

Joint Enforcement Team - one year on

In 2013 the Police and Crime Commissioner proposed to Surrey Police and the local authorities in Surrey that they could enhance their joint working and rationalise resources to take a zero tolerance approach to address low level crime, antisocial behaviour, on street parking management and environmental crime.

Two pilots (in Reigate and Banstead and Spelthorne) agreed by the Community Safety Board, sought to test the vision of the PCC that in Surrey an integrated model could be adopted where co located specially trained council officers and police officers deal quickly with problems and improve the public's sense of safety by making the most of all the legal powers the authorities have. By collaborating, people causing persistent nuisance and concern to residents can be dealt with using every legal power available. The effect was that the different powers held by Police and Council Officers were more than doubly effective when applied jointly.

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) and Spelthorne Borough Council (SBC) both agreed to act as pilot sites and have developed different approaches, variations on a theme, to delivering the project.

In June 2015 the JET Governance Board commissioned a one year review into the project. The aim was to understand what had gone well and what lessons had been learnt from the pilots.

Successes –

The report highlighted a number of areas where the pilots showed clear benefits to the local authority, the Neighbourhood Teams and importantly the public.

Resourcing - The JET team, whether on joint operations or working on their own, are establishing themselves as an important asset for residents to address anti-social behaviour. For the Neighbourhood Team, the JET officers can be a support to the police on less serious crime prevention or to tackle low level anti-social behaviour. This emphasises the flexibility of JET to do more with less by providing a valuable asset to the local police and residents of Surrey.

Some stakeholders significantly benefitted from the increased manpower JET provided which in turn increased their ability to keep the residents safe by identifying more areas for concern such as unlicensed taxis and highlighting unsafe premises.

Joint working and joint tasking - There were several reported advantages to joint working. These included the following:

- Formalised procedures for joint working and operations
- Improved working relationships
- Generated a more cohesive and team approach
- Increased the knowledge of both the police and council workers of each other's responsibilities
- The result of joint working and tasking was better sharing of information to get a clearer picture on the connections and links between police and JET tasking.

Both pilots have enjoyed a number of successful joint operations. The police reported they were particularly happy with the visibility, engagement and reassurance operations during the autumn 2014 anti-burglary campaign in Reigate and Banstead.

On a practical note a local authority officer noted - *'Often you find different people are working on the same thing. We find that we have a police issue in one area and you have an environmental health issue in another area – you don't realise you are working on the same thing and this brings it together. You end up with more agencies working on the same case...it gives more faith for the complainant point of view...we are saying the same thing'*.

Enhancing Co-Location - Police and council employees have been co-located across the county for some time. However, the depth of relationships and cooperation were different depending on the Borough/District. The benefit of the JET pilot in building closer relationships and increasing formal/informal liaison was significant in the Reigate & Banstead pilot. It was felt by most that co-location played an important part in that success.

Increased productivity – the data supplied by both areas showed an increase in enforcement activity. In particular Spelthorne issues 120 fixed penalty notices (FPNs) in three months. The activities logs showed how much progress was achieved. This is also an indicator of where time and resources are saved.

Branding, uniform and communications – most contributors to the review felt it was important to have a 'JET brand'. They identified a number of benefits with an established and recognised brand for JET.

- Projects a visual image of JET
- Increases awareness of the JET
- Communicates a simple message of 'joint working' for residents

'I believe there is a need for a physical presence that is easily identifiable...it's there...it gives a visible reassurance...making visible our responsibilities'.

'The branding is absolutely critical and non-negotiable. The branding aspect to it is crucial to its success...having spoken to the guys...parents with their cars parked outside the school...as the vehicle pulls up although they haven't got enforcement powers on double yellow lines...the parents do a quick jump in the car and drive off...the presence of authority it carries...similar experiences on foot with a positive impact...'.

'I think they are recognised if they are in uniform as someone who is in control and can say "you can't do that"...'

Overall, the branding was very effective. Most supported uniformed JET officers and vehicles as it presented a reassuring presence and authority in addition to PCSOs and the police.

