

Section 3. Community Safety Consultation

From October to mid November 2001 the Lancaster Community Safety Partnership carried out an extensive consultation. Approximately 4000 questionnaires were made available to many different organisations, agencies and to the public of Lancaster. Approximately 1600 questionnaires were returned – a 40% feedback rate. More were received after the cut off date. The Community Safety Partnership is particularly pleased with this response and wishes to thank all those who assisted with this process.

The aims of the consultation process were to:-

Confirm that the First Phase Report gave an accurate picture of crime and disorder in the Lancaster district.

Gain a view on crime, fear of crime and other quality of life issues from the people of Lancaster.

Assess the extent of the success of the Lancaster Community Safety Partnership over the past three year Strategy period.

The following is an outline of the methodology and findings of consultation around community safety issues.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Postal Survey

A postal survey was held where the full First Phase Report and the Summary were forwarded out to different agencies and organisations throughout the district, along with questionnaires for responses.

3.1.2 Full Report

The First Phase Report, along with its summary and questionnaires, was made available to:-

- 60 City Councillors. Lancaster City Councillors were requested to collate responses from their constituents and return to the Community Safety Team. The responses to this request from some city councillors was very pro-active and energetic and the Community Safety Partnership would like to thank those councillors who responded.
- 9 County Councillors (those with responsibility for Lancaster)
- 40 Parish Councillors
- 22 City Council Officers
- All members of the Community Safety Partnership Strategy Group and its Executive – 30 members.
- The First Phase Report was placed in public buildings throughout the district such as town halls, police stations, libraries and doctors surgeries.

3.1.3 Summary Document

The Summary document of the First Phase Report, along with questionnaires, was made available to a wide range of local agencies, organisations and various groups and bodies. The following list gives approximate numbers for the distribution.

- 80 agencies and organisations who are part of the wider Community Safety Partnership including local MPs and bodies such as Victim Support and Centrepoint.
- 101 Neighbourhood Watches
- 42 members of the Pub Watch Scheme
- 26 large businesses within the Lancaster area.
- 144 schools, both primary and secondary

3.1.4 Websites

The First Phase Report along with its summary and a feedback mechanism was placed on the City Council and Lancashire Constabulary web sites.

3.1.5 Face to Face Surveys

Local business, Kirkhope Marketing was commissioned to design a questionnaire and complete 300 face to face interviews. These were completed during November and December 2001. Interviewers used the same questionnaire as the postal survey and completed 100 surveys each of Lancaster, Morecambe, Carnforth and Rural residents.

Interviews were conducted between 9:30am and 4:30pm on both weekdays and weekend days and took place in town centres. The data from these interviews were then collated with over 1,000 postal questionnaires.

3.1.6 Citizens' Panel

It had been agreed to use the Lancashire wide Citizens' Panel to gain views from a wide ranging cross section of the Lancaster community. However, it was found that this would have involved reforming the questionnaire to such an extent that it would not have been possible to include the responses into the full consultation. A decision was taken, based on the fact the such an extensive response had been received by other methods, not to use the Citizens' Panel.

One of the development points for the next three years is to develop a communications strategy and the use of a Citizens' Panel will be explored.

3.1.7 Targeting of Groups of People within our Community

3.1.7.1 Ethnic Minorities

Representatives of the local ethnic minority community were contacted to give their views via representatives from their own groups. Representatives from these groups also attended the Consultation Event.

3.1.7.2 People from the Rural Community

People from rural communities were contacted to give their views via parish councils as well as via the Face to Face consultation. Links are now being strengthened with

the rural communities by a group led by Community Futures which acts as part of the Rural Action Group.

3.1.7.3 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People

The Community Safety Officer is a regular attendee of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) group and linked into this group via that forum giving a short overview of the report and questionnaire and requesting responses.

3.1.7.4 The Traveller Community

Within the Lancaster area there are numbers of travelling people, some who spend part of their time residing in Lancaster and travel for the remainder, and others who live permanently in the district but still consider themselves travellers. This group has been recognised as one which is hard to reach and particular to this area. The Community Safety Officer linked into this community via a contact from Social Services which enabled her to visit some of the travellers and survey their views using the questionnaire.

3.1.7.5 Other Groups

Groups such as; homeless people, drug users, victims of domestic abuse, older people, people with disabilities were contacted to give their views via representatives from their own groups.

3.1.7.6 Consultation of Young People

The Youth and Community Service used National Youth Week to consult young people with a rephrased questionnaire aimed specifically at young people. Questionnaires were sent to youth groups, both statutory and voluntary, through youth workers and network of registered voluntary groups. The feedback from young people was good with them being more than willing to complete questionnaires and feeling included in the process.

3.1.8 The Local Media

Representatives from the local media were given copies of the documentation and invited to meet with the Executive Group of the Community Safety Partnership and discuss the content of the First Phase Report. They then published the findings of the report and invited local readers/listeners to respond back to the Community Safety Team.

Readers' letters from back dated newspapers up to 6 months old were scanned to pick up on any issues relating to crime, and these issues fed into the consultation report.

3.1.9 Consultation Event

A consultation event was held with local agencies, organisations and various groups and bodies. Presentations were given based on the content of the First Phase Report and attendees were asked to comment on the strengths and development areas of the Community Safety Partnership.

Questionnaires were also made available for attendees to give their views on the findings of the First Phase Report.

3.1.10 Summary

The consultation process consisted of a basket of different methods aimed at targeting as wide a cross section of the community and as many of the community as possible.

3.1.11 Final Consultation

This document is to be used as a base for final consultation which will comprise the following:-

- The Final Audit will be placed in public buildings.
- The Final Audit will be made available on the Lancaster City Council and Lancashire Constabulary web sites.
- The Final Audit will be made available throughout to:-
 - Community Safety Partnership Strategy Group.
 - Lancaster City Council Councillors
- The press will be contacted to make the public aware of the existence of the completed document and request replies to the consultation.

3.2 Findings

Local firm, Kirkhope Marketing, was commissioned to analyse the responses to the above consultation. The findings are set out below.

3.3 Analysis of the Community Safety Partnership Consultation

3.3.1 Executive Summary

1,646 questionnaires were completed during November and December, 2001

Local people were as likely as the national average to think crime had increased in their area.

More than 2/3 of respondents agreed or strongly agreed all crime issues identified by the Partnership were important.

