

**Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel
10th February 2015 (Panel Session 3) - Civic Suite 6pm**

Reducing the Fear and Perception of Crime

- 1.1 The Panel will consider an overview of the partnerships initiatives in place which work towards reducing the fear and perception of crime within our Borough's communities.
- 2.1 The Panel will consider examples where there has been Partnership activity in specific areas to tackle and target individual local issues. (i.e. to demonstrate that the Partnership are understanding and addressing local problems).

Background:

- 3.1 We know that the numbers of reported crime are reducing and have been steadily over years. However, despite these reductions our communities tell us that they fear becoming a victim of crime and believe that crime is more prevalent than it is.

A few positive headline figures from our annual strategic assessment for 2015/16 are as follows:

- a. There has been an average of 31 crimes recorded per day during 2014 compared to an average of 33 crimes recorded per day during 2013
 - b. There have been 284 fewer victims of crime in over the past year [Nov 13 to Oct 14] compared to the same period last year
 - c. There have been 133 fewer victims of Burglary Dwelling compared to the same period the previous year
 - d. There have been 151 fewer victims of Thefts from Motor Vehicles
 - e. There have been 36 fewer victims of Robbery.
- 4.1 The partnership has always seen the difference between perceptions and recorded crime as a challenge but its focus in recent years has been to prevent people becoming a victim of crime and where they have been a victim to ensure they are provided the right support through victim support services and to deal with the incident as professionally and effectively as we can. Satisfaction is a key feature to how we measure the impact of the services that we provide.
 - 5.1 The Council uses its annual "place survey" to test how its communities feel about the place in which they live. The results from the survey in 2014 show that:
 - 6.1 15% of respondents thought people using or dealing drugs was an issue in their area compared to 20% in 2013.
 - 7.1 Almost nine out of ten people say they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live with the most important factors in making somewhere a good place to live (including the level of crime) tending not to be those that respondents think are the

most in need of improvement. 67% said the level of crime was important with 19% saying it needed improvement.

8.1 The proportion of Solihull residents satisfied with their local area as a place to live has remained relatively unchanged in each of the last three years

9.1 86% of residents indicate that they feel safe in their neighbourhood after dark compared with 90% at the last assessment.

10.1 Around half of respondents to The Place Survey 2013 agreed that the police and Solihull Council are dealing effectively with anti-social behaviour in their local area. The Place Survey 2014 saw a fall in the proportion of residents who agreed that the police are effectively dealing with anti-social behaviour [42% compared to 56%] although this was largely due to more people saying they didn't know and those disagreeing only increased marginally from 13% to 14%.

11.1 Overall the proportion of residents who agree that Solihull Council are effectively dealing with anti-social behaviour fell for the second year running [37% in 2014, 46% in 2013 and 51% in 2012] although only North Solihull saw a significant rise in the number who disagree from 15% in 2013 to 23% in 2014.

12.1 9 out of 10 residents think that taking everything into account they have confidence in the police in this area. Residents unemployed but economically active and those who rent from the council are least likely to feel the police do a good job. Positive views are highest amongst residents who are Black ethnic minority groups. There is a clear divide by constituency with the most positive views held by residents in the Solihull Constituency.

13.1 A new question in The Place Survey 2014 was whether respondents felt that agencies are effectively protecting the most vulnerable people in their community and four in ten agreed.

Partnership Response:

14.1 The challenge between perceptions and recorded crime is important however, the partnership understands that prevention is key and preventing people becoming a victim of crime is fundamental to improving confidence.

15.1 The website www.police.uk publishes figures about the crimes within neighbourhoods and this is readily accessible to all. People are able to see the recorded crime within a locality but external influences such as the media can have a negative impact upon the way people feel locally. We know that from other surveys Solihull is seen as a nice place to live and visit. It is through our day to day activities that the Borough of Solihull works to ensure that Solihull is a place that can be enjoyed by everyone, through the homes and roads that we build, health services open to all, the Town Centres that we develop and the employment opportunities that are available. Confidence is a by product of a vibrant borough and the wealth and health of its citizens.

