

The Safer Sutton Partnership Service



Executive Summary

Sutton has taken a major step forward in tackling crime by bringing local police and the council together in the new safer Sutton Partnership Service. The aim? To make the community safer.

With an excellent track record of partnership working between the council, police and other organizations, 60 council staff working in community safety and 80 police officers have been brought together in Sutton's police station to form the new Safer Sutton Partnership Service.

Former Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir John Stevens, gave the initiative his seal of approval when he came to Sutton to the launch. He predicted that Sutton, currently one of the safest boroughs in London, would soon be the safest.

Sir John Stevens said, "For the first time police and council staff are working alongside one another, under a single management structure, in pursuit of shared aims and objectives. What is happening in Sutton is an outstanding example of partnership in action. The borough's brave new approach could become the model for the rest of the country."



An "outstanding example of partnership in action" is how Sir John Stevens (left) described the Safer Sutton Partnership Service at its launch pictured here with Cllr Graham Tope (center) and Supt Warren Shadbolt

The teams that the Safer Sutton Partnership Service brings together include:

- Drug and alcohol abuse services
- Neighbourhood wardens
- Parks police
- Domestic violence services
- Police safer neighbourhood teams
- Special constables
- Police volunteers
- Schools and truancy liaison officers

The Council's CCTV monitoring suite is also based in the police station, in a new integrated operations room. Both police and local authority licensing departments are located in the station too.

Police Superintendent Warren Shadbolt heads the service, having responsibility for both police and local government staff.

Background

Why the initiative or service development was instigated

The Safer Sutton Partnership was instigated with the overarching aims of making Sutton safer and reducing the fear of crime.

In January 2005 Local Government Association Chief Executive, Sir Brian Briscoe recognized the importance of instigating this new approach to partnership working saying:

“The LGA welcomes the innovative approach to joint working launched in Sutton. An integrated approach to community safety is crucial in improving performance on these issues that rank higher than most others with local people”.

Initial aims and objectives

Cllr Graham Tope, lead councillor for community safety and metropolitan Police Authority link member for Sutton has explained the objectives of the partnership:

“The Safer Sutton Partnership is building on the already strong working relationship between police and the council. The second lowest crime rate in London is a tribute to that relationship. Now we aim to make the area even safer with this new integrated approach. I want to build a greater level of trust with the local community and I want to see increased accountability and better co-ordination than before. The public will judge our success by the results we achieve.”

Sutton's innovative approach meets many of the objectives in the Government's police reform programme 'Building Communities, Beating Crime'. In particular:

- making police services and councils more accountable to the public
- police working with local authorities to help the public be and feel safer
- informing the public about what's being done to make them feel safer
- involving them in decisions about how these services are delivered

How does it work?

The Services brought together into the new Safer Sutton Partnership is made up of three main parts. Further details of some of these teams are set out below.

Police Partnership Office

- Provision of community policing services through police officers and the 36 Police Community Support Officers who work with the community to prevent crime and help and advise residents
- Provision of special constabulary and police volunteers

- Provision of crime prevention and crime prevention design advice
- Police schools liaison, truancy liaison, links with travellers and mental health trust
- Police aspects of licensing function
- Police public relations function

Safer Communities Team

- Provision of 10 neighbourhood wardens and the 9 parks police officers
- Provision of street CCTV systems
- Commissioning drug and alcohol prevention and treatment services, community safety services and project work;
- Provision of a Virtual Criminal Justice Team for substance misuse

Both together

- Provision of advice and information to elected members, residents' groups, forums etc.
- Provision of a co-ordinated response to complaints and problems related to community safety raised by residents
- Community liaison and development in relation to community safety issues
- Commissioning relevant services and projects



The partnership is made up of council and metropolitan police staff

CCTV monitoring centre

The new service has enabled all the borough's CCTV cameras, nearly 100 of them, to feed into one centre into the integrated operations room where a bank of screens are monitored around the clock. This new service is the first time that the whole operation has operated from one control room.

Safer communities

The 35-strong safer communities team works to combat drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour in young people. Two data analysts – one from the police and one from the council - working alongside each other means useful information can be shared and action

taken immediately. With the police dealing with crime and the council the causes of crime the two sides make an ideal partnership.



Parks police officer on patrol

Safer neighbourhoods teams

There are nine neighbourhood teams, made up of (at least) one sergeant, two constables and four community support officers, bringing local policing back to communities. The council's 10 neighbourhood wardens also work with local communities, finding out their problems and getting something done about them. By sharing information action can be taken and solutions found quickly by both teams. One recent success meant a suspect was seen by a neighbourhood warden acting suspiciously near children, called the Safer Neighbourhood Sgt. who deployed Community Support Officers. They identified the suspect who was then arrested by the CID nearby on suspicion of committing more than 50 sexual offences.

