



UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

**‘Gloucester City Safe’ and Gloucester city
centre in 2019:**

*Research conducted by students from the
University of Gloucestershire*

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Dr Andrew Stafford (Lead Author)

Dr Jonathan Hobson

Contact:

If you have any comments or queries regarding the work, please contact:

*Dr Jon Hobson
University of Gloucestershire,
Francis Close Hall,
Swindon Road,
Cheltenham,
GL50 4AZ
Email: jhobson@glos.ac.uk*

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1. Executive summary

Experiences of reporting incidents and using the web platform

- Members reported that the process is quick and easy, and that the CPO's and scheme manager's help is appreciated with this. Staff at some businesses weren't familiar with the process if it was generally handled by their manager.
- The web platform was described by members as very useful and user-friendly. The revised gallery organisation was reported to have improved usability. The speed with which incidents are uploaded and viewable is greatly appreciated and helps businesses protect themselves. The DISC app is used widely by members and recognised as valuable.
- The frequency with which members view the galleries and refresh their knowledge of excluded offenders varies considerably (e.g. daily, weekly, fortnightly).
- There is wide variation among members concerning the reporting of incidents to the police.

Effectiveness of sanctions, issue of repeat offenders and use of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs)

- Members noted that most offenders are deterred by the receipt of a yellow card and the threat of a City Safe ban.
- However, many of the members noted a serious problem with a minority that ignore the sanctions and continue offending. For these repeat offenders' members noted that the card system is not effective.
- Members would welcome an increase in the use of CBOs for those that ignore their exclusion sanctions. Comments included that consequences weren't severe enough and that the police could do more to help enforce exclusions and CBOs.

City Protection Officers (CPOs)

- Members were highly positive concerning the work of the CPOs, stating that they had made a significant difference since their introduction.
- There were many examples provided of incidents where the CPOs had helped tackle or prevent an issue or diffuse a situation, and members spoke positively about the personal relationships they had developed with the CPOs.

Scheme's successes, achievements and benefits

- Members were highly positive about the effectiveness of the communications and information sharing process. Members were also positive concerning the detail in the information that is shared.
- Members reported feeling safer in their place of work because of City Safe. These feelings spurred from knowing that the CPOs could be contacted and would be present quickly if needed, and due to their increased awareness concerning individuals and other risks arising from information sharing.
- Some members stated that the scheme is an effective deterrent for offenders and that its activity has eased the burden on the police.

Areas for improvement

- Some members also noted that more CPOs, and CPO shift patterns that meant they were present in the city centre for longer periods of the day, would be beneficial.
- As above, members would welcome an increase in the use of CBOs for those that ignore their exclusion sanctions. Comments included that consequences weren't severe enough and that the police could do more to help enforce exclusions and CBOs.
- There were also calls among members for more proactive contributions from some members, increased efforts to generate more public awareness and support and to increase the number of City Safe members, and more police engagement and enforcement of sanctions.

2. Background, overview and report structure

2.1. Scheme background

The Gloucester City Safe Scheme (hereafter the Scheme) is a not for profit Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) designed to help reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. The Scheme operates during the hours of both the day time (6am-6pm) and night time (6pm-6am) trading economies. Membership costs £1 day and its members comprise, restaurants, bars, retail establishments and transport services operating in Gloucester, Stroud and nearby areas that have chosen to join the Scheme. There were 24 members when the Scheme was first launched in May 2014; in January 2020 there were upwards of 150 members.

The Scheme's manager and its members work in partnership with Gloucestershire Police, the Local Authorities in each scheme area, and other stakeholders to tackle occurrences of shoplifting, theft, anti-social behaviour, alcohol related disorder, street drinking and begging. Members commit to using and enforcing an exclusion-based sanction system and have access to an information sharing network. The exclusion-based sanction system has two tiers. Members can issue 'yellow cards' to persons in or near their premises who they deem to have committed an offence (in line with the classifications of crime and associated behaviour employed by the Scheme). A first yellow card is a warning and a second yellow card results in an exclusion (referred to as a 'red card' or a ban) that applies to all member premises. All incidents and the sanctions that are issued are recorded by the Scheme's manager and logged in an incident database. Information is communicated to and between members via a secure radio network, a secure website and through regular email updates from the Scheme's manager. The secure website holds information on those who have received sanctions, invites members to help identify unknown offenders caught on camera, provides information on other relevant news, and holds a directory of members.