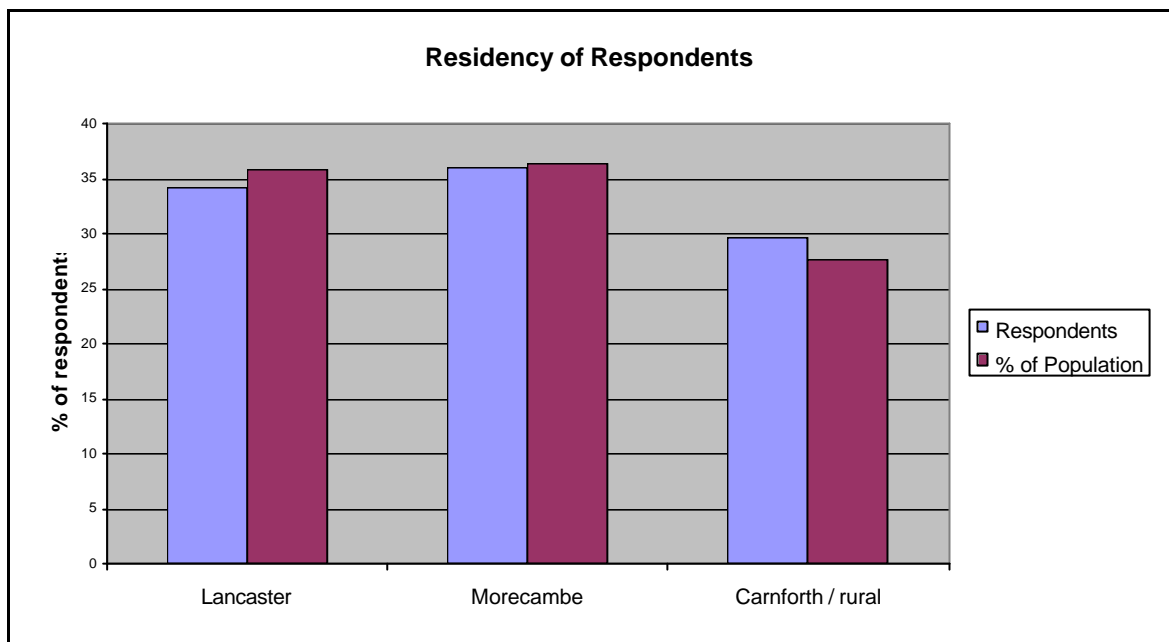
Burglary, violent crime and juvenile nuisance were identified as the top priorities overall, but there were significant differences between Lancaster, Morecambe and Carnforth / rural.

More respondents worried a great deal about burglary than the national average.

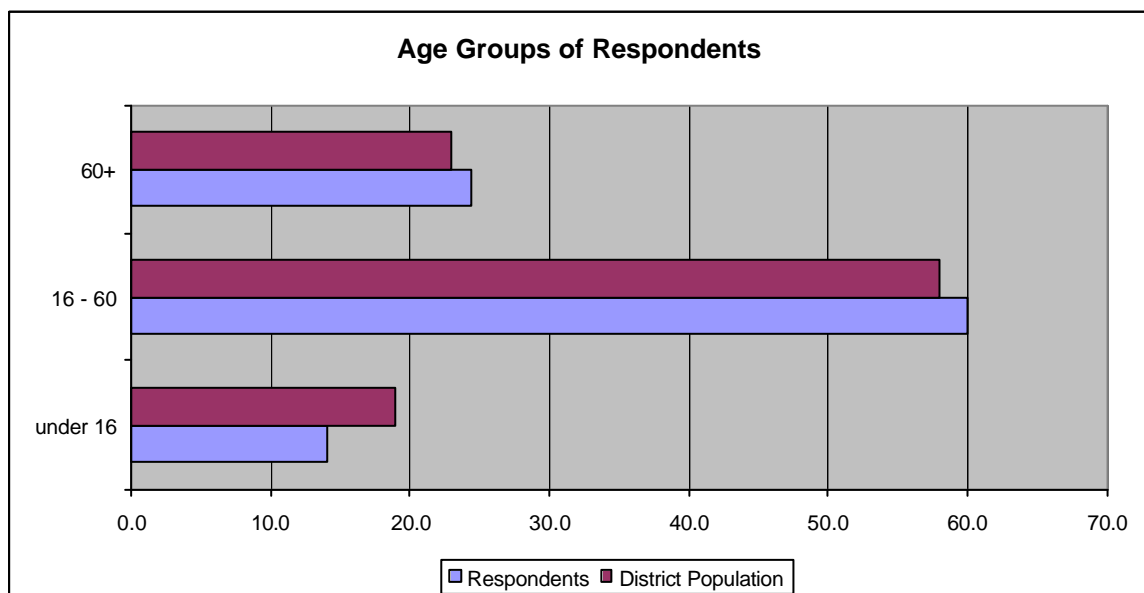
Morecambe residents showed much higher levels of worry about a wider range of crimes than other areas in the district.

3.3.2 Demographics of Respondents

1,646 surveys were completed. 300 were completed through personal interviews with the remainder being self-completed. These were fairly evenly split between the three sectors of the district (Morecambe including Heysham; Lancaster, Carnforth and Rural Areas) and match the actual distribution of the district's population¹. The best represented wards were Alexandra (148 respondents), Halton with Aughton (104 respondents) & Scotforth West (204 respondents).



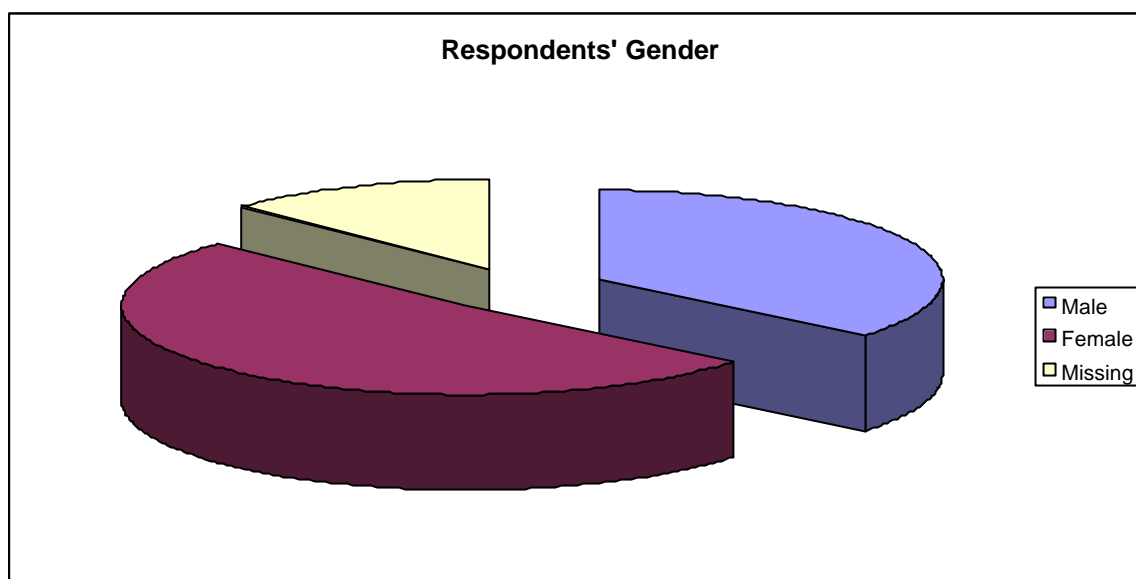
Age groups also closely matched the districts profile².



