POP in Partnership
To Deliver a
Community Safety Strategy

Submitted for the Tilley Award 1999

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■ SURREY ■
POLICE

Ian Blair QPM, MA(Oxon)
Chief Constable
of Surrey

Dear Delphine,

Tilley Award

I am writing in support of the entry submitted by the Safer Guildford Partnership team for the Tilley Award. The work they have developed focuses on fear of crime and a survey they carried out in response to the Crime and Disorder Act.

By utilising existing community groups, such as Neighbourhood Watch, they achieved not only a comprehensive fear of crime audit for Guildford at a very low cost, but also reinvigorated the local groups focusing them on community safety important to the local communities.

Guildford is one of the safest towns in England, but its residents still suffer from a significant level of fear of crime . By carrying out such an in-depth survey, the Guildford Partnership team, consisting of the Police, the local authority and voluntary agencies, has been able to identify the key areas and target their resources accordingly. The partnership team, established in 1996, have been using problem solving approaches to tackle local problems but the use of the fear of crime survey has enabled a focused and target response.

I fully endorse their submission for the Tilley Award.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Blair

POP in Partnership To Deliver A Community Safety Strategy

Abstract

In 1996 the **Safer Guildford Partnership** was formed between Guildford Borough Council and the Guildford division of Surrey Police. For two years the Partnership worked enthusiastically to design and implement initiatives it hoped would reduce recorded crime and enhance the quality of life in Guildford. In 1998 the Audit Commission ranked Guildford as the seventh safest borough and Surrey the safest county in England.

These rankings were not received with complacency as they reflected just one facet of community safety – recorded crime. In Guildford it was apparent that fear of crime existed – the public letters page in the local newspaper and correspondence to the Council and Police revealed concerns for safety and victimisation. By early 1998 the requirements of the Crime and Disorder legislation (in draft) were available and were studied in detail.

At this time the frustration for the Partnership was knowing what to address in their forthcoming Community Safety Strategy. There was a concern about just accepting existing Crime and Disorder information to shape the new strategy. It was decided to amplify the sources of data to enable a quality problem-oriented analysis to be undertaken. A powerful and cost effective way of doing that was found in the Home Office approved "Fear of Crime Survey Starter Kit".

The survey was conducted using a team of volunteers drawn from Neighbourhood Watch and other community groups. Their involvement ensured that:

♦ The survey costs remained minimal
♦ The level of community participation was high
♦ Community safety was seen as a responsibility for everyone, not just statutory agencies

The survey findings were used to focus the work of an already vibrant **Safer Guildford Partnership**. Out of the process a variety of issues emerged:

♦ Key issues that needed addressing such as autocrime and media influence
♦ The way the police and local authority communicate with their community
♦ Prioritising the needs of the borough at ward level

Following the *SARA* model, the survey findings were used in conjunction with recorded crime data to transform the Partnership into a team of engaged people with focus and purpose.

The "POP in Partnership" approach used to design and deliver the Guildford Community Safety Strategy is unique in Surrey and already this good practice is being disseminated throughout the county with requests for presentations to divisional commanders and Police and Community Partnership Groups.

P.O.P. in Partnership to deliver a Community Safety Strategy

In 1996 a paper was published by the Home Office Police Research Group to give an over-view of Problem Oriented Policing (POP) in practice in six Forces. In 1996 Surrey Police was the only Force implementing POP on a large scale. For many officers in Surrey POP is a core activity. Around the same time a concept of a formal partnership between local Government and a divisional police area was beginning to take shape. The **Safer Guildford Partnership** was formed between Guildford Borough Council and Surrey Police in 1996, with the express purpose of improving community safety within the borough.

Guildford Borough has a population of approximately 126,000, the highest in Surrey. About half the population live in the urban area of Guildford itself with the remainder spread over the borough in various parishes and villages. The local government boundary is co-terminous with the Guildford division of Surrey Police. The borough is divided into 20 "wards" or neighbourhoods, each of which has its own dedicated police personnel.

In the first two years of its existence, 60 partnership projects, including the installation of CCTV in Guildford town centre, had been completed or were underway. Some of these were a formalisation of projects that occurred on an ad-hoc or uncoordinated basis. Others came about in response to new legislation e.g. The Knives initiative, launched for the following two reasons:

♦ in response to the Knives Act (1997) concerning the sale of knives to people under the age of 16 years
♦ due to an increase in serious violent offences in Guildford committed with a knife. (Over the previous year Guildford had suffered a fatal stabbing and several serious woundings with a knife.)

