

**Evaluation
of the
Business Crime Reduction Centre**

Final Report

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Section 1: Background

Introduction

1.1 The Business Crime Reduction Centre (BCRC) was established in 2007 as a three year project under the auspices of People United Against Crime (PUAC) and funded by Yorkshire Forward (Regional Development Agency) and Objective 1 (ERDF).

1.2 The project was created to address a major issue: the reduction of the impact of crime on Small and Medium Size Business Enterprises (SMEs) in South Yorkshire.

1.3 At the inception of the project, Dr Susan Mullins was commissioned by People United Against Crime and approved by Yorkshire Forward to undertake an evaluation of the project.

1.4 The Business Crime Reduction Centre was officially launched in June 2007 in Sheffield by Meredydd Hughes, the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire and the Rt. Hon. David Blunkett MP.

Evaluation Aims

1.5 The overall aim of the evaluation has been to examine and assess the success of BCRC in reducing the adverse impact of crime on SMEs in South Yorkshire.

1.6 The specific objectives of the evaluation seek to:

- Determine the extent to which the BCRC has met outputs against specified targets.
- Identify the impact and effectiveness of the initiative's activities in meeting SMEs needs.
- Identify the key achievements and additionality of the project.
- Determine whether or not strategic added value has been achieved by the project.
- Identify lessons learned from the initiative for future developments.

Methodology

1.7 In order to gain multiple perspectives, the evaluation methodology comprised the following strategies:

- A comprehensive programme of in depth consultations with a range of stakeholders including all members of the BCRC team, the CEO of PUAC, representatives from private sector business and participants in conferences and seminars.

- Scrutiny and secondary analysis of a variety of documentation including business plans, progress reports, recorded statistical outputs, media documentation and future plans.
- Attendance at Steering Group meetings.

The Evaluation Scope

1.8 The scope of the evaluation is primarily qualitative in nature, focussing on the impact of BCRC in the sub-region. Section three does have a quantitative focus in respect of the outputs achieved against targets set, which are also used to provide a context for the qualitative aspects of the study. The Steering Group for the project determined that the achievements, additionality of BCRC initiatives and recommendations including key lessons learned from the project should be the main foci of this study.

Report Structure

1.9 The report comprises the following sections:

- **Section One:** Background
- **Section Two:** The Rationale for BCRC
- **Section Three:** The Structure, Spend and Recorded Outputs of BCRC against Targets
- **Section Four:** The Major Activities and Impact of BCRC
- **Section Five:** Success Factors and Challenges Leading to BCRC's Achievements
- **Section Six:** Conclusions and Recommendations

Acknowledgements

1.10 I would like to place on record my thanks generally to all of the individuals who have given their time to contribute to this evaluation and particularly to the BCRC team and Bea Jefferson at Yorkshire Forward.

Section 2: The Rationale for BCRC

Establishing the Centre: Context, Ambition and Key Aims

2.1 Research evidence reflects a general lack of confidence by business in the commitment to and action taken by the police in relation to crime against business. This situation is compounded by businesses not reporting crime as they believe these crimes are not prioritised by the police.

The general view that a crime against business does not really affect anyone because insurance will cover it or that the business can sustain the adverse impact of crime is both misguided and mistaken. Feedback indicates that every crime impacts on resources, both financial and human, which are diverted from the core business of the organisation in order to deal with the consequences of the crime. This can and does result in resources being redirected from business consolidation and expansion to fund the costs of criminal damage, additional security measures and replacements of goods. The chairman of Federation of Small Businesses in Yorkshire and the Humber has pointed out this year that,

“A fifth of all crime is committed against business, but only one in eight incidents is reported. Crime against business is thought to be victimless. It is not”^①

2.2 Official figures from the banking association APACS[®] in 2007, indicated losses of £290.5 million in relation to card and identity fraud and that fraud generally had spiralled to £1.7billion. Not surprisingly, South Yorkshire businesses have been victims of such fraud. One recent case involved a company who suffered a loss of £3.6million through fraudulent invoicing. This caused the liabilities of the company to continue to grow and the consequence was the business became insolvent, 20 suppliers went into liquidation and 7,500 jobs were lost nationwide.

2.3 The Sheffield based charity, People United Against Crime (PUAC), which has a substantial history of successfully working with local businesses in multi-agency settings, has undertaken various initiatives with a focus on the impact of business crime in South Yorkshire in the last five years. PUAC engaged with a range of agencies to ascertain the need, viability and support for a dedicated crime reduction service in the area.

2.4 Having gained a consistent positive response to the establishment of such a service, PUAC applied for and gained funding from both Objective 1 and Yorkshire Forward to set up the Business Crime Reduction Centre which was launched on June 14th 2007.

2.5 PUAC signed an agreement with both funding agencies setting out governance and steering group arrangements for BCRC. A BCRC business plan set in place key milestones, robust performance management targets, business protocols and a risk assessment strategy.

2.6 BCRC was established as a specialist business support service in 2007. Its ambition was to provide a dedicated service to reduce the impact of both general and e-business crime through the adoption of ICT and other solutions

and thereby contribute to sustainable economic regeneration and development in the South Yorkshire area.

