

## REPORT DETAILS

Author's Name:	Matt Challoner
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Committee or Meeting and	Cabinet
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Report Title:	Arrangemnts for Meetings of Cabinet
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### Shortcut Keys:

Alt-1    Heading (1., 2., etc.)

Alt-2    Main report text (1.1, 1.2 etc.)

Alt-3    Sub-paragraph text (a, b etc.)

Alt-D    Bulleted text with blank line after paragraph (level below sub-paragraph)

Alt-B    Bulleted text without blank line after paragraph (for lists)

Alt-N    Normal text without bullets or numbers, with blank line after paragraph

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**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**13 MARCH 2012**  
**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY**  
**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS**

**1. Purpose of Report**

To consider the results of the community engagement consultation undertaken in October and November 2011 and to determine any policy recommendations to Cabinet.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

The Committee is recommended to:

- (a) Note the results of the community engagement in respect of fear of crime and anti social behaviour;
- (b) In view of the aforementioned results, to agree final recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

**3. Summary (inc. brief overview of relevant background history)**

- 3.1 In August 2011 the Committee received a presentation on the Community Safety issues across the District. The Committee noted a 4% decrease in overall crime levels in Cannock Chase during 2010/2011 when compared with the previous year; in particular robbery and anti-social behaviour ('ASB') had decreased by 34% and 24% respectively.
- 3.2 Despite this overall reduction, the Committee noted that 14% of the residents who responded to the Feeling the Difference survey 'thought that ASB had increased in their local area over the last 12 months'. This percentage was higher than the Staffordshire mean average for District areas (11.5%)
- 3.3 Staffordshire Observatory presented maps of the neighbourhoods within Cannock Chase which are most likely to perceive issues in relation to ASB. This information was obtained from the British Crime Survey and modelled by ACORN (customer insight data). Accordingly six wards were identified as likely to be areas where residents have an increased perception that ASB is an issue locally. These wards were:

- Cannock North
- Cannock South
- Hednesford North
- Brereton & Ravenhill
- Western Springs
- Hagley

It is important to reiterate that these wards were not selected for having actual proven perceptions but for their (socially modelled) *likelihood* to have increased perceptions of these issues.

- 3.4 In October 2011, the Committee agreed to undertake a community engagement exercise in each of the six wards in order to ascertain whether people do actually feel unsafe; if so, what has made them feel this way and more importantly what measures might help people to feel safer. In order to target areas in each ward, postcode analysis was undertaken to identify key streets for community engagement.
- 3.5 The community engagement was carried out by Committee Members and Council Officers between 24 October 2011 – 11 November 2011. In total, 57 households were interviewed and the results were collated by the Policy and Performance Team. Headline results were verbally presented to the Committee meeting in December 2011; Annex 1 of this briefing note provides more detailed analysis of the results but in summary the results indicated that, whilst these six wards were selected for the engagement exercise on the basis that they were *most likely to have the highest perceptions of crime and ASB*, when this principle was tested through dialogue the following results were recorded:

**Do people feel unsafe in their local area?**

- The overwhelming majority of respondents do feel safe in their local area during the day (only 7% reported feeling unsafe in their local area during the day)
- Two-thirds of respondents also feel safe in their local area after dark

**What had informed people's perceptions on safety/vulnerability?**

- Almost a quarter of respondents had actually been a victim of, or witness to a crime in the previous twelve months (although location of incidents was not specified).
- 'Youths hanging around' with nothing to do was cited as a reason for feeling unsafe after dark by a number of respondents (11 people - 19%)
- 61% of respondents were satisfied that the council and police work together to seek and act on local views re ASB

### What did people feel could be done with regard to community safety?

- 19% of respondents suggested that more information about community safety from the council and its partners to inform residents of actions taken locally to improve community safety would help to make residents feel safer
- Greater visibility of officials within the community was cited as a reassuring factor in a number of the questions
- Respondents would like the council and its partners to keep them informed and ensure that residents' views on community safety are used to shape service delivery

3.6 The engagement exercise highlighted a number of issues which the Policy Development Committee may wish to consider in determining its recommendations to Cabinet:-

