
REPORT 4
(1215/52/IM)

SAFER COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE 2006 - REPORT BACK

1. Purpose of Report

To report back to all councillors on the Safer Communities Conference 2006, including subjects covered and the value of attendance for Elected Members.

2. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information*

3. Details of the Conference

This was the third such conference and was held at the Wellington Convention Centre on 14-15 August 2006, with the previous conferences held in 2002 and 2004.

The conference was sponsored by Local Government New Zealand and the Ministry of Justice.

The key notes speakers were

- Jeremy Wood: Director, Crime Prevention Unit, Ministry of Justice.
- Lyn Provost: Deputy Commissioner of Police.
- Dr Mike MacAvoy: Chief Executive, Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand.

Also:

- Ken Laban: Manager, Tamaiti Whangai Project, Hutt Valley.
- Tane Keepa: Service Coordinator, He Waka Tapu Project, Christchurch.

Wellington City Councillors in attendance were Councillors Ian McKinnon and Hayley Wain. Also in attendance from Wellington City Council were Laurie Gabites, Vicki McLaren, Giselle Bareta and Sharon Smart.

4. Content of the Conference

Three Focus Areas:

- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Reducing Alcohol Related Harms
- Community Based Responses

It was a two day conference.

Day One:

The focus on the first morning was on preventing crime through environmental design (CPTED), with the key note speaker being Jeremy Wood. His expertise in this topic was obvious, with his presenting a number of options for crime prevention through environmental design and assessing the impact of those various options. It was a comprehensive presentation on CPTED.

Following his presentation there were three concurrent sessions, each session focussing on CPTED from a different perspective. One such perspective was a "Safety Audit of Wellington City Housing", presented by Laurie Gabites and Vicki McLaren, WCC officers.

In the afternoon Lyn Provost delivered the key note address on working with the community, followed by community perspectives given by Ken Laban and Tane Keepa from their respective projects in the Hutt Valley and Christchurch. These presentations were followed by four further concurrent sessions on Community Based Responses.

Day Two:

The key note speaker on the second day was Mike McAvoy, speaking to the topic of reducing alcohol related harms. There is no question that alcohol remains the leading cause of crime, particularly violence, as well as a major cause of accidents. The problems of alcohol are now further compounded by the amount of adolescent drinking.

This presentation was followed by Jeremy Wood speaking again on 'initiatives for safer communities' where once more he showed himself to be a person who 'thinks outside the square', therefore offering a wide range of possibilities.

A further four concurrent sessions were held, with one session focused on 'creative thinking on youth drinking' and a further session which raised, amongst other matters, sports club accreditation programme SCAP, whereby sports clubs can achieve a grading as evidence of being safe environments, not least family friendly.

5. Material for Circulation

A considerable amount of material was on offer from various display booths. Two key booklets available were the “National Guidelines for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design in New Zealand; Part One - Seven Qualities of Safer Places; Part Two – Implementation Guide”.

A DVD has been prepared in support of these booklets (which is available to show to Councillors).

6. Benefits to Councillors/Elected Members

The importance of the theme of this conference, namely ensuring safer communities, can not be underestimated, with this being highlighted by all speakers. There is increasing crime throughout our communities, much of it drug and alcohol related, and people are more concerned about their safety. While that in itself is an issue, obviously it will in all probability impact also upon the economic and social wellbeing of communities.

The attendees in the main were Officers of various councils and representatives of a number of interest groups. From the perspective of a council, because much of what was presented was in some detail, thus requiring further investigation and assessment, it could be said that the conference was probably of more value to Officers than to Elected Members. However, from the perspective of Elected Members it did give an insight in to the importance of addressing the issues of safer communities plus the possibilities available for meeting such concerns. As a result it certainly made a contribution to equipping Elected Members with a better understanding of the implications involved when such matters are brought forward by Officers.

Report prepared by: Councillors Ian McKinnon and Hayley Wain.