2.7 The ambition of BCRC represented a new far reaching concept with tangible outcomes. This project was the first initiative which would establish a dedicated service to combat crime against business and which could contribute to the economic growth of the sub-region in relation to both the development and sustainability of business.

Overview of the Role of BCRC

2.8 BCRC is a three year, £1,860,000 project. BCRC's role is to be instrumental in the implementation of strategies to reduce the impact of crime against business and encourage the development of business including e-business within the South Yorkshire sub-region.

2.9 The work of BCRC covers the area of South Yorkshire. Specifically the organisation has responsibility for:

- Identifying, supporting and working in harmony with Yorkshire Forward, South Yorkshire Police, Chambers of Commerce, Business Link, Federation of Small Businesses, ICT partnership groups and other stakeholders to encourage the uptake of secure solutions to prevent crime against business.
- Increasing the confidence of companies in the benefits of e-business and moving them progressively towards safer use of technology within their business
- Advising and supporting the business sector, so to be better placed to resist physical and electronic attacks on their business generally and ICT equipment specifically
- Establishing and administering a security grant scheme.
- Creating, maintaining and updating a website offering advice and guidance on e-security and related crime matters.
- Running conferences and seminars to support the aims of the project to share best practice and upskill the workforce on security matters.
- Developing strategies to ensure the sustainability of the initiative.

2.10 BCRC has sought to ensure its activities align with the Regional Economic Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber and the Objective 1 Single Programme Document.

Section 3: Structure, Spend and Outputs

Structure

3.1 The BCRC structure has changed since the inception of the project. In March 2007, the initial operational structure comprised 9 staff which included two senior managers. The CEO and finance manager of PUAC also contributed as and when necessary to the project.

3.2 There was quite a high turnover of staff in the first phase of the project. Both senior managers and four additional staff moved on from the project. There are a number of factors which may have had an impact on the turnover of the staff:

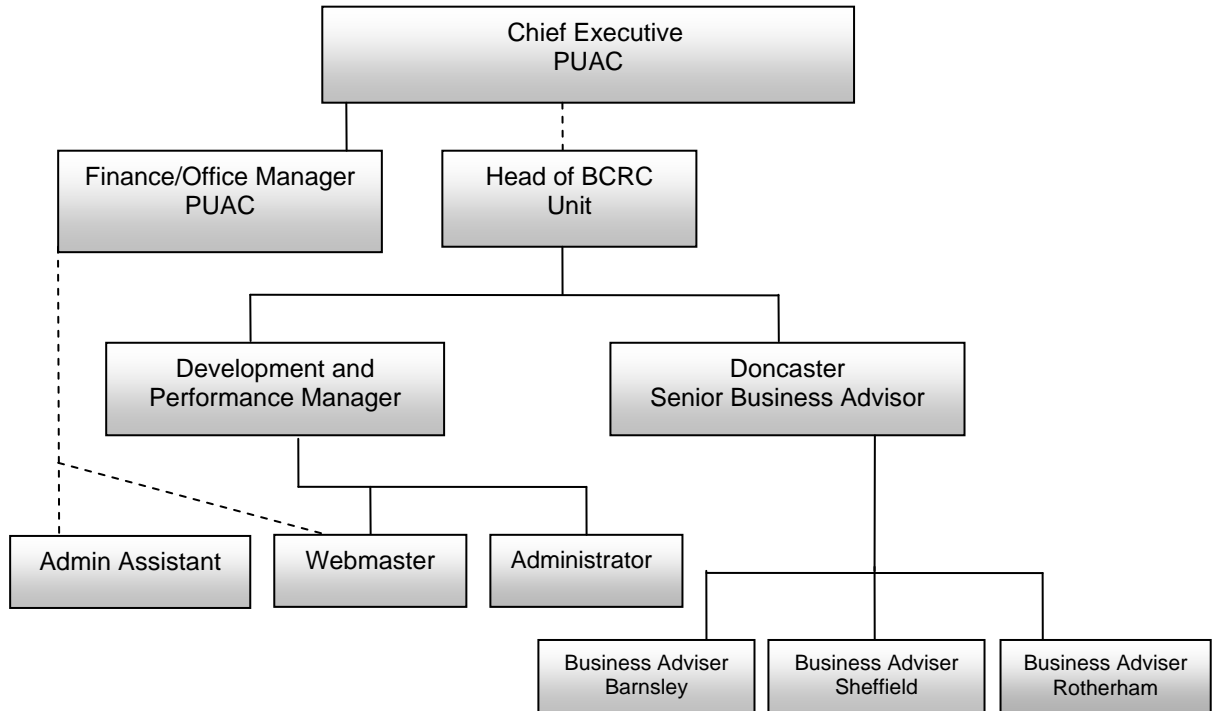
- The two senior managers of the BCRC project were appointed only two weeks before the remainder of the team. As the managers would be establishing themselves, it may have been difficult to provide the support and build the confidence which may have been expected by some of the newly appointed during the initial few weeks of the project.
- Feedback indicated that there were some differences regarding the experiences of the business advisors located at the Chambers of Commerce. All have been provided with excellent accommodation; however, initially there appeared to be different levels of integration within the Chambers.
- The previous experience, skills and expertise of the appointees to BCRC may not have been as transferable to the new posts as anticipated
- Expectations of the job roles may not have been met.
- The posts at BCRC are fixed term appointments.
- The strong focus on performance may have had an impact on staff turnover

3.3 All staff had a two week induction. BCRC staff indicated that this was comprehensive and effective in introducing the various facets of the project. There was some indication, however, that the newly appointed managers who were not familiar with their own job roles and responsibilities at the start of the project were personally experiencing role ambiguity whilst simultaneously managing staff who were also new to their roles. In the early stages of the project, feedback indicates that there was a lack of clarity to some degree about roles and responsibilities.

