

POLICING, PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY IN LIVERPOOL

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Whilst we both have full time jobs, we have been seconded into Liverpool City Council's unique partnership to try and improve the overall health and well being of the city. One of the key aspects that we are concerned with today is how, in terms of the city of Liverpool, we are trying to ensure that we can reduce crime and the fear of crime, particularly the issues surrounding night time economy.

Liverpool is a city of just under half a million people, but including the neighbouring areas of Merseyside the population rises to just over 1.2 million. However, because the north west of England has reasonable transport networks, and Liverpool is seen as one of the cultural centres of the North West of England, we have people travelling in from Wales, from other parts of the North West of England and even from Manchester, which is 35 miles down the road. Therefore the city centre population rises quite dramatically during the evening time, in addition to the people who actually live there. We have three very good Universities in Liverpool, which of course means a large number of students come to Liverpool each year to live and study. Liverpool therefore has a very mixed and thriving population, and one that largely depends on having a good and vibrant night time economy.

Liverpool has two police divisions. The northern police division covers the city centre and has 1000 officers, which is one of the biggest divisions in the UK. Geographically it is very small, but 40% of all crime in the county occurs in the northern police division. We have very few firearm incidents in Liverpool compared with other cities, but 96% of firearm discharges take place in about four wards in the North of Liverpool. Therefore crime and other problems are focused in the inner city suburbs of North Liverpool and in the city centre.

Liverpool will be the European capital of culture in 2008. The city is 800 years old in 2007, and in the intervening years many events have been planned and the city is undergoing an economic boom. The most important part of the economy is probably tourism and the night time economy. Around 150,000 people flood into the city centre every weekend, which causes massive social and crime problems for the agencies that are in place to look after them. We try to work in partnership through the city safe and one of the things that we try to get across to nightclub owners is that the night time economy needs to be sustainable; if people come to Liverpool and fail to enjoy their night out, they will not want to come back. Therefore to keep the economic boom going, clubs need to work in close co-operation with the law enforcement and care agencies to make sure that people's experiences are pleasant.

The key drivers are community engagement, accountability, and economic issues. All the operations that are carried out are intelligence led, whether it is police interventions regarding health, or crime prevention measures. We have built up a bank of intelligence in conjunction with the police so that we can operate on reality rather than false assumptions. An example of this is Liverpool's CCTV network. Liverpool recently had a spate of attacks on new bus shelters, which were being smashed. It was

assumed that this was happening sporadically by individuals breaking the glass. After targeting this with CCTV it was found that it was one gang of youths attacking bus shelters within a five to ten mile radius, and that they were using the buses to travel. By targeting those individuals that we had good photographic images of, we could halt a problem that was causing massive concern in the city.

We have tried to develop partnerships in Liverpool. The fact that Rod and I stand here together today is illustrative of how we have tried to develop partnerships. I have heard that the definition of a partnership is: “the suppression of mutual distrust and loathing in pursuit of government funding” and to a large degree that was certainly true initially in Liverpool. We have tried to move City Safe from rhetoric into reality; the partnership was good at discussing things but not so good at putting things into action. Therefore we have put a performance framework in, through our joint agency groups, where we now focus on key performance indicators.

Leadership is led by city safe; no one agency should take the lead. Everything is done under the auspices of city safe and there is a lot of safety in that, because if you want to try bold innovative things, it is not fair for one agency to be held responsible when things go wrong. Like wise when things go well, it is not fair for one agency to claim the credit because that fragmentises partnerships quite dramatically. Rather than having a CDRP - a crime and disorder reduction partnership, which is a strategic body in every city and borough in the country, Liverpool now has City Safe. We are currently undertaking an evaluation we are quite pleased with the results so far.

The Community Safety department in the city council was created because the city council realised it had a responsibility to deliver on crime and disorder, and I was seconded in to head up that department. I run social services and child sexual abuse investigations. City Safe is the other half of the job.

We are trying to develop Safer Neighbourhood services. Liverpool was one of the first cities in the UK to have an anti-social behaviour unit. The Crime and Disorder Act brought in Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), which were social prohibitory orders imposing civil prohibitions on individuals causing antisocial behaviour and affecting the quality of life of neighbours and other people. If those orders are breached then the sanctions are criminal. They have been very effective; when they first came out we used them on what I would term “the egg chuckers”. These were the young people who were breaking windows and creating mayhem, breaking down whole communities. They were forcing people to leave houses, and since nobody wanted to live there the local authority would then board them up. It has been very effective on that. We are now looking to try and use some of these antisocial behaviour orders on some of our mid tier “gangsters”, for want of a better word, where it is very hard to gather substantial proof to put them behind bars because they have clever lawyers and because they are very surveillance conscious.