¹ The Lancaster District Profile – Release 1

² The Lancaster District Profile – Release 1

Men are potentially under-represented in the sample. Whilst half of respondents have indicated they are female, only one third are male. The remainder are missing responses.



According to the 1991 Census³, less than 2% of the resident population were from ethnic minorities. It is expected that, with the publication of the 2001 census, that figure will have increased. Five percent of respondents in this survey were Black, Black Caribbean, Asian or Chinese.

3.3.3 Awareness of the Lancaster and District Community Partnership.

One fifth of respondents were aware of the Partnership prior to taking part in the survey, but less than 3% had seen a copy of the District's Crime Audit.

3.3.4 Perceived Levels of Crime

Although crime overall has decreased in the last three years, almost half of the respondents thought crime had increased where they lived. Similarly, 49% of respondents in the British Crime Survey 2001 thought that crime had increased in their own area.⁴

Less than 10% thought it had decreased and one quarter believed there had been no change. Morecambe respondents were more likely to think crime had increased. Carnforth and Rural residents were least likely.

³ Source: Community Safety Partnership

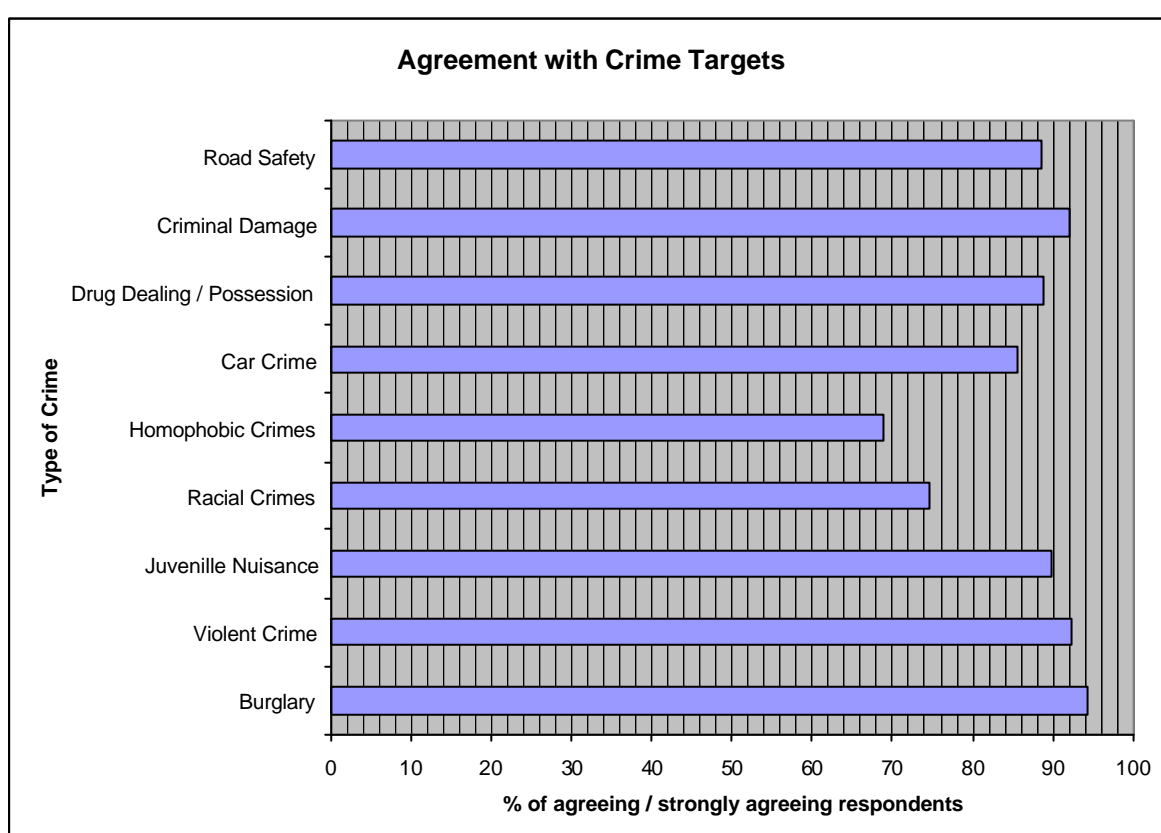
⁴ British Crime Survey 2001, First Results, England & Wales

Most respondents (33%) thought that their ward compared well with the rest of Lancashire, but there were significant differences between areas.

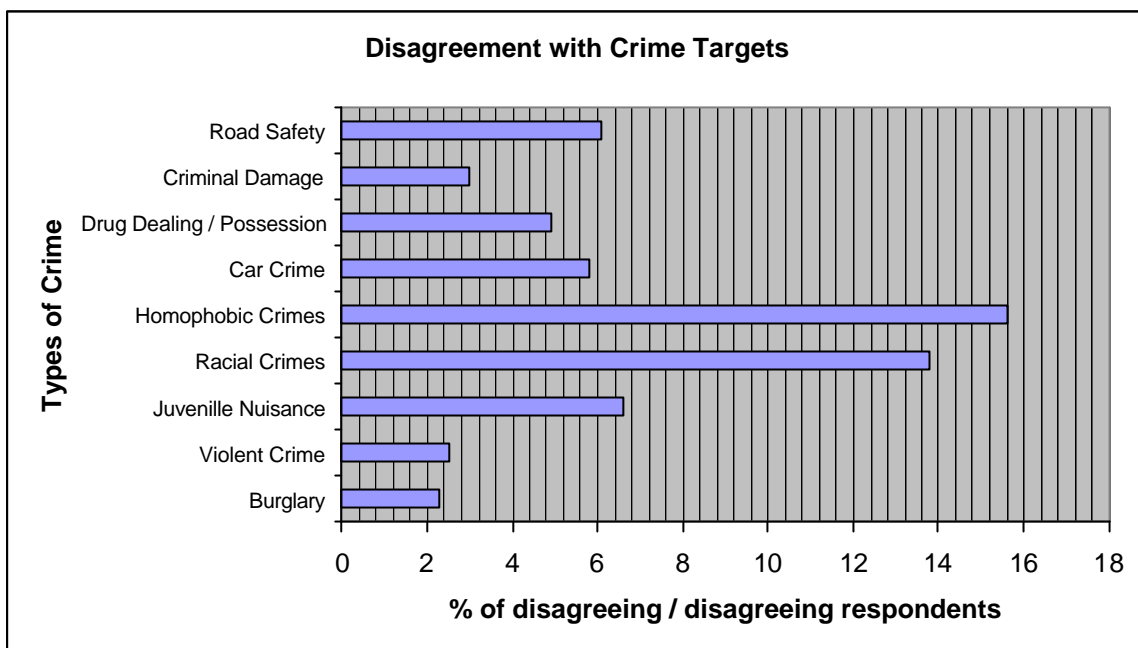
Comparison of Respondents' Wards with Lancashire				
	Overall	Lancaster	Morecambe	Carnforth and Rural
More Crime	15.2	13.5	26.5	3.3
About the same	28.7	34.8	33.1	16.1
Less Crime	33.3	24.9	19.1	61.0
Don't know	20.7	24.3	19.6	7.7

