

Strategic Assessment Executive Summary

Purpose of a Strategic Assessment

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are required by law to produce an annual 'strategic assessment'. This is a survey of crime and disorder levels and trends over the past year (and up to three years). It is used as for planning future Partnership activity as part of a three year rolling annual plan to reduce the levels of crime and disorder and its impact on the community.

The strategic assessment is required to look at reported crime, anti-social behaviour, environmental crime, neighbourhood and community issues and recommend priorities and possible courses of action to address them.

The requirement and partners involved are set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006. Guidance on the information that should be included and the format of a strategic assessment are set out in Statutory Instruments 3076 (2007) and 1931 (2007), as well as the 'Delivering Community Safety: A Guide to Effective Partnership Working' and 'Developing a Strategic Assessment' published by the Home Office in 2007

Scope

This strategic assessment looks at reported crime and incidents of disorder, together with other relevant data for the period July 2007 to June 2008 (inclusive). It also looks at longer term trends over the past three years, and social and demographic data for the whole of the new Cheshire East area. This has been facilitated by the co-terminosity of the authority area with the existing police Basic Command Unit and the development of a cross-Cheshire data sharing and viewing tool, 'CoStar'.

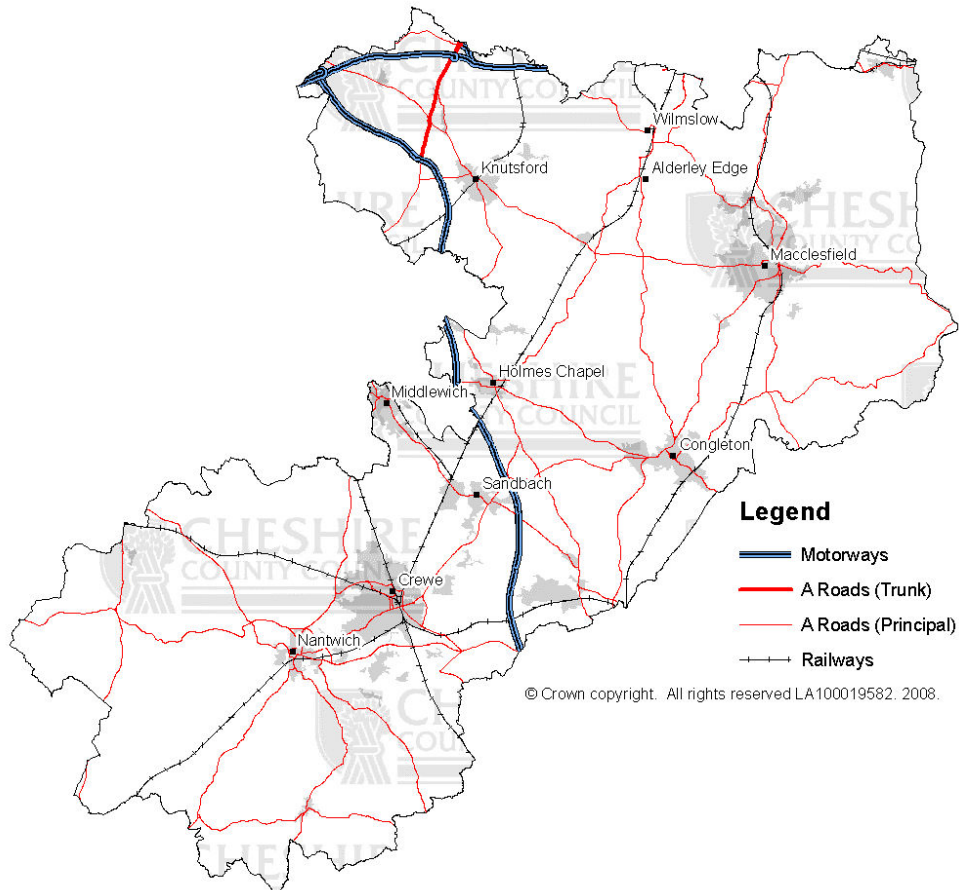
It should be acknowledged that there are always going to be issues and problems with the accuracy and reliability of different datasets in developing a partnership strategic assessment

A strategic assessment is not intended to be a definitive scientific snapshot of crime at a given point but the start of a process to address those issues of crime and disorder that most impact on the people living and working in the area.

