

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 It is important for public reassurance that high visibility policing be sustained.
- 2 It is likewise important that the good practices of community engagement established here are continued and where possible extended. The community itself requires a forum where its concerns and aspirations can be heard. Equally so it is important for the community to know and understand how service providers are dealing with community issues.
- 3 Engagement with young people in school and at informal events or diversionary activities should be sustained to build stronger relationships between the police and local young people. This provides the opportunity to encourage them to make positive life choices and divert them away from gang- and alcohol-related crimes and violence.
- 4 The provision of diversionary activities, such as music and sports events, should be continued as these facilitate interaction amongst young people who in the normal course of events would be divided by territorial and gang-related issues. More of these types of events it is felt will foster new relationships and contribute to breaking down territorial and/or gang barriers.
- 5 Affordable and accessible facilities are necessary to meet the needs of the local community. Consideration should also be given to the utilisation of existing resources such as school sports and computer facilities outwith normal school hours.
- 6 There is a need for the development of a range of pathways, to support the residents of this diverse community in accessing education, training and employment opportunities.
- 7 The experience of the Joint Problem Solving Group is something all of the partners would like to see continued. It is a good example of the ethos of Community Planning Partnerships and had been identified as a 'blueprint to build upon'; it could be developed – to include other agencies/groups not currently involved - or strengthened on the basis of the good foundation established thus far.
- 8 The success of the test purchasing scheme, to give only one example, highlights the importance of putting in place mechanisms to further co-operation between the CPP, local businesses and the community. Addressing local issues quickly increases public reassurance, improves the environment and helps to foster pride in the community.
- 9 It is important that the communities are consulted to improve service provider/community relations and increase feelings of safety within the community. Sustaining the growing involvement of community groups and residents is dependent on the police and their partners in the CPP continuing to listen and respond to the local community concerns and needs.
- 10 Continued funding is essential to sustain resources whether that be the enhanced policing levels of the EPP; more diversionary activities; new facilities; and/or regeneration of the community.
- 11 For the community to continue to grow and become pro-active in its own future development it will require the continued support and guidance of all the partner agencies.



# Building Safer Communities: An Evaluation of the Enhanced Policing Plan in the Shettleston, Ballieston and Greater Easterhouse area of Glasgow.

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## INTRODUCTION

This research was commissioned by Strathclyde Police to evaluate the Enhanced Policing Plan (EPP) in the Shettleston, Ballieston and Greater Easterhouse area of Glasgow. This area has historically been characterised by the endemic problem of violence and gang activity. The EPP is an innovative approach to policing aimed at: reducing crime, gang and anti-social behaviour and territorialism; creating a safer environment; building public confidence; and improving community opportunities for people so that they are less likely to commit offences or re-offend. Strathclyde Police developed the EPP in accordance with ACPOS Public Reassurance Strategy and delivered it in conjunction with their Community Planning Partners (CPP).

## METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research was to evaluate the efficacy of the EPP but also through qualitative research to better inform the police and their Community Planning Partners of the targeted community's experiences of living there; of the impact of the EPP; and of their aspirations. There were three stages to the research. Stage One involved a review of the existing literature including media and press coverage. In Stage Two focus groups or interviews were conducted with police officers; a sample of small local businesses; selected youth club members and youth leaders. Stage Three involved telephone interviews with Community Planning Partners who are on the Joint Problem Solving Group for the area. Members of the research team also observed the area on a number of occasions, visiting the local shops and driving around to better understand the concerns of the local communities in relation to vandalism, graffiti, and groups of youths hanging around the streets. They also attended by invitation a number of events that were put on for young people as part of the EPP during the period of this study and some time was spent with the police shadowing a shift.

## SUMMARY FINDINGS

- 1 The EPP has been welcomed by the police and the majority of the wider community who would all like to see it continued. Residents report that it has increased feelings of safety knowing that there were more police about and some shop keepers report seeing more customers in the evenings.
- 2 The EPP has provided the police with the opportunity to address some of the major issues within the area including knife crime, and alcohol-fuelled, drug-fuelled, anti-social behaviour, and to foster better police - community relations. In essence the police went from reactive to proactive policing.
- 3 During the period of the EPP violent crime fell to its lowest level for 5 years. Anti-social behaviour related crime decreased by 7% and anti-social behaviour incidents decreased by 8%.
- 4 This evaluation has found that the EPP met and exceeded its expectation across the majority of its targeted priorities.
- 5 Many shopkeepers report problems with shoplifting and the purchasing of alcohol. They experience verbal abuse from those they have refused to sell alcohol to and from youths hanging around outside in an attempt to get other customers to purchase alcohol for them. A few shopkeepers have experienced more severe levels of violence. However, test purchases and the increased presence of police and better use of CCTV and more effective policing were thought to be making a difference.
- 6 The EPP has allowed police officers to be pro-active rather than re-active but they feel that this level of policing should be understood as *'enough'* and not as *'enhanced'*.

- 7 Pro-activity they identify as engaging with their communities: increased stop and search of people and vehicles; investigation of low-level crime such as graffiti tags etc; working with the local schools and visiting community groups and shops in the area to hear and discuss their views and concerns.
- 8 Closer partnership working has improved community services in that through the sharing of information problems can be dealt with more effectively: for example, working with the Land and Environmental Services in cleaning up of areas – removal of graffiti and litter – and with housing providers who report that they are receiving fewer anti-social behavioural complaints.
- 9 There is evidence of a shift in attitudes amongst the youths who called for *'No gangs in Easterhouse'* and signs to be put up saying *'Keep Your Area Clean'*.
- 10 While there was a strong anti-gang attitude emerging, for some this was more complex in that they disliked gang-fighting, but "the gang" provided friendship and safety: individuals felt protected from other gangs. What became apparent is that gang membership does not always mean involvement in gang violence.
- 11 There is a strong demand for more affordable and accessible facilities: local community groups were found to be more accessible and less expensive than Culture and Leisure facilities which also involve having to cross boundaries.
- 12 Securing the necessary funding to ensure the continuation of the EPP is of considerable concern to the majority of the participants.
- 13 There were strong calls for existing community facilities such as schools to be opened up in the evenings and at weekends. It was considered to be *'disgraceful'* that these facilities were lying unused and closed to the public outwith school hours.
- 14 A highly visible presence of the police should be sustained.
- 15 Partnership working should be sustained and developed to meet the continuing needs of the communities.
- 16 Continued work with partnership agencies is identified as necessary in order to provide opportunities for those who wish to desist from engagement in gang-related activities.
- 17 Young people would like to see 'Operation Phoenix' run all the time and there is a need for opportunities for integration, through joint youth events.
- 18 Some feel that there is a need to provide more for those youths who are not on *'the edge'*, as they feel that *'the good kids'* can be overlooked.
- 19 The police and their partners in the CPP identified as a priority the need to engage more with the communities – the people of the communities need to be consulted on developments.
- 20 Continued working with schools to engage with young people in non-confrontational environments of *'them-and-us'* was identified as crucial for breaking down barriers and changing attitudes.
- 21 Continued partnership working was identified as crucial in supporting residents to become pro-active in developing and sustaining safer communities.
- 22 Age was found to a factor in feelings of safety and mobility within these communities. The older you were, the longer you had lived in, were known in and knew your community the safer you felt.