

## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

### **REPORT TO: Community Safety Scrutiny Committee**

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**Date of Meeting:** Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July  
**Report of:** Community Safety  
**Subject/Title:** Cheshire East Council Crime Prevention  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr L Gilbert

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#### **1.0 Report Summary**

- 1.1 Overview of activities and projects within Cheshire East that prevent/reduce crime.

#### **2.0 Recommendation**

- 2.1 Comment on activities and support funding applications

#### **3.0 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 All activities are conducted with the support of the Safer Cheshire East Partnership and many of the activities are in partnership with other agencies such as Cheshire Constabulary, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and Cheshire Probation Trust.

#### **4.0 Wards Affected**

- 4.1 All

#### **5.0 Local Ward Members**

- 5.1 All

#### **6.0 Policy Implications including - Climate Change - Health**

- 6.1
- Economical Climates and partner agency reduction of staff or funding meaning that they can no longer commit to the SCEP's processes as much as they previously had been.
  - New legislation from Home Office with regards to tools and powers to tackle ASB.

#### **7.0 Financial Implications**

- 7.1.1 Many of the projects require funding to pay for crime prevention items such as bike marking kits, timer switches and personal alarms. Cheshire Police have

a small budget to pay for items however already, this financial year, all the budget has been used. The Safer Cheshire East Partnership use to receive funding from the Home Office and a small element of this was allocated to the crime prevention fund to pay for such items. Since April 2013, the funding has gone straight to the Police and Crime Commissioner and whilst there is a crime prevention fund, it is much more difficult to obtain the funds now that Cheshire East is competing with bids from the rest of Cheshire.

Cheshire Crime Prevention Panel is a multi agency group of business and statutory agencies and the aim of the group is to prevent crime particularly amongst businesses in the Cheshire East area. The Crime Prevention Panel has a small amount of funding and this also pays for crime prevention items and community engagement projects such as the Brownies crime prevention calendar.

Cheshire Crimestoppers has a small amount of funding to pay for initiatives linked to crime prevention and encouraging people to report crime either to the police or anonymously to Crimestoppers. The Community Safety Team have applied and been successful in obtaining funding for leaflets and also translation costs for non English speaking communities.

Obviously with no clear funding streams for crime prevention and relying heavily on funding bids and small amount of money on an ad hoc basis, it makes it difficult to plan activities or when activities are carried out, at times there is a limited amount of items/resources to hand out. If a small budget was provided to the Community Safety Team, this would enable activities to be planned throughout the year and also, items can be purchased at a much better rate if bought in higher quantities.

## **8.0 Legal implications (authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

8.1 None

## **9.0 Risk Management**

- 9.1 Risks associated with the work of crime prevention are predominately due to the lack of provision of staff/officer time dedicated to this area of work. Many agencies are reducing their numbers of staff and therefore staff are overstretched with many activities (many of these are dealing with re-active activities as oppose to preventative).
- 9.2 Lack of funding makes it difficult to provide the public with basic crime prevention items/materials which would have a big impact on the likelihood of them becoming a victim of crime.

## **10.0 Background and Information**

Many crime prevention projects and schemes rely on assistance and commitment from partner agencies in order for the process to have the greatest affect and

success. The Cheshire East Council Community Safety Teams' work around tackling crime prevention and reduction is very much embedded within the partnership setting. The Community Safety Team (CST) is based within Cheshire Police stations across Cheshire East, Crewe, Congleton and Macclesfield. The Community Safety Team has full access to Cheshire Police IT systems and databases and therefore the exchange of data and information is very effective. (see appendix 1 for structure chart)

There are many crime prevention projects across Cheshire East and the Community Safety Team lead on a number of these activities such as

- StreetSafe
- SCOOT
- Alleygates/Situational Crime prevention
- Crime prevention community engagement events
- Anti social behaviour warning letter system
- Social media campaign

### StreetSafe

StreetSafe is a community engagement and survey project which has been running across Cheshire East since January 2011. The scheme is lead and co-ordinated by the Community Safety Team however it is a multi agency project that focuses on three key objectives

1. Safer
2. Stronger
3. Cleaner

The aim of StreetSafe project is to help the community to put the 'neighbour' back into the neighbourhood and it does this by working with the local residents and listening to the needs of every household within a designated StreetSafe scheme. Identification of the specific streets to be targeted is through the tasking and co-ordination group and analysis of the area is conducted to see what intelligence/data there is for the area. The households are informed one week before the event that a multi agency team will be visiting to discuss safer, stronger and cleaner issues, so that we are not cold calling on the day of the event. The scheme works by pairs visiting every household in the designated area and completing a questionnaire (see appendix 2) with the resident and discussing any issues that they may have. A goody bag is given to everyone that completes a questionnaire detailing key information and contacts about their local area, specific crime prevention advice and also crime prevention items such as timer switches, property marking pens and purse bells. Once the questionnaires have been completed, all the data is collated into a report to identify what the top issues are for the people within that area. (see appendix 3) A short report is hand delivered to every resident in the style of we asked, you said, we did. The StreetSafe project is not about 'fixing' the problems within the community but more of an enabler for the local community to take ownership of their street/neighbourhood.