The value of the strategic assessment, accepting that there is no such thing as definitively accurate data in social research, is that it is the start of a process of action research intended to reduce crime and increase feelings of safety.

Context

Cheshire East has a population of 358,900 and an area of 116,638 hectares. This is 5% of the North West's population and makes it one of the largest unitary authorities in the region. East Cheshire is bounded by Manchester to the north and east, and Stoke on Trent to the south. It contains the industrial town of Crewe, the old mill towns of Macclesfield, Bollington and Congleton, the market towns of Nantwich, Knutsford and Sandbach, the salt town of Middlewich, the commuter town of Wilmslow, as well as the smaller settlements of Holmes Chapel and Poynton.



The age structure of the Cheshire East population is slightly older than that of England & Wales:

- 5% of Cheshire East's population is aged under 5
- 12% are aged 5 to 14
- 18% are aged 65 or more

Population projections suggest that there will be around 5% fewer children living in Cheshire East by 2026 than there were in 2006 and that the number of people aged 85+ will double.

In 2001, there were 147,144 households with residents in Cheshire East. Household composition generally reflected the England & Wales patterns.

25% of Cheshire East households were all pensioner households of these 21,118 (57%) were pensioners living alone.

In 2006 the average house price was £210,600 compared to the North West average £157,500. In 2006 there were 160,700 dwellings in Cheshire East with the highest percentage in Council tax band C (20%).

96% of the population of Cheshire East were born in the UK, while the 2005 ethnicity estimates class 3% of the population as 'non-white'.

Census 2001 indicated that 32% of the population were managerial and professional workers (compared to 18% in the North West and 21% in England and Wales). 19% were semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, in line with the North West average and slightly above the England and Wales.

The area's population has a higher than average level of qualifications compared to the region and country as a whole, and lower than average unemployment rate. Census measures of health of the population also indicate that it has a lower than average rate of limiting long term illness, and lower rates of Disability allowances

In 2006 167,600 of the Cheshire East population was in employment with 17% working in manufacturing and 77% in services compared to 11% and 83% nationally.

The average household income was £37,000 with employment concentrations in chemicals and pharmaceuticals, 'non-metallic mineral products', agriculture, rubber and plastic products and computing services.

Vehicle ownership levels reinforce the impression of Cheshire East as a fairly well off area with 82% of households in 2001 owning at least one vehicle (compared to 73% nationally), and 40% of households owning 2 or more vehicles.

However, there are pockets of deprivation in Cheshire East, with 14 areas that fall within the top 20% most deprived areas in England. All are in the urban areas with two in Wilmslow, one in Macclesfield, one in Congleton and ten in Crewe. (See map, below¹)

¹ Cheshire East Summary, CCC R&I, February 2008



These areas are home to 6% of Cheshire East's population (over 21,000 people) and are areas that experience various levels of deprivation across a range of Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 'domains':

- Income
- Employment
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Education, Skills and Training
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Crime
- Living Environment

Community Views

In the 2007 Cheshire Omnibus Survey the majority of East Cheshire residents (92%) liked living in their home area. When respondents were asked specifically about their quality of life (from the 2005 Quality of Life Survey) 2% described it as very good and a further 44% described it as quite good. 1% said it was very or quite poor²

The Cheshire Community Survey 2008³, found that people considered three best ways of improving the quality of life in their local area were addressing

- Issues for children & young people,
- Affordable housing

² Cheshire East Profile, Cheshire County Council R&I Unit, February 2008

³ Cheshire Community Survey 2008, Cheshire East Summary, CCC R&I, Oct 2008 (conducted to support the development of the Community Strategy)

- Making the community even safer

However, in the more deprived areas there is a significant difference in the order of priority, with 'Making the community even safer' the top priority, followed by 'Worklessness' and 'Affordable housing'.

