



# **STROUD AREA CRIME AND DISORDER PARTNERSHIP**

## **STRATEGY**

**For the reduction and prevention  
of crime and disorder**

**2002 - 2005**

**CONTENTS**

**1. Introduction** **Page 3**

**2. The Structure of the Stroud District Crime and Disorder Partnership** **Page 3**

**3. Some Successes** **Page 5**

**4. Audit and Consultation** **Page 6**

**5. Local Priorities** **Page 7**

**6. Objectives and Targets** **Page 8**

## 1. Introduction

In 1998 the Crime and Disorder Act was enacted which put a legal obligation on the District Council the Police and the County Council to work together to address crime and disorder issues throughout the district. The first Strategy was written and published in 1999 at the inception of the Act and that first three-year strategy is soon to be superseded by the strategy for 2002 – 2005.

In the first three years of partnership activity under the Crime and Disorder Act, many issues have been addressed and many problems resolved. Some of our successes are outlined below but for a full account of the report on the actions of all the agencies involved in the Act please see the sister document to this strategy, '*Reduction of Crime and Disorder in the Stroud Area – The first 3 Years*'.

The new Strategy has been developed in the spirit of the legislation by drawing on the knowledge of those who live and work in the District. An audit of levels of crime and disorder and the subsequent consultation has taught us much and we will continue to learn more as the Strategy is implemented.

Many people from different groups and organisations have contributed to the formulation of this Strategy and we acknowledge the hard work that has gone into the final document. We are optimistic that the collaboration will continue, be strengthened and that local communities will be encouraged to contribute to our goal of improving the quality of lives for the communities within the Partnership area.

## 2. The District Partnership Structure

**The Stroud Crime & Disorder Partnership is working to reduce Crime & Disorder and the fear of Crime & Disorder in the Stroud District.**

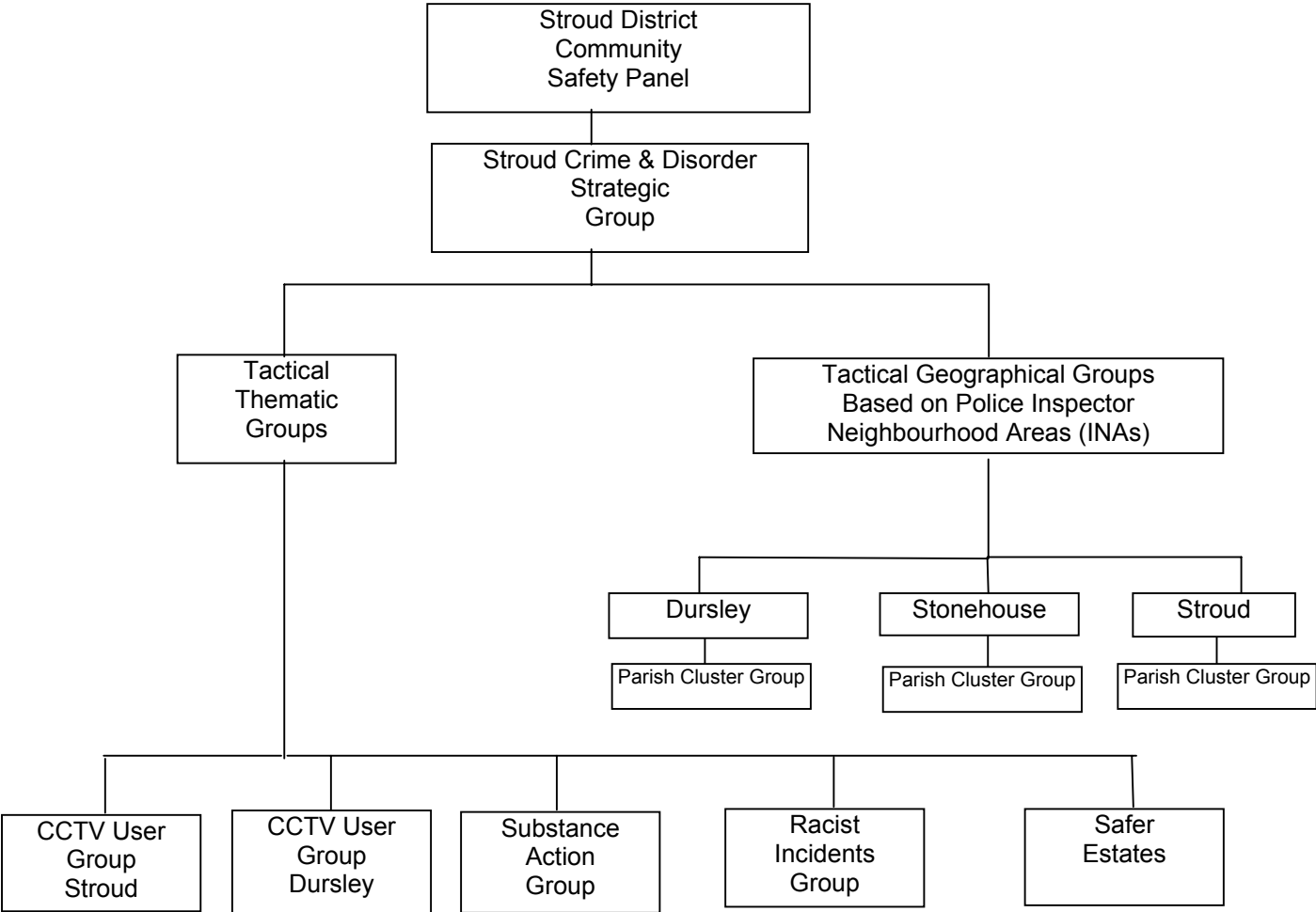
The Stroud District is a geographically large and diverse area. It covers 45,318 hectares from the River Severn in the west to the boundary with the Cotswold District in the east, and from South Gloucestershire in the south to the outskirts of Gloucester City in the north. The District is largely rural with a population of 108,000 mostly centered around the historic towns of Berkeley, Cam, Dursley, Minchinhampton, Nailsworth, Painswick, Stonehouse, Stroud and Wotton-under-Edge.

