



Date: 4 November 2010

## Communities tell us what they think about Barnstaple Town Centre Night-time

Local communities have come forward and given their views in a "Have your Say" evening to say how safe they feel in Barnstaple town centre at night and what they think police or partners can do to make them feel safer. The activity was carried out by local Neighbourhood Police and Safer North Devon in the town centre area of Barnstaple on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October between 19.30hrs and midnight.

When asked how safe they felt that night on a scale of 1-10 (when 10 is very safe) 79% of people answered between 7 and 10. 17% of people answered with a 10.

Other comments related to:

- CCTV, many endorsing the importance of the system and how it improves the general feeling of well-being in the town. Some were not aware of the extent of the existing CCTV system and its coverage and benefits.
- Intimidation from groups (both adult and young people) including noise,
- town traffic, parking and taxi's,
- safety felt in groups
- lighting issues

Sector Inspector for Barnstaple Toby Davies said: "It's very encouraging to see that the large majority of people who we spoke with feel safe going out in Barnstaple at night. North Devon has a welcoming environment where people are happy to go out in the evenings and enjoy everything the region has to offer. We want to keep it that way so we will take on board people's comments and look at what more we or other organisations can do to ensure our local communities have a safe night out."

Barnstaple Town Centre Management and North Devon Council will be raising more awareness of the town's CCTV system in the lead up to Christmas. The Council and police have also already proposed parking enforcement initiatives for Barnstaple Town Centre.

Where street lighting has specifically been identified as a problem, discussions are already taking place with the Devon County Council Highways Department to respond to these concerns. Partners are also anxious to address the concerns of a small minority of people regarding groups of people intimidating. This concern is being taken very seriously and police will be looking to deal robustly with groups of people intimidating using all powers available.

Sector Inspector for Barnstaple Toby Davies said: "We work together very closely as a partnership to maintain North Devon's special character and have a wide range of initiatives in place and powers available to us to do this, for example, under the 2006 Violent Crime Reduction Act and the 2006 Anti-Social Behaviour Act we have special dispersal powers which are currently being used in Barnstaple town centre allowing for the dispersal of two or more individuals causing, or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress locally."

Officers spoke to people throughout the evening but were asked to note comments from 132 individuals, of those most people were out enjoying drinks (27%) or for dinner (20%). 10% of people were out for work, 9% for the cinema and 8% for the theatre. A further 8% were hanging out, 4% were going to a nightclub, 3% were out for a walk and 3% were living in the town and en route home. The remaining 8% are not known.

Community Safety Manager for Safer North Devon Amanda Palmer commented: " We have listened to the views of people going out in Barnstaple town centre at night and the results will feed into future Partnership activities to ensure we continue to work effectively together. We are continually looking for ways to improve what we do and want our communities to come out and enjoy everything on offer locally for a great night out and intend to carry out this exercise again both in Barnstaple and in our other main towns."

- Ends -

#### Note to Editors:

1. 17 seniors, 34 adults, 36 young people and 27 people under 18 asked us to note their comments, the remainder did not note their age.

\*Police and councils work with other partner agencies as Safer North Devon to ensure North Devon and Torridge remains a great place to live. The Partnership covers both North Devon and Torridge Districts and is supported by agencies who are accountable under the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act to deliver on a reduction in Crime, Fear of Crime and Anti-social Behaviour as well as others with a local stakeholder interest. Our accountable bodies are North Devon and Torridge which include: Devon County Council, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service, North Devon Council, Devon Primary Care Trust, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, Devon and Cornwall Police Authority, Torridge District Council and Devon and Cornwall Probation Area.

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