Various partner agency surveys over the last two years have shown that low levels of crime are consistently seen as important in making somewhere a good place to live, along with clean streets and health services. There have been small increases in feelings of safety at day and night, and in the number of people who think crime has fallen, though around 1/6th are unsure.⁴

Anti Social Behaviour and Crime are still seen as important issues, though some other things also need to be addressed to improve quality of life. Perceptions of Anti-Social Behaviour in Cheshire East are generally better than in other parts of Cheshire, and there appears to have been some shift in emphasis in surveys away from Crime & ASB as a problem, with activities for teenagers, and highways issues (congestion and maintenance) seen as more in need of improvement⁵

Scanning & Prioritisation

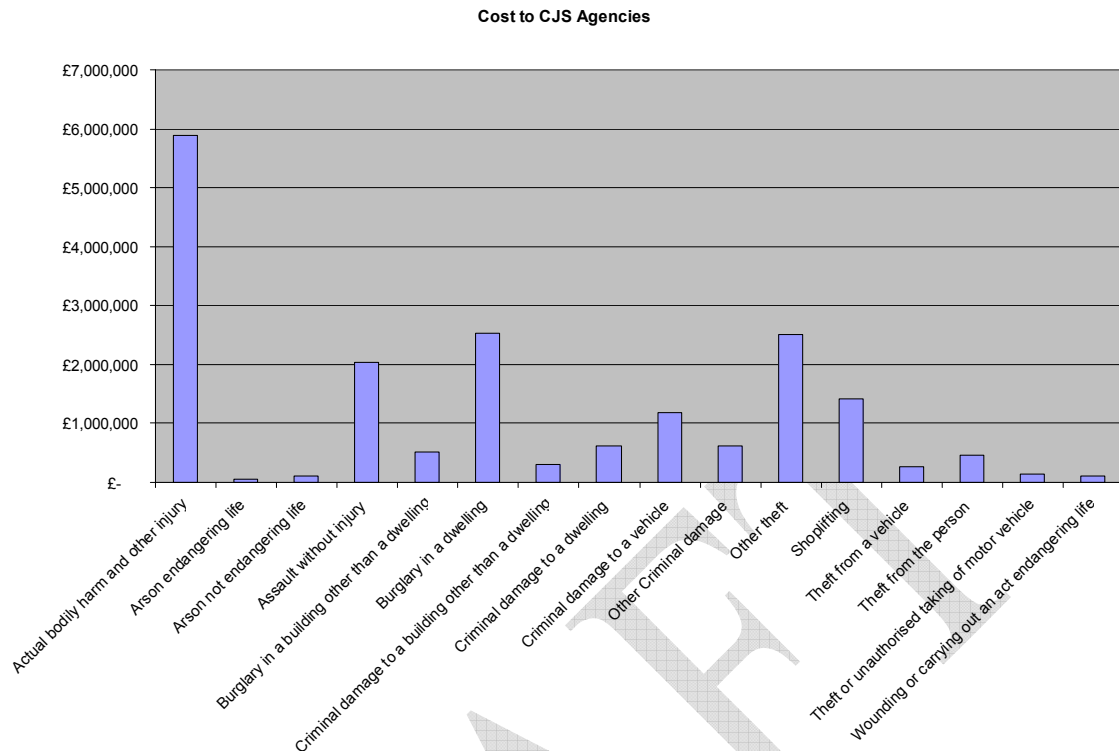
In order identify strategic priorities and recommend action, the team collated data on recorded crime, police incidents, and primary and secondary fires direct from the police and fire service. The 'Co-Star' project is a data sharing project across key agencies with statutory duty to share data relevant to crime and disorder reduction. It is an evolving project, but has provided access to additional data sets such as A&E admissions, ambulance pick-ups, socio-demographic and other data. Additional datasets on anti-social behaviour reports to Registered Social Landlords or the existing district councils were not included due to issues of recording and accessibility. However these data sets may be utilised in the future for more in-depth analysis of specific issues as appropriate.

Crime and ASB scanning looked at both crime or ASB type *and* geographic distribution, in terms of police beats. This was intended to provide a fuller picture than a concentration on crime type alone. Rather than volume of crime alone (i.e. number or 'count'), the rate of crime by area and the cost of crime to society and the justice system was used to assist in prioritisation.

