

Decision Maker: PUBLIC PROTECTION AND SAFETY POLICY DEVELOPMENT
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 15 September 2015

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: OPERATION CRYSTAL UPDATE

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Chief Officer: Nigel Davies, Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

Ward:

1. Reason for report

This report is to update Members on the progress of Operation Crystal, the MOPAC (Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime)-funded anti-social behaviour initiative to tackle crime, which will run from March 2013 to December 2016, in four hot-spots of the borough.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

2.1 Members are requested to note the points raised in the report and to comment as appropriate.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People Safer Bromley Supporting Independence
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal::
 2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost Non-Recurring Cost Not Applicable: Further Details
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Anti-Social Behaviour Team
 4. Total current budget for this head: £42.2k in 2015/16
 5. Source of funding: Grant funded through MOPAC
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 1.0
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): All residents in hot-spots
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 Operation Crystal is a multi-agency, intelligence-led initiative, which tackles crime and anti-social behaviour in four hot-spots of the borough. The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator was asked to identify key areas for joint operations to target anti-social behaviour, following meetings between the Council's Directors and the Met Police, which established that crime of this nature was generally contained within certain areas of the boroughs, and therefore would benefit from a targeted campaign.
- 3.2 Using both the Police and the Council's data, a mapping exercise was undertaken, which led to the identification of the four hot-spots – Kimmeridge, Riverbirds, and Penge A and B (Groves Estate). A Police Survey of Residents provided insight into the levels of intimidation and anti-social behaviour that residents were facing, which resulted in high levels of dissatisfaction with the area, directed at the Police and the Local Authority. The Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator compiled a number of intelligence reports, mapping out details of the nominals, working with local Safer Neighbourhood teams.
- 3.3 The purpose was to reduce complaints of anti-social behaviour and nuisance, and to improve the public realm and cleanliness of the areas, in order to reduce crime and enhance the quality of life and visual appearance. The approach planned was to undertake a number of highly-visible actions in the course of one day, with one operation a month in each of the locations (i.e. each location visited on a four-month cycle).
- 3.4 An application for grant funding for the project was made to MOPAC and was successful: funding is spread over three years, with £39,370 committed to the project in 2013/14 and £42,200 per annum for each of the next three years.
- 3.5 The aims of Crystal were developed by a multi-agency team chaired by the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator, based on residents' feedback, and were specifically to:
- Clear long-term rubbish in and around the targeted areas;
 - Visibly tackle crime-related matters in the area: in the identified areas, there were a number of high-profile offenders either residing or associating with residents, and they were responsible for a large number of anti-social behaviour and crime;
 - Raise the community's awareness of public services' commitment to the area, in order to reassure the public that crime is being managed;
 - Carry out operations as defined by specific issues raised in the Police Survey of Residents;
 - Find long-term solutions for the issues raised during operations.
- 3.6 Initially, Crystal was led by the Council (including Public Protection, Street Scene – incorporating Kier Street Services – and the Parks and Green Spaces Divisions) with input and support from the Police and the Affinity Sutton Housing Association.
- 3.7 In the first year alone, there was a 58% drop in offences reported to the London Borough of Bromley in the hot spots. Since March 2013, there have been 22 operations. As a result of the operations:
- 84.3 tonnes of fly-tipped waste has been cleared;
 - 868 square metres of graffiti has been cleared;
 - 428 vehicle stops have been carried out, resulting in several arrests and prosecutions;

- 10 FPNs have been issued;
- 42 investigations of benefits fraud have been carried out;
- 23 arrests have been made;
- 10 warrants have been executed, which have led to the recovery of drugs and firearms;
- There have been 11 weapons sweeps;
- 12 ABCs have been issued;
- There have been 9 dog operations;
- There have been 137 HPA visits.

Additionally, public satisfaction (measured through the Police Survey of Residents) demonstrates a 45% increase.

3.8 Each Operation is adapted in accordance with the intelligence received, but, for instance, could include:

- Rubbish and fly-tipping: Enviro-crime Enforcement Officers attend and attempt to obtain evidence regarding fly-tipping offenders. Officers are available to serve enforcement notices if required. Street Scene Officers, together with Affinity Sutton, remove fly-tipped rubbish on the day of the operation. Leaflets are distributed by PCSOs and Housing Officers to residents, explaining the operation, and giving details on how to report offending;
- Graffiti: Street Scene and Affinity Sutton deploy their Graffiti Removal Teams, and, prior to the event, collate all necessary consent forms for graffiti removal on private premises;
- Abandoned vehicles: Street Scene coordinates the Abandoned Vehicles Officers and liaise with the Police regarding visiting sites to serve notices on vehicles prior to the designated week. Street Scene carry out a preliminary visit to the area to identify abandoned vehicles;
- Untaxed vehicles: These are dealt with by the Street Scene Enforcement Officers and Affinity Sutton Officers, in conjunction with the DVLA;
- Anti-social and criminal behaviour: Joint operations are carried out by the Police and Council, as defined by the Police Survey of Residents, intelligence, and reports from various sources, and can include visits, warnings, arrests, or evictions of known individuals. The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and the Police compile a list of individuals alleged to be involved in prolific ASB in the area in advance of each Operation.

3.9 The outcomes of Operation Crystal are communicated to residents through the local press, in order to ensure that residents are aware of the work being undertaken to improve their locality. The impact of this is not only an increase in satisfaction but also increased assistance from residents and Crime Stoppers.

3.10 Crystal is dynamic: the initial brief, as stated above, was to tackle anti-social behaviour, noise nuisance, crime and enviro-crime.

- It now involves a wider range of agencies, including HMRC, Trading Standards, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Probation Service, and the Immigration Service.

- It also includes operations to tackle problem businesses, such as those selling illicit tobacco or alcohol, or those selling to the under-age.
- There has also been focus on emerging gang issues: effort is being made to target gang nominals and young people who have been committing anti-social behaviour, to encourage engagement and participation in diversion activities, such as an upcoming job fair.
- Drug warrants are also now undertaken and are proving successful: they have led to a number of arrests.

In summary, Crystal's brief was a multi-agency approach to tackling problem areas: it fulfils this brief, and working relationships with a wide number of agencies have been successfully developed so that pertinent intelligence is shared and informs actions, to the significant benefit of the community.

3.11 It is envisaged that an exit strategy will commence in the latter part of 2015, so that the benefits will carry on after Crystal. This will involve working with Residents' Associations, Local Authority Councillors, the Police, and local Safer Neighbourhood Boards.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The project outcomes contribute to the Building a Better Bromley priorities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The MOPAC grant provides funding until 31 March 2017, for a full time post which manages the project. One-off costs for fly-tip clearance and other associated cleansing operations are met from existing Council budgets.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 One internal Council post is funded through MOPAC grant monies: the grant will end in 2017, which has implications for the continuing employment of the affected post.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Legal Implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]