



**Surrey County Council's Local  
Committee  
COMMUNITY SAFETY IN  
RUNNYMEDE  
September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006**

**KEY ISSUE:**

The report provides an update on the work of the Safer Runnymede Partnership. It incorporates local and comparative crime data and information on recent initiatives including neighbourhood policing. Borough and police partners have also contributed to the report and will attend the meeting to answer questions.

**SUMMARY:**

Surrey is again the county with the lowest recorded crime figures in England, and Runnymede remains one of the safest places to live in the country. Although the period to June 2006 showed a small increase in total crime, latest figures just published to August 2006 indicate a reduction in total crimes reported, compared to the same period in 2005.

The Safer Runnymede partnership continues to work productively to promote community safety and reduce levels of crime and fear of crime in this area. It is now one year into its 2005-8 Strategy, and the Partnership continues to work together and initiate improved measures to tackle crime.

Funding for the crime and disorder reduction partnership last year (2005-6) included such projects as:

- research at the accident and emergency unit of St Peter's Hospital to assess the proportion of admissions where alcohol use was a factor;
- a range of activities and materials suggested by the Joint Action Group such as property marking kits and subsidised places on playschemes for young people in need of early intervention;
- the Junior Citizen programme which educates local schoolchildren on

- how to stay safe and to act as responsible members of society;
- provision of “sanctuary rooms” and additional security measures for people threatened with domestic violence from a perpetrator now living elsewhere, so that they have a choice as to whether to move house or not.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Local Committee are asked to:

- a) Note the progress made in promoting community safety in Runnymede, and recent crime statistics;**
- b) Delegate responsibility for expenditure of the County Council’s local crime and disorder funding in Runnymede to the Area Director;**
- c) Endorse the importance of the contribution of all services to community safety in Runnymede;**
- d) Comment on any issues of concern arising from the report or information presented.**

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| <b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b>                      | <b>Safer Runnymede Partnership Crime,<br/>Disorder and Drug Reduction Strategy 2005-<br/>2008</b> |

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Safer Runnymede Partnership is comprised of representatives of six agencies: Surrey Police, Surrey County Council, Runnymede Borough Council, the Health Authority, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Police Authority. This crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) is statutory under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and was established to tackle crime and disorder by auditing and monitoring local incidences of crime, and working together to devise and deliver an effective strategy to deal with it, including tackling the fear of crime.
- 1.2 All services contribute to the crime and disorder agenda, in line with Section 17 of the 1998 Act, which requires local authorities to mainstream crime and disorder by ensuring that all services have regard to the community safety implications of their activities.
- 1.3 In April 2006 the Local Area Agreement between Surrey County Council and the Government took effect. This distributes funding via the county to partnerships to deliver a number of priorities set by GOSE, most notably an overall reduction in crime county-wide of 13.2% by March 2008. The Safer & Stronger Communities Board, chaired by the Chief Constable, oversees delivery of the key outcomes in the Agreement and receives progress reports on local CDRP activity. Each CDRP has particular targets negotiated with GOSE (for a detailed list see **Annex 2**) and the target for Runnymede is to reduce total crimes reported by 11% by March 2008.
- 1.4 The borough level CDRP is assisted in delivering its targets by the work of two important multi-agency meetings:
  - the Joint Action Group (JAG), which meets monthly to review local hotspots for crime and anti-social behaviour and to agree actions to tackle the problem;
  - the Community Incident Action Group (CIAG), which meets monthly to monitor individuals who have come to the notice of agencies because of the impact of their behaviour on the community, and to agree service interventions to bring about improvements in their behaviour (which may include a wide range of alternatives which may include Anti-Social Behaviour Orders).
- 1.5 The last audit of crime and disorder, and fear of crime, in Runnymede was undertaken in 2004, and showed a reduction on previous years in the proportion of the local population who feared crime to the extent that it affected their lifestyle (from 41% to 22%). Given the low rates of crime in Runnymede in comparison to the adjacent capital and other parts of the UK, the Partnership aims to reduce this proportion to below 20% of all residents by keeping them informed to promote reassurance.
- 1.6 In 2005 the Safer Runnymede Partnership devised and agreed a new strategy for the period 2005-8 with a number of new targets, many set by central government. These targets are listed in **Annex 2**, and steps towards achieving them are outlined in section 3.

