve confidence in the police and other public services by seeking people's views about anti-social behaviour and crime in their area, successfully dealing with their local concerns and ensuring they are kept informed of and, where appropriate, engaged in work undertaken to tackle these.

Underpinning Principles

In delivering this strategy, our work will be guided by the following underpinning principles:

- We recognise that better informed and involved communities are more confident communities.
- Wherever possible we will seek to engage the community in developing and delivering solutions to the issues they face.
- Confidence is about trust and transparency – we need to trust the community with information and tell them what we are doing
- We will put listening to the community at the heart of what we do, ensure that we address their concerns and provide them with feedback about what we have done and the outcomes of our activities.
- The key agencies will work together through a county strategic framework, which ensures flexibility in delivery at local level.
- We will target 'confidence' activity in those areas where confidence is currently lowest in order to narrow the confidence gap.
- We will build on best practice in other areas and across the county.

Objectives

We will pursue the following key objectives. We aim to:

- Develop our understanding of the drivers of confidence locally
- Better understand the concerns of communities at local levels, especially in areas with the highest levels of crime and concern
- Provide information at county, local and community levels, to improve citizens' understanding of what is being done locally to respond to their concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB), using the most appropriate channels of communication including new technology
- Provide feedback at county, local and community levels on actions taken to tackle crime and ASB and the results of our work
- Encourage the community to engage in a two-way communication about crime and the part that they could play in developing and delivering solutions
- Embed neighbourhood policing and integrate it with other services
- Increase the quality of contacts with the public

- Deliver and publicise restorative justice interventions
- Provide effective support services for victims and witnesses
- Alleviate visual signs of crime and disorder
- Develop volunteering opportunities
- Prevent crime through highlighting safety measures and providing information about how to access other services
- Improve relationships with the media and ensure that there is a rapid, active service to tackle inaccuracies or specific issues
- Make criminal justice visible
- Set and publicise clear service standards – with clear accountability mechanisms

Communication – a key objective

We recognise that how we communicate with the public is a very important feature of the confidence agenda, so we set out below key aspects of our approach to communicating and consulting with the community.

- We will use a variety of means of communicating and consulting with the community, using appropriately targeted media and messages and accepting that local newsletters and stories are likely to prove most effective in enhancing confidence.
- We will make explicit how consultation will be used – manage expectations, and provide feedback on how views have influenced future planning

The information we need to convey will include:

- Information on how more serious crime is being tackled locally
- Information on how anti-social behaviour is being dealt with
- Success stories and what works well in local areas
- Feedback on how the public's concerns have been addressed
- More information about the criminal justice system
- More on how we are achieving success with high harm causers
- Information on sentencing to show that justice is being done

The key generic messages which need to be conveyed to the public are:

- Public services are listening to the concerns of the public
- Crime is falling; but where there are still problems, we know why and what we have to do to address them locally
- Current activities are tackling crime and ASB successfully and the outcomes are being relayed back to communities
- Agencies are working together to tackle crime and ASB
- Prevention activities are in place to stop crime before it starts

Each district/borough area will have their own specific messages, which will address particular crime and ASB issues for their area.

Targets

Challenging targets have been set for the measures of public confidence in both the Place Survey (to improve to 26.3% by March 2010 and to 29.5% by March 2011) and BCS (to improve to 58.3% by March 2012, with an interim milestone of 53.3% by March 2011).

Delivering the Strategy

A partnership action plan sits alongside this strategy. The action plan details work to be undertaken under four key themes:

- Consultation
- Communications and Marketing
- Community Engagement
- Support for Victims and Witnesses

Progress against this action plan will be monitored by the Crime and Disorder Management Group and ultimately the Warwickshire Safer Communities Partnership.

A specific twelve month communications and marketing plan will be developed by a small working group. This will be agreed by the partnership Confidence Task and Finish Group ready for implementation in early 2010.

Monitoring and Evaluation

If this strategy is successful, it will result in increased public confidence in the police and partners. This success will be measured through performance against the Place and BCS survey targets, which will be monitored by Warwickshire Safer Communities Partnership.

Success can also be measured through reduced negative perceptions about crime and ASB, measured through quality of life indicators within the Place Survey and Warwickshire Observatory Quality of Life document.

Performance in relation to each specific action within the action plan and communications and marketing plan will be regularly monitored, with an evaluation report to be submitted to Warwickshire Safer Communities Partnership at the end of the 12 month implementation period.

Review Process

This strategy, and the accompanying action plan, will be reviewed annually.