

Report To: Community Safety Executive

Date: 23rd March 2007

Report From: Roy Goulding ASB Unit Manager

Subject: Effectiveness of Anti-Social Behaviour Unit for stakeholders in Portsmouth.

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 To advise the Executive Member for Community Safety of the effectiveness of the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit for the stakeholders in Portsmouth.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Executive Member for Community Safety

- (i) Recognises the work of the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit
- (ii) Notes the positive impact and the value for money of the service

3. Background

3.1 The ASB Unit was formed in March 2003 as a result of recommendations made following Portsmouth City Councils Tackling Anti Social Behaviour Best Value Review.

3.2 The ASB Unit is a multiagency team and includes staff from Portsmouth City Council, Hampshire Constabulary, secondments from Preventing Youth Offending Project (PYOP) and Motiv8. The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit has grown from an initial team of eight employees to its current staff of fourteen.

3.3 The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit was initially a 2-year pilot project, though due to its success, the council mainstreamed funding of the service in April 2005.

3.4 The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and individual team members have been recognised by the Home Office and partner agencies for their positive impact on preventing and tackling anti social behaviour throughout its existence. Hampshire Constabulary awarded the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit Multi Agency Team of the Year and Penny Schofield (Solicitor) was awarded Multi Agency Individual of the Year in 2004. The Home Office awarded Portsmouth, Together Action Area Status and in January 2007 it became a Respect Area.

3.5 The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit uses a twin track approach to preventing and tackling anti social behaviour using both support and enforcement tools. Support is delivered by working with colleagues and partner agencies including PYOP, Motiv8, youth services and so on. To date the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit has been responsible for obtaining 200 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, over 90 Anti Social Behaviour Orders, 20 Crack House Closures and 30 Dispersal Orders.

4. Funding

- 4.1.1 The Directorate of Economy, Culture and Community Safety (DECCS) currently contributes £165,000 towards the ASB Unit. This funds 5 full time posts, the ASB Unit Manager, solicitor, public caseworker and administrator. There is also an element of office running costs within the £165,000. However there has been a reduction in this funding to £145,000 from April 2007 and this has led to the loss of full time Young Person Support Officer post for the team.
- 4.2 The Directorate funding also attracts additional contributions from colleagues, external agencies and the Home Office. Portsmouth City Council Housing contributes 4 full time posts including a manager, one senior and two other caseworkers. Hampshire Constabulary provides a police officer and civilian officer to work in the unit. The Home Office funds a legal assistant and Family Support Officer as part of Together Action Area status. The awarding of Respect Area status has led to an increase in Home Office Funding for 2007/08. This will include £225,237 for a Family Intervention Project and £50,000 to develop parenting programmes. A bid to obtain a further £125 000 has been submitted to the DfES to support this work.
- 4.3 It should be recognised that Portsmouth City Council funding to support the unit also encourages colleagues, external agencies and the Home Office to make a much larger commitment thus providing greater value for money.
- 4.4.1 It is difficult to measure in pure financial terms the cost-benefit analysis of the Anti Social Behaviour Unit's impact on reducing expenditure for stakeholders in Portsmouth but in the context of quality of life issues, it is 'priceless'. The earlier anti social behaviour can be tackled and stopped the greater the benefit to the community in terms of cost e.g. criminal damage to properties. The Anti Social Behaviour Unit and partners are able to ensure this happens and limit the need for enforcement actions. For example, of the 1252 C12's (police stop and account forms) issued in 2005/6, 732 first warning letters were sent which in turn led to 149 second warning letters being sent for a further incident and of those, 8 received Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. Ultimately it was necessary to apply for 3 ASBO's from an initial 1252 incidents of anti social behaviour. Therefore the vast majority of cases were stopped from re-offending at a much earlier stage saving costs in terms of finance and improving quality of life.
- 4.5 Preventing Youth Offending Project has undertaken a cost benefit analysis (see Appendix 1). The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit refers cases to the Preventing Youth Offending Project and carries out joint working with families and individuals.

