

## Operation Moonshine: Tackling Youth Nuisance in Valley Park (Hampshire)

### Good Practice Description 2004 - Anti-Social Behaviour

#### Overview

Operation Moonshine carried out in part of Valley Park, Hampshire aimed to tackle rising levels of anti-social behaviour by local youths and to contribute to demand management on police time. It was identified early on in the project that alcohol was the major contributor to the ASB. The project involved a mix of police based enforcement measures, community based interventions, and the modification of the environment around offending hotspots. For current purposes, 'ASB crime' and 'ASB' relate to a mixture of criminal activities (criminal damage, assaults, etc) as well as non-criminal activities (gathering in intimidating crowds, noise disorder, minor public disorder).

#### *Objectives of the project*

The primary objective of the project was to reduce complaints and instances of anti-social behaviour (both criminal and sub criminal activity). A secondary one was to reduce demand (and consequently police overtime).

#### *Interventions implemented in the project*

Method	Principles	Involvement
1: <a href="#">Modification of carrier bags to identify the origins of alcohol purchase</a>	Reducing readiness to offend (removing supply of alcohol); deterring and incapacitating crime promoters (shopkeepers), mobilising preventers (parents); empowering preventers (police).	Police; retailers
2: <a href="#">Targeted High visibility police patrols</a>	Deterrence and discouragement; Reassurance; Removing offenders from crime situation/ dispersing groups of offenders	Police; Community wardens
3: <a href="#">ABCs were considered for persistent offenders</a>	General and specific deterrence and discouragement; Removing offender from crime situation; Cracking down on promoters (parents) and converting to preventers	Police; Local councils
4: <a href="#">Target hardening of a retail store to stop alcohol theft</a>	Perimeter/access security; Target hardening; Environmental design; Conversion of crime promoters to crime preventers	Police; Retailers.
5: <a href="#">Removing a flowerbed from in front of a row of shops</a>	Environmental design; Restricting resources for crime; Deflecting offenders from crime situation; Reassurance	Police; Retailers; Landowner
6: <a href="#">Community clean up of litter in local streets</a>	Reassurance; Deterrence; Motivating preventers	Community wardens; General Public
7: <a href="#">Youth shelter</a>	Removing offenders from crime situation and from alcohol; Reducing readiness to offend by meeting needs legitimately	Police; Local Authority; Crime Reduction (HO grant)
8: <a href="#">Mobile recreation unit</a>	Removing offender from the crime situation	Police; Local Authority
9: <a href="#">Arresting/Cautioning of ASB offenders</a>	Removing offenders from the crime situation; Giving offenders resources to avoid offending (education); Deterrence and discouragement; Mobilising preventers (parents)	Police; Parents; Local authority
10: <a href="#">Drop in centre for youths</a>	Removing offender from the crime situation	Police; Local authority
11: <a href="#">Healthy living centre for youths</a>	Removing offender from the crime situation; Reducing readiness to offend by meeting offenders' needs	Police; Local authority
12: <a href="#">A forest location as alternative place for youths to gather</a>	Removing offender from the crime situation; Rule setting; Reducing readiness to offend by meeting offenders' needs	Police; The Tree Conservation Volunteers Group
13: <a href="#">Disrupting a possible drugs market targeting youths</a>	Removing offender from the crime situation; Resources to avoid offending (drugs education)	Police; CJS

## *Involvement*

**Partnership** working centred around committee steering groups – involving the police, the local authority, the parish council, the local media, the local residents association and representatives from the local community and retailers. The meetings highlighted problems and discussed potential solutions.

**Mobilisation** of the public was achieved through the residents association newsletter, as well as the local newspapers. These reported progress of the project and aimed to reassure the public, and encourage reporting of incidents/crimes.

PRIME<sup>1</sup> (Problem Resolution In Multi agency Environments) is the Hampshire Constabulary term used to marry POP (Problem Oriented Policing) with the approaches adopted. It was hoped a working group not owned by one particular agency, would help promote agency co-operation, with each agency having a shared goal and interest in working together .

## *Impact – meeting the objectives*

There is both quantitative and anecdotal data that, as a result of the interventions in the targeted area (called here 'The Close'), offending was reduced there and in the wider Valley Park area.

- **ASB Incidents:** Following the interventions in The Close there were 75% fewer ASB incidents there (51 fewer cases in 15 months) than expected on the basis of past levels and background trends. Overall falls in Valley Park as a whole may partly be attributable to the spillover of the effects of action within The Close – a case of diffusion of benefit. Taking displacement/diffusion of benefit into account, **net** reductions in ASB incidents in the whole of Valley Park attributable to the project action were estimated at 44% (106 cases in 15 months).
- **Recorded crime in Valley Park fell from 74 offences** (covering mainly criminal damage, shoplifting, and burglary from a shop), in January-December 2002 to **53 offences** in the same period in 2003, equating to just under a **30% decrease** in these offences not considering background effects. Burglary and shoplifting were included in the analysis of ASB in this study, as these related to stealing alcohol.
- There is anecdotal evidence that police patrol time and overtime was reduced. It was noted that an expected migration of the residents away from the area as a result of increasing ASB had not occurred as a probable outcome from the interventions.

## **Project description – the 5Is**

### ***1. Intelligence***

#### **General context**

The Borough of Eastleigh is located in Hampshire, adjacent to the city of Southampton. The Census 2001 shows that the population of the Borough of Eastleigh was 116,169 (47,001 households), of which just under 3% are non-white; this compares with just under 10% nationally.

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<sup>1</sup> More information about the PRIME in Hampshire can be found on the Hampshire Constabulary website at <http://www.hampshire.police.uk/> [click on Policing Purpose > PRIME]

Unemployment within Eastleigh is 3.4% of the working age population, lower than the national average (5.1%).

