

# THE BLACKTHORN 'CASPAR' PROJECT

## CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PARTNERSHIP

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE, CAMPBELL SQUARE POLICE STATION, ENGLAND, 2001

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### **SUMMARY:**

CASPAR (Crime and Anti-Social behaviour Partnership) was devised in response to the Northampton community safety target: "To identify and implement, in one area per year, an estate action community programme specifically aimed at reducing crime and disorder".

Blackthorn is an estate of 2,200 houses, predominantly built by the local authority in the 1970's and is located on the outskirts of Northampton. Blackthorn had a burglary rate six times that of the rest of Northampton, and high incidence of anti-social behaviour.

Crime pattern and mapping analysis of both the Police and Borough Council's incident systems was carried out. Meetings were held with Community Beat Officers, Housing Officers, the Residents Association and many statutory and non-statutory agencies to identify the problems, causes and possible solutions. A community survey was carried out of all households and the local school. The survey was heavily publicised in the local media and the results were presented to residents, local politicians and other agencies at a meeting at Blackthorn Community Centre. 809 response were received. Based on this several problems were identified. They included the general appearance of the area, the physical layout of the estates, groups of young people in the area of the shops, lack of provisions for young people in the area, overall crime levels, low levels of reporting crime and information, and a general high level of cynicism about community involvement and the activities of statutory agencies

For ten months a PS Mark McDonnell, worked in the local Housing Office as the Project Manager. Information disclosure protocols allowed exchanges of information between all agencies. A number of Partnership projects were run in response to the issues raised in the survey. The effort consisted of abandoned vehicle removal, environmental changes, targeted support for young offenders, increase of youth provisions, burglary reduction 'Neighbourhood Warden', targeted intelligence-led policing, and publicity strategy.

Comparisons of reported crime figures 18 months before and after the start of the project has shown a 39% reduction in overall crime, with reductions of 37% in House Burglaries and 56% in Thefts of Vehicles. Crime pattern analysis indicates an increase in confidence in the reporting of previously under reported types of crimes. Information via community leaders indicates a significant increase in the quality of life on Blackthorn.

## INTRODUCTION

Northampton is the County town of Northamptonshire and is one of the four operational areas of Northamptonshire police. The town is divided into four sectors; Blackthorn is one of several large local authority estates covered by the East Sector.

Following the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Northampton Community Safety Partnership (Northamptonshire Police, Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council and other agencies) published targets under "The Crime and Disorder Strategy For Northampton 1999-2002". One of the 'Personal Safety' targets was:

*"To identify and implement, in one area per year, an estate action community programme specifically aimed at reducing crime and disorder".*

Following the success of a 'holistic' partnership project that had run for a number of years on the Bellinge housing estate in the town, a similar approach was proposed for Blackthorn with a rotating manager seconded from the three main agencies.

Blackthorn is an estate of 2,200 houses predominantly built by the local authority in the 1970's, and is located on the outskirts of Northampton as part of a large 'new town' development. The natural community boundaries did not follow the ward or police beat boundaries and a decision was made that the project should follow the community boundary. This did not prevent crime analysis as two adjoining sub-beats covered the area exactly.

CASPAR stands for Crime and Anti-Social behaviour Partnership; it was devised by Mark McDonnell to be non-specific to any location in order that it could be used for each estate project. There are now other CASPAR projects running within Northampton using the same model.

The Steering Committee consisted of the Police Community Safety Inspector, the Borough Council Community Safety Manager, the Head of Performance Management, County Council representative, together with the Police Sector Commander and Senior Housing Officer for the chosen area.

PS Mark McDonnell, the first manager was seconded from the Police and it is his time leading the project from November 1999 to June 2000 that forms the basis of this report. PS Mark McDonnell was the Community Beat Supervisor for the East Sector of Northampton. He is a graduate with an academic background in creative problem solving and experienced in multi-agency partnership work.

During his secondment he worked from the Local Housing Office. A protocol was agreed allowing direct access to computer information held by that agency. Management then passed to a Borough Council employee for nine months, to be followed by the County Council employee.

## PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Having decided on the geographical area, a number of management meetings took place to plan in detail the Aims and Objectives of the project.

### Aims

1. To make Blackthorn a safer place in which to live, work and visit.
2. To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Blackthorn, without incurring displacement to surrounding areas.
3. To co-ordinate joint working by all agencies in enforcement, support and co-operation more effectively.
4. To fully involve the community in sustained crime and disorder reduction solutions.

