



Goldstein Submission 2010: Improving the lives of residents in Putney, Wandsworth Borough MPS

Agency and Officer Information:

Key Project Team Members

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Improving the lives of residents in Putney, Wandsworth Borough MPS – A Summary

Introduction

We chose this as we believe it represents the typical problem solving work being undertaken by one of our Safer Neighbourhood Teams, operating without any extra resources and having to meet other additional commitments.

Scan

Problem

Anti Social Behaviour by a number of youths in Sutherland Grove Estate, Putney, Wandsworth Borough, Metropolitan Police London UK

Analysis and Response

The initiative

Victims

These were the residents of the Sutherland Grove Estate. We made it easy for them to tell us about the problems and how it was affecting them. We wrote to them all and held public meetings. We also identified key people who became the conduit for the concerns of residents who did not wish to approach the police directly. We also helped set up a Residents Association and a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme for the estate.

Location

We conducted an Environmental Visual Audit (EVA) with the council, residents and the local Councillor. The Councillor then was well informed of the changes needed and their importance. Changes were made, such as bollards around the garages, where youths were climbing up via parked cars. The removal of an enclosed area where the youths were congregating as well as decorating an underpass, lighting the area and clearing the area of rubbish.

The offenders

Four main offenders were identified. Visits were made to the parents to get them to appreciate the problem. Our approach, with Housing and the Youth Offending team, was a combination of supporting the young people and their families and sanctioning those who failed to redress their anti social behaviour. A number of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts were implemented and evidence for Anti Social Behaviour Orders gathered. A number of police initiatives were also put in place resulting in significant arrests.



Additionally the Youth Offending Teams worked with each young person to involve him in various diversionary projects. The young people were also involved in an Army led 'Youth Outreach Project'.

The Housing Teams involved reminded the families of their tenancy agreements and that continuing anti-social behaviour could lead to repossession of their homes and potential legal action.

Assessment

The outcome

Residents have expressed a noticeable and positive difference in the atmosphere on the estate, which has also been noticed by the Safer Neighbourhood team. Our baseline was **28 Calls for Service to Police** relating to ASB, (Nov 2008). In September 2009 there was only **1 Call for Service** relating to ASB in the area (96% decrease).



Improving the lives of residents in Putney, Wandsworth Borough MPS – Full submission

SCANNING

The identification of the demand?

The demand came from the residents of the Sutherland Grove Estate. They were supported by the Local Councillor (Cllr L McDonnell).

What did they want?

A significant reduction in incidents of ASB on the Sutherland Grove Estate, East Putney Ward, Wandsworth Borough MPS

How did we find out?

We immediately began liaising with our partners and subsequently instigated a number of joint meetings and consultations. These included:

Confidential meetings with the Social Services and Council to discuss the behaviour and welfare background of the youths involved.

Meetings with Council Housing Teams, Registered Social Landlords, The Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, The Wandsworth Parks Police, The local Councillor and Youth Offending Teams.

We met with the youths and their parents at their home addresses to discuss what was occurring and why.

We organised Street Meetings in order to talk to members of the public.

We liaised with residents about what was occurring and what they thought might impact on the problem

Why was this important, in effect the driving force behind it?

The behaviour of the youths was serious and causing considerable stress. This was having an impact on the health and well being of those living on Estate.

What was the Problem?

The problem was anti social behaviour involving a number of youths on the Sutherland Grove Estate, SW18.



What is the Aim?

To reduce the number of calls for service to Police relating to ASB on the Sutherland Grove Estate by 10% by 31st March 2010.

We wanted to make sure it was SMART so we used the calls for service as our baseline. We appreciated that this is an indirect measure, but it proved extremely difficult to get direct measures of the youths committing anti social behaviour. For example we could have counted the number of fires, but this was just one contributing factor that led to distress amongst the residents living on the estate.

ANALYSIS

Research and Analysis

Who was affected?

The victims were residents of the Sutherland Grove Estate. Three (3) residents were regular callers to the Safer Neighbourhood Team regarding ASB incidents, although they often phoned on behalf of other residents who did not wish to call police through fear or not wanting to 'get involved'.

Who were causing the problems?

Problems were being caused by youths both resident on the estate and resident elsewhere. By researching calls made to Police (both to the central Police contact centres or direct to the Safer Neighbourhoods Team) four youths were identified as regularly involved, or instigators of ASB incidents on the estate.

This divided down to three estate residents and one young person who lived elsewhere in the local area. However, there were numerous other youths identified as being involved to a lesser extent in ASB incidents, regularly forming large groups on the estate.

What was happening?

There was general anti-social and nuisance behaviour on the estate such as; noise, litter; climbing on and over garages; criminal damage; setting off fireworks, setting of fires, throwing items into a busy road (West Hill – A3), graffiti and mopeds/pedal cycles being ridden dangerously/illegally. Additionally the young people were forming large groups (in itself intimidating to some residents), coupled with them verbally threatening residents of the estate.



When was it happening?

The majority of incidents of ASB on the estate occurred between the late afternoon and early hours of the morning, with incidents most often occurring later in the evening, during the hours of darkness.

Where was this happening?

The main points on the Estate where ASB incidents had been reported to occur were:

1. Youths were congregating in a covered walk through at the corner of estate nearest to West Hill j/w Sutherland Grove SW18 (where communal rubbish bins are stored)
2. Youths were congregating around the garages at the rear of the estate, next to the boundary wall of an M.O.D estate (Coldstream Gardens). The youths were climbing onto walls and crossing the boundary into the adjoining area.
3. Youths were using disused drying areas across the estate to easily climb into blocks not lived in by them.
4. Youths were dominating the path and road immediately outside the home address of one of the individuals involved.

How long had it been going on?

Our Intelligence systems showed the earliest report of ASB associated with the Sutherland Grove Estate as occurring on 17/05/2006. However, a significant rise in complaints from local residents regarding incidents of youth ASB only occurred in September 2008 onwards.

How much of a problem?

In November 2008, there were a total of 28 calls for service relating to ASB on the Sutherland Grove Estate alone.

When the Ward Panel meetings were held ASB by youths was chosen as the top priority.

Research from the Internet

We were anxious that we widened our research. As a result we put details of the location in the Internet. We read a number of entries and selected one that identified a problem. On this occasion it was motorbikes riding recklessly.



Below is an example from the Internet. This was from the website FixMyStreet part of www.mysociety.org

Teenage Joy-riding on scooter

*Reported anonymously at 13:19, Wednesday 1 April 2009
Sent to Wandsworth Borough Council less than a minute later*

A teenager living in Strathan Close got a scooter for Xmas (reg: LF04LXC) and has been joy-riding around the block, up and down Sutherland Grove, hitting the speed bumps at speed and doing wheelies in the middle of the road. This happens mostly in the evening (after school?) and the whining piercing sound is unbelievably loud and can be heard streets away. He sometimes races with another boy-racer on scooter (REG: DA03DMP). Can anything be done to stop is most anti-social and dangerous street racing.

Updates

Posted anonymously at 22:06, Friday 10 April 2009

The same scooter gang is racing almost every night up and down Sutherland Grove. They ride on the wrong side of the road and on the pavement, do wheelies in the middle of the road and rave their engines. They hit 50 MPH or more as they race each other in the streets. Always the same one involved with registration LF04LXC and two others. It's just steadily getting worse...

Posted anonymously at 15:50, Monday 20 April 2009, marked as fixed

The police have been made aware and have had a word. As a result the racing has stopped so thanks to the boys in blue from West Hill Station.

RESPONSE

Negotiated Responses

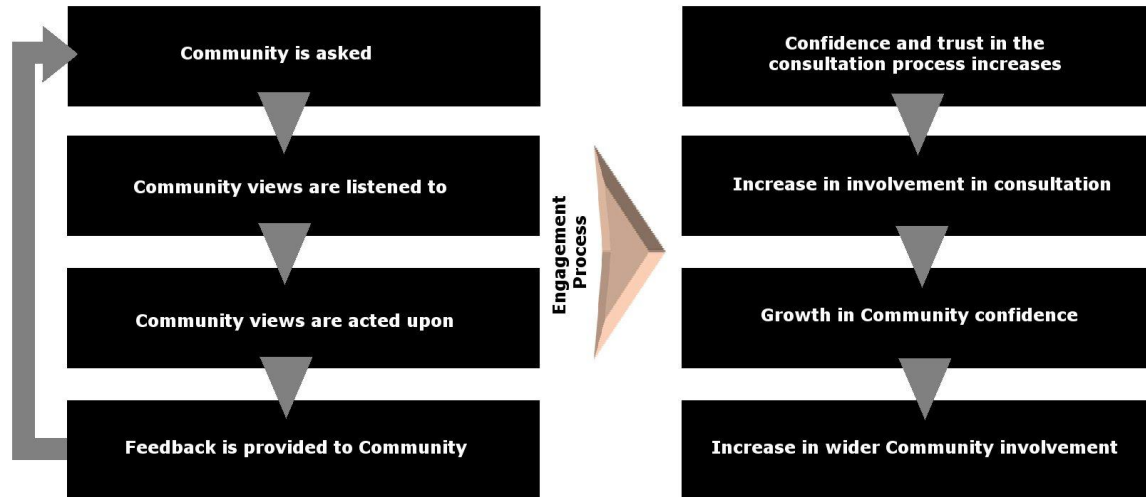
The problem solving initiative was divided into the conventional three strands, Victims, Offenders and Location. Though a useful tool we were aware that some of the offenders were themselves victims of both their built and domestic environment. As a result we will show how we managed each individual. However we never lost sight of our main responsibility that was the well being of the residents in the area.

Victims

As the research informed us that all victims were local residents we needed to encourage them to give us as much information as possible, to impress on them that we took their concerns seriously and that we were going to make improvements for them.



We made use of the information provided in *Practical lessons for involving the community in crime and disorder problem solving – Home Office RDS Series No.43 (November 2005)* by Sarah Forrest, Andy Myhill and Nick Tilley.



We decided that we would write to each of them, explaining who we were, what we wanted to know and the different ways they could contact us. We put it out after a particular unpleasant weekend and also believed this would be a good foundation if we needed to get Community Impact statements at a later date.

We also held public meetings though we were sensitive enough to appreciate that those attending may be intimidated. Therefore we had a uniform presence in the estate.

We also identified key people who lived on the estate who became the conduit for the concerns of residents who to frightened, or did not wish to approach the police directly. For example we discovered the elderly were especially reluctant to contact the police and attend the public meetings. This proved very successful.

In time we wanted the power and influence to move from the youths committing ASB on the streets to the residents. Therefore on 25 February 2009 we helped them first set up a Residents association. A number of issues were discussed and not just ASB, such as parking and litter. We took this as a milestone that things were improving, because the meeting in November 2008 was only about the ASB by youths.

On the 6 May 2009 we built on the earlier success and assisted Wandsworth Community Safety Unit set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. This enabled the residents to monitor the problems and have a clear means of feeding through their concerns and information. Equally we asked them how effective our interventions were.



The location

As a result of the research from both the Community, the Response Team Police Officers and ourselves, it was obvious that certain areas were enabling the behaviour to be sustained.

We made use of the following research on the **Broken Windows Theory** as it so closely reflected our own situation.

James Q. Wilson and George Kelling developed the Broken Windows Theory, which suggests that crime is the almost inevitable result of disorder. They suggested that the following sequence of events could be expected in deteriorating neighbourhoods:

- *Evidence of decay (accumulated refuse, broken windows, deteriorated building exteriors) remains in the neighbourhood for a reasonably long period of time.*
- *People who live and work in the area feel more vulnerable and begin to withdraw. They become less willing to intervene to maintain public order (for example, to attempt to break up groups of rowdy teens loitering on street corners) or to address physical signs of deterioration.*
- *Sensing this, teens and other possible offenders become bolder and intensify their harassment and vandalism. Residents become yet more fearful and withdraw further from community involvement and upkeep.*
- *This atmosphere then attracts offenders from outside the area, who sense that it has become a vulnerable and less risky site for crime.*

We had all of the above and therefore decided to undertake an Environmental Visual Audit and act with others in having all the items resolved. This would enable us to reverse this sequence of events.

We chose to take a number of people with us. We took residents to elicit from them the crucial point of why some areas were fine and some were not. We also took with us a Council Crime Prevention Officer. He was able to contribute on what was present that was detrimental and what was missing that if put in would go some way to negate the environment that enabled the youths to cause anti social behaviour.

We also took with us the Housing Managers for the area. They had also received complaints and they were in a position to have influence over the behaviour of the tenants by way of the tenancy and specific Housing legislation.

We also took the local councillor. We chose to take him with us for a number of reasons. He would be realistic in his expectations. That he could feed back to the community that the police and council were responding to their concerns and doing something about it.

Finally we thought he would be better informed when he would later be lobbying for funding and appreciate the importance of some changes that without that knowledge would not be seen as crucial.



On the 27 January 2009 the Council confirmed that the physical changes suggested in the EVA would take place and the funds were agreed. Below are a number of changes that were made.

The instillation of bollards around the garage area where youths were climbing up onto the garages via parked cars and the reallocation of the area as a motorcycle only bay.

The closure of an enclosed area next to the underpass, as this was not serving any purpose to the residents and was being used by the youths to congregate, intimidating residents using the underpass.

The underpass itself was decorated to make it lighter and cleaner and the regular removal of rubbish items stored in this area was agreed with the council. This was in order to make the area a less attractive place for the youths to congregate, make it more inviting to residents and prevent there from being easy access to items that were being set alight or thrown into the road.

As most of the offending took place at night, extra lighting was installed to illuminate the area in hours of darkness and hopefully go some way to remove the offenders' advantage of anonymity. Especially as the residents were being asked to report individuals behaving anti-socially, which in turn would support ASBO applications and breaches of their tenancy.

The offenders

The research told us that there were four key individuals who accounted for the majority of the crime and disorder. Three of the four actually lived on the estate.

It was decided that like all emerging good practice is a strategy that balances both "support" and "sanctions". The other partners involved were the Youth Offending team, the Housing Department and the Borough ASB team.

On the 5 November 2008 all four were issued with Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's) compiled in partnership with Council Central Housing Team and the Wandsworth Youth Offending Team. These were signed by each respective youth in the presence of a parent.

We followed up with dedicated patrols aimed at supporting the ABCs. These patrols led to a number of the youths involved being arrested between January and April 2009. In some cases receiving custodial sentences. The team supported this by maintaining contemporaneous records of anti-social behaviour so that ASBOs could be sought where appropriate.

On 14 January 2009 we visited all the parents of the youths currently with ABCs. One of the offenders parents seemed to think (as police did) that his behaviour had improved. Another parent was updated on her son's continuing misbehaviour and she said she was grateful for the information nevertheless.



This also gave the parents the opportunity to talk about their children's behaviour. For example one said that her son was not listening to any instruction from her and subsequent social services support was sought.

On the 28 January 2009 as part of offering positive alternatives for the young people we nominated 2 of the youths with ABCs an Army run "Youth Outreach Project". The youths subsequently took part in a team-building day. Both were successful in completing the day and were rewarded with praise and certificates for their involvement. On the 31 March 2009 one of the youths was successful in being selected for a further Outreach Project week in Wales. He was informed and very happy to have been chosen. The other was not selected and was contacted by ourselves and made aware of the opportunities available to him if he wishes to become involved with one of the uniformed cadet forces.

On the 31 March 2009 the family of one the youths subject to an ABC moved off the Sutherland Grove Estate and is now living outside our Borough. We were concerned that we were simply relocating the problem, which meant his overall behaviour would not have been addressed. Therefore we maintained a relationship with the youth and his family and offered our support where needed. We were informed that his behaviour appears to have been effectively curbed by all the interventions and so this appears to be a success story.

On the 9 April 2009 we attended a CAMS (Child Adolescent Mental Health Service) meeting at the Child Adolescent Mental Health office in Battersea on request of one of the offenders parents who had asked for our support. The subsequent meeting appeared to have been a success. CAMS selected which council department was best placed to support the family. The mother expressed her gratitude to our continued support.

On the 21 April 2009 a meeting was held at Wandsworth Housing where we discussed escalating problems at two of the addresses. Plans were developed to consider eviction.

24 April 2009 we arrested a 14-year-old Persistent Young Offender (PYO) during targeted patrols. This youth was one of the 'ringleaders' in relation to the anti-social behaviour on the Sutherland Grove Estate. Having been arrested by the team in similar circumstances a number of times recently, he was subsequently sentenced the next day at Balham Youth Court to a 4 month Detention and Training Order in a secure facility in Kent. This had an immediate and significant impact on the problems.

June 2009 it was becoming apparent that the estate was becoming relatively quiet and that the youths were beginning to congregate and offend in the adjacent neighbouring Fairfield ward. As a result we had discussions with this Safer Neighbourhood Team and agreed to adopt a joint initiative to ensure the overall behaviour was tackled, not just where they were offending.



On the 23 June 2009 Fairfield Safer Neighbourhood Team and ourselves attended a meeting with the Youth Offending Team and we agreed to a new round of ABCs and conditions. One of the offenders was more suitable for an ASBO than an ABC. It was decided that the remaining 8 nominals would get ABCs. Additionally we agreed to carry out a number of joint patrols to tackle problems on Fairfield Ward.

In early July 2009 we spoke to the parents of the additional youths who appeared supportive. Relevant housing authorities were consulted where applicable regarding tenancy. The assistance of Youth Offending Teams from 3 boroughs was also enlisted.

On the 20 July 2009 appointments for the ABCs were arranged. Representatives from Housing, YOTS (on and off Borough) and Police were in attendance. 5 of the 8 individuals signed their ABC. The others refused stating it was not legally binding.

One month on we did an assessment on whether the ABCs were proving to be successful. We discovered no notable reports concerning the problematic areas on both Fairfield and East Putney wards were received.

The above entries demonstrated how we practically applied the strategy of support and sanction by our partners and ourselves.

ASSESSMENT

Evaluation

Residents have expressed a noticeable difference in the atmosphere on the estate, which has also been noticed by the SNT.

Our baseline was 28 Calls for Service relating to ASB, (Nov 2008). In September 2009 there was only 1 Call for Service relating to ASB in the area. This indicates a 96% decrease in ASB activity.

Residents have expressed a noticeable difference in the atmosphere on the estate, which has also been noticed by Police.

Review

The team had a meeting in September 2009 to review what we had learnt from the initiative.

We first identified the things that we did well.

The fact that we, the Police, immediately instigating a partnership approach with Wandsworth Council Housing and the ASB Team to tackle the issue. We were pleased that we involved and gained the support of the local Councillor.



We were pleased that we did the EVA as a partnership and identified the physical aspects of the Sutherland Grove Estate (Strathan Close) that could be improved.

We benefited from the early involvement of subjects' parents.

The fact that we worked in partnership with the Housing Teams and Youth Offending Team in compiling the ABCs and Orders to curb the anti social behaviour.

The continuous patrols were greatly appreciated by the residents, who gave us a direct indicator of what was working and what was not working.

Working in partnership with the neighbouring Safer Neighbourhood Team as soon as problems became apparent elsewhere helped to effectively address the overall behaviour rather than just it's location.

These are the things that could have gone better.

We recognised that we should have started to gather in-depth evidence and impact statements concerning a key individual's behaviour in the early stages of the process, as a failure to do this led to a delay in instigating ASBO procedures.

We should have encouraged the parents of the youths to take more responsibility for their children's action.

Reward others

The residents were phoned and thanked by the Safer Neighbourhood Team. Letters were produced for all of the involved residents and partners, explaining the overall outcome and the importance of their support.

We sent a particular letter of thanks to the manager of Wandsworth Community Safety Project Officer (crime reduction) involved to explain his pivotal role in implementing environmental changes on the estate.

In March 2010 our work on the Sutherland Grove Estate was recognised by the Safer London 'Problem Oriented Partnership' Awards by receiving first prize. As a result of subsequent publicity we ensured that everyone involved in the partnership work was recognised. For example, when we provided the story of our success for the Wandsworth Guardian we ensured that the residents who were prepared to be identified were mentioned and their contributions explained in the subsequent news article.



Sustainability

Both East Putney and Fairfield Safer Neighbourhood teams continue to monitor the youths known to be involved in the above behaviour on a regular basis. The council are also maintaining records of behaviour supporting the youths and their families.

An ASBO file is being maintained regarding one of the group 'ringleaders'. This will allow the police, council and courts to take prompt action should further problems occur when he is released from custody.

The Youth Offending Teams associated with each of the ABC subjects have already offered diversionary activities to the youths involved, with response being received in a number of cases.

The Housing department and Fairfield Safer Neighbourhood Team are closely managing the case of another offender, due to deep underlying issues being outlined during these procedures. These issues concern the mental health and living environment of this family.

Each officer on East Putney SNT has been assigned two of the main subjects involved in the Strathan Close ASB, to research on a quarterly basis.

Closure

Before we closed the Problem Solving initiative we went back to the people who made the initial demand, in this case the residents of Strathan Close and the East Putney Ward Panel. The residents were very pleased with the result. Finally on the 30 September 2009 members of the East Putney Ward Panel agreed to close the initiative.

This concludes details of our problem solving initiative.