

North Bedfordshire Community Safety Partnership

Bed:Safe Action Plan

2003-2006



Table of Contents

Section 1 Introduction	3
Section 2 Background	4
Section 3 Developing the concept	5 – 7
Section 4 BED:SAFE – The Aim and Objectives	8
Section 5 BED:SAFE Projects	9
Section 6 Delivering the Concept	10
Section 7 Action Plan	11 – 13

Section 1

Introduction

The North Bedfordshire Community Safety Partnership is made up of the Police, Bedford Borough Council, the County Council and other local agencies. The aim of the partnership is to develop co-ordinated working between the agencies to ensure each partner maximises the effectiveness of their actions that are aimed at reducing crime and disorder in the partnership area.

The partnership was formed in 1998 in order to meet a requirement of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, one of the primary purposes of the Act was to ensure that reducing Crime and Disorder was no longer seen as being predominantly the responsibility of the Police, the courts and others in the criminal justice system. To achieve this, the Act introduced Community Safety Partnerships with a view to involving other local agencies and the voluntary sector in making local communities safer.

Setting up the Community Safety partnership was just one obligation under the Crime & Disorder Act. In order to ensure the partnership is effective, the Act requires that every three years, each partnership must carry out a careful study of the levels and patterns of crime and disorder: the Crime Audit. The last Audit was carried out in 2001 to help formulate the partnerships objectives for the new strategy to cover 2002-05

The Partnership's Community Safety Strategy for 2002-2005 clearly identifies as a priority the quality of life issues which lead to an increase in crime and disorder or an increase in fear that people will be victims of crime. The last crime audit identified the Town centre as the top location for incidents of violence against the person, this category of offence is on increase, and the percentage increase is a serious concern for the partnership. Consequently, the Partnership has been examining the need for co-ordinated community safety initiatives in relation to Bedford Town Centre's evening and night-time economy.

Research carried out by the Borough Council identifies that there is a significant shift in perceptions of safety in the Town between the day-time and night-time with the majority of people saying they do not feel safe in Bedford at night. Several pieces of research over the last few years has also shown that the public's clear top priority for the Borough, amongst all others, are measures to tackle crime and the fear of crime.

The statutory agencies (Police, Fire, County and Borough Councils and the Magistrates) have been working with the Town Centre Company, Licensed Victuallers and Charles Wells to develop a consensus around future policies that will help sustain a vibrant Town Centre evening and night-time economy that is safe and where people feel safe. This process has been given the overall framework label of 'BED: SAFE'

Section 2

Background

Borough Profile

Bedford is a predominantly rural borough, fifty miles from London with regular Intercity and Thameslink train services. Situated between the M1 Motorway and the A1 trunk road, the borough covers an area of 48,000 hectares and includes the county town of Bedford, the adjacent urban area of Kempston and 43 rural parishes.

The Borough has a population of 148,100, with approximately 60,000 households. Almost 60 different ethnic groups comprise nearly 11% of the population, much higher than the national average.

A 1999 national survey indicated that Bedford was the eighth best UK business relocation destination. At 3.1%, local unemployment is just above the national average.

Bedford has a workforce of over 75,500 providing a plentiful and varied supply of labour. This labour force is forecasted to grow significantly by the next decade following developments of around 5,000 new houses.

Bedford Town Centre

The character of Bedford Town Centre has changed over the last decade and now it is also seen as a pub and club entertainment centre. In 2002 the percentage of units in the Town Centre that were connected with the food and drink trade was 17% compared with 14% in 2001.

Bedford has also not escaped the national growth in alcohol and drug misuse.

Overall crime figures in Bedford Town Centre grew in 2002 to 2,686 crimes reported (up from 2,252 in 2001 and 2,369 in 2000). As far as incidents attended by the Police, there were 2,128 in the year to 31 October 2002 between 7.00pm and 7.00am which represented 42% of the total number of incidents attended by the Police in the Town Centre area in that year.

