

safer, stronger communities

**Ideas on community
safety for Police
and Crime
Commissioners and
local Councillors**

the co-operative party

Ideas to change Britain



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information and support

If you would like any more information about the topics covered in this guide, or would like support or advice in implementing the ideas contained in it, feel free to get in touch.

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Introduction

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections in 2020 give us an opportunity to reflect on what a co-operative agenda for community safety looks like.

This pamphlet kick-starts a debate on how co-operative values can be hardwired into how we make communities feel safer, how we target limited resources, how we widen participation in decision-making and how we ensure policing is accessible and accountable.

Co-operative approaches are characterised by the communities that come together to shape them. This is especially true when exploring policing and community safety policy, where genuine partnership working based on trust and shared values doesn't just involve communities but keeps them safe from harm.

This document looks at the key themes of voice, participation, partnership and prevention. It comes from the view that co-operative approaches to community safety listen to the experiences and concerns of ordinary people - victims, offenders, staff and the communities they come from - and reflect them in policing priorities; that decisions should be devolved beyond town halls and commissioner offices, so that the communities impacted by them have a genuine say.

Overarching all of this is the core belief that every area of life can be improved through better co-operation - working across the public sector to ensure joined-up, preventative services; working with communities and the third sector in a meaningful way; and involving businesses to create safer towns and communities.

The ideas in this document are just the start - we hope that across the country, local representatives can debate, amend and test these ways of working and contribute their own ideas and examples of best practice.

Co-operative, inclusive decision-making

To successfully tackle crime, it is crucial that partners work together – sharing information, resources, expertise and insight. Collaboration already exists, but this can be built on to ensure a collaborative culture is embedded in the structures and policies of all relevant organisations.

Partnership working

Community Safety Partnerships bring together ‘responsible authorities’ such as police, local authorities, fire and rescue, probation and primary care trusts to develop a community safety strategy.

They present an opportunity for deeper collaboration – for example inviting non-statutory members to take part, including from the voluntary sector, registered social landlords, youth groups or victim support organisations.

There could also be opportunities for pooling budgets and joint commissioning, to achieve more joined-up, efficient services and more resources available to be directed at the communities that need them most.

Victim voice

Being a victim of crime often means having to navigate a confusing array of different agencies. Involving victims in shaping that journey and the support on offer, and investing

in restorative justice and trauma counselling, creates a better service, builds faith in the police and justice services and helps them access the support they need to move on.

For example, the Mayor of London has created a Victims’ Commissioner to ensure victims can access a timely, effective, transparent and inclusive justice journey – from reporting through to post-sentencing. The Commissioner works alongside victims to amplify their voice and promote their interests, helping to ensure that lessons learnt from their experiences are used to inform and shape future practice.

Participatory budgeting

Services work best when chosen and shaped by the people impacted by them the most.

Participatory budgeting is a process of democratic deliberation and decision-making. PCCs can devolve parts of their budget to a local level, to allow local people to decide how it would be best spent.



A public health approach

A public health approach to tackle rising knife crime seeks to tackle the causes of violence not just the symptoms. This was pioneered in Scotland and has more recently been adopted by Lambeth Council and the Mayor of London.

By looking at violent crime as a health issue, violence is treated as a disease which is infecting our communities. Working together, agencies seek to diagnose and analyse the root causes of violence and then develop interventions which prevent as well as cure the disease.

A public health approach to tackling violence is interdisciplinary and requires meaningful partnerships. It also requires longer-term, evidence-based thinking – putting in place measures now to reduce problems in the future and using data and intelligence to target resource and evaluate effectiveness over time. Councils and PCCs could consider how the public health approach could tackle problems in their own areas.

Case study: Scotland

Scotland's public health approach was introduced by the police through operational changes, rather than legislation. Now funded by the Scottish government, the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit shifts the focus from reacting to the problem to preventing it happening in the first place.