⁴ Neighbourhood Policing Surveys, 2006 and 2007, Cheshire Constabulary.

⁵ County and District Council quality of life/ Best Value and Omnibus surveys, 2005 to 2007/8.

Cost of Crime in Cheshire East⁶



The total cost of crime in Cheshire East to the criminal justice system in the period under consideration was £18m.

The cost to the Criminal Justice System was used to assess the impact on the partnership. However the overall personal, social and economic cost has also been used to assess the relative impact on society. The table below indicates the relative costs of four broad categories of personal and property crime.

Cost	Violent Crime ⁷	Criminal Damage ⁸	Burglary ⁹	Theft & Shoplifting
Personal, social and economic cost	£40.7m	£18m	£8.25m	£8.2m
Criminal Justice System Cost	£7.9m	£2.8m	£3m	£3.9m

The highest cost to society was from violent offences, followed by criminal damage, burglary and then theft and shoplifting. However the relative cost to the Criminal Justice System is slightly different with the order becoming Violence, Theft/shoplifting, burglary and criminal damage. This is due to the

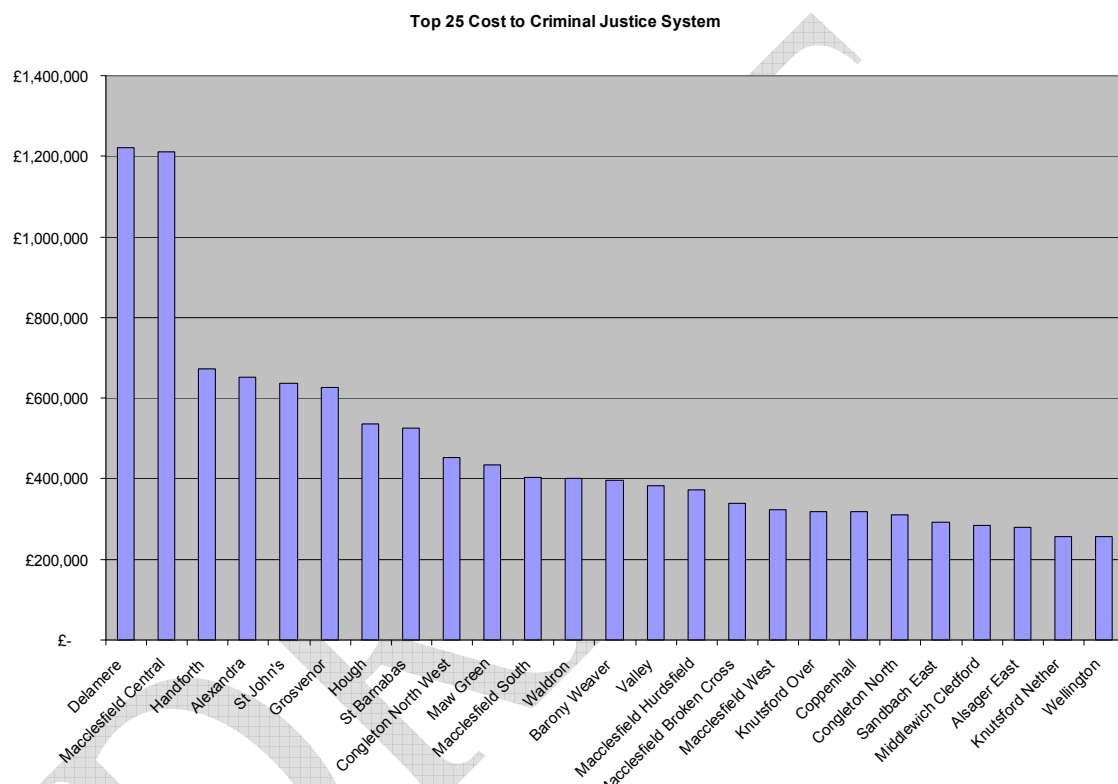
⁶ Economic & Social Cost of Crime, Home Office ON line Report 30/05, all costs at 2003 prices.