## Objectives

1. To design and implement innovative solutions to achieve the overall aims and objectives of the project.
2. To identify environmental factors contributing to crime and the fear of crime in the Blackthorn area and design and implement solutions, within available financial resources.
3. To develop a co-ordinated strategy for identifying and diverting young people vulnerable to involvement in crime and disorder.
4. To develop a co-ordinated strategy to protect and support victims of anti-social -- IK,haviour.
5. To reduce the number of burglaries by 30% by December 2001.
6. To reduce the number of thefts of and from motor vehicles by 30% by December 2001.
7. To increase the community ownership of crime and disorder issues and solutions.
8. To design and implement a sustainable crime and disorder strategy for the Blackthorn estate.

## SCANNING

Crime data from the previous three years was analysed. This showed Blackthorn to have a significant crime problem, particularly in relation to burglary and vehicle crime. For example:

- Northampton Borough  
14.6 Burglaries per 1000 households
- Blackthorn area  
87.2 Burglaries per 1000 households

The Police and Council incident logging data provided evidence of a disproportionately high

number of 'voids', turnover of tenants, and complaints of anti-social behaviour associated with young people and drugs within the Blackthorn estate.

## ANALYSIS

The crime pattern of the 720 dwelling house burglaries in Blackthorn over the previous three years showed that ten individuals were responsible for 133 of the 177 detected burglaries. Three of these people were siblings and all were associates. All were under 25 years old and lived within the estate.

Targeted houses tended to be within 500 yards of the offender's address, with a very high incidence of repeat victimisation.

House burglaries and thefts of cars accounted for most of the reported crime. The suspicion was that other crimes had not been reported.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

In order to gain more detailed analysis a community survey was carried out.

### The aim of the survey

- To identify areas of work to be undertaken during the CASPAR project.
- To provide a benchmark for future evaluation purposes.
- To bring the community into the partnership by the process and the publicity generated by the survey.

The Questionnaire was kept as close as possible to a survey carried out by Northampton Borough Council in their Crime and Disorder Audit 1998.

A total of 589 questionnaires were returned (25% of the households in the area), and a further 220 were received from Blackthorn Middle School pupils.

The survey was heavily publicised in the local media and the results were presented to residents, local politicians and other agencies at a meeting at the Blackthorn Community Centre, with 80 people attending.

### Concerns highlighted by the respondents of the survey are summarised as:

1. The general appearance of the area:
  - Litter
  - Abandoned vehicles
2. The physical layout of the estates:
  - Lighting
  - Footpaths
  - Underpasses
3. Problems with intimidating groups of young people in the area of Blackthorn Bridge Court.
4. Problem with the lack of provision for young people in the area
5. Crime, especially:
  - Burglaries
  - Vehicle crime
  - Repeat victimisation
6. Low levels of reporting crime and information due to:
  - A perception that the police cannot or will not take action
  - Fear of intimidation
7. A general high level of cynicism about community involvement and the activities of statutory agencies.

## RESPONSE

A number of initiatives were implemented in response to the concerns raised in the survey:

### The general appearance of the area

#### Litter

Ten disposable cameras were purchased. With the assistance of the Blackthorn Good Neighbours Project, young people living on the estate were asked to photograph locations where they felt environmental problems existed, all were returned and highlighted the locations of litter problems.

Meetings were held with representatives of the Residents Association the local Housing Officers and CBO's to 'brainstorm' how the most effective use could be made of a 'Spring Clean', in order to achieve the overall CASPAR objectives.

Full liaison was made with the press through the Police and Borough Council Press Officers. The event was coordinated with the launch of the new Abandoned Vehicle Policy.

#### Activities included:

- The lower school pupils designed posters and made models out of recycled materials. Prizes were given to winners, funded by Nene Valley Rotary. A local newspaper attended and a story was distributed advertising the litter pick.
- Local residents and school pupils took part in litter picks with The Princes Trust Volunteers and a youth club.
- The Prince's Trust Volunteers used the Blackthorn Spring Clean as a major project, working each day of the litter pick. They co-ordinated locations each day with the Cleansing Department who collected the bags of rubbish.
- Skips were placed within the estate and within hours were overflowing. They were cleared midweek and the replacements were again overflowing by the next day.

- During the week a 'sharps' box was supplied by CAN (a voluntary organisation involved in drugs work).

The Residents Association wrote to the Council requesting future skip placements and received a positive response.