Partnerships have been key to its success. For example, social services are instrumental in identifying at-risk individuals and families, and relocating and supporting at-risk young men into work, while youth services offer outreach and mentoring. Teams in hospital emergency rooms connect patients affected by violence with social enterprises that help them break the cycle. Dentists, vets, fire services and beauty parlours are trained to identify and refer incidents of domestic violence.

Visible, accountable policing

Neighbourhood policing means police officers are visible, accountable and accessible – building trust and relationships to better understand and respond to community needs. At its best, it means collaborative problem solving and strong partnerships with the public and voluntary sectors.

Invest in neighbourhood policing

Between 2010 and 2016, central government police funding shrunk by 25% in real terms, making community policing harder to deliver but more important than ever to get right.

Despite ringfenced funding for community policing being abolished by the Coalition Government and wider cuts to police budgets, PCCs and local councils can still develop a community policing approach.

Funding for PCSOs in every neighbourhood or an increase in community policing resource can be a priority for PCC budgets. Social justice can be hardwired into this – acknowledging that those in the poorest areas are most at risk of being victims of crime by targeting resource.

“There isn’t the intelligence any more, there isn’t the neighbourhood policing any more, people don’t know where to go”

Nazir Afzal, former chief prosecutor in Greater Manchester, reacting to rising knife crime

Establish safer neighbourhood panels

Safer neighbourhood panels (SNPs) enable local communities to set local policing priorities and hold their neighbourhood team to account. For example, in Rotherham these are called Community Action Partnerships – and councillor ward budgets can be put to use to help enact priorities such as new e-bikes for police patrols in North Rotherham.

If your area has a Safer Neighbourhood Panel already, consider ways to make it more representative of your local area – for example, if no young people are taking part, how about setting up a youth panel which mirrors the work .

A community safety fund

Pooling budgets across agencies to create a Community Safety Fund, as pledged in the Medway Labour local manifesto 2019, could support Neighbourhood Watch schemes, speed watch and community groups working to improve community safety. This will help to promote greater involvement and support

those in the community who want to help prevent crime and support their neighbours.

Communicate the work of the police

Just one in five people say they feel police officers are ‘highly visible’, compared to almost double this in 2010. 39% of people say they “never” see police foot patrols.

Despite government cuts to police budgets resulting in a decline in officer numbers, there are ways to ensure police activity is well communicated to build confidence in the police’s less visible work.

For example, local neighbourhood teams could use social media to communicate, or carry out leaflet drops and doorknocking on streets where there has been a spate of crime such as burglary or car break-ins. This can be both reassuring and a useful way to gather intelligence.

Drop-ins with the local police can be a way to be visible and accessible. In London, ‘Cuppa with a Copper’ sessions seek to provide opportunities for the community to meet local officers in areas where shopfronts and police counters have closed.

“Fewer officers and police community support officers will cut off the intelligence that is so crucial to preventing attacks. Withdrawal from communities risks undermining their trust in us at a time when we need people to have the confidence to share information.”

The chair of the National Police Chiefs’ Council, Sara Thornton, in response to the 2017 terror attacks in London and Manchester

Investing in young people

As services and funding are withdrawn, some young people will find themselves more at risk of being victims or perpetrators of crime, and less supported after a crime whether it's rehabilitation, trauma counselling or vocational training.

Rebuilding youth services

According to the YMCA, spending on youth services has fallen by 61% over the past six years - and on top of this, young people have borne the brunt of wider austerity, from education maintenance grants being slashed, families losing child tax credits, child benefit and housing benefits, and rising housing and childcare costs.

PCCs can commit some of their budgets into youth services as part of a focus on youth violence prevention, such as mentoring schemes for at risk young people, better support for rehabilitating ex-offenders, programmes in schools, programmes to provide alternative activities for young people at risk of exclusion. This has happened in the West Midlands in 2017, for example, where the PCC invested an additional £2 million in programmes for young people.