3.4 The need for a team of Business Advisors with specialist, complimentary technical, managerial skills and expertise was identified at the inception of the project. Staff were recruited with such skills and although there has been some changes in the team, the skills blend has worked very well.

3.5 The turnover of staff enabled scrutiny of and amendment to the initial structure. A key post of Head of BCRC was established in April 2008. In

addition, the roles and responsibilities of the Business Advisors were reviewed. This has proved a positive strategy as the business advisors have been able to “*have a say in how our job role has evolved.*” At the time of writing, the BCRC team comprised 10 staff including a Head of Unit. This team has remained stable for the last year which has enabled team building to take place. As previously, the CEO and Finance Manager of PUAC supplement the team when required. The current structure is illustrated below.



3.6 BCRC is governed by a steering group which generally meets bimonthly. The group includes the CEO of PUAC, representatives from Yorkshire Forward, members of the BCRC senior management team and a range of independent stakeholders with expertise and experience in aspects of crime against business. There is consensus that the steering group has been an effective governance device and has provided good levels of support in general and insights for BCRC concerning the impact of crime against business in particular. This group, together with the support provided by the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire, has contributed to raising the profile of BCRC within South Yorkshire.

Spend

3.7. Yorkshire Forward has contributed £1,385,000 towards operational costs, whilst Objective One has funded the remainder of £475,000. BCRC’s spend to March 2009 was £1,368,086

Outputs against Targets

3.8 BCRC has generated an outstanding volume of outputs against the each of the set targets. A summary of the outputs are presented in the following table. Key achievements to date (March 09) include:

- Over 450 permanent fulltime jobs created and safeguarded
- Over 660 businesses supported with consultancy
- Over 520 development sessions to enhance skills within businesses
- Over £300,000 of private sector investment made.

Output/Result Area	Project Total Target Dec. 2009	Year 1 07-08 Targets	Year 1 07-08 Actuals	Year 2 08-09 Targets	Totals Achieved by March 2009
Number of Jobs Created/ Safeguarded <i>Permanent full time</i>	115	50	282	40	457
Number of businesses supported <i>Min 2 hours consultancy support</i>	750	235	378	400	661
Number of skills development <i>Min 6 hours training</i>	250	50	289	150	529
Private sector investment @ 40%	£220,000	£147,000	£160,130	£156,892	£317,022

Section 4: Major Activities and Impact

Introduction

4.1 As outlined previously (2.4), BCRC was established as a specialist business support service to reduce crime against business through the adoption of ICT and other solutions and thereby to contribute to the economic regeneration of South Yorkshire.

4.2 This section focuses on the major activities of BCRC. Summary background information is provided together with additionality, which has been identified from the feedback provided through stakeholder consultations. In this context, additionality is that which would not have happened at all (pure additionality), to the same extent (scale additionality) or as quickly (time additionality), if the initiative had not taken place. Two brief case studies which illustrate the impact of BCRC are included in this section

Business Support Service and Security Grants

4.3 The BCRC advisory team of five staff have provided a minimum of two hours individual advice and support for 661 businesses in South Yorkshire to date (March 2009). The feedback from consultations has been unanimous in relation to the positive impact of working with BCRC.

4.4 Evidence from the SMEs supported indicates that BCRC has played a pivotal role in reducing the impact of crime against business. In particular, awareness has been raised about perimeter and building security. This view has been reflected by a number of businesses

'The BCRC has had a very positive effect on the way we looked at security. We knew a fence needed to be erected but we didn't really think about the vulnerable front door'

Corton-Bashforth Screenprint Ltd

The impact of BCRC as an impetus to undertake remedial work is also highlighted. One SME indicated that before advice and support from BCRC they had experienced 10 criminal incidents.

'We are more aware of the risk and more aware of how to stop crimes from happening. We also became aware that our CCTV system was out of date... now crime has completely stopped against us'

Dennis Riley Metal Treatment Ltd

4.5 The strong endorsement of BCRC's very helpful advice and guidance was also reflected in relation to ICT security solutions. Prior to BCRC's involvement, many SME businesses in South Yorkshire did not use secure ICT in their businesses. This has been successfully addressed through the advisory work of BCRC. Comments by two stakeholders reflect the views of the majority.

'We are much more aware of ICT security and solutions since the visit. All of our ICT equipment is now locked down'

Mailboxes Etc Ltd

'Anti virus/spyware in now installed on equipment'
WA Billing

4.6 BCRC has provided support grants for crime prevention work. The minimum grant is £100 and the maximum £7,500. These are in the ratio of 60% BCRC grant and 40% SME contribution. The grant combined with the support and advice from BCRC has proved a beneficial impetus for many SMEs to install and enhance existing security measures.