2.2. Overview of approach

Between 28th October – 11th November, 2019, students from the University of Gloucestershire visited Gloucester city centre to conduct a series of questionnaires and interviews. The students collected 773 questionnaires from the public, which were used to examine public perceptions of the Scheme, of policing, and of levels of crime and safety in Gloucester. The questionnaire contained further questions concerning Gloucester Business Improvement District's (BID) priority areas of activity: Safety and security; Street cleanliness; Physical and environmental improvements to the BID area; and Marketing and promotion.

The students also completed 42 semi-structured interviews with the Scheme's members (i.e. the business involved in the Scheme) in Gloucester and Stroud. An employee representing each business (the exact position of which would vary depending on availability and knowledge of the Scheme) was asked questions concerning their experience of using the Scheme, its effectiveness, its strengths and limitations, the benefits it offers and the ways in which it could be improved. A further five interviews with Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers, City Protection officers (in Gloucester) and other stakeholders were conducted by the students.

In the following report, participants are referred to using unique codes that make clear their participant number and (if applicable) whether they are a day time economy trader (DTE) or a night time economy trader (NTE).

2.3. Report structure

This report is structured in the following order:

- Public perceptions of crime, safety, policing, the Gloucester City Safe Scheme, and Gloucester City Centre
- Member and stakeholder feedback on the Scheme:
 - Overall successes, achievements and benefits
 - Member experiences of reporting incidents and using the web platform
 - The effectiveness of sanctions, the issue of repeat offenders and the use of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs)
 - The work of the City Protection Officers, tackling begging and the introduction of the Public Space Protection Order zone (Gloucester) and the Police Community Support Officers (Stroud)
 - Areas for improvement

The report concludes by summarising the main findings and considering their combined implications for the future of the Scheme.

3. Public perceptions of crime, safety, policing, the Scheme, and Gloucester City Centre

This section of the report uses survey data to illustrate public views on crime and safety in Gloucester, on police efforts to combat these issues, on the Gloucester City Safe Scheme, and on areas/issues that Gloucester’s BID is targeting for improvement. The majority of the discussion in this section concerns data gathered through the public survey conducted in 2019, but in places comparisons are made with data collected through similar surveys conducted in previous years.

3.1. The 2019 public sample

In total, the views of 773 members of the public were collected through the survey in 2019. 446/58% of these respondents lived within Gloucester city or within 5 miles of the city, and 509/66% of these respondents visited the city centre at least once a week. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate residence proximity to Gloucester and frequency of visits to Gloucester city centre for all participants.

Figure 1: Where the 2019 respondents lived

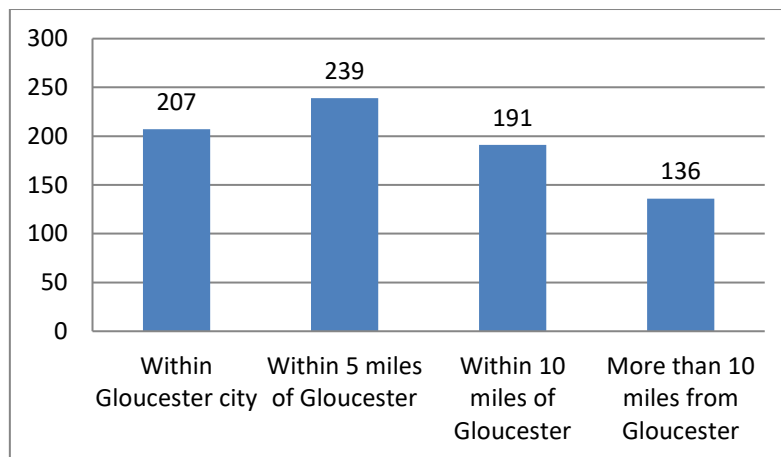
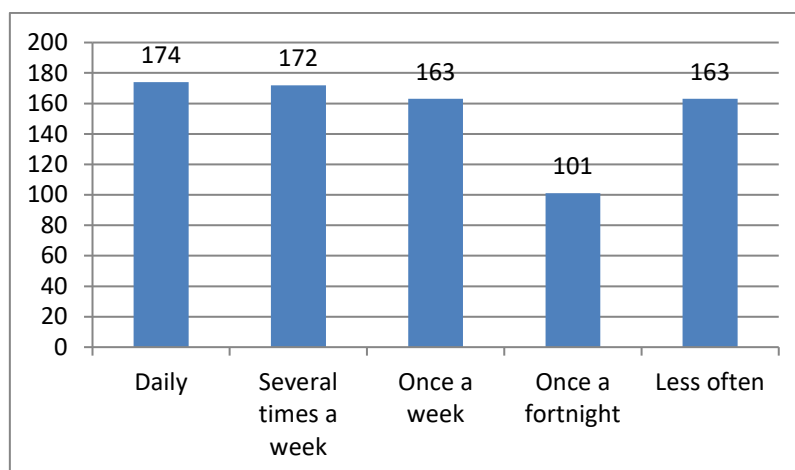