Valley Park is a new ward, part of Field ward before May 2003. In indices of multiple deprivation in 2000, Field ward was within the 5% of wards *least* deprived (8012th/8414 wards). The population of Valley Park was 7,484 according to the 2001 Census of which just over 3 per cent were of Asian ethnic backgrounds, with a further 1 per cent from Chinese (and “Other”) ethnic backgrounds. Just over 1 per cent of the working age population was unemployed.

### **Evidence of the crime problem – sources of information and analysis**

The officers involved initially examined crime data for a sub-territory within Valley Park, called here The Close, between March and August 2002. It involved recorded crime (mainly criminal damage, shoplifting, commercial burglary) and what the force termed Crime and Disorder Act (CADA) incidents (mainly juvenile nuisance, minor public disorder and noise nuisance). The data (collected through a computerised crime reporting system) was mapped using the pin and map method. The public seemed reluctant to report ASB related crime, partly in the belief that the police were doing nothing to tackle it. Hence the crimes recorded could represent only a small percentage of actual ASB incidents..

Specific incidents were acts of drunken behaviour (not necessarily drunk and disorderly; involving loudness and substantial congregation of youths)<sup>2</sup>. Criminal offences examined were burglary of commercial premises, shoplifting, criminal damage, and drugs offences. Later in the project it emerged in a public meeting that a local parish counsellor had previously been inundated with people knocking on his door with demands for action against ASB in Valley Park, but he had no channel of recourse. The drop-in centre for youths was used as a location to hold a focus group to identify the needs of youths in the community

#### *The crime problem that the project aimed to tackle*

When baseline data was collected (March to August 2002), there were on average 30 anti-social behaviour complaints per month, 6 recorded (ASB related) crimes per month and 36 other crime and disorder act incidents (see above for description of CADA incidents). It was acknowledged that non-criminal acts perpetrated by youths had a negative impact on the community’s quality of life. The problem was not so much that particular people were being victimised, but more that the ASB group was persistently acting in a disorderly manner for the extended weekend (Thursday to Sunday evenings). Criminal damage was mainly around the Leisure centre (see Modus Operandi for a further discussion of targets of criminal damage).

#### *Offenders*

Juvenile offenders were boys and girls aged between about 12 and 18. They congregated in groups of up to 50 youths at any time around The Close (specifically targeting the convenience store, a primary school, the medical centre, the church and the community centre). Given that Valley Park was a very affluent area, it was suggested that the local offenders had an average disposable income of £10 at least a night and some were given £600 a month by their parents. This was used for both alcohol and to a lesser extent recreational drugs.

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<sup>2</sup> The Valley Park project team defined acts of disorder as “anything that you can think of that would impact on your quality of life without being a criminal offence”.

There was also a less affluent migrant ASB offender population from the surrounding areas (some from Southampton). These added to the already growing numbers of youths around the shop area. The migrant population was formally identified through arrest data.

### *Modus Operandi*

ASB within Valley Park was alcohol-fuelled. Groups of youths were drinking around the local shopping parade, which made them noisy and disorderly, leading in some cases to violence (particularly where local groups of youths interacted with others from outside the area).

Street items that obstructed or got in the way were damaged, with the majority of the damage in the Leisure Centre area: damage to windows, doors, the fabric of the basketball court (fire damage, gates broken off, hoops broken, nets pulled down). Missiles had been thrown at the roof of the building. The surrounding litter bins and dog mess bins had been set alight. Forty-seven trees in the area had been broken. The sight screens of the cricket pitch had been damaged and turned on their side. Motor vehicles had on two occasions been driven over the playing pitches making them unsuitable for playing on for several months. The inside of the Leisure Centre was relatively untouched.

A particular shop door was targeted by youths, as it was behind a broken roller shutter, which was repeatedly kicked in to allow theft of alcohol and food.

### **Wider crime problems**

There was evidence (based on stop and search of youths) of significant use of recreational drugs in the Valley Park area. Drugs were mainly cannabis (both herbal and resin) and to a lesser extent ecstasy (although there was no substantive evidence of ecstasy use). Groups aged 12 and above had been found to be persistent abusers of cannabis and alcohol; although this only affected a minority of the age group in Valley Park. When found in possession of recreational drugs such as cannabis, the most commonly used excuse was that offenders thought it had been legalised.

### **Significant consequences of the crime problem**

Public perceptions of safety had been severely diminished by the growing numbers of disorderly intoxicated youths the shopping area of Valley Park. The public felt intimidated by them.

Customers were deflected from the row of shops in Valley Park at certain times of the day, as they perceived youths gathering on the flowerbed as a threat. This concern was raised at the committee meetings involving the local residents (see involvement).

Offending and anti-social behaviour also resulted in a substantial proportion of police time attending to disperse some youths and deal with calls to apprehend others. At the onset of the project, the time spent patrolling the area was around 30 hours a month, with police overtime running into 25 hours a month.

### **Significant consequences for further offending**

As ASB was fuelled by alcohol, it can be argued that for some offenders there was a self-reinforcing cycle of offending. There was no evidence that ASB offending specifically led individuals to a criminal career, or to the development of a 'community crime career' for example through an offending subculture. The presence of youths themselves in large numbers as stipulated above, attracted the attention of drug dealers.

## **Immediate causes<sup>3</sup> of the crime problem**

### *Wider Environment*

- A raised flowerbed in the shopping area seemed to encourage youths to assemble on the flattened earth to drink, often bringing blankets with them. The area had been ruined by people walking over it – so that the flowers ceased to grow. The rough patch of land also encouraged littering.
- A specific store adjoining the flowerbed was identified as a focal point for ASB as it provided light and shelter (the shop had a canopy).