This project involved retailers of knives preparing a voluntary Code of Conduct for the selling of knives to children under the age of 16. The need to raise people's awareness regarding the new legislation was also an objective and a poster was designed to widely publicise the project. The Code was enthusiastically received by the retailers, many of whom were committed to training their staff. Unfortunately, due to the unstructured way the project was designed, there was no long-term process in place for the evaluation of the project. Therefore no monitoring or evaluation of this worthwhile initiative ever took place.

At this time, Police or Borough Council staff would initiate schemes they felt would benefit community safety. In general though, the processes used by the **Safer Guildford Partnership** to generate and implement new community safety projects were unfocussed, did not use SARA and did not check out with the community whether the initiative was something they welcomed/would use etc.

At this time the Partnership and its projects would have been viewed as follows:

Positive attributes	Negative characteristics
Enthusiasm	No systematic problem solving approach
Energy	No idea of what the public wanted
Willingness	No evaluation process built into projects
	No focus to the project work

As new projects were included as **Safer Guildford** projects, there was a need to keep track of an increasing number of projects, not all of which were managed by the **Safer Guildford Partnership** Co-ordination Team (the "do-ers"). A "Project Monitoring" form was designed (Appendix A), whose introduction required police and council personnel to evidence the reasons for the new project. To do this, the people completing the form took themselves through a problem solving process. Two projects launched after the introduction of this form clearly demonstrated the benefits of following the problem-solving model and also included a comprehensive evaluation process, which had not been required from the Project monitoring form:

HYPA – Helping Youth Participate in Activities – was a Police Youth diversion officer's response to the needs of local young people who were frequently coming to the notice of the police. In several years of working with these young people PC Jones concluded that the majority of his clients lacked significant relationships and did not use their free time in a way that was positive to their self-development. PC Jones' response was to set up the *HYPA* project. *HYPA* is a fund, managed by a multi-agency group, which enables young people to participate in recreational, educational and social activities within the community. Applications are accepted from professionals and organised groups working on behalf of young people. All applicants are required to take part in the monitoring of the activity undertaken and evaluating the benefits to the young person involved. In the first year of the scheme, of those previously identified as "being involved in crime/at risk of becoming involved in crime" only 14% had reoffended whilst on the scheme. In the second year of the scheme, that percentage had reduced to 9%. Other benefits identified were improved behaviour at school and at home.

G.R.A.S.P. – Guildford's Response and Action for Safer Premises – came about after a series of distraction burglaries in Guildford targeted at the elderly. Subsequent analysis of recorded crime data revealed that in 1996 this type of offence accounted for 7% of all the Borough burglary dwelling figures. Additionally, some of the victims of these offences suffered repeat victimisation very shortly after the first incident. A scheme was introduced, with the assistance of a business sponsor, to provide a "Man in a Van" service. The service provides or improves the security and safety in the homes of the elderly, disabled and vulnerable people living in Guildford borough. A recent evaluation of the first year's activity revealed:

*   90% were satisfied with the service
*   100% felt more safe and confident as a result of the service
*   0% had been repeat burgled

The arrival in 1998 of the early draft-stage Crime and Disorder legislation caused the Partnership to take a pause and consider its response. The legislation placed a clear emphasis on the need to involve the public in the identification of issues that would receive priority for action. Certainly, at no stage until this point, had the Partnership even checked out with its public whether its projects actually addressed their fears and concerns, or indeed made a difference to their lives. In 1998 the Audit Commission ranked Guildford as the seventh safest borough and Surrey the safest county in England. These rankings were not received with complacency as they reflected just one facet of community safety – recorded crime data. In Guildford it was apparent that fear of crime existed – the public letters page in the local newspaper and correspondence to the Council and Police revealed concerns for safety and victimisation.

The **Safer Guildford Partnership** was faced with the imminent challenge of designing a three-year Community Safety Strategy without the benefit of studying and improving upon a previous version. "Where do we start" was the initial dilemma. What had already been learnt by the Partnership was that where projects had been planned systematically they had been successful. If SARA had worked for specific small-scale projects, why not use it for a larger, more strategic project?

There was a concern about just accepting existing Crime and Disorder information to shape the new strategy. It was decided to amplify the sources of data to enable a quality problem-oriented analysis to be undertaken. A powerful and cost effective way of doing that was found in the Home Office approved "Tackling Fear of Crime - A Starter Kit" [1]. This provided a good starting point for shaping the strategy and addressing the previous lack of consultation with the public.

Fear of Crime Survey process
The survey was conducted using a team of volunteers drawn from Neighbourhood Watch and other community groups. Their involvement ensured that:

*   The survey costs remained minimal
*   The level of community participation was high

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[1] By Clive Griffiths, 1995 published by HMSO ISBN 0-11-341135-9 Price £17.50

- Community safety was seen as a responsibility for everyone, not just statutory agencies

Clive Griffiths' publication was a complete package for carrying out the study, including the software necessary for analysing the results. A crucial element to the previous success of this package around the country was the fact that the questionnaire was hand delivered and collected.