City Watch is the new CCTV system, probably one of the best in the world and certainly one of the biggest privately owned systems in Western Europe and this is the system that we have just installed in Liverpool, thanks to a multi million pound grant from the British Home Office. What we have done with City Watch is create street crime wardens, which is new in the UK and part of the third tier of policing in the policing family. The problem with CCTV is that it increases workload massively for

all the agencies. As an illustration, if we see now on CCTV a man and a woman arguing and a bit of a dispute going on, we have to dispatch somebody to respond to this. The police are already stretched and find it very difficult. Quite often when someone attends to problems like this, things escalate and somebody gets arrested which creates workload. In the past, that incident would not have been seen on CCTV. Probably nobody would have called the police, and the incident would have gone unrecorded. On the one hand it allows us to target gangs who smash up bus shelters and get results, but on the other hand it creates a lot of work. We have tackled this by creating City Watch, and incorporating into that the city council street crime wardens, the city council security force, the alarms monitoring on public buildings; because these are income generators and they will actually end up funding the loss making services such as the warden service and the CCTV itself, because it has got to break even at the end of the day. The council have agreed to merge that body under myself and City Safe, so the council's economic generating arm will actually finance the loss making part of City Watch.

Two of the main night life areas in Liverpool are the Mathew Street quarter, which is where the cavern club used to be and where the Beatles originated; and Slater Street which is in the north end of the city, but there is only 10-15 minutes walking distance between the two. Slater Street is the "shirts out drinking out of bottles" brigade; it is predominantly the 16-20 years olds. Matthew Street sees a much older crowd; you could have any one there from 19-80. There are different types of problems for police and other agencies to focus on; Slater Street tends to have problems of drinking, drugs and violence, and Matthew Street problems of drinking and being victims of violence and robbery.

The Joint Action Groups are the action wing of City Safe, the strategic partnership. As a strategic partnership it has all of the statutory bodies: the local authorities, the police, the health service, the courts, all of the different agencies you could imagine. It also has the voluntary sector and community groups. Using the police model of victim, offender, location, we have developed these three joint action groups with the intention of focusing down on particular problems. Although there is good crossover between these three groups, having the opportunity to look at a problem in a location, or a particular vulnerable community group in the city, such as students, allows us to target some of the solutions to the crimes that they suffer.

JAG process means that they meet frequently, they are intended to be action groups – they are not talk shops. They draw down key officers from the different organisations that we have mentioned. If they do not attend we can find them and encourage them to attend. It is not essential that every body is there every two weeks as this is quite a high demand. But we need to be able to have a clear route into people who can make decisions and can use resources. Although City Safe is a strategic partnership that has allocated £50,000 to each of these as catalyst money, (this I guess would be roughly 120,000 Australian Dollars), it is only intended to pump prime projects or in some cases, ease the passage to allow a slower process to draw down money and to allow the activity we want to happen to happen and to happen quickly. It focuses very much on problem solving.

The location joint action group has picked up a couple of initiatives that are of particular interest to the club scene, and that is anything for escorts and the late night

buses out of the city – because one of the flash points we were seeing were people who had been out for the night and were then trying to get either a taxi or a bus home, and fights in the queues over who would get on the bus. Simply having escorts on the buses has reduced those flash points considerably. Similarly the deployment of CCTV; a partnership with all of the licensees in the pubs and the clubs in the city have meant that they have got a mutual protection scheme and can radio one another to identify particular problem individuals coming in, but also to call for some back up if needed by the various tiers of support.

Training of door staff and making sure there are some common standards has also been helpful, and we have found that simply just improving the street lighting has made a difference to street robbery. It improves the way people feel about the city, but also improves our targets in reducing the number of assaults. With the victim joint action group we have focused on the people who are either likely to be the victims of crime or who have already been victims of crime and try to stop this from happening. Taxi drivers have been one of the groups targeted, but since we put a sponsorship deal in to part fund CCTV, the assaults have dropped down to just one in the last six months, whereas there had been dozens in the previous time periods.

Focusing on the students, particularly the new students to the city, has allowed us to stop what was known as the “wildebeest syndrome”, where the locals in Liverpool had worked out what routes students took back to their residences and then preyed on them like lions on wildebeests. Safer lighting, better patrolling of those areas and advice to these students about reducing the risks by not drinking too much and not setting themselves up as targets, has reduced that type of crime considerably. We have already emphasised the kinds of risk factors and the kind of strategies that can be used to prevent drink spiking.

Crystal clear has helped us to reduce glass related injury, which has meant a reduced number of people who have turned up in accident and emergency departments with glass related injuries, either accidental ones cutting themselves on some broken glass on the floor, or those violent assaults where bottles or glasses have been used as weapons. The robbery reduction campaign has drawn in a whole range of things to allow us to stop individuals being targeted as victims of robbery. It has been key to ensuring that people feel that Liverpool is a safe place to be.