Additionality

4.7 From a regeneration perspective, feedback has indicated that BCRC's intervention has helped to instil greater confidence in and influence on the development of the SMEs, so that jobs were both safeguarded and created and the businesses contributed to economic development in the area. Overall, 457 full time permanent full time jobs have been safeguarded and created. This is almost four times the target number and this has been achieved in a much shorter time span than the target date. A recent example of the successful impact of BCRC has been that new contracts have been won by Sant Plating Ltd who had previously experienced high value theft on a number of occasions.

'Security advice, funding and subsequent measures have been instrumental in gaining new business. Specific new contracts have been won on the basis of a secure facility. In addition the business has invested in a new automated line to increase productivity and keep work from going to China. In addition, security was such an issue; the business may have relocated instead of investing in the area.'

Sant Plating

4.8 Similar comments which credit BCRC with accelerating and/or securing business development and economic regeneration as a direct result of BCRC's intervention include,

'Sales safeguarded of £5,000,000 and 15 jobs safeguarded'
Hi Tech Special Steels

'Enabled to carry on the business ...and given peace of mind'
Intoprint

'£120,000 of sales and 3 jobs safeguarded'
Dennis Riley Metal Treatments Ltd

4.9 The security grants provided by BCRC, have been a catalyst for SMEs to invest in their own security, with the majority of SMEs contributing well over the matched funding required with some investing large amounts of money.

'In addition to the funding, we invested about £7,000 in extra cameras and we will be looking to expand the security systems later in the year.'
Polydon

'We have fitted extra security cameras since the project investing a further £3,000'
Specialised Aerosols Co Ltd

'We have put in £4,000 extra investment in security measures over and above the grant'.

Earlsmere ID Systems Ltd

'We received a grant of £3,900 and spent £18,600 over and above that'.

Farmstar

4.10 An additional positive aspect of the influence of BCRC has been the multiplier factor that all of the SMEs in the sample indicated that they have used local businesses to carry out security work, thus further enhancing beneficial economic impact in the South Yorkshire region.

4.11 Brief case studies follow of two SMEs who have participated in the project and which illustrate the positive impact of BCRC's advice and support

- **CS Surveying and Architectural Design Ltd**

This is a new company that has grown to an eight-strong workforce in three years. It has comprehensively improved the security measures at its Dinnington headquarters, aided by a £3,900 grant from the BCRC. External roller shutters, a sophisticated alarm system and extensive CCTV coverage have been installed under the scheme.

CS Surveying and Architectural Design Ltd has grown turnover 400% year on year and last year handled projects totalling £35m. Managing Director John Cawkwell-Stansfield, stated,

"We handle a wide range of projects, from small-scale domestic developments to large commercial and public sector schemes with occasional overseas schemes. As a multi-disciplinary practice of Chartered Architects and Chartered Surveyors we have to be at the forefront of building pathology, design and procurement and be aware of all local, regional and national developments and strategies on all types of buildings, businesses and construction, including security and crime reduction initiatives. Naturally, many of our projects include built-in security measures and we are well aware of the damage business crime can cause. Accordingly, we have been able to adopt a belt and braces approach to total security, thanks to the grant. We have been so impressed with the work of the BCRC that, as Chairman of the Rotherham Construction Forum, operating within the Chamber of Commerce, we are co-operating to positively advocate and further promote its activities."

- **Farmstar : Agricultural Machinery**

Farmstar, a leading Doncaster based agricultural machinery company is a recipient of a £3,900 security grant from the BCRC. A sophisticated lighting system and advanced CCTV surveillance circuit has been installed at the company's Marr headquarters and depot near Doncaster. A contribution of £18,000 has been made by the company and additional costs have been contained by some of the heavy duty fabrication being carried out by the company's own engineers.

Farmstar director Mark Benn commented:

*“This year, we’ve had a spate of thefts and attempted crimes, which led us to consider moving our headquarters out of the area with the resulting loss of local employment. However, with the grant and our own investment and efforts, we are looking forward to a period of secure business and we now feel confident in continuing to manage affairs from Marr. In fact, we’re now adding a further purpose-built branch in Nottinghamshire to trade alongside our other depots in Brigg and Market Weighton.”*³

BCRC adviser Ian Smith commented:

“All our grants are important and in this case, doubly so, in that it has persuaded a successful company to continue trading in the area.”

Conferences and Events

4.12 BCRC has engaged in and hosted a number of conferences and events to raise awareness of the services they provide. These include: a free one day seminar in February 2008, ‘Tackling Cyber Crime for Small Businesses’ and the launch of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Business Crime Forum at Doncaster Racecourse in March 2008. In August 2008, BCRC held ‘Supporting e-Crime Prevention’, in Sheffield, which aimed to help SMEs operate more securely. Also, BCRC exhibited at the Business Yorkshire event in October held at Doncaster Racecourse whilst in November 2008 BCRC hosted a free event, How to Trade Online Safely, Securely and Legally. Overall, the feedback from participants in the events has been overwhelmingly positive both in relation to the organisation of the events and their specific content.