⁷ Assault with injury and assault without injury

⁸ Criminal Damage to dwelling, vehicle, other buildings and 'other'

⁹ Burglary Dwelling and Burglary Other

high personal, property and social costs attributed to violence, burglary and criminal damage on one hand, and the large volume of crime that is theft and shoplifting on the other. However, there are other issue to do with theft that raises its profile as a crime issue in the area. Anecdotal evidence has been supported by analysis indicating that there is a clear link between repeat offending and drug use with 76% of identified repeat offenders being drug users. As interventions like the Prolific Offender Scheme appear to cut the cost of burglary to the CJS, similar targeting of repeat offenders in theft and shoplifting could impact on the volume crime area.



The above graph shows the top twenty five beats (pre unitary wards) by cost to the criminal justice system.

Generally, these beats are those that contain town centre with retail and evening economy, and those which contain area that fall within the top 20% most deprived wards in England.

This is due in part to the levels of violent crime associated with town centres, but also with the range and volume of crime that afflicts some of our neighbourhoods.

Anti Social Behaviour

There are a number of issues over the classification and definition of anti-social behaviour. It is largely a subjective issue, with the only accepted definition in law being behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress

to someone not of the same household. The reporting and recording of antisocial behaviour is therefore itself subjective relying on the perceptions of the 'offender' and 'victim' as to what is 'anti-social', but also reliant on the perception of the person who is recording the incident on whom the final classification depends.

Between July 2007 and June 2008 there were 100,561 reported incidents (or 'calls for service') to the police from Cheshire East. Of these 18,245, or 18%, were classified as Anti-Social Behaviour 'types'. Of the 18,245 'ASB' calls to the police 2,564 concerned vehicle nuisance (on and off road, including parking nuisance), 1,462 were neighbour disputes and 1,2776 malicious calls. Other calls were classified as Abandoned Vehicles (767) and animal related - minor bites, noise or fouling (404).

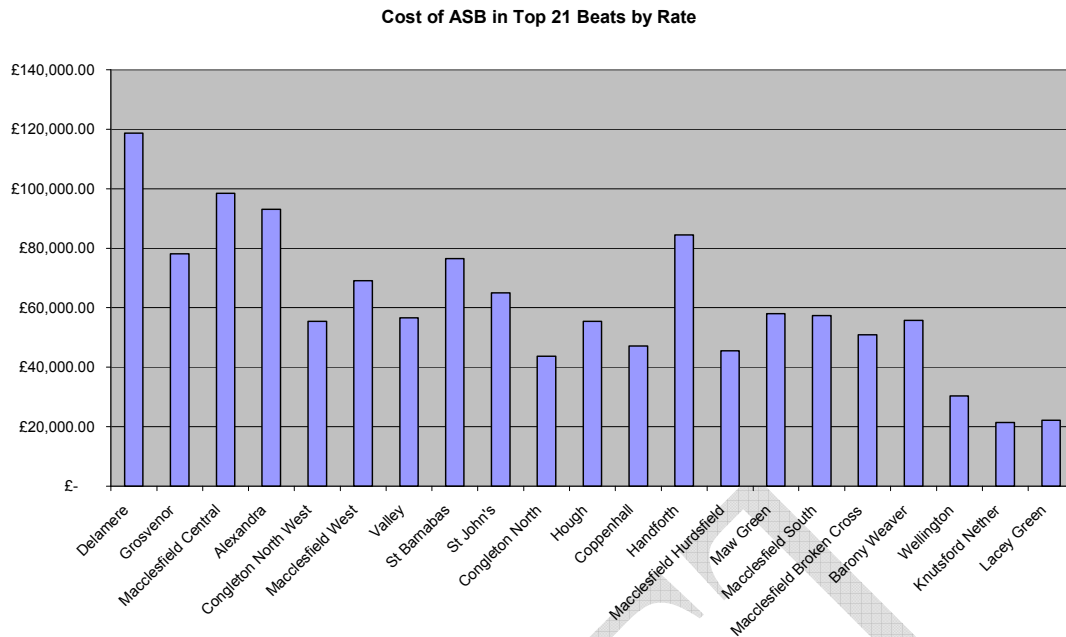
The largest classification, accounting for 60% of 'Anti-Social Behaviour' and 11% of all calls to the police in the area is called 'rowdy/loutish/drunken behaviour etc in a public place'

This is the largest category of 'ASB', but also perhaps the most broadly or ill defined. Other categories include prostitution related activity (only 4 incidents reported), or street drinking (61 incidents) or begging (41). 'Rowdy/loutish/drunken' can include 'gatherings', 'football in the wrong place', etc and is something of a catch all. Given the volume, however, analysis of 'anti-social behaviour' issues was concentrated on this category.