A volunteer team was gathered by drawing together agencies and groups such as the Victim Support Scheme and Neighbourhood Watch. So often Neighbourhood Watch is undervalued because it is not seen to be responsible for catching thieves and detecting crime. One of their biggest complaints prior to the survey was that they were always looking for ways to become more involved in policing their neighbourhoods because so often they felt they were not doing anything useful. Certainly bringing them into the Fear of Crime Survey gave them a sense of value and of being useful. The intervention itself of involving them in this survey brought about a renewed interest in the Neighbourhood Watch scheme and what it could do for its community. Communities working for themselves is what the Partnership are aiming to achieve in the long-term.

During March 1998 just over 1400 questionnaires were distributed by the volunteer team who in pairs personally visited households in their neighbourhood. Households were selected on a random basis using the electoral register, which identified every 37th house across the borough. The person resident at that address whose birthday it was next in that household completed the survey. This ensured variety in terms of the age and gender of the respondent. Completed surveys were personally collected within a week of delivery and the response rate was very encouraging at 71% (1018 responses). This achievement meant that the results were 98% statistically significant and therefore reliable for the purposes of evidencing the borough's fears and concerns.

The community responded with real interest to the survey and often volunteers were engaged in quite lengthy conversation with the survey respondents who were evidently very committed to improving the quality of life in their neighbourhood. Of all the households targeted, only 2.2% actually refused to take part in the survey which gives a good indication of the willingness of residents to become involved in some way in assisting the council and police in their work.

The Fear of Crime Starter Kit and the process it recommends is a very cost-effective and user-friendly package which can provide the sponsor with a wealth of previously untapped information. Just over £2,000 was spent on the process which was completed from start to finish within a ten-week timeframe. (See Appendix B). Estimates obtained from external consultants to deliver a comparable study ranged from between £16,000 to £65,000.

Fear of Crime Survey findings

The survey findings provided a very privileged insight into the fears, concerns and levels of satisfaction of Guildford borough residents: the needs of ethnic groups within the borough were identified; the benefits of Neighbourhood Watch schemes in terms of reducing the fear of crime were apparent; residents identified public places they avoided and their reasons.

The most beneficial outcome of the survey was that it provided the Partnership with focus and a variety of revelations which have directly impacted on the shape of the new Community Safety Strategy:

- Key issues that needed addressing such as autocrime, self-help crime prevention and media influence
- The way the police and local authority communicate with their community
- Prioritising the needs of the borough at ward level