### *Resources for committing crime*

- Loose bricks within the flowerbed presented a tool for use in vandalism.
- Some of the migrant offenders – from the Southampton and surrounding areas – were arriving in Valley Park with golf clubs and wrenches to use in criminal damage and conflicts.
- Mobile phones were sometimes used to draw gang members together.

### *Readiness to Offend*

- Underage drinking acted as a disinhibitor – encouraging criminal damage and minor public order offences. It was also thought that alcohol played a symbolic role as an expression of their independence.
- Alcohol was being made available through some youths stealing from a ‘soft target’ shop, and through the action or inaction of various crime promoters (see below).
- Boredom through inadequate local leisure facilities was cited as a common problem behind ASB. At the time of project implementation, there was a leisure centre, but this was not an exclusive resource for youths. There were plenty of play areas for younger children, but there were no recreational facilities for older youths. The absence of legitimate entertainment opportunities for youths to spend sizeable disposable incomes may have encouraged spend on alcohol.
- Difficulty of access to leisure facilities was a related problem. The surrounding towns offered some suitable recreational facilities, but these involved financial cost and travelling time. The transport system was also not felt to be adequate.

### *Crime Promoters*

- Local retailers sold alcohol to youths under 18 contrary to licensing rules.
- Drink orders were placed with a 17 year old youth from outside the Valley Park area, distributed from the back of a car. Legislation prevents the arrest of 17 year olds selling to under 18s . (The youth concerned is now 18, but another youngster may well be recruited.)
- Older friends and siblings purchase alcohol legally and supply it to younger peers/siblings.
- Offending youths harassed the general public to act as ‘forced promoters’ to purchase alcohol on their behalf.

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<sup>3</sup> Causes are described using the Conjunction of Criminal Opportunity (CCO)– [www.crimereduction.gov.uk/learningzone/cco.htm](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/learningzone/cco.htm). Those judged particularly relevant to this crime problem and its prevention have been emphasised. Where possible these relevant causes are supported by evidence; where such evidence is missing, and the causes are relevant to the interventions, conjectures are identified.

- Another possible contributory cause was younger, lower-wage workers being poorly supervised and supported, and not receiving appropriate training in handling underage customers attempting to purchase alcohol.
- Peer pressure also served to initiate those who would not normally engage in ASB to perpetrate criminal and socially disruptive acts.
- Parents acted as negligent promoters as often both worked very long days. The parents therefore sent their children out giving them money to amuse themselves. This indirectly encouraged children in Valley Park to drink.
- Low staffing levels and poor quality CCTV in a particular store in effect promoted the theft of alcohol from this particular store.

#### *Offender presence in situation*

- Some youths involved in the ASB in Valley Park came from the local area – estates that were densely populated within the district. But also compounding the problem was the influx of migrant ASB offenders from the surrounding areas –specifically from Southampton. Offenders were attracted by wealthier peers (and the subsequent increase in availability of alcohol) and by specific females within the area.
- Offenders from outside Valley Park in some cases had links to Valley Park through attending a local school. Certain migrant offenders also saw the wealthier peer group in Valley Park as potential customers for drug sales. .
- Conflicts ensued between local and migrant male youths over the females in the area, fuelling ASB.

#### *Crime Preventers*

- It was noted that the level of staffing in some local shops was not sufficient to monitor shop theft efficiently.

#### *Target Enclosure*

- One shop was highlighted as having poor external security– a broken roller shutter coupled with a breakable door and limited internal CCTV – which led to the youths breaking into the shop to steal alcohol and food.

#### *Target 'Property'*

- As said, conflicts between local and migrant males were often based local females seen as 'worth fighting for'. This was supported by a youth culture of wagers to "pull" as many females as possible. In this respect, the presence of the girls was acting both as a disorder attractor and generator.

#### *Higher-level cause – drug market*

- The possible influx of drug dealers from outside the area was possibly the result of accessible wealthy youths.

## **2. Intervention**

The main interventions centred on identifying key ASB offenders and removing opportunities for offending, the time to cause nuisance and the alcohol generating the nuisance activity.

## Existing interventions

Apart from limited police patrolling there did not appear to be any pre-existing interventions in place at the time of the local disturbances. The remit of the project was to reduce excessive use of patrolling, and where possible find alternative interventions. .

## New interventions

### Intervention 1: Modification of carrier bags

**Method:** *Modification of plain carrier bags to branded bags*

**Principles:** *Reducing readiness to offend (removing supply of alcohol); Deterring and incapacitating crime promoters (shopkeepers) and converting them to preventers; Mobilising preventers (parents); Empowering preventers (police).*

Retailers were selling alcohol to underage youths were identified through the seizure of alcohol from youths in bags that revealed the origin of purchase. Police officers then went to the relevant stores and seized CCTV footage of the sale. This footage was then used both to reiterate the licensing legislation and mobilise the retailer as a preventer. CCTV footage (where of good enough quality) was also used to inform parents of the offender(s) The carrier bags of certain retailers were also modified from plain white to 'branded' bags. In the case of two shops with the same bag this served to narrow down the search. As the officers quickly detected and apprehended youths carrying alcohol in the vicinity of the shops, it took on average 10 minutes to review CCTV footage analysis to identify offenders who had purchased alcohol underage.

**Risk to method 1:** *countermove by offenders*

Following these modifications to carrier bags, youths subsequently brought their own bags from Tesco. The police when confiscating these bags, checked at the local Tesco store for CCTV footage and confirmed that this was not the location of purchase – the police then re-established with the offender the true location of the alcohol purchase.

