

TITLE OF REPORT: **Community Safety Board:
Communication and Engagement Plan**

REPORT OF: **David Bunce
Strategic Director – Care, Wellbeing and Learning**

Summary

The Community Safety Board is responsible for co-ordinating and delivering a range of activities and interventions to tackle crime and disorder issues within the Borough – and is committed to improving perceptions of crime and disorder to ensure Gateshead residents continue to feel safe. The introduction of Communications and Engagement Framework is designed to improve residents' awareness of the breadth of work that is undertaken in partnership to demonstrate the impact of our work on local communities.

1 Purpose

- 1.1 As a reminder, at the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2015, members requested additional information on activity that has been undertaken by the Community Safety Board to positively address feelings of safety within the Borough.
- 1.2 This report provides an overview of the Communications and Engagement Framework that has been produced on behalf of the Community Safety Board to ensure that we are proactively raising the profile of the work that is routinely undertaken by its partners to make residents feel safe. It will also set out how the Board intends to engage, consult and feedback outcomes to local residents and community groups throughout the next twelve-months.

2. Background

- 2.1 Gateshead continues to be one of the safest boroughs within Northumbria and still remains one of the best performing Community Safety Partnerships (when compared to its 15 Most Similar Family Groups). Latest Safer Communities Survey findings show the vast majority of residents feel safe and are satisfied with the services delivered by the Police and Council to address crime and anti-social behaviour in their local area.
- 2.3 Despite this, reported crime has started to increase, deliberate secondary fires have risen as have reports of complex ASB. Although this is not too dissimilar to the rising trends found across the whole of Northumbria, it is something the Board will need to be mindful of when implementing its future Communication and Engagement Framework.
- 2.4 The Board have continued to stress the importance of tackling fear of crime and improving feelings of safety, which is particularly crucial in light of diminishing resources coupled with the potential impact of wider changes to organisation

delivery models and structures. Board members agreed that we must also be able to effectively manage resident expectations of the services that can be offered by partners working under the community safety banner in order to ensure that public confidence remains high.

- 2.5 We need to reassure local residents and community groups that agencies continue to work in partnership on their behalf to drive down crime and anti-social behaviour and improve public safety – and agreed to try and involve local communities in supporting crime reduction and community safety agendas.
- 2.6 It was important to recognise that partners have their own processes in place in relation to promoting the work that they do, but that more could be done to demonstrate to local residents the breadth of joint working that is being undertaken across the Partnership. To achieve this, the Board has started to map out all proactive campaigns and media that are being undertaken by the different partners throughout the year – which has been included in Appendix 1.

3 Next Steps

- 3.1 Effective communication is important if the Partnership is to continue raising the profile of the good work it does which includes getting key messages, advice and information to specific targeted groups. The current arrangements are working well, however the following actions have been identified to further develop communications:
- Implementation of a CSB Communications and Engagement Framework (set out in Appendix 1 for comment);
 - Production of a multi-agency Action Plan and Campaign Calendar that will set out the key seasonal trends that warrant additional media attention. This will consider historic crime and disorder statistics as well as specific national and regional campaigns and will ensure we have a coordinated approach to the Partnership's communications activity.
 - Development of a Task and Finish Group to look at how best to progress the communications activity on behalf of the Board.
- 3.2 The following priorities as areas to be developed in the near future:

Communication and Engagement Framework

- A Communications and Engagement Framework has been drafted to reaffirm the role of communications for the Board. The Framework will support the priorities of the Board and ensure that communications support targets and maintain the profile of partnership working. It will also help re-establish the communication protocol between partners and give us the base from which to develop a Communications Plan for year ahead, making sure media linked with Community Safety is valuable, informative and meet the needs of our priorities.

Website

- Community Safety section of the Gateshead Council website will be updated to ensure the right information and links are relevant. The Web and Digital Team have recently trained a Community Safety Officer to become a

website editor, to ensure that information is uploaded onto the website in a timely and consistent manner.

Social Media

- Gateshead Council's social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) are used to inform residents of immediate community safety issues (either directly from Gateshead Council or via the Community Safety Boards partners) and put a spotlight on larger pieces of work.

Communications in the community

- Discussions to be had with Neighbourhood Management and Volunteering Team to establish further communication opportunities with community groups.

4 Delivery of Communications and Engagement Framework

- 4.1 Gateshead Council Communications Team will lead on re-establishing the Communications Group between the partners, to ensure that opportunities to promote the message of partnership working between organisations.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 Members are asked to:

- (i) Discuss the report;
- (ii) Comment on Communication and Engagement Framework (set out in Appendix 2);
- (iii) Agree to receive six-monthly update in relation to the activity undertaken to promote CSB activity and improve feelings of safety within Gateshead;

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Safer Gateshead

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Communications Framework

2015 – 2017

DRAFT

Communications Framework

Foreword

This is the Communications Framework for the Gateshead Community Safety Board. It outlines how the Partnership will communicate and engage with the residents of Gateshead, its partner organisations and others to help achieve its objectives.

Effective communications and meaningful engagement, both internally and externally, are vital to identifying, understanding and tackling the community safety issues affecting local communities. Failure to communicate and engage properly is likely to mean that the services provided may not be those that are needed or wanted by local residents and communities.