Many residents felt that the presence of a uniformed authority was reassuring for most. As one resident claimed that the 'fear of crime rather than the action' was what residents felt the most.

'Reassurance...It's the perception of fear of crime rather than the action'.

'If it's the ones that wear the yellow jackets they are in the park quite often'.

Shared information - Sharing of knowledge, information and intelligence enabled the police to carry out more 'targeted enforcement' and there is evidence to suggest that informal information sharing had benefits for both parties but in particular the police.

For all involved the benefit of better information sharing has been an increase in productivity through less time spent with more than one agency working on the same concerns.

'We have the official tasking process, but if things come in-between we just naturally have those conversations. If it needs to be raised for the next meeting it's raised...just to flag something is being done. We are in a fortunate position that we are co-located so it does work'.

Cultural change - for many, especially local authority officers, the pilots meant a change in working practises. More enforcement responsibilities and a visible presence on the streets was a concern for some. However, the benefits from this cultural change as part of the JET pilots included an increase in

- An increased exchange of dialogue between stakeholders who would not have otherwise connected as successfully
- Closer communications and liaison increased knowledge share
- Familiarity generated trust and transparency
- Productivity was improved through better joint working

All these benefits enabled the police, JET officers and other stakeholders to feel a greater sense of 'team work' enabling a more efficient service for residents and other stakeholders.

Relationships - *'I think it has huge potential. The basic drive behind the JET scheme is a very positive one. It's about working closer together...for me I think the JET partnership strengthened the formal and informal relationships with Reigate & Banstead Borough Council...they were already good but I think they progressed further at the point of being really very productive'.*

The Reigate & Banstead pilot created an excellent network of stakeholders for joint working and built on relationships which grew into successful multi-agency operations.

*'The nice thing from my perspective is that it starts to break down those silos that exist...in any organisation where you have a reasonably complex structure it's a fact that from a working relationship everybody starting to work together but the technology is coming in with it well...'.
(Councillor James Durrant, Portfolio Holder)*

Public perceptions and reassurance – the review carried out a number of focus groups with residents who had come in contact with the JET. Feedback was positive and wished it to continue. There was recognition that JET deals with everyday problems of anti-social behaviour which impact on the lives of ordinary residents. JET is a visible representation of how seriously this issue is being taken and is perceived to offer a portal for residents' concerns.

'The JET team is the output where you can make some comments and recommendations and ask them to address a problem and there is a resource there to do it. Certainly the people I talk to are very positive...' (Male, Resident, Spelthorne)

Reassurance is very important for residents especially amongst older age groups. A uniformed presence encourages dialogue and deters criminal or anti-social behaviour. The uniformed JET officers represented a visible investment in the security and well-being of residents and businesses. For the public, this change has been a positive success.

JET also represented a 'one stop shop' approach to anti-social behaviour for residents and other stakeholders.

This is very attractive to residents as their knowledge of council services is generally low. There were reports of residents contacting councillors for help with anti-social behaviour, so this could also provide a useful contact point for councillors.

Lessons learnt –

Personnel and cultural change- The most significant challenge during pre-launch and implementation was in the area of 'personnel' in both Reigate & Banstead and Spelthorne. The greater enforcement role and the requirement to wear uniforms affected some staff and caused concern. This challenge is particularly difficult to overcome if enforcement activity is at a minimal.

'One of the problems I have had is when some of our enforcement officers are not enforcing...you shouldn't be hesitant in enforcing the legitimate bylaws of the Borough...we have weeded out that sort of attitude...if they do encounter any problems the police will be with them or respond very quickly'. (Councillor Victor Broad, Leader of Council, Reigate & Banstead Council)

Bespoke training, alongside the CSAS accreditation course and mentoring, especially from Neighbourhood Police colleagues improved confidence of local authority staff to undertake a more visual and proactive role.

Cultural differences between local authority and the Neighbourhood Team have been tested and while some frustrations were raised about differing working practises these were quickly overcome. Neighbourhood Teams did report that it is important that JET officers have the right skill/mind set to generate confidence in their police colleagues and partners; they can then be trusted and relied on.

