

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	6 <sup>th</sup> April 2006
Subject:	Reducing Fear of Crime Scrutiny Review – Commentary on Recommendations
Responsible Officer:	Executive Director of Urban Living Andrew Trehern
Contact Officer:	Gareth Llywelyn-Roberts, Interim Head of Community Safety Services
Portfolio Holder:	Communications, Partnership and Human Resources Environment and Transport
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

## **Section 1: Summary**

### **Decision Required**

Cabinet are asked to:

1. Endorse the Recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Fear of Crime subject to the commentary made in section 2.1.7 of this report.
2. Agree that a detailed report be made to Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub Committee, indicating how the recommendations will be implemented following full consideration by the Safer Harrow Management Group.
3. That progress reporting and performance monitoring is undertaken through the Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub Committee in their performance management role for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy

## **Reason for report**

Harrow Councils Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub Committee undertook a Review of Fear of Crime in 2005/6. This report provides a commentary against the recommendations made and proposes an outline of how these may be progressed.

## **Benefits**

Fear of Crime is a priority area of concern to Harrow residents as identified by the Council's Mori quality of life survey and a Key Priority under the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005-8 as identified following the Crime Audit and Public Consultation in 2005. The review group recommendations identify ways in which the council and its Partner Agencies under the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (Safer Harrow Management Group) should seek to address this key corporate and Partner Agency priority.

## **Cost of Proposals**

The report is not seeking additional financial resources and there are no financial implications relating to the agreement of the recommendations by Cabinet.

However, the implementation of the recommendations within the report could have financial implications for the Council and/or its Partner Agencies which will be fully considered when the detailed report is made to Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub Committee, indicating how the recommendations will be implemented following full consideration by the Safer Harrow Management Group.

## **Risks**

There may be financial implications attached to the adoption of the Scrutiny recommendations not currently covered in the Crime Reduction Strategy and work of the Safer Harrow Management Group or its Partner Agencies. If Cabinet does not agree the report and recommendations they will not be referred to the Safer Harrow Management Group (SHMG) for consideration and implementation.

## **Implications if recommendations rejected**

If Cabinet does not agree the recommendations this could result in a reduced opportunity to influence the development of future approaches for tackling Fear of Crime and the delivery of key corporate priorities.

## **Section 2: Report**

### **2.1 Brief History**

- 2.1.1 In 2004-5 Harrow was the second safest borough in London in terms of total recorded crime and the lowest for violent crime. However, the councils June 2005 Mori quality of life survey demonstrated that concerns about crime were a key priority for residents. It identified that 79% of residents said that the level of crime was the most important thing in making somewhere a good place to live, with 66% stating that fear if crime had a moderate or high impact on their lives.
- 2.1.2 In the survey conducted in June 2005, Harrow's residents were asked what needs improving in Harrow. The leading response at 53% was to improve the levels of crime. Similarly, the 2004-05 police public attitude survey revealed that 34% of Harrow's residents were worried about crime.
- 2.1.3 In reality, total crime in Harrow reduced by 1.8% last year and residential burglary reached its lowest level for 8 years by showing a 20% reduction. Taking information from Iquanta, the Police comparator statistics, in the last 12 months Harrow has the lowest rate of total notifiable crime.
- 2.1.4 Clearly there is a gap between the actual levels of crime in Harrow and our resident's perceptions. This is recognised as what is known a constitutional crime where the fear of crime is not linked to actual crime levels but perception. Nevertheless the fear of crime has a significant impact on the quality of life our residents and is likely to affect every person in the borough to some degree.
- 2.1.5 Fear of crime is therefore a key priority under the Crime and disorder reduction Strategy 2005-8 and linked heavily to most of the priorities contained within the national Community Safety Plan 2006-09:
1. Making communities stronger identifies the need to be free of the fear of crime.
  2. Creating safer environments is about creating safe places where people like to live and respect.
  3. Protecting the public and building confidence. We cannot build confidence without reducing fear.
- 2.1.6 Fear of Crime is also a core corporate priority as well as a key priority within the recently agreed Local Area Agreement (LAA). One of the main areas within the LAA under this thread is to build a composite of fear of crime drivers in order that we can better understand exactly 'what' crime type is causing the fear of crime in the borough. This is a vital in deciding how best to reduce the fear of crime.