### Intervention 2: Targeted high visibility police patrols

**Method:** *Covert and overt observation police patrols and neighbourhood wardens, aided by mobile CCTV*

**Principles:** *Deterrence and discouragement; Reassurance; Removing offenders from crime situation/ dispersing groups of offenders*

High visibility police patrols and neighbourhood wardens were used to disperse offenders and potential offenders from loitering in problem areas. Surveillance of offenders on the streets was boosted by the use of a mobile CCTV vehicle, which allowed gathering of intelligence (with a capacity to take stills of identified offenders). This also had the effect of reassuring the public that there were people available to support them in the case of being threatened.

**Risk to method 2:** *surveillance countermeasures by offenders*

Youths also made use of Hoodies (hoods or garments that covered most of the head and face) and baseball caps to hinder identification. However the police gathered intelligence on specific clothes worn by ASB offenders and so were able to identify individuals on this basis.

### Intervention 3: Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts(ABCs) were considered for persistent offenders

**Method:** *Threat of ABCs for identified persistent ASB offenders*

**Principles:** *General and specific deterrence and discouragement; Removing offender from crime situation; Cracking down on promoters (parents) and converting to preventers*

Nine persistent ASB offenders (who has been noted and/or cautioned previously) were identified by the police as potential candidates for ABCs. . In the presence of their parents, the police and council informed them they were under scrutiny for the application of an ABC. The threat of this appeared to prevent further offending by this group. No ABCs had been applied to the nine offenders at the time of this study.

**Risk to method 3:** *ABCs – administrative boundaries*

There were complications over applying ABCs due to borough boundaries, as it was unclear which of two adjacent borough councils should be involved. After liaison and careful mediation, one council was handed ownership to carry forward the ABCs. However by the time this had been achieved, the project team had used alternative methods to tackle ASB (through cautioning, arresting and engagement with the youth services amongst other things – see below).

**Intervention 4: Target hardening of a retail store to prevent alcohol theft**

**Method:** *Set of structural and environmental modifications to increase the effort required to steal alcohol*

**Principles:** *Perimeter/access security; Target hardening; Environmental design; Conversion of crime promoters to crime preventers*

*Perimeter / access security; Target-hardening; Environmental design*

A particular store identified as a soft target for alcohol theft (see Intelligence: causes) received crime prevention (specifically Secure by Design) advice from the project team. External electric fences were installed to prevent offenders entering through the back-entrance, internal electric fences were placed around the exposed storage areas, the CCTV system was upgraded (and was placed inside as well as outside), vehicle parking was improved, and overhanging trees and branches were cut down. A new roller screen was installed to replace the broken one and the layout of the store was altered (lowering the height of displays) so that it promoted better natural and CCTV surveillance.

*Conversion of crime promoters to crime preventers*

Store staff and managers were advised by the project team on good practice and regulations on the sale of alcohol to minors . As a result of CCTV footage a shop assistant was fired. (This was not promoted by the project team, but it did help *encourager les autres*.) The project also showed that some security staff employed by the retailers were themselves stealing. They too were dismissed, and the retailers took the issue further with the staff agency involved.

**Intervention 5: Removing a flowerbed from the front of row of shops**

**Method:** *Removing the flowerbed from the row of shops and improving the environmental design*

**Principles:** *Environmental design; Restricting resources for crime; Deflecting offenders from a crime situation; Reassurance*

A flowerbed was removed outside a row of shops. This was a focal point for youths gathering, and provided them somewhere to sit. The flowerbed had been misused by youths and adults alike, and was actually spoiling the image of the area. Removing the flowerbed prevented youths from



using loose bricks to cause structural damage elsewhere. The area ceased to attract youths. This helped reduce intimidation felt by legitimate users of the local stores as they ran the gauntlet of the loitering youths.

***Risks to method 5: additional crime risk***

Local retailers were concerned that removal of the flowerbed would take away its protection from ram-raiders. Therefore it was decided that bollards, which were chosen with the design feature of being uncomfortable to sit on, would be placed at frequent intervals on the paved area both to prevent ram-raiders and the youths from sitting down.

**Intervention 6: Community clean up**

**Method:** *Community clean up of Valley Park*

**Principles:** *Reassurance; Deterrence; Motivating preventers*

Community wardens and some members of the public cleared up litter and generally tidied up the area by Valley Park shops. This apparently boosted reassurance (although it is difficult to measure direct impact), through the visible presence of community wardens and an apparently cleaner and safer place. It may also have engendered feelings of ownership and augmented collective efficacy. Removing the 'signs of crime' and establishing standards, may also be seen as applying 'Broken windows' principles to reduce misbehaviour and set rules. The clean-up also served the 'involvement function' of mobilising/ engaging residents.

**Intervention 7: Youth shelter**

**Method:** *Youth shelter for local juveniles*

**Principles:** *Removing offenders from crime situation and from alcohol; Reducing readiness to offend by meeting needs legitimately*

The project team installed a youth shelter to provide personal space for local youths and divert them from the shops (and alcohol). Youths were consulted by social services about the shelter. They had indicated a need for one.

***Risks of method 7: Youth shelter – additional crime***

The police emphasised that the shelter was ultimately the property of the youths, and they had to take responsibility for it. If the shelter was spoiled it would be removed. The shelter did attract graffiti but this was seen in principle as acceptable by the police. But when unacceptable language was sprayed on this was erased by spray paint by the police. (The beat constable carried a can in his bicycle saddlebag for instant remedial action.)

