

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	12 November 2009
Subject:	Safer Harrow - Borough-wide Anti Burglary Project
Key Decision:	Yes
Responsible Officer:	Brendon Hills Corporate Director Community and Environment
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Susan Hall Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

A crime reduction campaign is proposed, that would include a traceable liquid property marking product being made available, free of charge and on request to households across the whole of the Borough. This would assist in both the detection and deterrence of crime. The scale of this project would make it unique in London.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is requested to agree:

1. A project for the “one-off” distribution of a traceable property marking product to be made available on request to all households in Harrow, free of charge through a defined roll out programme.
2. The procurement of a suitable product, with the award of the contract to be agreed at a future Cabinet meeting.
3. The programme for the roll out of the product to be decided by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety in conjunction with the Corporate Director Community and Environment, with a priority to be given to areas where there will be greatest impact on perceptions of levels of crime.
4. Evaluation of the project to be through the Safer Harrow Partnership.

Reason (For recommendation):

To support the reduction and detection of crime, particularly burglary, and provide the assurance of community safety through the Safer Harrow Partnership.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

1. Burglary is a challenge for the Harrow Safer Partnership, and improved performance is stated as a local performance indicator in the Local Area Agreement. The Harrow Borough Commander has stated that a key focus for this year is to reduce burglary. A number of police forces and local authorities (including Harrow) have trialled the use of a liquid traceable property marker that is not visible but can be detected using ultra violet light as a way of deterring and detecting burglary and handling of stolen goods. There are also opportunities to use this sort of product for tackling domestic violence, and environmental crime such as fly tipping and vandalism.
2. The Place Survey 2009 revealed that people in Harrow feel that the most important factor for making a place a good area to live is a low level of crime. In terms of the public's perception of what needs improving in Harrow, the level of crime was the fourth highest priority.
3. Harrow Council would seek a strategic and operational partner to undertake a significant borough wide crime reduction project to supply a traceable property marking product and to support the communications campaign that will form a deterrent to crime in Harrow.

Crime Reduction through Traceable Property Marking

4. Harrow is a borough which has long been regarded as one of the safest in London in terms of the volume of crime experienced. Largely, this is still the case although recent trends have indicated increases in the numbers of crimes being reported, particularly in the fields of acquisitive and violent crime. Fear of crime in the borough is relatively high, and does not reflect the low level of crime and the low likelihood of actually becoming a victim of crime. Indicators reflecting public confidence and satisfaction with the way in which the Council and Police deal with crime have been prioritised by the Council and Police for improvement work. The areas of clean and safe streets, safeguarding vulnerable people and the promotion of strong and cohesive communities have been highlighted as strategic priorities for the Council.
5. Under the proposed scheme, Harrow Council, in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), would undertake a major crime reduction initiative which has the capacity to impact positively upon both the level of crime and upon public attitudes to crime and the manner in which the Council and Police deal with crime. The nature of

the project means that the Council would require an external partner who has the capacity, experience and expertise to assist in the development and delivery of the project.

6. The Harrow Safer Partnership has identified that acquisitive crime is a significant problem, both in terms of contributing to overall crime levels and as a driver of the fear of crime. . The project will impact upon both the level of acquisitive crime and also upon the public's perception of crime and the way in which the Council and Police deal with this problem. Burglary in Harrow is showing a 3.6% rise over the last year.
7. There are a number of techniques that can be used to reduce crimes such as burglary, including target hardening through alarms, and property marking and publicity and signing to show that a property is protected. To assist members of the public to protect their property, the Council proposes to offer a traceable property marking product to all households in the borough. This service would be offered free of charge at point of take-up, to be delivered by means of a personal visit and installation to each household and to be the subject of an extensive marketing and evaluation programme. The service would be made as a one-off provision – households seeking additional supplies would be provided with information about commercial suppliers of the products. The MPS have agreed they would assist with the distribution of the product through the Safer Neighbourhood Teams.
(Recommendation 1).
8. The Council proposes to complete the delivery phase of this project by the end of March 2011, through a phased roll out. It is important that distribution takes place in a way that the integrity of the traceability is maintained. The priority will be given to areas of high risk and reporting of burglary as identified through the partnership tracking of crime hot spots that takes place monthly at a joint tasking group.
(Recommendation 3).
9. The facility to mark property without damage in a way that it can subsequently be traced back to the owner is a practical aid to prosecution. The products available also leave a traceable mark on the hands and clothes of people who have been in contact with the property. Police officers can detect the presence of the product using UV light. Officers have available key-ring UV torches, and UV lights have been installed in the custody suites at Harrow Police Station. A difficult area for dealing with burglary to date has been the problem of identifying the receivers and sellers of stolen goods, and this marking can provide a trail for the property. In addition to detection, there are benefits from the publicity and communications around such schemes which act as a deterrent to criminals, and as an assurance to members of the public.
10. The project will include a methodology for the evaluation of the success of the project based on the existing performance indicators and the measures of public satisfaction and fear of crime, as well as operational aspects such as take up of the scheme, and success of distribution. These measures of performance will be reported through Cabinet, Scrutiny and the Improvement Board process, but additional evaluation of effectiveness will be reported to the Safer Harrow

