

The Highland Council

Inverness City Committee – 8 June, 2009 Operation Respect – City Centre – Final Outcomes and Update

Agenda Item	4
Report No	ICC 35/09

Report by: Inverness City Manager

SUMMARY

At the last City Committee (20th April) members received a report giving a detailed analysis of Police activity during Operation Respect as it applied to the City Centre during the period 20th November 2009 - 3rd January 2009.

This report gives detail on the other aspects to Operation Respect as provided by the partners. An update on future plans is also provided. The Committee is invited to consider its content, pass comment and continue to support the principal objectives of Operation Respect. The Project activities support outcome 4.1, paragraphs paragraph 2 and 4 of the Councils Single Outcome Agreement, being 'People are, and feel safe from crime, disorder and danger' and paragraph 4 'Public Services are delivered, effectively, efficiently and jointly'.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The objective of Operation Respect - City Centre was to enhance public amenity space, to allow people to make better use of it.
- 1.2 Each agency/group that took part, focussed in on a particular activity relating to the above. These can be summarised as follows:
 - The Council – enhanced street lighting, focussed cleaning regime, youth activities and co-ordination of contributory agencies/groups.
 - Northern Constabulary – focus on public order issues, community safety and support for youth activities.
 - Scottish Ambulance Service – focus on alcohol related incidents, use of assessment facility in City Centre.
 - The Street Pastors – enhanced City CentreCentre patrols.
 - Business Improvement District Co. (BID) Youth activities, provision of Taxi Marshals, Security Task TeamTeam (night clubs & street patrols – daytime)
 - Stagecoach – Nightrider bus service
 - Crime Prevention Panel / Crime Stoppers – provision of information to public on community safety.
- 1.3 Members have already received a report on the activities of Northern Constabulary. The following is a breakdown from each of the above agencies (other than Northern Constabulary) on how they believe Operation Respect – City Centre contributed to uplift in the quality of visitor experience to the City Centre.

2 EVALUATION

- 2.1 The Council – the main focus for The Council was to act as a catalyst for the various organisations and allow them to work as an effective group to deliver a common purpose. Member contributions were critical as they provided the links between those in the community who were not represented within the stakeholder group as well as supplying invaluable local information regarding what they believed would be effective.
- 2.2 Officer contribution was led by the City Manager with important support coming from relevant Services within the Council including Transport Environmental Community Services (TECS) and Education, Culture and Sport (ECS)

2.3 **Transport, Environment and Community Services**

TECS - In order to enhance street cleaning in the City Centre during the period of Operation Respect from 30th November until 4th January inclusive (not including Christmas Day; 35 days) TECS arranged for two men to work two hours overtime per day; 6am – 7am and 3pm – 4pm.

The total extra cost to the Service to provide this additional cleaning was £2520.

2.4 **Education, Culture and Sport**

ECS Youth Development Team: - Youth Development Officers (YDO) carried out Street Work when groups of young people were gathering, particularly in Falcon Square. Engaging with young people and explaining the concept of Operation Respect. They had a positive response from young people. YDOs also organised early evening events for young people using the stage in Falcon Square. These events were very well received and young people expressed the view that they felt included in City Centre planning for the first time.

The Youth Development team perception was that when events were provided there were fewer incidents involving young people and alcohol on the fringes of the City Centre.

ECS would be happy to be involved in planning for similar events in future.

3 **Scottish Ambulance Service**

The City Centre Triage centre was manned on 5 nights by Paramedics with assistance from Red Cross personnel. The centre was located in the Old High Church Hall which was kindly donated free of charge.

On the first night there were 12 people seen in the centre, 2 were subsequently taken to hospital, all the others released after a period of observation. The other nights did not produce any customers – the City Centre was very quiet, very cold weather and financial issues may have contributed.

Feedback was very positive from all involved.

4 **The Street Pastors**

Street Pastors provided additional patrols at strategic times and dates

throughout the holiday period, as identified by Northern Constabulary. This was aided by an award from the Common Good Fund of £6,900 which was used to recruit, train, and equip additional volunteers (increasing their total number from 18 to 30), to double-up on equipment such as Shopsafe radio handsets to facilitate two teams operating at the same time, and the purchase of additional supplies such as emergency foil blankets and flip-flops. Patrols included early and late patrols on the Friday before Christmas, Christmas Eve and Hogmanay, in addition to our usual Friday and Saturday night patrols.