5. ASBO Case Study

- 5.1 Case Study 1
Adult Street drinker in a busy shopping precinct extremely abusive to shoppers whilst he sat on a bench drinking alcohol. An ASBO was imposed prohibiting him from this area for two years. He immediately returned the same day the ASBO was imposed and started to drink alcohol. He was arrested brought straight back to the court and given a 6 week prison sentence. This order has now expired (2 year order) and he did not breach

again. This had a tremendous impact on those that were able to use the shopping precinct without having to face the torrent of abuse he would routinely use.

Case Study 2

Youth involved in serious offences on a housing estate. Involved threatening behaviour, car thefts and criminal damage. Obtained an Interim ASBO. During this period the individual obtained support and began to carry out youth work in the area and pursue the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme. A dramatic change around in behaviour occurred. Therefore when all parties agreed the ASBO full order hearing came about it and in particular the Chief Inspector that this would not be appropriate and the Interim was removed without the necessity of a full order. This again had a huge impact on residents within this location who had experienced anti social behaviour incidents.

Case Study 3

An individual operated a wheel-clamping firm. He clamped people on land on which he did not have permission to clamp and did not have the appropriate notices. He would block vehicles in and demand payment of a fine. He used intimidation and threats and there are horrendous statements from elderly and a disabled motorist describing how they were in fear of him and his actions. The police were unable to take action due to witnesses being intimidated against making formal statements and the fact that it was deemed a civil matter. Therefore an ASBO was obtained and publicised. This enabled the public to be aware of the case and many more witnesses came forward willing to give evidence against him. Following the ASBO and the great public interest, the police launched a full enquiry and they subsequently prosecuted him; he received a substantial prison sentence for blackmail. He has since been released from prison and has not continued with his business and is no longer a problem for the ASB Unit.

6. MORI Survey 2006

6.1 *Public perception of ASB and satisfaction with services.*

The public perception of anti social behaviour in Portsmouth is that 40% believe it to be a problem compared to 42% in the 2005 MORI survey.

81% of residents are satisfied with the area in which they reside.

65% of residents mention one other area within the city whereby they feel frightened or at risk of crime compared to 76% in 2004.

Residents are asked if they avoid going to certain places in the city due to fear of crime. The 2004 MORI survey highlighted a number of areas that resulted in targeted work to reduce the problem on these areas – reductions are as follows:

- Somerstown fallen from 40% to 37%
- Paulsgrove fallen from 20% to 13%
- Guildhall Walk entertainment area fallen from 13% to 8%
- Landport fallen from 10% to 7%

Buckland increased from 24% to 27% and a number of initiatives are taking place (such as Crime Reduction Environmental weeks) in this area to address these issues

7. Conclusion

7.1 Portsmouth City Council's Anti Social Behaviour Unit is recognised nationally for delivering good practice in its approach to preventing and tackling anti social behaviour. The Anti Social Behaviour Unit is unique in having a multi-agency team co-located together within the Community Safety Service. This has increased the ability to respond quickly to anti social behaviour problems thus having a positive impact on victims and witnesses.

7.2.1 The Anti Social Behaviour Unit attracts additional funding and Home Office support to pilot schemes to tackle anti-social behaviour. This has led to the Anti Social Behaviour Unit being short-listed for Beacon Status. If the unit gains Beacon Status it will attract additional funding that will be aimed at more long term approaches using education and parenting projects are undertaken. This will have a positive impact for the stakeholders of Portsmouth.

Signing Off The Report

Signed..... Date

Rachael Dalby, Head of Community Safety

Approval to The Recommendation(s)

The recommendation(s)s set out above were approved / approved as amended / deferred / rejected* by the Executive Member for Community Safety.

Signed Date

Councillor Paula Riches, Executive Member for Community Safety