

Working together to reduce crime  
and the fear of crime



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**April 2007-08**

Report by Nicky Collinson, Safer Surrey Heath Partnership Communications Officer

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Surrey Heath is one of the safest boroughs in England, with overall crime levels staying well below the national average. Within Surrey, Surrey Heath ranks second safest out of 11 boroughs/districts for overall levels of crime, and the third safest in terms of rate of crime per 1,000 population.

Throughout 2007/08, frontline officers from all six partner agencies continued to work with representatives from other organisations, and with the community, to maintain and enhance the borough's reputation as one of the safest places in the country to live, work and visit.

In the year to April 2008, the Partnership funded more than 15 different community safety projects, either directly or through funds allocated to its operational arms – the Joint Action Group (JAG) and the Community Incident Action Group (CIAG).

In July 2007, the Partnership undertook a major Community Safety Survey, canvassing the views of residents, businesses and young people (see section 3). Its first Partnership Plan was published in April 2008 following a Data Analysis Review and Annual Strategic Assessment carried out during July to October 2007 (see section 16).

## **2. CRIME AND DISORDER STATISTICS 2007/08**

In the year to April 2008, Surrey Heath saw a reduction in most crime areas, including violent crime, robbery, burglary and vehicle crime. The year ended with a small increase in overall crime (0.1 per cent); the only increases were in criminal damage and drugs offences. The latter was due to the recording of the offence of possession of cannabis as a sanctioned detection but not as a criminal conviction. According to Surrey Police, 100 per cent of these crimes have been detected.

## **3. COMMUNITY SAFETY SURVEY 2007**

Just over 80 per cent of respondents (1,304 completed surveys) to the Partnership's 2007 Community Safety Survey said fear of crime did not affect their lifestyle. Sixty-four per cent of respondents said they were satisfied with local policing – but 60 per cent did not believe there had been an improvement in crime and disorder in the previous 12 months. More than half of residents felt there was a sense of community spirit in their neighbourhood, compared with 40 per cent in 2004. Ninety-two per cent said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the area in which they lived, compared with 83 per cent in 2004. Just over 12 per cent had been a victim of crime in the previous 12 months, compared with 39 per cent in 2004.

Most residents' concerns focused on quality of life issues such as speeding vehicles, parking on pavements, litter and dog fouling. A survey of young people (541 completed surveys) revealed they were most concerned about litter, underage drinking, alcohol abuse, loud music and neighbourhood disputes. The primary concern of businesses surveyed was traffic-related, but included burglary and 'young people hanging around'.

Just over a third of respondents identified areas where they felt particularly unsafe, compared with 46 per cent in 2004. Camberley Town Centre was cited by over half of those, primarily due to drunken behaviour. Other areas identified were the Old Dean, Heatherside shops and Frimley Green recreation ground.

## **4. COMMUNITY INCIDENT ACTION GROUP (CIAG)**

Members of CIAG meet monthly to discuss early diversionary activities and interventions. Throughout the year, youth workers from Surrey County Council have continued to work closely with named individuals on the CIAG agenda. For example, one young person attended a motorcycle project at Frimley Green Youth Centre, and several young people were referred to Fire Wise Scheme through the Partnership-funded Arson Task Force (Surrey Fire and Rescue Service). Five CIAG cases were closed, and one young person has found and retained gainful employment having previously been an issue to most of the CIAG agencies.

## **5. JOINT ACTION GROUP (JAG)**

Members of JAG also meet monthly to discuss long-term solutions to reduce anti-social behaviour at identified locations, linking in with intelligence provided by CIAG. During the year, JAG processes were reviewed and restructured to ensure compliance with the National Intelligence Model. As at April 2008, six locations were being monitored, in accordance with the results of the 2007 Strategic Assessment Data Analysis Review. Targeted interventions have resulted in reduced incidences of anti-social behaviour in Camberley Town Centre and on Heatherside Recreation Ground. A scooter project, aimed at distracting young people from anti-social behaviour, has also been implemented. The Partnership continues to fund an administrator post to support the work of CIAG and JAG.

## **6. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

### **6.1 CCTV**

In April 2007, the Partnership agreed a bid from Surrey Police to install five new lamppost brackets for a mobile CCTV camera, bringing the total to 15. The use of mobile CCTV during the year has proved to be a successful tool in deterring anti-social behaviour and detecting crime. On one occasion in spring 2007, thanks to CCTV monitoring neighbourhood officers made four arrests in one evening for criminal damage to motor vehicles, with all four offenders subsequently charged with criminal damage. The success of the scheme led to an expansion of the scheme in April 2008, with funding agreed for a further six brackets and three more mobile cameras – bringing the total to 21 locations in the borough now CCTV ready.

### **6.2 Headcam trial**

In March 2008, Surrey Police utilised JAG intervention funds to begin trialling the use of a police headcam in several targeted locations. The results of the trial are currently being evaluated with a view to rolling it out across the borough. Initial findings suggest the device is proving a useful deterrent to anti-social behaviour, and a reliable source of evidence in proving offences.

