

OUTLINE COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2005/08**Purpose of report**

To consult the Assembly on the outline Community Safety Strategy 2005-8.

Summary of audit findings

The Community Safety Audit is a statutory document that is produced every 3 years in order to prepare for the Community Safety Strategy. The audit is currently being printed as a public document, and a copy is **circulated separately**.

Crime recording guidelines became more stringent in 2001, contributing to a national rise in recorded crime of 7.4% per 1,000 population between 2001-4. In Milton Keynes recorded crime has risen by 5.5% per 1,000 population during the same period. However the British Crime Survey indicates that underlying levels of crime are falling nationally.

The pattern on specific crimes is mixed. Burglary and vehicle crime have shown substantial reductions in Milton Keynes over the last 3 years, in both cases by rates above the national trend. Crimes of violence have risen significantly both locally and nationally. This is partly because common assault (which does not result in injury) is now classified as a recordable crime. It is also partly attributable to the increase in recorded domestic violence, which accounted for 27% of violent offences in Milton Keynes in 2003/4.

Crime in the city centre has fallen by 5% over the last 3 years, and the rate of decline has become greater during the last year. There is evidence of a significant rise in recorded crime in most of the estates surrounding the city centre. Although this cannot definitely be ascribed to displacement from the city centre, it may be a contributory factor.

Outside the city centre, the pattern is mixed. On the whole, crime is higher in areas of greater deprivation, as it is nationally. However, the crime rate in Milton Keynes is lower than the national average. Some areas have experienced a rise in recorded crime, and others have experienced a fall. It is notable that Fullers Slade is one of the latter, experiencing a fall of 5% over the period. This is significant because it is the only estate of relatively high social deprivation that has experienced a fall in recorded crime, and this may be attributable to the interventions that have been targeted on the area, including the use of the warden.

On the whole, crime rates per 1,000 population are lower than the national average. The rate for Milton Keynes as a whole in 2003/4 was 118 per 1,000. The rate in some of the higher crime estates was in the 180s and 190s, and in 1 estate (Granby) the rate was 738 per 1,000 population.

The peak age for being a victim is similar to that for being an offender: both lie within the age group 17-25. The older the person the less likely he or she is to be either an offender or a victim. However, the fear of crime survey indicates that older people are proportionally more afraid of crime.

The fear of crime survey also indicates that there is a high fear of crime on the Redways. In fact, 1% of recorded crime occurs on the Redway system, and 17% of that occurs in a single hour of the day – between 3.00 and 4.00 in the afternoon.

Anti-social behaviour is a very significant factor in generating fear of crime. Although referrals of anti-social behaviour have declined slightly in the last three years, certain categories of referral (such as noise nuisance) have risen. The community safety strategy 2002-5 is reviewed in the audit. It has shown some successes, but has not yet delivered across all its targets. It may be appropriate to concentrate on fewer key targets in the next strategy.

Summary of outline strategy

The local priorities identified by the audit are supplemented by those of the Home Office. These national priorities include tackling anti-social behaviour (which is also a local priority) and targeting prolific offenders. The audit and ensuing public consultation, together with national priorities will inform the next community safety strategy, 2005-8. This will be presented to Cabinet in draft form in February.

The Community Safety Partnership held a consultation day on 28th September, after which the outline strategy was produced, forming Part 5 of the audit report.

It is recommended that the 2005-8 community safety strategy should focus on three key outcomes:

- To reduce crime across the city
- To reduce the fear of crime
- To enhance quality of life by increasing community safety.

These outcomes are described in greater detail in Attachment 1. In order to achieve these outcomes, it is recommended that the strategy should focus on 5 streams of activity. These are described briefly below, and in greater detail in Attachment 1.

Work with persistent offenders is a national priority that will be divided into 3 distinct areas.

- The first (to be led by the Youth Offending Team) will concentrate on preventing and deterring young people from offending in the first place.
- The second (to be led by Thames Valley Police) will identify the main offenders in Milton Keynes in order to catch and convict them as rapidly as possible.
- The third area (to be led by the National Probation Service) will concentrate on resettling convicted offenders as useful members of the community.

Tackling anti-social behaviour is both a national and local priority. The strategy will develop existing services, focusing equally on education, prevention and enforcement. This stream of activity will be led by Milton Keynes Council.

The national and local increase in recorded crimes of violence is a matter of grave concern. The strategy will target domestic violence, violence in public hot-spots throughout Milton Keynes and on alcohol-related crime. This stream of activity may be led jointly by Milton Keynes Council, Thames Valley Police and The Primary Care Trust.

In addition to these 3 areas of activity, there are local priorities that require attention from time to time. These include targeting particular crime hot-spots, improving fire and Redway safety, and actions required to address community safety problems in the specific neighbourhoods. This area of activity could effectively be led by Parish Councils.

The final activity stream is that of public engagement. This involves a continuous communication with the public in order to match activity with need, and reduce fear of crime by providing correct and timely information. This area may be led by Milton Keynes Council.

Parish Assembly and the Community Safety Partnership

Parish and town councils have been ably represented on the Community Safety Partnership by Cllr Isabella Fraser. However, in preparation for the audit, the Partnership undertook a full survey of stakeholders. Parish Councils considered that the Partnership had not done enough to consult with or involve parish and town councils. As a result, the Partnership has agreed to do the following:

- Ensure that minutes and key decisions of the Partnership are copied to all parish and town council clerks.
- In addition to the existing representative, the Partnership will invite at least two other delegates to join as full members.

Recommendations

That the Assembly considers the outline strategy presented in Part 5 of the Audit report, offering comments on how it may be developed in detail. This

outline will also be sent out for public consultation. The full strategy will be drafted in January and presented to the Assembly at its next meeting.

Background papers

Community Safety Audit Report 2004