Partnership, which is the statutory Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for Harrow. (Recommendation 4)

11. To implement the project, a partner will be sought who has the capacity, experience and expertise to:-
 - Supply and install a suitable property marking product. The operational specification for such a suitable product is outlined below;
 - Demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Council that suitable supply chain mechanisms are in place to deliver the required volumes of the appropriate product in the timescales required by the Council;
 - Supply and install all appropriate ancillary equipment required in order to ensure the full operational effectiveness of the product;
 - Provide technical support in marketing the product;
 - Provide high quality training in the use of the product to householders, Council staff, police officers and other nominated individuals and organisations linked to the product and its use;
 - Provide a rigorous evaluation service on the impact of the product and its use, including measurement of crime levels, public attitude and impact upon relevant criminal behaviours. This evaluation to be undertaken to acceptable academic quality standards;
 - Be capable of acting as expert witness in court should the veracity of the product be disputed; and
 - Offer ongoing training and support to the Council, Police and partners during the delivery of the project, including offering appropriate information, advice and training, and a nominated lead officer to act as single point of contact with the Council project manager.

12. The property marking product which is to be supplied must be capable of meeting the following minimum operational and quality criteria:-
 - Be invisible to the naked eye in normal lighting conditions;
 - Be detectable under specified (ultraviolet or other) light;
 - Be capable of being used on a wide range of surfaces, both porous and non-porous, including glass, metals, wood and plastics;
 - Not to compromise the health and safety of either householders or staff involved in installation or use, i.e. be non-toxic and be hypoallergenic
 - Not to stain or otherwise damage any items which are marked;
 - Not to be degraded by extremes of either heat or cold;
 - Be traceable to individual household premises;
 - Provide a traceable residue on individuals coming into direct contact with items which have been marked by the product;
 - Have performance which does not degrade over a reasonable time under normal light conditions;
 - Not be capable of removal by means of water and/or detergent products; and
 - Be acceptable to courts as evidence and means of identification

13. In addition, the product should be able to demonstrate a level of public awareness (i.e. brand identity) which assists in the marketing and promotion of the project. (Recommendation 2).

Consideration of Alternative Options

14. The alternative options that have been considered in reaching the recommendations are:
- a. Not to offer a product – in which case the benefits and the impact on crime and fear of crime would not be realised. The Council and Police do have in place a number of initiatives such as publicity campaigns and anti burglary packs that are provided to victims, but reduction of burglary has remained a challenge to the partnership.
 - b. Enhance other target hardening products – e.g. distribution of alarms, locks etc. It is considered that the offer of a borough-wide traceable marking product provides a better balance between cost and impact.
 - c. Charge for the product or provide at a subsidised rate. The products are currently available for purchase as one off or on a subscription basis, but discussions with providers suggest there has not been a sufficiently high purchase rate to have the significant impact resulting from saturation distribution. A key opportunity with the project is to have such a high probability that property will be marked that burglars will be deterred from operating in Harrow. The use of a charge to the public will reduce the costs of the scheme or allow more units to be purchased, but will deter some households from taking part, and will absorb some of the funds in transaction costs.

Financial and Legal Implications

15. The estimated value of the project procurement will be over the relevant financial threshold of around £140,000 and so the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (PCR) apply. The project is a Part B Service under the PCR and so the council does not have to go through a full OJEU tender process. However it must procure the project in a non-discriminatory, fair and transparent way.

16. To establish a budget for the project, initial investigation and discussions with the market about prices and estimates of the number of households likely to take up the offer have been made. A sum has been earmarked for this project from the special projects fund that was created at the end of 2008-9. This funding is one-off, and the rollout of the scheme will run for a fixed two year period. More detail will be reported to Cabinet following the procurement process as part of the award of the contract.

Performance Issues

17. This project will have a positive impact on a cluster of performance improvements associated with community safety.

18. The Local Area Agreement has local indicators seeking to improve through a reduction in the number of residential burglaries where the victim is over 75 years, and the proportion of adults saying they are in fear

of being a victim of crime from a baseline of 41% to 33% in 2008/9 and 30% in 2009/10.

19. The project is expected to have a positive impact on responses to the Place Survey questions on:

- The most important factor in making Harrow a good place to live - crime was the highest factor for residents in 2009 for 66% of respondents.
- What most needs improving - level of crime was the 4th highest priority.
- How well are the local public services working together to make the area safer.
- Satisfaction with the Metropolitan Police - currently 51% very or fairly satisfied.

Environmental Impact

20. There are no direct impacts on environmental factors. The type of product can be used in projects to deter environmental crime such as fly tipping.

Risk Management Implications

21. The successful implementation of the project will have positive impacts on the risk levels for households in the borough.

22. A risk has been identified that an unsuccessful project would have a detrimental impact on the reputation of the authority.

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Myfanwy Barrett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief Financial Officer
Date: 3 November 2009		
Name: Matthew Adams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 6 November 2009		

Section 4 – Performance Officer Clearance

Name: Tom Whiting



Assistant Chief
Executive

Date: 30 October 2009

Section 5 – Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: John Edwards



Divisional Director
Environmental Services

Date: 30 October 2009

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: John Edwards, Divisional Director for Environment
0208 736 6799

Background Papers: None