Within the survey findings were some recurrent fears/perceptions which were compared with recorded crime and anti-social behaviour data. In this way, the Partnership was able to avoid being driven purely by unreasonable fears and informed public opinion. Clearly areas where high concerns had been shown which did not appear to correspond with recorded data needed positive publicity inputs as the appropriate response. Where perceptions corroborated recorded data complimentary measures needed designing.
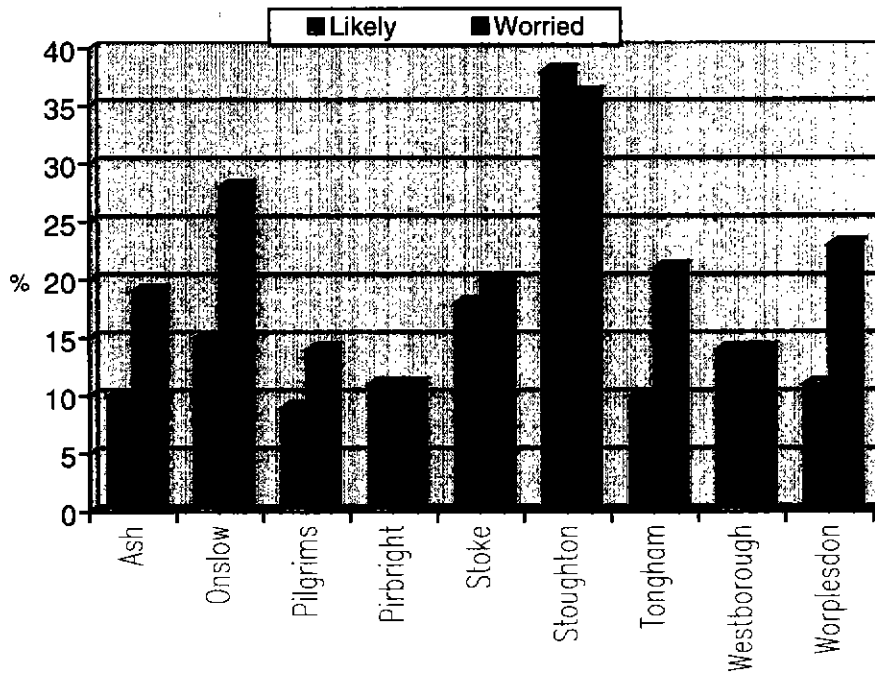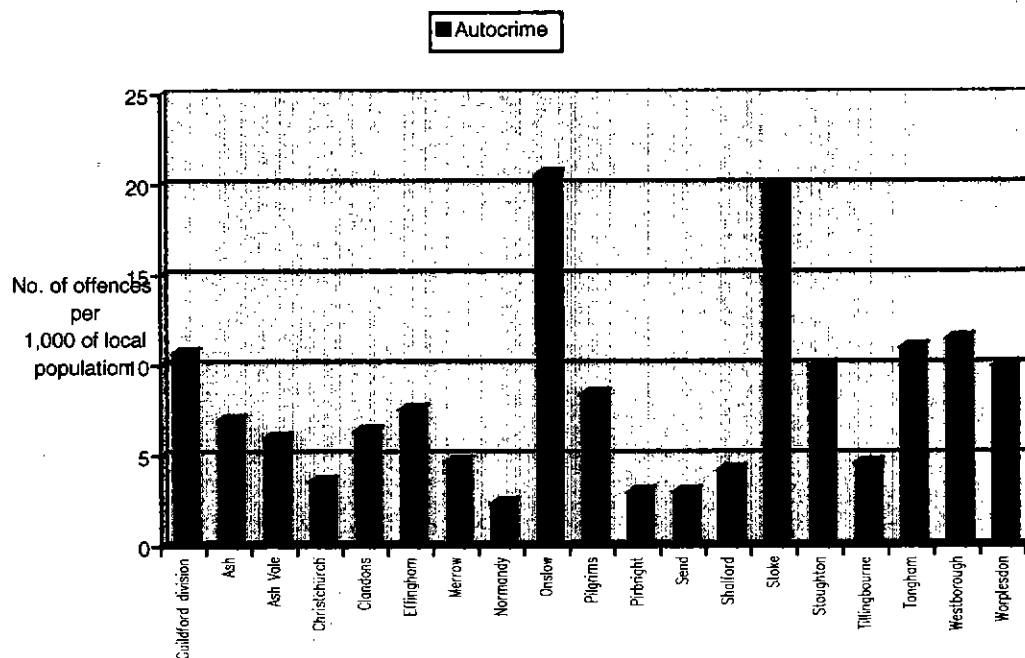
Autocrime

Table 1.1

In the survey, respondents were asked a series of three questions about the likelihood, level of worry and ability to cope with regard to being a victim of various offence types. Table 1.1 shows startling differences between levels of fear of autocrime. The Partnership needed to establish whether these perceptions were unfounded and compared these fears with recorded autocrime for a period of 12 months (Table 1.2 below). This enabled the Partnership to group certain wards into specific categories:
High levels of worry about autocrime which appear to be founded: Onslow, Tongham and Worplesdon
High levels of worry about autocrime which are not reflected in high recorded rates: Ash
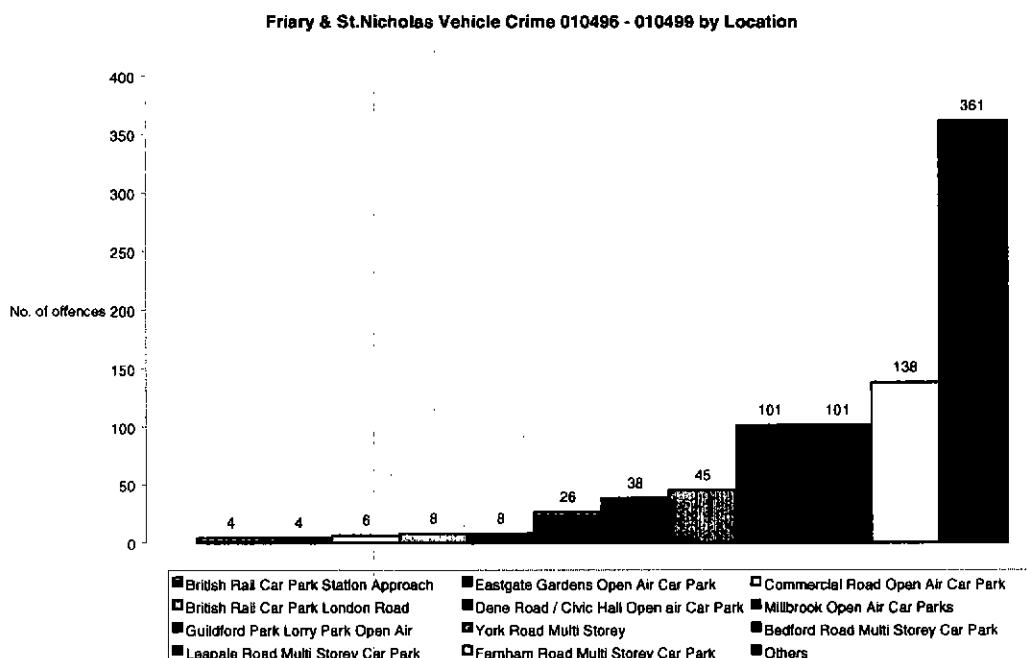Disproportionate levels of recorded autocrime: Onslow, Stoke

