

New Cross Gate NDC/Trust - Community Safety Strategy

Review date Jan 2013

Introduction

Crime and anti-social behaviour continues to top the list of concerns for New Cross Gate residents, despite evidence that most forms of crime are dropping. Fear of crime remains high. The causes of fear of crime are complex and perceptions can be influenced by direct experience of crime and in recent months, levels of media exposure. Tackling crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour has been a key priority for the NDC programme since 2001. After eight years of sustained investment and progress, we are now moving into a new phase of addressing community safety issues through community empowerment.

The forward strategy is based on a basic yet sound principle that, making real improvements to community safety depends on an holistic understanding of the circumstances that lead to a crime being committed and an appropriately joined-up set of responses. This strategy forms part of the NDC's succession strategy to the New Cross Gate Trust. It covers the next 5 years and sets out the Trust's priorities for future years as well as looking at what has been achieved during the past 8 years. Underpinning this is the need to build local capacity in the long-term to enable residents take a lead role in tackling crime and community safety issues in New Cross Gate. The underlying aim, summarised succinctly in the crime and community safety vision is to make New Cross Gate "a safer place to live, work and learn."

2.0 Review of Work

2.1 Strategic Outcomes

The achievement of this vision is underpinned by the two key strategic outcomes of:

- **C1** – reducing residents' fear of crime in the NDC area.
- **C2** – reducing the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviour in the NDC area.

Over the course of the NDC programme, these strategic objectives have translated into key outcomes for the area. These include:

- An 11% reduction in the number of crimes committed in New Cross Gate over the course of the programme, putting the neighbourhood on

course to come in line with the borough average crimes per 1000 by 2011. Burglary in particular has fallen by 58% on the 2001 position.

- Residents also enjoy improved satisfaction with New Cross Gate as an area to live - up from 60% in 2002 to 69% in 2008. The proportion of residents feeling a bit unsafe or very unsafe walking alone in the area after dark has fluctuated during the course of the programme, falling from 51% in 2002 to 42% in 2006 following an extensive estate lighting scheme in 2005/6.
- Anti-social behaviour, residents' number one concern is also down from 136.51 per 1000 in 2001 to 19 per 1000 in 2006.

2.2 Projects

An extensive estate lighting project has provided 196 light columns around the NDC area, including the Winslade and Somerville Estates, as well as Eckington Gardens. This has made a significant contribution to reducing fear of crime.

The local neighbourhood wardens also continue to play an important role in working with local people and the police to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime in New Cross Gate. They promote and facilitate excellent relations within the community, ensuring both young and older people are supported, listened to and signposted to help and advice. Regular information sharing with the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), housing providers and other agencies mean that crime and anti-social behaviour issues are identified and resolved quickly.

To help address the issue of anti-social behaviour, isolation and crime on the high street, a thriving community safety network has been created through the Alertbox scheme. The network works to create a safer shopping and business environment by linking all the businesses together through a network device. This allows businesses to send instant messages to each other when they have an anti-social behaviour or safety concern. The scheme is also advertised prominently in shops allowing it to act as a deterrent to crime and anti-social behaviour.

The NDC/LAA rapid reaction camera system consists of five semi-permanent CCTV which can be positioned where they are most needed and can be easily relocated to reflect the fact that trouble hot spots move around the area and that fixed cameras sometimes displace rather than deter crime. The system is often deployed by the local SNT and the wardens in identifying perpetrators of crime in the area.

A number of homes have also been improved through target hardening and the installation of smoke alarms to reduce their vulnerability to burglary and fires. The target hardening project is a partnership between Lewisham Council, London Fire Brigade, Lewisham Crime Prevention

Service, Victim Support Lewisham and the NDC which provides free security measures such as window and door locks to reduce the chances of homes being broken into, and free smoke alarms to reduce the risk of damage and injury caused by fire. In addition, the project provides free expert advice on being safe in the home.

In a pioneering move, the New Cross Gate NDC area is being developed in to a Restorative Justice (RJ) neighbourhood. RJ is a theory of criminal justice that focuses on crime as an act against another individual or community rather than against the state. The victim is put at the centre of the process and restorative resolutions engage those who are harmed, wrongdoers and their affected communities in search of solutions that promote repair, reconciliation and the rebuilding of relationships. Subject to victims' wishes, RJ is being used on nuisance/grievance/dispute/bullying incidents and on 'low level' crime (including all ASB, criminal damage, theft, and lower levels of assault).