As well as the physical removal of a huge amount of rubbish from the estate the publicity generated from this event was extremely valuable in 'community building' and generating interest in the whole of the CASPAR project. There was a feeling that "something could be done".

This issue is also linked to tree and shrub pruning carried out at the same time and changes to contracts making the same contractors responsible for cleaning litter as for grass cutting. This increased the frequency of cleaning.

### Abandoned Vehicles

This problem, highlighted by the survey, was echoed by the amount of time, and frustration, experienced by individual Housing Officers and Community Beat Officers in dealing with complaints of abandoned vehicles.

The number of abandoned vehicles throughout all of Northampton had increased significantly following the introduction of landfill tax with a car having little scrap value.

From 1 January 1999 to 1 April 2000 a total of 2,300 abandoned vehicles were reported to NBC and only 800 removed, (53 per month).

Representatives from NBC Cleansing, Housing and Borough Solicitors, Fire Service, Police Community Beat Officers and Control Room staff met during January and February 2000 to review the existing policy and procedures as they were cumbersome with a significant number failing to be removed.

The CASPAR manager produced a new policy, which was adopted by the Borough Council.

From 1 April 2000 until 6 June 2000 a total of 369 abandoned vehicles were removed in Northampton. (A rate of 164 per month).

The new policy increased the rate at which abandoned vehicles were removed by over 300% within the first two months.

While a large number of vehicles have been removed under the new procedure, there were still problems caused by 'back street' car breakers bringing vehicles onto the estates in order to strip them of usable parts.

The use of an injunction to prevent such activity was used successfully on one occasion.

### The physical layout of the estates

The experiences learnt during an earlier partnership, on the nearby Bellinge estate, regarding the legal processes involved in blocking footpaths and of public consultation were used in the planning of structural changes.

The community survey included a map of the estate, respondents were asked to indicate locations they felt unsafe. Using these locations meetings took place with the Community Beat Officers, Housing Officers, Construction and Property Services, Crime Prevention Officers and the Residents Association. It was agreed that:

- The same basis of trying to prevent the free flow of routes through 'rat-runs' from one area to another as done on Bellinge should be attempted.
- Due to the large area of the estates and the differing type of layout to Bellinge a co-ordinated work timetable of work needed to be drawn up.

Consideration has been given to:

- Traffic calming
- New footpaths

- Closure of existing footpaths
- Closure of underpasses
- Vehicle/Motorcycle barriers
- Lighting enhancement
- Tree pruning and removal
- Layout of shops and community centre area.

A walk of the estate took place during which the locations highlighted were surveyed. (During the walk a youth was arrested on a stolen motorbike driving down one of the footpaths!)

The chair of Bellinge Residents Association gave a talk to the Blackthorn Residents Association. She outlined the benefits that had resulted on the estate and the need to see this as a long-term benefit.

This part of the project has started with some fencing and tree pruning but developed into the major part of the work in the second management phase of CASPAR and will take some years to fully progress. Analysis of the same work done in the Bellinge estate showed a reduction in reported crime on that estate by over 60% over five years.

### Problems with groups of young people in the area of Blackthorn Bridge Court

The physical layout of the shopping area prevents natural surveillance and was reviewed as part of the physical layout part of the project having been highlighted as an area of particular concern by residents.

The Community Beat Officer and the Police Community Safety Department liased with the owners of the pub and the shop regarding the use of each premises CCTV to cover the security of the other premises, and the frontage area. (Shortly after this a security guard of the local pub was stabbed to death in this area, the CCTV

showed much of the incident and a local youth has been convicted of manslaughter).

The Youth Service Outreach workers were notified of the reported problem and targeted this area.

It was identified by the Community Beat Officers and Housing Officers that there was a group of about twenty youth's aged between 14 and 19 who were responsible for a high proportion of antisocial behaviour and crime throughout the estate.

Work to co-ordinate an approach to this group has resulted in the Blackthorn Youth Project (14-to-19 Project).

It is emphasised that this project is related to Crime and Disorder Reduction, not to the provision of facilities for young people on the estate.

This project was initiated in November 1999 as a result of a meeting between the 'Northampton Chamber' Youth Training Contact Manager with responsibility for developing "Life Skills" provision (part of the Learning Gateway) and the CASPAR manager.

Research and discussions took place with projects in other parts of the country, particularly the Young Eagles Project in Lancashire.