Some examples of work which has happened as a result of Streetsafe is

- Successful installation of alleygates which was joined funded by a residents committee (set up through the work of StreetSafe) and Cheshire East Council.
- A number of Homewatch schemes have been created and small resident group to bring residents together, to tackle local issues.

To date 15 StreetSafe schemes have taken place over the last 2 years which is the equivalent of over 800 households have been contacted. Of them, 3 StreetSafe schemes have specifically targeted elderly communities and from StreetSafe alone, 86 nominated neighbours have been developed.

### Nominated Neighbour Scheme

The Nominated Neighbour Scheme has been developed by Cheshire East Council and Cheshire Police to tackle bogus callers and workmen or other kinds of distraction thefts.

The scheme is aimed at vulnerable people in our community and makes the most of our extremely strong community relationships. Often the bogus workman or criminal will target the elderly or vulnerable and the scheme means that these people will be protected by someone they know and trust, such as a neighbour or a relative.

This scheme will help limit the opportunity for doorstep callers to con there way into homes or persuade residents to have unnecessary home improvements, once they fail to gain access and know the local community is aware of their activities it will act as a strong deterrent to stop them returning in the future.

The Community Safety Team is currently promoting the Nominated Neighbour scheme across Cheshire East and working very closely with Trading Standards and local neighbourhood policing team to ensure that vulnerable people, particularly elderly people within the borough are protected against door step crime.

### SCOOT

Stamp Crime Out of Town (SCOOT) is a non-profit making multi agency partnership between the retailers of Crewe & Nantwich, Cheshire Police, Town Centre Management, Chamber of Commerce, Magistrates and the Local Authority to combat town centre crime. The Home Office strongly promotes such long-term, sustainable schemes under the "Crime & Disorder Act" as a means of fighting retail crime, anti-social behaviour, drugs, and fraud.

Shoplifting is a gateway crime, which is why SCOOT works as a deterrent as well as a crime reduction scheme. This initiative is designed to combat retail crime, by the release, under strict guidelines, of a criminal's photograph (targets) and relevant information, with the ultimate aim to exclude persistent, prolific "lifestyle" criminals from all member stores. It also encourages a better working partnership between police and retailers, ensuring that a more focused and targeted response is adopted towards thieves.

The scheme, by coordinated use of CCTV, SCOOT and Radio Link Radios (which all member stores have and the town centre police officers utilise) also improves the general environment of a town by making it a safer, less violent place to be, not only for visitors but also employees who work there

In March of this year SCOOT was audited by the Association of Business Crime Partnerships for the **Safer Business Award**. The Safer Business Award is the nationally recognised standard for business crime reduction partnerships, which shows that they are operating lawfully, in accordance with the Data Protection Act and codes of practice which are specifically designed to promote effective partnership work. The accreditation requires the partnership to evidence partnership management and structure, data protection and data management, key performance indicators and management information and performance.

SCOOT were successful in gaining the Safer Business Award after receiving a pass with distinction.

#### Alleygates/Situational Crime Prevention

The areas gated in Crewe were selected on the basis of an analysis of crime and disorder figures; and In some instances the areas were also identified in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation as the areas with the worst crime problems in Crewe, being two and three times the borough average.

A survey to determine the appropriateness of gating these alleys was carried out and alternate options considered. The alley ways were assessed as suitable for gating, and this was considered the most efficient, and cost effective intervention.

This project supports the partnership objectives of reducing ASB with a direct link to reducing the fear of crime, as ASB and the perceptions of ASB have a major influence on peoples safety and feelings of safety and wellbeing within their homes. It also links with the reduction of acquisitive crime as alley gates have had an appreciable impact on the instances of rear entry burglaries, and also impacted on vehicle crime in areas of terracing with on-street parking. There are also implications for the reduction of secondary fires (minor arson), criminal damage, graffiti, fly tipping and fouling.

#### Crime prevention community engagement events

On a regular basis, the Community Safety Team are actively engaging with the local residents in their own communities. This predominately occurs in the form of stalls/stands in locally held community events such a family fun days, whereby members of the team are available to the members of the public to chat about issues relating to crime, disorder and anti social behaviour. Events in which the Community Safety Team have been involved in are

- Cheshire Show
- Nantwich Show
- Cholmondley Pageant of Power

- Ocean fun day (multi-cultural event), Crewe

These events are designed to reach the maximum amount of people giving generic advice about crime prevention and reduction. At these events, we try and give away free crime prevention items such as timer switches, personal alarms and purse bells to name a few.

