



# **Successful Initiatives in Crime Prevention as Part of Neighbourhood Renewal Programmes.**

Crime Reduction in the Community White Paper

Presented to  
Mansfield Area Strategic Partnership



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### **Application of Resources:**

The National Strategy For Neighbourhood Renewal and The New Deal For Communities Programme (NDC) has, as was intended, provided a large number of valuable examples of what “works in practice”. The problems of each NDC neighbourhood are unique, but the same five key themes are being addressed with varying degrees of success. One of those themes, endemic to the broader issues addressed in some of the other themes, is high crime rates. While overall crime figures in the UK are showing encouraging signs of improvement, this is not necessarily reflected in the areas of vulnerability that are the focus for the Neighbourhood Renewal Initiatives.

Crime prevention is obviously the preferred route to detection and punishment, but this traditionally has been left in the private sector and has required personal investment and implementation. Awareness of the problems is high and most Local Authorities already have crime prevention programmes in place, although these tend to be mainly information based activities that rely upon people picking up and reading pamphlets or attending community talks – not entirely practical. Some schemes advocate the marking or coding of valued possessions to help identify them in the case of theft, but this doesn’t alone fully qualify as “prevention”.

A return of the “beat bobby” has been cited as one solution and community policing is on the increase, but this involves fundamental policy changes. Other more direct and practical measures might include the provision of security lighting, CCTV systems, alarm systems and other passive deterrents. But do they work and do they justify the forward investment to combat crime that basically hasn’t happened yet? Some pilot initiatives show that this kind of kind of investment produces immediate returns and an overall reduction in policing costs.

### **Mansfield, North Nottinghamshire. A Case Study.**

House burglaries across areas in Mansfield have been slashed by almost 80 per cent in some areas under the new 'Safe and Secure Homes' project that was launched in April last year. The reduction is in comparison with the level during the same six months a year ago. Additionally overall domestic burglary rates have fallen by 40% and the neighborhoods are now well under the average for the Mansfield and Ashfield Police area as a whole.

### **Project Scope:**

The initial pilot project run as an initiative within Mansfield District Council’s “Safe and Secure Homes” programme was aimed at reducing crime in the areas most vulnerable communities. This was one of the regions biggest ever crime reduction and home safety initiatives.

The basis of the programme was (and is) the provision of various technologies to deter crime. This included the free installation of 'SmartWater©', the latest synthetic DNA property-marking technology and wire free burglar alarms. Initially the offer made covered approximately 5,500 homes in the district and also included other energy saving and personal security products. The wardens employed on the project conducted a free home safety audit and linked into other agencies to provide additional safety equipment where appropriate.

### **Performance Against Targets:**

The project target was to cut burglaries by a quarter in the five Neighbourhood Renewal areas of West Titchfield, Bull farm, Ladybrook, Warsop and Northfield.

The results after the first six months exceeded targets beyond all expectations. Amazing reductions in all areas in offences of dwelling house burglary were reported, the largest reduction being almost 80 per cent, with the average reduction being an astounding 40 per cent.

### **Project Implementation:**

The community led 'Neighbourhood Management Teams' played a pivotal role in the scheme, which was also being supported by Mansfield District Council, Mansfield and Ashfield Police, Mansfield Partnership Against Crime, Mansfield Area Strategic Partnership, Nottinghamshire County Council, and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue.

A team of installers were recruited and trained to deliver the scheme and carry out the installation of the equipment and a full safety and security audit of the properties.

Almost all the properties in the scheme have taken advantage of the opportunity to safeguard their possessions by having them permanently marked with their own unique synthetic DNA manufactured by 'SmartWater Technologies©' who are in partnership the Forensic Science Service. The details of property marked with 'SmartWater' are recorded on a national database available to all police forces instantly, making property likely to be stolen in a burglary permanently identifiable to the lawful owner.

An integral part of the project was the installation of a Wireless Intruder Alarm, with external Siren & Strobe. The visual presence of a "Lice" burglar alarm system is universally recognised as the single biggest deterrent to a burglar. Additionally, the systems used have "Flashing Prowler Deterrent" Comfort lights which are active 24 hours a day.

The Response Alarms range of wireless alarms from Response was selected and met the requirements of:

- Ease of installation
- Simplicity of operation
- Low maintenance
- Visible Deterrent
- Effective in use

The Response range of system requires no mains supply and there are no wires to install. Response Electronics provide a free of charge training programme for installer which covers all aspects of surveying and installing alarms.

Following the training programme, the installation team were able to carryout:

- Pre-Start Survey
- Security Review of each Property
- Installation as per ITT requirements
- Commissioning
- Fault Finding
- Full System Test
- Customer Demonstration & Training
- Customer Handover & Satisfaction Notice obtained

In addition to the direct and quantifiable impact on Crime, the other main benefit is that residents in the qualifying area that took advantage of the alarm now feel safe and secure in their own home, which is considered as a basic human right.

### **Comments and Conclusions:**

Because of the success of the project and as part of the Mansfield standard for decent homes, Mansfield District Council has decided to extend this project to all council properties throughout Mansfield.

Steve Brookes, Home Office Director Government Office East Midlands said: *"I warmly welcome these most encouraging early results. Burglary of people's homes is a crime that has an effect on its victims, which goes well beyond the economic loss. We know that burglary is the key priority in the County and I am therefore delighted with the significant reductions that the 'Safe and Secure Homes' initiative has had since April."*

*"Neighbourhood Renewal seeks to improve the quality of lives of those who live in some of the more depressed areas of the country and it is these homes that are often at risk of burglary. The fact that nearly half of all homes in the*

*neighbourhood renewal areas have been fitted with alarms together with the fact that crimes of burglary in those areas have reduced by a similar amount bears testament to its success.*

Chief Superintendent Ak Khan, Divisional Commander for Mansfield & Ashfield Division said: " *This is the largest crime reduction scheme of its type to take place in this county, and it is a testament to all those involved that it has had one of the greatest successes in crime reduction we have experienced and has had a substantial impact on peoples fear of crime in their communities.*"

Richard Goad, Chairman of Mansfield Partnership Against Crime, and Chief Executive of Mansfield District Council said: "*Feeling safe and secure in your own home is a basic human right and one that we should never lose sight of. The difference that this scheme has made to people's lives is incredible.*"

### **Viability Assessment for a Regional Pilot Scheme:**

Response Electronics have been working with Local Authorities, Crime and Disorder Partnerships and Neighbourhood Renewal projects on proactive crime prevention programmes right across the UK. The Mansfield initiative is one of many successful continuing projects in which Response are providing the consulting and technology support required to plan and implement crime prevention programmes. Cost and viability evaluations are provided free of charge by Response Electronics for any projects that fall under the current government initiatives.

### **Further Information.**

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