It was felt that there was sufficient expertise within agencies in Northamptonshire to run a mentoring type course without the considerable cost, and loss of control, that would result from employing external consultants. The target group on Blackthorn was *'those most involved in crime and disorder'*.

The Northamptonshire Youth Service (Lifelong Learning) were in the process of planning a Youth Project on Blackthorn with similar aims to those of the Young Eagles, and it was felt that much could be gained from expanding this project.

In December 1999 a meeting took place with The Chamber, Northampton Borough Council, Youth and Residential Services, Social Care and Health, Police, CAN, Youth Offending Team and Educational welfare. It was agreed that the Youth Project would be expanded to include those aged 14-19, targeting those most vulnerable to involvement in criminal activities on the Blackthorn CASPAR area.

The youth service took management responsibility for the day-to-day matters. They report to a steering group which represents all of the partners, these include:

- Police
- Health and Social Care
- Adolescent Response Team
- Education Welfare
- Northants Chamber
- Career Path
- Northampton College
- CAN
- Northampton Borough Council

Aims of the Blackthorn Youth Project are:

- To Develop a multi-agency partnership as an extension of CASPAR to address the issues of youth crime and anti-social behaviour as follows:
  - To create a partnership across agencies to pilot the initiative in Northampton
  - To reduce the number of people becoming involved in crime in and around the Blackthorn Estate in Northampton
  - To disseminate and develop good practice to be adopted across the county

Objectives are:

- To appoint staff from across agencies to develop the provision
- To identify a group of young people in need
- To develop a programme suited to the needs of the cohort
- To motivate and develop the young people as positive citizens
- To increase confidence of individuals
- To increase self-esteem of individuals
- To achieve individual targets
- To maintain and develop existing provision in Northampton
- To identify the possibility of developing similar provision beyond 2001

Funding included £15,000 from the Youth Service, £15,000 from the Northampton Chamber and £3,000 from the New Start Partnership. Also, £7,000 worth of sessions work from the Health and Social Care, £4,000 of sessions work from CAN and £2,000 from Northampton College.

A Research Fellow from University College Northampton was contracted to provide detailed ongoing evaluation of the project.

Although the aim of the project was to engage 12 to 14 young people living on Blackthorn it was accepted that there would be difficulties in making the initial contacts as there was to be no compulsion in attending. Consequently all partners drew up an initial list of 30 individuals who lived in the CASPAR area. It was agreed that the reason for inclusion in this list would not need to be justified and the nominating agency would remain anonymous.

Outreach work was undertaken by youth workers to engage the young people who had been nominated and by June 2000 there was regular contact being made with 11 of the target group.

This project is extremely sensitive regarding publicity due to the client group. Any suggestion that they have been targeted in a crime reduction initiative involving the Police/Social Services could result in withdrawal, not only from the project but also from any other work undertaken by the Youth Service and CAN.

### **Problem with the lack of provision for young people in the area**

Successful bids were made for grants from the High Sheriff's fund for a senior (14 to 18 year old) youth club and for the training of a number of local young people in youth leadership to run the club.

The Prince's Trust Volunteers were invited to move to and run a project permanently from the Blackthorn Community Centre. The group of 16 people on the scheme in June 2000 included 3 from the Blackthorn estate.

### **Crime**

A successful application was made to the Home office for £72,000 to run a burglary reduction project within CASPAR. This employed a 'Neighbourhood Warden' to target repeat victims of dwelling burglaries. The Warden is employed by the Northampton Borough Council and works from the local Police Station.

### **Targeted Information Disclosure**

Meetings took place between the Police Community Beat Officers and the local Housing Officers to identify the ten households who cause the most Crime and anti-social behaviour. Each independently identified the same households.

By exchanging information in three cases successful evictions were obtained.

One of the identified persistent offenders was arrested in January 2000 as a direct consequence of information received by the CASPAR manager. He had committed 21 burglaries within a close proximity of his home during the Christmas period and is now in prison.

### **Community involvement and the activities of statutory agencies**

A 'Blackthorn Workers Forum' was set up which now meets monthly at the community centre and is attended by the front line workers of many organisations including the Residents Association and the schools. The aim is to allow networks to form between the individuals working on the estate and to ensure that each is supporting the actions of the other. Usually about 20 people attend.

To ensure that there was a regular supply of positive publicity regarding the estate there was an allocation of a dedicated Press Officer both at the Council and the Police Press Office. This has contributed to achieving a large amount of positive publicity.