3.0 What is still to be achieved

Although these projects and initiatives have led to significant noticeable outcomes for the area, there remains a number of key outcomes to be delivered. These include:

- Crimes per head remain high at 149 per 1000 compared to the borough position of 128 per 1000. Although the current trajectory shows a decline in crime, a fall of about 18% at current levels is needed to bring the area average to that of the borough level. In particular, drugs and violence against the person offences need to be tackled.
- Fear of crime remains high in comparison to the local authority position especially among some socio-economic groups. A key achievement will be to reduce fear of crime to levels commensurate with actual crime levels.
- Although overall levels of anti-social behaviour is down, pockets of the area continue to have problems to be a problem for many residents despite the NDC programme's attempt to transform the area into a Restorative Neighbourhood through the innovative Restorative Justice project and the Alertbox Scheme on the High Street.

3.1 Delivering the target outcomes

In noting the gap between fear of crime and the incidence of crime, it is clear that more needs to be done to reduce fear of crime to a level which is commensurate with actual crime levels in the area. One of the key areas of development supported by theories of fear of crime is community empowerment. Embedding the need for empowerment in the approach to tackling crime and community safety in New Cross Gate is a key

component of the succession strategy. A two stage process will help us achieve this:

The first is raising awareness and tackling misconceptions of crime in the area. Although recent crime figures indicate a fall in crime, the fact that some people believe crime is higher than it is, seems to indicate that the facts need to talk a bit louder. The Trust will use such means as the local Gate Post, website, leaflets and posters to raise awareness of the actual crime in the area.

The second approach to reducing fear of crime is linked to the wider agenda of capacity building local groups and residents in taking ownership of crime issues in the area. Linked to this capacity building agenda is the need to trial new methods of working to achieve a cultural change in how crime and anti-social behaviour is perceived, challenged, and managed, so that in the long-term the community will have the capacity to effectively and safely confront criminal and anti-social behaviour. As such a strategy aimed at strengthening and building up social capital is of crucial importance for community safety in New Cross Gate. Consequently, the strategy supports:

- Further development of the neighbourhood policing approach used by the local Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) and Neighbourhood Wardens. The high profile patrols by the SNT and wardens on the high street for example, supports the Alertbox network's effort in creating a safer high street in New Cross Gate. These patrols will be encouraged and co-ordinated through ongoing joint tasking activities between the wardens and SNT.
- The development of Neighbourhood Watch schemes in each of the five super output areas within the NDC. Neighbourhood Watch or Home Watch schemes have become one of the biggest and most successful crime prevention initiatives ever. Behind it lies a simple idea, and a central value, that getting together with your neighbours to take action can cut local crime and that Neighbourhood Watch can create a better place to live, work and play. The activity of Watch members can also foster a new community spirit and a belief in the community's ability to tackle problems. The strategy proposes a pilot scheme in one of the five super output areas by June 2010 with the view to having one in each area by December 2010. This will be supported by Community Resilience Champions in each NWS who will receive training in community safety techniques such as the Scanning, Analysis, Response and Assessment (SARA) model and Crime Opportunity Profiling of Streets (COPS) techniques.
- The development of an inter-agency tasking group on a neighbourhood level through a virtual community safety hub. The hub will build a skilled partnership of local residents, businesses, wardens, police, Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) representatives, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), councillors, and community and voluntary sector organisations to lead on and take ownership of local community safety issues. It will also enhance the capacity of the local area and facilitate links between local

people and statutory service providers in priority setting and local problem solving.

- The strategy also supports the development of highly focused activities to support the capacity building effort described above including training on crime prevention principles and applications and the SARA problem solving model. This is clear through the desire to impact on crime through Defensible Space, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and particularly Situational Crime Prevention, which considers a range of management and design interventions that reduce crime. There will be specific efforts to tackle the problem of drugs and violence against the person offences which continue to remain areas of concern for the area. Additionally, the strategy support residents' empowerment efforts to address issues that cut across a number of these offences, such as youth crime and gang crime by placing a strong emphasis on empowering the local community.

3.2 Milestones

The delivery of this strategy requires the attainment of a number of key milestones

- Mainstreaming of all projects in delivery into Lewisham Crime reduction Service.
- Gaining the buy-in of all individuals, groups and statutory agencies in New Cross Gate with a remit on community safety for the formation and use of the virtual community safety hub.
- Securing funding to deliver the a number of focused activities aimed at capacity building local residents and resident groups with the fear to improving fear of crime in the area.

4. Partnerships and Links

Delivering the target outcomes requires partnership working at various levels. Lewisham Crime Reduction Service remains one of the key partners in delivering the NDC's and the Trust's community safety agenda. The Service has affirmed its commitment by mainstreaming the Neighbourhood Wardens and the Rapid Reaction CCTV projects. Discussions are underway to ensure that another two, the Restorative Justice and Target Hardening projects, are also mainstreamed by the service through its current delivery mechanism.