**Intervention 8: Mobile recreation unit**

**Method:** *Mobile recreational unit moved to non-hotspot areas to engage youth in diversionary activities*

**Principles:** *Removing offender from the crime situation*

The unit was equipped with sporting equipment initially but the mobile recreation unit had not been fully equipped at the time of this study – so it was not known at this point whether it would be used for alternative recreations such as surfing the internet (using computers), etc.

## **Intervention 9: Arresting/cautioning of ASB offenders**

**Method:** *Arresting/cautioning of ASB offenders*

**Principles:** *Removing offenders from the crime situation; Giving offenders resources to avoid offending (education); Deterrence and discouragement; Mobilising preventers (parents); gateway to CJS; gateway to range of youth services*

The police used cautions for first and second time ASB offenders; arrest was threatened if they continued to misbehave, at which point they were sent to the youth courts. (Physical conflicts between local and migrant ASB offenders were also dealt with primarily through the arrest of main participants.) In both cases, the police recommended the youth in question to contact youth services – which offered advice on citizenship, drugs and alcohol, etc. This process was invariably boosted by the police approaching parents and showing them video footage of the child's involvement in ASB. It was hoped that through confronting parents with the footage confirming ASB activity, they would be engaged to tackle the offending of their children. Once the project had become established, the ASB officers took on this role.

**Risks of method 9:** *Attempting to arrest offenders – countermoves by offenders*

Youths often sought to avoid arrest, using mobile phones to warn of an impending police approach and evading police by 'starbursting'. A local primary school field was also used as an escape route, and the surrounding bushes for hiding places. Alcohol was concealed in hedges. This problem was tackled by the council lowering the height of hedges and bushes, and cleaning out rubbish beneath them.

## **Intervention 10: Drop in centre for youths**

**Method:** *Drop in centre for youths*

**Principles:** *Removing offender from the crime situation*

A drop in centre was made available one night a week to local youths to socialise and hang out. This helped take them off the street, distancing them from sources of alcohol and consequently removing the opportunity as well as the motivation for ASB.

## **Intervention 11: A healthy living centre for youths**

**Method:** *A healthy living centre was made available to youths at the leisure centre*

**Principles:** *Removing offender from the crime situation; Reducing readiness to offend by meeting offenders' needs legitimately and alleviating stressors*

The leisure centre offered a healthy living service to youths with advice on diet, sexual health and community issues. This intervention had not been fully implemented at the time of this study as there were funding difficulties relating to the location of the unit.

## **Intervention 12: A forest location as an alternative place for youths to gather**

**Method:** *A part of the local forest was given over for use by the local youths*

**Principles:** *Removing offender from the crime situation; Rule setting; Reducing readiness to offend by meeting offenders' needs*

The Tree Conservation Volunteers Group along with the police made available a portion of a local wood to use as a gathering spot, particularly in the summer holidays. Ground rules were

established about acceptable behaviour (e.g. about littering), and where these regulations were not adhered to, then encampments that had been built were taken down and the area left as it was originally. After this had happened several times, the youths accepted that they needed to comply to retain the encampments.

### **Intervention 13: Disrupting a possible drugs market targeting youths**

**Method:** *Enlisting youths to identify drug dealers so that they could be dealt with through the CJS*

**Principles:** *Removing offender (dealers) from the crime situation; Deterrence (dealers); Resources to avoid offending (drugs education for youths); Mobilising preventers*

The potential for drug dealing was stamped on quickly through arresting identified and known drug dealers. Youths were approached both in the street and at various diversionary events to get them to identify those they believed were attempting to sell drugs. They also received advice on drug misuse from the youth services (who spent around 2 hours every week raising awareness of drugs and alcohol misuse), wardens (who spent around 10 minutes every evening talking to youths directly on the street and handing out leaflets on the subject) and police officers generally advising youths on drug/alcohol misuse. Bail conditions were used for identified drug dealers so that they could not return to the Valley Park area.

## **3. Implementation**

This section looks at how the methods and principles of the project were converted into actual practice on the ground.

### **Lessons learnt from the implementation process:**

- *Adaptability* – coping with limited sustainability of impact. It was estimated based on past experience that the interventions planned would only be effective for 3-5 years. Those involved therefore had to continually re-assess alternatives to sustain the project. Diminishing effectiveness of interventions stemmed from the cyclic nature of fashionable activities for youths (for example youth clubs were cited as being initially popular, then the popularity tailed off). Thus a certain element of the project was to estimate future youth interests and adapt the project accordingly.
- The project started before the Problem Oriented (Policing) Approach had been fully instigated by Hampshire Police Force. Initially crime reduction management worked on a trial and error basis, drawing from intelligence gathering and responding intuitively to the problems as they presented themselves. Learning from errors and implementation failure was a useful tool before more defined work practices were introduced (i.e. the PRIME approach.)
- Support from the police senior management was felt to be important, , especially where (in an initially tense situation over the ASB problem) the public paid little heed to the beat police officer and civilian police staff.
- Legislation increasing police powers was cited as boosting the project over the three years. Section 59 of the Police Reform Act<sup>4</sup> (granting police powers to retain vehicles) was mentioned in particular as having impacted on anti-social use of cars.

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.legislation.hms.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/20020030.htm> for the Police Reform Act document – which gives further information on section 59 of the act.

- Liaison between local retailers, the licensing officer and trading standards led to the adoption of an over 21s sales policy for alcohol. This to a certain extent reduced the possibility of older peers and sibling supplying alcohol to younger youths.