Figure 2: How often the 2019 respondents visited Gloucester city centre

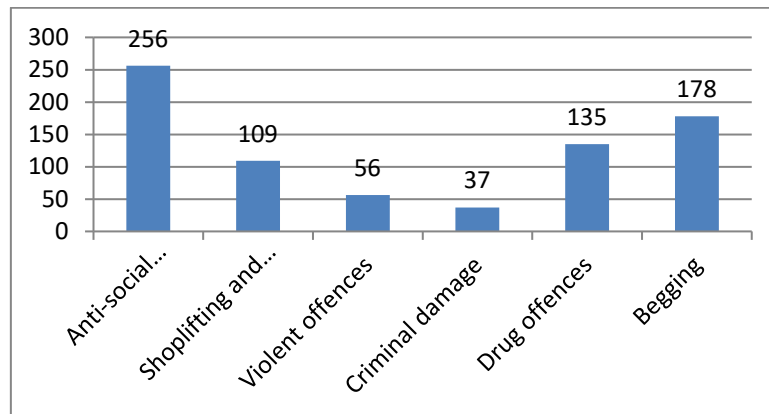


3.2. Views on crime problems in Gloucester city centre

Respondents were asked to select the crime that they felt was the biggest problem in Gloucester city centre from the following options: ‘Anti-social behaviour’, ‘shoplifting and theft’, ‘violent offences’,

'criminal damage', 'drug offences', or 'begging'. The most common response in 2019 was 'anti-social behaviour', which was selected by 256/33% of respondents. Figure 3 illustrates all responses to this question.

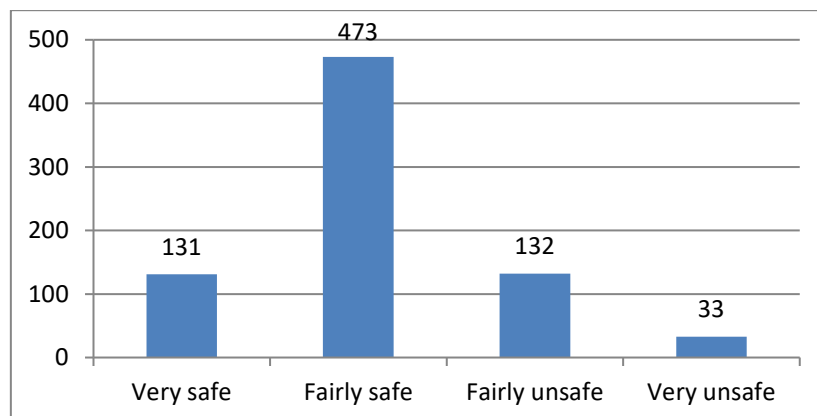
Figure 3: What kind of crime is the biggest problem in Gloucester city centre



3.3. Views on safety in Gloucester city centre

Respondents were asked to state how safe they felt during their visit to Gloucester that day. In 2019, 604/78% of respondents stated that they felt 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' during their visit to Gloucester, revealing a high degree of perceived safety for those in this sample. Figure 4 illustrates all responses to this question.