And it isn't just the police and public sector bodies that can play a role. The East of England Co-op also partnered with the Suffolk Constabulary to set up the Chantry Football Project which saw up to 40 young people play football over their 6-week school holiday with police and security officers, reducing antisocial

behaviour in stores and breaking down misconceptions.

Youth offending

Youth offending teams work with young people who offend or are at risk of doing so. They're multiagency, including social workers, police officers, mental health practitioners, community panel volunteers and probation workers.

Better co-ordination between services can result in better outcomes. Linking the youth offending service with other services that work with vulnerable young people can provide more effective support.

The police, NHS and probation services have a legal duty to work with the council as part of the Youth Offending Team, while others can be invited to take part as the statutory partners consider appropriate. Many services without a statutory role do already work with the Youth Offending Team on an ad hoc basis, but formalising co-operation can mean more consistent and collaborative pathways.

Other non-statutory partners to consider include schools, further education institutions, youth clubs, and local businesses who can provide work placements or training.

Give young people a voice

Young people should have a stake and a say in the services that affect them. PCCs could create formal structures which give young people a role in decision-making on policing and criminal justice. This could take the form of a youth commission, spaces reserved for young people on scrutiny and community panels, and/or events in schools.

The Knowsley Youth Mutual for example involves young people in decisions - services are co-created and chosen by young people.

Empower young people through co-operative development

Narratives about young people too often focus on gangs, violence and antisocial behaviour, especially in popular discourse on marginalised communities and lower income areas.

Co-operatives provide an opportunity to turn this around. By giving young people a stake in a worker co-operative and creating a successful enterprise, those young people can develop their own skills while demonstrating their energy, ideas and positive contributions to the rest of the world.

In Canada, Solid-State Industries works with newcomer youth – immigrants and refugees – to establish worker co-operatives. Those young people coproduce and co-own viable, democratically run enterprises. For example, Mavins Media is a web and digital communications co-operative, owned by the teenagers who set it up and providing design, branding, social media and web upgrade services across Surrey, British Columbia.

Case study: The Co-op Group

The Co-op Group has developed a number of initiatives, not only addressing the safety of staff in stores, but also looking at innovative partnerships to tackle the causes of crime.

The Group has already launched a partnership with Steel Warriors, a charity which melts down knives confiscated by police and uses the metal to make gym equipment. 20 free community gyms will be installed across the country as a result.

Another partnership is with the Damilola Taylor Trust in East London which will aim to prevent young people from falling into crime.

The Trust was set up, in the name of Damilola who was killed in 2000, to help improve the lives of underprivileged children. The Co-op Group will provide a careers and skills development programme for the trust as well as linking 80 stores to fundraising for the initiative.

Tackling retail crime

There is rising concern about abuse, threats and violence against retail workers. According to the British Retail Consortium's annual crime survey, the rate of reported violence with injury has doubled in the last year. Retail crime affects the wider public too – town centres, shopping centres and shopping parades should be a safe space.

A tougher response to retail crime

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and police decide not to prosecute many cases of violence against shopworkers, despite ample evidence. The current lenient sentences appear to deter prosecution, leaving victims feeling abandoned.

Furthermore, a lack of prosecution and sentencing leads to a lack of reporting. Usdaw's Freedom from Fear survey of shopworkers shows that 17% of attacks were not reported. As well as campaigning for violence against retail workers to be a single, clearly defined offence in law, PCCs can ensure police make a stronger case for prosecution.

On other retail crime such as shoplifting, a £200 threshold for pursuing criminals introduced in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 has sparked an increase in incidents with a significant drop in those arrested. These thresholds effectively price small shops out of receiving any response to theft. PCCs and local police forces could introduce local policies to ensure that all

incidents are attended by an officer and that serial offenders who may steal thousands of pounds of goods but without crossing the £200 threshold for each incident, are pursued.