The cost of ASB to the partnership and society was calculated using an average figure per incident taken from that used by the Home Office One-Day count of ASB.¹⁰ The total cost for the year was estimated at £2.2million, which is probably an underestimate, however, it is considerably less than the costs of crime indicated earlier.

The chart below indicates the 21 beats (or pre-unitary wards) out of 85 that have the highest reported rates of ASB (per thousand residents) and also account for 57% of the cost of ASB in Cheshire East.

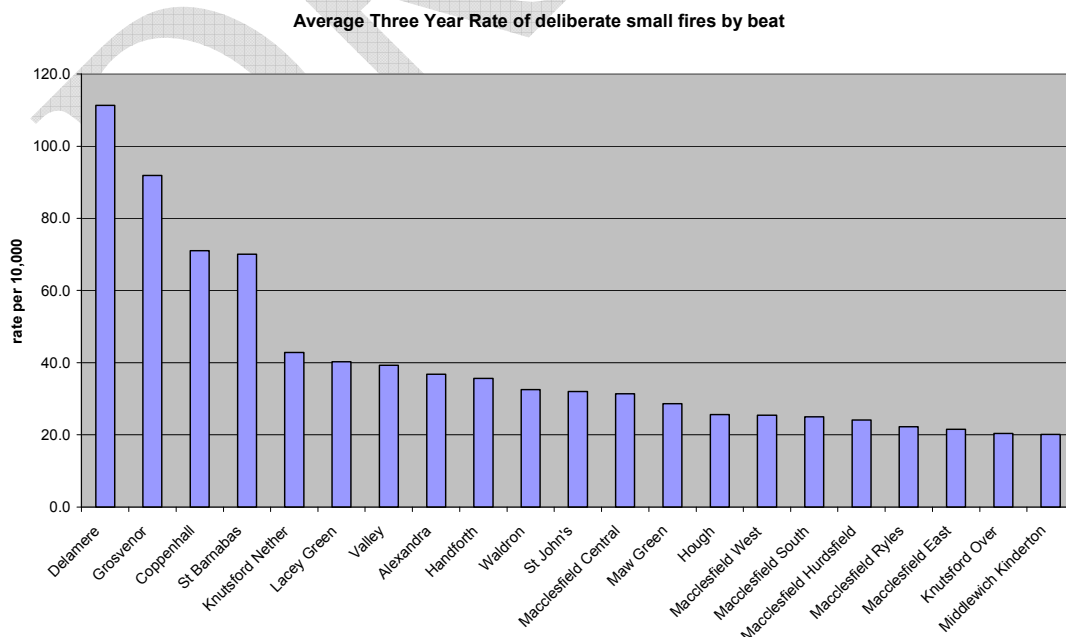
¹⁰ It is impossible to breakdown the reported incidents under rowdy/loutish behaviour into type of ASB and so assign specific estimates. ASB One Day Count, Home Office Figure used is £205 per incident



Again, it will be noted that town centres and beats which contain areas of multiple deprivation feature prominently in this list, across the Cheshire East area.

Arson: Deliberate Small Fires

Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service provided analysis and background data on deliberate small fires across Cheshire East. A map of the distribution of fires can be found in the appendix (??). Rates of deliberate small fires per ten thousand population are shown in the chart below:



This indicates a mix of areas, but again mainly areas with relatively deprived neighbourhoods, often social housing and the two main towns feature.

Prioritisation of local Crime & Disorder Issues

Within the context of the Local Area Agreement, it is accepted that certain issues have to be prioritised beyond the findings of the local crime analysis. Some issues are considered to be universal and even Cheshire wide, such as Drugs Action, Domestic Violence and Road Safety. As such they have their own thematic partnerships which produce assessments of their own. This Crime & Disorder assessment therefore includes issues like Road Safety and Domestic Violence with reports from the lead Partnerships in those areas.