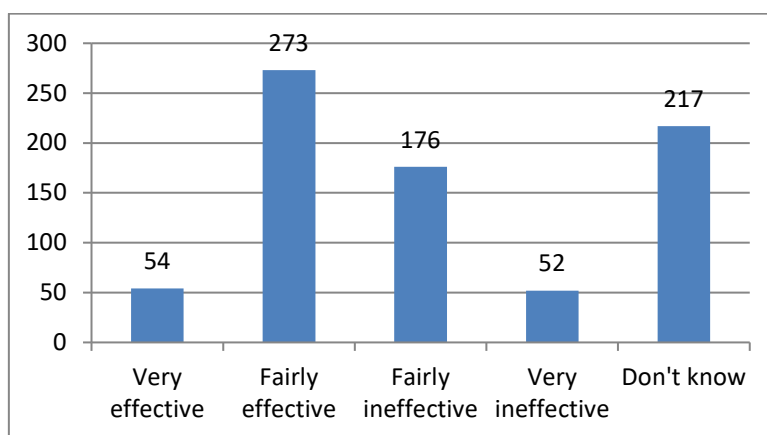
Figure 4: How safe does the respondent feel on their visit to Gloucester



3.4. Views on police effectiveness in Gloucester city centre

Respondents were asked to provide their view on the effectiveness of police efforts to tackle crime in Gloucester city centre. In 2019, 327/42% of respondents stated that the police were 'very effective' or 'effective' in this regard. Figure 5 illustrates all responses to this question.

Figure 5: Public views on police effectiveness at tackling crime in Gloucester



3.5. Public perceptions of the scheme

Perceptions concerning the Scheme were gathered from members of the public in Gloucester city centre through annual surveys conducted in each year between 2014 - 2019. Members of the public were asked about their awareness of the Scheme and, for those that had heard of the Scheme, their views on its effectiveness. Just over a third of the sample in 2019 (291/38%) had heard of the Scheme. Table 1 displays these data across the six years.

Table 1: Public awareness of Gloucester City Safe

Year of data collection	Number/percentage of sample aware of Gloucester City Safe
2014	26% (63/247)
2015	44% (272/619)
2016	37% (208/560)
2017	48% (353/740)
2018	47% (314/662)
2019	38% (291/773)

In each year, those that had heard of the Scheme were asked to provide their view on its operation. In 2019, 68% (198/291) stated that the Scheme was 'very effective' or 'effective' at tackling crime in Gloucester city centre. Although the wording of this question has been changed, Table 2 displays the data gathered on this topic across six years of data collection.

Table 2: Public views of Gloucester City Safe

Year of data collection	Number/percentage of sample expressing positive views of Gloucester City Safe
2014	65% (41/63) stated that: The Scheme 'works well'
2015	38% (104/272) stated that: The Scheme 'works well'
2016	48% (98/208) 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' with the statement 'the Scheme has been successful in reducing crime in Gloucester'
2017	75% (256/345) stated that the Scheme was 'very effective' or 'effective' at tackling crime in Gloucester city centre

2018	76% (237/312) stated that the Scheme was 'very effective' or 'effective' at tackling crime in Gloucester city centre
2019	68% (198/291) stated that the Scheme was 'very effective' or 'effective' at tackling crime in Gloucester city centre

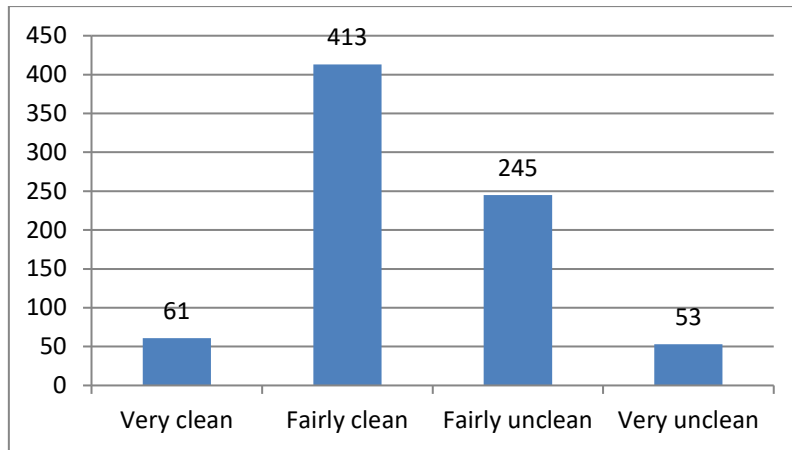
Those that had heard of the Scheme were asked whether knowing that it is in operation makes them feel safer in Gloucester city centre; 77% (225/291) responded 'Yes'.