### **Targeting of the implementation**

*Offenders* Juveniles, of either sex aged 12 to 18 from the surrounding area (*Secondary; Tertiary*)

*Crime preventers* Local police unit and Community wardens (*Tertiary*)

*Location* Community facilities - including specific shops, a school and community centre (*Tertiary*)

*Targets* Food and alcohol was stolen (*Tertiary*)

### **Strategic and tactical co-ordination and monitoring of performance**

A steering group to tackle ASB emerged in response to concerns raised by the public after the problem of ASB grew. The group involved relevant agencies (police, social service, etc) and residents. Its meetings monitored progress on the reduction of ASB (covering both crime and CADA incidents). Decisions on appropriate courses of action were determined, based on intelligence gathered on the nature of the crime problem and possible displacement effects of the interventions.

### **Inputs into the project**

There were no stipulated **running costs** from the project. Most costs were absorbed into routine costs – such as the residents’ association newsletter and local newspapers’ coverage of the project. One of the only running costs mentioned was the purchase of the spray paint to deal with abusive graffiti. This was paid for voluntarily by the officer concerned.

**Capital costs** were mainly funding the purchase and installation of the youth shelter. This came from a budget of £48,000 awarded by the Government Office for the South-East.

In terms of **human resources**, community wardens dedicated time to engage with the public and clean up the environment. The public’s time was voluntary. High visibility policing monopolised time spent on routine daily patrols and generated overtime dealing with ASB on the streets. Time spent on co-ordination by the civilian crime reduction officer was absorbed into normal daily workload.

### **Outputs achieved**

The following outputs were achieved:

- Modification of the environment (removal of a flowerbed and insertion of bollards) adjacent to a parade of shops.
- Augmentation and installation of facilities for youths at a local leisure centre.
- Provision of a range of health and educational services by the youth service.
- Installation of a youth shelter.
- Designated area of a wood for use as a gathering spot for youths.
- A mobile recreational unit for supplying diversionary activities for youths.
- Reinforced security measures in a local shop identified as a target for theft of goods.

- The project team estimated that around £76,500 was saved due to the interventions in first year of implementation.

### **General risks and blockages in implementation**

Although crime prevention information was given to a local school (a potential target for ASB), it was not possible to implement any interventions in this location due to restricted funding. (It is possible that funding this kind of preventive action is a generic problem with schools.)

Certain complications with rolling out interventions stemmed from borough boundary lines and subsequent confusion over which council was responsible and which police station a crime or incident should be reported to. This was largely solved by police officers using bikes – face-to-face reporting in the street bypassed the potential confusion over which police station the informer should report to. Bikes were also advantageous as officers could remain mobile, access places not available to vehicles, and it was easier for the members of the public to approach them (it was harder for the public to stop a police car to report an incident). Bikes also served to help engage with those residents who were not involved with committee meetings.

### **Plans for expansion and/or exit**

An exit strategy outlining the specific roles and responsibilities of each partnership member was drawn up to allow the actions and capacity to respond to persist when the project team had relinquished direct control over the project. The project team would continue retain the role of monitoring the ASB crime and incidents in Valley Park and would offer advice to the residual steering group should problems re-emerge.

## **4. Involvement**

### **Partnership**

The main organisations involved in this project were:

#### *Hampshire Police Force*

A crime reduction officer and police beat constable formed the core project co-ordinating team. They:

- Identified and monitored changes in ASB offences and CADA incidents.
- Offered advice on crime preventive measures to the other key partners.
- Chaired the steering group/committee meetings.
- Located sources of funding for the project.
- Local basic command unit – carried out targeted police patrols involving a mixture of covert and overt observations of the crime/ASB problem.

#### *Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC)/ Eastleigh Borough Council*

- A community safety officer and relevant services attended committee meetings.
- Funded alterations to the local community centre.
- Offered to support additional services for youths offered at the leisure centre.
- Provided the supporting use of neighbourhood wardens.
- Involved in representing the local council's views at the committee meetings.
- Were consulted on issues concerning developing council owned land.

- Were also willing to support ABC contracts and ASBO.
- ASBO officers presented video footage of offending to the parents.

#### *Neighbourhood Wardens*

- Established credibility in the community through direct interaction. Specifically they knocked on doors of the local residents and discussed their role and projects being carried out by the police confronting ASB.
- High visibility policing.
- Cleaning and tidying local environment.
- Engaging with youths to get them involved in local activities.
- Liaising with the police, feeding back observations and public concerns.
- Helped to seize alcohol from youths – although this was initially detrimental to their relationship with the youths.

#### *Representative from a local shop*

- Implemented target hardening measures to prevent thieves from entering and stealing goods.
- Improved staff training and increased awareness of licensing legislation to the staff.
- Other retailers were invited but did not engage, as they felt that the problem did not relate to them directly (others were in a process of changing ownership).

#### *Residents Association*

- Involved in representing the local community views at the committee meetings.
- Also distributed newsletters containing quarterly updates on the progress of the project.

#### *Youth Service*

Although it took around three months to fully engage with the local youth services, they then:

- Offered educational and social services to the youths
- Their main role was to identify what the young people required to modify their anti-social behaviour.

#### *Local Landowners – of the parade of shops*

Consulted by the project team about environmental re-design (the flowerbed).

- Consulted shop tenants on their views of changing the adjacent environmental design

#### *Parish Council*

- Involved in representing the parishioners views at the committee meetings.

Having established contact with these partners, the links remained and there was a certain carryover to other projects the police were involved in.

### **Climate setting**

The project team discovered the importance of *managing the public's expectations* – through admitting it would take some time for results to become noticeable. Deadlines were of course necessary to take action forward at the steering group level. But some of these were deliberately not made public. This allowed both a degree of flexibility and sufficient time to obtain funding. 'NIMBY' issues were anticipated for the siting of the youth shelter, but careful advance persuasion led residents to see the shelter as a solution rather than a problem.