2.1.7 Continuing the promotion of 'Harrow is one of the safest boroughs' is key in delivering this key priority of reducing fear of crime and this process will be informed by the recommendations of the scrutiny review.

2.1.7 Commentary against the individual recommendations is given as follows with the recommendation in italics followed by the commentary in normal text:

- (1) *The review group recommends that the Safer Harrow Management Group (SHMG) give consideration to the setting up of a specific strand within the Safer Harrow Management Group (SHMG) for the tackling of fear of crime, as it cuts across a number of the existing strands;*

It is not considered to be advisable to set up a separate Fear of Crime Theme. Advice from Government Office for London is to restrict the number of strategy themes as much as possible. Fear of Crime is already a key element of Priority Area 1: ASB, Fear of crime and Liveability of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and there is a danger of duplicating the work in this area.

Way forward: That the remit of the Priority Area 1 Crime Reduction Strategy Group be broadened to encompass the Recommendations of this review as a key area of delivery reporting through a bespoke action plan.

- (2) *The review group recommends that the Safer Harrow Management Group (SHMG) take all available opportunities to actively engage existing and new partners in crime and disorder reduction in Harrow – for example British Transport Police, Transport for London.*

This recommendation is fully supported. The lack of TFL involvement in the Safer Harrow Management Group has been a main barrier to progressing community safety improvements on the transport network e.g. locally managed CCTV and Community TV, graffiti removal etc and this recommendation is fully supported. .

Way forward: GOL Transport sub-group have assessed the BusStation complex within the top 6 transport interchanges requiring special attention. Also Harrow and Wealdstone station is identified as a concern. GOL has recommended a TFL contact for the SHMG and suggested a dedicated transport sub-group be set up. At the recent MPA visit these issues were raised as obstacles and will be progressed by the MPA chair. In addition this issue has been raised through the West London Alliance Environment Directors Group and will be progressed on a regional basis.

- (3) *The review group recommends that (a) future surveys be developed in accordance with the council's community engagement strategy and forthcoming toolkit in order to ensure that it becomes standard practice to consult appropriate agencies on questions to be included in surveys; (b) standard information management practices be developed (for example raw survey data should be passed to the Safer Harrow Management Group (SHMG) in order to allow in depth analysis with other datasets such as crime/health data); (c) that questions addressing fear of crime be developed using research and best practice in order to avoid generating fear in respondents.*

This recommendation is fully supported. There needs to be an audit corporately of Council/HSP surveys and data collection systems to ensure consistency of approach and reporting of findings. The rationalization of surveys will reduce the risk of over-consulting the public and we would fully support a process for the auditing and coordination of surveys to stop the over consultation of the public, duplication and financial waste that is currently occurring.

Way forward: Policy and Performance Unit to review survey content against the community engagement strategy and process and include representatives from other council directorates and HSP/SHMG agencies.

- (4) *The review group recommends that further consideration be given to: (a) Investigating enhancing personal safety awareness and training to the over 60 year old population. Harrow's population is nearly twice the national rate; (b) Enhancing provision of preventative support to victims of crime; (c) Investigating the targeting of community led personal safety campaigns to the Asian population.*

This recommendation is fully supported. This work also needs to be linked work with the POP Community safety sub-group and MAF to progress this issue that also supports key local Area Agreement targets.

Way forward: Consultation with POP and MAF on approaches to personal safety without raising fear of crime and supported by external funding e.g. Big Lottery bid.

- (5) *The review group recommends that further work be undertaken on (a) the drivers of fear of crime; (b) developing the fear of crime matrix as a tool to identify local fear issues and devising area specific approaches to the tackling of fear of crime.*

This recommendation is fully supported and links directly to core LAA targets. The initial data will be sourced from a single survey (see recc' 3 above)

Way forward: The development of a fear of crime matrix, to be implemented through recommendation 1 above and monitored by SHMG and Scrutiny.

- (6) *The review group recommends that there should be far greater systematic communication of crime and community safety performance information to demonstrate to the community that Harrow is a safe borough.*

This recommendation is fully supported. A key recommendation of the Crime and Disorder Act Review is to require Community Safety Partnerships to provide 6 monthly strategic assessments. Part of the assessment is a review of performance that will be monitored by the SHMG and Scrutiny with the requirement to widely publish the performance review through the 'Community Call to Action' consultation process.