Table 1.2

Autocrime in car parks

Autocrime and feelings of safety in car parks were also further explored. The survey sample who responded that they avoided car parks did so because of fear of attack and because crime was too high. Many of these respondents lived close to the town centre. Recorded autocrime in Guildford town centre was studied over a three year period -Table 1.3 (in which autocrime on the division has dropped by approximately 20%). Four car parks stood out for high numbers of offences and over the three-year period these car parks had not enjoyed the 20% reduction experienced elsewhere.

Table 1.3

Friary & St.Nicholas Vehicle Crime 010496 - 010499 by Location

Legend:
- British Rail Car Park Station Approach
- British Rail Car Park London Road
- Guildford Park Lorry Park Open Air
- Leapale Road Multi Storey Car Park
- Eastgate Gardens Open Air Car Park
- Dene Road / Civic Hall Open air Car Park
- York Road Multi Storey
- Farnham Road Multi Storey Car Park
- Commercial Road Open Air Car Park
- Millbrook Open Air Car Parks
- Bedford Road Multi Storey Car Park
- Others

These locations were examined more closely (Table 1.4) and it has been decided that, in conjunction with other strategies such as lighting and a change in ticket payment system, the most effective next step will be to extend the very successful Guildford CCTV programme into these 4 locations. (To do this a Home Office CCTV Challenge Funding bid will be submitted).

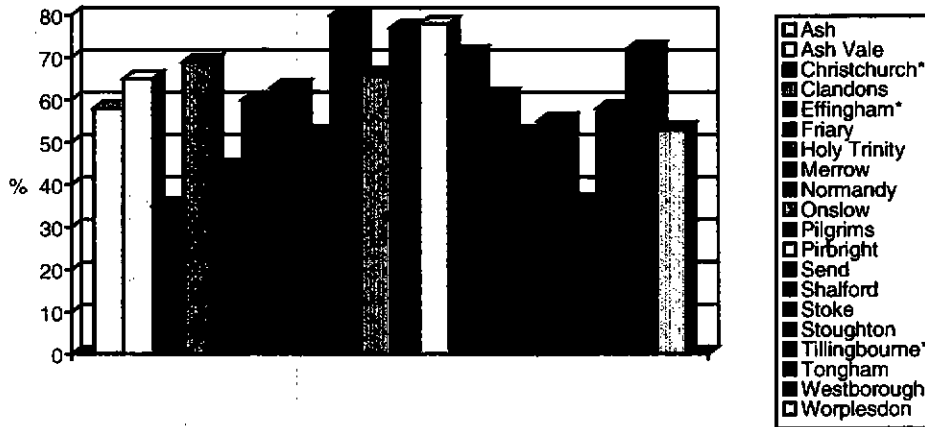| Location & ticket system	Effective Local Guardians			Attractive target?	
	CCTV	Public movement	Council patrol	Exit routes	Vehicles using location
Farnham Road Pay on exit	No central CCTV coverage One small camera covering payment machine	6.30am - 6.30pm no influx Commuter serving car park.	Daily 2-3 times (8am – 6pm)	A3 and A31 within one minute's drive of location	High quality company BMW, Mercedes with high quality audio equipment
Bedford Road Pay & Display	CCTV programme covers vehicle entry to car park	Regular influx daytime only	Daily Every hour (8am – 6pm)	British Rail station - two minute's walk	Daytime – all types After dark many high performance vehicles
Leapale Road Pay & Display	CCTV programme covers vehicle entry to car park	Regular influx daytime only	Daily Every hour (8am – 6pm)	Several pedestrian into main town centre area.	During day all types After dark many high performance vehicles
York Road Pay on exit	No coverage	Regular influx daytime only	Daily 2-3 times (8am – 6pm)	A3 < five minutes	All types

Table 1.4

Self-Help Crime Prevention

The community's contribution to crime reduction was another important survey finding. For example, there is a question in the survey that asks the respondent "Which of the following measures do you take to prevent yourself becoming a victim of crime?" You can see from the following chart the startling difference between, for example, Normandy residents 80% of which routinely check the identity of callers to the home, compared with, for example, Christchurch.