## **Mobilisation of members (including general public) to be actively involved in crime reduction measures**

The steering group meetings helped to quell the fear of crime perceived by the general public, as the community members attending propagated reassuring ('Something has been done') messages principally through the resident newsletter. Community champions were also identified at these meetings, which allowed the police to show the problem was one to be shared, not just for the police to tackle alone.

The project co-ordinator decided to apply some quick win interventions before engaging wider public support. This was to pre-empt a perception that nothing was being done by the police. However, the public became aware of the partnership committee, recruiting people through leaflets and disrupting, en masse, a committee meeting to get their views heard. Quick reaction by the police and the crime reduction officer turned this from near-riot to a constructive occasion. To help maintain public involvement, follow-up was emphasised – they made sure to return calls to answer their questions and deal directly with concerns.

### *Newsletter*

The residents' association newsletter, produced and distributed quarterly to 3,500 local residents, covered articles on project progress and acted as a strong link between the project team and local community. An article was run called 'Do you know where your children are?'.

### *Local newspapers*

Information about the progress of the project was also fed to the local newspapers. In fact, they attended the steering groups. This served to reassure and inform the public that the police in tandem with the local council were carrying out measures against ASB. Specific information provided to the media included information on basic achievable crime prevention techniques for individuals, what the partnership was achieving, plans for the future and asking for help from the local residents.

## **Risks and blockages to community involvement (see also Climate Setting)**

Following active participation of youths in the steering group committee meetings, conflict between elderly people and local youths (who had differing needs and lifestyle) was resolved through mediation with a view to building a mutual understanding. Some progress was indicated by the older residents attending the opening of the youth shelter.

## **Sustainability of involvement**

As previously stated, quite a few shops in Valley Park were undergoing changes in management. It was thus felt essential that the new retailers were advised on the sale of alcohol to youths, and that they were monitored for compliance.

The project team drafted an exit strategy at the time of this study, where the roles and responsibilities of each partnership member were defined to continue the actions without central control by the project team.

## 5. Impact

### Informal outcomes

There was a general improvement of the image of the environment, a reduction in littering around the shops which resulted from removing the flowerbed and the subsequent paving (with the bollards).

One measure of improvement to quality of life in the area, was that the crime reduction officer was approached by various members of the public who expressed thanks that their friends had not moved out of the area as a response to the ASB problem. The project reduced the time spent patrolling in the study areas to normal levels (2-3 hours a month per beat officer), eliminating overtime (originally 25 hours a month) by the police officers involved. In fact police time was freed for a similar ASB problem in another area.

### Impact evaluation

#### *Impact evaluation design*

The Home Office conducted a simple retrospective evaluation to gauge the impact of the battery of interventions

The **outcome measures** available covered ASB-related recorded crime (with some limitations to its utility) and incidents:

- **Recorded crime ASB** figures such as common assaults, harassment, damage to other buildings (including other damage), burglary (other than dwelling), thefts from shops, theft or taking without consent of vehicles, and drugs offences (both trafficking and possession). Descriptions of the specifics of these offences (e.g. who was involved, what was done, etc.) were not available for this evaluation so it was difficult to gauge how appropriate it was to use this data to measure ASB (see Box). This evaluation briefly reports Eastleigh Police's analysis of ASB recorded crime, but this has been used mainly to support the incident findings which deal more specifically with juvenile perpetrators.
- **CADA (Crime and Disorder Act) incidents**, covering recorded *non-crime* disorder incidents which were known or inferred to be committed by youths: nuisance through gathering in intimidating groups, noise related disturbance and minor public disorders (throwing of missiles, drunkenness, etc).

The **areas** compared were concentric:

- **The Close** (a specific road in Valley Park incorporating a Leisure Centre) – the *target area*, where the interventions were carried out;
- **The rest of Valley Park** (excluding The Close area) – the '*buffer zone*'; and
- **The rest of the Eastleigh BCU area** (excluding Valley Park beats) – the *background comparison area*.

The **time phases** compared were defined by a compromise, to be in step with: the seasonal cycle, when the responses took place, and when the ASB problem started:

- **Phase 0** – the *before* period (all of 2002, when the ASB incidents were rising and the preliminary interventions were implemented to tackle these); and
- **Phase 1** – the *implementation* period (January 2003-March 2004, at the beginning of which further targeted interventions were implemented).



The rest of Eastleigh was used to indicate general background falls in vehicle crime from Phase 0 to Phase 1, which were then used to create **expected** levels of vehicle crime in Phase 1 in The Close, and in the rest of Valley Park. The rest of Valley Park was used in similar fashion as a 'buffer zone' to indicate any local geographic displacement from The Close.

This evaluation has many limitations (see Box) Nevertheless, a clear prima facie pattern of results emerged. The patterns of changes in ASB incidents over the 2 phases and 3 areas were statistically highly significant ( $p < .0001$ , 2-tailed, 4df).

*Technical commentary: Difficulties in inferring cause and effect*

Limitations of the data constrained the reliability of the evaluation:

- The Recorded crime ASB figures included both adult and youth crimes – although it was estimated that youths accounted for approximately 80%.
- It was not possible to take account of background changes in ASB recorded crime in Test Valley/Eastleigh areas or in Hampshire as a whole. There were differences in data aggregated at force and district level compared with measurements taken on the local level.

*Time issues* Short-term fluctuations in crime or disorder are typical of local crime patterns. But they can often be misinterpreted: action is (understandably) implemented when crime is on a temporary coincidental upswing, and the equally coincidental downswing that follows can be mistaken for success. It is not possible to rule out this 'selection-regression' interpretation completely. However, the natural pattern of ASB is likely to be one of sudden growth, so finding such a pattern cannot be used to rule out an attribution of success. The impact of weather and seasonal cycles on crime further complicates this picture. The most plausible interpretation is that a spring-summer peak in ASB in 2002 did not recur in 2003, at least in part due to the crime reduction interventions which had begun in 2002 but which made a real difference the following spring/summer.

