

Shops to shut doors on thieves in crime-fighting partnership

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Shoplifters and troublemakers who loiter around stores in and around Bath could soon find themselves banned from more than 125 shops.

Business owners, police and council officers are forming a united front in a drive to reduce cases of anti-social behaviour in the city's shops.

The Exclusion Notice Scheme has been launched by Bath and District Business Crime Reduction Partnership, which works closely with Bath and North East Somerset Council and the police.

Under the initiative, unwanted shoppers will be barred from all the partnership's stores for a year.

Those firms which have signed up to the scheme are identified by a window sticker, which includes the logos of both the council and Avon and Somerset police.

A total of 126 businesses in Bath and north east Somerset are now members of the partnership, which is targeting the most prolific shoplifters.

Cllr Vic Pritchard (Con, Chew Valley South), B&NES Council's cabinet member for community safety, said: "The successful growth of the partnership and expansion into the outer towns provides a strong core of active members who need the extra tools to ban the most troublesome shoplifters."

"I am pleased that the Exclusion Notice Scheme will help members address this problem and have already noticed the window stickers appearing in Bath city centre members' windows."

Dave Dixon, chairman of Bath and



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SHOPLIFTING BATTLE: front, Cllr Vic Pritchard with Sgt Richard Durnford, of the city centre beat, Dave Dixon, chairman of Bath and District Business Crime Reduction Partnership, and Silas Freeman, director of security firm Safe and Sound Ltd

PICTURE:
Kevin Fern

District Business Crime Reduction Partnership, said he hoped the move would lead to a drop in cases of shoplifting.

"The window sticker will clearly indicate just how many members there are in the partnership and act as a deterrent," he said.

"Offenders must realise they are not going to disturb the workings of a successful and thriving town and city centre by either shoplifting or cre-

ating trouble."

Sgt Geoff Cannon, of Bath police, voiced his support for the initiative.

"The police welcome initiatives to help manage the worst shoplifters," he said.

"We will continue to support the members of Bath and District Business Crime Reduction Partnership in gathering valuable information through the Exclusion Notice Scheme."

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