

# Making Brentford safer

A report to the Brentford ward Police team based on the results of a survey carried out in April by new Brentford Ward Councillor – Andrew Dakers  
31 May 2006

## Introduction

In writing this report to the local police, I am acting in the spirit of collaboration which I, as a Liberal Democrat Councillor, believe to be the most pragmatic way in which to tackle local issues. I have studied the Police Sector Plan 2005-6 and hope that the suggestions I include below will be practical ones towards the Plan's development and implementation over the coming year.

I hope that it will not be interpreted as arrogance that I make suggestions to the crime reduction professionals – the police. Of course I am aware that it is your organisation that has the overall strategic view and knows the priorities. As elected representative for this community, what I am putting forward is what I have gathered as the "residents' views on the doorstep". From your point of view, it may well be that some of these seem incorrect. However, I believe that in every field of work, one must act in part upon the *perceptions* of the consumer.

My comments are largely based on analysis of 70 responses received from the 4,500 households who received one of two surveys during early April 2006. If some of these suggestions have already been enacted I am delighted. However, the public is not aware of their enactment and I believe that it is essential to make them aware and so change their perceptions.

## Sector Plan 05/06

From my reading I have three questions.

1. What are *Talking Signs* mentioned on p. 15?
2. How do the police report progress to the Local Area Monitoring Committee?
3. Is there a new 06/07 local policing plan?

## Issues and proposed action/questions

ISSUES	PROPOSED ACTION/ QUESTIONS
<p><b>Policing</b> The message given out by a police station open Monday - Friday 9am-5pm (except Bank Holidays) is that the Brentford Police believes that crime only takes place during the working week!</p>	<p>24:7 manning of Brentford Police Station</p>

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<p>Regular meetings need to be scheduled at a ward level between the police and public – and not in a pub as tool place in 2005!</p> <p><b>Accessibility</b> A further access difficulty is that of reaching the police station by telephone. What are the targets?</p> <p>30 of the 70 responses variously requested: more visible policing (or even security guards), more police, more officers on the beat, more police patrolling their area or estate esp. from 7pm onwards, more visible policing which can be reassuring to see on days other than football match days, lack of obvious police presence. [I note the Safer Neighbourhood’s team has launched since the survey was released.]</p> <p>People are concerned that insufficient interest in crime by government trickles down locally with the result that the police do not take action and there is no site security or patrols. Some respondents call for more effort to tackle persistent offenders, harsher</p>	<p>I understand that with the launch of the Ward Safer Neighbourhood team a local forum will be established. It would be good if alternative forum models and best practice could be discussed at the Local Area Committee, so that police and councillors can decide together the most appropriate structure for Brentford ward. One resident suggested that whilst keeping the meeting open to the public, area representatives might be nominated, and that we might also want to consider rotating the meetings around different Brentford locations on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Huge telephone numbers, visible from the car, painted on the outside of Brentford Police Station – working week and out-of-hours numbers.</p> <p>Police need to deliver a progress and information leaflet door to door twice a year. Same information could be communicated to the local press via a twice yearly press release through Hounslow Police Station if necessary. In this local contacts can be named and may also explain how core patrol patterns are flexible and are supplemented where there is a need.</p> <p>Police need to <i>tell</i> the public what examples they can give of action taking place locally on these fronts, for example community orders. Is there any effort to organise graffiti clean-ups by graffiti offenders and vandals?</p>

<b>ISSUES</b>	<b>PROPOSED ACTION/ QUESTIONS</b>
<p>punishment for petty crime, tougher legislation for parents of children who are out of control, and more controls on speeding and the use of mobile phones whilst driving.</p>	<p>In the Liberal Democrats recent local election manifesto we put forward the idea of Hounslow Police and the Council undertaking a high impact joint campaign to discourage drivers from using their mobile phones without a hands-free. For example, an approach used elsewhere would see offending drivers given a morgue toe-tag on which to write their next of kin's details. On the back of the tag would be a list of the various injuries that drivers and passengers can suffer in a car crash.</p>
<p><b>Drugs</b> Drug dealing was cited as being visible around Gunnersbury Park and Carville Hall Park, walking home from South Ealing tube, on the 17th floor landing of Fraser House and by the New England bar/restaurant (now closed) on the Great West Road.</p>	<p>I hope all of these locations are already on the radar of the new ward team. It would be useful to share general information on your approach to reducing drug dealing with the public in a newsletter/leaflet (mentioned above).</p>
<p><b>Theft, burglary and violence</b> At 5am on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May a resident of 8 Enfield Walk was awoken by noises from downstairs in his cottage. He went down to investigate and was confronted by a burglar armed with a large knife who threatened to stab him unless he stood aside and let him go.</p> <p>Similarly a number of burglaries were cited including one with a hold-up with gun, someone's elderly neighbour burgled and garden thefts.</p>	<p>Gates at each end of alleyways and tiny roads such as Enfield Walk and CCTV. <i>See also lighting.</i></p>
<p><b>CCTV</b> Whilst one respondent acknowledged that masks can undermine the usefulness of CCTV, a great many respondents supported greater use of</p>	<p>Is a mapping of CCTV coverage available? What type is being used? Is the resolution of cameras high enough for identification of individuals? Is it an</p>