Figures for Violence against the person over the last three years have shown a marked increase, even taking into consideration the expected increase due to the new crime recording regime, it is clear the majority of incidents of this nature take place in and around the Town Centre. Looking just at the High Street we have seen an increase from 85 incidents in 2000 to 112 in 2002 an increase of 27%. Along with this over the same period we have seen a 15% increase in criminal damage in the town centre area. As always these are incidents that are actually reported to the police the true figure could well be higher.

Section 3

Developing the concept

The 'BED:SAFE' concept was launched at a seminar for those with a stake in the Town Centre night-time economy that took place at the Swan Hotel on 23 October 2003. The key note address at this Seminar was given by Police Officers from Greater Manchester who have been involved in their own 'City Centre Safe' project. These speakers had, the day before, addressed a meeting at No. 10 Downing Street and the Manchester scheme is seen as best practice nationally. **The Manchester scheme had seen assaults at night stop rising year upon year and then actually decline by up to 20%.** Following their address, the delegates at the Seminar examined further the possibility for developing a similar scheme here in Bedford. There was wide-spread support for this. Indeed, there were strongly expressed views that it was well overdue and that if the scheme was not delivered now we would be discussing the same problems in a few years time when they would probably be worse still.

In the programme of the seminar was the following four workshops. For completeness, a brief resume of the issues discussed are also set out:

Workshop No 1 : 8 Pints + Curry + Punch Up = A Great Night Out in Bedford?

The workshop effectively asked the question is this the reality of a night out in Bedford Town Centre. The discussion centred around the following:

- ❖ The majority of visitors to the Town Centre cause no problem but are subject to an unruly minority
- ❖ There is a definite bottle neck at closing time which often leads inevitably to difficult situations arising
- ❖ The culture of going out to get drunk as this equates a good time
- ❖ Licensees need to set the standards for customers, bad behaviour by a customer in one venue should exclude them from all premises
- ❖ Delivering improvements is not the responsibility of one agency

The Key priorities to address emerging from the Workshop were:

- ✓ Setting up a scheme for the licensees to be advised of possible trouble – zero tolerance and agreement on banned from one banned from them all - nite net
- ✓ Avoiding promotions that encourage binge drinking / training for staff to enable them to recognise excesses of alcohol and drug use
- ✓ Education about the effects of alcohol and the effect it has on your ability to make a judgement call
- ✓ Additional Transport and taxi ranks to speed up dispersal of revellers
- ✓ Structure for multi agency scheme to target the issues

Workshop No 2: More Bobbies on the Beat – Does High visibility Policing work?

This group looked at the current policing style for the town centre and raised the question did it work. The discussed focussed around the following issues

- ❖ The actual number of police officers available for the town centre
- ❖ Visibility of police and Council Licensing Officers officers in the town centre
- ❖ Lack of authority figures in public places in the area
- ❖ Number of door staff on duty in relationship with police
- ❖ Setting up of a night net system for pubs and clubs to communicate with each other

The Key priorities to address emerging from the Workshop were:

- ✓ Look at feasibility of supporting the police with additional authority figures
- ✓ Set up nite-net system
- ✓ Police to patrol on foot on the High Street

Workshop 3: Mini Ibiza or Family Town

The workshop effectively asked the question of why disorderly behaviour happens/perceived and what/who is responsible. The discussion centred around the following

- ❖ Properly trained staff which would include Bar Staff as well as Door Staff.
- ❖ The layout of Bedford Town Centre which encourages channelling and crowding of people into a particular circuit or area
- ❖ Confusion between private (staff & licensed premises) & public (police & public space) response and attitudes.

The Key priorities to address emerging from the Workshop were:

- ✓ Greater co-ordination in public/private response
- ✓ Promotion of drink eg pricing mechanisms, happy hour etc
- ✓ Crowding of people
- ✓ Getting home
- ✓ Staff Training

Workshop 4: Transport

This workshop looked at how people got home after a night out. The discussion centred on the following:

- ❖ The planning that went into which pub or club you went to , but very few people thought about how they were going to get home
- ❖ The bottleneck for taxis home and the huge numbers seeking transport home
- ❖ The catchment area for Bedford Town Centre was as wide as Hitchin to Rushden
- ❖ Public transport
- ❖ Access to Taxis

The Key priorities to address emerging from the Workshop were:

- ✓ Location of Taxi ranks / additional ranks in High Street
- ✓ Commercial viability of a Night bus – research into the catchment area

Section 4

BED:SAFE – The Aim and Objectives

The BED: SAFE concept has as its aim:

“To sustain a vibrant Bedford evening and night-time leisure based economy that is safe and where people feel safe”

The concept provides a coordinated approach to improving Bedford Town Centre in the evening.

