

Community Safety Consultation

Consulting and engaging with communities on community safety issues ensures the Community Safety Partnership accurately reflects the needs of people within the district. It also enables any emerging issues to be identified which can be reflected in annual action plans.

1. Partnership Consultation 2008/09

To ensure community safety partnership work reflected the views of people in East Herts the partnership consulted on two occasions in 2008:

- **Priority importance, March 2008**

This consultation asked the people of East Herts to rank the priorities identified from last year's strategic assessment in the order the partnership should consider as extremely important to the least important. Findings suggested two issues that should be considered as a top priority for the Community Safety Partnership - to improve response to anti-social behaviour and reduce violent crime.

- **Community Safety Workshop, September 2008**

This consultation was structured into 4 workshops: reducing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB), tackling drug and alcohol misuse and community safety; getting involved and feeling safe. The aim was to consult with communities about the community safety priorities the partnership should tackle in the future and to ensure community views were reflected within the strategic assessment. This consultation has helped inform the priority selection process for 2009/10.

2. Partnership Consultation 2009/10

- **Community Safety Survey**

From September – December 2009 1500 survey forms were made available to the public via Community Safety Partnership reception areas and websites, Town and Parish Councils, sent to community groups and distributed at public events (Appendix A).

Respondents were asked to list their top three community safety concerns.

There were 228 respondents. Of those who stated, 59% were female, 41% male, 172 under the age of 18, 56 over 18 and 33 over 65.

The community safety concerns were widespread with not one concern standing out as being dominant. The top three concerns of all 228 respondents were burglaries (13%, n86), theft/mugging (12%, n83) and anti-social behaviour (10%, n71).

All age groups felt that burglaries were a concern to them. However, only the under 18's felt that drug abuse / misuse featured in the top three. Only those aged 19 and above had anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their top three. Having not asked what type ASB concerns people, firm conclusions cannot be made. However, ASB featured in the Place Survey, where the biggest ASB problem in the district was reported to be teenagers hanging around the streets and litter lying around (see section 2.6).

It must be noted that the majority of those who listed their age fell in the under 18 age group. Therefore comparisons cannot be made directly between the age groups as the under 18's feature in the majority. Despite this, it may be worth noting that there were some large differences in opinion between the age groups. Thirty three in total were concerned about domestic violence. 91% (n30) of those were under the age of 18. Furthermore, 27 people were concerned about hate crime. 89% (n24) of those were under the age of 18 and no one over the age of 65 was concerned about hate crime.

- **Community Safety Public Meetings**

During January – February 2010 the Community Safety Partnership presented at five public meetings across the district. The presentation was structured “you said, we did” providing a summary of last years consultation and the work the partnership carried out in response to it, followed by “what next” enabling a summary of the most recent crime trends and community safety issues to be shared.

During the question and answer session to the panel comments varied slightly for each town. For example, Ware and Bishop's Stortford focus was on pot holes, litter, graffiti, and driving with mobile phones. Hertford's discussion centred on activities for young people and the role the community can play with regards to community safety. Sawbridgeworth's focus was on poor street lighting and Buntingford commented on anti-social neighbours.

Those in attendance at the public meetings were given the opportunity to list three community safety concerns and after the presentation, asked to state if they still had these concerns and if the partnership had been effectively addressing them (Appendix B). A total 73 concerns were listed. Forty seven of those remained concerns after the presentation, and only 4 had their concerns dispelled. After hearing about the work of the partnership, 9 felt the partnership was effectively addressing their concerns, whereas 24 felt the partnership was not. As with the results obtained through the community safety survey, concerns were wide ranging. The top concern was speeding (n11), followed by litter (n9) and anti-social behaviour (n8).

3. Partnership Consultation 2009/10

From December 2010 – February 2011 an online questionnaire was made available on the East Herts Council and Community Safety Partnership websites. Respondents were asked to state which community safety issues had improved and got worse over the last 12 months, and if they felt their area had more, less or the same amount of crime compared to a year previously.

Thirty four people responded online. Twenty were female and 14 were male. Twenty two were aged over the age of 56, 5 were aged 46-55, 3 were aged 36-45 and one was aged 26-35.

The majority of respondents were connected to East Herts as a resident (n28), and lived in locations across the district. According to respondents, a total of 59 community safety issues had improved, and 56 issues had got worse. The issues which were said to have improved were wide ranging from ASB (n8), street drinking (n5), fear of crime (n5) and alcohol related crime (n5). The issues which were said to have got worse were also wide ranging, and included dwelling burglary (n7), litter (n7), speeding (n6) and ASB (n6). Of those who answered, 17 said the levels of crime within the district had remained the same.