

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Economic and Community Development Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
MEETING DATE:	27 September 2012
TITLE:	Community Safety Plan: 'Student Watch' – Bath Spa University and University of Bath
WARD:	ALL
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 In June 2010, Bath and North East Somerset's 'Student Watch' was launched by the Community Safety Partnership to strengthen students' safety awareness and, to reduce the risk of students becoming victims of crime.
- 1.2 This report invites the Panel to receive and ask questions of a presentation about how this scheme has progressed since 2010 and the outcomes it has achieved

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to agree that:

- 2.1 It receives a presentation on our approach to keeping students safe in Bath and North East Somerset, and identifies key questions for consideration
- 2.2 It identifies where further support can be generated by the Council and other agencies and opportunities for the Panel to influence

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report. Student Watch is managed within existing partner budgets.

4 THE REPORT

- 4.1 Student Watch aims to increase safety awareness amongst students living both in halls and private accommodation – where, for some, this will be their first time living away from home. The scheme adopts the same principles as 'Neighbourhood Watch' and is student-led. The "strapline" for the scheme is "**Students keeping Students safe**".
- 4.2 There are a number of reasons why students may be at risk of becoming victims of crime. For example, multi-occupancy is a particular risk factor for burglary. National statistics indicate that 1 in 3 students will become a victim of crime at some point during their stay at University.

- 4.3 Student Watch in Bath and North East Somerset has been initiated and developed by a core group of Student Volunteers involving Bath Spa University and the University of Bath Students' Unions. This has been supported by the Community Safety Team, Police, and the Student Community Partnership.
- 4.4 Students from the beginning expressed a wish to take full responsibility for this scheme and deliver safety messages tailored to student needs. The Council's Community Safety Team's commitment throughout has been to provide the support needed to make this possible.
- 4.5 This student-led approach has proved to be very successful and has established a greater impact than would public services delivering similar messages on their own. Students have utilised their exclusive communication networks to good effect , including:
- Campaigns and initiatives on the themes of personal and property safety – eg; personal safety at night, alcohol and drug awareness, and encouraging property marking and registration of laptops, cycles, mobile telephones etc
 - Using existing opportunities for student engagement- eg Freshers' and Refreshers' Fairs
 - Working with the Community Safety Partnership for specialist advice and guidance
 - Maximising communication opportunities within the Universities and in the wider community- eg, through use of Social Media
- 4.6 This approach has also led to student volunteers becoming directly involved in working with the Council, Police and Community Safety Partnership. This offers significant opportunities for future development of the scheme as well as strengthening the relationships between students and wider communities.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 The presentation relates to a number of agencies which have their own risk management processes relating to this work.

6 EQUALITIES

- 6.1 Promoting equality and opportunity for all groups and individuals across the equality strands and promoting community cohesion is integral to this work. As highlighted in the report there are potential differential impacts of crime on students and this is reflected in this project.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Divisional Director, Policy and Partnerships;

8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

- 8.1 *Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Corporate; Other Legal Considerations (Section 17 and 115 Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Council Solicitor) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication

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Background papers	Student Watch leaflet
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	