Policing in Liverpool now is very intelligence led. We have all our officers in high visibility uniform, out on the street, on foot, working designated beats and they are responsible, with a sergeant, for making sure that the incidents that happen in their areas are kept to a minimum. If there are incidents they have a handle on the situation and are able to solve the problems. We have what is called a bronze commander. The police command system, similar to the fire service, has gold, silver and bronze. The bronze is to have an operational commander, so that every weekend on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights in the city, we have an inspector or a chief inspector out in uniform on the streets, actually in command of all the resources in the city centre addressing the issues that take place in the nighttime economy. In the past, we would only have used that system if we had a demonstration, a march or a royal visit. That commander and his or her staff are well versed, well equipped and well led.

We have tried to improve co-ordination by getting different agencies to work alongside each other and build relationships. We found this is a distinct improvement. We are looking to merge the police planning and the police licensing with the council licensing and the council planning.

Some of the more pro-active police activities that we have done we have already spoken about, and these are all multi agency. All our drugs operations are done with a harm reduction orientation enforcement. A police officer is sworn to uphold the law, but our first priority is the preservation of life. Our intention is to ‘do good, not too to do harm’.

People will be familiar with test purchasing. We had a recent operation, *Operation Manton* in the city. In Liverpool there is a big drug addiction problem amongst Big Issue sellers; they are among the most social excluded of our people. We found that the people who were selling the big issue were actually being used as a front for drug dealers, to provide drugs to mainstream society. They were building up there own income from the sale of the papers. One of the tricks was to sell the newspaper to somebody and then claim it was their last copy. That person would just leave the money with the individual and go on, and this would happen ten or twelve times. That money was then being used to purchase class A drugs which were then sold on, increasing the profit and causing a widespread problem. Working together with all the agencies, we tackled this through test purchasing. CCTV was used in addition. Of 49 arrests on CCTV there were 41 that pleaded guilty. The corresponding economic saving and court time etc in dealing with this was huge – which proved the boon of CCTV.

To stop door staff supplying drugs to individuals we mounted a steel cabinet in the doors of all the nightclubs. Door staff search people coming in to the premises and if they find drugs it has to be placed in the *drug safe*. This means when we search door staff and find them with drugs, they are not able to say “I have just taken this from one of the people coming into the club and that is why they are in my pocket”, the question is then “Why are they not in the safe?” It also stops the door staff keeping stocks to supply drugs. It also helps us to focus on the bad clubs and not hassle the good clubs. If some clubs have drugs in their safe and others do not, we have to question why this is. Is it because they are not searching people?

Blue toilet lights are a very simple initiative. We put blue lights in the main line stations, which stops intravenous drug injection because people cannot find a vein. We also have a ‘cop shop’ in the city, which in the past we use to open during the day and close when it was most needed. We have reversed that now and the ‘cop shop’ is open right through the night when people are there. It is basically a glass fronted shop, which is made as inviting as much as possible, and at the weekend we also have paramedics in there as well, because people where presenting at the desk with injuries that police officers were not able to deal with and were calling an ambulance to the cop shop. So we now have paramedics in there that can do triage and first aid.

Some of the other initiatives are ‘red card, yellow card’. This was based on the football – English soccer, where, basically what we did was give officers yellow cards and red cards so that when they saw people committing infringements, they would take down details of the individual on a yellow card and give it to them as a warning.

A red card would be an arrest if they were found again. We used CCTV to photograph the individual. The yellow card was then forwarded to the royal Liverpool teaching hospital to the alcohol abuse unit. They would then write to people subsequently about binge drinking and invite them to come in and see some of the people in the unit to try and address the abuse of alcohol.

For safe routes, we designated safe routes out of the city where police gave extra patrol to encourage people to use those routes. For the university special constable scheme, we offered to enrol students in their own special constable core and they work up at their own university at their own police station. They are designed to police those areas where students frequent, police the safe routes and police the precinct. We were doing many of these initiatives before Citysafe came along but these were mainly one offs; we would do these marvellous initiatives which reduced crime and then we would move on. What we are trying to do with Citysafe is to make sure that all of these initiatives become core activity and mainstream activity, rather than one off initiatives.

To demonstrate some of the reductions in crime that we have had, a lot of the reductions are even greater when you drill down to geographical areas. In some of our inner city areas we have seen a 54% reduction in street robbery and a 37% reduction in burglaries, which is quite impressive. Of the 376 CDRPs in England and Wales, the government classifies 94 of them as high crime. Liverpool stands at 24. We have less crime than Hull, Slough, Reading and Bristol. Manchester is number two, Nottingham number three 94 is the best, Liverpool stands at number 24, which is something we are very proud of.

Thanks very much for listening.