A test of the benefit of this approach occurred immediately after the murder of a prominent community leader in May 2000. There was the potential for a lot of negative media coverage, in fact it resulted in positive comments from residents in the papers and television reports, regarding the work being carried by the CASPAR project.

By informing the community of ways to combat crime and anti-social behaviour in the areas they indicated were of concern, there has been an increased amount of information and intelligence supplied to the police.

### **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

An evaluation of the objectives of the Blackthorn CASPAR Project indicates considerable achievements:



## Reported crime

The following graph shows the total number of recorded crimes on Blackthorn from January 1995 until March 2001. The CASPAR project started in November 1999 and the management passed to the Council in July 2000.

Analysis revealed considerable reduction in crime has been sustained since the change in Management. The reduction of actual crimes (including unreported crime) could not be properly assessed without conducting another survey, which is planned for late 2001. The previous survey indicated that almost 100% of dwelling burglaries and thefts of motor vehicles were reported, with other crime types accounting for most of what went unreported. Despite the fact that dwelling burglaries and thefts of motor vehicles now account for a smaller proportion of recorded crime (26% from 36%) it is anticipated that the next survey will identify an increase in the reporting of other categories of crime.

If dwelling burglaries and thefts of motor vehicles are used as an indicator of the total crime levels, the reduction in crime is considerable.

## Reported crime reductions

An important lesson from the experience is the need to be careful in selecting reported crime figures as objectives in a project aimed at increasing community confidence. The survey indicated 95% of Thefts of Vehicles were being reported compared with 50.6% of Thefts from Vehicles prior to the project. This was mainly due to a feeling that the Police could or would not do anything.

As a Crime and Disorder Reduction Project, the reduction in overall reported crime by 39% in the first 18 months underlines the fact that this project is successfully following the experience of the Bellingham Partnership.

Analysis of crime patterns on estates surrounding Blackthorn showed a reduction in

crime also, indicating displacement was not occurring.

Analysis as to the contribution of individual initiatives, carried out as part of the Blackthorn CASPAR Project, in the overall crime and disorder reduction, has been difficult due to the complexity and interdependency of all the components of the project.

## Suggestions for Best Practice

Lessons learned from the Blackthorn CASPAR Project could be used to assist in future CASPAR Projects as follows:

- Plan in detail the aims/objects before the project starts.
- Make sure partners are 'on board' and prepared to commit themselves.
- Meet and work closely with community leaders.
- Appoint a project manager whose role is solely that, not someone who fits in the project alongside their day job.
- Move the manager into the partner's office to ensure they are not pulled back into their normal role.
- Do not use the project managers normal title in press releases, it distracts from the partnership approach.
- Put in place an agreed media strategy.
- Be aware of personal, organisational and political agendas of partners.
- Personalities and personal contacts are the most important part of a partnership; information exchange relies on trust as well as protocols.

- Match the project to the specific problem; what works in one community may not be appropriate in another.
- Share the success with everybody involved.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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## APPENDICES

### Key Finding of Blackthorn Residents Survey

A total of 589 questionnaires were returned by 01 January 2000 (25% of all households).

#### Concerns about the area

In response to the question " How much of a problem do you think the following are in the blackthorn area at this time?" the following charts shows the responses:

	NOISE FROM NEIGHBORS	GRAFFITI	DAMAGE	LIGHTING	RUBBISH	DRUNK ADULTS
Not a problem	297	147	79	142	52	238
Bit of a problem	172	273	185	197	141	169
Big problem	58	117	271	211	378	71
Don't know	46	34	36	21	6	92

	YOUNG PEOPLE DRINKING	DRUGS	MOTORCYCLES	ROAD SAFETY	THREATS TO YOUNG FROM CRIME	LACK OF YOUTH FACILITIES
Not a problem	167	92	108	143	93	29
Bit of a problem	180	87	176	221	139	110
Big problem	111	213	246	155	152	321
Don't know	113	180	43	53	184	111

	TEENAGERS HANGING ABOUT	PUBLIC TRANSPORT	CHILDREN NUISANCE ON PLAY AREAS	CRIME IN GENERAL	RACIAL ATTACKS
Not a problem	44	281	129	39	157
Bit of a problem	173	126	175	182	83
Big problem	309	79	134	297	67
Don't know	45	85	132	56	264

The responses to the question: "How worried are you about the following happening in the Blackthorn area, to you?" Was:

	BEING BURGLER	VANDALISM	CAR STOLEN	CAR BROKEN INTO	CAR DAMAGED	MOTORBIKE STOLEN	PEDAL CYCLE STOLEN	MUGGED	INSULTED BY NEIGHBORS	DRUNKS	SEXUALLY ASSAULTED	ASSAULTED ON PUBLIC TRANSIT	WHILE WAITING FOR PUBLIC TRANSIT
Not at all worried	7	20	24	25	23	70	58	38	218	133	104	117	93
Not very worried	68	111	55	39	46	16	50	141	138	206	178	137	126
fairly worried	175	201	108	110	114	19	67	192	82	109	121	110	126
very worried	329	238	313	327	313	64	140	192	97	82	136	78	118
Not applicable	4	10	74	75	78	402	257	13	41	44	37	133	113

#### Issues relating to the physical appearance of the area

	GRAFFITI	DAMAGE	LIGHTING	RUBBISH
Not a problem	147	79	142	52
Bit of a problem	273	185	197	141
Big problem	117	271	211	378
Don't know	34	36	21	6

67% of respondents saw graffiti as a problem and 78% damage as a problem in the area.

These two issues were seen as a linked problem with 100 of the 117 who saw graffiti as a 'big problem' considering damage in the same way, of these there was an even split between owner occupiers and tenants.

In this case there is a similar proportion of people who are fairly or very worried of being a victim of vandalism (77%) as see it to be a problem (75%).

	VANDALISM
Not at all worried	20
Not very worried	111
Fairly worried	201
Very worried	238
Not applicable	10

70% of respondents considered bad street lighting to be a problem, 98 of the people who saw this as a 'big problem' were very worried about been mugged, robbed or beaten up, 77 of these very rarely or never went out alone after dark and 59 were female. There was no significance in the age range of these.

### Young people and antisocial behavior

	YOUNG PEOPLE DRINKING	MOTORCYCLES	THREATS TO YOUNG FROM CRIME	LACK OF YOUTH FACILITIES	TEENAGERS HANGING ABOUT	CHILDREN NUISANCE ON PLAY AREAS
Not a problem	167	108	93	29	44	129
Bit of a problem	180	176	139	110	173,	175
Big problem	111	246	152	321	309	134
Don't know	113	43	184	111	45	132

### Young people drinking in public places

This response to the problem of drunken people is linked to the concern people have in visiting the area of the public house and the shop where there is a reported problem with a group of youths demanding that shoppers buy cigarettes and alcohol for them. It is interesting that there is more of a concern with drunken youths than adults.

### Motorcycle nuisance

Few people had no view regarding this issue with a significant number (72%) seeing this as a problem.

### Threats to young people/ children from crime

There was a relatively high number of 'don't knows' to this question.

### Lack of facilities for young people

This issue was seen to be a major issue at 29 it had the lowest number of 'not a problem' responses, of the 111 who indicated that they 'did not know' if it was a problem 68% were owner-occupiers. Of all respondents 75% stated that the lack of facilities for young people was a problem and 54% a 'big problem'. This issue was considered to be an important one for all age groups.

### People stating that the lack of youth facilities for young people is a major problem

	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENT
age under 20	3	50%
age 20 to 29	68	67%
age 30 to 39	87	58%
age 40 to 49	74	62%
age 50 to 59	39	49%
age over 60	41	34%

### Teenagers/ young people hanging about in groups

This issue was the one that resulted in the greatest number of written responses.

When asked about locations in the area that were avoided due to fear of crime many expressed concern about a group of young people who congregate outside the shop, harassing shoppers to try and get them to purchase drink and alcohol for them.

This implies that the shopkeeper is not selling such products to underage children.

Apart from rubbish it had the highest proportion of respondents who saw it as a problem (82%).

### People using illegal drugs

	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENT
Not a problem	92	16%
Bit of a problem	87	15%
Big problem	213	37%
Don't know)	180	31%

Compared with other issues there was a high number of people who indicated that they did not know if drugs was a problem in the area, these people were of all age and household categories. Of the rest 73% saw drugs to be a problem and 53% as a big problem on the estate (51% and 36% of all respondents).

