

**REPORT TO: POLICY COMMITTEE – 5 MARCH 2008**

**SUBJECT: EVALUATION OF THE SAFER STREETS INITIATIVE 2007**

**BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The Policy Committee is invited to review the evaluation of the Safer Streets initiative conducted by Moray Community Safety Partnership over the festive period 2007.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section A (41) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the statutory functions of the Council under the Government in Scotland Act 2003, to initiate, maintain and facilitate Community Planning.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Policy Committee is invited to review the evaluation of the Safer Streets initiative conducted by Moray Community Safety Partnership over the festive period 2007.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Towards the end of 2007, the Scottish Government made funding of £10,000 available to Moray Community Safety Partnership in order to tackle the issue of alcohol fuelled street violence. The funding was released upon the Partnership's submission of a problem profile, and associated problem solving plan. A problem profile examining the extent of the alcohol fuelled street violence problem in and around Elgin High Street was prepared by the Grampian Police analyst in Moray. A sub-group of the partnership, including representatives from Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, Moray Health and Social Care Partnership, Grampian Police and The Moray Council, met to consider how best to address any issues identified in the problem profile.
- 3.2 Given the relatively small amount of funding available, it was agreed that any initiative could not be Moray-wide, and that effort should be concentrated in a smaller defined area, namely Elgin High Street and its immediate surrounding area. A two-part process was agreed upon whereby a number of Security Industry Authority licensed door stewards would act as taxi marshals at the taxi rank on High Street, and Stagecoach would be contracted to operate a late night bus service between Elgin and the towns of Forres and Buckie. Each of the bus services also required the presence of marshals to ensure the safety of late night travellers. A series of posters advertising the bus service and promoting the "Don't Drink and Drive" message was produced by Grampian Fire and Rescue Service and distributed amongst licensed premises in the target area. Additionally, a series of credit card sized cards were produced and distributed by Moray Health and Social Care Partnership which carried the telephone numbers of several local taxi firms, along with general safety advice and a sensible drinking message. Media interest was

generated by Moray Council's Press Office, leading to interviews on local radio, and articles in the local press.

- 3.3 The initiative operated every weekend from 8 December 2007, and ended on 1 January 2008. It also operated on Christmas morning, and the morning of New Year's Day.
- 3.4 At the conclusion of the initiative the Grampian Police analyst prepared an evaluation document (**Appendix 1**) which examined whether or not there had been a reduction in alcohol fuelled street violence in the target area during the period of the initiative, when compared with the previous year. He also examined whether there had been any displacement of violence linked to the provision of the late night bus service.
- 3.5 Of the crimes types examined, it was found that in 2006 there had been 27, but in 2007 that number had reduced to 12.
- 3.6 No displacement of violent crime to Forres or Buckie was evident.
- 3.7 485 people made use of the late-night buses. Each paid a flat fare of £3, and the cost to the Partnership was £5000. There were no incidents on any bus.
- 3.8 The taxi marshalling element of the initiative was very well received.

#### 4. **SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

- (a) **Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan**  
Within the Social Programme, there is a commitment to work in partnership within communities and other agencies to promote positive and inclusive communities and to minimise the incidents and impact of anti-social behaviour
- (b) **Policy and Legal**  
There is no policy or legal requirements.
- (c) **Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**  
All resources were met by the additional funding provided for this initiative by Scottish Government. Risks during the initiative were managed through the use of marshals.
- (d) **Consultations**  
Consultation on the development of the project included Grampian Fire and Rescue Service, NHS Grampian, Moray Health and Social Care Partnership and Grampian Police. In addition Councillors McGillivray and Cree were also on the Sub Group.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1** The aim of the initiative was to reduce the number of alcohol fuelled crimes of violence and disorder in the area of Elgin High Street. An examination of quantitative data provided by Grampian Police shows that there were significantly fewer incidents within the target area this year, than there were in the same period in the year before. Whilst it would be reasonable to conclude that this is likely to have been due in some part to the initiative, it cannot be said with statistical certainty that there was a cause and effect relationship, as other variables will have been at work.
- 5.2** Qualitative data shows that the provision of taxi marshals was very well received by members of the public, taxi operators and police officers on duty during their operating times. This was the lowest cost element of the initiative, but the one that seems to have had the greater impact on achieving the Partnership's intended outcome.
- 5.3** The provision of late night buses, each with 2 marshals on board consumed the greater proportion of the available funding. In total, 485 people took advantage of the service. This represents a cost to the Partnership of about £11 per passenger, before including the cost of the marshals. Stagecoach have indicated that they considered the running of the service to be a success, and there were no incidents on the buses, and no evidence of displacement of problem behaviour to Buckie or Forres. In simple terms, the bus service appears to have done what it was supposed to do. However, it was expensive and was condemned by taxi operators who saw it as a threat to their business. Opinion is divided as to whether or not 485 passengers represented good uptake of the service.
- 5.4** Any recommendation about a future initiative to achieve a reduction in alcohol fuelled street disorder would, in all likelihood, include the recruitment and use of taxi or street marshals. A cost / benefit analysis of the late-night bus service might lead to the conclusion that the benefit derived was not sufficient to justify the cost.

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Background Papers:  
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