3.3.5 Important Crime Issues

More than 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed burglary, criminal damage and violent crime were important targets



Disagreement with target areas was low. However, a significant percentage of respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly that racial and homophobic crimes should continue to be priorities.



347 young people aged under 24 also took part in this survey. The issues they identified as important differed from the overall sample in several areas.

- They were much less likely to consider burglary, juvenile nuisance and criminal damage as important.
- They were more likely to consider racial crimes to be important.

Older respondents (aged 60+) differed little from the overall sample except on two issues. They were much less likely to agree / strongly agree that racist and homophobic crimes were important. They were also twice as likely to ignore these questions.

3.3.6 Crime Priorities

When asked to choose three top priorities, burglary, violent crime and juvenile nuisance were named by most respondents. All have been identified by The Partnership as Key Target Areas. In some wards, juvenile nuisance is well above the county's average.

However, there were some differences dependant on respondents' residency. Morecambe residents were more likely to have concerns about drug dealing and possession. Residents in Carnforth and rural areas, where the number of road traffic collisions and KSIs are high, cited road safety.

Whichever area respondents lived in, racial and homophobic crimes were the least likely to be prioritised, although Lancaster respondents were twice as likely as elsewhere to have concerns about racism.

There was some concern during the personal interviews that respondents did not understand the term "homophobic". After the first morning of interviews, this question was explained as "crimes against gay people". However, the postal

respondents did not have the benefit of an explanation. This should be borne in mind when considering responses to any homophobic related questions.

Crime Priorities – All Respondents				
	Overall	Lancaster	Morecambe	Carnforth / Rural
Burglary	59.9	57.2	56.2	67.8
Violent Crime	41.3	48.7	45.4	27.6
Juvenile Nuisance	45.5	43.9	50.3	41.5
Racial Crimes	9	14.7	6.4	5.4
Homophobic Crime	3.8	5.7	3.4	2.1
Car Crime	27.5	25.2	26.6	31.1
Drug Dealing	38.6	34.6	50.8	28.2
Criminal Damage	23.2	21.8	25.0	22.5
Road Safety	28.8	28.2	21.1	39.0

The top three priorities amongst younger respondents were burglary, violent crime and drug dealing / possession. One quarter thought racial crime should be a priority.

Older respondents priorities broadly fell in line with the overall priorities. They were 10% more likely to think burglary was important, but less likely to think violent crime should be top priority.

3.3.7 Fear of Crime

The crimes which worried respondents most were burglary and being attacked or robbed in the street. In fact, with the exception of racial and homophobic attacks, around one fifth of respondents' worries about crime affected their day to day lives.

The 2001 British Crime Survey notes that around 20% of respondents experienced high levels of worry over every crime.⁵ Nonetheless, burglary is a greater worry for Lancaster district's residents than nationally. Where 29% of local people classify their worry level as 5 out of 5, only 16% of respondents nationally gave worry about burglary the top rating.

Score Rating

Worry level 1 – Doesn't affect my life at all

Worry level 5 - Affects my life a great deal

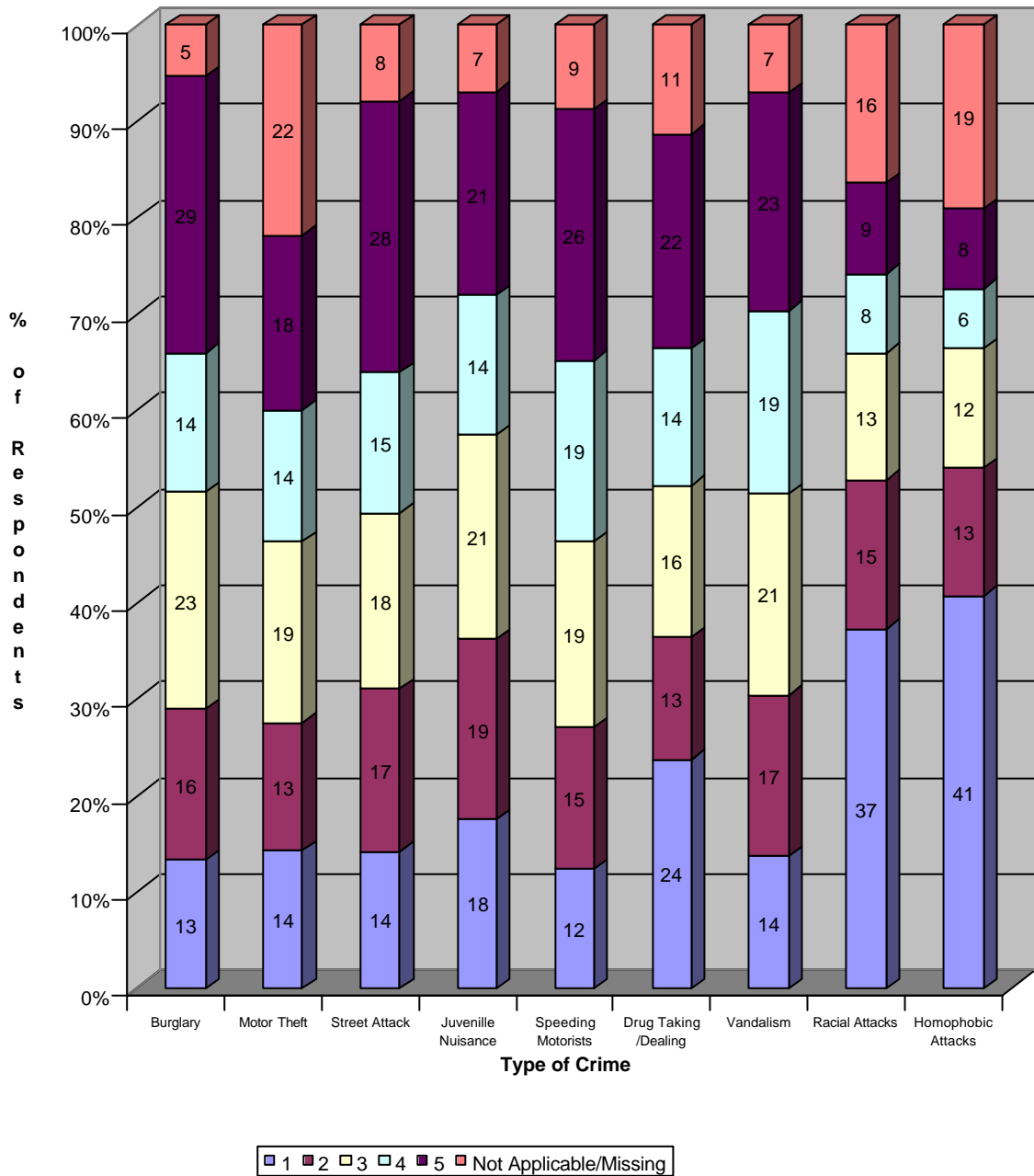
⁵ British Crime Survey 2001, First Results, England & Wales