Way forward: The results of the 6 monthly reviews should be widely published e.g. multi-agency electronic newsletter, Harrow People, Community TV.

Resources will be required to support training and briefing requirements of the SHMG and Scrutiny to support the response to Community Call to Action.

- (7) *The review group recommends (a) That as far as possible the Safer Harrow Management Group (SHMG) should undertake to issue joint press releases on matters that relate to crime and disorder reduction – appropriate mechanisms should be developed and releases should be branded predominantly with the Safer Harrow logo; (b) That a senior officer from relevant partner organisations should be identified to lead on communications matters and the Safer Harrow communications strategy; (c) Mechanisms should be developed and governance arrangements strengthened to enable member input into strategy; (d) That steps be taken to ensure that there is co-ordination between partners on engagement at the neighbourhood level relating to community safety and reducing fear of crime – this will include but may not be limited to the Safer Neighbourhood teams, any area consultation by the council as well as the neighbourhood renewal agenda. Such an approach represents best practice.*

This recommendation is fully supported. The approach to community safety communications is coordinated through the Safer Harrow Communications Plan but this has yet to be fully implemented.

Way forward: Specialist Communications role to support co-ordination of the plan will require a dedicated resource through the Communications Unit. The Safer Harrow Management Group would welcome a council financial or resource contribution to support this function.

- (8) *The review group recommends that the council place a bid for inclusion in year two of the roll-out of the single non-emergency number and that this be enmeshed in developments of the council's First Contact project.*

The details of the process, expectation and timetable will not be released until late April. Until this time the full ramification will not be known and there may be significant resource and timetable implications.

If this bid is pursued it will be a very significant extension of the BTP project and will need very careful consideration. The Council is considering this issue and a meeting has been set up with the BTP/First Contact to discuss the potential for placing a bid to be a pilot authority for the Single Non-Emergency Number implementation.

Way forward: The full details of the bidding and pilot timetable and process is not yet known. The issue will be progressed in partnership between the council and BTP/First contact. A more detailed report will be provided to members when the implications of the bidding and implementation process are known.

- (9) *The review group welcomes moves to expedite the introduction of the Safer Neighbourhood teams and recommends that scrutiny receive future reporting on its implementation and effectiveness.*

This recommendation is fully supported. The Safer Neighbourhood teams performance monitoring will form significant operational response to Community Call to Action/Customer satisfaction.

Way forward: A key recommendation of the Crime and Disorder Act Review is to require Community safety Partnerships to provide 6 monthly strategic assessments. Part of the assessment is a review of performance that will be monitored by the SHMG and Scrutiny with the requirement to widely publish the performance review through the 'Community Call to Action' consultation process. This development is already in progress through the scrutiny committee.

(10) *In the light of the report of the Public Green Spaces review, the review group recommends that the council develop the 'capable guardians' concept but enhance it through the more formalised support of both police Safer Neighbourhoods teams, volunteers and council staff, when appropriate.*

This recommendation is fully supported. There is a case for 'co-production' i.e. tapping into community and voluntary sector provision e.g. SN teams, Area Teams, Borough beat, NHW, residents groups to take ownership of their areas as part of the 'Respect' agenda.

Way forward: Incentives such as funding and rewards for local residents to become involved proactively and become part of the local neighbourhood decision taking process e.g. SLAs supported by external funding and Council grants. Standard Operating Procedures need to be developed through the SHMG to support this e.g. police extended family model.

(11) *The review group recommends that consideration be given to providing personal safety training to young people in the school environment in order to help to address young people's concerns about fear of crime. Such activity may need to include local Safer Neighbourhoods teams in order to build local relationships.*

This recommendation is fully supported and delivers key crime reduction priorities.

Way forward: This recommendation should be amalgamated into the development of the Safer Schools programme and the work of the police officers dedicated to schools. It is also a standard part of the development and implementation of the SN teams and will be progressed as the teams are rolled out.

(12) *The review group supports the council's efforts to improve street lighting through the bid for public finance initiative funding and recommends that scrutiny be kept in touch with developments relating to the bid and contingency plans should it be unsuccessful.*

This recommendation is fully supported and relates directly to the PFI bid that has already been developed and submitted for consideration.