### Crime in general

	CRIME IN GENERAL ALL RESPONDENTS (N = 589)		CRIME IN GENERAL COUNCIL TENANTS (N = 212)		CRIME IN GENERAL VICTIMS OF CRIME (N = 281)		CRIME IN GENERAL NONE VICTIMS (N = 308)	
Not a problem	39(7%)		12(6%)		7(5%)		33(11%)	
Bit of a problem	182	479(81%)	51	172(81%)	80	259 (92%)	105	233(76%)
Big problem	297		121		179		128	
Don't know	56(9.5%)		19(9%)		15 (5%)		42(14%)	

Not surprisingly this was seen as a major problem with only 39 (7%) considering it not to be a problem. It is interesting that it was not seen as big a problem as youth problems or litter. The perception of the problem was the same for council tenants as for the private sector housing.

The people who have been victims of crime in the last 12 months considered the crime problem to be a far worse than those who had not been victims with 92% as compared with 76%.

### Racial attacks or harassment

	RACIAL ATTACKS ALL RESPONDENTS	RACIAL ATTACKS VIEW OF NONE WHITE EUROPEANS (21)
Not a problem	157 (27%)	3 (14%)
Bit of a problem	83 (14%)	5 (24%)
Big problem	67 (11%)	6 (29%)
Don't know	264 (45%)	5 (24%)

The small number of those respondents who were not white effects the validity of this response, but it is clear that those who may be victims to or have experience of racial behavior see the problem as significantly more of an issue than others.

### Feeling of safety

	HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL WHEN OUT ON FOOT ALONE AFTER DARK IN THE BLACKTHORN AREA		AVOID GOING OUT ALONE AFTER DARK IN THE BLACKTHORN AREA DUE TO FEAR	AVOID PUBLIC TRANSPORT AFTER DARK IN THE BLACKTHORN AREA DUE TO FEAR	AVOID CERTAIN LOCATIONS IN THE BLACKTHORN ESTATE DUE TO FEAR
Very safe	4	Never	57	103	54
Fairly safe	68	Rarely	51	70	48
Bit unsafe	141	Sometimes	132	103	136
Very unsafe	159	Usually	108	67	95
Never go out alone	215	Always	226	173	220

### Locations avoided

346 (59%) of respondents gave written replies when asked where they avoid in the area.

Street lighting was an issue mentioned by a number of people;

The area near to the shops on Blackthorn Bridge Court was the area with the highest number of written responses identifying locations avoided with a total of 198 that is 57% of the written replies (34% of all respondents)

## VIEWES ABOUT CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION

The question was asked, ' Apart from the work of the police, there may be other ways of helping to reduce crime and improve community safety. How helpful do you feel the following would be in making the Blackthorn area a safer place?

HOW HELPFUL	BETTER SECURITY OF HOMES	CCTV	BETTER LIGHTING	COUNCIL SPENDING	ACTIVITIES FOR YOUTH	MORE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	RESIDENTS COUNCIL	SECURITY ON PUBLIC TRANSIT	BETTER JOB OPPORTUNITIES	COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM	NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH
Don't Know	9	27	15	34	39	23	53	75	57	74	30
Not at all Helpful	2	8	9	8	11	10	5	5	20	10	32
Not very Helpful	10	24	37	27	32	47	44	39	39	49	77
Helpful	158	118	180	158	201	201	224	217	179	209	202
Very Helpful	398	401	330	349	298	296	251	237	281	231	237
Total of Helpful & Very helpful	556	519	510	507	499	497	475	454	450	440	439

## EXPERIENCE OF CRIME

About half of the respondents reported that they had experienced some crime in the categories in the survey during the previous year (to 30 November 1999).

	EXPERIENCED CRIMES	% EXPERIENCED CRIMES
Council house	115	54%
Private house	166	45%
Total from 589	281	48%

The following table shows the number of crimes experienced by respondents.

ALL CRIMES	ALL CRIME REPORTED TO POLICE
829	468 (56.5%)



The different categories of crimes and the number reported to the police.

NUMBER OF CRIMES REPORTED BY RESPONDENT	HOUSE BURGLARIES	REPORTED BURGLARIES	ATTEMPTED HOUSE BURGLARY	REPORTED ATTEMPTS	SHED BURGLARIES	REPORTED SHED BURGLARIES	ASSAULTS	REPORTED ASSAULTS	STOLEN VEHICLES	REPORTED STOLEN VEHICLES	VANDALISED VEHICLES	REPORTED VANDALISED VEHICLES	THEFT FROM VEHICLE	REPORTED THEFT FROM VEHICLE
None	519	524	497	530	516	539	560	575	545	547	429	509	533	555
1	52	49	57	45	52	43	18	11	32	31	77	49	40	30
2	14	13	25	11	14	6	5	2	8	7	50	21	12	3
3	3	2	7	1	6	1	3	0	4	4	24	8	3	1
4	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	4	2	1	0
5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
6	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total crime	94	86	150	82	102	58	49	19	60	57	297	127	77	39
Reported to police	91.5%		54.7%		56.7%		21.1%		95.0%		42.8%		50.6%	

\*The number reported to the police is according to respondents not police crime figures.

