



Practice Note 11

Edinburgh Safer Neighbourhood Teams

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Topic Areas: Partnership Working; Community Engagement.

Project Background and Aims

In 2007 a review of community policing within the north area of Edinburgh was carried out within Lothian and Borders Police. The purpose of this review was to provide a clear and consistent model for the use of all community based police officers throughout Edinburgh to meet the needs of the numerous and varied communities served. This included police officers funded by the City of Edinburgh Council. The review produced a series of recommendations, which were presented to the A Division (City of Edinburgh) Command Team.

However, the interim implementation plan that was subsequently developed chose to discount a number of the recommendations made. This led to the decision that a more fundamental review was required, one which would examine the role and structure of community policing within Edinburgh. In May 2009, a Project Initiation Document was published with the overall aim to collaboratively develop, agree and implement a community policing model that would effectively meet the needs of the community and facilitate the delivery of the force crime prevention strategy.

Further to this, a number of interdependencies were identified and it was acknowledged that the City of Edinburgh Council had an integral role to play in the development of a community-based model. This was due to the wide and varied services provided by them and also the funding linked to the role of council-funded community-based police officers within Neighbourhood Action Units.

In August 2009 a final report was published which set out the Project Board's vision for community policing within Edinburgh. This vision included the formation of 'Safer

Neighbourhood Teams' (SNTs), comprising all community orientated police officers and council equivalents. In addition it was recommended that a community engagement model should be utilised to address local priorities identified by the community. The 'Eight-Stage Community Engagement Model' was thus adopted for this purpose.

The Project Board agreed that the proposed Community Policing Model would be adopted as a prototype for the south and east areas of Edinburgh over the period covering 1st March 2010 to 20th September 2010, in preparation for city-wide implementation. In order to facilitate this, a training programme was developed by the Force Safer Communities Department, which was delivered during February 2010.

Resources

Funding: **Mainstreamed funding**
Partners: Lothian and Borders Police, City of Edinburgh Council, communities located within South and East Edinburgh.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Lothian and Borders Police and the City of Edinburgh Council agreed a set of performance indicators which satisfied both organisational needs. These indicators recorded levels of activity in relation to a wide variety of tasks and also offered the opportunity to provide contextual descriptors of activity undertaken.

The project team involved in the design and implementation of the prototype maintained an involvement in the project throughout the period 01/03/10 to 20/09/10. This enabled them to review the practicalities of SNTs and the delivery of the 8-stage Community Engagement Model on an ongoing basis. Their observations were fed to the Project Board in order that remedial action could be taken.

Two further academic reviews are being carried out within the prototype area, focusing specifically on the use of Safer Neighbourhood Teams. The first of these studies examines the activities and outcomes of SNTs in relation to the 8-stage Community Engagement Model and aims to develop relevant performance indicators. This is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). The second study is a small-scale qualitative analysis on the implementation of SNTs, which this practice note relates to.

Activities

The 8 Stage Engagement Model provides a generic process for Lothian and Borders Police and partners to adopt within a local context, thereby enabling them to meet requirements of their engagement and prevention remit. Box 1 below contains a summary of the key activities undertaken by SNTs within each stage:

BOX 1: Summary of Key Activities within 8-stage Community Engagement Model**1. Research:**

- Find out what is already known about the local community;
- Create a community profile;
- Identify potential difficulties in engaging with local people; and
- Research must be simply presented and easily understood by officers.

2. Engagement:

- Engagement must reflect local community demographics;
- Establish a range of community groups, contacts and networks;
- Utilise existing structures and processes, ensuring they match the community profile;
- Ensure engagement is representative of local communities.

3. Identify Issues:

- Local people must identify what matters most to them;
- Enable local people to voice their concerns and receive feedback; and
- Utilise a range of engagement methods to ensure cross section/representative view.

4. Investigation and Analysis:

- Conduct investigation and analysis to identify causal factors, patterns, partner knowledge, and key stakeholders;
- Make use of the 'Victim, Offender, Location' in this process; and
- Conduct further investigation and analysis as necessary.

5. Deciding Local Priorities:

- Investigation and analysis must be presented in an easy to understand format so that informed choices can be made;
- Community/community planning partners to decide local priorities;
- Choices can vary from drug dealing/other serious crime to vandalism/litter/ASB;
- 'Engagement' is local communities setting/prioritising issues they want dealt with.

