Tilley Award 2004

‘Reassurance Policing’

SAFER GUILDFORD
a partnership approach

Application by the Guildford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

Tilley Award 2004

Project Title:	'Guildford's Reassurance Policing'
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Endorsing Chief Officer(s)	Assistant Chief Constable Mark Rowley
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Executive Summary

Tackling Fear of Crime

'Guildford's Reassurance Policing'

The issue of public reassurance in relation to law and order is critical. Tough measures on crime, zero tolerance and alternatives such as Wardens has not prevented the rise in the reassurance gap as measured by falling trends in priority crimes against the general perception that crime is rising. Research suggests that the incivilities that people see in their towns and housing estates such as drunkenness, litter, graffiti and abandoned cars, combined with the lack of presence of authority are the cause of this increasing gap. Issues that are not necessarily a crime have been downgraded and often do not receive attention from either the police or any other authority.

Surrey Police commissioned research from the University of Surrey to see if we could scientifically identify the issues that created the gap and put in place measures to reduce them. Visible control of the environment, and of the behaviour of those who repeatedly cause difficulty stood out as major factors. The presence of authority to deal with those difficult people is greatly enhanced if they are locally known and knowledgeable of the area.

Guildford Police engaged its Partners through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Community Safety Strategy and set about trying to reduce the 'reassurance gap.' Innovative working has taken place including environmental visual audits of neighbourhoods, placement of Neighbourhood Teams into Wards, significant improvements in environmental clear ups and public perception surveys. In addition to this, staff have been put in place to obtain anti social behaviour orders and communicate good news and information.

Initially, the Reassurance Project was conducted as a pilot in three Wards in Guildford Borough commencing in 2001. The success of the project led to the commencement of the National Reassurance Project in 2003 involving 16 Boroughs in 8 police forces including Manchester and Leicester. This Project is being funded by the Home Office and managed jointly with ACPO.

The improvement in the service level of clearing abandoned vehicles, graffiti and litter, including innovation such as the community clear ups which mobilise the community to take responsibility for their area has helped to both restore faith in authority and increase ownership within communities. This along with the use of the National Intelligence Model to target difficult people and places and the structure to tackle these issues through the use of a multi agency problem solving panel has led to a significant improvement in levels of service, achievement and public satisfaction.

1. Outline of the Problem

1.1 The 'reassurance gap' has been something of a paradox. Even in localities with the lowest recorded crime in the country, the gap still flourishes. The impact of this problem for the police as well as the local community cannot be over-emphasised.

1.2 Guildford Borough is one of the safest places to live, but falls foul of the 'reassurance gap'. Despite crime figures well below the national average, public perception is that crime is rising. The 'reassurance gap' clearly exists between the public's perception of the risk of crime, and the actual likelihood of suffering crime. Analysing the cause is crucial to the narrowing of this gap and rebuilding their faith and confidence in local policing, as well as pride and responsibility for their communities.

1.3 To better understand the causes of fear of crime in our communities, in 2001 Surrey Police commissioned Surrey University to undertake research to explore the reassurance gap. The results were instrumental in changing Guildford Borough's long-term approach to policing.

1.4 Research showed that, despite downward trends in actual crime, what people saw and read had a disproportionate effect on perceptions of safety, increasing their fear of crime. These 'signals' varied according to each community, but generally included such issues as poor lighting, graffiti, abandoned vehicles; young people gathering, litter and vandalism. Other 'signals' such as the presence of authority figures, CCTV and neighbourhood watch signs were 'comfort' factors and reduced people's fear of crime. By reducing the 'fear' factors and increasing the 'comfort' factors it should be possible to reduce significantly fear of crime.

1.5 Guildford Borough's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Safer Guildford Partnership, has a history of high achievement. It's dedication to combining skills, experience and expertise to tackle fear of crime is testament to its recognition that only through a joint approach can the real issues be tackled effectively.