Work together to raise awareness

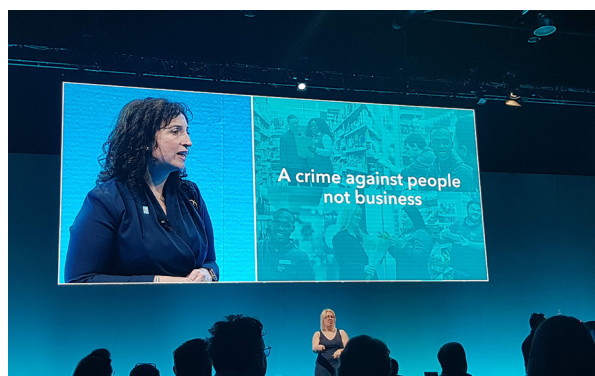
PCCs and local authorities could work with businesses to develop and roll out a public awareness campaign on the unacceptability of assaults against shopworkers. This could include encouraging shopworkers to report assaults and the signposting of advice for businesses to improve safety in their premises.

For example, Central England Co-operative joined forces with the West Midlands and Northamptonshire Police forces to actively promote the message that targeting convenience supermarkets is “not worth the risk”, as well as offering store colleagues support and counselling from specialists when incidents do take place.

Business and community role in tackling retail crime

Research by the Co-operative Group shows that 63% of police and crime plans make no reference to business crime and 83% make no reference to the business community. Retail crime is a crime against people not businesses, and every day 250 retail workers are the victims of a violent incident, which in turn affects wider families and communities.

East of England Co-op's anti-social behaviour officer has been working with young offenders convicted of committing crimes in stores. This restorative programme offers youth offenders the opportunity to understand the impact of retail crime on



The Co-op's Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities report being discussed at its 2019 AGM

colleagues and customers, before being offered opportunities to grow their skills to help find future employment.

The Annual Respect for Nottingham survey aims to explore views of local residents and businesses about crime and anti-social behaviour to identify areas needing more work.

Safer Colleagues, Safer Communities

The Co-op Group published its Safer colleagues, Safer communities report in November 2018. It explored the issue of the safety of workers and shared their stories of how violent crime was affecting them. Every day more than 250 retail workers face violence, just for doing their jobs. Increasingly these assaults involve weapons – knives, axes, guns, hammers and syringes.

A quarter of assaults were triggered when retail workers refused to sell restricted goods to under-18s or alcohol to customers who were already drunk, as required by law. There are now more than 50 types of products that are restricted by law, but if it isn't enforced, retail workers are personally liable for breaking it. The Co-operative Party, alongside the Co-op Group and USDAW, have been campaigning in Parliament for assault of shopworkers to be a specific crime with better protection for retail staff.

The Group has also invested in better security, physical improvements to stores and more support to employees, as well as looking at tackling the root causes of crime through local partnerships such as the Damilola Taylor Trust, and the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust.

Freedom from Fear Campaign

USDAW, as the trade union for retail workers, runs an annual Respect for Shopworkers Week as part of its Freedom from Fear campaign.

The week, in the run up to Christmas, raises awareness amongst the public of the violence, threats and abuse that shopworkers experience by running stalls, press stories and visits by local politicians.

Business Crime Reduction Partnerships

Business Crime Reduction Partnerships are forums which enable business, community, local authorities and the police to work together on retail crime, make town centres safer and reduce anti-social behaviour.

Many Business Crime Reduction Partnerships use radio systems to proactively share information and link in with the police's CCTV, as well as regular meetings with the police, pub watch programmes, local accreditation schemes, and working together on prosecutions.

In Yeovil, the partnership has gone a step further – the Yeovil Crime Reduction Team has sought to get to know repeat offenders so that they can work holistically with other agencies to offer support to prevent them reoffending such as shelter, medical treatment, counselling or food and clothes.

By breaking the cycle of repeat offending and social exclusion, they help tackle underlying issues from homelessness or domestic violence to difficulties with welfare benefits, mental health or drug abuse. The service includes early intervention and triage and works because of the co-operative partnership approach.

