

Recommendations



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How draft priorities are selected

It would be difficult for the Partnership to focus effectively on too many priorities. The Home Office recommended that this number be kept to a minimum, ideally no more than 7.

Points to consider when selecting draft priorities are:

- The issue represents a significant proportion of total crime or drug misuse
- The issue represents a larger proportion of crime or drugs misuse than in comparable areas
- Rates are higher than in comparable areas
- The issue is increasing faster than other issues, or faster than comparable areas
- The costs related to the issue are high for victims
- Victims may belong to especially vulnerable groups
- The public are anxious about the issue
- There is something that the partnership can do about the issue
- The issue is a Government Priority.

Priority 1 - Geographic location

To address this priority we would focus partnership activity in 6 ward areas in Blackpool. These would be Talbot, Claremont, Bloomfield, Waterloo, Brunswick & Park.

The mapping of deprivation and crime has identified key wards that experience significantly higher levels of crime than other areas of Blackpool. From this, resource can be prioritised to address the problems faced by residents. The cumulative effect of sustained, intelligence led policing, problem solving and multi agency working in our most deprived and vulnerable neighbourhoods can be dramatic and we feel should be a priority.

It has been argued that focusing resources in a limited number of areas could be perceived as unfair to others. In response to this the following points should be raised:

- The cost of responding to problems inconsistently and ineffectively in these areas, together with the ultimate price of rebuilding neighbourhoods when they have fragmented, far outweighs any carefully planned long-term investment

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- Resolving criminality and providing reassurance in the most critical neighbourhoods can have a positive effect, not only for vulnerable residents, but well beyond any geographic boundaries.

Below are some statistics to support this recommendation:-

- 40% of vehicles stolen in Blackpool are stolen from Talbot, Claremont, Bloomfield and Waterloo wards
- 61% of all crime is committed in the six wards
- Blackpool has a large number of areas which rank highly in the indices of deprivation and these are the same areas which suffer from high crime, disorder and substance misuse levels.

The Audit has identified these areas as those with higher levels of crime, disorder and drugs misuse.

As a Partnership it makes sense for us to target the multiple problems faced in these areas. Whilst we will target our resources accordingly, we will continually review this priority.

Priority 2 - Prolific Offenders

This area of work includes Government initiatives such as the Drugs Intervention Programme and Prolific and other Priority Offenders.

Research shows that a small proportion of offenders are responsible for a disproportionate number of crimes. The Home Office estimated that 15% of offenders account for 43% of crime.

Therefore it makes sense to target those prolific / persistent offenders in order to achieve maximum impact. This does not necessarily mean just arresting and convicting, but involves addressing the motives behind this activity such as drug or alcohol dependence and lack of education, employment and housing.

The audit highlights that categories of crime such as damage, vehicle crime, theft and arson are particularly related to young offenders. A proportion of these young people have learning difficulties, social and/or behavioural problems. It is clear that we need to identify such young people at an earlier stage and work with these youths today, in order to prevent them from becoming the prolific offenders of tomorrow.

The Partnership feels that by targeting the small proportion of offenders who commit the most crime, we can achieve reductions in crime, disorder and drugs misuse in the town. The Tower Project was established within the previous strategy and targeted the most prolific drug misusing offenders. We believe this

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intervention to have contributed to a 39% reduction in domestic burglary in 2002/3. We feel that this approach could be extended to other categories and to non drug misusing offenders.

Priority 3 - Acquisitive crime - Domestic burglary, burglary non-dwelling & vehicle crime.

Acquisitive crime accounts for 52% of all crime reported to the police. If the partnership is to make further reductions in crime as a whole, it makes sense to address those areas in which the partnership can make the greatest impact.

Domestic burglary, burglary non-domestic and vehicle crime account for 41%.

Both domestic burglary and vehicle crime have been key areas of activity for the Partnership over the last three years and as a result significant reductions have been achieved. Even so, these crimes still account for a large number of offences and are areas the residents of Blackpool are most concerned about.

Whilst domestic burglary is reducing, burglaries committed against properties such as schools, hotels, garages and sheds account for almost 60% of all burglaries.

Whilst we have achieved substantial reductions in this category over the last three years, the Partnership does not want to be complacent and would like to continue addressing this area.

Priority 4 - Quality of life issues - Anti Social Behaviour, Fear of Crime and Reassurance.

The Partnership is keen to address anti social behaviour, fear of crime and provide reassurance to the community.

Recent 'PACT' and area forum meetings have highlighted that youth related nuisance is an issue high on the community's agenda across the majority of Blackpool's wards.

Youth nuisance has increased by approximately 30% over recent months and the trend line indicates this may continue to do so.

