

Strabane Community Safety Partnership

Outcome impact evaluation of the 2006-2008 Community Safety Action Plan

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CONTENTS

Executive summary	3
Evaluation outcomes summary	5
1.0 Background	12
2.0 Methodology	13
3.0 Evaluation outputs and outcomes	15
Individual project performance	15
Strategic and operational structures	35
4.0 Conclusions and recommendations	39
Conclusion	39
Recommendations	41
Appendix	43
List of evaluation participants	
Community Safety Partners questionnaire	

Executive Summary

The opinion of all of the Strabane Community Safety Partnership (SCSP) members and project sponsors interviewed as part of this evaluation is that the individual Project Action Plans approved by the SCSP under the Strabane Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2006 – 2008 have served to reduce criminal behaviour and to improve overall community safety. This finding was further endorsed by those who participated in action plan projects either directly delivered by the SCSP co-ordinator or projects delivered by organisations funded by the SCSP.

To quote one project participant

'The concerted effort made by the Partnership to get out advice and information about the danger and fear among older people caused by the misuse of fireworks had very positive results'.

However the primary difficulty we have encountered in carrying out this evaluation is the fact that no baseline measures were in place to measure the actual level of impact both collectively and individually that these projects have had on community safety. This has been a problem universally encountered by most if not all of the Community Safety Partnerships.

While baseline crime figures have been made available by the PSNI via the DPP, we cannot accurately apportion any reductions in crime to the impact of the Community Safety Strategy. Quite simply no outcome framework was put in place at the outset by the Northern Ireland Office Community Safety Unit. Therefore there was no way of accurately measuring 'distance travelled' as a consequence of the implementation of the identified Community Safety Strategy.

Such a tool would have allowed not only for the collection of measurable outputs and outcomes but also for comparative performance analysis between the 26 Community Safety Partnerships.

What however cannot be denied is that there was a significant overall reduction in the crime rate for Strabane District Command Unit between 2002/03 and 2006/07; in 2002/03 the crime rate was 74 crimes per 1000, in 2006/07 the rate was 51.5 per thousand. In comparison, the crime rate at the Northern Ireland level was 73 per 1,000 population*

Some dramatic changes were witnessed – take for example the 72% decrease in the 'inappropriate use, sale or possession of fireworks,

* The recorded figures are not entirely accurate as not all crimes which occurred in a specific District Council/ward may be included in the total as a result of missing or incomplete postcodes.

undoubtedly the two consecutive Halloween awareness campaigns funded and run by SCSP made a positive impact in terms of bringing about this downward turn – a factor highlighted by a number of those consulted who work directly with elderly people.

The impact of the new political dispensation which has witnessed improving relationships between the PSNI and many Catholic/Nationalist/Republicans should not be ignored in terms of the increased levels of reported crime in certain areas such as Castlederg and Strabane Town – North.

We would also draw your attention to the fact that we did not speak to the NIO CSU as part of the evaluation process. A memo was circulated to all Community Safety Co-ordinators stating their reason for not participating in the evaluation exercise.

If you require a full version of this document please put your request in writing to:

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