3.6. Public views on Gloucester city centre

Members of the public were asked questions that related to four of Gloucester BID's priority areas of activity: Safety and security (covered in the previous discussion in section 2 of this report); Street cleanliness; Physical and environmental improvements to the BID area; and Marketing and promotion.

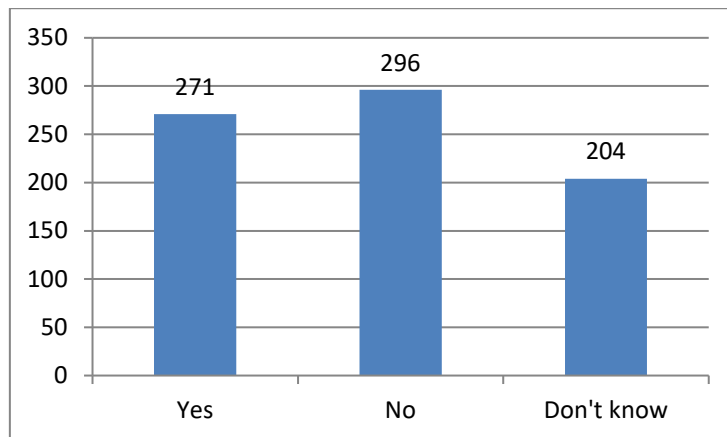
Respondents were asked 'On your visit today, how clean would you say the centre of Gloucester looks?'. The majority (474/61%) stated that the city centre looked 'very clean' or 'fairly clean'. Figure 6 illustrates all responses to this question.

Figure 6: Public views on the cleanliness of Gloucester city centre



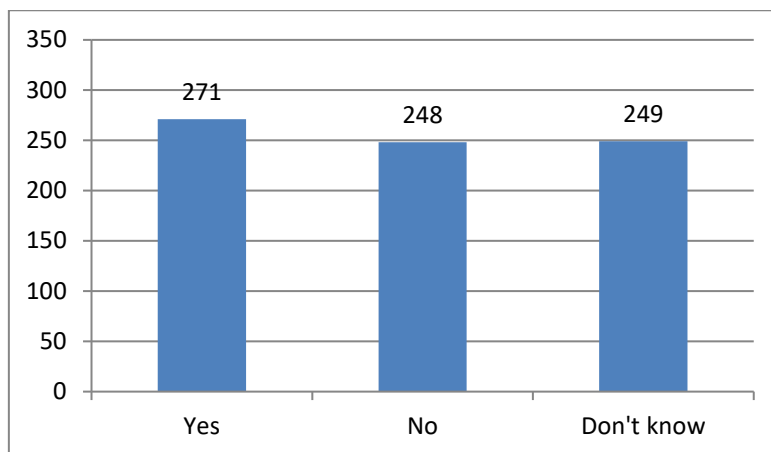
Respondents were asked 'Would you say that the appearance of Gloucester city centre has improved over the last two years?'. A similar proportion of respondents stated 'yes' (271/35%) and 'no' (296/38%) in response to this question. Figure 7 illustrates all responses to this question.

Figure 7: Public views on whether the appearance of Gloucester city centre has improved over the last two years