4.13 Provision of information about crime hotspots, trends, prevention strategies and links to professional support organisations facilitated by BCRC have been very favourably received by SMEs. This is particularly important given that increasing numbers of businesses are looking to diversify in relation to on line trade. At the ‘How to Trade Online Safely, Securely and Legally’ event at which the Right Honourable Alun Michael MP and Max Sahota, Assistant Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police gave keynote presentations, the views of a number of delegates was reflected in the following delegate’s comment,

‘A very good selection of speakers covering a wide range perspective, taking some very useful information away which would not have been found in any other way’

Additionality

4.14 Without doubt, both the profile of BCRC has been raised generally and the publicity created by such events has helped to generate more enquiries about the services provided by BCRC specifically. The Regional Business Crime Forum was attended by both the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Meredydd Hughes and the Minister for the Yorkshire and Humber region Rosie Winterton MP, who told the delegates,

'I want to see this region as a safe place to do business and continuing to attract inward investment. Business crime has a detrimental effect on economic development and growth'

4.15 Engaging with SMEs and encouraging networking is perhaps one of BCRC's key achievements. BCRC have also been flexible in meeting the needs of SMEs by establishing specific forums and groups to explore strategies to combat particular types of crime affecting certain SMEs. The Metal Theft Forum is a prime example of this. Chief Inspector David Fortune highlighted both the adverse impact of both crime and the importance of effective networks,

' Dealing with the aftermath of business crime adds significant costs to the running of a company and it's important that businesses have access to specialist advice and networks to help them to learn how to minimise the risks'

Skills Training Seminars, Website and Best Practice

4.16 Developing the awareness and skills of SMEs, particularly in relation to both the adoption and increased use of ICT within business has been very well received. Stakeholders have indicated that the range of resources including best practice guides developed by BCRC have proved very helpful.

4.17 Very positive feedback was also received generally from participants who attended the training seminar on Cyber Crime which had a focus of helping businesses operate their computer systems more securely. The specific session by Ed Gibson, the Chief Security Advisor for Microsoft, was described as outstanding in delegate feedback. He told delegates that,

'Despite the mutating threats of cyber attacks, online extortion or spam, a well structured security strategy backed by commitment and understanding can ensure that risks are managed.'

4.18 Many delegates indicated that they felt more confident and much better informed as a result of the seminar and such confidence does impact positively on business growth. Jim Farmery, Head of Innovation at Yorkshire Forward commented,

'If the regional economy and regional business are to continue to grow, they need to be making the best possible use of ICT. However they will only do this if they understand how to manage and reduce the risk of cyber crime which is well publicised and daunting to IT users.'

4.19 A dedicated BCRC website was established at the start of the project which includes links to e-Crime Guides, Metals Theft, Newsletters, Security Planning Downloads and a One Stop Shop links to other Professional Support Organisations. The website has been very well used with 15,399 copies of the various e-Guides being downloaded at the time of writing.③

Additionality

4.20 *'BCRC asked us what we needed'*.

This statement reflects the positive view of many consultee stakeholders regarding opportunities provided by BCRC for SMEs to work with both the Business Advisor team and each other to influence the content of best practice guides. A number of stakeholders commented that the strategy to involve a wide range of SMEs as frequently as possible in development work is vital so that both BCRC and SMEs have an up to the date view of changing challenges for businesses in the South Yorkshire area which can then be addressed.

4.21 The plan to produce crime prevention guides which cater for users with different levels of ICT skills led to BCRC being awarded additional funding to tackle e-crime through the Cyber Security Knowledge Transfer Network. This additional funding enabled the development and production of both a booklet 'e-Crime: What Your Business Needs to Know' along with eight threat specific leaflets dealing with e-Crime prevention. This work has continued to raise the profile of BCRC and thereby publicise its function.

4.22 BCRC finished runner up in the Best Security Initiative Award category organised by Nominet Best Practice Challenge 2008. This award recognises organisations or individuals that make the internet more secure and accessible to all users. This is clearly a very significant achievement after such a short period of operation and is testimony to the hard work and commitment of the BCRC team.

Summary

4.23 When BRCR was established in 2007, it was tasked with reducing the impact of crime on SMEs in South Yorkshire. This was the first time a dedicated organisation had been set up to advise and support business. Stakeholders have provided much testimony regarding the success and very beneficial impact of the work of BCRC. In consequence this has raised business confidence and jobs have been both safeguarded and created.

4.24 The next section identifies both the factors which have led to the success of the project and summarises the strategic added value of the project.

Section 5: Success Factors and Challenges

Introduction

5.1 This section focuses on the factors which have contributed both to the success of and the challenges for BCRC. The overwhelming finding from a broad spectrum of stakeholders is that the BCRC project has not only provided support for SMEs but has also been a catalyst for tangible services which would neither have taken place to the same extent nor been coordinated in a cohesive manner if the project had not taken place. Whilst there have been challenges, the consensus is that the establishment of BCRC has been extremely positive.

