



## Public Reassurance Initiative - Westcliff

### Executive Summary

Through a collaborative relationship between West Dunbartonshire Council, Strathclyde Police and local stakeholders, a multi-agency action plan for the Westcliff area in Dumbarton was developed to tackle issues including anti-social behaviour and the local environment. The plan and resulting actions were based upon community views and intelligence gathered through meaningful engagement, interviews, surveys and public consultations.

The initiative was developed from the ACPOS Reassurance Strategy and the resulting Public Reassurance model enabled engagement with communities and the implementation of appropriate problem solving approaches in the area. The results of the initiative were evident with a 42% reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour seen in the Westcliff area during the initiative, in comparison to the same period in the previous year (2010). This project demonstrates how innovative work through engagement and wider partnership and collaborative working in a specific community results in positive effects.

The project was runner up in the Better Outcomes for Communities category at the Safer Communities Awards 2012.

### Project Background and Aims

The Public Reassurance model is a process for engaging communities with high levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB), crime and the fear of crime. The Public Reassurance Team (PRT) was established in May 2010 as part of a major re-structuring of West Dunbartonshire Council's (WDC) Anti-Social Behaviour Services to further complement existing services in tackling ASB and environmental issues. West Dunbartonshire Council PRT is made up of six Public Reassurance Assistants and one Public Reassurance Officer. Their main role was to work closely with Strathclyde Police using the Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS) Reassurance Strategy to engage with communities and formulate appropriate problem solving approaches in areas that are affected by high levels of ASB and crime.

The Westcliff area is considered to be one of the most deprived areas in Dumbarton with the Scottish Indices of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) classing it in the top 15% of the most deprived areas of Scotland. As such, the area was designated as a Public Reassurance area and the PRT and Strathclyde Police began the initiative in January 2011.

The aim of the PRT is to reduce serious crime, the fear of crime and ASB by implementing the Public Reassurance model in local communities. The initiative set out the following objectives:

- To reduce high levels of drug dealing;
- To reduce high levels of serious crime;
- To reduce high levels of anti-social behaviour; and
- To support the community in reporting crime and anti-social behaviour.

### Activities

West Dunbartonshire's multi agency Anti-Social Behaviour Task Group, with support from a specialist police ASB analyst, determined in January 2011 that Westcliff was to be classified as a Public Reassurance area. The Public Reassurance model was delivered through

extensive multi agency working, calling on all partners to contribute to the problem solving process and the delivery of their resources to tackle issues within the area. This approach enabled the local community to have sustained and detailed involvement in how resources were deployed. The model constantly calls for engagement with the community to form good relationships and build trust. Through this, a better understanding can be gained and therefore sustainable solutions can be identified. This initiative required a high focus of resources from all partners and called for innovative techniques to create problem solving solutions in a community based initiative. A high degree and consistency of public engagement and feedback was maintained during the project.

Initially, Public Reassurance Assistants and Police Officers were deployed throughout the estate over a seven day period to engage with residents. The engagement was through a combination of face to face interviews and public consultation meetings to determine the community's perception, worries and key issues in the area. The resulting information from the engagement allowed Police Scotland and the PRT to liaise with respective Police and Council departments to feedback public complaints and devise appropriate responses to community feedback. The PRT worked jointly with West Dunbartonshire Councils Anti-Social Investigation and Support Team (ASIST) and Housing teams to ensure that tenancy agreements were being adhered to in relation to section three "Respect for Others".

The environmental standards in Westcliff were improved by working in partnership with Community Payback, Waste Services and Anti-Social Behaviour Officers. Two redeployable CCTV cameras and daily foot patrols monitored and removed graffiti and dog fouling and identified offenders. Furthermore, grass and hedging was cut back, two play parks were improved and 26 no dog fouling signs were fixed in the area.

Additional examples of the actions carried out in the Westcliff area by the PRT include:

- Patrols to identify and deter ASB
- Mobile CCTV Vehicle patrols
- Multi agency problem solving meeting
- 'Shop a Dealer' campaign
- Weekly key partner meetings to identify issues
- Monthly local area meeting with tenants and residents
- Weapon and alcohol patrols
- Tenancy agreements robustly enforced for ASB
- Community involvement litter pick
- Community Allotment - ground identified and funded

In August 2011, a 'Reclaim the Park' event was held which raised awareness of the community's campaign to improve the local environment. During the day a public consultation was held to determine the resident's views on how the communal areas should be developed. The event encouraged public participation by providing children's games, face painting, competitions, a barbecue and refreshments.