Although co-operation between agencies, groups and communities within the District has taken place for many years, it was not until the Crime and Disorder Act that this was put onto a formal footing. As a new formal concept it was, understandably, interpreted in different ways in different districts and as the months passed best practices were identified and adapted to make the structure as flexible and effective as possible, whilst still meeting the needs of the district. Now, three years on, a proactive set up with a structure with short effective lines of communication exists.

An overarching group known as the **Community Safety Partnership for the Stroud District** meets twice a year. Here all agencies involved in the crime and disorder process throughout the District are able to attend a single meeting where they are updated as to the ongoing activities of the Crime and Disorder Partnership whilst at the same time highlighting their own contribution to the process. The range of people attending includes all the agencies such as Police, Social Services, Education, elected members of the County District and Parish Councils as well as voluntary organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch, Victim Support and Citizens Advice Bureau and others.

Immediately beneath this overarching group is the **Crime and Disorder Strategic Group** for the district. This group has membership drawn from all the agencies involved in the Crime and Disorder process. Members include the Divisional Commander of Police or his deputy, the head of Social Services, the head of the Youth Service, the head of the Housing Department at Stroud District Council, Stroud Victim Support, the chair of Valleys and Vale Neighbourhood Watch Association and the Community Safety Officer for Stroud District Council. This group gives direction to those who are operating at a tactical level through the current strategy and will continue to do so for the new strategy.

The tactical groups that operate within the district include geographically based groups located on the three Police Inspector Neighbourhood Areas of Stroud, Stonehouse and Dursley. Membership of these groups include the local Police Inspector, the Community Safety Officer for the district and representatives from Social Services, Youth and Community Services, the Youth Offending team, the District Council Housing department and all those agencies that work together under the Crime and Disorder Act. In addition to the geographically based tactical groups mentioned above, there are also thematic tactical groups operating in the district. Those groups are the CCTV User group for Stroud and the CCTV group for Dursley, the Racial Incidents Group combining the Cotswold and Stroud Districts, the Substance Action Group for the Stroud area and the Safer Estates Group. These thematic groups operate, as their names suggest, in relation to their given subjects.



