

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Safer Bromley Partnership Strategic Group</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>23 September 2010</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Tackling Drug Supply Initiative</b>
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## 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the planned programme of enforcement action to tackle the issue of drug supply within the borough. Whilst detailed operational plans are not included within this report, the broad outline of action is provided along with details of the associated communications and engagement activity that will support more intrusive operational activity.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Strategic Group is asked to
- Note the proposed programme of work to tackle the issue of drug supply within the borough.
  - Endorse the proposed outline of activity and identify methods for further engagement of each Partner in delivering the outcome of disrupting and reducing the supply of illegal drugs in Bromley.

## 3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the end of 2009/2010, the Safer Bromley Partnership was able to reflect on the year's performance and a strong position in crime reduction. Overall, the borough saw a reduction in offences of 9.8% and there were significant reductions associated with this in particular crime types. For example, whilst the significant challenges faced in relation to domestic burglary are not overlooked, the figures for robbery fell by 25%, motor vehicle crime fell by 27% and offences of violence by 4%. However, the challenges for 2010 and onwards are not only the maintenance of these low levels of crime but to embrace the challenge of achieving further reductions in pursuit of making Bromley a safer place for all.
- 3.2 It is proposed that, if further reductions in crime figures are to be achieved, the threat of diminishing returns from previous tactics must be acknowledged and new tactics and interventions need to be developed and implemented. It is against this background that it is proposed that the Partnership adopt a renewed emphasis on the disruption and reduction

of illegal drug supply within the borough. The links between drug use, drug supply and criminal activity are well documented and even the most basic problem solving approach to crime reduction recognises the role of drug supply markets as either crime generators or “attractors”. To provide context, the following facts are drawn from a national review paper in 2008<sup>1</sup>:

- At least 1 in 8 arrestees (equivalent to about 125,000 people in England and Wales) were estimated to be problem heroin and/or crack users, compared with about 1 in 100 of the general population.
- 81% of arrestees who used heroin and/or crack at least once a week said they committed an acquisitive crime in the previous 12 months, compared with 30% of other arrestees.
- 31% reported an average of at least one crime a day, compared with 3% of other arrestees.
- Between a third and a half of new receptions to prison were estimated to be problem drug users (equivalent to between 45,000 and 65,000 prisoners in England and Wales).
- Drug-related crime costs an estimated £13.5 billion in England and Wales alone.

3.3 The Partnership will be aware that much financial investment has been made in the past ten to fifteen years in establishing and improving drug treatment programmes and initiatives to engage problematic drug users in these programmes. In Bromley there has been significant progress in the use of arrest referral workers, Court ordered treatment programmes and the targeting of drug using criminals. However, this paper acknowledges that these “demand side” measures can only have a limited impact if other activity is not checked.

3.4 The drive to re-focus interventions on supply side measures are not only seen as important in helping to make continued reduction in offending and crime levels within the borough but it is an ambition that is also reflected in recent publications from the Home Office and other bodies. For example, the recent consultation paper<sup>2</sup> relating to the Government’s Drug Strategy makes the clear assertion that the Government at National level will strengthen enforcement by targeting all points along the drug supply chain from disrupting street level dealers to tackling organised crime groups. In addition, the Metropolitan Police Service for 2010/2013<sup>3</sup> includes the commitment to focus on six key activity areas. These areas include targeting drug offenders involved in violent or serious acquisitive crime, closing crack houses and disrupting commercial cannabis cultivation.

3.5 The Police Strategy also highlights the importance of engaging communities in tackling drug dealing at a local level, a priority that the renewed focus in Bromley will be keen to emphasise. The Partnership recognises the significant impact that drug supply can have on both local businesses and communities and neighbourhoods. It is also recognised that

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<sup>1</sup> The treatment and supervision of drug-dependent offenders: A review of the literature prepared for the UK Drug Policy Commission (March 2008) Tim McSweeney, Paul J. Turnbull, and Mike Hough

<sup>2</sup> 2010 Drug Strategy Consultation paper, Home Office, August 2010

<sup>3</sup> Confident, Safe & Secure: Metropolitan Police Service Drug Strategy 2010-13

a drug supply can threaten community cohesion, quality of life and the ambition to create vibrant and thriving town centres.