(NOTE: to be added)

It is clear from the initial scan and broad level analysis that that crime and disorder (including 'ASB', arson and other issues) disproportionately affects two types of area within Cheshire East.

These are town centres with areas of daytime retail trade and usually concentrations of licensed premises associated with an evening economy as well, and residential areas, primarily those with issues of multiple deprivation, of which one is the crime level.

Cheshire East is made up of a collection of towns, all providing retail and entertainment centres and all affected by similar types of crime and disorder issues – shoplifting, theft, vehicle crime, evening economy disorder and ASB.

However there is a need to discriminate between the types and causes of crime and anti-social behaviour in these types of location. Analysis indicates that not all 'violent crime' in these areas is associated with the evening economy, also the towns display drastic variations in levels of theft and shoplifting (whether due to levels of intervention is not known). There is also a need to be more discerning when looking at 'anti-social behaviour' as this splits between that associated with young people earlier in the evening and that attributed to drunkenness and the evening economy.

Other areas suffer relatively high levels of ASB, Arson, damage to buildings and vehicles, burglary and other burglary. These tend to be areas or relatively high deprivation. Not all are social housing, though some are. In these areas there can be lower confidence in the agencies and there are multiple issues associated with quality of life such as littering, vandalism, fouling and up keep of the 'public realm' which contribute to lower feelings of safety and dissatisfaction.

In some of the areas the 'town centre' and residential areas overlap and here feelings of safety are affected both by the fall out from the night time economy and the day to day experience of 'ASB' and minor crime.

The partnership should recognise the need to address the issues of crime, disorder and feelings of safety across the whole of Cheshire East, but, it

should also recognise that it must prioritise and target its resources where they can have the greatest impact and where there is the greatest need.

Recommendations

This partnership strategic assessment has been conducted alongside the Police BCU Strategic Assessment, using the same period for analysis, and in the case of crime and ASB the same data. It is therefore not the intention to make operational level recommendations in tackling specific crime types such as would be found in the police assessment.

Rather, it is the role of the partnership to focus on the broader strategic themes and identify the areas where deeper partnership and multi-agency working can 'add value' to the partners' core business.

Two broad themes are evident from the analysis.

The first is the need to maintain operational activity and processes that have successfully reduced crime across Cheshire East over the last three years.

The second is to develop approaches to crime and disorder that has the most impact on people, and which most concerns them. Therefore an emphasis should be placed on the strategic management of crime and disorder in our towns and in those neighbourhoods that suffer most.

An approach to the strategic management of towns, in terms of licensing and planning policy, enforcement, crime prevention and engagement with businesses to assist in the prevention of crime and ASB should contribute to reducing fear of crime, as it is often the reputation of a town centre that prevents people feeling safe and using them more.

Similarly, a strategic approach to the reduction of crime and disorder in our less well off neighbourhoods, one which address the 'signal' nature of much environmental crime and vandalism, that tackles the specific issues in that neighbourhood and which engages with and increases the confidence of the residents (and their landlords) to contribute to improving where they live. This could be through working with the Local Area Partnerships and engaging with the community and partners to fit the approach to the specific areas.

Key Priorities:

Public Confidence and Area Working	Police Authority lead	NI 4 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in the locality NI 21 – Dealing with local concerns about ASB and crime by the local council and police
Anti Social Behaviour	Cheshire Police lead	NI 33 – Arson incidents LI 37 – Reported

		incidents of ASB LI 39 – Alcohol Arrest Referral LI 40 – ASB – criminal damage
Preventing Offending	Cheshire Probation Service	NI 18 – Adult re-offending rate NI 30 – re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders
Protected Towns	Cheshire East Council	NI 20 – Assault with injury rate
Domestic Abuse	Cheshire Domestic Abuse Forum	NI 32 – Repeat incidents of domestic abuse LI 38 – Increase in proportion of non- police referrals to the DAFSU and MARACs
Road Safety Groups	Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service	NI 47 – People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents