

Title of the project: Operation Brilliant

Author contact details: Inspector Mark Spooner

Barnsley Central Safer Neighbourhood Team

Commerce House, Westgate, Barnsley, S70 2DJ

mark.spooner@southyorks.pnn.police.uk

01226 787100

Partnership agency lead contact details: Mark Miller

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

markmiller@barnsley.gov.uk

01226 787108

Summary of application

Scanning:

Issues around tackling crime and disorder have been at the forefront of public debate, government policy and policing priorities for many years. More recently there has been a shift in focus whereby police and partner agencies have joined forces to target anti-social behaviour (ASB). Although ASB has several strands some would argue that nuisance youths are what most people visualise when they hear the term, arguably having most impact on resident's quality of life.

Since 2004 the partnership in Barnsley has tried to tackle the problem, especially over the Mischief period in October/November. Historically Worsbrough Common has been the worst affected area, and following a disappointing Operation Mischief 2007, this project was launched

Analysis:

An in-depth review of the approach taken for Operation Mischief 2007 and analysis of new data from a host of partners allowed objectives for the project to be set. The analysis also allowed us to learn what worked previously and to build on that success, at the same time incorporating new aspects into the project, e.g. the use of a new approach to the Anti-Social Behaviour Contract process.

Using the analysis and the Problem Analysis Triangle we were able to identify appropriate and innovative approaches.

Response:

The responses were designed to deliver on the five objectives emerging from the data analysis.

Consultation with young people not only determined the type of diversionary activity but also provided an insight into how to conduct the activity to maximise attendance of the target group. It also highlighted the interventions needed to enable the ringleaders to attend the activities without losing face in the eyes of their peers.

The response also acknowledged that the problematic young people during Mischief were actually problematic throughout the year both in the community and at school and interventions were designed accordingly.

Assessment:

The assessment not only looked at progress towards achieving each of the five objectives but also considered whether or not the overall project had contributed to a reduction in criminal damage and ASB. In doing so it raised some interesting questions about how resident's perceptions may be more aligned to numbers of young people on the streets rather than incidents of anti-social behaviour. That in itself may provide an insight into how diversionary activities may be used in the future to increase the confidence within communities rather than 'divert' young people from ASB.

Words: 392

Description of project

Scanning

The problem – an overview.

For as long as anyone could remember the period around Halloween and Mischief was one of fear for the residents of Worsbrough Common as large gangs of youths roamed the streets causing vandalism, arson and mayhem. In previous years burning barricades had been set in the middle of roads and police and fire services pelted with rocks.

In response Operation Mischief was established in 2004 and ran annually but until relatively recently the emphasis was on a large police presence in areas identified by analysts as 'hot spots' of anti-social behaviour (ASB). In 2007, however, money was made available through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for the provision of youth diversion activities, and Central Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) embraced the change of approach with enthusiasm but limited success.

The lessons learned in 2007 together with a new approach formed the basis of **Operation Brilliant, the subject of this submission.**

Location

Worsbrough Common is a run-down neighbourhood of Barnsley, South Yorkshire, lying just to the south of the town centre.

In 2007 the population was 2,889 living in 1,339 households with 21.4% being under the age of 16, 64.3% of working age and 14.3% over 65.

Worsbrough Common is an area of multiple deprivation, education standards well below the local and national averages with barely 20% students achieving 5+ A-C, compared with a Barnsley average of 30% and nearly 50% nationally.

More than twice the national average of 16-64 year olds are either unemployed or on long term sick and three times the national average are claiming income support.

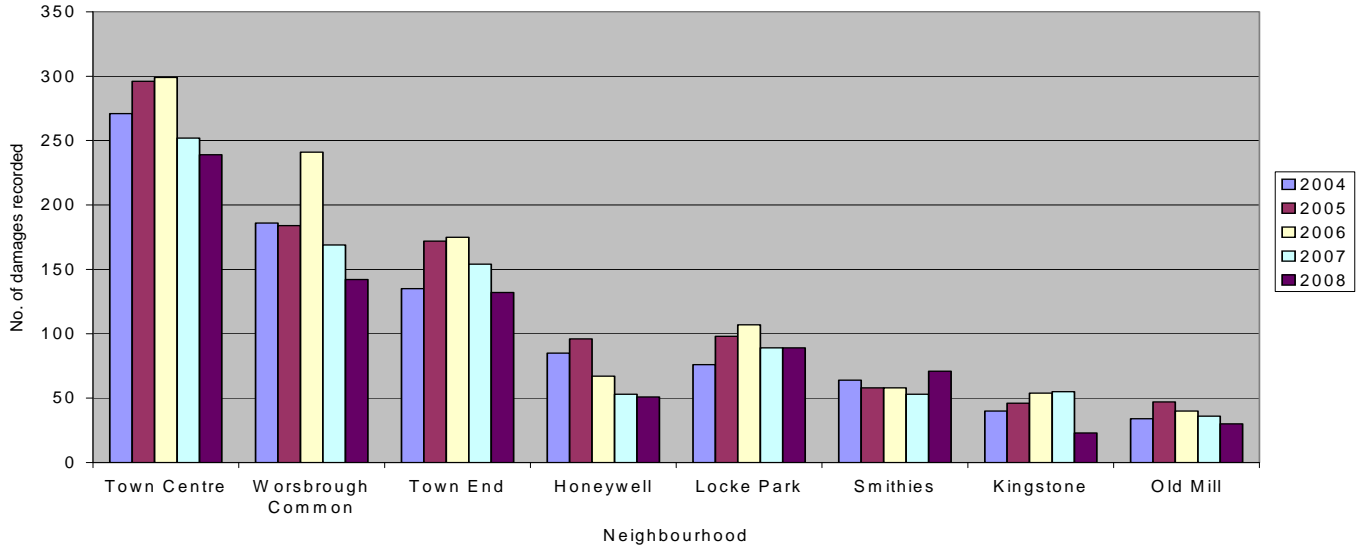
Acorn data reveals that 90.4% of the population of Worsbrough Common can be described as 'Hard-Pressed'.

Although the housing stock is comparable with elsewhere in Barnsley the number of public sector voids is 3.5 times the borough and national averages, giving some indication how the area is perceived.

Figures from the Local Area Statistics Online Service for Yorkshire and Humberside (lasos.org.uk) show that the weighted overall score for the combined domains of income, employment, Health & Disability, Education Skills & Training, Barriers to Housing & Services, crime, and Living Environment classifies parts of Worsbrough Common as severely deprived.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, the area suffers from high levels of criminal damage (Chart 1) and ASB.

Chart 1 - Showing recorded criminal damage by Central SNA neighbourhood over the last 5 years



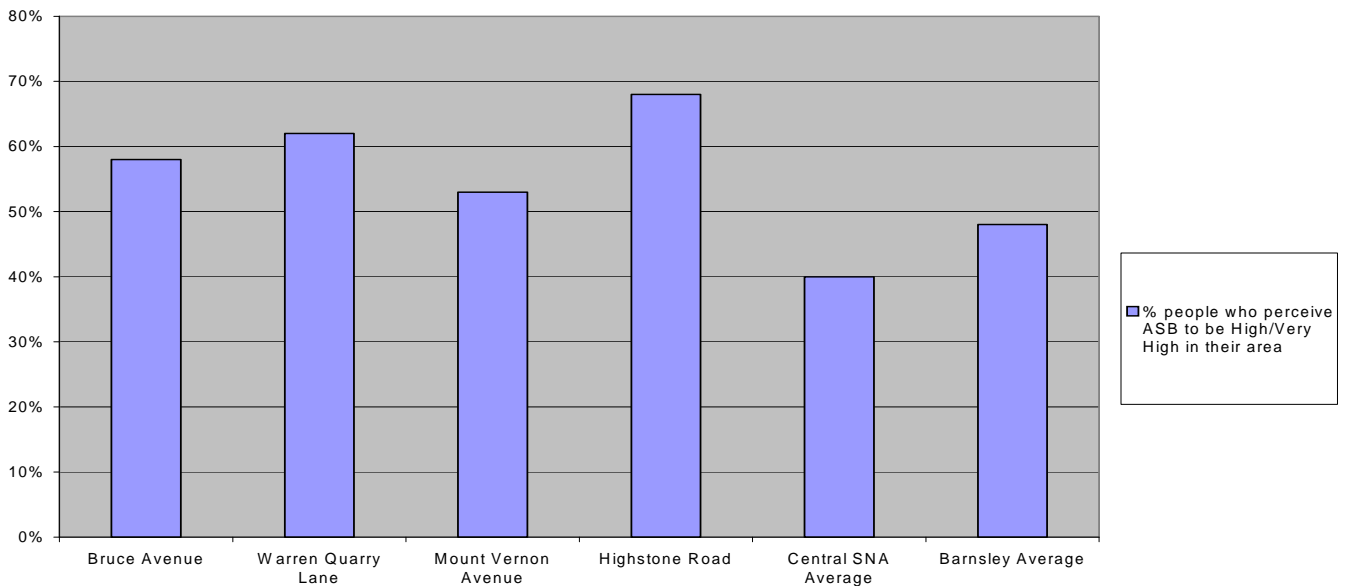
Victims

Planning for Brilliant started in February 2008 and during Spring Central SNT conducted a resident's survey to establish the true extent of ASB in Worsbrough Common.

A total of 129 face to face questionnaires were completed on four of the main streets in the area. The results revealed almost half of the residents had been subjected to anti-social behaviour in the preceding 18 months and of those nearly 20% (7% of the total sample size) had been subjected to 9 or more instances of ASB.

Not surprisingly their perception was correspondingly bleak, and as chart 2 shows on Highstone Road 68% of people surveyed perceived ASB to be high/very high, which is in comparison with an average across the whole SNA of 40% and a Barnsley average of 48% (Your Voice Counts 2008)

Chart 2 - % people who perceive ASB to be High/Very High in their street



These findings were consistent with the premise of social disorganisation theory in that the higher the social disorganisation and physical disorder in a given community, the greater the likelihood that residents will experience feelings of vulnerability and anxiety to crime and its consequences (Sampson and Groves 1989).

Offenders

At any one time there are approximately 16 criminals in Barnsley classed as Priority Prolific Offenders (PPOs) and in January 2008 seven of them lived in Worsbrough Common. This is disproportionately high.

Gathering information

As part of the scanning process the following organisations were involved and provided information around ASB and criminal damage in Worsbrough Common:

- SYP
 - Crime Management System (CMS) – Provided trend data on criminal damage
 - Command and Control – Provided details of reported incidents.
 - OIS (Operational Intelligence System) – Provided details of criminal and community intelligence submitted about planned disorder over Mischief 2008.
- Environmental Regulatory Unit (ERU) – Provided details of environmental crime.
- Berneslai Homes – Provided details of criminal damage reported by tenants that often went unreported to police
- Stagecoach – Bus operator provided reported damage to buses over previous Mischief periods.
- Transport Executive – Provided details of damage to street furniture. Unfortunately data sets were limited.
- Kingstone and Holgate Comprehensive schools – Provided support with management of their pupils
- 'Goldenline' – Provided information on damage and acted as a conduit for community intelligence
- Local Elected Members – Provided community intelligence from residents.
- Worsbrough Common Community Association (WCCA) – Provided community intelligence
- Crime Safety Groups (CSG) – Newly formed in the Worsbrough Common acted as the formal interface between the public and the SNT and acted as a sounding board for ideas.
- Resident's survey - 129 residents were surveyed to establish the true extent of ASB in the area
- Community Safety Partnership (CSP) – Provided financial support and feedback from the community.

There were gaps in the information outside the control of the project team. The local authority's Civica system would have been a valuable source of data, however an inputting backlog meant it couldn't be used.

Analysis

Initially we critically analysed the 2007 operation to learn from our mistakes. The main problem was seen as low attendance of young people at the diversionary events.

In 2007 the following diversionary events were arranged:

- 'Rave' in Locke Park – No one attended
- Local cinema showing 'Stardust' – 150 young people showed but none of the 'target group' (**NB: *The 'target group' – those important to engage to reduce ASB over the Mischief Period***)
- Cover band Re-Rox played at the Metrodome – No one attended
- Street dance lessons from 31st Oct to 4th Nov – Two girls attended one lesson

Operation Mischief 2007 – The lessons

- Planning started too late in the year
- There was an over emphasis on traditional enforcement type operations e.g. Test purchasing for alcohol and fireworks.
- Too little involvement of young people in planning the diversionary activities. This led to very few using the activities provided and none of the 'target group' engaging at all
- We failed to make the link between young people's behaviour over the Mischief period and that throughout the year, both in the community and at school.
- Parents weren't held responsible for their children's behaviour.
- The community weren't involved in the solution

That analysis, combined with community intelligence and work with young people in schools and on the streets led to the first objective for Operation Brilliant 2008 :

Objective One: Ensure high levels of attendance at the youth diversion schemes by the target group.

The analysis also found that many of the young people within the target group wanted to go to the youth diversion events arranged in 2007 but felt they would lose face within their peer group as the events were organised by the police.

Location

Data from the local authority, bus service providers, Transport Executive, police and fire services identified several ASB 'hot spots' from the 2007 Mischief period.

These were:

- **Warren Quarry Lane** – Buses stoned and windows smashed, a police vehicle stoned and windscreen smashed, residents reported a group of 30 youths throwing stones at properties causing damage and a vehicle was turned on it's side by a group of youths.
- **Mount Vernon Avenue** – Mud thrown at properties, fighting amongst residents and threats made to cause criminal damage.
- **Highstone Road** – Group of 8 youths throwing eggs at properties, group of 50 youths throwing potatoes at residents, houses and passing motor vehicles, group of 25 youths throwing bricks at a property causing criminal damage, a group of 50 youths setting off and throwing fireworks and a group of four youths travelling up and down the street throwing fireworks from a vehicle.
- **Bruce Avenue** – A resident assaulted, threats made to residents that their houses would be damaged, windows smashed at a property, an arson attack on a vehicle, windows smashed on the police CCTV van and a public order situation with a large group of youths.

The above analysis was interestingly at odds with the results from the resident's survey data that indicated the 'Top shops' and the 'Top Rec' as the ASB 'hot spots'. This suggested much of the ASB went unreported and emphasised the importance of community intelligence. That intelligence helped form the operational policing plan over the Mischief period. The analysis led to objective two:

Objective two: Reduce the availability of potential missiles or arson targets on Mischief Night

Victim

Feedback from the Community Support Officers (CSO) conducting the resident's survey and Crime Sub-Group (CSG) revealed that proportionately more young people take to the streets over the Mischief period than elsewhere in Barnsley.

Analysis of the survey and police and fire service data raised concerns that residents appeared unwilling or unable to challenge ASB within their community and as a result exhibited low social control on wrong doers, effectively giving young people the 'green light' to continue to cause problems.

Further analysis of the data from the local authority's ERU showed fly tipping, dog fouling and other environmental crime was high in the area. It also indicated residents seemed more likely to report minor issues like dog fouling to ERU rather than challenge the offending owners. In other words the resident's were very service reliant.

That inability or unwillingness to challenge ASB raised questions over the collective efficacy of the community and therefore raised concerns over the resident's ability to be part of the solution rather than just being part of the problem.

That led to a separate piece of ongoing work looking at the effectiveness of the WCCA and it's role within the community, despite previously being nominated for The Queen's Award. It also led to the formation of the community led CSG, which in the long-term may be the vehicle through which the community becomes more self-reliant.

Offender

Analysis of the data from reported calls for service over the Mischief period, community intelligence and reports from staff who worked the previous year revealed three distinct types of 'offender'.

12 to 15 year olds

The main group, in terms of sheer numbers and by far the most impactful on the community, were the 12 to 15 year olds roaming the streets in large gangs. Many were known to agencies but few had criminal records.

Within that group was the 'target group' of ringleaders who, egged on by those around them, were the catalysts for most of the ASB throughout the year but especially around Mischief 2007. They were all, without exception problematic in school from minor breaches of the school rules, e.g. lateness or appearance to more serious behaviour e.g. swearing at teachers or assaulting other pupils.

The 'target group' was considered to be on the verge of criminality and all agreed something needed to be done.

This led to the third objective for Operation Brilliant.

Objective three: To address the behaviour of the target group through the existing Multi Agency Action Group (MAAG)

16 and over

The second group was older and more hardened, many with extensive criminal records for acquisitive crime, drugs and violence. Analysis of OIS and community intelligence indicated members of this group were planning violence under the cover of Mischief, as they had previously when a family had windows smashed and their car torched.

Two members of this group had made direct threats to police that there would be organised disorder over Mischief but particularly on 4th November, Mischief Night.

This led to objective four:

Objective four: To disrupt the group during the relevant period and arrest key individuals on Mischief Night if the opportunity presented.

Under 12

This group engaged in the more traditional 'trick or treat' type behaviour but were then allowed by parents to join the older children who stayed on the streets late into evening.

Parental involvement appeared minimal and the concern was that they were 'learning' the behaviour of their older peers and unless checked would continue the cycle of ASB in Worsbrough Common.

This led to the longer-term objective five:

Objective five: Reduce the likelihood of future involvement in ASB

Response

The first planning meeting was held in February 2008 and chaired by the sergeant from Central SNT. This meeting, and all subsequent planning meetings, was attended by representatives from various departments within the local authority, police and fire staff.

Objective one: Ensure high levels of attendance at the youth diversion schemes by the target group.

In addition to working in schools the youth service engaged young people on the streets of Worsbrough and through established youth groups such as 'Voice and Influence'. As a result the young people themselves not only identified the activities but also the crucial element that had been missing in 2007 – the detail within the activity that either

made it a success of a failure.

For example, analysis of why young people hadn't taken part in last year's activities revealed that although the 'rave' was a popular concept, the DJ employed by us was 'the wrong one!' and that if the event was to be a success the latest 'happening' DJ should be booked. The young people suggested a local DJ called Pilky.

They also suggested a Town Centre venue to encourage young people from across the borough, and despite initial concerns around local rivalry, 'The Citrus Room' was approached and agreed to allow an alcohol free event to take place on Mischief Night.

Two other major diversionary events were agreed with the young people. The first, as the previous year, was the use of the Town Centre cinema but this year the film choice was made by the young people, and more likely to attract the young, predominantly male target group. The cinema showed the newly released Bond film Quantum of Solace.

The second activity chosen by the young people was the local Metrodome for free swimming. This came as a surprise to the project team but on the night was very well attended.

Free tickets were printed and distributed (see Image 1 post).

Two strategies were also developed to help ensure the target group could attend the events without losing face amongst their peers.

The first was the application for a Section 30 'group dispersal' order in Worsbrough Common and the second a public meeting at which parents were reminded of their responsibility towards their children and the community.

Objective two: Reduce the availability of potential missiles or arson targets on Mischief Night

The following action was taken:

- In 2007 wheelie bins were targeted and set on fire. Enquiries with Waste Management revealed that the collection for Worsbrough Common was scheduled for the morning of the 5th November, which meant the bins would be out on the street on Mischief Night. The local authority agreed to change the collection day and residents were informed.
- Worsbrough Common is undergoing development and the building sites have proved popular with children. Berneslai Homes agreed to secure the sites with fencing and employ security patrols over the Mischief period.
- Joint cycle patrols between fire and police were used to engage young people outside mainstream education and alert them to the dangers of setting fires and fireworks.

Objective three: To address the behaviour of the target group through the existing Multi Agency Action group (MAAG)

The MAAG is an existing multi-agency meeting attended by police, fire, behavioural support, schools, YOT, Berneslai Homes, ERU, CSP, substance misuse services, and Children and Young Person's Services. It's the structure through which the problems of certain adults, children and families are discussed and support coordinated, and once the decision had been made to manage the behaviour of the target group well in advance of the Mischief period it seemed the appropriate forum for referral.

Nine young people identified from the analysis of last year's problems were referred to MAAG and their current level of support, and that of their families were reviewed. Levels of offending and/or ASB were also discussed along with other needs, e.g. anger management issues.

Four of the young people were already accessing mainstream support through other agencies but the remaining five, the MAAG agreed, should be considered for an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC).

This gave us the opportunity to review the ABC process and as a result we made significant changes to our approach.

Traditionally the young person would be visited by a CSO at home and asked to sign pre-set conditions drawn up from complaints of ASB made by the public. However, breaches of those conditions were frequent.

The new process recognised that behaviour in the community was usually mirrored in school and visa versa and so involvement from the school was important, as was the 'buy-in' from the young person and their family. It was therefore decided that the new process should take place in more formal settings but that the conditions should be negotiated with the young person not imposed.

The new style ABC meetings for the five young people were run in June and July of 2008.

To disrupt the group during the relevant period and arrest key individuals on Mischief Night if the opportunity presented

Although the thrust of Operation Brilliant 2008 was towards moderating behaviour and providing alternatives to hanging around causing ASB, there was always a recognition that a police presence would be required at Worsbrough Common over the Mischief period. Intelligence received told us the threat came from members of the older group and two PPOs in particular.

In the run up to Mischief Night the police disrupted this group using stop and search powers and the execution of drug warrants.

On Mischief Night itself the police team has some luck in that three of the main targets for the evening were stood together within the Section 30 area and refused to leave when directed. They were very publicly arrested.

Objective five: Reduce the likelihood of future involvement in ASB

Two approaches were taken to achieve this objective.

- **Education** – The fire service and CSOs visited every primary school in the area and conducted a number of talks on the dangers of fireworks and particularly the dangers of setting fires within the community.
- **Parental responsibility** – A public meeting was arranged with a 'pie 'n' pea' supper for the parents of children and young people in Worsbrough Common. Each parent received a personal visit from a CSO with an invite to the event held in the local church hall. Interestingly many of the parents were angry that a Section 30 had been imposed over the Mischief period and that appeared to be the catalyst for 50 of them turning up.

Assessment

Objective one: Ensure high levels of attendance at the youth diversion schemes by the target group.

In 2007 very few young people attended any of the organised events. In 2008 the scene was considerably different with:

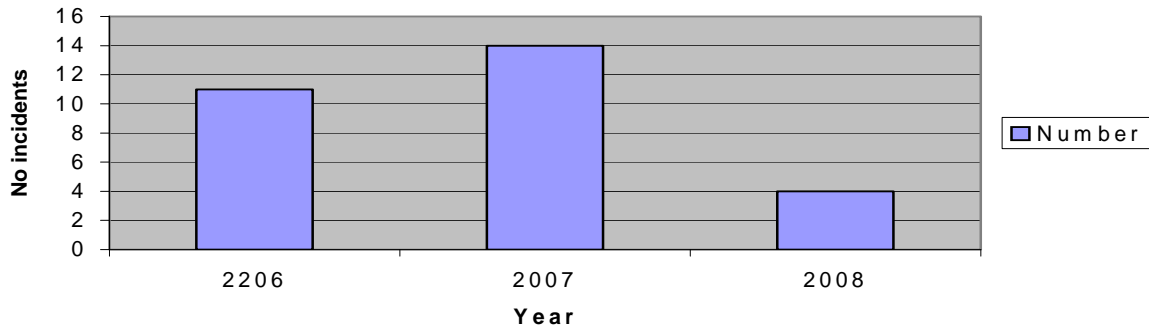
- Cinema – 290 turning up to the film Quantum of Solace
- Swimming – 225 turning up to the Metrodome
- Citrus Room – 187 turning up to see the DJ Pilco at the 'rave'.

In total 702 young people took part in the diversionary activities, but more importantly the entire target group felt able to attend. Total cost of the activities was £1,500, a fraction of the cost of damage caused in 2007.

The feedback from the young people was that the evening had been 'fantastic' and there was absolutely no trouble at the venue or from any of the Worsbrough Common young people on the way home. As a direct result we arranged a Christmas event at the Citrus Room as a thank you for their behaviour.

Objective two: Reduce the availability of potential missiles or arson targets on Mischief Night

Chart 3 - Number of deliberate Primary and Secondary fires across Barnsley between 30th Oct and 8th Nov in each given year



Although the removal of arson targets was concentrated in Worsbrough Common the 72% reduction in arson across the borough would suggest the diversionary activities attracted young people from across Barnsley. There were no arsons reported in Worsbrough Common over the Mischief period.

Objective three: To address the behaviour of the target group through the existing Multi Agency Action group (MAAG)

The nine young people identified as most at risk of committing ASB over the Mischief Period were fully engaged in the diversionary activities and there were no reports of them committing ASB.

The five young people who were already subject to referral orders are all making good progress, especially within school. Some of the young people had anger management issues, as did some of their parents, who in a minority of cases acted as a catalyst to the young person's ASB. In those instances the mother's have also voluntarily attended anger management classes.

The four young people who took part in the new style ABC process have adhered to the agreements they made and have now 'dropped off' the MAAG radar.

Objective four: To disrupt the group during the Mischief period and arrest key people on Mischief night as soon as the opportunity arises

The three arrested on Mischief Night for failing to disperse when requested all pleaded not guilty.

Their trial took place in January 2009 and all were convicted and each fined £100 with costs. Their conviction was marketed positively through the press. They continue to offend.

Objective five: Reduce the likelihood of future involvement in ASB

This is clearly a long-term aspirational objective that can only be assessed over time, but the hope is that the principles of Operation Brilliant will be used year on year and the reductions in ASB seen in 2008 can be built upon.

Reductions in damage and ASB

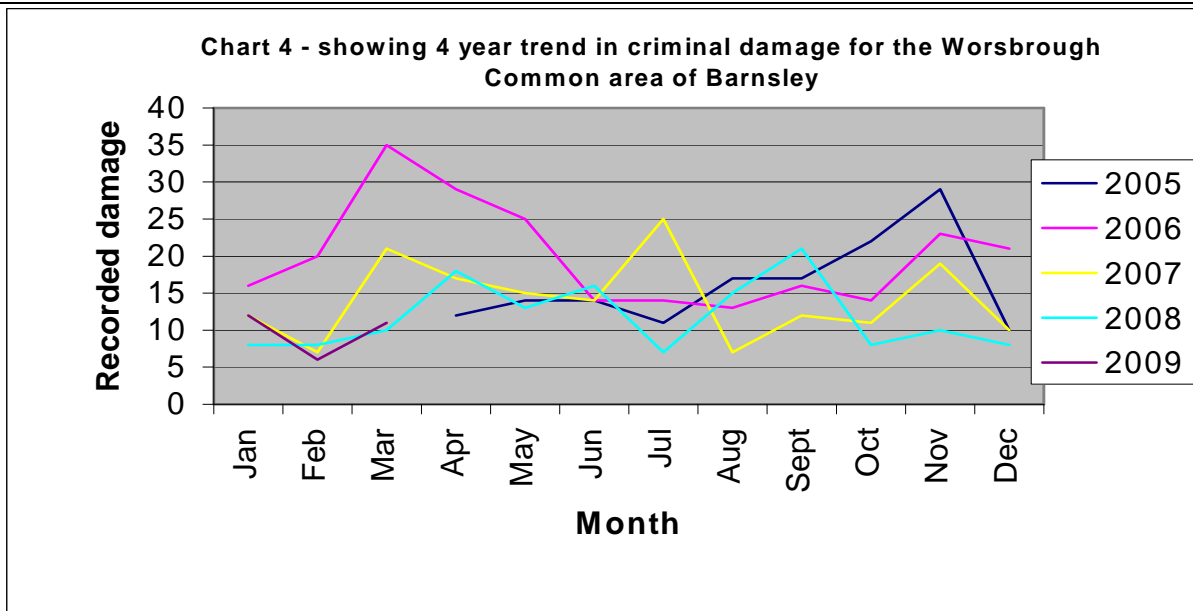
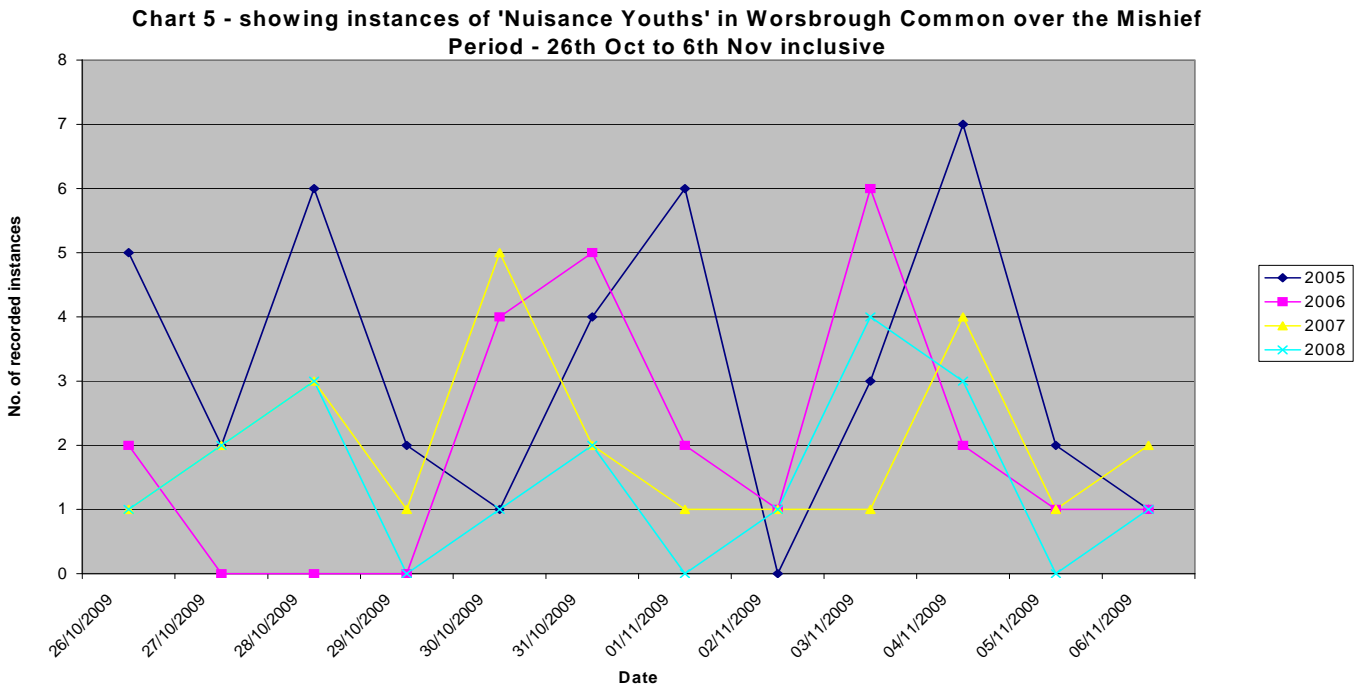


Chart 4 shows levels of damage fell significantly in Oct/Nov 2008 when compared with previous years and reductions have been maintained into 2009. It would seem that something in Operation Brilliant was successful but without further detailed evaluation it would be difficult to say exactly what.

In terms of ASB problematic recording and inconsistencies across agencies makes it difficult to access the true picture but as chart 5 shows there was a drop in the number of 'nuisance youths' incidents reported to police over the Mischief period. Interestingly when the high levels of overall ASB figures in Worsbrough were filtered and examined closely the vast majority couldn't be necessarily attributed to young people.



That is perhaps due to a number of reasons. Firstly we have already established through the resident's survey under-reporting was an issue. Secondly it highlights the problems of recording and labelling ASB, especially across agencies.

Thirdly, and arguably most importantly it raises the question of perception. On the face of it the above chart shows

impressive reductions in ASB since 2005, but on Mischief Night 2008 the police only recorded one less 'Nuisance Youth' call than the previous year.

Despite that residents and local elected members heaped praise on the Operation, saying:

Local Elected Member's testimonials

Operation Brilliant (formerly Mischief). Through a variety of planned activities and events, including a disco at Citrus, swimming at the Metrodome and a showing of the latest James Bond film at the Cinema on Eldon Street, over 900 young people had been engaged with. Barbara commented that it had been the quietest mischievous/ Halloween period she had known for many years (**Barbara Sharpe, Co-opted member of the Kingstone, Old Town and central Area Board. Extract from minutes of meeting held 6th November 2008**).

I would like to make a comment on the Operation Mischief (Brilliant) that was conducted in the Worsbrough Common area last year (2008). This has been a 'hot spot' of anti social behaviour for a good number of years, and last year's efforts were spectacular to the fact that little or no ASB was evident. I believe that the feelings have been echoed throughout the many organisations in and around Worsbrough Common and Barnsley. I am all in favour of the continuation of Operation Mischief this coming year. May I offer my congratulations to yourself and the officers' concerned in the Operation.

Regards

Geoff Bowden, Councillor Kingstone Ward

On behalf of all the residents on the Worsbro Common Council Estate I would like to thank the Central SNT for the quietest mischievous night since Guy Fawkes tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament.

As you are aware this estate is plagued with youth who use this night as an excuse to do as much criminal damage as possible and because of the activities the SNT provided on the night it was like a ghost town. I would hope that the same events will be programmed in for this year

Regards

Malcolm Price, Councillor Kingstone Ward

Conclusions and future work

The whole thrust of Operation Brilliant was to manage the behaviour of a small number of people we knew were most likely to cause problems over the mischief period. Once achieved through existing agency working the focus switched to providing the young people of Worsbrough Common (and across Barnsley as it turned out) with an alternative to roaming the streets. Most importantly of all the project provided them with an 'excuse' if they wanted to attend the diversionary activities but were concerned what their friends might think.

Operation Brilliant seems to have been a success in terms of the aims being achieved and more importantly reduced damage and ASB from previous years.

However, it's the small reduction in the ASB category 'Nuisance Youths' that appears to be the most interesting aspect emerging from this operation in that it led, in part, to so much acclaim. **One theory being that because almost all of the young people of Worsbrough Common, especially the 'target group' were in the Town Centre for Mischief Night residents equated no young people with no ASB. Or, in other words they traditionally equate lots of young people on the streets with lots of ASB, regardless of their behaviour.**

But that's for another day!

State number of words used: 3,999

Operation Brilliant

Youth engagement events on the 4th of November 2008.
All activities are free of charge with the tickets below.
Please make sure you attend these events early to avoid disappointment.




<p>This ticket allows you FREE entry to watch:</p> <h2>James Bond in Quantum of Solace</h2> <p>Showing at the Parkway Cinema, Eldon Street, Barnsley Time: 6.00pm to 8.00pm</p> 	<p>PROOF VERSION 6</p> <p>Client: South Yorkshire Police Job title: Barnsley Central SMT Operation Brilliant AS</p> <p>Job No: C75515 Print date: 21/01/08 Print scale: 100% Date: 17/1/08</p> <p>Colour: 4 M Y K</p> <p>PEPPER TREE Tel: 0114 254 254 http://www.peppertree.co.uk</p>
<p>This ticket allows you FREE entry to:</p> <h2>Swimming at Barnsley Metrodome</h2> <p>Come along and make some waves Time: 7.00pm to 9.00pm</p>	
<p>This ticket allows you FREE entry to:</p> <h2>The Citrus Rooms</h2> <p>Eastgate, Barnsley to see your very own local DJs Pilky and Ben Barrett Time: 7.30pm to 10.30pm</p>	

Image 1 – Copy of 'free' tickets given to young people for the 4th November diversionary activities

Chairperson: Chief Superintendent Andy Brooke

Andy.brooke@southyorks.pnn.police.uk

'I fully support this application, it gained massive approval at the Safer Communities Partnership Executive, the YOT Strategic Management Board and the Offender Management Forum'