This Framework sets out our objectives, our guiding principles and the key methods of communication that we need to use if we are to have a positive influence on community safety matters in Gateshead. Our main aims are to:

- To raise the profile of the CSB and its activities;
- To engage, consult and feedback outcomes to community and partner agencies;
- To make residents feel safer and to reduce the fear of crime, and
- To highlight the positive work undertaken by the CSB.

Brand recognition

It is important to mention the CSB in external communications to raise awareness of the work that partner organisations are involved in and will contribute to achieving targets set out in the CSB Partnership Plan (e.g. in all press releases). The CSB should also be mentioned in all external communications by projects/work that has received or continue to receive ongoing funding from the CSB (e.g. Bonfire Initiative).

Commitment

This Framework aims to ensure that we:

- Promote the CSB vision and values, highlighting its activities and publicising its successes to local residents;
- Increase public awareness of the CSB and inform people about how they can get involved in its work and feed in their views;
- Provide feedback on how their views are being taken into account and to show accountability for the CSB decisions;
- Ensure open and honest communication with local residents, taking into account the diverse needs of the population;
- Encourage greater involvement in the CSB work by hard-to-reach groups within our community; highlighting the importance of inclusion and community cohesion.
- Co-ordinate messages of the CSB to ensure consistency, and
- To support national/regional agendas by organisations (e.g. Home Office, PCC and Ministry of Justice).

Guiding principles for effective communication

If communication and engagement is to be effective we must:

- Ensure all communication is of the best quality;
- Be honest, open, transparent and accountable;

- Use plain language that is jargon-free and expressed simply;
- Build and maintain trust by delivering strong and consistent messages linked to our strategic priorities;
- Encourage and support good two-way communication and engagement by listening to partners and communities and promoting participation;
- Ensure that our communication and engagement activity is equally accessible to all, using a variety of formats where practical and reasonable;
- Maximise our resources to provide cost-effective, high-quality information;
- Use existing networks and forums for consultation and whenever possible share information;
- Allocate resources and coordinate activity, and
- Regularly review our communication routes to ensure that we are engaging all sectors of the community and making best use of available technology within available resources.

Who do we want to communicate with?

Target audiences (external)

- People who live and work in Gateshead
- Organisations working in and for the benefit of Gateshead
- The business community
- The media
- Regional and national organisations
- Other Community Safety Partnerships
- Central Government and/or other decision makers
- Anyone who wants to know about the work and best practice of the CSB

Target audiences (internal)

- Community Safety Board and its sub-groups
- All teams and agencies involved within the CSB structure
- All partner organisations, including those represented on the Partnership
- Councillors and portfolio holders

Methods of communication

- Regular coverage in Council News magazine
- • Local and national media (press, radio and TV) Digital communication (social media and website)
- Printed communication (flyers, leaflets and posters)
- Face-to-face/door-to-door community briefings
- Feedback – questionnaires, evaluation, including use of Viewpoint – Gateshead's resident panel.
- Meetings – agendas, minutes, reports and supporting documents
- Surveys – Safer Communities Survey and Residents Surveys

Responsibility for communication

The responsibility for populating the Action Plan and Campaign Calendar will rest with the Crime, ASB and Confidence Sub-Group (supported by the Communications Team within Gateshead Council) who will:

- Spread messages and actively promote the work of the CSB and its partners
- Develop a range of initiatives to involve and/or consult local residents
- Listen and provide feedback on resident views
- Provide communications appropriate to the diverse needs of our community
- Share our achievements and successes
- Create, develop and spread messages tailored to Gateshead
- Monitoring the results of the Safer Communities Survey and Residents Surveys
- Develop seasonal activity linked with historic crime and disorder trends
- Respond to emerging issues from a communications perspective (including issue such as community tensions).

All partner agencies involved within the CSB have a responsibility for implementing effective communication to address fear of crime within Gateshead. All partners will:

- Maintain a two-way flow of communication to ensure that everyone is kept well informed
- Advise of the copy dates for their publications
- Advise of opportunities for joint working
- Advise of their communication and consultation activity
- Provide publicity and display material
- Manage or facilitate public relations or media campaigns
- Provide skills and expertise in specialist areas where possible

Implementing the Communications Framework

The Framework sets out where the CSB aims to be in terms of communications. In order to implement this Framework and establish how we will get to where we want to be an annual Action Plan and Campaign Calendar will be developed. This will set out in detail the activities needed to fulfil our commitment and improve the way we communicate with the people of Gateshead, partner organisations and beyond.

Development monitoring and evaluation

- The ongoing development and monitoring of the Communications Framework will be undertaken by the Crime, ASB and Confidence Sub-Group which meets on a monthly basis and is chaired by the Chief Inspector (Partnerships).
- The Annual Action Plan will be the main tool to monitor and evaluate progress against the Framework and targets will be set where possible.
- Evaluation will be undertaken by the CSB when it considers the twice-yearly report from the Crime, ASB and Confidence Sub-Group.

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National
Probation
Service



Northumbria
Community Rehabilitation Company



Further Information

If you would like any further information relating to this Framework,
please contact the Community Safety Team on:

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