Percentage of residents routinely checking the identity of callers to the home
* Areas to be targeted for crime prevention awareness raising

Legend:
- ☐ Ash
- ☐ Ash Vale
- ■ Christchurch*
- ▦ Clandons
- ■ Effingham*
- ■ Friary
- ■ Holy Trinity
- ■ Merrow
- ■ Normandy
- ▨ Onslow
- ■ Pilgrims
- ☐ Pirbright
- ■ Send
- ■ Shalford
- ■ Stoke
- ■ Stoughton
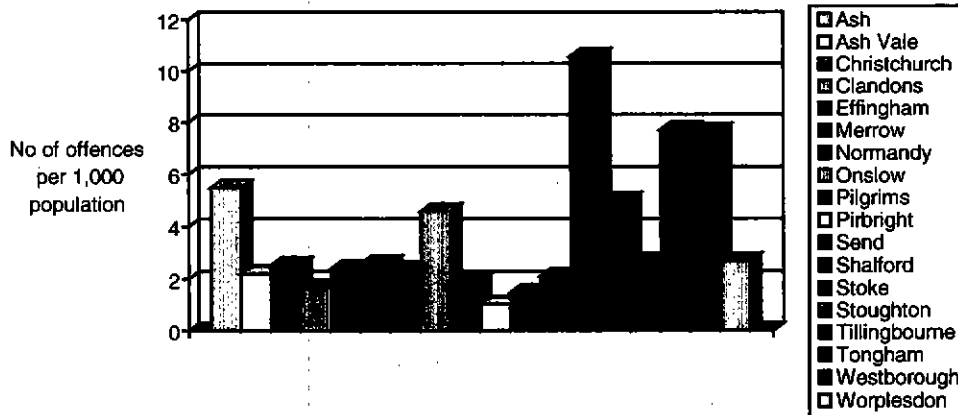- ■ Tillingbourne*
- ■ Tongham
- ■ Westborough
- ☐ Worplesdon

On cross-referencing these findings with recorded burglary dwelling data, the Partnership discovered that Christchurch and Effingham were areas where distraction type burglaries were prevalent. This has caused the Partnership to include local crime prevention awareness-raising campaigns, for those areas with a clear need, to be built into the Community safety strategy (See Appendix C – CC2F).

Media Influence

Whilst analysing the Survey findings there was one particular ward, Shalford, whose fear of violence appeared to be inexplicably acute.

- 15% of Shalford respondents thought it likely they would be mugged in the next year (6% Guildford average) with 23% worried about being mugged (19% Guildford average).
- 11% thought it likely they would be threatened in the next year (8% Guildford average) with 23% worried about being threatened (16% Guildford average)

These findings puzzled the Partnership. Shalford is situated about 3 miles outside Guildford Town centre in a very quiet and scenic rural spot with a parade of independent small shops, a garage and a public house. Recorded incidents of violence for the previous year were studied to attempt to provide an insight into the reasons for their fears:

No of offences per 1,000 population

Legend:
- ☐ Ash
- ☐ Ash Vale
- ■ Christchurch
- ▨ Clandons
- ■ Effingham
- ■ Merrow
- ■ Normandy
- ▨ Onslow
- ■ Pilgrims
- ☐ Pirbright
- ■ Send
- ■ Shalford
- ■ Stoke
- ■ Stoughton
- ■ Tillingbourne
- ■ Tongham
- ■ Westborough
- ☐ Worplesdon

Shalford did not appear to suffer from high levels of recorded violence. Other factors were considered, one of which was media coverage for Shalford in the local newspaper *"The Surrey Advertiser"*. The paper was studied for the six-week period prior to the survey being conducted and the explanation was found for the high levels of fear. In February 1998 a violent incident took place in the local public house. A visitor to the area was repeatedly hit on the head with a barstool, needing urgent specialist treatment at the Atkinson Morley Hospital. This incident was reported the same week in the local newspaper with a large degree of sensationalism. On going back to the survey findings, the Partnership was not surprised to learn that 80% of the Shalford respondents regularly read this newspaper and that these readers were the respondents demonstrating high levels of fear of violence.

This important revelation highlighted the need for media and publicity to be incorporated within the different areas of the Community Safety Strategy. Proactive work with the local newspaper on a regular weekly basis is slowly redressing the balance so that these "one-off" isolated incidents are not the only ones reported, and when they are, they are set in some kind of context of the overall local picture of crime and disorder.