The projects to be followed will seek to deliver improvements against one or more of the following objectives:

- **To reduce the number of alcohol related assaults and alcohol related crime in the Town Centre.**
- **To work in partnership with the licensed trade to improve the management of licensed premises**
- **Promote the provision of safer drinking and safer clubbing and support services for those who visit Bedford’s pubs and clubs.**
- **Reduce the perception of drunkenness, rowdiness and disorder**
- **Improve the movement of people around the Town Centre at night and thereby reduce the potential for nuisances to be caused and the opportunities for disorder.**

Key measures for the BED: SAFE concept are:

- ✓ **To reduce Violence against the person by 14% per annum**
- ✓ **To reduce alcohol related incidents by 5%**
- ✓ **Reduce the availability and use of Class A drugs within the Town Centre**
- ✓ **To improve the number of licensees and pub managers with National Entertainment Licensing Certificates by 100%.**
- ✓ **To maintain spending in the Town Centre leisure based economy in real terms at 2002/03 levels**

Section 5

BED:SAFE PROJECTS

Projects	Details
1. Increasing Co-ordination of Public Private Response	i) Setting up a 'Evening Economy Group' as an umbrella group ii) Introduction of NightNet Radio System iii) Introduction of a 'service level' type agreement between Council, Police and licensed premises iv) Co-ordinated support to licensees to develop operating plans for their premises covering reducing crime and disorder, protecting the safety of the public and reducing nuisance to residents.
2. Promoting and Marketing the Evening Economy	i) Setting up a membership scheme for Licensees, restaurants etc. ii) Work with licensees to promote 'sensible drinking' eg co-ordinated happy hours, pricing etc iii) High profile, quirky and 'sexy' promotional campaign related to safety and awareness involving all sectors. (posters, t-shirts, banners) iii) Harm minimisation campaigns on drugs and alcohol targeting young people aged 18-25.
3. Moving Around	i) Investigate location and quality of Taxis, Ranks and Bus routes and stops ii) Investigate 'circuit' mentality and business practices related to this
4. Getting Home Safe and Quick	i) Research into the catchment area of the Town at Night ii) Provision of Night-time Taxi Ranks in appropriate locations iii) Provision of appropriate, extra or night buses iv) Provision of night wardens for streets and buses
5. Staff Training	i) Staff Training by experienced personnel for licensed premises staff. ii) Training from police about their role e.g. do mock exercises for Group iii) Training on rules and regulation regarding licensing laws iv) Continuous training on the use of NightNet Radio system v) Drug and Alcohol awareness for licensees, first aiders, door staff and bar staff vi) Support for all licensed premises in developing drug policies to ensure compliance with legislation and national guidelines vii) Provision of National Certificate for Entertainment Licensees courses as the development of this as the standard for Licence holders locally.

Section 6

Delivering the concept

The sheer range of issues that it is hoped to address through BED: SAFE concept has demonstrated the need for co-ordinated action over the medium term at least. In order to deliver this, the Community Safety Partnership has identified the need for a full-time Project Manager who will both shape the direction of the concept and engineer the key actions that need to be taken to deliver the aims of the concept. The employee will be formally engaged by the Borough Council although they will be working on behalf of the Community Safety Partnership

To this end, the Partnership will establish a Project Board to direct the project manager and this will include the Divisional Commander, the Deputy Mayor and the Borough's Chief Executive and a senior representative from the County Council. The status of the members of the Project Board will be such that they will be able to commit their respective organisations.

The cost of the engaging a project manager is likely to be in the region of £105,000 over the three years. In view of the range of projects involved and the contribution such a scheme could make to achieving the Community Safety Partnership's objectives for crime reduction and improvements in the quality of life of people in the Borough, they have secured funding from the Home Office in the sum of £32,250 in 2003/04 towards the scheme and the Town Centre Company has committed £2,500 towards the scheme in that year.