### 3. Some Successes

One of the great successes of the Partnership in the first three years of its life has been to obtain extra funding from Government to help to improve the CCTV operation in the Stroud town area. Colour cameras have been introduced to supersede the black and white cameras previously in use. This will also include an improvement in street lighting in the town centre and a further three cameras introduced as well as an upgrade of equipment in the control room. The complete package cost around £100,000 and £74,700 of this money was drawn from the Home Office as a result of a bid made by the Partnership. The remaining funding came from the CCTV Trust, the Police and the District Council in equal amounts.

The Police funding two part-time observers who work along side the 20 or so volunteers all of whom monitor the cameras within the control room has also enhanced the CCTV operation in the district. In addition there is a supervisor who is funded by the District Council and together they have substantially improved the amount of time the cameras are being monitored. The Trusts, having set up the CCTV schemes both in Stroud and Dursley to an excellent standard, requested that the District Council should take over the operation of the CCTV process, and during the last year this has occurred.

A further achievement, which is considered to be very effective, was the introduction of *Message in a Bottle*. This system, funded by Help the Aged/Age Concern Gloucestershire has resulted in over 6000 bottles being given to vulnerable people living either alone, or as a couple, where they are susceptible to known illnesses such as angina or diabetes. Information about the individual, their doctor and next of kin is placed in a bottle; a label is stuck on the door of the fridge where the bottle is kept and also on the inside of the front door of the premises. Emergency services have been briefed to look for this information in the event of an emergency. This makes vulnerable people feel safer in their own homes, thus enhancing their quality of life and increasing resilience to the effects of crime and the fear of crime.

An example of partnership work for young people has been the introduction of the *Validate Proof of Age card scheme*, initially launched prior to the summer holidays in 2001 and now further developed with the Youth Service giving presentations on *Validate* to senior schools in the district. Cards can be issued to the 12 – 16 year age group, 16 –18 year group and 18 years plus. The take up has been steady during this period. It allows young people to prove their age either to take advantage, for example, of young person's fares for travel, or to access goods and services that are age-related.

A further initiative across the district has been the introduction of *Safe Child*. Dr Fosters' Theatre Group was commissioned by the Partnership to visit all infant and junior schools in the district, accompanied by uniformed police officers, to present a play educating young people in what to do in the event of being separated from their parents while shopping. In addition local shops, where appropriate, have been issued with stickers, to indicate where a lost child can go for help to contact the Police in order to be reunited with their parent.

## **4. The Audit and Consultation Process**

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 placed a requirement on each District, whilst formulating their strategy, to carry out an Audit of the levels of Crime & Disorder in their area. Whilst this could have been carried out via various Agencies it was felt in the Stroud District that if a local Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy is to address the root causes of the problems and address the concerns of the local community it is clearly essential to ask the members of that community what they see as being the most significant problems affecting them in their daily lives. To this end consultation has taken place in many areas in order to identify the local issues and define the key strategic priorities in the reduction of crime and disorder.

- **County Audit**

Early in 2001 a decision was made at County level that the Crime and Disorder Partnerships of the six districts would work together in order to produce an audit of activity rather than each of the districts doing it alone. Once the audit had been carried out, a consultation process took place with the general public. To that end, 3000 questionnaires were circulated within the Stroud district in order to establish the public's view of the identified areas of concern. Included in the circulation were some of the "hard to reach groups such as the young (senior schools), the elderly (all of the sheltered accommodation), and the Gay and Lesbian Community. Members of District and Parish Councils also received the questionnaires. The result from the process has shown that the Crime and Disorder Partnership has identified certain local issues as areas that need to be addressed.

- **Audit of agencies**

Various agencies throughout the County have been consulted in relation to the main areas of crime and disorder throughout Gloucestershire. These agencies are as follows: Gloucestershire Ambulance NHS Trust, Education Department, Magistrates Courts, Youth Offending Team, Environmental Department, Fire and Rescue, County Libraries, Probation Service, Drugs and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), Domestic Violence Project, Racist Incident Group (RIG), Gloucestershire Constabulary and the various departments of Stroud District Council.

Each of the statutory agencies making up *the Partnership* was canvassed by asking them to provide what they considered to be their top six crime and disorder priorities, ensuring that the decision making behind their prioritisation was meaningful and auditable.

- **Perception of Crime survey**

A perception of crime survey has been conducted within the District, which involved the distribution of 1,250 questionnaires.

