

# Bobbies on the beat

Communities in Edinburgh will see more 'bobbies on the beat' with a significant enhancement to local policing that comes into effect this week.



Councillor Paul Edie, Community Safety Leader for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "This innovative approach to local policing will build on the strong partnership foundations we already have in place across the Capital for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.

The newly formed Safer Neighbourhood Teams are a specially created group of officers dedicated to visibility, community engagement and responding to local neighbourhood concerns.

These teams are an amalgamation of community beat police officers and local and national government funded officers working alongside City of Edinburgh Council Community Safety teams.

Local communities will be able to shape their activities through local priority setting meetings, which will identify the concerns of residents and give actions to the local teams through agreed 'priorities'.

The main issues that both organisations will address include anti social behaviour and quality of life concerns.

Officers from the police, as well as Community Safety teams from the council, will listen to what the public are saying before reporting back on progress.

The new system will allow both organisations to solve the issues that communities care about most in a quicker and more efficient way, as well as strengthening the partnership working between organisations in the city.

The launch comes as officers from Lothian and Borders Police undertake a second day of action under Operation Advance.

This intelligence led drugs operation in Leith has already seen 22 people being taken into custody and thousands of pounds worth of drugs being seized, including crack cocaine, heroin, and herbal cannabis. Several thousand pounds worth of cash was also recovered.

A number of people are set to appear at Edinburgh Sheriff Court today.

The operation is the result of six months of intelligence gathering work, a lot of which has been conducted by community officers. Similarly, the new community teams will be heavily involved in the reassurance phase of the operation.

Throughout the coming days and weeks, Safer Neighbourhood Teams will be conducting high visibility patrols in the affected areas and visiting local schools and community meetings to talk to pupils and work with local people to prevent drug dealers returning.

Cllr Edie added: "Yesterday's raids demonstrates the value of community policing which is at the heart of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams. I am sure the recent fall in crime in the city over the past few months will continue with this new approach."

"An important element is the setting of local priorities with communities – this really is giving the people who matter a say in how they want crime to be dealt with in their neighbourhoods."

Chief Superintendent Gill Imery, Divisional Commander for the City of Edinburgh, said: "Our Safer Neighbourhood Teams will have a huge impact on the way we police communities in partnership and I am delighted they are now in place."

“It represents a real shift in our policing efforts towards local engagement and reflects our recently launched Community Commitment, where we have outlined the level of service we will provide to the public.

“Significant operations like Advance are inextricably linked to our community policing efforts and we could not undertake initiatives like this without our teams, especially in the reassurance phase.

“Also, often our officers respond to calls that can be better served by an Environmental or Community Safety Warden from the council, or vice versa. This new team structure will allow for closer joint working between the two agencies which will ultimately better serve communities.”

Minister for Community Safety Fergus Ewing said: “Everyone has the right to feel safe in their community and promoting community safety and tackling antisocial behaviour are top priorities for the Scottish Government.

“The Scottish Government fully supports the work Safer Neighbourhood Teams will be doing with local communities in Lothian and Borders. It is clear these teams will be equipped with local knowledge that makes them well placed to help put the right local solutions in place.

“This Government is committed to a high visibility police presence on our streets, as demonstrated by the 1,190 additional police officers in Scotland we have provided since coming into office.”