- a) Overwhelmingly, people want to be re-assured. Consultees felt this re-assurance should be in the form of regular communications and a visible 'official' presence in their local areas. Some good practice exists in service areas e.g. the housing 'Estate Walks' programme, however there is not a consistent approach across the District.
- b) In terms of a visible official presence, Members will be aware that the resources of every partner organisation have been reducing over a period of time, including those of the Police, Fire and Rescue Service and Local Authorities. Accordingly, increasing the visibility of an official presence within the community is particularly challenging and will require a more innovative, pragmatic approach within the District. It is reassuring that a significant number of people want to be involved in their community. Accordingly, Cannock Chase already has an extensive voluntary network throughout the third sector which includes Fire Service volunteers, the Right Stuff boxing project, Age UK, Neighbourhood Watch, Staffordshire Circle, Special Constables, the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Councillors to mention but a few. In addition there are a number of groups working within the District which have been identified as resident/community 'Champions', these include:
  - 'Friends of Etching Hill' are a group based in Etching Hill which was established in 2009 using funding received via an application to the 'Connecting Communities' fund created by Central Government. There are approximately seven members of the group and a representative attends the Community Forum in Rugeley.
  - 'Blake Resident Champions' are based at Chase Council for Voluntary Service in Chadsmoor. Originally a larger group, there are only three remaining Resident Champions. These volunteers link into local issues within their community and feed any issues back to appropriate councillors and agencies. The Consultation and Engagement Officer at the Council now attends meetings with these Resident Champions to provide a mechanism for reporting any community issues.
  - Anti social behaviour resident champions work with the Housing Team at the council and attend the Anti Social Behaviour Focus Group. There are ten members, each of whom received training on the existing tools and policies to tackle ASB through funding from the Home Office.

- 'Parent Champions' are a group coordinated by Chase Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). There are a number of parents involved, two of whom are based at West Chadsmoor Family Centre. Parent Champions talk with parents, signpost to support or activities and report any issues for further attention to a member of staff at The Family Centre or CVS.
- 'Street Friends' is another group coordinated by CVS which currently have one active member for The Jubilee Estate. This volunteer is very well known within her community and has had success in referring residents to other agencies for services such as the home fire safety checks and mobility support. This role works on the basis that the volunteer is trusted by local residents and becomes 'a friend' who can check on vulnerable residents, chat at the bus stop and who attends local community meetings.

Furthermore, customer insight data for the District indicates that over a third (37.9%) of households in Cannock Chase are profiled as being more likely than the national average household to be "willing to volunteer for a good cause". There is therefore perhaps some potential to review how the Council in its role as Community Leader, could support and expand the existing potential within the community itself, (whilst complementing existing voluntary and democratic networks) to improve community reassurance across the District.

The role of local councils as community leaders is specifically set out in the Local Government Act 2000 and is additional to the role of service provision. The Audit Commission briefing on Community Leadership states:

*"Successful community leadership is about more than having robust democratic structures and working in partnership. It is also about developing social capital so that local people can become politically, socially and economically engaged. However, community development is complex and councils may need to lead and challenge communities as well as support them, for example to counter prejudice and to build social inclusion."*

- c) In terms of regular communications being used to reassure our communities:

The Partnership (the Council and Police primarily) currently communicates key messages using various communication channels including regular press releases, a monthly feature in the Chronicle, regular mentions on Facebook and Twitter and the development of a Partnership section on the Council's website. Targeted campaigns including domestic violence and alcohol-related violence have also been developed and distributed district wide.

Customer Insight has also helped to ensure that the Partnership communicates effectively to its residents by using the right forms of communication that they are most receptive to.

In considering its recommendations to Cabinet, the Committee may wish to consider how the council could respond to each of these issues.

#### **4. Key Issues and Implications**

5. **Conclusions and Reason(s) for the Recommendation(s)**

Members are requested to consider the responses to and analysis of the Community Engagement exercise undertaken in Winter 2011, and determine any recommendations to Cabinet as appropriate.

6. **Other Options Considered**

The Committee are requested to consider the responses and determine any options for recommendations to Cabinet.

7. **Report Author Details**

Donna Meredith-Wood, Local Strategic Partnership Manager, extension 4638.

**SCHEDULE OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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**Section 1**

**Contribution to Council Priorities (ie. Corporate Plan)**

The Community Engagement Exercise was undertaken to ascertain perceptions of Community Safety and ASB, and to identify ways in which the Council can work with its partners to reduce the impact and perceptions of ASB and ultimately achieve an improved living environment as per the PLACE, PDP and Corporate Plan.

**Section 2**

**Contribution to Promoting Community Engagement**

The Council seeks to ensure that the needs and perceptions of the community are mainstreamed within decision-making processes. The Community Engagement exercise undertaken in winter 2011 sought to ascertain public perceptions, what specifically had informed those perceptions and what measures the Council could take to improve levels of assurance within the Community; thereby ensuring residents are involved in shaping service delivery.

**Section 3**

**Financial Implications**

There are no direct Financial Implications arising from the report.

In considering any Recommendations to Cabinet Members will need to take into account the Budget and Policy Framework of the Council.

**Section 4**

**Legal Implications**

None

**Section 5**

**Human Resource Implications**

There are no Human Resources implications

**Section 6**



**Section 17 (Crime Prevention) Implications**

As a 'Responsible Authority' under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council has a duty to "exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area". The engagement exercise focussed on understanding whether residents actually held perceptions of crime and disorder in their area, if so, what had informed those perceptions and what measures the Council could take to improve levels of assurance with regard to community safety and actions recommended for implementation as a result of this exercise will ultimately contribute to the prevention of crime and disorder and perceptions thereof.