The public voiced their appreciation of their work, and asked for assistance when needed. As anticipated, the Street Pastors were much busier than usual either side of the holiday period. They were also able to assist the Taxi Marshals on the busiest nights, e.g. ensuring people queuing didn't spill out on to the road and defusing minor disagreements.

The Street Pastors would be very happy to participate in Operation Respect again in the future, i.e. increasing our patrols at strategic times in partnership with others.

They were also delighted to see the late addition of the Scottish Ambulance Service Triage Centre and would like to voice their encouragement of this service in the future. In addition to the more obvious uses of the service, they anticipate this being a safe, warm place where anybody who becomes vulnerable during the night can wait out until morning, i.e. any stranded and well-behaved revellers.

5 Business Improvement District (BID)

The BID were involved in a number of activities in support of Operation Respect. The following is a summary of activity.

5.1 Child Safe

For the period of Operation Respect – City Centre the BID handed out free wristbands to the public through local stores and other public areas.

5.2 BID Security Task Team and Taxi Marshalls

The above personnel (who also acted as Bus Marshalls) were employed through a local security company and were therefore appropriately licensed to carry out their duties.

The Taxi Marshalls operated between 11pm and 4am, with the City Centre Security Task Team operating between 12pm and 6pm. Copies of letters giving feedback from the Community on these activities are attached (Appendix 1).

During the operation of the above teams, the Task Team assisted the Police with locating a number of suspects and also provided back up to the Eastgate Security Team and indeed the Police at other times.

In general, the Task Team assisted the Police in ensuring that the Public were better able to enjoy their visit to the City.

5.3 Cost of Taxi Marshalls, Bus Marshalls and Task Team

The cost of providing the Security Task Team and the Taxi and Bus Marshalls, during the period of Operation Respect were provided from existing resources together with significant support from the Safer Streets Initiative Funding which had been detailed to Members previously.

- 5.4 The BID indicated that they would provide support for future projects under Operation Respect, as the activities of members of their team helped improve the visitor experience and trading environment with in the City Centre.

6 Stagecoach -

6.1 Festive Night-birds

The Festive evening service provided in partnership with Stagecoach and The Highland Council gave party-goers a safe and reliable alternative to getting home after a night in Inverness City Centre, using low floor double deckers with on board digital CCTV.

This completely free service was used by over 400 passengers over the eight evenings throughout the festive season to Kinmylies, Hilton, Milton, Culloden, Smithton and Balloch and Milton of Leys.

Unfortunately the Milton of Leys was very poorly used with only a total 11 passengers used the service.

Marketing prior and during the festive period was provided through newspaper advertising, posters and radio advertising.

Stagecoach would be happy to be involved in future projects as budgets permit.

7 Crimestoppers and Inverness Crime Prevention Panel

- 7.1 Crimestoppers and Inverness Crime Prevention Panel were delighted to be invited to work in partnership with other Agencies supporting Highland Council's initiative Operation Respect.

7.2 Activities

Crimestoppers and ICPP worked closely with Area Commander Julian Innes preparing a leaflet, which was printed and distributed around Inverness. The purpose of the leaflet was to give information how members of the public could report those thought to be involved with criminal activities anonymously by using the Crimestoppers Freecall number 0800 555 111.

A full page Press Feature - A "Be Safe be Happy" was placed in the Inverness Courier with hints and tips on Shopping Safety and supporting the Anti Drink Driving initiative.

Crimestoppers had 55 posters printed for the Stage Coach Bus Company. Posters were displayed inside all buses, giving the reason why the public should phone Crimestoppers and contact number.

A Crimestoppers Radio Campaign was run on Moray Firth Radio for two weeks prior to Christmas up until New Year. Among the topics covered were,

Drink Driving and Drink Spiking and supporting Highland Councils initiative "Operation Respect".