*Space issues* It is normal practice to compare an action area with some nearby equivalent comparison area/s. This is to try to filter out common background trends (which could account for the fall in crime in an action area). Given the likely very local, and volatile nature of ASB incidents, finding an equivalent comparison area with the same background trend is often very difficult. Immediately adjacent areas (the buffer zone, see Clarke & Eck (2003) paper *Become a Problem-Solving Crime Analyst in 55 small steps*, particularly Sections 42-46<sup>5</sup>) can either reflect common background changes, or geographic displacement from the target area – or its opposite, diffusion of benefit, a spillover of reduction in crime/disorder beyond the intended scope of the intervention. Which is more likely can be judged by comparing the changes over time in the target area, buffer zone and background comparison areas. This judgement is a 'soft' one to be made on the balance of plausibility. Close study of events and mechanisms on the ground – as here – can help to increase this plausibility.

The graph (Figure 1 at the end of the document) shows the relative changes in ASB incidents in the three areas described above – The Close, Rest of Valley Park and Rest of Eastleigh as a whole. (The figures are indexed to February 02 = 100 for ease of comparison.).

*Impact evaluation results*

Recorded crime and CADA incidents recorded in The Close (incorporating the Leisure Centre) both indicate a drop in ASB:

- Recorded crime fell by 30%, from 74 offences in January-December 2002 to 53 offences in the same period in 2003.
- CADA incidents experienced a substantial absolute reduction of around 80%, falling from 68 (over 12 months) to 17 (over 15 months).

The rest of Eastleigh (background comparison area) showed a 20% fall in ASB incidents from Phase 0 – Phase 1. Indexing this background fall out showed that, following implementation of the

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.jdi.ucl.ac.uk/publications/manual/crime\\_manual\\_content.php](http://www.jdi.ucl.ac.uk/publications/manual/crime_manual_content.php) (index page)  
[http://www.jdi.ucl.ac.uk/downloads/pdf/analyst\\_book/Part\\_7.pdf](http://www.jdi.ucl.ac.uk/downloads/pdf/analyst_book/Part_7.pdf) (chapter on assessing impact)

interventions, there were there were **75% fewer ASB incidents in the target area (51 fewer cases in 15 months)** than expected on the basis of Phase 0 level and background trends in the rest of Eastleigh.

Looking at Figure 1, the rest of Valley Park (the buffer zone) appears to follow the trend in the background comparison area – there is no overt evidence of displacement from the target area. Rather, the steeper fall in the buffer zone relative to the background comparison area (44% versus 20% from Phase 0 to Phase 1) suggests either a local background trend in the whole of Eastleigh that was coincidental to the intervention, or diffusion of benefit, where the action in the target area was having a wider than intended effect. If the former, this would imply the net impact of the intervention was less than the *gross* 75%/51 incidents figure above. If the latter, it would be more. The latter seems more plausible in this case. Taking Valley Park as a whole (ie buffer zone plus target area), the *net* overall attributable impact was therefore a reduction of **106 ASB incidents/15 months, equivalent to 44% of the ASB incidents in the whole of Valley Park.**

### **Impact of specific interventions**

Because the interventions were all implemented quite close together in time, and maintained in daily practice, it is not possible to establish a definitive view on which of the many interventions contributed to the impact, and which did not. Nor can we discern whether they made entirely separate contributions, synergised with each other or even antagonised. Some indications can be gleaned from the timeline in the graph – for example, the high-visibility patrols seem not to have achieved much – but even here, they might have had a lagged effect over a longer timescale, or established the necessary conditions of control for the other interventions to work.

### **Sustainability of impact**

It was acknowledged by the project team that the nature of ASB in the area was evolving and diversifying (the team had already considered the possibility of both geographical and crime type displacement), and that any individual intervention would in any case have a limited effective lifespan. As part of the exit strategy they planned to tackle this through establishing a modest but enduring Intelligence facility – upon relinquishing control of the project the plan was to monitor the nature and prevalence of ASB in the area and respond to emergent forms of ASB and defunct intervention methods accordingly.

### **Replicability of the method**

The conditions required for a replication of this initiative elsewhere are as follows:

- An area where large numbers of youths are involved in alcohol related ASB offending.
- Presence of shops selling alcohol – with environmental designs which encourage youths to gather – light, shelter, warmth, somewhere to stand/sit.
- Availability of neighbourhood/community wardens (special constables could fulfil a similar role) to directly bridge the gap between the police and community.
- Access to council owned ground to create a personal area devoted to youths.
- Relevant knowledge of crime preventive measures and designing against crime – and the resources and capacity to extend this knowledge.

- A strong leader – who can co-ordinate and make the ultimate decisions on actions guided by the steering group committee meetings.
- The ability to communicate with all sections of the community (through local networks residents newsletters, public meetings, local media – television and papers).
- Supporting culture from key community members – elders/community champions, council members, police management staff – to convince the community of the value of the implementations.

### **Authorship**

This report was prepared by Andrew Kent and Paul Ekblom of the UK Home Office with assistance from Barbara White, PC Iain Wilson, Insp Martin Jeffrey and Superintendent Anne Wakefield of Hampshire Police Force . Thanks also to Pat Mayhew of the Home Office for her comments on the report and David Berrow of Eastleigh Borough Council for assistance in obtaining incident data.

**Figure 1. Index of three month moving averages for recorded ASB “CADA” incidents in The Close compared with rest of Valley park beats and Eastleigh BCU**