## 2. ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

**2.1 Annex 1** shows recent crime data trends against the targets agreed with GOSE as part of the Local Area Agreement, using Home Office statistics. The crime figures for Runnymede are set against those for Surrey as a whole, and it should be borne in mind that Surrey has the lowest crime rate in the country. The table below indicates total crimes in each borough.

| Borough            | Total crimes June 05-06 | Percentage change over year |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Elmbridge          | 4833                    | -0.1%                       |
| Epsom & Ewell      | 2634                    | -1.2%                       |
| Guildford          | 4957                    | -13.3%                      |
| Mole Valley        | 2183                    | -11.1%                      |
| Reigate & Banstead | 5060                    | -1.0%                       |
| Runnymede          | 3372                    | +1.6%                       |
| Spelthorne         | 5131                    | -1.7%                       |
| Surrey Heath       | 2696                    | +0.1%                       |
| Tandridge          | 3195                    | +10.1%                      |
| Waverley           | 3098                    | -6.5%                       |
| Woking             | 4316                    | +11.7%                      |

**2.2 Vehicle crime:** whereas there has been a county-wide fall of 21% in the theft of vehicles, Runnymede has seen a 15% increase. One factor thought to be relevant to this increase is a recent rise in the price of scrap metal, as many of the stolen vehicles have been relatively old and parked on the street for long periods. The borough's proximity to London may also be relevant. The small rise in thefts from vehicles reflects a surge in such crimes after Christmas, when many people received new Satellite Navigation systems, together with the ongoing problem of laptops left in cars: few people are aware that criminals can detect laptops even when placed in a locked boot. Additionally, the borough's excellent transport links (M25, M3, A30) offer criminals an easy escape route. The Partnership has tried to address this issue with CCTV in Wick Road, use of variable message signs, and a number of targeted police operations.

The increase in thefts of pedal cycles has been addressed by Safer Runnymede through public awareness campaigns at fetes and fairs around the borough. Several offenders have been caught in the act by use of CCTV.

### 2.3 Common assault/wounding/personal robbery

"Theft from a person" offences have halved and personal robberies have also decreased, in line with the trend across Surrey. At the same time common assaults have increased, although the number of incidents remains very low (135) as a proportion of the total for the county as a whole (2460). There are very few random attacks in Runnymede, although where they occur they generate publicity and understandable public concern.

### 2.4 Domestic abuse

This year (April 2005-2006) Runnymede has seen an increase of 5% in the number of incidents of domestic abuse reported to the police (986), although

neighbouring boroughs have seen a greater increase in reporting. The proportion of such incidents committed by repeat offenders has remained static at 27%. The targets in the Strategy are to encourage more reporting of domestic violence, and to reduce the number of repeat offences. The domestic violence outreach service in Runnymede, contracted to Surrey Women's Aid and funded by the CDRP, received 1,223 calls and met with 187 women to provide them with help and practical support, over a nine-month period in 2005.

### 2.5 Criminal damage

There has been an increase of less than 1% in such offences, although other parts of Surrey have seen a greater increase. Incidents such as damage to car wing mirrors and tyres are often alcohol-related and take place as perpetrators make their way home from town centre pubs late at night. Where graffiti is sprayed in public spaces, Runnymede council's graffiti hit squad can ensure swift removal.

- 2.5 Domestic burglaries increased a little over the year as a result of a spate of offences in the Chertsey/Addlestone area, following release of a prolific offender earlier in 2006, but the culprits were apprehended and convicted relatively swiftly.

## 3. PROGRESS TOWARDS THE 2005-8 STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Local Committee received details of the Partnership's Crime, Disorder and Drug Reduction Strategy 2005-8 at their meeting in September 2005, when the document had been published recently. Since the targets (detailed in **Annex 2**) were put in place, there have been a number of new developments outlined below, which are expected to contribute to achievement of the targets by the end of the three years.

### **Borough Information Management system**

- 3.2 In autumn 2005 the borough council, together with Surrey Police, launched a new on-line reporting system to enable residents to tell them about concerns such as vandalism, litter, abandoned cars or more serious crimes such as drug dealing, giving full details via their website. Residents complete a form from their personal computers at home at their convenience, and this is sent automatically to the appropriate council or police department so that a response can be made quickly. More and more residents are using this new method of reporting anti-social behaviour, and the Joint Action Group discusses a co-ordinated response where such reports identify an ongoing problem, at its monthly meetings.