Clarity of Purpose

5.2 One major factor in the success of BCRC was that from the outset BCRC had a clearly defined role which was not duplicated by any other provider. Key stakeholders including PUAC, Yorkshire Forward, Objective 1, South Yorkshire Police, Chambers of Commerce in South Yorkshire, Business Link and representatives from business all engaged in consultations regarding the concept and the role of BCRC. There was agreement that BCRC should have a remit of crime reduction with a special focus on e-crime in relation to SMEs and that its work should be a key influence both in safeguarding and building economic regeneration in South Yorkshire. The fact that the role and remit was clearly defined by consensus helped to ensure that the BCRC initiative would not duplicate the work of other agencies, rather it would work along side and with such established agencies.

5.3 Clear communication about the BCRC initiative through a range of media including a high profile launch with the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Meredydd Hughes and former Home Secretary David Blunkett, undoubtedly helped the establishment of BCRC. The clarity of purpose is also likely to have contributed to their very significant positive impact in a comparatively short period of time and thereby not only meeting but exceeding almost all of the specified outputs almost a year in advance of the target dates.

5.4 A further factor key to the success of the BCRC was that the BCRC model was tested rigorously through ongoing review and evaluation in the initial phase of the project. The feedback ensured that the initiative was tailored to meet the needs of the stakeholders and was 'Fit for Purpose'.

Building Consensus within BCRC

5.5 One challenge for the senior management team of the newly created BCRC was to build confidence and consensus within BCRC. There is some evidence that this did not occur initially as quickly as might have been hoped for. As highlighted in Section 3 (Structure), in the first few months of the project there was quite a high turnover of staff and both senior managers for the project moved on. As the whole team of staff were new in post within a few weeks of each other, role ambiguity is very likely to have had an impact on the team.

5.6 This challenge was met with a review of the structure and the appointment of a single senior manager as Head of Unit. Since this appointment, the BCRC has not only had a stable team but also the Head of

Unit has worked with colleagues successfully to build confidence in the team and the services they can offer. Each Business Advisor now leads on a particular project in addition to providing advice and support for SMEs.

5.7 The teamwork of the BCRC unit generally and the advisors in particular has been a major factor in the success of BCRC's work. The advisors have expertise in IT, banking sector fraud and the police service and they have indicated that such a mix of expertise seems to work particularly well as the team are able to share this and provide excellent support for each other. One of the advisors summed this up as,

"The cohesion of the team is our star product"

Partnership Working

5.8 Evidence from the consultations has confirmed very successful partnership working. This includes:

- Strategic Partnerships: Data sharing agreements across organisation boundaries were set up with South Yorkshire Police and the Chambers of Commerce. In addition, the business advisors were very well supported by Business Link in the first year of the project and BCRC advisors were given access to the Business Link client management system, *Captivia*.
- Location Partnerships: BCRC Business Advisors are based within Chambers of Commerce in Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley and Doncaster. A major strand of activity has focussed on establishing good relationships with colleagues in the Chambers of Commerce where the advisors are based. Feedback has indicated that solid positive links have been formed and consolidated during the project. A value added aspect of this relationship is that the Business Advisors have proved to be a valuable resource and source of expertise for the South Yorkshire Chambers of Commerce and other collaborative agencies to utilise. The advisors have hosted and participated in a range of business networking meetings and been the focus for specialist forum meetings which have proved very successful, as one of the advisors commented,

"We are at the heart of where business congregates"

- Project Partnerships: BCRC is a single point of contact for the different elements of the project and for SMEs, thus providing a common focus and continuity. A number of activities have taken place with South Yorkshire Police and feedback indicates that the relationships with their Crime Reduction Officers have been particularly productive for BCRC.
- Security Grant Partnership: Matched funding provided by SMEs related to security grants from BCRC has been very successful as discussed previously (4.6) However, as the project has continued there have been some SMEs who have not been able to take advantage of a security grant, as the grant funding has been exhausted. Although these SMEs have still commented positively

about the advice and support provided by BCRC, they also indicated that the lack of security grants had been disappointing.

5.9 The partnerships and collaboration has enabled the advisors to build up a wealth of knowledge about business in the South Yorkshire generally and trends in crime against business in the area in particular. The various dimensions of partnership working arrangements have contributed positively to both the cohesiveness and consolidation of the role of BCRC.

Developing Relationships with Businesses

5.10 This activity is the essence of the BCRC and has been key to its success. Business contacts were initially generated through police data in respect of those companies who have experienced crime, whilst the contacts for preventative work have come from Chamber of Commerce, Business Link data, direct contact and word of mouth. Over the period of the project, referrals have been made by an increasingly wide range of individuals including self referrals.

5.11 Stakeholders have indicated that BCRC has employed a client focussed approach, once contact has been made the Business Advisors have communicated regularly to advise and support the business. This has clearly facilitated solid relationships with clients and has created confidence in their advisor. The flexibility and responsiveness of all of the Business Advisors to the need of clients has been particularly highlighted in feedback. Increasingly BCRC is being requested as a 'business partner' by companies who service SMEs. This is particularly significant for the long term sustainability of BCRC in South Yorkshire.