**Section 7**

**Human Rights Act Implications**

None

**Section 8**

**Data Protection Act Implications**

None

**Section 9**

**Risk Management Implications**

None

**Section 10**

**Equality and Diversity Implications**

The Partnership focus on vulnerability ensures that individuals and communities included within Equalities legislation are given due regard in the delivery of Partnership activity. Further actions taken to address community reassurance will require the relevant assessment of equality and diversity implications before implantation.

**Section 11**

**List of Background Papers**

**Section 12**

**Report History**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Environmental Policy Development Committee	August 2011
	October 2011

**Annexes to Report**

Public Consultation: Anti Social Behaviour perceptions in 6 Wards

**ANNEX 1****Environment Policy Development Committee****Public Consultation: Anti Social Behaviour perceptions in 6 Wards****Total respondents = 57**

Ward location	
Western Springs	6 10.5%
Brereton & Ravenhill	10 17.5%
Cannock North	12 21.1%
Hagley	10 17.5%
Hednesford North	8 14.0%
Cannock South	11 19.3%

Of which 35 (74.5%) said they would be prepared to have further contact re Community Safety issues

During the last 12 months, have you felt concerned about the possibility of becoming a victim of crime?	Yes	No	No Reply
	21	33	3
	36.8%	57.9%	5.3%
<p><b>Further information</b></p> <p>Positive response (happy with area etc) x9</p> <p>Youths hanging around x6</p> <p>Perceptions/ feeling of vulnerability x6</p> <p>Break in/ theft victim x4</p> <p>Domestic violence x1</p> <p>Neighbour issues x2</p> <p>Car crime x1</p> <p>Litter/ environment x1</p> <p>Feel unsafe at night x1</p> <p>Don't go out x1</p> <p>Victim elsewhere x1</p>			
Have you been a victim or witnessed a crime in the last 12 months?	Yes	No	No Reply
	14	42	1
	24.6%	73.7%	1.8%
<p><b>Further information</b></p> <p>Feeling vulnerable x5</p> <p>Positive response (happy with Police response etc) x4</p> <p>Purchased alarms/ security equipment x2</p> <p>Victim elsewhere x1</p> <p>Speeding/ traffic issues x1</p>			

Gave witness statement to Police x1				
More Police required x1				
<b>Do you have a close friend or friends that have been a victim or witnessed a crime in the last 12 months?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No Reply</b>	
	14 24.6%	43 75.4%	0	
<b>Further information</b>				
Feeling vulnerable/ fearful x7 (this includes 1 occurrence outside District)				
Would like more feedback from authorities x4				
Feel safe in area x2				
Victim support received x1				
Unhappy with response – need tougher measures x1				
<b>How safe or unsafe do you feel when you outside in your local area during the day?</b>	<b>Safe</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Unsafe</b>	<b>Don't go out</b>
	47 82.5%	5 8.8%	4 7.0%%	1 1.8%
<b>Further information</b>				
Positive response about local area x13				
More Police visibility required x3				
Alarms/ security measures x3				
More support & reassurance needed x2				
More activities for young people required x2				
<b>How safe or unsafe do you feel when</b>	<b>Safe</b>	<b>OK</b>	<b>Unsafe</b>	<b>Don't go</b>

<b>you outside in your local area after dark?</b>				<b>out</b>
	22 38.6%	5 8.8%	19 33.3%	11 19.3%
<b>Further information</b>				
Youths hanging around x11				
Positive response about local area x9				
Don't go out x9				
Feeling vulnerable/ fearful x8				
Improvements needed to street lighting x3				
Would like alarm/ house lighting fitted x3				
Disability/ mobility issues x3				
More activities for young people required x1				
More police presence x1				
Attitudes influenced by TV/ media x1				
<b>In the last 12 months have you seen or heard any information on community safety?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No Reply</b>	
	26 45.6%	31 54.4%	0	
<b>Further information</b>				
More Police info & presence required x16				
More Council info required x11				
Receive info through Council and other local publications x7				
Receive info through Neighbourhood Watch x6				
Positive response for Police x5				
Positive response fro Fire Safety x4				

Receive info through National media x2

More local meetings x2

Rugeley Facebook x1 (dubious)

<b>Do you think the police and local council seek out and act on local views about anti social behaviour and crime in your area?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>No reply</b>
	35	10	9	3
	61.4%	17.5%	15.8%	5.3%

#### **Further information**

Positive response for Police & Partnership x23

More Police/ Partnership required x17

More communication through local meetings x2

Positive comments regarding local area x2

Action on litter/ environment x2

Tougher penalties required x3

More activities for young people x1

More parental responsibility x1

Home security improvements x1