

## **STRATEGIC COMMUNITY SAFETY DEVELOPMENT FOR TEES VALLEY**

**April 10<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**

**Conference Room 4, Cleveland Police Headquarters, Ladgate Lane, Middlesbrough**

### **BRIEFING PAPER**

#### **Introduction**

1. You have been nominated by your Chief Officer to represent your organisation in the development of two or three key propositions to further improve community safety across Tees Valley. This briefing paper provides the background and context for the work to support scoping discussion at the meeting scheduled for April 10th.

#### **The National Context**

2. Community safety remains at or near the top of the public's priorities. The Government's cross-departmental Crime Strategy, published in July 2007, has been widely welcomed by stakeholders. It takes a holistic view of tackling crime, from prevention through to rehabilitation, focusing on the underlying drivers of crime, particularly drugs and alcohol. It makes important linkages to social exclusion and mental health and represents a more mature relationship between Government and partners. It proposes a differentiated approach across the spectrum of crime from anti social behaviour through to organised crime and terrorism with a more devolved approach to tackling volume crime. The National Community Safety Plan outlines the delivery mechanisms for the Crime Strategy and is the foundation for understanding national priorities and how they link together as a tool for local delivery. Further publications including the new Drug Strategy, Action Plan for Tackling Violence; the Criminal Justice Strategic Plan; and the forthcoming Strategic Plan for Reducing Re-Offending, provide further guidance for local practitioners to assist their strategic planning and the delivery of the Home Office's priorities over the next three years.
3. The strategy and plans reflect the community safety priorities set out in the Public Service Agreements (PSAs). The PSAs act as a signal to the public about what is important. New Local Area Agreements (LAAs) will, of course, remain the central mechanism for delivering community safety targets and rewarding good performance.

#### **The Regional Context**

4. The North East Region has a target to reduce crime, as measured by the British Crime Survey Comparator Crime [BCS] by 18.1% from the baseline year of 2003/4. The latest published crime statistics for the year to April 2007 showed that BCS comparator crime reduced by 13% against the 2003/04 baseline year (a reduction of 22,727 recorded crimes). This was greater than the reduction across England and Wales as a whole, (which reduced by 10% in comparison).
5. The latest unpublished data to end February 2008 shows that the Region as a whole is well ahead of expected progress and it is expected that the Region will meet its target to the end March 08.

6. Government Office for the North East recently commissioned a Regional Strategic Assessment of Community Safety. This document, which is still in draft at this stage, highlights the emerging challenges for the next PSA period, as follows:

- Diverting young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour, and reducing their vulnerability to crime
- Offender management – removing the barriers to employment, skills development, accommodation and alcohol treatment
- Responsible drinking
- Neighbourhood safety
- Community reassurance.

### **The Tees Valley Context**

7. Overall, crime rates have fallen by about a third over the last ten years and the chances of becoming a victim of crime remain at historically low levels. Over the last three years alone overall crime across the Tees Valley has reduced by about a fifth and car crime, robbery and burglary have seen substantial reductions. Record numbers of police officers, community support officers, wardens and local authority community safety specialists are working to keep communities safer. Tees Valley's five Community Safety Partnerships are delivering results through intelligence led problem solving, targeting resources and innovative tactics. Neighbourhood policing, and neighbourhood management more broadly, have been widely welcomed by the public. They are demonstrably effective vehicles for providing reassurance at the very local level.
8. However, violent crime, anti social behaviour and links with alcohol continue to be of concern in the sub region. Some people and places remain more at risk than others. Fear and anxiety about crime and anti-social behaviour remain disproportionately high in some places and for some sections of the community. Questions arise about the extent to which agencies can reduce crime further without a concerted effort to bear down on the underlying drivers through longer term prevention and early intervention. Big challenges remain around violent crime, anti-social behaviour, alcohol misuse and how we treat young people both as perpetrators and victims. Reducing the gap between crime figures and public perceptions of crime will be especially important in an environment where public agencies will be judged increasingly by how people feel about the place they live in.