1.6 The Safer Guildford Partnership comprises Surrey Police, Guildford Borough Council, Surrey County Council, the Guildford and Waverley Primary Care Trust, the Youth Offending Team and the Probation Service. Its emphasis on strategic and pragmatic collaborative working has resulted in a Partnership that is highly effective. That effectiveness has been acknowledged in a recent BCU Inspection, in the Local Authorities recent Assessment, and the fact that we are currently shortlisted for Beacon Status. The structure of the Partnership is shown at Appendix A.

1.7 The close collaboration and relationship between the partners led to the engagement of the Local Authorities and their commitment to finding additional resources and improving service levels. This led to provision of Wardens and improvement in services such as, clearance of litter, abandoned vehicles, graffiti, lighting and CCTV.

1.8 Agreement was reached with our partners that three Wards within the Borough would be used as pilot sites to test the theory and experiment with solutions. Each of these Wards had different issues. Ash Ward had relatively high levels of crime and social deprivation but its fear of crime was average for the Borough. Tongham Ward had average levels of crime and fear of crime. Christchurch Ward was a relatively affluent Ward with low levels of crime but high levels of fear.

1.9 The 'reassurance gap' extended beyond the geographical boundaries of our pilot sites and it was essential that realistic resources were put into these areas. This would enable us to sustain the programme across the whole Borough if successful. Sustainability needed to include the community taking responsibility and feeling empowered to deal with some of the issues with effective support from the Authorities.

1.10 The success of the scheme in Surrey has since led to a National Reassurance Project being piloted in six Forces throughout the country. Guildford continues to take part in this National project where Ash Wharf Ward is now the pilot. It must be emphasised that the success in our three original pilot Wards has now been extended to every Ward in the Borough. The national Programme gives us an opportunity to take things forward even further.

2. Analysing the problem

2.1 Defining the extent and range of 'signal crimes' across the Borough meant undertaking a detailed consultation process. Using established methodologies and innovative new practice, we were able to make an accurate assessment of the level of fear of crime as well as identify individual communities' hot-spot areas of signal crimes.

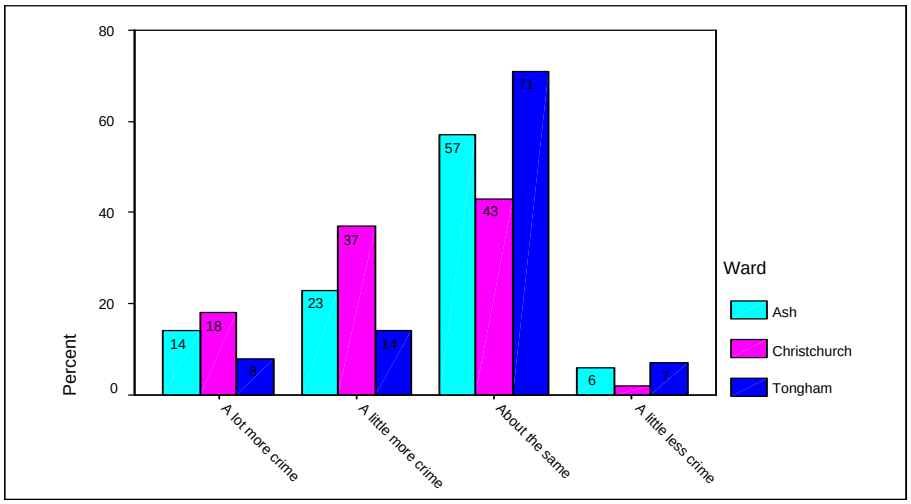


Fig 1. Perceptions in the change of local crime rate between 2001 and 2002, by Ward

2.2 The strength of our analysis lay in the breadth of our consultation. This was achieved through:

- The Fear of Crime Survey
- Environmental Visual Audits
- Local Steering Groups
- Public Perception Data
- Use of the National Intelligence Model

2.3 **Fear of Crime Survey and Crime Audit**

In 1998, the Safer Guildford Partnership conducted its first local crime survey of both residents and businesses. This was cross-referenced with crime figures and environmental factors such as abandoned vehicles, graffiti and neighbourhood nuisance complaints. From this our first Crime and Disorder Audit was prepared. Following the audit, a draft consultation list of strategy issues was circulated for discussion. Participants included schools, businesses, Local Councillors, Partners, Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators, Police Consultative Partnership Groups, minority and hard to reach groups, those in areas of deprivation and voluntary groups.