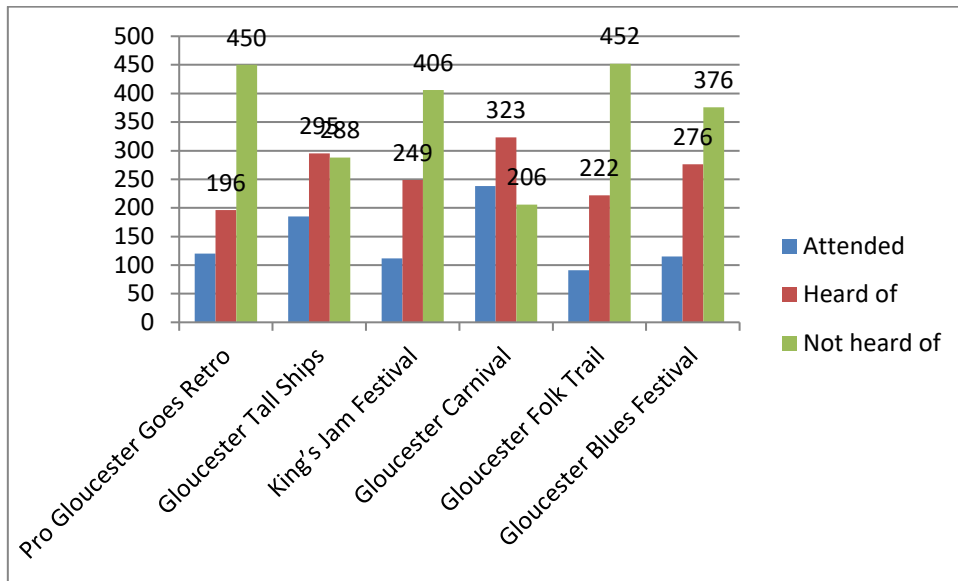
Respondents were asked 'Would you say that Gloucester does a good job of marketing and promoting its events?'. A similar proportion of respondents stated 'yes' (271/35%) and 'no' (248/32%) in response to this question. Figure 8 illustrates all responses to this question.

Figure 8: Public views on the marketing of events in Gloucester



Respondents were asked whether they had 'attended', 'heard of' or 'not heard of' six of Gloucester's flagship public events: Pro Gloucester Goes Retro; Gloucester Tall Ships; King's Jam Festival; Gloucester Carnival; Gloucester Folk Trail; and Gloucester Blues Festival. There was great variation in response rates. The most well-known event among this sample was Gloucester Carnival (323/42%), but over 49% (376) of respondents had not heard of five of the six events. Figure 9 illustrates all responses to this question.

Figure 9: Public knowledge of events in Gloucester



3. Member and stakeholder views on Gloucester City Safe

This section of the report considers the interviews conducted by students. In total, 42 interviews were conducted with Scheme members in Gloucester and Stroud, and another 5 with police officers, PCSOs, CPOs and other stakeholders. The interviews were used to explore members' views on the successes and achievements of the Scheme, their experiences of reporting incidents, and their views on the effectiveness of the sanctions, the work of the City Protection Officers and areas for improvement.

4.1. Overall successes, achievements and benefits

Members were highly positive about the effectiveness of the Scheme, and particularly positive about the communications and information sharing procedures employed by the Scheme.

'it is helpful to know who these people are that I need to be watching out for' [7, NTE]

'having that network of businesses being able to communicate with each other helps prevent [crime] to a degree, but also recognises who [the offender] is and makes sure that they're accountable' [26]

Members reported feeling safer in their place of work because of the Scheme. These feelings spurred from regarding the Scheme as a support network and taking reassurance from the collective efforts to tackle crime through the Scheme.

'I call for assistance and there are people there straight away' [11, DTE]

'You know that if it kicks off in here, you're on the radio and someone's going to be here' [32, DTE]

4.2. Member experiences of reporting incidents and using the web platform

During the interviews, students asked members about their experiences of reporting incidents to the Scheme through any means and when using the DISC web platform and/or mobile application. Members were positive about the reporting process, and about the ease with which they could communicate information to the Scheme.

The Disc web platform and mobile application was described by members as very useful and user-friendly and the way in which the offender galleries are organised by the Scheme were regarded positively.

'we will go on there and just browse through... we read the reports... and it does help, it absolutely helps' [11, DTE]

Some members would report all incidents to both the Scheme and the police, whereas others would only report incidents to the Scheme. Some members reported that they preferred reporting crimes to the Scheme via the City Protection Officers (CPOs) in Gloucester rather than reporting them to the police. The interviews suggested that there is a remaining divergence between the information held by the police and the information held in Disc by the Scheme.

4.3. The effectiveness of sanctions, the issue of repeat offenders and the use of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs)

Although interviewees noted that the yellow card system works in the majority of cases, there were concerns raised regarding those who ignore the Scheme's sanctions. Interviewees noted a serious problem with a minority of offenders that ignore the sanctions and continue offending. For these repeat offenders, members noted that the card system is not effective.