An Enforcement, Prevention, Intelligence and Communication (EPIC) log was implemented in the area to ensure that all actions taken by the initiatives partners were documented and monitored. The log contained short, medium and long term actions which refer to the respective partner's responsibility in the area.

The Public Reassurance Initiative was advertised through local media, radio, Registered Social Landlords, the West Dunbartonshire Council website and door to door leaflet and letter drops in targeted areas. Furthermore, Public Reassurance Assistants and officers were out and about in the area on a daily basis completing surveys and engaging with the public.

## Impact

Analysis of the 2011 crime statistics in comparison to the previous year (2010), revealed a 42% decrease in crime and ASB in the Westcliff area during and following the implementation of the Public Reassurance Initiative. A significant (43.5%) reduction in drugs offences was noted as the number of offence in the corresponding time frame (January to June) went from 23 in 2010 to 13 in 2011. It is thought that this reduction may be due to the distribution of 'Shop A Dealer' leaflets to each household.

Feedback from events and monthly meetings with residents found that residents had noted a difference within their area and felt that the model had a positive impact in terms of antisocial tenants and a visible improvement in the environment of the area. This led to resident empowerment and an increased community confidence in the partners involved in the initiative and as such it led to increased reporting.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The impact of the Public Reassurance Initiative in Westcliff was evidenced in the Westcliff Area Profile which was compiled by the Analyst Unit at the Argyll, Bute and West Dumbartonshire Police Division. The report examined crime and disorder incidents between 1 January and 30 June 2011, the duration of the Public Reassurance Initiative and compared them to the same period in 2010.

In addition to the report, monthly statistics were kept within WDC Community Safety and ASB service. This data including numbers of surveys, attendance at public consultations, environmental reports, weapon finds, alcohol seizures, partner meetings, membership of Key Individual Networks (KIN) and community intelligence reports.

## Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

Changes to Strathclyde Police personnel both operationally and analytically impacted on service delivery during certain periods. Furthermore, technical issues were experienced with the redeployable CCTV cameras. Initially the installation of the CCTV had a negative effect on the project in terms of evidential footage and partner harmony; however this has now been resolved through technical improvements to the cameras and further training to the operators. A joint Police/West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) Analyst has also been appointed which in turn is now complementing our service delivery.

The PRT engaged with local communities through a combination of public meetings and face to face interviews. The use of the latter method enabled the engagement of harder to reach people and residents who were unable to attend or have the confidence to speak at public meetings. Furthermore, the face to face interviews allowed residents to discuss issues which may not be appropriately addressed during a public forum.

WDC intends to roll out further initiatives of this type following further development of the model. In particular the future model will involve:

- Collaborative working between WDC and Strathclyde Police, and other local stakeholders.
- Involving the community in decision making and delivery of the projects.
- Involving wide range of council departments, proactively ensuring that their services are providing what the community expects.

## Resources

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| Funding  | WDC funded the development of the new Public Reassurance Team. Additional project resources were provided by Community Planning and 'in kind' resources were contributed by partners. The total costs of the project (per annum):<br>WDC Staffing £119,038<br>Additional project funding £16,000<br>Redeployable cameras £25,000 |
| Partners | WDC: Addictions Services, DACA (Alcohol), WDC Housing, ASIST Team, , WDC Access Team, Litter Control and Waste Services, Learning and Development, Community Payback, Environment Trust, WDC Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour Service, Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue.                                 |

## Outcomes

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| National | 09 - We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.<br>11 - We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.<br>12 - We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.<br>15 - Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs. |
| Local    | 2.1 - Reduced violent crime.<br>2.2 - Enhanced safety of women and children.<br>2.3 - Reduced antisocial behaviour and disorder.<br>2.5 - Reduced impact of alcohol and drug misuse on communities.<br>2.6 - Stronger, confident and more involved communities.  |

## Practice Note Information

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| <b>Practice Note Title:</b> | Public Reassurance Initiative - Westcliff  |
| <b>Practice Note No:</b>    | PN45   |
| <b>SCSN Topic Areas:</b>    | Environment Safety, Public Space Safety, Personal Safety, Home Safety, Partnership Working |
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