Prioritising needs at ward level

The feedback the public provided in the Fear of Crime Survey was not exclusively crime-oriented. Quality of life issues were also included. Incivilities were high on the list of the public's concerns. Incivilities are visible: graffitti, fly tipping, litter and dogs – they are outward manifestations of problems. Various studies have found connections between incivilities, fear of crime, rates of victimisation and neighbourhood satisfaction. They account for a large proportion of the demands placed on uniform policing response.

Policing is done on a ward basis so this was felt to be the most productive way to analyse the data. These ward areas vary enormously from each other so it was vital to study the data at this level in order for the Partnership to prioritise local needs and target resources correctly and efficiently.

Incivilities were not consistently a problem across the borough - some neighbourhoods appeared to be quite satisfied with their environment. Rather than spread limited resources thinly across the borough to tackle incivilities, through this analysis the Partnership has been able to concentrate its efforts on specific identified problems in specific identified places, offering a more efficient and effective way of managing demands and resources. For example, the chart below highlights areas in which young people hanging around is viewed as a problem. These identified areas will be the focus of proactive work in partnership with local youth workers and community members. The remaining areas will not be targeted in this way, since there is not a perceived problem and available police and council data confirm this to be the case.

Percentage of respondents stating young people hanging around were a problem in their area (* areas to target)
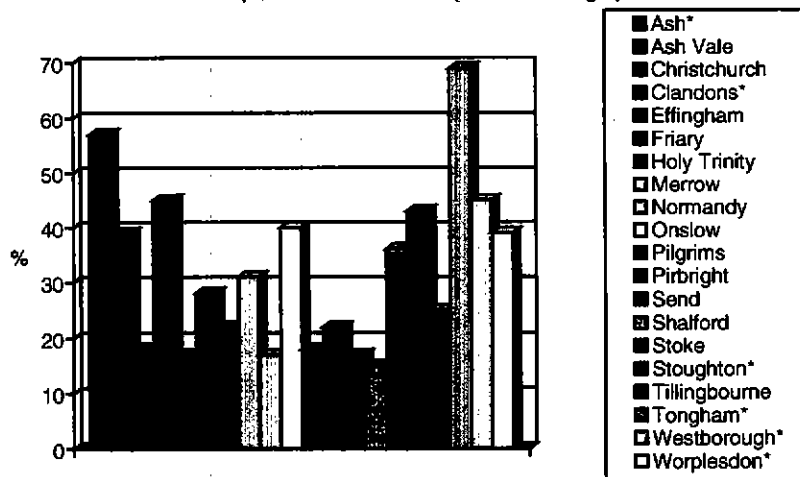
Through analysing all the incivilities in this way it became apparent that certain neighbourhoods appeared to have problems with most of the incivility issues presented to them in the survey: young people hanging around, dog fouling, litter/rubbish. (See Appendix D) These "pockets" were also found to have low levels of satisfaction and social cohesion (community spirit/inclusiveness). A more holistic response in terms of community strengthening was required for these areas and a separate key concern area within the Community Safety Strategy has been formed for this purpose.
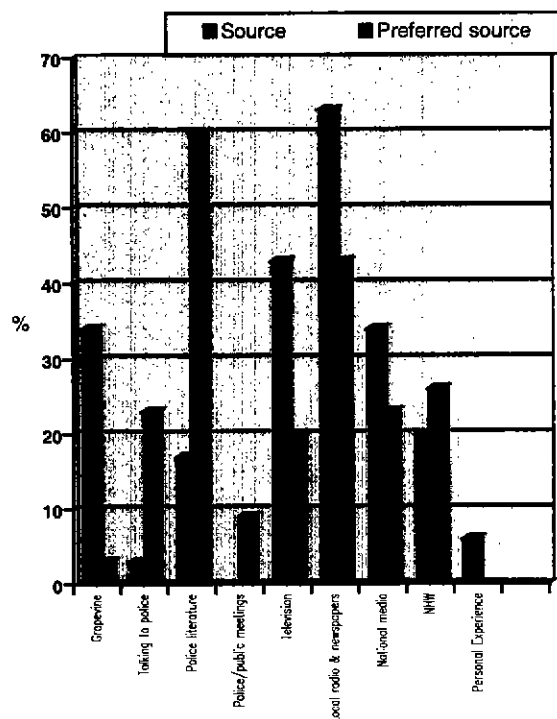
Police/Community communication
In the current climate of "consultation", this last issue to emerge from the Fear of Crime survey was of particular assistance to the Partnership. Respondents were asked a series of questions about the current methods they used to find out about policing matters in their area.

