



Practice Note 31

Hamilton Safer Streets Initiative

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Topic Areas: Public Space Safety, Partnership Working, Community Engagement, Personal Safety

Project Background and Aims

Safer Streets funding is available from the Scottish Government to target town centre violence through a range of community safety initiatives such as enhanced CCTV, street pastors, targeting of street drinkers, high visibility police patrols in 'hot spot' areas and late night taxi marshals. The nationally directed and locally delivered initiative aims to reduce alcohol-related violence and disorder in urban centres, with the long term outcome of building the capacity of Community Safety Partnerships. The funding is available to all 32 local authorities in Scotland, through a competitive bidding process.

South Lanarkshire's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has delivered the Hamilton Safer Streets programme in Hamilton town centre since the festive period of 2005/2006, running from the start of December until the end of March. The initiative is delivered in partnership with Strathclyde Police, Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership and the local licensing trade. The Hamilton Safer Streets Initiative prioritises alcohol-related disorder and drink/drugs offences and violent crime utilising a mix of high-profile policing, enhanced use of CCTV, taxi marshalling and Key Individual Networks.

Outcomes

National

- 9: 'We live our lives free from crime, disorder and danger',
- 10: 'We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need', and
- 11: 'We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others'.

Local 'Tackling alcohol related anti social behaviour and disorder,' 'Reducing the fear of crime and increasing public reassurance,' and 'Tackling town centre violence.'

Resources

Funding: Scottish Government's Safer Streets initiative and funding from South Lanarkshire Community Safety Partnership.

Partners: South Lanarkshire CSP, Strathclyde Police, Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership, Hamilton licensed trade.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A questionnaire was compiled by Strathclyde Police to gather information on the impact of the initiative from the business community within Hamilton Town Centre such as public houses, fast food outlets, and entertainment venues. The questionnaires were completed by Police Officers during face-to-face interviews with the owners/managers just prior to the initiative starting. This survey was ongoing throughout the duration of the initiative, and helped to coordinate service delivery.

At the conclusion of the initiative members of the Key Individual Network (KIN) compiled their own evaluation of the Safer Streets initiative in Hamilton town centre.

Activities

The Hamilton Safer Streets is delivered in two key phases in Hamilton town centre. The first phase targets the enforcement of and support for evidenced problem licensed premises, high profile targeted policing, late night taxi marshalling, KIN and public surveys, Safe/Night Zones that reduce the risk for users of the night time economy, and ongoing activities to support the targeting of drink driving.

Phase two continues the programme from phase one where required, extends existing or launching new pub-watch schemes and applies recognised training standards for licensing staff. During phase two an alcohol-free event is also run for young people to provide a safe alternative to underage drinking during the festive period.

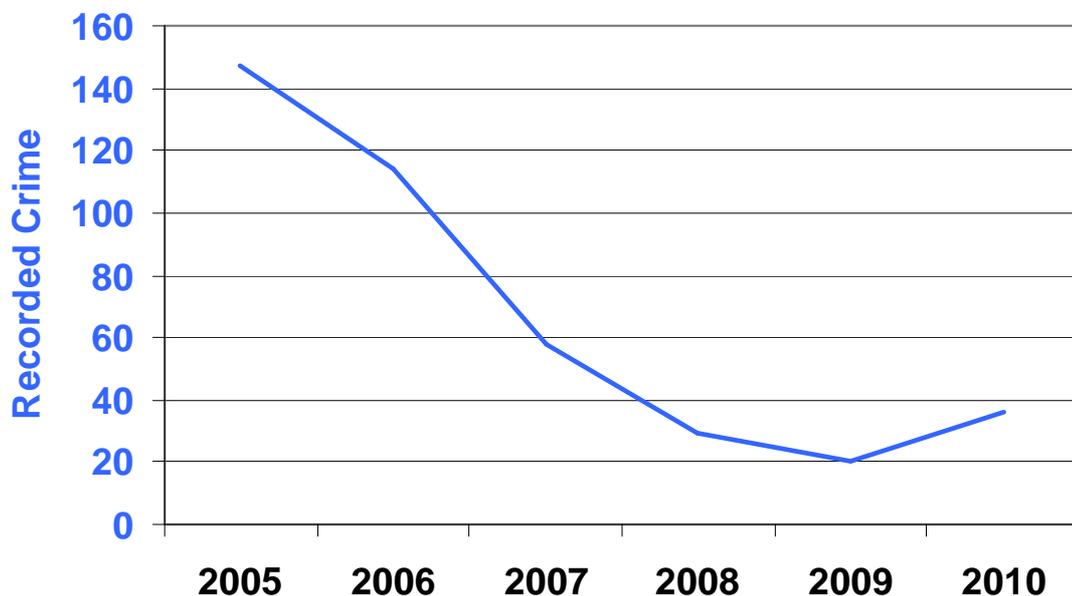
In planning for the 2010/2011 initiative, a process of consultation with all local Safer Streets partners took place with regards to the event as to what issues it would address. As alcohol was the common theme of the partnership, and in consideration of the issues that were being experienced in the lives of individuals, homes and in the communities, a list of core components were drafted which was then put out to tender. A drama was commissioned for the event, which would be the central focus of the 'Big Night In'. Liber8, a Lanarkshire-based voluntary organisation, were approached to coordinate the 'Big Night In' event for young people from the Hamilton areas who had been identified through their Streetbase programme.