2.4 In 2001, the process was repeated, taking account what we had already learnt from the previous consultation, and of course, the strategy results themselves. From these audits and subsequent consultations, the Community Safety Strategy for 2002 – 2005 was published.

2.5 Both the detailed consultation process and preparation of the Community Safety Strategy helped not only to identify the impact of crime and disorder, but also the perception of fear of crime – thus being a valuable tool in assisting us to prepare our subsequent action plans. This included for example identifying places where people were afraid to go and the reasons why. This enabled us to formulate plans such as the Lighting Strategy to improve lighting in specific areas. Also, the Eyes and Ears of the Alleyway, a project to promote ownership of spaces subject to litter and vandalism.

2.6 The results of the survey showed that minor issues, not priority crimes were of most concern to people. (See chart below). Even in areas of low crime, fear of crime was often disproportionately high. Results also showed

further evidence of a lack of community spirit, with 23% stating that they would not consider calling on a neighbour for help.

Issue	**% who stated the issue was a problem to them**			
	Guildford Borough (sample size of 1130)	Ash (sample size of 79)	Christchurch (sample size of 40)	Tongham (sample size of 19)
Traffic and parking	53	48	65	42
Rubbish and litter	51	63	53	68
Dogs	45	62	45	58
Using public transport	40	59	45	42
Young people hanging around	39	57	38	63
Poor street lighting	31	29	40	21
Worrying about going into town centre	27	11	38	0
Neighbours	13	11	18	21

2.7 Fourteen multi-agency project groups were then formed to address the most salient issues. These groups have clearly defined targets and work towards strategy objectives, and are responsible for monitoring and evaluation their performance against these.

2.8 **Environmental Visual Audits**

Designed in Guildford specifically to provide a visual assessment of the extent of physical disorder in a given area, Environmental Visual Audits have become an essential tool in identifying the extent of the problem. The audits are a process whereby physical disorder can be measured in a neighbourhood. (See copy attached at Appendix B).

2.9 Neighbourhood Teams and members of the public conduct the audits in their locality. The process not only generated a comprehensive listing of target hot spot areas where signal crimes were most evident and could be targeted, but also captured changing levels of physical disorder.

2.10 Local Steering Groups

Also playing a part in defining the extent of the problem were our Local Steering Groups. The Safer Guildford Partnership's Community Safety Wardens used their regular meetings with locally based steering groups and Parish Councils to ensure that we were noting the issues that really did have an impact on fear of crime. With representatives from a variety of stakeholders ranging from schools and young people to community leaders and religious groups, these steering groups proved to be a valuable part of the 'problem analysis' process.

2.11 Members of these groups were able to triangulate information from other sources as well as highlight additional factors such as where youths were congregating. This ongoing consultation process helped to shape our subsequent problem solving action plan.

2.12 Public Perception Data

An assessment of the public's perception of fear of crime was also obtained through a specific detailed survey conducted in the three pilot Wards in November 2001 and then repeated in December 2002. Approximately 100 people were interviewed face to face in the three Wards. The overall perception was that crime was

increasing in the area they lived although the vast majority (72%) were satisfied with their neighbourhood. Fear of crime in each of the areas had increased as indicated in the chart below.

Table 1.1. Impact of fear of crime, by year

	ASH		CHRISTCHURCH		TONGHAM	
	2001	**2002**	**2001**	**2002**	**2001**	**2002**
Minimal	51%	52%	68%	69%	66%	37%
Moderate	35%	26%	28%	24%	26%	30%
Great	14%	22%	3%	7%	8%	33%

2.13 The issues raised by local people as most significant for them were not the priority crimes but other issues relating mainly to quality of life as the chart below indicates. This confirmed the information from the Fear of Crime Survey.