Given the clear links with delivering the Borough Council's community planning commitments, it has approved funding from its Community Plan Provision of £35,000 towards the scheme.

This means that other stakeholders will need to guarantee funding of £35,000 if the project manager is to continue to be engaged for the full three years. Clearly these contributions will need to be known early as this will determine the prioritisation to be given to different projects, the duration of those projects and the exit planning.

BED:SAFE is a long term project and the actions detailed overleaf are a "starter for ten" they are intended to start the process. BED:SAFE provides a real chance for all agencies to work together rather than struggling to achieve change on their own.

ACTIONS TO BE DELIVERED/SUPPORTED THROUGH BED:SAFE

Action	Support or deliver	Start and review date	Measurement
Establish project board	Deliver	April 2003	Membership Terms of reference for board (deputies etc) constant review of membership frequency of meetings
Continue to facilitate licensees forum to discuss licensing issues – investigate feasibility of best bar award	Deliver	Ongoing	Membership No of meetings Projects identified
Develop and implement “Host charter “ for Town Centre establishments	Deliver	April – June 2003	Number of establishments Signed up
Implement First tranche of Night Net radio system.	Deliver	April 2003	Number of establishments with system
Evaluate Night Net System, including development of protocol for use. Identify additional locations to participate in scheme	Deliver	Sept 2003	Carry out evaluation in first six months, identify gaps in system.
Identify additional locations for taxi ranks to disperse Revellers	Deliver	April – June 2003	Location identified Rank established Evaluation
Investigate alternative dispersal methods and commercial viability	Deliver	June 2003	Methods identified

Action	Support or deliver	Start and review date	Measurement
Investigate feasibility of pedestrianisation of High street	Support	Sept 2003	Feasibility study
Target Hot Spot locations with high visibility policing / licensing enforcement	Support	Ongoing	Number of operations
Work with licensees and proactively use "Itemiser" (a drugs detection device) where drugs are likely to be used or found, e.g. safer clubbing	Support	Ongoing	No. clubs on 'voluntary' basis No. times used No. positive results No. negative results
Promote use of Itemiser at licensed clubs and pubs, and advise licensees of regular use, in view of the licensing regulations.	Support	Ongoing	No. drugs seizures on licensed premises No. arrests
Use of passive drugs dogs in town centre establishments and area	Support	Ongoing	No of operations No of arrests
Offer training in basic drug & alcohol awareness to all staff including conflict resolution	Deliver	Ongoing	No of training courses Percentage of establishments with staff trained
Increase the number of premises carrying harm minimisation / education literature or resources	Deliver	April – Sep 2003	No of premises Percentage
BED:SAFE Publicity Campaign Have fun / Be safe	Deliver	Ongoing	Number of campaigns

Action	Support or deliver	Start and review date	Measurement
Drugs & Alcohol Education framework providing structured education from year 1 – year 12 in schools	Support	Ongoing	No of schools partaking
Seek to inspect licensed vehicles in addition to the annual or 6 monthly testing at the Councils testing Depot	Deliver	Ongoing	Number of taxis licensed Number of taxis inspected Number that fail
All premises with category 3 entertainment licences to have registered door staff - promote use of registered door staff to establishments that do not hold entertainment licences.	Deliver	Ongoing	Number of establishments with entertainment licences that have registered door staff Number of establishments without entertainment licences that use door staff and number registered
Inspect Category 3 premises (town centre pubs and clubs) and enforce non-compliance with conditions.	Deliver	April 2002 to March 2005	Number of premises inspected Number of premises non-compliant
Work with other agencies, e.g. Trading Standards, on joint initiatives such as targeting premises serving minors with alcohol.	Deliver	April 2002 to March 2005	Number of joint initiatives
Investigate the feasibility of extending the alcohol free zone	Support	Sept 2003	Consultation carried out



“To sustain a vibrant Bedford evening and night-time leisure-based economy that is safe and where people feel safe”