Design town centres that minimise crime

In Neath, the council and the police worked closely together in the redesign of the new Neath Civic Centre in order to ensure it is 'secure-by-design', meaning opportunity for crime and the fear of crime are reduced through a more secure environment.

Local authorities could include secured by design as a condition of planning in the next refresh of their Local Plans. For example, Newcastle City Council published a "Designing for Community Safety Supplementary Planning Document" making Secured By Design a principle of local planning decisions, with specific guidance on designing out crime in city and local/ neighbourhood centres.

Night-time economy

The night-time economy is at the heart of many towns and cities, providing over 1.3 million jobs nationally and contributing an estimated £66 billion to the UK economy.

However, it isn't without its problems – 27% of councils put night-time crime in their top three challenges and the Association of Chief Police Officers say nearly 50% of all violent crime is alcohol related.

A collaborative approach is needed to tackle night-time crime. This could include training, engagement events for businesses, and multiagency help points for vulnerable people at night, such as Help Point Swansea funded by the South Wales PCC, the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust and the Abertawe University Health Board.

Community involvement in preventing reoffending

Nearly half of people with past convictions in England and Wales reoffend within twelve months, resulting in the highest imprisonment rate in Europe. While sentencing sits outside the direct purview of councils and PCCs, they do have a role to play in ensuring non-penal options are there, with proper community involvement, ongoing support and effective partnership working to make them as impactful as possible.

Restorative justice and community payback

Penal sentences may be appropriate for many offenders, but there are other options available in some cases which can help to reduce reoffending as well as easing the pressure on an overburdened prison system.

Restorative justice is a victim focused approach, helping those who have experienced harm to begin to find answers or closure. It also has the potential to reduce reoffending – reducing penal sentences or providing support, advice and skills after release.

The police, council and local prisons could develop a partnership to deliver more and better restorative justice – for example Winchester Prison hosted a Restorative Justice and Reintegration event with the

commissioner, prisoners, organisations funded to deliver aspects of the restorative justice programme, third and public sector organisations who support offenders, and prison staff.

Another approach could be to build on the experience of referral panels in the Youth Offending Service to extend their remit to include selective cases in the young adult age group to widen potential for directly reparative work placements, such as in the Making Good Bicester programme.

Involve the community in delivering community penalties

By ensuring community payback and unpaid work placements reflect community priorities, confidence in community sentencing can be increased, offenders can work on locally relevant projects, and local communities will

see meaningful benefit from their contributions.

Community panels could be developed to nominate projects and activities for community payback and unpaid placements. Projects identified can be given better support through partnership working and the panel can more effectively communicate to their communities, informing them of the work undertaken.

Community Justice Panels

Research suggests that bringing offenders and victims together can reduce reoffending – bringing victims improved closure and benefitting offenders by raising their awareness of the damage their crime causes.

The PCC, police, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), magistrates, victim support, probation, youth services and local council can work together to use community justice panels whenever appropriate to improve the outcome of both convictions and cautions.

For example, Sheffield City Council's Community Justice Panels bring victims and wrongdoers together to resolve conflict. They encourage wrongdoers to apologise and make amends, resulting in a Community Justice Agreement signed by the victim and the wrongdoer.

The importance of using victim personal statements should be emphasised where appropriate, so that the impact of the offense can be explained to offenders. Victims are often unaware of their right to make a victim personal statement – these should be strongly embedded in the criminal justice process and used effectively.

Case study: Rhubarb Farm

Rhubarb Farm is a horticultural social enterprise which provides supported work placements, training and volunteering for ex-offenders as well as other excluded groups.

Through meaningful and well-supported work and training, the scheme builds self-esteem, skills and opportunities, helping people into secure employment and reducing the risk of reoffending.

This work is supported by the police and crime commissioner, who included grant funding in the Police and Crime Plan, as well as support from the Derbyshire County Council's drug and alcohol team, lottery funding and community support.

Next Steps

Let us know what you think about these ideas and how communities, business, councils and police and crime commissioners can take a more co-operative approach to making our communities feel safer?



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