Of the 157 who gave a reason why they did not report incidents the reasons given are shown in the following table.

Police could have done nothing	65
Police would have done nothing	50
Wasn't serious enough	42
Scared of revenge attacks	25
Don't like the police	1
For another reason	9

\*A number gave a combination of reasons.

	TOTAL	HOUSE BURGLARIES	ATTEMPTED HOUSE BURGLARIES	SHED BURGLARIES	ASSAULTS	STOLEN VEHICLES	VANDALISED VEHICLES	THEFT FROM VEHICLES
Total crime CASPAR Survey	829	94	150	102	49	60	297	77
CASPAR crimes per 100 households	140	16	26	17	8	10	50	13
BCS crimes per 100 households (1997) (Violence per head of population)	30	6	4	2	8	2	8	10

\*Source 1998 British Crime Survey. All figures have been rounded to whole numbers and due to different time scales should only be used as a general indicator. Only crimes in the categories shown are included not all crime.

### **Dwelling house burglaries**

Total number of reported House burglaries and Attempt house burglaries reported to the police in the 12 months prior to December 1999 (according to respondents) was 168, which is a rate of 28.5 per 100 homes.

This is considerably higher than the 10.4 rate per year recorded over the three-year period 01 Oct 1997 to 30 Sep 1999. A probable reason for this is the recording of offences by the police as criminal damage, instead of attempt burglaries, in many cases.

The figure is also well above the 5.4 per 100 national average rate.

The total number of all House burglaries and attempts including those not reported to the police is 244 which is a rate of 41.4 per 100 homes.

It is likely that the 25% of the 2305 who responded to the survey represent those who have had some experience of crime that may have inflated the figures.

This survey reinforces the evidence of repeat victimisation with 70 locations accounting for all the dwelling house burglaries and 92 the attempt burglaries.

Unsurprisingly the percentage of those people who are very worried about being burgled is far greater, in the people who have been burgled within the last year, at 84%, than those who have not, at 59%.

When repeat victimisation is taken into account this fear is justifiable.

Repeat victimisation for Dwelling house burglaries including attempts.

NUMBER OF BURGLARIES	NUMBER OF HOUSES	TOTAL CRIMES
1	57	57
2	38	76
3	19	57
4	5	20
6	1	6
7	0	0
8	2	16
12	1	12
Total	123	244

### Auto crime

NUMBER OF CRIMES	STOLEN VEHICLES	REPORTED STOLEN VEHICLES	VANDALISED VEHICLES	REPORTED VANDALISED VEHICLES	THEFT FROM VEHICLES	REPORTED THEFT FROM VEHICLES
none	545	547	429	509	533	555
1	32	31	77	49	40	30
2	8	7	50	21	12	3
3	4	4	24	8	3	1
4	0	0	4	2	1	0
5	0	0	3	0	0	0
7	0	0	1	0	0	0
10	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	60	57	297	127	77	39
	95.0%		42.8%		50.6%	

As 405 respondents suffered no crime in these categories 184 victims, at an average of 2.4 crimes each suffered all of the 434 Auto crime offences.

Auto crime has a particularly low rate of reporting to the police and the following reasons were given

	THEFT OF VEHICLE	DAMAGE TO VEHICLE	THEFT FROM VEHICLE
Police could have done nothing	12	54	15
Police would have done nothing	7	39	18
Wasn't serious enough	2	31	8
Scared of revenge attacks	2	11	9
Don't like the police	1	0	0

**Key findings of concern from survey including written comments:**

1. The general appearance of the area highlighted in concerns about:
  - Litter
  - Abandoned vehicles
2. The physical layout of the estates:
  - Lighting
  - Footpaths
  - Underpasses
3. Problems with intimidatory groups of young people in the area of Blackthorn Bridge Court.
4. Problem with the lack of provisions for young people in the area
5. Crime especially:
  - Burglaries
  - Auto crime
  - Repeat victimisation
6. Low levels of reporting crime and information due to:
  - A perception that the police cannot or will not take action.
  - Fear of intimidation.
7. A general high level of cynicism about community involvement and the activities of statutory agencies.