### **The New Operating Environment**

9. Addressing the challenges of improving the quality of life in places and delivering better value for money and public services under CSR 07 will require a new approach to:
- delivery, that sees councils continuing to lead their communities by effective partnership working; increasingly working across boundaries in collaboration with other councils and partnerships to deliver better, more efficient services;
  - devolution and co-ordination of improvement and efficiency support, that sees resources used in the most effective and efficient way to support key priorities agreed through the LAA; and
  - performance assessment and inspection, through the new Comprehensive Area Assessment, currently being developed jointly by the Inspectorates, which is intended to be area based, outcomes focused, put the views of local people at the centre and reduce the overall burden of inspection and regulation on localities thereby creating more space for councils and partners to develop innovative solutions to local challenges.

10. In the community safety context, meeting the challenges requires renewed vigour from all agencies across the delivery landscape and a further strengthening of multi agency collaboration with a range of partnerships working together to tackle some of the more intractable and complex issues faced by communities. The speed and globalisation of criminal innovation, the value of proof of identity and authenticity, ever increased mobility, rapid technological advance and changing demographics require strategy and tactics to operate seamlessly on many levels. Trends include:
- the changing nature of terrorism including suicide attacks;
  - a changing pattern of drug misuse;
  - a shift towards more serious drug related violence and intimidation; and
  - binge drinking by young people and alcohol related disorder<sup>1</sup>.

These changing and evolving patterns, the social and economic costs of crime and anti-social behaviour and the concentration of harms in certain deprived areas and segments of the population require new and different approaches, strategic leadership and collaboration between key decision makers nationally, regionally, sub regionally and in places.

### **Developments to Date**

11. In early 2008, a meeting was held between the Government Office for the North East (GONE) Directors, the Chief Constables of Durham Constabulary and Cleveland Police, and Tees Valley Chief Executives to identify community safety issues of common interest and concern. It was agreed that Community Safety Partnerships in Tees Valley were delivering results through good use of intelligence, problem solving, targeting resources and innovative tactics. Participants at the meeting questioned, however, the extent to which crime could be further reduced without a concerted effort to tackle its underlying drivers through longer term prevention and early intervention. Increasingly all agencies will be judged on how people feel about the place they live in but it was recognised that fear and anxiety about crime and anti-social behaviour remains stubbornly high despite significant falls in recorded crime and that this impacts on public confidence.
12. Effective partnership working at the right spatial level for the issue will assume even greater importance in the future and as such it was agreed that the time was right to consider a more sophisticated, collaborative approach across the Tees Valley area to address some key community safety issues. Each Chief Officer agreed to nominate a senior representative to come together to work up a handful of community safety propositions with clear deliverables.

### **Aim and Outcomes**

13. The meeting on April 10th will provide an opportunity for preliminary discussions about the key issues and challenges and what might be done through collaborative working across Tees Valley to deliver a clear and consistent set of community safety outcomes. Discussions will include consideration of how collaboration at sub regional level can:
- add value to work already being carried out in local areas;
  - simplify and remove barriers to effective delivery; and,
  - generate potential economies of scale.

By the end of the meeting we hope to have identified a handful of collective concerns and challenges which we will develop further at a longer session at a later date.

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<sup>1</sup> The Foresight – Britain 20-20 (2003)

## What we need from you

14. Please come to the meeting prepared to discuss the following:

- The key community safety concerns and challenges for your local area. This could include:
  - types of crime/anti-social behaviour/substance misuse;
  - drivers such as those associated with fear of crime, offending behaviour and vulnerable geographical locations/communities;
  - emerging trends or areas of concern that may present a risk or threat in the future;  
or
  - connectivity between wider partners and partnerships in tackling shared priorities.
- What action is needed to address them?
- What does success look like?
- What are the barriers to delivery?
- What joint working already exists, and how might public services in Tees Valley work together to add value and produce better outcomes than might be achieved by working independently?
- What can Government do to assist?

This is a timely opportunity to consider from a different perspective how we tackle community safety issues of common concern throughout Tees Valley.