<u>Worry about Crime</u>						
% of respondents						
Score (out of 5)	1	2	3	4	5	N / A Missing
Burglary	13	16	23	14	29	5
Motor Theft	14	13	19	14	18	22
Street Attack	14	17	18	15	28	8
Juvenile Nuisance	18	19	21	14	21	7
Speeding motorists	12	15	19	19	26	9
Drug taking / dealing	24	13	16	14	22	11
Vandalism	14	17	21	19	23	7
Racial Attacks	37	15	13	8	9	16
Homophobic Attacks	41	13	12	6	8	19

Apart from burglary, direct comparisons with the British Crime Survey are only possible⁶ for “being attacked or robbed in the street” and “racial attacks and abuse”.

⁶ Comparisons are not possible because the BCS classifies some crimes slightly differently and excludes some other types of crime e.g. juvenile nuisance

Scale of Worry



Older participants were not more worried about crime than their younger co-respondents. In most cases, the scores of 4 or 5 were very close to the overall sample. The British Crime Survey 2001 notes that on a national level, “For elderly men and women the levels of worry [are] either similar or below those for the averages for men and women.”

People living in Morecambe felt concerns more keenly than other respondents did.

Worry Ratings By Area				
Area				
% of respondents scoring 4 or 5 out of 5	Overall	Lancaster	Morecambe	Carnforth and rural
Burglary	43	38	51	39
Motor Theft	32	28	36	32
Street Attack	43	44	53	29
Juvenile Nuisance	36	35	46	33
Speeding motorists	45	42	46	48
Drug taking / dealing	37	33	49	45
Vandalism	42	40	52	30
Racial Attacks	18	20	20	12
Homophobic Attacks	15	16	18	9

3.3.8 Other Issues

Hundreds of respondents raised additional issues which concerned them. Many comments were a repetition of issues already covered in the questionnaire (for example, "children throwing eggs" has been classified as juvenile nuisance). Some were inappropriate (for example, requests for a bypass). However, some were relevant.

The most frequently mentioned of these were:

Issue	Number of Mentions
More police needed	61
Litter / Fly tipping	42
Crime prevention and education	16
Dangerous cyclists / Cyclists on pavement	14
Noise, especially at night	13
Under age drinking	12
Alcohol in public places	12
Child Abuse / Paedophilia	11
Sexual abuse / assault	11

The background information to this report is included at Appendix 4.

3.4 Other Surveys

A number of other surveys have been undertaken around crime and disorder issues. A summary of the results of these is included below.

The surveys which have been included are:-

- The Lancaster SRB Community Audit (May 2000)
- The Morecambe SRB Community Audit (March 2001)
- A Community Study on the Perceptions of danger in the West End
- A Survey of Tenants on the Ryelands Estate
- Survey of Gay and Lesbian Experiences
- Research Project into the Needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in the Lancaster District, September 2001⁷
- Women Influencing Safer Environments (WISE) Consultation

3.4.1 The Lancaster SRB Community Audit 2000

This project was designed to address economic and social problems in Lancaster and involved a survey of 1200 local residents of the six wards of inner Lancaster.

- Bulk
- Castle
- John O Gaunt
- Skerton East
- Skerton Central
- Skerton West

Problems in the area were seen to be heavy traffic, litter, dog noise and fouling, lack of safe, clean areas and broken pavements. When asked what needed to be improved the answer was they would like to see improved facilities for children and young people.

The vast majority of respondents liked living in the area, although 1 in 5 council tenants did not. Half the respondents living in council housing found the lack of safe, clean play areas a problem. Over 1/3 of council tenants said they were afraid to go out alone after dark.

The main crimes of which residents were victims were loss or damage to property and vehicle crime including theft of and from vehicles. Personal attacks were reported by a significant minority. Around 90% of those who witnessed a crime said they would report it to the Police and give a statement, although not all of these said they would be willing to give evidence in court.

The most common crime prevention methods used involved window and door locks, although door chains and security lighting were also popular.

Drug dealing and rowdy late night behaviour had been reported by many residents.

3.4.2 The Morecambe SRB Community Audit 2000

This survey was conducted in September 2000. Interviews were held with residents aged 16 and over in the following wards.

- Alexandra
- Poulton
- Harbour

⁷ Undertaken by Kushminder Chahal and Sue Edwards. Managed by CVS and K Chahal Ltd

- Heysham North
- Heysham Central
- Heysham South

Disturbance from youths, litter, people being afraid to go out alone after dark, lack of safe, clean play areas, unemployment and discarded needles and syringes appeared to be the biggest problems in the area. The most common issues perceived to be problems for young people were lack of leisure facilities and crime, poor job prospects, drug and solvent abuse and boredom.

The most significant changes over the past five years were felt to be a perceived increase in crime, more housing development, deterioration of buildings, closure of shops and facilities and an increase in youths on the street.