'some people don't care as they have habits to feed' [19]

'I think often there is an issue with having the resources to remove people that you know have been banned or anything like that and that's a struggle' [26]

There were members who expressed a need for more severe consequences for repeat offenders, for increased police enforcement of exclusions and for increased use of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) for this group. It was also noted that breaches of CBOs should be addressed immediately by the police, as in one instance an offender continued to offend for several weeks after they first breached their CBO before the police intervened.

4.4. The work of the City Protection Officers, tackling begging and the introduction of the Public Space Protection Order zone (Gloucester) and work of the Police Community Support Officers (Stroud)

In 2017, funding was granted to support a number of City Protection Officer (CPOs) posts within the city of Gloucester. Since then, these CPOs have acted as a visible presence in the city, helping to increase safety, tackle crime and disorder and support the work of Gloucester City Safe. The CPOs have been particularly involved in tackling begging in the city and in enforcing the alcohol-free policy in the city's Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) zone.

During interview, members were very positive concerning the work of the CPOs, stating that they had made a significant difference in the city. Some of the members did raise concerns about the volume of begging that occurs in the city centre. Members were aware of the PSPO zone and had welcomed its introduction. CPO efforts to tackle begging and help enforce the alcohol free zone policy were regarded positively by members.

In Stroud, the introduction of a dedicated town centre Police Officer and Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) team had been welcomed by members. The only criticism of this introduction was that these officers were not present at all times.

'I want to see them in town all the time ... and that will make people feel safe. It means they can get all the little kids out of the park who drink and smoke and all the other bad things that are wrong like anti-social behaviour.' [10, NTE]

4.5. Areas for improvement

Some members noted that more CPOs and PCSOs in Gloucester and Stroud, as well as additional efforts from these officers to enforce the Scheme's sanctions, would increase its effectiveness.

'Definitely more PCSO's would be a big thing' [38 DTE]

Concerns were raised regarding the consistency of reporting to the Scheme and the local police. This highlights the need for the two organisations to work together closely and to ensure that data is shared regularly and systematically.

'we do tend to put [occurrences of shoplifting] onto the city safe scheme which is an app, but I'm not sure everything gets reported to the police.' [19]

A range of comments highlighted the need for the Scheme to continue to publicise its activity and recruit new members. Members mentioned the issue of crime displacement (i.e. offenders taking their offending to non-member locations after receiving a sanction) and of insufficient representation among businesses operating in the night time economy.

'I believe [the Scheme] has probably not reduced crime as such. It's probably moved where that crime is happening. It's taking it away from the City Centre and pushed it more towards the outskirts.' [23, DTE]

'Every single licenced premises should be part of the scheme and anyone opening a new licence premises should be forced to join the scheme, I think.' [37, NTE]

4. Conclusion

This report has presented an examination of the Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) 'Gloucester City Safe' in 2019. The report's findings can be used by the Scheme's management and the police to enhance understanding of crime and disorder in Gloucester and its surrounding areas and to help inform efforts to tackle these issues. It is also intended that Gloucester BID should use the questionnaire findings as an indication of public perception in their areas of activity.

The following content summarises the findings presented in this report.

Public perceptions of crime, safety, policing and the Scheme

33% of the members of the public in the sample stated that 'anti-social behaviour' was the biggest problem in Gloucester. Feelings of safety were high among the sample, with 78% of respondents stating that they felt 'very safe' or 'fairly safe' during their visit to Gloucester. Respondents were asked to provide their view on the effectiveness of police efforts to tackle crime in Gloucester city centre, and 42% of respondents stating that the police were 'very effective' or 'effective' in this regard. Just over a third of the sample in 2019 (38%) had heard of the Gloucester City Safe Scheme, and 68% of this sub-sample stated that the Scheme was 'very effective' or 'effective' at tackling crime in Gloucester city centre. Those that had heard of the Scheme were asked whether knowing that it is in operation makes them feel safer in Gloucester city centre; 77% responded 'Yes'.