The 'Big Night In' ran on the evening of 3rd February 2011, for young people aged between 14 and 17 years old. Feedback was gathered from young people using a VOXUR system. The computer-generated questionnaire used a pre-recorded message by a young person to gauge the effectiveness of the drama and the event and focused on issues surrounding alcohol across Lanarkshire.

Impact

There has been a significant annual reduction in the number of recorded crimes in Hamilton town centre over the period 2005/2006 to 2010/2011, as indicated in Figure 1 below. The total recorded crime in the ward fell from 147 to 36, a decrease of 76 per cent during the five year period.

Figure 1: Recorded Crime in Hamilton Town Centre 2005/06 to 2010/11



Year on year reductions have been notably marked in crimes of violence, with simple and serious assault both substantially reduced, along with street drinking. These figures are shown below in Table 1. Recorded crimes of simple assault have decreased by 65 per cent, whilst serious assault has been reduced by 83 per cent. Street drinking and breach of the peace have decreased respectively by 100 per cent and 82 per cent.

The police survey indicates that consumers of Hamilton's night-time economy in 2010/2011 felt that the 'Safer Streets' programme had made a significant difference to safety in the town centre. For example, 69 per cent of respondents were aware of a high police presence when visiting Hamilton Town Centre, an increase on 55 per cent in 2005/2006. 58 per cent of people also stated that they would be more likely to visit Hamilton town centre rather than surrounding locations due to the higher visibility police presence, compared with 61 per cent in 2005/2006. 77 per cent were aware of CCTV coverage in the town centre (up from 68 per cent in 2005/2006) and

75 per cent felt there was a safer atmosphere in the places they visited during the initiative, compared with 77 per cent in 2005/2006. Overall, 60 per cent of people surveyed felt the Safer Streets initiative had made a difference to them, an increase from 42 per cent in 2005/2006.

Table 1: Breakdown of Recorded Crime in Hamilton Town Centre 2005/06 to 2010/11

Recorded Crime	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Breach of the peace	62	38	20	9	5	11
Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 s. 5(2)	16	10	22	4	6	5
SLC Alcohol Bye-Law 1996 s. 3(1)	19	27	3	1	0	0
Civic Government Act 1982 s. 47	3	17	2	0	1	2
Police (s) Act 1967 (resisting arrest)	4	7	4	2	2	6
Criminal Law (C.S.) Act 1995 s. 52	14	6	2	2	2	3
Simple Assault (Common Assault 2010)	23	8	4	10	3	8
Serious Assault	6	1	1	2	1	1

Community Wardens made over 500 visits to licensed premises on the periphery and within Hamilton Town Centre over the duration of the initiative helping to reduce the sale of alcohol to underage persons and consequently reducing the number of incidents of alcohol related antisocial behaviour.

Local business reflected how much safer they felt while carrying out their services including licensees, taxi drivers, and fast food outlets. The business community within Hamilton town centre also felt they were playing an important part in community safety by participating in the initiative.

The KIN evaluation indicated that 100 per cent of respondents felt the Hamilton Safer Streets initiative was working. 75 per cent of respondents rated the programme delivery as very good and 25 per cent rated the service provided as good. 100 per cent of respondents also felt that Hamilton town centre was a safer place as a result of the initiative. The top 3 named interventions by the KIN evaluation were taxi marshalling, high profile policing and a positive media campaign.

The Hamilton Safer Streets initiative has thus contributed to annual reductions in violent crime, alcohol-related antisocial behaviour and disorder, and the fear of crime.

The 'Big Night In' event was attended by 51 young people. The feedback gathered from the VoXUR system was largely positive, with comments recognising the risks

involved in drinking alcohol. Since then, 20 young people who attended the event have gone on to complete a fire reach programme with Strathclyde Fire and Rescue.

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

Effective partnership working within a coordinated planning approach has been essential to achieve effective service delivery. Lessons learned from previous year's Safer Streets programmes allowed for better continuity and consistency between partners and the local business community in helping to achieve stated outcomes. The initiative has built on the strengths of its existing arrangements with partners through the CSP.

The partnership through its Safer and Stronger Communities Group continues to commit on an annual basis to provide funding to support the initiative. Future incarnations of the Hamilton initiative will be mainstreamed under the CSP budget as the Scottish Government has withdrawn its Safer Streets funding from this year. It is likely that the Hamilton project will be scaled down as a result.

Summary

The Hamilton Safer Streets Initiative prioritises alcohol-related disorder and drink/drugs offences and violent crime utilising a mix of high-profile policing, enhanced use of CCTV, taxi marshalling, Key Individual Networks and youth diversionary events.

Produced 15th September 2011.

Scottish Community Safety Network is a company Limited by Guarantee Registered in Scotland, Company No: SC357649
SCSN is Registered Scottish Charity No: SC040464

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