Over half the residents interviewed said they did not worry about crime happening during the day. Only 1/3 of residents could say that they did not worry at all about night time crime. Similarly, 60% of residents said that there was no time of day when they would not go out in the area. 38% of residents, including 47% of those aged 65+ said they would not go out after dark.

When residents were asked what improvements would be most appreciated they listed amongst others; improved security and greater Police presence, decreased crime and vandalism.

More than ¼ said they had experienced crime in the last 12 months, most commonly burglary, theft, vandalism, or vehicle crime. Only a minority had been victim to a personal attack.

The great majority of residents said that if they witnessed a crime they would report it and give a statement to the Police, although not all of these would be willing to give evidence in court, most commonly because of fear.

The most commonly supported crime and disorder reduction measures were; targeting drug dealing, regular Police foot patrols and more leisure facilities for young people. There was also significant support for targeting vehicle crime and rowdy late night behaviour, harsher sentences and CCTV.

3.4.3 A Community Study on the Perceptions of danger in the West End by Dr Mark Levine, Psychology Dept, Lancaster University

The aim of this study was to examine the way different groups of people in Morecambe's West End talked about the places where they felt safe, and the places they did not. Groups interviewed were; Business people; the West End Committee; Homeless men; Women's group; Elderly; 18 year old males; 13/14 year old youths.

The findings of the survey are listed below:-

- All groups felt that the West End was safe during the day but dangerous at night – with the exception of the homeless men, who had no safe domestic place to go to during the day and therefore felt unsafe generally.
- All groups agreed that young people 'owned' the streets. The presence of young people on the streets was one of the main reasons given for feelings of generalised danger in the West End.

- Young people felt at home on the streets. They did not feel that the West End was generally dangerous, but indicated particular places that they felt were unsafe. Paradoxically, the places where young men and youth groups felt unsafe tended to be areas provided for 'youth activity' (e.g. the basketball court; the Battery playground). Young people feared the presence of adults, drug users or other youths in these places.
- Other sources of danger agreed by all groups included, drug users and particular individuals and/or families
 - Regents Park had a particularly interesting status in the West End. Some groups regarded Regents Park as a safe place (the elderly, women's group, homeless men, 18-year-old men). Other groups regarded it as dangerous (West End Committee, Business group), and others saw it as both safe and dangerous (13/14 year olds).
 - There was a consensus that young people 'own' the streets. All other groups felt a sense of general threat in the West End as they didn't feel that the place belonged to them. For young people danger can be found in other people (rather than a 'place' in general) and they have particular concerns about certain spaces.
- Almost all groups (including both 18-year-old males and 13/14 year old youths) suggest that a failure of parenting is responsible for problems in the West End. All groups give examples of young children running out of control, and of parents failing their children or failing to take responsibility for them.
- There was a shared concern about damage to amenities in the West End. For example, both the 13/14-year-old youth group and the elderly group complained about damage and graffiti in Regents Park.
- There was a shared perspective that Morecambe was neglected in favour of Lancaster (and that the West End was disadvantaged within Morecambe itself). Such sentiments were expressed by the business group, the West End Committee and the 18-year-old men.
- All groups (including the 18-year-old men and the 13/14-year-old youths) felt that the Police did not do enough to control crime and disorder in the West End. There was a shared feeling that the Police were slow to respond (or reluctant to enter the West End) and that the Police lacked a presence on the streets. This contributed to feelings of lack of safety in the West End.
- All groups were at pains to point out that, although the West End has its share of problems, there were other places (including parts of Lancaster) that were worse off. All groups expressed a deep affection for the West End, and wanted to work for its improvement. There was a general feeling that the money which has been spent to regenerate Morecambe (and the West End) has improved the physical infrastructure, but at the same time, the social infrastructure has been allowed to collapse.

3.4.4. A Survey of Tenants on the Ryelands Estate, by CEL for Lancaster City Council, Council Housing Department

A Needs and Preference Survey⁸ of all tenants on the Ryelands estate was undertaken during September 1999. This document represents a summary of the final report on the study.

- Over a third of all respondents and 48% of home-owners had been victims of crime, whilst 27% had suffered anti-social behaviour.
- The most common forms of crime or anti-social behaviour were "burglary/house theft", "vandalism to home" and "abusive behaviour". In this particular survey, 30% of victims also claimed to have suffered car theft.
- Almost two-thirds of respondents claimed that they do not worry at all about crime during the day. This compares to 21% who worry a lot. However, 34% said that they are, at least, worried quite a lot about crime at night. Less than half of all respondents say that they do not worry about crime at night.
- Over half of this sample (59%) said that there was no time of day when they would not go out in the area. Nevertheless, 38% of respondents would not go out after dark in the area.
- Amongst this particular sample, 84% of respondents said that they would always report a crime, to which they were a witness. This attitude towards reporting crime is much stronger than we found amongst Council tenants. Fear of reprisal was the major deterrent to reporting crime.
- The most common perceived cause of crime in the area was "drugs/drug dealing", mentioned by 61% of respondents. Other causes included "boredom" (38%), "unemployment" (29%) and "poverty" (23%).
- Juveniles, rather than young adults, were seen as the main source of behavioural problems in the area. Almost 60% of respondents believed that children aged 12-16 were most likely to be responsible for crime in the area, whilst 41% nominated the 17-18 age group. A significant number (36%) also mentioned children under the age of 12.
- Almost 90% of respondents, both owners and tenants had taken some precaution to reduce the likelihood of crime against themselves or their households. In general, these measures involved greater home security, such as "better door locks" (65%), "window locks" (60%) and "installing a burglar alarm" (23%). These levels of crime prevention are much higher than we experienced amongst Council tenants.

⁸ CEL Research, commissioned by the Council to undertake a Needs and Preference Survey with tenants on the Ryelands estate.

- Finally, on the subject of crime in the area, 93% of respondents were able to make at least one suggestion for reducing crime. Most notably, these included “better policing” (39%), “move drug takers away” (39 %) and “more facilities for young people” (21%).

3.4.5 Survey of Gay and Lesbian Experiences

Since the production of the first phase report a law academic from Birkbeck College, London has offered his research on gay and lesbian experiences of violence safety and danger in Lancaster over the last 3 years. The research was made up of over 200 responses. The following is a short summary of some of the findings of the research.⁹

Sexuality of Respondents

	Percent	Count
Straight men	11	24
Gay men	24.2	53
Bi-sexual men	2.7	6
Other	2.7	6
Bi-sexual women	4.6	10
Lesbians	42	92
Straight women	12.8	28
Total	100	219

Perception of Safety in Lancaster

	Percent	Count
Very Safe	10.5	23
Fairly Safe	56.6	124
Fairly Unsafe	7.8	17
Very Unsafe	5.0	11
Not Answered	20.1	44
Total	100	219

Perception of Safety by Sexuality

	Unsafe	Safe	Total %	Count
Straight men	29.2	70.8	100	24
Gay men	15.9	84.1	100	44

⁹ Research by L Moran of Birkbeck College, London.