Management structures

All these services operate under a single management structure under the Superintendent Warren Shadbolt who is jointly managed and accountable to the Council's Chief Executive and the Borough Commander. The entire service is located in a dedicated building – the Old Police Station in Sutton town centre. Supt. Warren Shadbolt has a dual role as the first head of a joint safer community unit with responsibility both for police and local government staff.

The Safer Sutton Partnership Board

The Head of Safer Sutton Partnership, Supt Shadbolt, is accountable to both Sutton Borough Police Commander and LB Sutton's Chief Executive. He is also accountable to the Safer Sutton Partnership Board (SSPB) for the delivery of the Crime and Disorder and Drugs Strategy. This strategy was born out of a crime and disorder audit carried out in consultation with the public. The Board's mission is 'To improve the safety of its residents by: improving health, reducing crime, building communities, through the principles of community co-operation, individual responsibility and consideration of diverse needs of all the people of Sutton'.

The Council Chief Executive chairs the Board. Membership includes representatives from the Police, the Police Authority, the Primary Care Trust, the Fire Brigade, the Probation Service, Sutton Centre for Voluntary Services and Sutton Race Equality Council. The Board is responsible for implementing both the local crime and disorder strategy and the national drug and alcohol strategies, according to local needs and priorities.

Initial challenges or barriers

It is thanks to our excellent record of partnership working that this exciting initiative has become a reality. It has not happened overnight: Cllr Tope was involved, as leader of the council, back in 1991 when the then chief executive and heads of the local NHS trust, police and probation services formed the forerunner to today: the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Board. This at a time when partnership working was in its infancy.

After overcoming some initial suspicions Sutton's partnership working has developed for the benefit of residents. Fourteen years later forming this combined service is the next logical step. In the short time the new partnership service has been operating both police and council staff have built mutual trust and there's increased co-operation between the two organisations.



CCTV manager, Hugh Arnold

Improvements Achieved and Challenges Overcome

Although cause and effect are difficult to prove, Sutton has a very low crime rate. Our levels of crime make us more akin to Surrey district councils like Reigate & Banstead or Epsom, rather than our neighbouring London Boroughs with which we share similar demographic profiles and urban social problems. In fact, Sutton is even safer than either Eastbourne or Torbay.

We believe our success is due at least in part to our history of effective partnership working between the police and the council. This partnership has become instinctive and cultural over the years. A rather unique relationship has developed – while many authorities have regular meetings of the police Borough Commander and Council's Chief Executive, in Sutton such regular

meetings go all down the hierarchies with for example parks constabulary officers and police having joint briefings; and youth and police meet regularly.

What have the benefits been to the organisation

For local people the Safer Sutton Partnership will mean a more joined up service and one that is better able to problem-solve. It will mean less chance of matters being referred across the two agencies - instead accountability is expected to increase and a quicker, coordinated response is expected to emerge for residents. Bringing local people on board will be a bonus for the police, better enabling the latter to gain the cooperation and trust of local people.

More joint working and planning will emerge as well as better information and intelligence sharing and better joint working to more effectively tackle antisocial behaviour. It is also expected to lead to a better understanding of cultures between the police and local authority. With the police dealing with crime and the council the causes of crime the two sides make an ideal partnership.

What benefits have been witnessed by the individual/ customer/citizen

Sir John Stevens cited Sutton's improving crime record when he launched the partnership – burglaries in the home down by 27% in four years; commercial burglary down 54% in the past four years; street robberies down by 33% in the past 12 months.



The partnership is organised for the convenience of local people – not public organisation

The new partnership service is building on this success. The benefits of this partnership to our residents and communities include:

- A single point of contact for all community safety issues
- Sharing of information and better problem-solving
- Improved communication at all levels
- Quicker and more effective response to incidents
- Greater accountability to councillors and local people

The new structure is expected to make for a more efficient and effective service for local people. The Head of the Safer Sutton Partnership will be able

to manage police and council staff to better deploy and manage resources - including community police officers, neighbourhood wardens and parks constabulary.

The partnership has established a clear understanding of the problems facing Sutton following a crime and disorder audit we carried out in consultation with the public. From the results of this consultation we know this structure is right for Sutton.



The Safer neighbourhood team

Future Targets & Goals

Targets for the future and the framework within which they will operate.

Supt. Shadbolt said: "We believe that we are moving from working in partnership to delivering services in a truly integrated way. This will improve the efficient use of public money and provide a more effective range of safety services for everyone in Sutton. This is a very exciting project and I hope it will become a model for similar partnership work in other areas of the country."

We believe this partnership marks a turning point in tackling community safety. As Sir John Stevens has said, "What is happening in Sutton is an outstanding example of partnership in action. The borough's brave new approach could become the model for the rest of the country."