5.12 Evidence from stakeholders indicates that the location of the Business Advisors in the boroughs of Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham and the City of Sheffield has been a most productive strategy. It has enabled the advisors to learn first hand about the concerns of businesses who have both already experienced crime and who may be future victims. The view of one of the advisors that "*all our talents are in working with and supporting clients*" would appear to be the foundation of BCRC's success.

Strategic Added Value

5.13 The descriptor Strategic Added Value (SAV) is used to refer to the non quantifiable or qualitative benefits of publicly funded interventions.

5.14 There are five recognised elements of SAV. Although discussion of aspects of SAV has taken place in Section 4, the evidence against each element is brought together in summary in this section.

Strategic Leadership and Catalyst

5.15 The achievement that has greatest significance perhaps is that the establishment of BCRC made a major contribution to the thinking about crime against business, its profile and impact. BCRC has raised awareness with stakeholders of opportunities and strategies to combat crime in a cohesive way. Conferences, exhibitions, forums and network meetings together with the individual support provided for SME's has marshalled common interests in combating crime and accelerated the adoption of solutions which have had

a positive impact on the development of businesses including a major increase in sales and both the safeguarding and creation of jobs. Business confidence is generated which ultimately can contribute to a more buoyant economy and ultimately the regeneration of South Yorkshire communities.

'BCRC is a ground breaking initiative'

Chief Constable of South Yorkshire

'BCRC's work has persuaded us, a successful company to continue trading in the area on a secure basis'

Farmstar

Strategic Influence

5.16 BCRC has been pivotal in creating and consolidating partnership working with stakeholders in South Yorkshire, which has benefited individual SMEs, agencies and the sub region as a whole. They have fulfilled an enabler role encouraging stakeholders to develop common objectives in the implementation of strategies to reduce the adverse impact of crime. BCRC have also fulfilled an innovatory role in actively encouraging the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Business Crime Forum with theme groups to tackle specific crime challenges and the development of the e-crime prevention guides with and for SMEs.

'We are much more aware of e-crime and have learned a great deal from working with BCRC and others'

Polydon

Leverage and Deadweight

5.17 A key SAV achievement of BCRC is that, as at March 2009, they had secured the investment of £317,022 from SMEs over and above the 40% security grant matched funding. This actual investment together with the commitment to invest in South Yorkshire in the longer term and the multiplier effect of using local companies for security provision reinforces the impact of the strategic leadership and influence BCRC has had during the two years of the project. In respect of the 'dead weight factor' which occurs when an organisation would have invested in the same level or type of provision regardless of BCRC, all of the consulted sample indicated that they would not have taken these measures and that BCRC had been a key catalyst in the process.

'Last year we had a spate of thefts and attempted crimes, which led us to consider moving our headquarters out of the area with the resulting loss of local employment. However, with the grant and our own major investment and efforts we now feel confident to manage our affairs from Marr'

Farmstar

Synergy and Improving Intelligence

5.18 Information exchange, knowledge transfer, skills development and enhancement between stakeholders has certainly been greatly improved through the work of BCRC. A total of 630 delegates and stakeholders have participated in one or more of these activities. The project has been a unique 'one stop shop' for crime reduction and has thus provided economies of scale

and beneficial scaling up of activities for SMEs in South Yorkshire. Perhaps of greater significance is that the synergy has created an empowerment culture amongst many of the SMEs with the result that they are themselves sharing intelligence and urging other SMEs to join the initiative to combat crime against business.

Engagement

5.19 Effective stakeholder engagement has been paramount to the success enjoyed by BCRC and it has been created through the excellent teamwork of the project team. The appointment of the Head of Unit has been instrumental in consolidating a team approach and synergy has been created which is demonstrated through the very high outputs achieved, the effective relationships in place with SMEs and agencies and the very positive feedback from stakeholders about every aspect of BCRC's role, influence and impact. BCRC has provided according to one businessman,

"A much needed focus to discuss business crime and gain advice on how to take preventative action. At last it seems someone is taking notice of us"

Summary

5.20 BCRC made a good start despite some initial staffing changes and has grown from strength to strength during the two years it has been operational. Key to its success has been a clear concept, purpose and profile. Consensus has been built both within BCRC itself and with SMEs and other stakeholders resulting in engaged and empowered SMEs who have been unanimous in their positive responses to the BCRC project.

5.22 BCRC has generated a significant amount of scale, time and pure additionality through their activities together with a substantial amount of Strategic Added Value. The very positive evaluation findings may appear positively biased, however, this highlights that there was a major need for an cohesive initiative of this type to tackle crime against business .

'While independent campaigns have made some progress against business crime, this is a massive collective initiative to put crime out of business in the region. Make no mistake; it is vital that we work collectively to reduce the impact of crime on economic growth and development.'

David Ransom (CEO of PUAC)

Section 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

6.1 The consultations with stakeholders resulted in a clear concept, role and remit for BCRC. This clarity has contributed to the success of BCRC, enabling it to develop its role and remit effectively from the outset.

6.2 The concept and creation of BCRC was a timely and ambitious initiative. The increasingly adverse impact of crime on SMEs in the South Yorkshire area necessitated a bold and creative approach.