Bi-sexual men	0	100	100	5
Other answer	0	100	100	4
Bi-sexual women	12.5	87.5	100	8
Lesbians	14.1	85.9	100	64
Straight women	15.4	84.6	100	175

3.4.6 Research Project into the Needs of Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in the Lancaster District, September 2001¹⁰

The aim of the above project was to consult a wide range of black and minority ethnic people to establish their needs and views on a number of different issues. These issues involved service use and development, language needs, views on racial harassment and health and housing needs. The secondary aim was to consult with a diverse range of statutory and voluntary agencies on their perception of need and implications for service development and delivery.

For the purposes of this Audit those findings directly relating to community safety have been summarised and reproduced. Further information from the report is available from Lancaster Council for Voluntary Services.

Methodology

A household survey, focus groups and interviews with agencies and organisations were the means used to glean views.

Household Survey

A questionnaire was completed by people from the South Asian, Traveller and Polish communities. Two interviewers were recruited and trained and a snow balling technique was used where initial contact with the interviewers' family and friends was made and then each person contacted was asked if they knew anyone else who would be willing to complete the questionnaire.

Focus Groups

Three focus groups were organised involving the South Asian community and the Traveller Community.

Interviews with agencies and organisations

Interviews were undertaken with 35 local agencies and organisations, covering health, social services, benefits, education, business and voluntary groups. Organisations which have services specifically for black and minority ethnic communities and individuals were also interviewed. Questions related to equal opportunities policies, staff training, and issues relating to black and minority ethnic communities.

¹⁰ Undertaken by Kushminder Chahal and Sue Edwards. Managed by CVS and K Chahal Ltd

Respondents

A total of 125 individuals were contacted.

	Women	Men
South Asian Community	61	18
Traveller Community	23	7
Hindu Community	1	2
Polish Community	5	5
Refugee and Asylum Seekers	2	1
Total	92	33

Findings

It was found that, generally, feelings of safety and security come with living in a close community free from crime and that few people had been victims of crime; to quote:-

“Strong South Asian community feeling, everyone knows each other and looks out for each other”.

There was found to be little experience of racial discrimination or harassment, with virtually no reporting of racist incidents.

Thirteen women and 7 men from the traveller community completed questionnaires. When asked their likes and dislikes in living in Lancaster they noted as dislikes; traffic congestion and gangs of children hanging around causing noise. Litter, dogs and crime were also concerns. Improvements to traffic problems and better facilities for children were seen as the most important improvements to the area. Most people felt safe where they lived. Several people had experienced discrimination and racism and this was experienced regularly by one particular family. Nobody had reported any racist incidents.

Within the focus groups one of the reasons most people liked living in Lancaster was the closeness of communities, being near friends and family from their own community enabled people to feel good about where they live. The quietness and lack of crime helped people feel secure. The dislikes of living in Lancaster were noted as being; lack of facilities for children, and the biggest dislike being lack of entertainment that didn't involve going to a pub. Some of the women felt that their children's nursery was too far away and involved a long walk down dark streets with uneven pavements. It was felt also that younger children missed out because the parks in some areas were particularly poor and frequented by drug users and alcoholics. Where some facilities were available such as a local youth club the respondents noted children outside smoking and drinking and so would not allow their children to use that facility. In addition the local community centre was seen to be under-used, with little going on and nothing advertised.

Younger respondents focused on the quietness of the area as a negative thing. They felt there was nothing to do and that Lancaster was full of pubs. They suggested that a café that opened in the evening would be an asset to the city.

Vandalism was a concern to most residents who believed the parks were affected by vandalism.

Most people felt safe where they lived although crime was felt to be on the increase.

Women and children were felt to be particularly vulnerable to crime.

3.4.7 Women Influencing Safer Environments (WISE) Consultation

Women Influencing Safer Environments (WISE) is a countywide group which consists of professional women representing a range of organisations including; Probation, Social Services, Police, Health and members of the business community such as Virgin Rail.

Two of the aims of the WISE group are;-

- To promote and encourage a safer environment for the family and in the work place.
- To examine ways of promoting safety on public transport and in public car parks.

As such the group carried out a consultation throughout Lancashire to a broad representation of women including; working women, women at home, women with young children, women with disabilities and young women and children.

The following information has been extracted from the WISE report as that most relevant to Lancaster and its Community Safety Partnership. The full WISE report is available from www.wise-lancs.info.

In Lancaster the following were issues that made women feel unsafe:-

- Groups of youths, drunkenness, poor lighting and overgrown bushes were the main themes emerging from the responses received.
- The WISE group ran workshops and in these many of the women spoke about the fear of being attacked, linked into the recent attacks around the Millennium Bridge and the problem of men exposing themselves or urinating in the street. The community perception of when a woman is attacked was also explored-asking the question of why she was out on her own, which isn't addressing the real problem.
- Problems with young people were highlighted and the fact they are so disrespectful if they are challenged. This is particularly relevant for the elderly who feel they can't challenge young people. Also underage drinking was highlighted and the ease of access to alcohol.
- Overgrown/ overhanging bushes and trees make women feel more vulnerable.
- Speeding vehicles was also raised as an issue for concern.

The following are suggestions for improvements:-

- Making policing more visible, getting police officers back on the beat, enabling them to get to know the community and key figures.

- Provide more resources to encourage good parenting skills, self-esteem and safety and to increase the sense of responsibility within local communities.
- Safer play areas for children, with neighbourhood, adult supervision. Ask the children what they would like and act on their suggestions, not on adult interpretation. The youth need to be involved and feel that they have a future in the community and that there is hope for them.
- Speeding vehicles, lack of speed restrictions, and cyclists on pavements were also raised frequently.
- Carry out more work on alcohol abuse as more young people are turning to alcohol and this increases violent behaviour.
- Break the chain of damage caused by exposure to domestic violence and alcohol abuse by addressing the problems whilst the victims are still young enough.
- Increase community activities with things going on locally so people can get to know each other.
- More police support of neighbourhood watch concerns that are reported through the co-ordinator.
- More organisation and management into housing issues. Putting drug dealers into properties where they don't care about the consequences has devastating effects of the local area and community.
- Traffic calming measures in Chatsworth Road, Albert Road and Ellesmere Road urgently needed to protect children.
- More personal safety courses for women needed.