7.3 Results of projects

Statistics

Crimestoppers Scotland's performance between 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009:

We had 10,665 actionable calls (calls with useful information) about crime in Scotland. Of these calls, some of the crime types were:

- Robbery/Assaults - **372**
- Murder/Violent Crime - **249**
- Possessions of Weapons - **234**
- Drugs - **5,888**

We have also achieved the following:

- Arrests - **665**
- Property recovered - **£81,085**
- Drugs recovered - **£477,265**

We feel confident, given the rapidly increasing promotional activity by Crimestoppers, Northern Constabulary and other Police Forces will significantly benefit, aiding their fight against crime.

Feedback from Community Councils was very positive, as a result of our Radio Campaign and the Inverness Courier Feature. We have been invited to give a number of presentations to local organisations and they will be phased in the coming weeks.

Both Inverness Crime Prevention Panel (ICPP) and Crimestoppers organisations will continue to offer support to the Highland Council's initiative and working in partnership with other organisations in particular the Street Pastors and Safe Inverness to help create a Safe City environment supporting Diversionary Activities for young people.

We are continuing with Blue Light Events for young people in the City Centre which are proving to be successful in getting young people off the streets.

Both organisations will continue to support Street Football, Twilight Basketball and Netball and an initiative by the Army Careers staff who are looking to attract support for a Football Club on Thursday evenings at Bught Park which, with appropriate funding could be free for young people.

7.4 Exhibition and Promotional activities in the immediate future

ICPP and Crimestoppers will have stands at the Marymas Fair and Highland Games with the distribution of Crime Prevention literature to all age groups. It is also proposed for a presentation to be made to Inverness Chamber of Commerce members as soon as a date can be set.

ICPP are working with Northern Constabulary and other partners to develop a Mobile Activity Facility for use as part of the Diversionary programme for young people.

8 SUMMARY

From the feedback detailed above by other Partner Agencies, the Public and the Business Community, it is clear that Operation Respect – City Centre had a beneficial impact on the use of amenity space and the visitor experience to the City. The BID provided information from the Home Office Cost of Crime Report – 2003/2004 which estimated that each violent crime (at 03/04) has a cost of £10,407, with each crime of dishonesty having an average cost £1,708. Noting this and the likelihood that a number of Ambulance journeys and probable A & E admission costs were saved as a result of the intervention measures put in place particularly by the Street Pastors, it is likely that many thousands of pounds were saved of Public Expenditure as a result of the activities of the Partner Agencies.

9 UPDATE ON CURRENT ACTIVITIES

In accordance with the decision of the City Committee, the principal of Operation Respect is being rolled out through the seven City Wards. Issues are being raised, in conjunction with Ward Managers, by the Northern Constabulary as part of the 'Community Safety' item on each Ward Forum agenda. The principle is to tailor the activity to suit the particular needs of each community.

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9.1 Respect Merkinch

In line with the above, roll out has taken place within the Merkinch area. Close co-operation has been achieved with Northern Constabulary, the Merkinch Partnership, the Highland Council and the Street Pastors amongst others. Principle activities involve patrols of the Merkinch area by four Pastors at weekends. The Street Pastors co-ordinator has confirmed that initial feedback has been very positive with members of the public who they met, already knowing who they were and being pleased to see them on the street.

Respect Merkinch's main aim was to support all members of the community, to reassure people within Merkinch that the partners were listening to their concerns. The Partners recognised the need to support such things as diversionary activities for young people. The objectives therefore tie in with those of the Merkinch Partnership who already undertake a number of diversionary activities.

Importantly, as part of Respect Merkinch there was a recognition by the Partners of the need to work with the Licenced Trade to improve responsible alcohol sales and to work with Community Councils to continue to support Youth Projects.

The Merkinch Partnership already provides a number of activities for young people during the week but there is a recognition that this provision needs to be developed further, at weekends.

This process will be helped by the Street Pastors, who over the coming weeks will be getting to know more and more people within the community, particularly young people. Working together with local Police, particularly on Friday and Saturday evenings, they will get to know more about what young people are looking for and the Merkinch Partnership is ready to step in and support developing new initiatives which will help.

10 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The principle objective is to ensure better use of current resources. Every effort is undertaken by each service to enhance activity within the locality, using existing resources.

Where third party funding is being used to supplement, or on where additional internal resources have been found, then, this will be identified.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is invited to consider the content above and continue its support for Operation Respect, noting that further reports will be provided as appropriate.

Signature:

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Date: 6 May 2009

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Background Papers: **(Web links to previous reports to be printed)**