Table 1.3. Local problems, by year

PROBLEM	PERCENTAGE	
	2001	**2002**
Speeding motorists*	53	65
Traffic and parking issues*	40	60
Groups of youths hanging around*	38	60
Litter / rubbish lying around*	35	45
Poor street lighting	33	32
Vandalism*	29	41
Presence of drug users*	18	29
Dogs (noise, mess, loose)	17	21
Graffiti*	17	11
Presence of drug dealers*	16	29
Abandoned / burnt out vehicles	15	21
Problem / noisy neighbours	9	12
Presence of homeless people	7	11
People begging*	2	9

2.14 Other areas that were examined in the public perception survey were the presence of police or other forms of authority on the streets, knowledge of local officers and satisfaction with policing and other services.

2.15 National Intelligence Model

The National Intelligence Model was successfully piloted by Surrey Police and is now mandatory for all Police Forces. The potential to use additional sources of intelligence and information to assist deal with the reassurance gap was quickly realised. The introduction of the National Intelligence Model into the Borough Council is well advanced and additional data sets can be considered when tasking resources. In addition to this The Surrey Community Safety Unit developed the Surrey Crime and Disorder Information System (SCaDIS) that gives immediate access to data from other agencies. For example, the fire and education services provide arson and truancy figures

2.16 For the last two years now the Partnership has employed a reassurance analyst to scan the environment and obtain data sets and information outside of the normal policing environment to assist with this. This includes the above information, crime and disorder figures and other data such as the Environmental Visual Audits and Council nuisance complaints.

3. **Responses**

3.1 **Resources**

The Partners recognised that a significant amount of resources would need to be placed within communities if we were going to achieve presence, control and a reduction in fear of crime. These additional resources would need to be sustainable. Surrey Police carried out a major reorganisation that took effect in January 2002 to release 96 officers as Neighbourhood Specialist Officers (NSO's) whose roles were ring fenced so as they were not deployed elsewhere. 12 NSO's were placed into Wards in Guildford in January 2002 including one each in the three original pilot Wards.

3.2 The Partnership successfully obtained funding for seven Community Safety Wardens meant that we could now place Wardens in nine Wards, including the three pilot sites, and we now saw the development of Neighbourhood Teams.

3.3 In two Wards funding was found through the Healthy Living Programme and Local Voluntary Services for community development workers.

3.4 In 2003 funding was achieved for twelve Police Community Support Officers. (PCSO's) There were 22 Wards within the Borough and approximately a third of these did not have dedicated resources. Through the local meeting structure and feedback it was apparent that those Wards that did not have locally known officers felt aggrieved and perhaps more vulnerable than before. When placing the PCSO's we still took account of crime, fear of crime and social deprivation factors but ensured that every Ward had the benefit of a PCSO as a local contact. The allocation was weighted so that some Wards have a PCSO to themselves and others covered up to four Wards

3.5 The NSO's, PCSO's and Wardens were allocated to Wards based on crime figures, fear of crime figures and social deprivation factors. The NSO's were weighted in relation to crime, the PCSO's in relation to fear of crime and Wardens in relation to social deprivation.

3.6 We now have substantial teams within some of the Wards. Those with significant problems have four members in their team whilst some affluent areas with low crime rates share a PCSO.

3.7 In line with the National Intelligence Model we needed a multi agency problem-solving group to tackle identified problem people and places. In 2001 we set up the Community Incident Action Group. (CIAG) The Members are all the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partners plus other voluntary sector services. This group meets every month and is the agreed method of tackling problems before considering obtaining an anti social behaviour order, for example.

3.8 The Partnership acknowledged last year that there was insufficient capacity to deal with the number of Anti Social Behaviour Orders required and invested in a CIAG administrator and ASBO case builder.

3.9 Communicating the reassurance agenda both internally and externally and promoting good news was seen as a significant issue. Last year the Partnership employed a communications officer to tackle this area.