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CCTV – bus stops and stations being amongst key sites for usage.	integrated network? If not, is there a plan to integrate?
<p><b>Feeling unsafe</b></p> <p>My respondents varied on this. Some felt fairly safe both in daylight and after dark. Others only felt safe in the day. One mentioned feeling unsafe in open areas at night and another noted used a spy hole to check who was at the front door.</p>	<p>Twice yearly police ward newsletter and press releases, mentioned above, and future surveys need to promote Neighbourhood Watch and Ringmaster schemes. Is development of these in local police plan for 2006-7? I have passed the names of nine new volunteers to the Neighbourhood Watch team at Chiswick Police station. What is the progress?</p> <p>The launch survey I recently received from the Syon Ward police team was far too long at several pages (and printed single-sided which is environmentally unsustainable). I would suggest crime survey's run by the police need to shorter if they are to generate many responses.</p>
<p><b>Blackspots</b></p> <p><i>Travel and safety.</i> People expressed concern about the buses at the start and end of the school day. The N9 bus between Brentford and Hounslow Bus Station can feel unsafe. There were worries about walking home from South Ealing and other tube stations and from Brentford Station. The alleyway at Brentford Station crops up time and again.</p> <p>Other places mentioned were South Ealing Road, the Brentford library grounds, Hamilton Road, Gillette Corner, Albany Road, Adelaide Terrace, an unspecified newsagents. Mostly these were deemed unsafe at</p>	<p>I propose a night walkabout with the local police team, emphasising in particular the walks away from stations.</p> <p>The Lib Dems are backing the Evening Standard's Safer Stations Campaign. Do Hounslow police support more security on unmanned stations? <i>See also Alleyways and Lighting.</i></p> <p>More lighting, cut back shrubbery</p> <p>Would greater investment in youth</p>

ISSUES	PROPOSED ACTION/ QUESTIONS
<p>night and some expressed fear of young people.</p>	<p>activities and/or a youth centre reduce anti-social behaviour?</p>
<p><b><i>Vandalism and graffiti</i></b> People report crime and vandalism hotspots such as the Kew Bridge Road traffic lights. They are upset by vandalism to cars, in local parks (crime also), in phone boxes, at bus stops and of course graffiti. They notice that this last increases in particular during school holidays.</p> <p>This was mentioned north of the Great West Road, at Kew Bridge traffic lights, on Kew Bridge Road, the Haverfield Estate (with vandalism) and in parks (with vandalism) and on private property.</p>	<p>Community activities for young people at a loose end – in particular during school holidays. A combination of amusement and community contribution e.g. river and estate clean ups</p> <p>Police map with London Borough of Hounslow the distribution of free graffiti clean-up kits and share this information with residents. The Police newsletter must encourage sensible approaches to reduction like not painting fences white and take a lead on organising graffiti clean-ups.</p> <p>Two strategies might be considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For public housing, public buildings, telephone boxes, transport facilities and offices, community support officers should gather information and log on a database accessible by police and three ward councillors. A standard prepared letter should be sent requesting rapid clean-up and action logged.</li> <li>2. For private landlords, home owners, shops another standard letter should be sent from police and councillors with advice on obvious prevention and action. A follow-up letter might also be prepared that highlights the enforcement action the police/ council can take if action is not taken.</li> </ol>

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<p><b>Improvements</b> Gates/barriers called for on alleyways in such places as Haverfield Estate and Enfield Walk and need to replace large metal post on Tunstall Walk – all to stop kids driving down them on motorcycles.</p>	<p>Walkabout with councillor(s), a Hounslow Homes official and London Borough of Hounslow officer to coordinate approach.</p>
<p><b>Lighting</b> Feeling unsafe is increased where the lighting is poor or trees obscure lighting – also where street lights are not working. Mentioned in particular is the railway footbridge between Layton Road and Brook Lane North (completely unlit), Boston Park Road, and the alleyway between Brentford Railway Station and Windmill Road.</p>	<p>Should form part of walkabout with proposals submitted to Hounslow Council. S106 funding or private sponsorship should perhaps be considered for some of these improvements.</p>
<p><b>Dog fouling</b> Complaints about this included in particular tenants of Green Dragon Lane Housing Association.</p>	<p>Police newsletter could include information on nearest dog training classes and penalties for not keeping dog under control.</p>
<p><b>Speeding and cameras</b> Particular places were mentioned – as well as the general issues - included Lionel Road North, Burford Road, Green Dragon Lane and Windmill Road. A 20mph zone was proposed for this last. Also called for was a renewed emphasis on traffic calming measures in particular in Old Brentford, north of the Great West Road.</p> <p>One said that too many speed cameras had been installed and another commented on the lack of impact of the Ealing Road speed camera.</p>	<p>What is the view of the police on 20mph zones?</p>

## **Conclusion**

I have made a few specific suggestions and asked a few direct questions. However, I believe that a great deal could be achieved by immediately improving communication with local householders (and businesses) by the immediate introduction of a twice yearly newsletter to which I would be pleased to contribute. I also feel strongly that going together to look at some of the local problems and working out solutions that are practical for all the agencies involved should speed up the implementation of those solutions.

Finally I suggest a regular three monthly 'traffic light' report on the local police plan is sent to the Local Area Committee. Through a regular free flow of information I am confident we will be able to work together even more effectively. This will help ensure the necessary action is taken to make Brentford residents feel as safe as possible.

I should be happy to discuss my report with you.