The proposed virtual community safety network is a key element of successful partnership working in the area. This provides the opportunity for community safety issues to be jointly addressed by the key community, voluntary, private and statutory sector organisations who work in the area. It has the potential to create a step change in the way community safety issues are dealt with in New Cross Gate.

In addition to the virtual network, the Trust will also continue to maintain the existing partnership links with projects that received core NDC grant and other community safety service providers, particularly those with a remit for young people, to help address the issue of youth involvement in crime and antisocial behaviour. There is also potential for a firmer working relationship with the Metropolitan Police SNT ward panels for New Cross and Telegraph Hill with the view to promoting resident participation in community safety issues.

5. Management /Delivery

Both the NDC and its successor organisation the New Cross Gate Trust are determined to maintain the current trajectory of crime in the NDC area. This means that this strategy and all projects in delivery will continue to contribute to the two strategic objectives of reducing crime and fear of crime and anti-social behaviour while also contributing to the National Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets.

Mainstreaming all projects in delivery will ensure that the Trust has little or no direct involvement in project delivery. Thus, while direct project involvement will be minimal, the Trust will be expected to play an active role in developing and sustaining the partnerships needed to deliver the work through active involvement in activities of, for example, the LSP at a strategic level and the MPS ward panels at a local level. Further, the proposed virtual community safety hub will provide an effective means of monitoring and reviewing the strategy in line with identified priorities.

6. Marketing

As stated above, improvements in community safety are not widely publicised. This could be a contributory factor to the higher level of fear of crime in New Cross Gate compared to Lewisham in general. To ensure that an increased level of awareness is created in the area, the Trust will use such means as the Gate Post, website, the community safety hub, ward panels, voluntary and community sector organisations to inform residents about projects it supports. The Trust, through partnership working with, for example, the SNT's will also ensure that crime data is readily available and accessible to local residents. The proposed neighbourhood watch scheme will also have a key role in ensuring that awareness is created at a neighbourhood level.

7. Budget and Resources

The delivery of this strategy is reliant upon effective partnership working at all levels. The mainstreamed projects will be directly funded by the relevant mainstreaming organisation, in this case, Lewisham Crime Reduction Service. However, the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and the focused activities such as capacity building local residents and groups will require some initial direct funding and support from the Trust. Further, there is also the need for direct man-power support from the Trust in terms of a representative.

The strategy is based on a funding budget of circa £50,000 from Trust resources. A significant portion of the budget will support the delivery of the neighbourhood watch scheme and the proposed focused activities to capacity build residents and the local community and voluntary sector organisations. This funding will also help support a role similar to that of a project manager or neighbourhood manager. The officer will represent the Trust at both partnership and delivery levels. They will be responsible for reviewing the strategy and implementing the neighbourhood watch scheme and helping in source funding for other project initiatives.

Programme to Deliver NXG Community Safety Forward Strategy

Element	Objective	Details	Lead	Timetable
Partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstreaming of all current community safety projects in delivery • Develop virtual multi-agency crime and community safety hub • Active neighbourhood policing through joint tasking of neighbourhood wardens and safer neighbourhood teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with current projects in delivery to secure mainstreaming by current providers. • Attend the ward panel meetings for the New Cross and Telegraph Hill Wards and play an active role in setting policing priorities for the area. • Ensure the effective deployment of Community Wardens and Anti-social Behaviour Team to improve the environment within our communities 	NDC Officers	March 2010
			Trust Officer	Once every six weeks
			Trust Officer	Ongoing
Tackling misconceptions of crime in the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising • Reassure communities about the work being done to tackle offending behaviour through key agencies, stakeholders and communities themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Gate Post, website and partnership activities to raise awareness of crime issues in the area. • Develop a fear of crime action plan which will set out projects to tackle evidence based issues around fear of crime and disorder. • Encourage sharing of good practice between communities in tackling crime and Antisocial Behaviour 	Trust Officer	
			Trust Officer	
			Trust Officer	

<p>Local capacity building</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower local residents and resident groups to enable them play an active part in addressing community safety issues in New Cross Gate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop at least one neighbourhood watch scheme in each of the super-output areas • Increase level of voluntary sector participation in community safety activities • Capacity build local residents through training TRA members and other local interest groups in SARA problem solving techniques and COPS. 	<p>Trust Officer</p> <p>Trust Officer</p> <p>Trust Officer</p>	
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