16.1 Where our communities have been a victim of crime we strive to ensure that they are provided the right support through victim support services and that we deal with the incident as professionally and effectively as we can, bringing offenders to justice and accountable for their actions. The West Midlands Police have improved their processes following the introduction of the Victims Code to ensure compliance with the new legal requirements, particularly around victims being kept informed of the progress of their case.

17.1 Satisfaction is a key feature to how we measure the impact of the services that we provide. This is done as a matter of course for some services such as the substance misuse services or through satisfaction surveys by the Police as part of the their “feeling the difference surveys”.

18.1 Below are examples that demonstrate how the partnership responds to community safety issues and to build confidence in our communities.

Case Study 1: Moorend Avenue

19.1 In the last Strategic Assessment Moorend Avenue was the second highest repeat street with 80 crimes recorded during 2013, 43 recorded at Meriden Park. Over the past year there have been 51 crimes recorded which is a reduction of more than a third. There has been significant work to improve the facilities within this park to ensure there is a wider use of the park by broader sections of the community in order to provide increased guardianship. There has also been a permanent Nomad Camera installed and improved lighting. There have only been 11 crimes recorded in Meriden Park over the past year. Four of these have been robberies from three incidents compared to 18 robberies the previous year. Whilst anti-social behaviour is still an issue within this park it is positive to see the severity of crimes against the person incidents has greatly reduced.

Case Study 2: Key Individual Network

20.1 The partnership has recently revised and improved the Key Individual Network (KIN) and re-formed Independent Advisory Groups made up of community representatives able to offer feedback to agencies and a voice for their respective demographic. During recent traveller encampment issues on the borough the neighbourhood police teams reported community concerns being voiced around the perception that travellers posed a risk of increased offending. The Partnership worked quickly to dispel rumours and offer reassurance to local residents with positive messaging and increased visible patrols. The KIN Network was utilised to transmit a common message to all members, requesting that they speak to all of their contacts in order to increase confidence and reduce the fear of disproportionately perceived issues. The messaging proved effective and feedback was received via the KIN, allowing partners to further assess community concern and measure tensions. This 360 degree feedback method allowed police and partners to continuously feed information to both the travelling and local community in order to dispel fear and rumour with official information sources whilst increasing the confidence of all parties that the partnership were doing everything possible to reach a solution.

Case Study 3: Hobs Moat Shops.

21.1 The shops and residences above the shops at Hobs Moat had been presenting a variety of issues to the Police in recorded crime and the council's services for environmental issues along with the Solihull ASB service for nuisance behaviour.

22.1 The issues had begun to be raised via a number of forums, local ward members, priority setting panel meetings and also through questions via scrutiny.

23.1 The Solihull Observatory with assistance from the Safer Solihull Partnership analyst provided a profile of what the issues were for this area. Whilst the levels of crime were not as severe as those presented in some other wards in Solihull it was felt that a pattern was emerging and action needed to be taken.

24.1 In March 2014 Scrutiny Members, ward members, Neighbourhood management officers and neighbourhood police officers and Public Protection officers conducted a site visit of the shops at Hobs Moat. The area continued to be a cause for concern for local residents and plans were put in place for a multi-agency approach to improving the area. Consideration was given to environmental and structural improvements. Four ASB agreements were signed with four teenagers who had been causing a nuisance at the location. They had all signed up to the following: not to go within 200 yards of Hobs Moat Shops, not to go within 200 yards of Hobs Moat Church, not to associate with each other and to comply with a curfew. If they were to break the agreement ASBOs would be applied for.

25.1 To date the other partnership action taken includes application of anti-climb paint, signage, a mortice lock for a broken gate which is in situ, graffiti has been removed and CRASBOs have been issued to four youths. The 2014/15 ward action plan includes this location and £5000 has been allocated to dealing with issues. In April 2015 teams will undertake land registry searches to ascertain details of owners and leaseholders so we can consult them about the action that needs to be taken.

Photos of before and after a clear up performed by offenders under the community payback scheme through Probation services.

Before



After

