

COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

NEIGHBOURHOOD CRIME & JUSTICE PROGRAMME

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

9th March 2010

Strategic Priorities: Safe City

Corporate Improvement Objectives: CI01,CI04

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview to the Scrutiny Committee on key delivery areas of The Home Office Neighbourhood Crime & Justice Programme to improve public confidence in the criminal justice system.
- 1.2 To promote discussion, encourage support and provide opportunities for members to become involved in the next phase of the programme.

2. Background

- 2.1 In October 2008 Sunderland was one of 60 areas across England and Wales awarded Pioneer Status by the Home Office to deliver a Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Programme. The aims of the programme are to drive improvements in the service the public get from the criminal justice system and through this improve public confidence.
- 2.2 The programme is influenced by the review “Engaging Communities in the Fight Against Crime”, 2008 undertaken by Louise Casey (Director General, Crime & Justice Group) which revealed that there is a significant gap between what the public want on crime and justice and what they think they get. Key facts and findings highlighted:
 - 33% of the public are not confident that the Criminal Justice System meets the needs of victims
 - 79% feel the Criminal Justice System respects the rights of offenders
 - 90% don't feel they are told enough about what happens to individuals who have committed a crime
 - 75% of the public are prepared to play an active role in tackling crime
- 2.3 The Crime and Justice Programme sets out to redress this balance by putting law abiding citizens at the heart of policing and justice. The programme recognises the vital role the public have to play and without their action, support and confidence the Police, the Safer Sunderland Partnership and other Criminal Justice Agencies cannot make communities safer.

3. Key Delivery Areas

3.1 Each element of the crime and justice programme (set out below) is designed to demonstrate to the public that the criminal justice system in their area listens to their priorities, acts upon them and is on their side in tackling crime and conveys that there are tough consequences for criminals.

3.2 Delivery Areas;

- The Policing Pledge (including PACT meetings)
- Highly visible Community Payback (Justice Seen, Justice Done Campaign)
- Community Crime Fighters Scheme
- Minimum Standards of Service (ASB, Witness Charter)
- Victims Champion

4. The Policing Pledge

“91% of the public agree that the standards of the police service should be the same wherever you live across the country” (Casey review, 2008)

4.1 The Policing Pledge informs communities of the minimum standards of service they can expect from Northumbria Police. The pledge has been adopted by all 43 police forces in England and Wales and reflects public desire for a consistently high level of service across the country. The standards reflect what the public say they most value – a visible, accessible and responsive service. Northumbria Police has adopted 10 local priorities based on the national standards, including how to contact and meet Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

4.2 During the months of April and March 2009 every Sunderland household received a pledge booklet and an invite to attend nine locality based road shows delivered by Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Sunderland Magistrates Court and the Safer Sunderland Partnership. From the 14th to the 24th of April over 150 residents met their local policing team, raised concerns and asked questions about the pledge. In addition a short DVD (using local officers) was produced and broadcast on media vans across the city.

4.3 As a pioneer area a key expectation of the programme is also to improve the effectiveness of public engagement, communication and feedback to communities on local action taken by the police. Around 60% of the public want to be kept informed about action being taken to tackle local problems so effective communication is vital. In Sunderland Police and Communities Together meetings otherwise known as PACT take place in each of the 7 neighbourhood policing areas across the city and provide a dialogue on local

crime, anti-social behaviour and policing issues. These meetings provide an opportunity for residents to get together to raise any crime and disorder concerns and listen to action taken by the police to tackle crime priorities in there area.

5. Highly Visible Community Payback

- 5.1 The Casey review highlighted that the public do not think they are told enough about what happens to those who have been convicted of a crime. The national community payback scheme sets out to raise public awareness and increase confidence in community sentences. Community Payback forms part of the national Home Office Campaign, Justice Seen, Justice Done to ensure that criminals face tough consequences for their actions.
- 5.2 In Sunderland Community Payback is managed by Northumbria Probation Service where offenders recognised by orange high visibility jackets complete tasks such as graffiti removal, clearing litter and gardening as part of their probation order. In the past year 31,000 hours of community payback has been carried out in Sunderland with more than 450 offenders each month taking part in four projects nominated by the public. Sunderland residents now have the opportunity to suggest new areas for community payback through the Northumbria Probation website.

6. Community Crime Fighters Scheme

- 6.1 The Community Crime Fighters Scheme (CCF) provides members of the public who are already active in their communities with training, information and support to work with neighbourhood policing teams and local authorities to help make communities safer. The scheme does not confer any additional status, formal role or authority upon those who participate. However it does recognise those who are committed to play an active role in tackling crime deserve encouragement and support to be successful in advocating on behalf of their communities.
- 6.2 In Sunderland there are currently 17 community crime fighters actively engaged in the programme. Across the county the Home office has achieved the target of 3,600 members of the public involved in the scheme. Those currently involved find the role an extension of work they are already involved in for example; neighbourhood watch, resident groups, tenants associations, and volunteer groups. To date community crime fighters have had the opportunity to:
- Bid for small grants to facilitate community events
 - Completed a variety of free training
 - Participated in consultation events
 - Worked with neighbourhood policing teams

- Nominated projects for community payback
- Met with Home Office crime and justice representatives

7. Minimum Standards of Service

- 7.1 A key driver of the crime and justice programme is to ensure the public are aware of the support available and their individual rights when accessing criminal justice services. To date minimum standards have been applied to the level of service you can expect as a witness from the Police, the Courts, the Crown Prosecution Service and through the Policing Pledge.
- 7.2 The next phase of standards will focus on anti-social behaviour to ensure local action focuses on tackling and not tolerating ASB. The standards will include a commitment to reduce perceptions of ASB year on year, provide regular up-dates on what is being done to tackle the issue, and improve links between neighbourhood policing and other local partners. The months of March and April 2010 will be dedicated to raising awareness of the standards and services on offer to the public. To co-incide with this activity Home Secretary, Alan Johnson is improving the measures available to tackle the harmful impact of disorder and harassment by the introduction of Victims Champions.

8. Victims Champion (ASB)

- 8.1 A total of 60 Victim's Champion's have been appointed across England and Wales to promote the needs of anti-social behaviour victims. The Government has committed almost 2.8 million over the next two years to develop a network of champions in priority areas to stand alongside victims, delivering practical help to those taking a stand.
- 8.2 In response The Safer Sunderland Partnership has recruited a champion to co-ordinate local services across the city to ensure victims receive the support and information they want and need. The role will ensure the views of victims are at the heart of relevant strategies and action planning processes. Duties will include;
- Raising awareness of the support services on offer
 - Representing the needs of victims
 - Adding value to existing services by ensuring a more joined up approach to meeting the needs of victims
 - Promoting the ASB tools and powers available to the Local Authority, Police and Courts

- Co-ordinating ASB training

9. Impact

9.1 The Crime and Justice Programme is intended to support delivery of PSA 23 (make communities safer) and PSA 24 (deliver a more effective transparent and responsive criminal justice system for victims and the public). These PSA's are also reflected in the single public confidence target for the police (NI 21).

9.2 The programme will also be a valuable contribution to improving public confidence and supports a number of Safer Sunderland Strategy outcomes including:

- Creating active citizens
- Creating cohesive communities
- Being and feeling safe and secure

10. Conclusion and Next Steps

10.1 The Crime and Justice Programme will continue to focus on improving public confidence throughout 2010 into summer 2011 with a strong emphasis on championing the needs of victims and witnesses.

11. Recommendations

11.1 Members are asked to raise awareness of the key elements of the crime and justice programme in their localities and support the next phase of the programme.