The following charts illustrate the differences in local preferences:
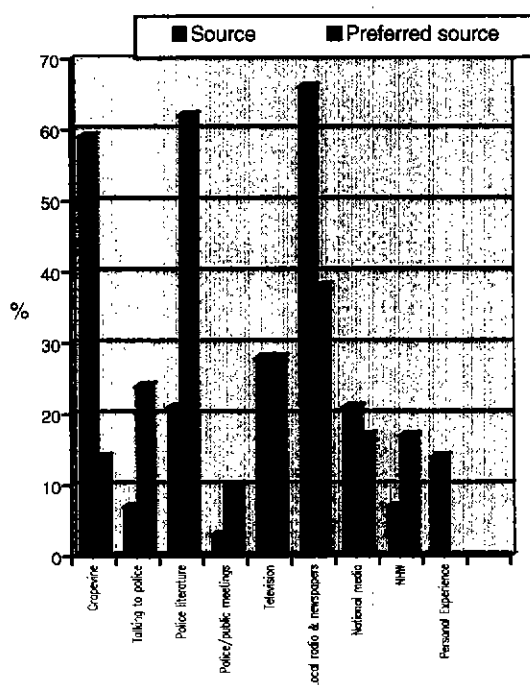
The neighbourhood of Westborough

The neighbourhood of Send

By studying the responses at local level, this information:

• identified optimum methods for communicating with the public on the community safety strategy
• provided area inspectors and their teams with an indication of how best to engage their public in local areas, thereby ensuring maximum community participation.

The local findings were considered carefully when the Crime and Disorder Audit results and draft Community Safety Strategy were available for distribution. Using this information, articles were published in the local newspaper, Neighbourhood Watch Schemes were contacted and the literature was placed in public buildings such as libraries and health centres. Hard to reach groups, voluntary sector agencies, residents' groups and schools were also contacted by post with consultation documents. The Partnership was encouraged by the level of participation – 85+ returns – which is relatively high for a postal response.

The survey findings have also catalyzed proactive work with the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. Using the local information in the charts on the previous page together with a final question on Neighbourhood Watch membership, specific roads within the borough have been identified which do

not currently have a scheme but would like one. This information has been forwarded to local policing teams for them to take forward.

Finally, the Fear of Crime Survey features prominently within the Community Safety Strategy evaluation process.

Evaluation
Pre-Crime & Disorder Act, the **Safer Guildford Partnership** had really only monitored their activity through quarterly status reports from Project managers who detailed the numbers of clients served, number of schemes implemented etc. This information is all very helpful but did not measure the project's impact on crime and fear of crime. Therefore, the action plans were drawn up in such a way that this could be measured.

The assessment of the Community Safety Strategy will take place in 6 distinctive ways during its three-year term (See Appendix E):

- **On a quarterly basis** – (I) Crime data will be analysed to check for increases or reductions in the number of offences (II) status reports will be produced by each of the Project managers for the information of the Safer Guildford Executive Group.[2]
- On an **ongoing basis** – evaluation opportunities have been built into the action plans (See Appendix C)
- From an **annual review audit** of recorded crime data and partnership agency data.
- Through a proposed **annual seminar** held in early spring. The original consultees will be invited to listen to the previous year's activity. They will be able to offer comments on whether our community safety priorities remain the same for the forthcoming year and whether they envisage potential for working in partnership with Safer Guildford on these priorities.
- From the **full audit** to be conducted every three years.
- A full **Fear of Crime study** will also be conducted every three years in the year prior to the full audit.

The **Safer Guildford Partnership** has come a long way since its inception in 1997. With minimal bureaucracy the Partnership works methodically through the challenges presented in the Community Safety Strategy, whilst being flexible to changes within communities that may require the strategy to adapt as it progresses. The Fear of Crime Survey provided a cost-effective process of engaging the public and providing a depth of information which has enabled the Partnership to "bridge the gap" between the perceptions and reality of community safety.

This very holistic problem-oriented process is unique in Surrey and already this good practice is being disseminated throughout the county, with requests for presentations to divisional commanders and Police and Community Partnership Groups. The process is equally appropriate and relevant for areas across the country addressing the Community Safety Challenge presented by the Crime and Disorder Act (1998).

The Partnership is committed to making an impact on the community with projects and initiatives that really do make a difference to the people who live in, work or visit Guildford Borough. Through an integrated approach, we aim to provide longer term, preventative solutions to the underlying causes of crime and disorder, as well as continuing to provide an immediate response to Community Safety concerns.

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[2] The Safer Guildford Executive Group comprises of the Borough Council Chief Executive, the Divisional Police Superintendent, the County Council Partnership Director, and the Health Authority Representative.