3.10 **Environmental Improvements**

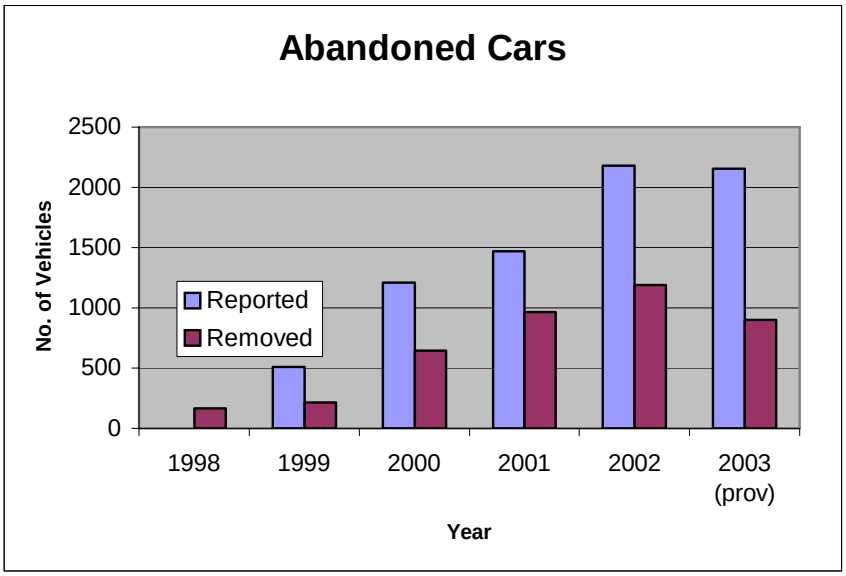
The environmental issues had been identified through our audits and surveys and became targets within the Community Safety Strategy. The Environment Group is one of our 14 multi-agency project groups within the Strategy. All the initiatives and improvements were led by this group to ensure that the work was integrated with the rest of the Strategy

3.11 **24 hour removal of Graffiti, litter, fly tips and abandoned vehicles**

The Council initially improved services in the three pilot Wards to a level where removal of the above was improved from a nine-day service level agreement to 48 hours from reporting. After a year the service level improved further to 24 hours in the three pilot Wards and to 48 hours elsewhere in the Borough. The service level has improved further again so that now the whole Borough has a 24-hour removal service. There is

already evidence that this fast removal is having an effect. For example the quick removal of graffiti means less is put up and removal costs have decreased.

3.12 In addition to removal of abandoned vehicles, the Partnership has obtained funding from the Arson Control Fund that now allows us to immediately remove vehicles that have been dumped where it is felt they are likely to be set alight. The police are now also removing 'pool vehicles', unregistered vehicles used by a number of criminals and often abandoned and set alight when they have been finished with. Untaxed vehicles are being clamped and then removed to reduce the number of end of life vehicles in circulation. The Council have negotiated with a local scrap company to remove end of life vehicles free of charge. This only commenced this year and so there is no data available yet to show whether the number of arson offences has decreased. A chart is shown below indicating that the rise in the number of abandoned vehicles is abating.



3.13 **Community Clean Up Days**

Community Clear Up Days were chosen in line with our Environmental Visual Audits findings, and public consultation. The Safer Guildford Partnership, with the Borough Council's Cleansing Services taking the lead, arranged seven initial events. Promoted as fun events for all, those who attended took part in litter picking for an average of 80 minutes, followed by free refreshments (provided by local businesses), giant games and a litter quiz with prizes.

3.14 All of the clean ups were widely advertised via door-to-door leafleting, posters in local shops and community centres, invitations to uniformed groups, youth groups, community associations and businesses as well as through the local press and radio stations. The result was an average of 50 local attendees at each of the 7 clean ups days.

3.15 The events were a huge success with a noticeable difference made to the local environment - approximately one tonne of rubbish was collected at each initial clean up. Where repeat clean ups have taken place the amount of rubbish has decreased between a third and a half indicating that people were taking more pride and responsibility in their area. Positive coverage was achieved in the Surrey Advertiser, County Sound Radio, Eagle FM, Guildford Times, Ash & Farnham News and Aldershot News, again reassuring the community that their concerns were being addressed.

3.16 The events achieved a positive impact in the community's, particularly building relationships with young people. Some communities are now organising their own clear ups.

3.17 **Operation Locust**

In specifically identified areas the Council carried out large scale clean ups entitled Operation Locust. This allowed for a fast, thorough and impressive clean up of areas identified from intelligence and information as being in need of improvement. Staff spent up to a week in each of these areas removing all traces of identified graffiti, abandoned cars, litter and fly tips.