- **Stroud Town survey**

A survey by Stroud Town Council provoked 351 comments regarding the Crime and Disorder priorities of residents.

- **Neighbourhood Watch Survey**

The Valleys and Vale Neighbourhood Watch Association surveyed 390 of its members as to their priorities.

In addition to the above consultation processes due recognition has been given to those issues that the Government has declared as being priority areas. In addition, in order to judge the success or otherwise of activities, meaningful and timely analysis and collation of data is essential.

## 5. Local Priorities

The overall result is that, whilst the District remains a very safe, low crime area and the Partnership continues to work towards maintaining and improving community safety, a series of priorities has been identified, which are both desirable and essential to improving the quality of life for the people both living and working in the District.

Consequently the local Priorities for the Stroud District Crime & Disorder Partnership have been identified as follows:

- **Disorder**, including disturbances in the street, graffiti and other types of criminal damage, anti-social behaviour and includes the anti social use of motor vehicles.
- **Acquisitive crime**, especially car crime and burglary.
- **Violent crime** including domestic violence and street violence.
- **Fear of crime** – a survey to be carried out halfway through this Strategy, and at the end of it, assessing people's perceptions of crime.
- **Young people**, both as victims and perpetrators of crime, as well as opportunities for crime prevention initiatives aimed at young people.
- **Drugs and alcohol**, as causes of criminal behaviour
- **Racial incidents** and crimes
- **The audit process** i.e. collating information by agencies in relation to results of actions and as a means of focusing future actions and measuring outputs of the agencies to achieve our desired outcomes.

From the priorities identified, objectives have been set for the crime and disorder partnership with anticipated outcomes from the work of the next three-year strategy.

In addition to the outcomes of the strategy in terms of the objectives there is a further document to work alongside this strategy namely the *Action Plan*. This Plan will identify the outputs of those agencies who are endeavoring to improve the quality of life for people within the district in terms of crime and disorder issues, which will positively influence the desired outcomes of the Strategy. In particular this identifies the work to be carried out by each agency, both unilaterally and collectively as members of the Partnership.

An example of how outputs will contribute to the outcomes of the Strategy is the way in which an improvement in street lighting consequently contributes to an Objective in that it will reduce both the incidence of and fear of crime.

## **6. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS**

When monitoring the success, or otherwise, of actions and initiatives aimed at achieving objectives it is important to be able to apply relevant measurement criteria.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002 the new National Crime Recording Standard comes into operation\*\*. This will impact on the way in which crimes are recorded and will therefore make it impossible to compare like with like when comparing certain crime levels for the period April 2001 to March 2002 with any period prior to that. For this reason certain targets will be set which relate to years two and three of the strategy compared with year one. This does not mean that the activity to reduce crime and disorder will be put on hold but it will allow for meaningful comparison.

### **Objective 1.**

#### **To Reduce Incidence of Disorder.**

Disorder includes a variety of incidents from substantial criminal offences of disorder to reports of nuisance or noise. It may even be described as anything, which impacts, on the normal tranquillity of life within a community.

#### **Targets.**

##### **1. To reduce the incidents of Public Disorder by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 as set against the baseline as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003.**

The Police incident codes for identifying disorder changed on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2001, hence the baseline figure being set at 2003. The target for this strategy will be set when data for the first year is available

##### **2. To reduce the offences of Criminal Damage by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 by 6% as set against the baseline as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002.**

Criminal Damage consists of the unlawful damaging or destroying of property and includes damage by fire. There has been an upward trend in the district due primarily to changes in the way in which the Home Office counts certain groups of offences. It is often linked to drunken behaviour and often is the criminal result of Anti Social behaviour and Disorder. There is also a perception that it may in part be addressed by the provision of appropriate recreational facilities for young people. (Objective 4.).

##### **3. To Reduce public concern in relation to the anti social use of motor vehicles.**

Prior to the formulation of this strategy, a survey was carried out which highlighted concerns by members of the public in relation to the anti social use of motor vehicles. In consequence a number of initiatives will be carried out. In order to measure the public perception in respect of how these initiatives have worked a further survey will be carried out mid term and at the conclusion of the strategy period.