## **7. YOUTH PROJECTS**

### **7.1 MUGA and teen shelter**

The Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) project, for which the Partnership allocated a sum of £150,000 to Surrey Heath Borough Council in 2006, was stalled in February 2008 after an amended proposal for the MUGA at Heatherside Recreation Ground was refused planning permission. The amended proposal followed two consultations with residents during 2007 undertaken by Surrey Heath Borough Council Parks & Countryside (with the majority of respondents in favour of the MUGA), and a youth consultation undertaken by Surrey County Council Youth Development Service and Surrey Connexions. After planning permission for the MUGA was refused, a petition signed by 400 young people was submitted to Surrey Heath Borough Council seeking a safe place for them to use. Discussions are ongoing between the Partnership, the relevant agencies and the young people of Surrey Heath as to the best way to utilise the funds to improve youth provision whilst meeting the requirements of the Partnership Plan.

A planning application for a teen shelter on Frimley Green Recreation Ground was withdrawn in the last quarter, when issues relating to byelaws and associated insurance arose. Borough council staff are still considering how best to proceed with this project.

### **7.2 SNAP club nights**

The Partnership continued to provide marketing support for the SNAP (Say No And Phone) club nights at Camberley Theatre for young people aged 11 to 16. Attendance has risen from an average attendance of 300 in April 07 to an average of 500 in April 08.

### **7.3 Voices 07**

In July 2007, Partnership funding allowed the Xpress Theatre Company to deliver a community safety schools outreach project for Years 6 and 7, as part of Camberley Theatre's

Voices 07 Youth Arts Festival. Four schools were visited – Kings International College, Hammond Community Junior School, Ravenscote Junior School and Watchetts Junior School – and 300 pupils took part. Feedback from pupil and teacher questionnaires distributed after the events were overwhelmingly positive.

#### **7.4 Camberley Youth Café**

During the year, the Partnership contributed towards the running costs of the Camberley Youth Café for young people aged 11 to 17 on Friday evenings. Thanks to extra funding from the Youth Opportunity Fund that the young people obtained themselves, the café was able to stay open during the summer 07 school holidays. Average attendance has risen during the year thanks to the hard work of all those involved – Surrey County Council's Youth Development Service, Surrey Heath Borough Council community safety and development officers, the coffee shop staff and the young people themselves.

### **8. DOMESTIC ABUSE**

#### **8.1 Sanctuary Scheme**

A funding bid of £10,000 from Surrey Heath Borough Council and partners was agreed to maintain availability of the Surrey Heath Sanctuary Scheme initiative to support victims of domestic abuse, and help them remain in their own home. In the year to April 08, there were 19 referrals to the scheme from Surrey Women's Aid.

#### **8.2 Outreach worker**

The Partnership continued its annual grant to fund an outreach worker for Surrey Heath to help victims of domestic abuse.

#### **8.3 Surrey Domestic Abuse Awareness Week**

The Partnership contributed funds towards the costs of pens to support Surrey Domestic Abuse Awareness Week in November 07, and supported the Week with PR and promotion.

### **9. PUBLIC PLACE DISORDER**

#### **9.1 Taxi Marshals**

Between May and August 2007, the Partnership funded a trial of Taxi Marshals to work in Camberley town centre on Friday and Saturday nights. Due to its success, the Partnership agreed funding for a further year to September 2008. A police study undertaken during the initial pilot showed that crime and disorder in Camberley town centre on Friday and Saturday nights had declined by almost 30 per cent since the introduction of Taxi Marshals. In addition, 70 per cent of people, when questioned, said they felt safer with them on duty.

### **10. NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPROVEMENT**

#### **10.1 Neighbourhood Watch**

During 07/08, the Partnership funded the production costs of the Neighbourhood Watch magazine, Heathwatch. It also paid for repairs to be made to Neighbourhood Watch's trailer and a new PA system. The Neighbourhood Watch team was able to take the trailer to various events around the borough and to support the community, and has since found corporate sponsorship for Heathwatch from local Camberley business, Churchills Property Services.

#### **10.2 PCSOs**

The Partnership continued to contribute towards the cost of employing Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Surrey Heath. Surrey Heath now has 14 PCSOs.

#### **10.3 Tune In initiative**

Officers from the Partnership agencies worked together to pilot and deliver three Tune In Neighbourhood Improvement Workshops. The first was for residents in Mytchett and Deepcut (May 07), the second for Bagshot and Windlesham residents (November 07) and the third for Frimley and Frimley Green residents (March 08). The events were very well attended with the recurring themes of speeding, youth provision and community safety arising as issues concerning residents. Perhaps the most significant outcome of the events was the

establishment of a new community-led youth café in Bagshot after like-minded individuals in the community were brought together at the Bagshot and Windlesham youth provision workshop. More information about Tune In can be found at [www.surreyheath.gov.uk/community/tunein](http://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/community/tunein)

## **11. DOMESTIC BURGLARY**

### **11.1 Anti-burglary signs**

In April 2007, the Partnership agreed a Surrey Police bid to purchase six free-standing metal anti-burglary signs to be used on an ad hoc basis, in conjunction with increased police patrols and leaflet drops in targeted areas. According to Surrey Heath's Crime Reduction Advisor, the signs proved an effective deterrent in the areas they were used. During 2007/08, incidents of domestic burglary fell by 22.1 per cent.