3.18 **Eyes of the Alleyway**

Another innovative project was launched this year to tackle identified signal crimes through community engagement. "Eyes of the Alley" is a project designed to improve the feeling of safety in alleyways across the Borough that are subject to regular littering, dog fouling, fly tipping and vandalism. Having identified problem areas in our analysis phase, Surrey County Council took the lead to clean the alleyways, repair damage and cut back vegetation. Local residents in each area were engaged to become "eyes of the alley" in their area, reporting any problems, littering etc via a freepost postcard.

3.19 **Lighting Strategy**

Both Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough had responsibility for lighting in some areas where people stated in the Fear of Crime Survey they were afraid to go. These areas were prioritised and then tackled by making improvements to the environment generally and improving the lighting where this was necessary.

3.20 **Joint Training**

To encourage a better understanding of the Reassurance agenda and to improve working between the partners joint training has taken place. It brings together staff from all levels within the Safer Guildford Partnership's, including Local Authorities, the Police, the Primary Care Trust, the Youth Service and Neighbourhood Teams. This new training, known as 'Learning Communities,' is being used on an ongoing basis to develop a common understanding of the issues involved in reassurance

3.21 his model of joint training has had a significant effect and many tangible outcomes. A shared mindset and understanding of what joint working really means within the Safer Guildford Partnership. In many departments there are now 'Reassurance Champions' who can liaise with colleagues and help deliver improved services. This joint training has been acknowledged during the assessment and evaluation process.

3.22 **Neighbourhood Panels**

The project has adopted the Chicago principals of community consultation. In the National Reassurance project site of Ash Wharf we have had a number of community meetings for local people to come and discuss the major issues in their neighbourhood. At the end of the meeting they have the opportunity to vote for the one issue that they would like their neighbourhood team to tackle over the next month until the next meeting. The Police and Local Authority attend these meetings so either party can take the lead depending on the issue raised. Attendance at the meetings is increasing and we are working on ways of engaging those such as youth who would not necessarily attend such a meeting.

3.23 **Other Issues**

The most repeated complaints from the public were with regard to speeding and contacting a local officer with non-urgent problems. To help tackle this we gave all the NSO's training and equipment to conduct speed checks. This allowed them to be seen in their local community tackling the problem that most concerned their community. A significant amount of work has taken place to publicise the neighbourhood teams through media, website, leaflets and local meetings.

4. Assessment

4.1 'Reassurance Policing' has proved to be a highly successful initiative and is growing from strength to strength. Through using a tested method, and strong partnerships, we have worked together to find sustainable feasible solutions to identified problems. The reaction from local residents to the scheme both in our pilot sites and

across the Borough has been tremendous. We are confident that this will be reflected in the next Fear of Crime Survey to be conducted in 2004.

4.2 The success of the scheme has already been measured in a number of areas :

- Reduction in physical disorder (evaluated through Environmental Visual Audits)
- Reduction in resources required to clean graffiti and clear abandoned vehicles.
- Increased public satisfaction with levels of service.
- Increased awareness of local officers measured through website access.
- Improvements in service levels throughout the Borough

4.3 Reduction in physical disorder

On the most recent audit conducted by Simon Dunne, Head of Research and Consultation at Surrey Police, and creator of the Environmental Visual Audit process, there can be seen that already low scores in relation to environmental disorder have been improved and continue to improve over the last year. (See table 1.1 below). These are fantastic improvements over the low scores already being recorded at the commencement of the process.

Table 1.1.

Ash / Ash Wharf			
OCT '01	**APR '02**	**NOV '02**	**NOV '03**
68	71	60	45

4.4 We also know from our repeat community clear ups that the amount of rubbish removed from identified problem areas has decreased 30-50%

4.5 Reduction in resources

The Local Authority employed a team to remove graffiti and litter. This team is now able to spend 50% more of its time on other duties such as litter picking and chewing gum removal. This is a direct result of the 24-hour removal policy that has seen a substantial decrease in the amount of graffiti in the Borough. This represents a saving of £8000 per annum in the costs of removing graffiti, which has been invested in other environmental improvements.