- 3.6 Any initiative to disrupt and reduce drug supply must take account of the type of drug supply market that is likely to be present in an area and the relationship between localised initiatives and the importance of not jeopardising the work that will take place at a regional (pan-London) and international perspective. It is also important to be clear whether the action that will be taken will target “open” drug markets where dealers will, generally supply to anyone (can be either on the street or off the street at premises etc) or “closed” markets where a dealer will only sell to those who are known or introduced to them (again, can be street based or in premises). Looking at the Bromley picture, there are no identified open drug markets either at street level or within premises. As such, the majority of the work identified below will, by its nature be focused on any closed markets that exist.
- 3.7 It is important to note that the adoption of this programme of work will not detract from the priority placed on strong enforcement action by the Police to tackle drug supply where it takes place. The outline of interventions provided below is designed to compliment and work alongside the intelligence led and targeted operations. In outlining the proposals below, it should also be noted that the detail of interventions has been limited in order to avoid compromise of the individual activities. There will be three distinct phases to the proposed project and the programme will be one that develops and grows rather than moves from one distinct operation to the next without opportunity to repeat good practice. A summary is provided below:

## **PHASE 1 - TARGET NIGHT TIME ECONOMY AND MAXIMISE HIGH VISIBILITY OPPORTUNITIES**

This phase will focus on the night time economy, predominantly those within Bromley and Beckenham town centres. Work is not precluded in other town centre areas in future but the initial roll-out of interventions will take place within these two areas.

- a Engagement of Businesses – Officers from both the Police and Local Authority will visit licensed premises within the target locations and discuss the aims of the project with licensees and managers within the borough’s pubs and clubs.
- b Public Launch – this element will rely heavily on the communications strategy that has been devised to compliment and support this initiative. The “crack down” on drug supply will be launched using press releases, posters and other materials within the borough’s town centres, highlighting the fact that the Partnership will demonstrate no tolerance of drug supply.
- c High Impact Operations – A number of detection and challenge events will be held at key focus points and interchanges within the borough’s town centres.
- d Targeted Market Disruption – Following the more generic activity for detection and challenge in public areas, a programme of more targeted operations will be deployed in relevant premises.

- e Repeat And Vary Tactics In Ongoing Programme – The interventions highlighted above will be repeated at various times within the next six months and options for deploying similar tactics in other parts of the borough will be assessed and actioned as relevant.

## **PHASE 2 - LOCALISED ACTION IN LICENSED PREMISES**

The second phase is characterised by a focus outside of the town centres, recognising that a robust programme of interventions must take account of the entire borough rather than maintaining a simple focus. This phase of the programme is characterised by interventions from the combined resource of the Council and Police Licensing Team:

1. A section on the matter of drug misuse in licensed premises will be incorporated in the Licensing Authority's (Council's) Licensing Policy. This is currently being reviewed and is due to be considered by Council on 25 Oct 2010. The new section reinforces the Council's commitment to the reduction and eradication of drugs from licensed premises. It will make it clear that in premises where drugs misuse is problematic and where the Police or others apply for a 'Review' of the licence, the Licensing Authority will consider this as being very serious and will give appropriate consideration to the full range of options available including the suspension and revocation of the licence.
2. Licensing Officers will undertake random testing for drugs in high risk premises, undertaking joint inspections with the Police if necessary
3. Licensing Officers will continue to reinforce the anti drugs initiative with licensees ensuring that their drugs policy (policy on searching, management of Door Staff etc.) is appropriate to the type of premises and clientele.
4. Publicity will be produced to highlight the anti drugs initiative and related issues for businesses through the 'Best Bar None' award scheme and the business information e-bulletin 'Business Matters'

## **PHASE 3 - INTO THE COMMUNITY**

This phase recognises the importance of tackling drug supply issues amongst communities and in residential areas. Much of the work will rely heavily on the engagement of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams, but a concerted communications campaign is also planned to encourage the provision of community intelligence in relation to venues and individuals within communities:

- i) "Crack Houses" – The powers to close premises associated with anti-social behaviour and Class A drug use already exist and the Partnership has been responsible for the closure of a number of premises. This work will continue but there will be a renewed emphasis on the importance of communicating action to neighbours and other nearby neighbours, providing evidence that action is taken and reassurance that the concerns of local people are acted on in a robust manner.

- ii) Cannabis “Factories” – Key in this respect is the work of Safer Neighbourhood Teams who provide a crucial source of intelligence relating to individual properties and activities that may alert to the presence of commercial cannabis production.
  - iii) Increasing Intelligence – Whilst communications will be crucial throughout the programme, it is proposed that once the campaign has been clearly promoted and there is a broad range of recognition and support for interventions, it is proposed that a further stage of promotion be commenced, focusing on communications to encourage individuals to share important intelligence with local Police in relation to the supply of illegal drugs in communities. The key objective would be the improvement in both the amount and quality of localised intelligence that is received to inform pro-active enforcement activity.
- 3.8 Evaluating Impact – Each phase of the programme will be subject to review and evaluation e.g. looking at the number of people stopped, number searched, arrests and charges that arise from interventions and action against licensed premises. Overall, it is proposed that the number of sanctioned detections for possession with intent to supply will be the major indicator of positive outcomes, and whilst a potentially conflicting target, it is proposed that this is associated with further reductions in total notifiable offences during the period of operation.