

# RESEARCH PROPOSAL:

## Measurement tools to help prevent crime and get residents input at lynfield estates

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# RESEARCH PROPOSAL: Measurement Tools to Help Prevent Crime and Get Residents Input at Lynfield Estates

Crime is an ever present problem in modern society, affecting every country and city. The inner cities have always been a haven for crime due to poorly structured buildings, forgotten factories, old housings, and lack of funding to repair roads and schools. What this proposal research intends to do is to provide a strategy that will implement a tool that will give data to the UK local authority on the primary needs of local residents on crime reduction and prevention. The first steps are to successfully create and implement a community wide survey that asks the important questions to local residents. Firstly, the key issues and concerns will be identified that will help to counteract crime activity in Lynfield Estates. The survey will provide data that will be useful to the local authorities in securing changes in how to curb criminal behavior. Secondly, an administrative strategy will be provided, in order to factor out what questions to ask, whom to ask, and how to ask the community in hopes of cooperation and collaboration.

## Background

Starting in the late 1800's and vastly expanded throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, housing projects were the first to begin to accommodate the growing population in inner-city and heavily populated areas of major cities (Wikipedia 2012). Public or mass council housing was started to provide working class citizens with affordable rents and spacious living. Lynfield Estates like several others was first built in 1960's with the sole purpose of providing housing with better standards of living, varying income and a mixture of racial and economic backgrounds (Robbins 2012). The local

government went on to create high rise flats that housed hundreds of people in each building. The buildings were praised as a way to provide indoor bathrooms and modern amenities such as hot running water, private gardens, efficient planning and also they created a better environment. The tower buildings were meant to maintain the population within the cities, and be closer to the more employment opportunities (Stone 2003, p. 10).

As time has passed, housing projects such as Lynfield Estates have gone into decay. The local state has not been properly taking care of the structures and buildings. The majority of the buildings that were built before the 1960s apparently have no problems and still stay attractive. (Stone 2003, p.12). Due to the poor planning for the future with lack of accessibility to elderly and disabled tenants, and poor quality in building leading to bad conditions of the water supply and reliability of homes, the once popular housing structures are now symbols of social decay. The open space of the buildings has created a breeding ground for drug and gang activity leading to an increase in crime activity. Lynfield Estates has seen a rise in crime over the decades, with most tenants learning to deal or learning to live in fear.

Lynfield Estates like so many other early housing projects were not meant to continue development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, however due to the local government turning a blind eye to the problems in the inner city, the housing projects have remained a shell of what they were intentionally meant to be (Robbins 2012). Lynfield Estates currently houses over 1500 residents, with many of them low income, under or unemployed, and low or uneducated. The inner cities of the UK are no different than the inner cities from around the world in that they reflect the state of less privileged society. Although many criminals circumvent inner city housings such as Lynfield, they are home to many citizens that are law abiding and are trying to raise their families. It is important for the research to be done to improve not only the residents living conditions from the decrepit buildings, but to prevent crime

in Lynfield Estates.

## Literature Review

With the help of the literature on history of public housing in UK, reports on crime prevention in the inner city and ways to help implement a strategy to survey the residents can be created. With the use of selective literature such as, reports from authorities on measuring police and community performance from their usage of web-based surveys. This paper is able to instruct a plan to acquire data from residents of Lynfield Estates. Take the following report from Chicago, USA Police Department that like the research proposal has successfully implemented a survey among the community to ask for helpful inputs and recommendations for improvement of the betterment of the community and local police authority (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Graziano, Stephens 2008). Authorities in Chicago, USA, created a joint information technology project with the University of Illinois and the community called the Chicago Internet Project.

The Chicago Internet Project was first thought about because of the need of the Chicago Police Department to effectively communicate with the residents. The surrounding communities were experiencing an increase in crime activities. The police efforts used before in communities to help curb activities, such as using aggressive tactics to obtain information by setting up hotspots around the communities had created mistrust within communities, especially in inner-city and minority based communities (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Graziano, Stephens 2008, p. 4). The police felt that they needed to reevaluate their tactics while realizing police accountability to not only please the public but to be held accountable for police behavior in the communities. The police also believed that the community residents also needed to take accountability for public safety and crime

prevention. Thus the Chicago Internet Project , was based on the premise that, “while much has been done under the community policing and problem-oriented policing models, progress in reforming police organizations and communities has been restricted by failure to explore new measures of success and new methods of accountability that are grounded in the community” (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Graziano, Stephens 2008, p.5).

The push came for more innovative measures in measuring community concerns and the priorities of the local residents in order to come up with strategies to help get community and police engagement in crime prevention. The report asked the same questions as the proposal, such as, “How are the police responding to residents as victims, witnesses, suspects, complainants, callers, and concerned citizens? And how do residents respond to the police?” (Rosenbaum, Schuck, Graziano, Stephens 2008, p. 5). Since more organizations and government entities are moving towards technology based information it was important to develop a measurement tool that reflects the changing trend. However the current surveys and programs to receive input from the citizens were obsolete in correctly measuring accountability, community concerns, or used towards strategically mapping out a plan for crime prevention. This literature helps to give recommendations on the key questions on how to obtain the sample population for the survey, the method of creating a diverse sample population, how the survey will be administered to the population, and finally how the answers would be strategized in a plan.