Public views on Gloucester city centre

The majority (474/61%) of the sample stated that Gloucester city centre looked 'very clean' or 'fairly clean' on the day of their visit. Respondents were asked 'Would you say that the appearance of Gloucester city centre has improved over the last two years?', and a similar proportion of respondents stated 'yes' (35%) and 'no' (38%) in response to this question. Respondents were also asked 'Would you say that Gloucester does a good job of marketing and promoting its events?', and again a similar proportion of respondents stated 'yes' (35%) and 'no' (32%) in response to this question. Among this sample, the most well-known event held in Gloucester was Gloucester Carnival, but over 49% of respondents had not heard of five of the six events that they were asked about.

Member and stakeholder feedback on the Scheme

Members were very positive about the effectiveness of the Scheme, and particularly positive about the communications and information sharing procedures employed by the Scheme. Members reported feeling safer in their place of work because of the Scheme. These feelings spurred from regarding the Scheme as a support network and taking reassurance from the collective efforts to tackle crime through the Scheme.

Members were positive about the Scheme's reporting process, and about the ease with which they could communicate information to the Scheme. The Disc web platform and mobile application was described by members as very useful and user-friendly and the way in which the offender galleries are organised by the Scheme were regarded positively. Some members would report all incidents to both the Scheme and the police, whereas others would only report incidents to the Scheme.

Although interviewees noted that the Scheme's yellow card system works in the majority of cases, there were concerns raised regarding those who ignore the Scheme's sanctions. Interviewees noted a serious problem with a minority of offenders that ignore the sanctions and continue offending. For these repeat offenders, members noted that the card system is not effective. There were members

who expressed a need for more severe consequences for repeat offenders, for increased police enforcement of exclusions and for increased use of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) for this group.

During interview, members were very positive concerning the work of the City Protection Officers, stating that they had made a significant difference in the city. Some of the members did raise concerns about the volume of begging that occurs in Gloucester city centre. Members were aware of the PSPO zone in the city and had welcomed its introduction. In Stroud, the introduction of a dedicated town centre Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) team had been welcomed by members. The only criticism of this introduction was that these officers were not present at all times.

Areas for improvement/attention

The findings from this research indicate that consideration should be given to the following matters:

- **Dedicated police resource for tackling retail crime in Gloucestershire:** Gloucester City Safe has experienced great success in its efforts to tackle retail and other business crime in Gloucestershire. Not only it is essential that City Safe continues to operate and grow, but the Scheme could be strengthened further by working in partnership with a dedicated police retail crime unit.
- **Continued efforts to increase public awareness of the Scheme:** This research suggests that continued efforts to raise public awareness of the Scheme's activity is required. Those who are aware of its work tend to view its achievements as positive, and 77% of those who had heard of the Scheme reported feeling safer knowing that it existed.
- **Continued efforts to recruit more members:** The Scheme relies on the commitment of members in order to work effectively. In locations where there are few or no members efforts to tackle the issues that the Scheme is concerned with can be uncoordinated and ineffective. It is also conceivable that individuals who have received sanctions from the Scheme could move their offending activity to non-member locations, placing these businesses at risk. A suggestion was made that all licenced premises in the Scheme's locations should be required to join as part of their licensing conditions.
- **Regular and systematic engagement and information sharing between the police and the Scheme:** The interviews suggested that there is a remaining divergence between the information held by the police and the information held in Disc by the Scheme. Some members would report all incidents to both the Scheme and the police whereas others would report more incidents to one than the other. There have also been incidents where former prolific shoplifters serving City Safe bans have been released from prison without the Scheme being notified. This highlights the importance of regular and systematic exchange of appropriate information between the Scheme and the police to ensure that both parties are aware of matters that concern them.
- **More severe consequences for those who ignore their exclusions:** Many of the members noted a serious problem with a minority of offenders that ignore the Scheme's sanctions and continue offending. For these repeat offenders, members noted that the card system is not effective. There were members who called for more severe consequences for repeat

offenders, for increased police enforcement of exclusions and for increased use of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) for this group of offenders.

- **Additional City Protection Officers (in Gloucester) and Police Community Support Officers (in Stroud):** The addition of CPOs and PCSOs in these locations has been welcomed, but additional personnel and visible presence in Gloucester and Stroud and greater enforcement of the Scheme's sanctions by these officers could increase the Scheme's effectiveness further.