Way forward: The bid has already been submitted and will be progressed through the Public Realm Infrastructure Group when the outcome of the bidding process is known.

(13) *The review group supports the further development of the CCTV infrastructure in order to help to provide reassurance to the community. Efforts should be made to enhance provision in partnership with transport providers such as TfL and National Rail. Partners should consider lobbying transport providers to improve staffing levels at stations in order to provide reassurance. There also needs to be greater publicity of the CCTV van and greater communication of where CCTV has been involved in successful convictions or has acted as a deterrent.*

This recommendation is fully supported. The project to enhance the CCTV control room is well advanced and development of the infrastructure is a natural progression. The comments regarding TFL are considered above at recc' 2. The CCTV van has been under-utilised in terms of joint operations to address anti-social behaviour and low level crime due to a lack of sufficiently trained operators to man the van as well as the resource to support out of hours use.

Way forward: The Community Involvement Officer, who is the only trained operator, will be tasked to train a pool of operators e.g. police, special constables, PCSOs, Area teams staff, Security/CCTV control room staff. This training will require funding which will need to be negotiated and agreed with each of the agencies.

The Council and Partner Agencies are already engaged with TFL and this issue will be progressed through this forum.

(14) *The review group recommends that consideration be given to developing mechanisms through which the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community can (a) be consulted; and (b) provided with reassurance. This may involve setting up an LGBT forum or adapting or expanding existing provision.*

This recommendation is fully supported. The Safer Harrow Management Group would very much welcome the implementation of a LGBT group in Harrow although it must be recognised that LGBT issues are much wider than just a community safety issue and will also deliver against many equalities issues.

Way forward: Engagement of LGBT groups to be addressed in consultation with the partner agencies and the Policy and Performance Unit as it affects all strands of the HSP and is an equalities issue for the Council and main statutory agencies. There are some good examples of engaging LGBT groups and Harrow is one of only a few boroughs in London that doesn't have a group in its borough. Support for the group may have resource implications which will be identified as the group is developed.

## 2.2 Options considered

### 2.2.1 Not applicable



## 2.3 Consultation

2.3.1 In conducting the fear of crime review significant public consultation was undertaken as detailed in the Scrutiny report and covering cabinet report. The recommendations will be fully consulted on through the Safer Harrow Management Group and partner agencies before the detailed report is made to the Councils Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub Committee.

## 2.4 Financial Implications

2.4.1 The report is not seeking additional financial resources and there are no financial implications relating to the agreement of the recommendations by cabinet.

2.4.2 However, the implementation of the recommendations within the report could have financial implications for the council and/or its partner agencies which will be fully considered when the detailed report is made to Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub Committee, indicating how the recommendations will be implemented following full consideration by the Safer Harrow Management Group.

## 2.5 Legal Implications

2.5.1 The report is not seeking additional financial resources and there are no financial implications relating to the agreement of the recommendations by cabinet.

2.5.2 However, the implementation of the recommendations within the report could have financial implications for the council and/or its partner agencies. These will be fully considered, with detailed costings and financial implications, when the detailed report is made to Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub Committee, indicating how the recommendations will be implemented following full consideration by the Safer Harrow Management Group.

## 2.6 Equalities Impact

2.6.1 The review groups report explores equalities issues associated with fear of crime, such as reassurance of vulnerable communities and consultation with hard to reach groups. Implementation of the recommendations will serve to support delivery against the key equalities issues identified.

## 2.7 Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Considerations

2.7.1 The review groups report and recommendations addresses the need for partner agencies to work together to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder and misuse of drugs. The report makes recommendations relating to partnership working arrangements and

activities that should be co-ordinated across agencies, such as communications.

2.7.2 Implementation of these recommendation will serve to underpin the delivery of crime reduction strategy priorities and as such directly support section 17 key objectives.

### **Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents**

Appendix 1 – Report considered by the Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee and Reducing Fear of Crime in Harrow Scrutiny Review, March 2006 (circulated in the Cabinet Supporting Documents Pack)

Appendix 2 – Reference from the Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee

#### **Background papers**

Crime and Drugs reduction Strategy 2005-8

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers should telephone 020 8736 6230