

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Head of Community
Development

REPORT NUMBER: **L29**

TO: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE (COMMUNITY
SERVICES)

DATE OF MEETING: 21 June 2011

BABERGH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REVIEW

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To detail the work of a key partnership for the Council, the Babergh Community Safety Partnership. This report concerns the activities of the partnership for 2010/11, results achieved and makes comments about significant future developments.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the content of the report be noted.

The Committee is able to resolve this matter.

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with the content of this report

4. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 The nature of this report is such that a risk assessment is not required as the committee is not being asked to make a decision or agree any recommendations.

5. **KEY INFORMATION**

The Community Safety Partnership

- 5.1 Crime and disorder reduction partnerships (referred to in Suffolk as Community Safety Partnerships) were formed by Local Authorities following the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Nationally structures vary, but in Suffolk all the local authorities at district/borough level have adopted similar models. There is a Responsible Authorities Group (RAG), which principally has a strategic remit and in Babergh was chaired by Nick Ridley in 2010/11 with Jenny Antill member for Waldingfield, as Vice-Chair for 2010/11; Cllr. Antill is the current Chair.

- 5.2 In addition there is an Officer Working Group (OWG), chaired by Paul Little CS and L Manager, which takes responsibility for operational delivery. Suffolk County Council provides a supporting strategic role. Both groups include key partners from the Police, Probation Service, Youth Offending Service, Fire Service, Suffolk County Council and the Primary Care Trust.

Strategic Assessment and Action Plan 2010/11

- 5.3 The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) undertakes strategic assessments and action planning to ensure that its activities are focused on those areas of most local relevance and need. These are reviewed on an annual basis. The strategic assessment itself is undertaken by Suffolk County Council on behalf of all CSPs in Suffolk and is a comprehensive audit of information about crime and disorder in the County. The assessment also looks to make some localised recommendations (for each CSP area), which are then considered by the CSP and a full action plan is developed. In addition, in Babergh, we have factored in local survey data and other District-wide information, including locally developed crime and anti-social behaviour data collection. A joint planning event with the CSPs strategic and operational groups (RAG and OWG) was undertaken and a detailed action plan formulated and implemented from April 2010. Details of that action plan, along with quarterly progress reports are published on Babergh's website.
- 5.4 The action plan for 2010/11 took a thematic stance, consistent with the approach adopted in the previous year. Rather than focus on types of crime, the partnership feel that organising around themes gives a better opportunity for a comprehensive approach to problem solving rather than the narrower focus on specific crime types. The themes adopted were:
- Creating Safer Town Centres at Night
 - Anti-Social Behaviour and Engaging Positively with Young People
 - A Focus on Key Areas
 - Promoting Responsible Alcohol Use as a priority and Tackling Substance Abuse amongst under 18s
 - Helping Vulnerable Families and Individuals
 - Emerging Crime Issues
- 5.5 There is a good deal of consistency between the themes adopted in 2010/11 and those adopted in the previous year, particularly issues concerned with alcohol fuelled disorder in town centres and anti-social behaviour and the perceptions of anti-social behaviour by young people in groups. These are issues that have Suffolk-wide and indeed nationwide resonance; in Babergh there has been some significant progress made in both these respects.

Action taken by the Community Safety Partnership

- 5.6 Some of the actions agreed at the start of the year have not been able to be completed. Babergh's Community Safety Officer left in July 2010 and the post has not been filled. This reduction in staff capacity has affected our ability to deliver against some of the actions, however the impact of this has been mitigated through support from other partner agencies.