## **Objective 2.**

### **To reduce the number of Offences relating to Acquisitive Crime**

The term 'acquisitive crime' describes offences where the offender derives material gain from the crime. For the purpose of this strategy we will be targeting Burglary, where the offender enters a building as a trespasser and then steals or commits other offences, including offences committed by bogus callers, and Car crime which can be defined as stealing a vehicle, joyriding and stealing something from a vehicle. These offences are by their very nature often some of the most distressing of offences to befall a victim and are generally the most prevalent of offences in the District.

#### **Targets.**

##### **1. To maintain a rate below 14.4 offences of domestic burglary per 1000 households for each year of the strategy.**

To lose one's personal possessions by way of Theft is, as previously stated one of the most distressing of offences to befall its victim. Victims often state their feeling of repulsion and fear if their home has been violated in this way. If we are to reduce the Fear of Crime then incidents of this nature must be of paramount importance. The Partnership firmly believes in the fundamental right of a person to feel safe in their own home and this target will include within it burglaries described as Bogus Caller burglaries.

##### **2. To Reduce the number of Non – Domestic Burglaries by 2% year on year until 2005.**

Similar to Domestic Burglary, this offence occurs when an offender enters a building (other than someone's home) as a trespasser and then steals or commits certain other offences. In the Stroud District the level of Commercial Burglaries is not high, but when one considers this category also includes offences which relate to private garages and garden sheds as well as businesses, the impact on the individual is often as great as that on the victims of Domestic Burglary and the impact on the community at large can sometimes be greater.

##### **3. To reduce the number of Thefts from Motor Vehicles by 2% year on year until 2005.**

Car crime is a high volume crime affecting many people. Due to the speed with which the offender can carry out his crime this is often the most difficult of offences to detect but given that a proportion of them are opportunist crimes it remains highly preventable.

## **Objective 3.**

### **To reduce the availability and use of illegal drugs and the misuse of alcohol.**

In addition to supporting, at District level, the Government 10 year Strategy for tackling drugs and the ' Gloucestershire Drugs and Alcohol Team's Action, as a Partnership we will carry out actions designed to disrupt drugs markets, tackle drug related crime and disorder and to strengthen the ability of communities to resist and react to drug misuse. This will be carried out under the banner of 'Project Planet' and will be assisted through funds provided by Central Government under the 'Communities against Drugs' initiative.

## **Targets**

### **1. To detect 20 offences of dealing in Class A drugs for each year of the Strategy.**

The use of illegal drugs is frequently associated with other forms of criminal behaviour. In addition to it being a crime to possess and use the drugs, it is widely accepted that a large percentage of all acquisitive crime is committed to support drug addictions. As shown by the Survey and consultation, there is now real public concern about the availability and use of so called 'Hard' drugs.

### **2. Increase the number of drug dependent persons each year seeking assistance.**

In addition to the cost in Criminal terms of people's addiction to drugs, there is a real cost in human terms to the health of those effected. This effect is passed onto those closely associated with them. The partnership will be seen to be successful in its aims if it targets those groups so affected and provides a real alternative to their current life style.

### **3. Increase the number of persons seeking support each year, who are suffering the effects of alcohol misuse.**

Alcohol abuse is frequently associated with both anti-social and criminal behaviour including the anti-social use of motor vehicles. Alcohol consumption is increasing and concerns have been raised in respect of underage drinking and alcohol related health problems. In addition, anti-social behaviour caused by excessive drinking has an impact in many areas of community life. As with the issue of drug misuse, offenders and victims alike must be supported in finding an alternative life style.

## **Objective 4.**

### **To reduce the impact of crime and disorder on young people in the District.**

Young people, for the purposes of this strategy, those under 25 years of age, are often seen as the perpetrators of crime and disorder. Whilst statistics prove that the highest proportion of offenders fall within the 16 to 25 year old age bracket, it must also be remembered that Young People are disproportionately more likely to be the victims of crime than adults. In addition it should be noted that young offenders are a very small minority of the youth population of the District.

## **Targets**

### **1. Reduce the number of young people each year who become victims of crime as set against the baseline as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002.**

As previously stated, young people are often the victims of crime and not necessarily the perpetrators. Any victim is likely to suffer either emotionally or physically from their experiences. Due to their age, experience and perceptions this is likely to have a more profound effect on young people who will consequently require more emotional and physical support.