With regard to abandoned vehicles, the Local Authority had to retrieve store and dispose of vehicles themselves but have now contracted out to an improved service that achieves free removal, storage and disposal.

4.6 Increased public satisfaction with and improvement in levels of service

There is evidence from public consultation meetings that public satisfaction is increasing. Comments made in the Police and Community Consultative Group meetings include :

"It is just marvellous to know that if you need to speak to a police officer you can just e-mail or telephone your local officer and they contact you. They know the local issues."

" We asked for something to be done about the speeding and the next day Steve was out with his radar doing something about it."

Each NSO has a web page that can be viewed on the Internet giving local information and a point of contact. Figures show that there has been an increased number of 'hits' on these pages. From an average of 56 hits per month per NSO in 2003 to an average of 128 this year. This shows an increased public awareness and engagement with their local Neighbourhood Team.

There has been a significant improvement in the delivery of environmental services by the Council over the last 3 years. Removal of graffiti, abandoned cars and fly tips was taking in excess of a week leading to vandalism to vehicles and a public perception of a run down area. The level of service has improved to an extent that Borough wide now removal of these eyesores takes place within 24 hours of reporting.

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COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

Alison Wilkinson (GBC)
Nicola Burress (SURREY POLICE)
Catherine Abraham (GBC)
Joy Ridley (SCC)
Plus members of the Co-ordination Group

14 PROJECT GROUPS (Chairs and *Co-ordination Group link members*)

Burglary Tina Griffiths Surrey Police	Safety in Public Places Duncan Greenhalgh Surrey Police *Marie Treddenick*	Street Drinking Martyn Munro Health Promotion *Liz Funning*	Communities Against Drugs Claire Pridgeon Surrey Police *Tina Griffiths*	Vehicle Crime Duncan Greenhalgh Surrey Police *Tina Griffiths*	Vulnerable Young People Tina Griffiths Surrey Police	Truancy Marilyn Parsons SCC *Tina Griffiths*	
Safe Places for Young people Cynthia Bates SCC *Diccon Bright*	Speeding Traffic Derek Lake SCC *Diccon Bright*	A Safer Environment Marie Treddenick GBC	Strengthening the Community Steve Epsom GBC *Marie Treddenick*	Domestic Violence Stephanie Ward G&WPCT *Diccon Bright*	Hate Crime Ian Cole Health Promotion *Holly Streeter*	Safer Public Transport Derek Lake SCC *Diccon Bright*	

ASH WHARF
AUDIT RESULTS

	WAVE 1	WAVE 2	WAVE 3	WAVE 4
SOCIAL DISORDER				
Presence of homeless people	**0**			
Blankets / clothing left in public	**0**			
People begging	**0**			
Groups of youths hanging around	**0**			
Groups of adults hanging around	**0**			
Groups of other hanging around	**0**			
Problem / noisy neighbours	**1**			
Stray / unleashed dogs	**0**			
Signs of outdoor sexual activity / public urination	**0**			
Public prostitution	**0**			
Other local problems	**0**			
PHYSICAL DISORDER				
Poor street lighting	**8**			
Tag graffiti	**1**			
Racist graffiti	**1**			
Painted over graffiti	**2**			
Other / cannot classify graffiti	**8**			
Litter / rubbish lying around	**12**			
Vandalised telephones / telephone boxes	**0**			
Vandalised buildings	**0**			
Damaged bus shelters	**1**			
Dog dirt	**4**			
Damaged / abandoned / burnt out vehicles	**0**			
Other local problems	**0**			

DRUGS AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROBLEMS	
Drug houses / premises	**0**
Public sales of drugs	**0**
Users of drug substances in public	**0**
Physical signs of drug / substance use	**0**
Other local problems	**0**
TRAFFIC AND PARKING ISSUES	
Broken street lights	**1**
Broken / missing street signs	**2**
Parking on pavements	**4**
Speeding / reckless driving / running red lights	**0**
Other local problems	**0**