Other events the Community Safety Team organise is more specific to either a crime type or a season trend. These include

- Bike marking events
- Fresher week in Reaseheath College and MMU Crewe Campus
- Flu clinics (attending GPs surgeries and health centres)
- Halloween and bonfire events

The Community Safety Team also is heavily involved in the promotion of the Homewatch scheme which over the last 12 months there has been a significant rise in the number of co-ordinators and members that have joined. The benefit of this is that we now have a large database of residents contact details and therefore if any information comes into the council or the police that requires help from the public, an email can be sent out immediately and to thousands of people which acts as a two pronged approach in that it informed people of a specific crime or incident and also it provides an opportunity for people provide information/intelligence to the police or council.

An example of where this has had a huge impact was approximately 12 months ago, a prolific offender who was targeting elderly people in relation to door step crime was caught by information that came as a result of an urgent appeal to the Homewatch members database.

### Anti social behaviour warning letter systems

The ASB Team has submitted a number of papers to the Scrutiny Board over the past twelve months, most of which have outlined a number of the interventions that have an impact on Crime Prevention across the East of Cheshire.

Below are short descriptions of the main interventions that we use on a regular basis which inevitably have an impact on the prevention of crime. If further detailed descriptions are required, these can be supplied.

### **Letter warnings:**

A selection of different letter warnings regarding Young People involved in ASB acts are sent home to parents, informing them of their child's behaviour. Statistics have evidenced that over 70% of these letters sent do not come to partnership attention again. This early intervention could have an effect on those young people becoming first time entrants to the Youth Offending Service as potential issues are highlighted to parents/guardians at a very early stage

### **Preventing Offending Panel (POP):**

The POP has been running under various different formats and names over the past 10 years. Its main function is to hold two panels a month (North and South of East Cheshire). The POP takes on referrals from a number of agencies for young people and families (up to the age of 18) with reference to those that are at risk of/involved in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and/or offending.

The core duties of the panel are to assign these cases to the appropriate preventative interventions in order to reduce this risk.

### **Acceptable Behaviour Discussions/Acceptable Behaviour Contracts:**

These are voluntary meetings/contracts that are drawn up between the Partnership and a young person/adult which tackles signs of ASB that have the potential to lead to criminal acts should the behaviour continue. Over the years only a very small proportion of young people/adults who have been subject to these discussions/contracts have gone on to offend/be subject to an Anti-Social behaviour order.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour Community Questionnaires:**

These are delivered to households whom have been identified due to reports of ASB in the area. They may well have been subject to this ASB and may not have reported it due to fear of repercussions or not knowing who to report it to. The questionnaire themselves are a good tool for allowing those residents to come forward, to increase visibility in the area when they are being distributed by Police Officers and also to identify possible vulnerable residents who may need further interventions, such as crime prevention assistance, home safety assessments etc.

They also allow us to collect further information with reference to identifying any perpetrators of ASB. The alleged perpetrators also have a copy of this questionnaire delivered to their property, which in itself highlights to them that the Partnership is looking into the case and can assist in them curbing their behaviour before it leads to more criminal acts.

### **Mediation services (in-house and out-house)**

The Partnership ASB team have a number of cases that have been purchased which supply services to those members of the public whom are private rent or private own residents. We are also undergoing the process of training one of our team to become a qualified mediator to assist with some of these cases. These are to deal with neighbour/community disputes that can often lead to criminal offences being reported, such as criminal damage to properties, or assaults due to a feud that has got out of control. Recent studies have shown that Police incident reports to cases whom have been subject to mediation intervention have dramatically reduced calls to the Police and CEC agencies such as Environmental Health, and also potentially prevented criminal acts from taking place.

## **Crimestoppers:**

All the literature that we send to local residents via community questionnaires etc, do have included with them information with reference to Crimestoppers, we are in hope that this could also assist with Crime Prevention by highlighting anonymous reporting to residents in an area that might be subject to a high level of ASB/Crime.

## Social media campaigns

The use of the internet has made the messages of crime prevention much easier to reach a wider community. The Community Safety Team has dedicated web pages on crime prevention and how to keep safe.

Other forms of social media used by the Community Safety Team is twitter and this has proven to be a good way of engaging with the local community. At a recent crime prevention event in Nantwich, a tweet was sent out in the morning to inform people of the details of the event. During the event, every person who presented themselves at the stand was asked how they knew about the event and over a third of people stated that they specifically came to the event because they had seen the tweet.

The Safer Cheshire East Partnership twitter account is @safercheshire

## **11.0 Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

Abigail Webb  
Community Safety Development Manager  
01606 363352  
[Abigail.webb@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:Abigail.webb@cheshireeast.gov.uk)