

Reducing Criminal Damage in Bolton, Be Safe Bolton Strategic Partnership re: Criminal damage

Scanning:

Reducing criminal damage is a strategic priority for the Be Safe Partnership. A challenging target of 23% was negotiated and included in Bolton's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005-8. Historically, criminal damage has generated a large volume of crime for the Be Safe Partnership and between April 2004 and March 2007 accounted for more than a third of all British Crime Survey comparator crimes. This volume represented a real threat to the Partnership and a significant concern for Bolton communities.

The monthly Partnership Business Group (PBG) meetings started to identify an upward trend from the already large volumes of criminal damage recorded each month. Local Area Partnerships were also highlighting in more detail the increasing levels of criminal damage around the borough and the strong correlation with recorded levels of anti-social behaviour.

Analysis:

The Be Safe partnership commissioned a detailed problem profile of criminal damage in Bolton. The aim of the report was to provide a detailed profile of criminal damage offences and related incidents in Bolton during the period March 2006 to February 2007. Data was used from a wide range of sources such as Greater Manchester Police, Fire and Rescue, Bolton Council and Housing. The report identified seven priority neighbourhoods, demographic profiles, victim and offender profile, trends, time and spatial analysis.

Response:

The Reassuring and Supporting Communities Theme Group took ownership of the problem profile and set a sub-group to develop an action plan and act as project management board. A number of activities were implemented which related directly to the problem profile focussing on the seven priority neighbourhoods, repeat victims and persistent offenders. Activity included targeted use of Antisocial behaviour tools and powers, including ASBOs and ABCs, situational crime prevention methods such as Gating Orders, CCTV and environmental work including Beat sweeps.

Assessment:

The assessment has shown how effective the criminal damage project has been. Since 2006/7, criminal damage has reduced by 13.4% across Bolton and by 21.5% in the seven priority areas identified in the analysis where the majority of activity has taken place. The assessment has identified specific interventions which have had a direct impact on levels of criminal damage including Gating Orders, targeted multi-agency operations and the use of anti-social behaviour tools and powers. Significantly, the assessment points to the established partnership business process as a real strength in delivering effective interventions.