Vetting caused a number of issues early on in both projects. To successfully able to use the accredited powers local authority officers must pass Surrey Police vetting. Unfortunately, several applicants failed and therefore could not progress. This caused delays and frustrations. Clear guidance and advice is now provided to applicants. While the process cannot be changed, better communication has been adopted.

All this learning has now been taken on board by both Reigate & Banstead and Spelthorne. The understanding gained from the pilots covering personnel and vetting will be of great value in the recruitment of JET officers in the future and help inform other Boroughs/District thinking of trialling a JET pilot.

Working hours – The '9-5, 5 days a week working hours' issue could be considered a serious barrier to more effective JET operations especially around anti-social behaviour (i.e. noise) at the weekends and in the evening.

There is clear evidence from residents that they struggle during these hours to address noise issues and other anti-social behaviour. In both areas, an out of hours service is in place or being developed.

Performance monitoring – the review found that most felt that the performance and measurement of JET pilot project would be a challenge.

Due to the nature of the pilots it was a challenge to put performance measures in place as the systems and processes were being tested as part of the pilot process. This is a similar problem with any pilot or concept testing process.

The JET Governance Board is working with colleagues to develop a performance management tool which will show productivity, customer satisfaction and any savings.

Technical Support - technology issues presented some problems for both pilots. In particular, the use of radio communications between police and JET officers was limited to the JET officers' radio network.

In the initial stages of the Reigate & Banstead pilot there were problems with Mobile Data Terminals which on the whole were fixed. This impacted on the ability of JET officers to issue FPNs.

There still remains some technical issues around 'police' being represented on the ticket issued by JET officers which may have implications if a case is taken to court. This problem is currently being addressed.

Opportunities –

The two pilots are proving themselves to be valuable and workable models in Surrey. While both areas suffered challenges they are demonstrating successes and a new way of working. There are a number of emerging areas which make a strong case for adopting a Joint Enforcement Team.

New ASB Legislation – the 2013 ASB legislation and powers was designed to be flexible and allow professionals to adapt them to protect victims in a wide range of situations. However, as the guidance says, the new powers work best when complemented by more effective ways of working in partnership, by sharing information and using early and informal interventions. The JET has proved in the two pilot areas that it can respond quickly and visibly to residents' concerns. Using all the powers available, the new ASB powers will make JET stronger and more productive.

Cross District and Borough border work – *it has been reported that environmental ASB such as fly tipping is up 50% across the county. With few partners able to meet that increase in demand alone, a local JET which can proactively work with other areas and partners is a valuable commodity. East Surrey CSP has developed an action plan which uses the JET officers as an important asset.*

Summary

Success has been down to the tremendous energy and enthusiasm for the project particularly from elected leaders and senior officers. The JET concept has been very well received by stakeholders and residents.

'100% for it, absolutely...I will fight to keep JET in the Borough'. (Councillor Victor Broad, Leader of Council, Reigate & Banstead Council)

'I think it is a fabulous idea. I just think we should increase... the more that are doing this the more learning there will be'. (Councillor Penny Forbes-Forsyth, Spelthorne Borough Council)

There are also significant benefits for the police and council. Joint working has worked particularly well; there has been an increase in productivity and clear evidence of more effective/efficient working relationships.

As with all pilot concepts, problems and barriers appear during the timeline of the project. Most of the initial problems have been successfully addressed. Learning has been made in a number of crucial areas which will benefit not only Reigate & Banstead and Spelthorne, but any future Boroughs/Districts who join the project.

Residents perceived JET as the answer to their daily anti-social behaviour problems which were not being addressed by either the council or police.

The firm foundation established in Reigate & Banstead and Spelthorne has provided an excellent service for residents concerned with anti-social behaviour problems.

There is potential for JET to provide coverage around Surrey which will enhance the resources and capacity to engage successfully on a county wide basis anti-social behaviour and criminality, which would be a positive asset for all stakeholders and residents in Surrey.

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