3.5 Media Scan

To gain a further picture of crime across the Lancaster district readers' letters from the following newspapers were scanned to see what issues has arisen over the six months leading up to the consultation – March to August 2001.

The following is a brief summary of the issues covered relating directly to community safety initiatives and some comments to give a flavour of the letters.

- One letter reinforced the views shown in the consultation that "*the west end has character and has the potential to be revamped*".
- A number of letters expressed concern at cuts to the budget of the Lancaster District Homeless Action Service (LDHAS) which stemmed from an article printed in March 2001 by the Chair of the LDHAS.
- Concern was expressed at unsafe riding by motorcyclists around Brookhouse and the rural areas.
- A number of letters were received expressing concern at the drugs raid on the Warehouse in June. However other letters expressed the other side of the argument such as, a letter signed by 'Frustrated' which articulated worries around

young people and access to drugs. A response from independent members of the Lancashire Police Authority praised and thanked the Police for their “determination to make our communities safer”.

- A number of letters were received complaining of juvenile nuisance. A letter received by the Morecambe Visitor in March 2001 stated; *“I am amazed at all the letters sent into the Visitor condemning juvenile crime, these letters come from all parts of Morecambe, Heysham and other local areas”*.
- Some locations were noted as problem areas such as; the Millennium Bridge, where attacks have taken place, the Graveyard behind Morecambe Town Hall which has suffered vandalism, and the Museum steps where teenagers have been congregating.
- Concern was expressed at the number of young people drinking in Lancaster city centre which was deterring others from using the city centre at night.
- Issues such as dog fouling were given a mention with ‘Disgruntled’ from Morecambe complaining that dog dirt was to be found all along the coast and in childrens’ play areas. Letters were also received from Morecambe residents regarding litter, with shock being expressed at the amount of litter on the streets.

It should be noted at this point that the above information is included as supplementary to the audit report and consultation and largely to give a flavour of the types of concerns that have appeared in the local press over the past few months.

3.6 Consultation Event

The Lancaster Community Safety Partnership is committed to improvement and has carried out a self audit with its core members i.e. the Strategy Group and three area action groups to ascertain where its successes lie and where development is required.

The following is a summary of the findings of the self audit.

Strengths

- Commitment to and enthusiasm for partnership working and continually progressing towards best practice.
- Willingness to embrace opportunities and use change as a powerful tool for improvement.
- Increased levels of public confidence.
- Examples of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act implemented and producing positive results. (Section 17 puts a duty on organisations to integrate community safety into all their responsibilities.)
- Reduction of crime when all partners have worked together.
- Strong links outside the partnership.
- Integrated model to be built on.

Development Areas

- Strengthen the partnership and its links to external organisations and agencies.
- Strengthen links strategically between the Strategy Group and the Area Action Groups.

- Establish a multi agency prioritised training programme.
- Build on the integrated model for crime and disorder reduction.
- Join up different agencies' strategies.
- Increase use of Section 17 and monitor implementation.
- Establish a community safety tool box of best practice and promote its use.
- Establish costs of crime, financial plan and increase pooled budget.
- Clarify and re-issue information sharing protocol.
- Provide regular information on success across services and community.
- Ensure active community involvement, including hard to reach groups and young people.

This was followed up by an event which was held with members of the wider Community Safety Partnership i.e. those organisations that the partnership deals with like Age Concern, Victim Support, etc. Approximately 55 representatives of different agencies and organisations attended. These representatives, after hearing presentations on the work of the Partnership split up to work in groups to answer three questions.

- What do they believe are the strengths of the Community Safety Partnership.
- What do they believe are the areas for development of the community safety partnership
- How can their group/organisation contribute to the Community Safety Strategy 2002-2005.

A summary of the responses are outlined below.

The strengths and achievements

- Consistent approach to dealing with town centre violence & licensing issues
- Bringing the wider partnership together and strengthening links between agencies- more joined up working taking place
- Identifying and sharing examples of best practice.
- Reduction of crime in overall crime, auto crime and burglary
- An increase in communication and support in relation to domestic violence
- Information sharing and an increase in the quality of statistical information.
- Recognition of problems requiring joint responses.
- Setting up of Race Line.
- The Communities Against Drugs initiative.
- Development of a culture in which agencies are prepared to accept their shortcomings.
- The partnerships profile has been raised through the media and consultation.
- Full time staff members working to develop the partnership were effective.
- Effective use of CCTV system across the district.

Areas for development

- Increase in community policing arrangements, including rural areas
- Monitor and develop Neighbourhood warden schemes
- Increase in police resources

- Increased representation from and liaison with local student bodies and other organisations
- Further exploration of best practice from other districts
- Explore issues of late night transport
- Explore issues of dealing with a the areas transient population
- Increase involvement of local/community groups including young people in the work of the area action groups.
- Introduction of ward action groups
- Support further provision of youth facilities eg skatepark
- Become more proactive and accessible
- More involvement of local magistrates
- Explore issues of adult tolerance in relation to juvenile nuisance
- Further develop Race Line
- Work more closely with the Drug Action Team (DAT) to set targets & tackle drug dealers
- Tackle women's safety &- safe routes home
- Training for partnership members
- Tackle street drinking
- Challenge cultural attitudes towards problems such as drugs, crime & race
- Community Safety Surgeries for rural and defined communities
- Training initiatives for licensees etc to help to reduce violence.
- Focusing on offenders and responses to be based on the facts rather than figures.

How can groups & organisations contribute

- Bring Lancaster University & St Martins College back into working groups
- Residents to be prepared to be involved
- Local groups can monitor initiatives in their areas
- Signpost will continue to liaise with agencies and residents in developing strategies
- Skerton Family Centre – more active involvement with the community to address issues and concerns
- Licensing – Explore taxi signs and research late night bus service.
- Councilors – encourage constituents to come forward with concerns, encourage people to appreciate and respect their environment
- Parish councils, ands other organizations to assist with passing on information and consultation.
- Alcohol Free Provision in Lancaster City Centre - YMCA
- Council and Cabinet to become more involved and to be more proactive.
- Drugs Action Team will assist in developing targets and actions
- Connecting Communities can undertake consultation with black and minority ethnic women
- Retail sector can enforce proof of age cards
- Women's Aid to be involved in supporting other agencies
- Citizens Advice Bureau to carry out more outreach surgeries
- All organisations can work to make communication more effective.

This information has been incorporated into the objectives and into Section 4 of this document on the progress of the Community Safety Partnership.