## **Construction of Survey**

When constructing a successful measurement tool, the first step is to determine the sample population and methods of recruiting the sample population. The sample population consists of residents from Lynfield Estates.



In order to get the sample population, incentives were given to the residents in order to gain participation. Incentives were such as gift cards on bus and cab fare, gift cards on food and free meals at places where the survey was set up. Sample population consisted of the residents from different age groups including from the youngest 13 years to the oldest age that was recorded at 81 year, different racial backgrounds that included, White, Latino, Asian, Black and other nationalities of immigrants. In total the sample population was around 500 out of the 1550 residents that live at Lynfield Estates.

The survey is based on the Chicago Internet Project, which created a web-based community wide survey used as a measurement tool to scope the residents' concerns and priorities, as well as collect useful data for the local authorities. Just as the literature uses, so does this survey. The survey is conducted in the Lynfield Estates' common area, where individual 25 computers lined up against the walls that are connected to the local authorities' server to collect information. The best method in administering the survey was in an open meeting format where community engagement is encouraged between residents and local authorities. Each resident answers the list of questions that were listed, a mixture of demographic information such as, age, race and number of years at the estate. Questions regarding attitudes toward police interactions, levels of crimes, security issues, building issues and what could be improved on. There were used open ended answers, number scale systems and multiple choice formats. The data of the questions answered, is used to measure police responsiveness and behavior, crime activity and how it is affecting residents, and finally to find out ways that can be strategized to for crime prevention. The data was collected and sorted into priorities, areas of improvement, information on criminals and crimes in the community, and police behavior.

The survey was not without errors and problems specifically in knowing how

to set up the survey to ensure residents' concerns will be heard. The problem is to achieve the residents' eagerness to participate and give honest answers in the survey. Errors on survey were made if not enough attention was given for residents to voice the priorities and changes they want to see from the local authorities and within their community. The ethical concerns of police presenting findings at open meetings on police behavior are the lack of police responsiveness or the levels of interactions within the community. However, even with these problems and concerns, the web-based survey proved to be the best method with innovatively administering a measurement tools to collect useful data from the residents to give to the local authorities in efforts to improve Lynfield Estates.

## **Questionnaire**

- 1)** Please rate how serious you feel the level of crime is at Lynfield Estates.
  - ☐ Very Serious
  - ☐ Somewhat Serious
  - ☐ Serious
  - ☐ Not Too Serious
  - ☐ Not At All Serious
  
- 2)** In the past two years would you say the level of crime at Lynfield Estates?
  - ☐ Increased
  - ☐ Stayed About the Same
  - ☐ Decreased
  
- 3)** What would you say the level of the local police protection at Lynfield Estates is in the past two years?
  - ☐ Increased

- ☐ Stayed About the Same
- ☐ Decreased

**4)** How much Police patrol would you feel the community needs?

- ☐ More Police Patrols
- ☐ About the Same Number of Police Patrols
- ☐ Less Police Patrols

**5)** Do you feel the local police respond fast when a crime has occurred?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't Know

**6)** Do you think the community needs a neighborhood crime watch?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**7)** How safe do you feel at Lynfield Estates?

- ☐ Very Unsafe
- ☐ Unsafe
- ☐ Safe
- ☐ Very Safe

**8)** Have you been a victim of crime at Lynfield Estates?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**9)** Have you purchased a gun for protection?



- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**10)** Do you feel protection of the police at Lynfield Estates?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**11)** How safe do you feel going out at night?

- ☐ Very Unsafe
- ☐ Unsafe
- ☐ Safe
- ☐ Very Safe

**12)** Please rank what you feel are the most important problems in the community with 1 being Least likely to cause crime and 5 being Most likely to cause crime.

	1	2	3	4	5
Unemployment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poverty	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Drugs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lenient Sentencing of Criminals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of Supervision of Minors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**13)** Who do you feel is doing the crimes in the community?

- ☐ Juveniles
- ☐ Adults
- ☐ About the same

**14)** What type of crime do you feel is more of a problem in your community?

- ☐ Property Crimes
- ☐ Violent Crimes
- ☐ About the Same

**15)** Please rank the following measures that can be used to reduce crime based on how effective you feel each would be with 1 being least effective and 5 being most effective at reducing crime.

	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing Police Patrols	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Legalizing Drugs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stronger Prosecution and Sentencing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supervised Activities for Juveniles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enforced Curfew for Juveniles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**16)** What do you feel is the main source of crime at Lynfield Estates?

**17)** What, if anything, do you feel could be done to decrease the crime?

**18)** What is your age?

- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-40
- ☐ 40-55
- ☐ 56-or older

**19)** Are you male or female?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**20)** What is your race?

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Latino
- ☐ other

## Reference List