### **CCTV links on station platforms**

- 3.3 In spring 2006 a new safety initiative was launched in partnership with South West Trains. Runnymede Borough Council's CCTV control centre was linked up with 63 cameras on railway stations in the borough, enabling 24 hour surveillance and response to anti-social behaviour as well as the ability to track offenders when they leave the station and move into town centres. This has assisted a fast and effective police response to crime and disorder. The stations covered by this CCTV monitoring include all the stations in Runnymede and Spelthorne together with Weybridge. An announcement on

the preferred bidder for the South West rail franchise (for a new contract commencing February 2007) is expected this autumn. However, it is not anticipated that any change of train operator would threaten the success of this initiative.

### **Surrey Together team**

- 3.4 The Surrey Together initiative came into being last autumn, and is a partnership between Surrey County Council, the Surrey Police Authority and Surrey Police. Teams comprising Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), a sergeant, a youth development adviser and a trading standards officer are deployed in areas where there have been persistent reports of disruptive or nuisance behaviour by young people. Their role is to form relationships with young people to find out what lies behind their behaviour and to offer positive referrals to employment and training advice or to drugs counselling services. The North West Surrey Together team has been deployed in New Haw in recent months, as well as in parts of Surrey Heath and Woking. The Joint Action Group advises on where the team should be deployed.

## **4. NEIGHBOURHOODS PATHFINDER**

- 4.1 North West Surrey is a pathfinder area for the Home Office's neighbourhood policing initiative, which is due to be rolled out nationally by April 2008. The pathfinder began in autumn 2005. Its aim is to "create confident, safe and secure neighbourhoods where people know that the police and partners understand the issues that matter most to them and are able to tackle them together" (Surrey's Neighbourhood Policing Programme implementation plan, draft April 2006). This is to be achieved by putting in place a dedicated team of uniformed police officers and community support officers in every neighbourhood, to focus on low-level crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 4.2 The NW Surrey Basic Command Unit of Surrey Police (BCU) monitors and develops neighbourhood policing in its area. In Runnymede, there are nine neighbourhood clusters each of which has named officers (see **Annex 3 map**), co-ordinated and tasked by Runnymede Neighbourhood Inspector, Roger Nield. Residents are encouraged to contact their local officers by telephone or email, or in person at surgeries and panel meetings held in local venues, to let them know about problems or activities in their street or park (to find out who are their neighbourhood officers, residents can view the internet site [www.surrey.police.uk](http://www.surrey.police.uk) and click inside the inter-active map for their area).
- 4.3 As well as speaking directly to their neighbourhood policing team, residents can highlight local concerns to the Surrey Police Authority at the Police and Community Participation Group (PCPG) meetings. The next meetings in Runnymede are as follows:  
*Thursday November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7.30pm, to be confirmed (Chertsey/Addlestone)*  
*Thursday November 9<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm in Royal Holloway College (Egham).*

## **5. FUTURE WORKING**

- 5.1 The NW Basic Command Unit area, led by Chief Superintendent Sue Warren, has worked together across the division in recent months, for example to monitor and tackle Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPOs), and it is expected that divisional level working to share best practice and undertaken joint work will continue to develop. Prolific and Priority Offenders are an identified minority of offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate level of crime and disorder.
- 5.2 The Home Office are introducing the number 101 as a single non-emergency number, particularly for calls to report anti-social behaviour. A project team from Surrey Police, Surrey County Council, and all Districts and Boroughs are working on the implementation, which is scheduled to be by June 2007.
- 5.3 The neighbourhood policing approach will continue to develop, and to inform how partners work together with police to share expertise and ideas.
- 5.4 The Safer and Stronger Board, established to monitor progress on the Local Area Agreement, will continue to be a significant player in working with the CDRPs to channel funding towards practical measures which lead to real improvements.

## **6.0 REPORTING AND CONTACT**

- 6.1 Residents with a serious crime to report should always contact 999, the emergency number, and ask for police.
- 6.2 Residents who wish to report a less serious but significant crime or act of anti-social behaviour may contact their neighbourhood police officer by telephone or email (see police website or Annex 3 for details), or report the problem to the borough council using an on-line form on their website (under FAQs: Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour).
- 6.3 A further option to report anti-social or nuisance behaviour is by using the government website: [www.direct.gov.uk/mycouncil](http://www.direct.gov.uk/mycouncil). This allows the user to identify the problem they wish to report and to connect via a link directly to the relevant borough or county service.
- 6.4 As detailed in 5.2, from 2007 there will be a national telephone number for reporting anti-social behaviour.

## **APPENDICES:**

- 1. Home Office BCS comparator crime data (July 05-June 06).**
- 2. List of Safer Runnymede Strategy 2005-8: aims & targets.**
- 3. Map of neighbourhoods with the names of police officers and police community support officers, and a list of contact details.**