6. Dealing with Priorities

- This is the 'doing' phase of the model;
- Some matters can be dealt with by police;
- Some require partnership working through Community Planning;
- Not all priorities will have an obvious and simple solution; and
- Problem solving approach adopted where appropriate.

7. Review:

- Review impact of action to address priorities;
- Ensure range of methods adopted to capture representative view;
- If remedial actions are necessary then feedback to stage three.

8. Feedback:

- Communication is critical to influencing public perception and confidence;
- Feedback outcome of police and partner activity to local communities.

Clearly stage six provides the police and local authority officers with the opportunity to implement problem-solving initiatives across the communities which they serve.

For example, Operation Density was developed in response to community concerns of increasing antisocial behaviour amongst young people within the Southside of Edinburgh. Historical analysis by Lothian and Borders Police showed a rise in anti-social behaviour amongst young people during Easter holidays and thus the bespoke intervention was designed to address these locally identified priorities. The operation had several aims:

- To provide a high visibility police and local authority presence in identified areas offering reassurance to the community,
 - To deter and disrupt the anti-social behaviour of youths and others who congregate there. To engage with residents to resolve community tensions and issues in partnership with Community Safety Team personnel,
 - To deter anti social behaviour, reduce incidents and increase the solvency of vandalism and other criminal behaviour, and
 - To promote police commitment to the Anti Social Behaviour Plan in conjunction with our partners, in order to prevent alcohol abuse in young people and any resultant community issues, both health and social. Where found and if appropriate, alcohol was to be seized and steps taken to identify and take appropriate action against those supplying the alcohol.
- Youth calls to Gilmerton Dykes Street –
 - To date in 2010 there have been 54 youth calls to the shops at Gilmerton Dykes Street. As a result, focused action by local SNT officers and targeted patrolling lead to an 80% decrease in the number of calls to the area throughout the period of Operation Density in comparison with the previous month. Jan – 15 calls. Feb – 15 calls. March – 20 calls. April up to 19th – 4 calls
 - Youth calls to Ruthven Place & Walter Scott Avenue –
 - To date in 2010 there have been 25 youth calls to the area of Ruthven Place and Walter Scott Avenue at its shops. As a result, focused action during Operation Density lead to a decrease of over 60% in comparison with the number of calls received in January 2010 and continued the work already being carried out in the area by local SNT officers.
 - Jan – 13 calls. Feb – 6 calls. March – 3 calls. April up to 19th – 3 calls

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Impact

The primary impact of the introduction of SNTs within Edinburgh has been to allow the police, local authority and other partner agencies to meet the requirements of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, specifically:

- ‘Making sure people and communities are genuinely engaged in the decisions on public services which affect them’, and

- ‘A commitment from organisations to work together, not apart, in providing better public services’.

This reinforces the emphasis on partnership working, coupled with community engagement. In addition, the Justice Minister circulated 12 principles of Community Engagement which were intended to support the five most important objectives of policing in Scotland: supporting the delivery of safer communities, increasing public confidence in policing, improving public satisfaction with service delivery, contributing to increased public reassurance and contributing to the reduction of crime.

The impact of combining these two areas is that the City of Edinburgh now benefits from services which work more effectively in relation to the partnerships, community engagement, community confidence, community satisfaction and public reassurance.

Specific interventions that have emerged from the new framework have had a swift impact. For example, evidence suggests that Operation Density was a success, with 180 hours of dedicated patrol time by officers in high visibility uniform, CEC colleagues and mounted branch, 60 stop and searches, 8 arrests, 54 submitted intelligence entries and 34 licensed premises checks. A large quantity of alcohol (16 litres) was also seized from youths in this area and police officers, in conjunction with Council colleagues, local residents and representatives carried out an Environmental Visual Audit, which has resulted in a number of recommendations to relevant Council authorities.

Motorcycle offences had also been identified by analysts, local police and community groups as an emerging problem in the area and as a result of community intelligence and focused pro-active patrolling, a total of 4 motorcycles were seized during the period of Operation Density (and the follow-up Operation Delta), with 3 people charged with over 30 road traffic offences, including disqualified driving, dangerous driving and document offences. A further unassociated male was served with an ASBO in relation to his manner of riding a scooter in the area

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

The small-scale qualitative review of SNTs has been drawn from a series of interviews conducted with police officers of various ranks; council employees operating within the realms of community safety; elected representatives and members of the community. The review has identified certain common themes which were relevant to all participants, regardless of rank or role. These can be broken down into four general categories: administration, local priority setting, personnel and strategy.