Creating Safer Town Centres at Night

- 5.7 This has been and is likely to remain a key focus for the Community Safety Partnership. The Council and the Police have developed increasingly effective joint working arrangements to ensure that there is a necessary focus of energies and resources on this theme. We know through specifically commissioned research that the volume crime types of criminal damage, public disorder and violence for the District and indeed the County have strong links to the irresponsible use of Alcohol.
- 5.8 Babergh has a long standing joint tactical approach with local Police that focuses on issues of crime and disorder in town centres. Tactics include how the town centre CCTV system is used, maximising its usefulness at low cost through the use of volunteers; targeted Police patrols; and coordinated license enforcement action. A local action group meets on a regular basis to coordinate the operational implementation of specific actions.
- 5.9 In order to assess the Partnership's impact in this area, there is specifically commissioned analytical support and corporate targets have been adopted (LP1115) as, in terms of crime, this is the key driver for violence and disorder. 2009/10 saw a 15% reduction in crime types associated with the *Night-time Economy* (pubs and clubs) in target areas and 2010/11 saw a further reduction of 3%. This is a measure of crimes occurring during the night time in Sudbury and Hadleigh town centres and includes violent crime, criminal damage and public order offences.

Anti-social Behaviour and Engaging Positively with Young People

- 5.10 Concerns about anti-social behaviour amongst young people are consistently raised by our communities. These concerns are raised through direct public engagement via the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and through reports from individuals both to the Council and the Police. There is often a mixture of perception of issues, leading to concerns about personal safety and actual incidents. The resulting actions developed through the Partnership have therefore focused on ensuring that where genuine issues occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively; that unduly negative perceptions about young people are tackled; and that preventative and rehabilitative measures continue to be developed.

- 5.11 Aside from the core work that is done, including the continuing success of BeActive, a number of projects have been developed in partnership with schools. These include a range of drug and alcohol awareness sessions led by Babergh's substance misuse officer (this post has now been cut from the establishment); an ongoing drama project led by Babergh's ASB officer and community development staff; and a commissioned project working with the New Wolsey Theatre. BeActive's work has also developed to focus on developing additional provision of positive activity for young people in Sudbury through the HUB based at Sudbury Upper School. This is not an ideal location though and alternatives are being explored.
- 5.12 Babergh has fully supported the development of co-located multi-agency ASB teams across the County. The way in which these work locally have varied and for Babergh this involves Babergh's ASB Officer, Tenancy Enforcement Officer, a dedicated Police Officer, support from Youth Offending and designated contacts in Social Care for Adult care services. This builds on existing good relationships with the local Police teams and other partners and has been of significant value. Case work is dealt with robustly and our target of 80% of cases closed within 12 weeks has been met. Because of the nature of the issues in Babergh there is relatively little legal enforcement action needed, but Acceptable Behaviour Contracts continue to be used successfully. 28 were issued during the year, with only two breaches, one of which was very minor and in both instances follow up action resolved the issues with no ongoing incidents. Individuals referred to BeActive also continue to be very successfully engaged with well over 90% of those referred not reoffending (LPI70). In terms of overall impact on levels of Anti-Social Behaviour, Police records show a 19% reduction (yearly comparative figures until Dec 2010) in reports recorded against their main ASB reporting category in the Babergh area.

A focus on key areas

- 5.13 This theme was to identify hotspot areas for crime and ASB (principally around issues of criminal damage) and develop focused activity to tackle those concerns. It is an area of activity that has been most significantly affected by the vacancy of the Community Safety Officer as this sort of project work is a major part of that post's activity. Despite this though through work with partners some significant work has been achieved.
- 5.14 Capel St Mary was identified through the Safer Neighbourhood Team as an area that had been affected by issues of criminal damage. Joint work with the Police identified the individuals responsible and a reparation scheme was developed, whereby the individuals concerned undertook repair work to the local area. This generated lots of positive publicity and to date the damage has not recurred.

- 5.15 Babergh Connect was a Safer Neighbourhood Team initiative that engaged with people throughout the District, with every Parish visited. In addition there were events to engage with young people and a specific Impact event in Sudbury, which included a range of Police officers, Babergh's community safety, leisure and environmental protection teams. The purpose of the event was to identify and deal with issues raised as concerns by the community through this direct engagement and thereby build confidence. The event was also used to promote the opportunities for ongoing community engagement afforded by the Safer Neighbourhood Teams. The event was successful and has been replicated in Mid Suffolk.