Over the last 12 months, Blackpool's Devonshire Road school and a fairly new Sure Start building were destroyed by youth related arson. This cost the community millions of pounds and the loss of some essential facilities.

As a result, the research carried out in preparing this document led to the hypothesis that youth nuisance, criminal damage and fire-setting were all related. A number of analytical techniques were employed to test this hypothesis. The result was that there is a definite geographical correlation between the types of incident, whilst links between the times they were being committed was less conclusive.

By addressing criminal damage in the town, we believe we will impact on the deprivation score for the crime aspect of the indices of deprivation.

We know that criminal damage and deliberate fires are increasing in Blackpool

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and as a Partnership we want to continue to address this.

Deliberate vehicle fires are a burden on society and dealing with them is costly. These costs are borne by vehicle owners and the community at large through increased insurance premiums and social disruption.

In relation to the fear of crime, we know that this can have a significant impact on the quality of life for residents and want to address this.

Crime and disorder has an adverse effect on individuals in the community effectively restricting their activity and movement within an area.

We know from consultation, that 26% of residents believe vandalism to property and awareness of general crime levels in the area made them feel unsafe at home.

We also know that burglary caused the greatest fear of being a victim of crime even though rates have fallen dramatically, and that a third of residents believe crime has increased. Drug dealing and misuse and drunken behaviour have also been identified as concerns by the community.

We also found that most of the community consulted, do not know who their local police Community Beat Manager is.

Please note that by community we mean those who have been consulted via PACT and area forum meetings.

By addressing all of the above areas, we believe that we will enhance community reassurance.

Priority 5 - Violent Crime

As a Partnership we recognise the need to address violent crime and in particular its links to alcohol. Where other categories of crime have reduced, violent crime has increased and we want to address this in our new strategy.

Blackpool CDRP is ranked at 360th in the country, placing it at as the highest in Lancashire. Within the country, Blackpool is currently featured within the 4th quartile (bottom 25%) of all partnerships. The town has seen a 50% increase in the category of violent crime when comparing the 2002/03 figures to 2003/04.

In Blackpool, 81% of all violent crimes are assaults, with many being committed under the influence of alcohol.

Talbot ward (town centre) has a rate of violent crime which is seven times the Lancashire average.

Alcohol plays a significant part in the cause of violent crime, hence the concentration of incidents around the town centre. This has a significant impact on Lancashire Constabulary and many other agencies operating in the borough.

Accident and Emergency are recording 20% more assaults than reported to the Police. This indicates that there may be recorded rises to come.

Males under the age of 18 are more likely to be the victims/and offenders of violent crime than any other group.

Whilst the Partnership is highly concerned about the rise of this type of crime, it is

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important to acknowledge that a change in crime recording has taken place in the last 12 months which has clearly had an impact on the recorded level of violent crime.

The Partnership would like to address the increase of violent crime within the new strategy.

Priority 6 - Substance misuse

The Audit has clearly identified that a considerable proportion of acquisitive crime is still committed by those misusing substances such as heroin, alcohol and cocaine. It is imperative therefore to continue our efforts in Blackpool to develop further local treatment services, to ensure that those misusing these substances can be engaged into treatment and therefore cease, or reduce, their offending. This will also assist with the implementation of initiatives such as the Drug Intervention Programme and the Prolific and Other Priority Offenders.

We also need to ensure that those individuals who are misusing drugs, but as yet not committing offences, can access substance misuse services today in order to prevent them becoming the offenders of tomorrow.

We also must take into consideration that there are other destructive consequences to substance misuse than drug related offending. The Partnership is keen to ensure that issues such as HIV and Hepatitis amongst substance misusers and drug related deaths, are all adequately addressed.

The Partnership is also committed to ensure that the work with young people continues. Research clearly proves that substance misuse, including alcohol, can have a detrimental effect on a young person's education and development, as well on other issues such as sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy.

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The Audit has also clearly identified that the misuse of alcohol is responsible for a number of offences, such as assaults, domestic violence and drink driving. Alcohol is also often associated with all forms of crime and disorder in the town centre, as well as with a high proportion of all anti social behaviour incidents in the town.

From a health point of view, the recently published report of the Liverpool John Moore University clearly identifies the impact of alcohol misuse in the town, which has the highest number of alcohol related deaths in the North West. The partnership is committed to ensure that the extent of alcohol misuse in the town is addressed to prevent the detrimental impact of alcohol misuse to the individuals misusing it, their families and their communities.

In relation to young people, again alcohol is the most commonly used and misused substance. This has considerable consequences with regards to a young person's health and development, including education.