The findings of this study have been fed back to the project team and Divisional Commanders to ensure that there is sustainability built in to the future roll out of the concept. One example from each area is provided below.

1. Administration

From the interviews conducted it appears that there was a lack of clarity relating to the role profile for an officer working within the Safer Neighbourhood Teams. All officers working in a community-focussed role were able to provide a comprehensive list of tasks they complete on a day-to-day basis. However, it appears from scrutinizing this list that a significant proportion of officers time was spent on general police duties, as opposed to community specific tasks. Examples of this are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Comparative Duties of Community-based Officers

Role	General Duties (tasks)	Community Specific Duties (tasks)	Total Tasks	% Tasks Relating to Community Policing
CBO	80	50	130	38.4%
NAU Officer	105	30	135	22.2%
SNT Officer	79	34	113	30%

Whether the tasks were defined as Community specific or General in nature was based on a subjective assessment conducted by two police officers and a training co-ordinator. This assessment was measured against the eight-stage engagement model as this is the direction community policing across Edinburgh is moving towards.

It is important to note that a DIF (Difficulty, Importance and Frequency) analysis is yet to be completed on this data. Therefore, it is impossible to say which tasks an officer spends most time completing. However, it does show that officers are carrying out more general police duties than community specific tasks.

This table provides a direct comparison of officers working in roles which preceded the formation of SNT to those currently employed within that role. It is worthy of note that officers employed as CBOs appear to be carrying out more community related tasks than those employed within SNTs. However, the long-term vision is to move all CBOs into Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Interestingly the SNT officers proportion of community tasks sits almost in the middle of the NAU and CBO officers. This could indicate that SNT officers are trying to fulfil both previous roles rather than embark on a new style of policing.

2. Local Priority Setting

It would appear that there was significant discussion prior to the implementation of Safer Neighbourhood Teams regarding priority setting groups. Options were explored including:

- The establishment of a bespoke group for the purpose of priority setting, and
- Making use of an existing group within the community planning structure.

Interviewees advise that following these discussions the city of Edinburgh Council identified groups known as 'Environmental Forums' as suitable for the purpose of priority setting. The council took this decision, as the agency with primacy over community planning structures, with the full support of the Project Board.

It has become apparent since the implementation date (01.03.10) that the Environmental Forum is not 'fit for purpose' in relation to priority setting. The full rationale for this statement is included within the final report.

3. Personnel

From the evaluation forms received after the Community Engagement Training and from comments made during the training it was apparent that there were some officers and staff who viewed the move to Safer Neighbourhood Teams with some scepticism. This tended to be more prevalent amongst existing Community Beat Officers, who felt that they would lose 'ownership' over the area they policed and were not convinced by the concept of placing a model (eight-stage community engagement model) around the role. Also, officers with very little service who had been placed into the SNT were also resistant, as they tended to view 'response' as the more glamorous side of the police.

During the interviews conducted within this study a combination of officers were spoken to who had come from CBO, NAU and Response roles. It is interesting to note that the majority of officers all intimated that they were relishing the opportunity to work within a team environment. Further to this, due to local management all CBOs had been allowed to remain within the areas they had previously been responsible for. One officer even reported that he felt a sense of pressure being lifted from his shoulders, as he was now able to share the responsibility for 'his' area with other officers, who he had been able to introduce to key community contacts. The same officer also reported that he believed his initial concerns had not come to fruition but suggested this was due to little change in working practices.

In general there appeared to be an over-riding sense of enthusiasm from front-line officers and staff for the ethos of Safer Neighbourhood Teams and what they were aiming to achieve. This was tempered by a feeling that they were not always allowed to get on with their core role of community engagement, local priority

setting and problem solving. This appeared to be due to an allocation of ancillary tasks, including warrants, correspondence and attending calls.

4. Strategy

Interviewees suggested that they had seen no change in the type of tasking received, through the National Intelligence Model, since the implementation of SNT. It remained closely related to Force and Divisional priorities and only rarely acknowledged the existence of local priorities. This placed significant pressure on local managers (specifically Inspectors and Community Safety Managers) who found they were increasingly being tasked from top down and bottom up. Rarely were the demands the same, which meant they had to distribute resources more thinly in relation to all priorities.

Summary

Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) were established in Edinburgh in early 2010. SNTs are made up of all comprising all community orientated police officers. An 8-stage Community Engagement Model has been put in place to provide a framework for community-based policing activities. This has led to the successful implementation of several bespoke interventions such as Operation Density which targets antisocial behaviour amongst young people.

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