Promoting Responsible Alcohol Use as a priority and Tackling Substance Abuse amongst under 18s

- 5.16 This theme reflects the prominence of alcohol as the most problematic drug, in terms of its impact on crime, in the local area and recognises the need to prevent other substance abuse amongst young people. The focus on alcohol is connected to both the theme concerning safer town centres and anti-social behaviour amongst some young people (a key *fuel* for disorder in both cases). The emphasis within this theme being education and campaign work aimed at influencing behaviour.
- 5.17 Action in this area has included a number of campaigns aimed at peak periods, such as responsible drinking campaigns around key events, such as Christmas and the world cup, more general radio and other medium campaigns and participation in national campaigns such as alcohol week. Substance misuse work has included work with schools on illegal drugs as well as so called *legal highs* and raising awareness around the reclassification of cannabis. This work also interacts with work to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Helping Vulnerable families and individuals

- 5.18 This theme was adopted to incorporate action to tackle domestic abuse and to look at family interventions where domestic instability had clear links with incidents of crime or anti-social behaviour. Actions around parenting programmes, FISPs (Family intensive support programme), developing specific working arrangements with social care and developing programmes to address perpetrators of domestic abuse were all included.
- 5.19 This was another area of work significantly affected by the CSO vacancy. This had a particular affect on domestic abuse work and work to develop local parenting programmes. Though a combination of external funding however it was possible to contract in support for domestic abuse work (the employment of a specialist DV coordinator) and we have made progress on a long standing goal of developing perpetrator programmes, whilst continuing and expanding support for victims as well as increasing awareness of the issues. Funding for this post is finite though so the prospect of some of this work being sustained is in question. Funding application to the Western LSP to develop a FISP was rejected, however through the development of the joint ASB team better links with social care has meant some of that intervention work has been increasingly effective.

Emerging Crime Issue

- 5.20 This theme was adopted specifically to tackle an increase in burglary from other buildings (sheds and outbuildings). Work was coordinated by the local Crime Reduction Officer supported and coordinated through the CSP. Reported Figures for year end of March 2011 show a reduction in this crime category of 16% with 67 fewer offences.

Future Issues

- 5.21 There are two significant issues for the future. An ongoing review of community safety work and community safety partnerships across Suffolk and the advent of the Police and Crime Commission – which was due to replace Police authorities from May 2012, however the certainty of that is now in question given a difficult passage through the houses of parliament.
- 5.22 The CSP review has resulted in an invitation to Babergh to merge with a wider Western CSP – negotiations are ongoing in this matter and the Babergh CSP will be seeking assurances that a focus on local issue will not be lost through joining this wider partnership. The issues of the review have been considered by PLG.

Crime and other indicators

- 5.23 In terms of the overall crime picture in Babergh, aside from the figures already referred there are two other crime categories that show some significant changes. Criminal Damage, the biggest volume crime in Babergh shows a continued decrease (decreases shown in the previous year), with a reduction of 17%, 171 fewer offences. Following a reduction in the category, Other Violence against the Person in the previous year there has been an increase this year, with 110 more offences (21%). Police comment in this related to increases in reported domestic violence and the increase is at odds with progress made in targeted town centre areas, referred to above, which supports that observation. It should be noted that this crime category includes a range of offences, including public order offences, that most wouldn't categorise as violence and excludes serious violence, incidents of which fell in Babergh by 22% (very small numbers involved, total of 21 offences in the year). So whilst the increase looks significant it is a rather unclear picture when taken in context. We have also, through external funding, increase the amount of work down in relation to domestic abuse, with a consequent raising of profile and publicity; this may have had an affect on the willingness and confidence of victims to come forward.

6 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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