6.3 The structures set in place to establish the project, including accommodation, data sharing agreements the Steering Group and the revised staffing structure with a Head of Unit, have proved very effective. This change along with the other structures has ensured that the BCRC model is 'fit for purpose'. The structures have enabled BCRC to work successfully on a range of crime reduction initiatives across South Yorkshire.

6.4 The outputs which have exceeded the set targets provide very clear evidence of significant tangible impact of BCRC in South Yorkshire. BCRC has supported 661 companies, helped to create and safeguard 457 jobs, provided 529 skills building opportunities with a minimum of 6 hours training and secured £317,022 of private sector investment. This progress in just two years is very considerable, particularly in the current economic climate.

6.5 In relation to Strategic Added Value, BCRC has been strong in each element. Strategic leadership, acting as a catalyst and exerting strategic influence have been very strong areas of performance. BCRC has taken forward the issue of the adverse impact of crime against business and accelerated strategies to combat this.

6.6 BCRC has been pivotal in engagement; creating and consolidating partnership working and also fulfilling an enabler role with stakeholders in South Yorkshire, which has benefited individual SMEs, agencies and the sub region as a whole.

6.7 Synergy creation has been an area where BCRC has also performed strongly and proactively through stakeholder consultation and involvement. There has been a move to towards a coherent approach to combat business crime in South Yorkshire and a sense that BCRC has been the key force in this.

6.8 Without the existence of BCRC, much of what has been delivered would not have taken place to the same extent (scale additionality), as quickly (time additionality) or indeed at all (pure additionality).The value which BCRC has added through the initiative activities has been outstanding.

6.9 In summary, the existence of BCRC has proved pivotal in the fight against business crime for SMEs and the benefits secured as a consequence have helped secure both jobs and businesses and thereby support the economic regeneration agenda in South Yorkshire.

Recommendations

6.10 The evaluation has two areas of focus; lessons learned from the initiative and the way forward for the project.

Lessons Learned

6.11 Clarity of purpose regarding its role and remit and clear communication about the BCRC initiative have contributed to their very significant positive impact in a comparatively short period of time. These aspects of organisational best practice should be maintained in any future developments of the initiative.

6.12 The BCRC model was tested rigorously through ongoing review and evaluation in the initial phase of the project. The feedback ensured that the initiative was tailored to meet the needs of the stakeholders and was continuously 'Fit for Purpose'. Testing of the model would need to be an essential element of any future expansion of the initiative.

6.13 The teamwork of the BCRC unit generally and the advisors in particular have been a major factor in the success of BCRC's work. The advisors have a mix of expertise seems to work particularly well as the team are able to share this and provide excellent support for each other. This blend of expertise should be maintained in any future appointments.

6.14 The creation of BCRC was a timely and much needed delivery vehicle for a cohesive approach to combat crime against SMEs. Most stakeholders however, have indicated that this is only the start and that there should be no complacency about future crime, particularly e-crime against business in South Yorkshire. BCRC has been a catalyst for change; the next challenge is to build on the foundations and to sustain the impetus which has been created by the project.

6.15 The engagement of SMEs and partnership working with stakeholders has been a key strategy for the ongoing impetus of action against business crime. The evidence from stakeholders has demonstrated a compelling need for strategic planning and action dedicated to working with business and other agencies to provide a cohesive way forward to work with the business community and other stakeholders to reduce business crime and thereby support the economic regeneration agenda in South Yorkshire. The momentum needs to be maintained and enhanced. Without this, regeneration is likely to be disrupted and slowed, with some businesses almost inevitably ceasing to trade, particularly in the current economic climate.

6.16 The advice and support services provided for business and the matched grant funding have both been very successful and have the potential to become an integral element of the regeneration of South Yorkshire. BCRC has helped to identify and support SMEs to implement a variety of security measures to prevent crime and thus secure the inward investment in business and jobs in South Yorkshire. Currently the volume of business support being offered has been sustained, this work would be further enhanced were funding available to offer catalytic grants to all of the SMEs receiving business advice and support.

The Way Forward and Agenda for the Future

6.17 BCRC has proved to be a sound model not only to illuminate the adverse impact of crime against business on economic growth but also to develop and deliver robust strategies to reduce that impact in order to aid economic regeneration in line with the recommendations of Leitch (2006)⁴.

6.18 BCRC has been an effective catalyst for change and such a catalyst is crucial to changing attitudes to crime against business. In the comparatively short time that BCRC has been active it has made a major contribution to the thinking about business crime including e-crime. BCRC has provided a coherent strategy, leadership and generally acted as a pivotal and innovative force for change resulting in economic development in South Yorkshire.

6.19 Despite the efforts made by BCRC, there is clearly some way to go. Chris Graham of the Defence Group in Sheffield commented recently in the press,

“SMEs are the lifeblood of this country and are under more pressure than ever due to the recession.....we need to tackle crime against businesses which are often seen as victimless”⁵

6.20 The findings indicate that the BCRC model devised for the project has worked very successfully and suggest that this model could be replicated not only in the wider Yorkshire region but also expanded nationwide.

6.21 BCRC is ideally placed to both to lead on any future developments. The development agencies and other key stakeholders may need to reflect on what are the next steps for the continued economic regeneration of both South Yorkshire and the wider area and the part that BCRC can play in the agenda for the future.

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