## **12. PROPERTY THEFT**

### **12.1 Anti-theft materials**

In July 2007, the Partnership agreed a funding bid from Surrey Police to pay for 10,000 double-sided anti-theft window stickers for vehicles. The Partnership also contributed towards garden shed burglary signs, Operation Decode, to be used by Surrey Police. During 2007/08, vehicle crime, which includes theft from a car, fell by 6.1 per cent. Robbery from personal or business property fell by 63.3 per cent.

## **13. ARSON**

### **13.1 Arson Task Force**

A bid from Surrey Fire and Rescue Service/Surrey County Council resulted in £10,000 being agreed for the continuation of a joint project with Surrey Police to reduce arson incident levels and increase reporting. Since the introduction of the ATF in 2004, Surrey has seen a decrease in the number of deliberate fires from 2,151 in 2003/04 to 1,495 in 2006/07. During 2007/08 the number of deliberate fires (excluding vehicle fires) in Surrey Heath increased slightly by seven per cent, from 122 to 130. This figure remains low, and just below the four-year average (131). During the year, deliberate fires in vehicles decreased by 49 per cent, from 43 to 22. The activity of the ATF remains an important factor in maintaining this low level of deliberate fires, according to Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.

## **14. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

### **14.1 Drugs Focus Team**

In 2006, the Partnership agreed a funding bid to be used during 2007 by the Surrey Police Drugs Focus Team to initiate a drugs-related project. During the past year, there were 12 people charged with the supply of Class A drugs and 208 drugs offences. There was a 65 per cent increase in drug detection over the year. According to Surrey Police, these figures are a reflection of increased activity by officers, and that drug-related crime is only recorded as a result of police searches.

### **14.2 Life Education Centres Life Bus**

A grant of £10,000 towards the Life Education Centres (LEC) Life Bus initiative concluded a three-year funding bid up to April 08. The initiative targets primary schools and educates primary school age children about substance misuse and how to make healthy life choices. During 2007/08, LEC carried out 30.5 workshops in 10 schools in Surrey Heath. Some 2,700 pupils attended and four new schools were introduced to the initiative.

## **15. CASUALTY REDUCTION**

The Partner agencies have continued to implement initiatives to improve driver behaviour and reduce the number of those people killed or seriously injured on the roads. These included regular enforcement days by Surrey Police, the installation of Vehicle Activated Signs by Surrey County Council, and Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's Safe Drive, Stay Alive

campaign targeting young people. The Community Speed Watch scheme continued to contribute to road safety awareness.

## **16. PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2008-09**

In accordance with its statutory duties, the Partnership published its first 'Partnership Plan' in April 2008. This is a rolling document, which will be reviewed and updated every six months. An Annual Strategic Assessment will feed into the Plan to ensure that crime and disorder reduction targets and objectives remain intelligence led.

For 2008-09, the Partnership's community safety priorities are:

- Traffic and road safety, with a focus on speeding and dangerous parking
- Public place disorder
- Domestic abuse
- Environmental issues
- Alcohol and substance misuse
- Priority crime, e.g. vehicle crime and domestic burglary

## **17. COMMUNICATIONS**

In March 2007, the Partnership created the post of Communications Officer to devise and deliver a communications strategy to promote the work of the Partnership (both internally and externally) and to help it meet its objective to reduce fear of crime in the borough. Reporting to the Partnership Chairman, the Communications Officer acts a primary point of contact for partner officers as well as the public, working closely with partner agencies' press teams.

As part of the Communications Strategy for 2007/08, the Partnership's image was streamlined in May 2007 with a new simplified logo and branding guidelines. In October 2007, the Partnership launched a stand-alone website at [www.safersurreyheath.info](http://www.safersurreyheath.info) to provide more comprehensive information about the Partnership, and more transparency in relation to its procedures and objectives. During the year to April 2008, 29 Partnership press releases were issued with 93 per cent coverage in the local and regional media. Partner community safety initiatives were also featured in all four issues of the borough magazine, *Heathscene*.

## **18. ABOUT THE SAFER SURREY HEATH PARTNERSHIP**

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, agencies in England and Wales have a statutory duty to form a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) to tackle key community safety issues. The agencies required to take part are the borough and county councils, primary care trust (PCT), fire authority and police authority. CDRPs are required to review the levels and patterns of crime and disorder in the area, and develop and implement strategies to tackle these problems.

In Surrey Heath, the CDRP is known as the Safer Surrey Heath Partnership and is made up of Surrey Heath Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (a department of Surrey County Council), Surrey Police, Surrey PCT and Surrey Police Authority.

All six partners work together to provide reassurance, raise awareness of community safety issues and implement a Partnership Plan to reduce crime, and fear of crime. The Partnership works closely with safer neighbourhood policing teams, as well as voluntary organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch, to maintain the borough's high safety record.

[www.safersurreyheath.info](http://www.safersurreyheath.info)