**2. Reduce the number of people in the 15 – 17 year age group appearing before courts each year as set against the baseline as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2002.**

Young people are often the most impressionable group in society. (Peer pressure and boredom have long been regarded as contributory factors to youth offending). If they can be so influenced, then the correct intervention may result in the antithesis. This will be achieved in many areas by many agencies.

**Objective 5.**

**To reduce the incidence of Violent Crime within the District.**

Violent Crime not only has a far reaching and enduring effect on it's victims, but the fear it induces within a community can greatly affect the way that community behaves and interacts. Whilst the level of violence is low in the District the fear of being a victim of it is disproportionate to the reality. If we reduce the reality and market our success then the fear should be greatly reduced.

Domestic Violence is defined as *“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners regardless of gender. It will also include family members which are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, in-laws and step family.”*

**Targets**

**1. Reduce the number of Violent Crimes in public places year on year in years 2 and 3 against the baseline figure as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003. (Refer to Page 7 \*\* Objectives and Targets)**

By their very nature the effects on the victim are often traumatic and long lasting. Often one encounter of a violent nature will cause an individual to change the way in which they conduct their lives, often to the detriment and hardship of the original victim. For the purposes of this target this will include Common Assault, Assault occasioning Actual Bodily Harm (ABH), Grievous Bodily Harm (GBH), Wounding, Manslaughter and Murder.

**2. Increase the number of reports of Domestic Violence Incidents by 10% by 2005 against the baseline figure as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003\*\*.**

Due to the very emotive nature of the offence, many victims do not report its occurrence until the abuse has taken place on a large number of occasions. Given the detrimental short and long term effects on those being subjected to, or witnessing such abuse, it is not tolerable to allow this to continue to be the case. There are also consistent links between domestic violence, child abuse and substance misuse.

**3. Reduce the proportion of repeat victimisations of Domestic Violence by 5% year on year against the baseline figure as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003.\*\***

As already stated it is often the case that the victim has suffered such abuse for some considerable time before reporting the fact. It has also been proven statistically that if a victim has been subjected to domestic violence he/she is more likely to become a victim on subsequent occasions. If we are to prevent this occurring we must develop a 'Get it right first

time' approach. It should be noted that the baseline figure being 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003 is to allow the comparison of accurate data.

*\*\* Changes in the definitions and recording methods for Domestic Violence Incidents necessitate a full year for data capture to enable accurate and meaningful comparison.*

## **Objective 6.**

**To further develop the procedures to respond robustly and positively to Racist incidents.**

The Stroud District has a very small resident population of visible ethnic minority groups making up its population. It is recognised that however small the community there is always the potential for racism, and it is not the size of the ethnic community but the racism that can exist within the community at large which needs to be addressed. Whilst there have been very few racially motivated incidents in the area there is no room for complacency, as the potential for such behaviour undermines the very fabric of the community in which we live or work. It is also recognised that rural isolation further impacts on the effects of racism.

A racist incident is defined as *“Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.”*

### **Targets**

- 1. To Publicly launch the Cotswold and Stroud Racist Incidents Group in the year 2002.**

The responsibility for dealing with racist incidents does not lie with any sole agency, group or organisation but is the responsibility of everyone. However there needs to be a formal structure to inform, advise and respond in relation to racist incidents. By necessity any response will be on a multi agency basis. Having launched the group this will enable targets to be set for the improved reporting and management of racist incidents.

## **Objective 7.**

**To ensure that all organisations involved in the Crime and Disorder Partnership collate information in a compatible format.**

### **Targets.**

- 1. By 31<sup>st</sup> March 2003 to have in place a fully operational, integrated, information collation and dissemination system.**

Working in partnership with the Government Office South West and the five other Crime and Disorder partnerships within Gloucestershire, employ an analyst to work within the County Council MAIDEN project office.

MAIDEN is the Multi Agency Information Database for Neighbourhoods.

**Responsible Authorities for the Stroud District Crime and Disorder Strategy.**

<p>.....</p> <p>Timothy Brain BA Phd Chief Constable Gloucestershire Constabulary</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Adrian Grimmitt Divisional Commander Cotswold and Stroud Division</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>David Hagg Chief Executive Stroud District Council</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>Gloucestershire County Council</p>
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