

Positively Affecting Lives

Evaluation of Four Anti-Social Behaviour Projects in Wales

Report for Welsh Assembly Government

August 2007



Document Control

Project Title:	Evaluation of Four Anti-Social Behaviour Projects in Wales
MVA Project Number:	C34986/00
Document Type:	Final Report
Directory & File Name:	C:\Documents And Settings\Jwicks\My Documents\Contracts\MNEW\Wales\WAG ASB C34986\Evaluation Of Four Anti-Social Behaviour Projects In Wales Final Report.Doc

Document Approval

Primary Author:	Kate Skellington Orr
Other Author(s):	Susanne Falp Laura Hunt Joanne Christensen
Reviewer(s):	John Wicks
Formatted by:	Lynsey McNeill

Distribution

Issue	Date	Distribution	Comments
1	19/07/2007	John Wicks	Final Draft for Review
2	23/07/2007	Welsh Assembly Government	Final Draft Delivered
3	17/08/2007	John Wicks	Revised Final Draft for Review
4	18/08/2007	Welsh Assembly Government	Revised Final for accuracy check by project teams
5	8/11/2007	Welsh Assembly Government	Final Report

Contents

1	The Research in Context	1.1
1.1	Introduction	1.1
1.2	Anti-Social Behaviour in Wales	1.1
1.3	Community Safety Partnerships	1.2
1.4	Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation	1.3
1.5	The Evaluation Process	1.3
1.6	Research Caveats	1.4
1.7	Report Presentation	1.5
2	The Torfaen Project	2.1
2.1	The Local Context	2.1
2.2	Set Up and Operation	2.2
2.3	Project Impact	2.7
2.4	Cost and Resource Issues	2.13
2.5	Sustainability	2.13
2.6	Summary	2.16
3	The Melin Project	3.1
3.1	The Local Context	3.1
3.2	Set Up and Operation	3.2
3.3	Project Activities	3.8
3.4	Project Impact	3.10
3.5	Costs and Resource Issues	3.21
3.6	Sustainability	3.21
3.7	Summary	3.23
4	The Newport (Lliswerry) Project	4.1
4.1	The Local Context	4.1
4.2	Set Up and Operation	4.2
4.3	Project Impact	4.6
4.4	Cost and Resource Issues	4.12
4.5	Sustainability	4.12
4.6	Summary	4.13
5	The Cardiff Project	5.1
5.1	The Local Context	5.1
5.2	Set Up and Operation	5.2
5.3	Project Impact	5.8
5.4	Cost and Resource Issues	5.19
5.5	Sustainability	5.19
5.6	Summary	5.24

6	Discussion	6.1
6.1	Introduction	6.1
6.2	Defining the Problem	6.2
6.3	Explanatory Models	6.3
6.4	Incidental Learning – What Helps?	6.5
6.5	Incidental Learning – What Hinders?	6.7
6.6	Conclusions	6.10
7	Summary of Learning Points for New Projects	7.1

Figures

Figure 2-1 Total number of anti-social behaviour incidents in Trevethin, St Cadocs and Penygarn	2.12
Figure 3-1 Number of incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit for Neath East from April 2006 to March 2007	3.12
Figure 3-2 Number and type of incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit for Neath East from April 2006 to March 2007	3.13
Figure 3-3 Number and type of incidents of anti-social behaviour by month reported to the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit for Neath East from April 2006 to March 2007	3.14
Figure 3-4 Map of Meadow Road showing the main areas identified by the Groundwork team as being suitable for future landscaping/recreational development	3.17
Figure 5-1 Recorded levels of anti-social behaviour	5.9
Figure 5-2 Types of anti-social behaviour considered to be problematic	5.11
Figure 5-3 Perceived Increase/Decrease in Anti-social Behaviour	5.12
Figure 5-4 Feelings of safety in Cardiff's parks compared to 12 months ago	5.12
Figure 5-5 Perceived importance of anti-social behaviour prevention methods	5.14

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report presents the findings of an independent evaluation of four pilot anti-social behaviour projects in Wales. Funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, the projects ran between April 2006 and March 2007 and operated in four different areas of Wales: Torfaen, Melincryddan (Melin), Lliswerry and Cardiff.

The Welsh Assembly Government takes the problem of anti-social behaviour very seriously and supports Community Safety Partnerships to ensure a joined-up, multi-agency approach to combating the problem in Wales. Each of the 22 Community Safety Partnerships in Wales has designated Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinators who play a strategic role in reducing anti-social behaviour at the local level.

The funding for the four pilot projects was awarded on the basis of detailed proposals submitted by Community Safety Partnerships across the country. Proposals were invited for innovative ways of tackling problems of anti-social behaviour that were of particular concern in their respective localities.

Evaluation Processes

The evaluation took place over an eight-month period between September 2006 and April 2007 and sought to examine how each of the projects was established and managed. Where possible, it also sought to provide an indication of how successful each project had been in achieving its initial aims, and the extent to which they were able to tackle anti-social behaviour within their localities.

An additional aim was to identify incidental learning from the pilots, for example, the most effective ways to measure outcomes or engage with at-risk young people. The specific aims were to:

- systematically collect and analyse information about how the projects were operating during their first year of funding and to identify key factors affecting project implementation;
- identify the key factors and underlying principles which allowed projects to successfully tackle anti-social behaviour;
- where projects were less successful, to identify the factors and underlying principles which can prevent or undermine attempts to reduce antisocial behaviour; and
- assess the extent to which the projects achieved the particular objectives they set when making their submissions for funding.

The evaluation was not a critical review but was essentially about learning for the future. As such, the evaluation was carried out in close collaboration with those managing the schemes. It was non-directive and was flexible in its design to allow for changes in the schemes' operations to be accommodated within the evaluation process. The evaluation essentially involved consultation with the staff and participants involved in each of the four pilot projects, as well as liaison with key stakeholders and partner organisations who supported the schemes in each area. Background literature reviews and analysis of secondary data held by the schemes in relation to the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour pre- and post- pilot were also explored.

The independent evaluation of these four pilot projects was seen as a unique feature of the operation of this pilot programme and as a necessary part in maximising learning from the venture.

Introducing the Schemes

Four very different models were implemented in the pilot areas. Two of the projects sought to work with young people in reducing anti-social behaviour at the local level (Torfaen and Lliswerry) whilst two had a more environmental focus, concentrating on ways of designing out crime in communities and public places as a first step towards reducing nuisance behaviour (Melin and Cardiff).

Given the different models employed by each scheme, it is not possible to compare the outcomes or successes of them all. Indeed, this was never an aim of the evaluation exercise. Instead, what this report seeks to do is outline the key learning from each of the projects which may be used for rationalising the way that similar schemes are developed in the future so as to maximise impact in their local areas.

The Torfaen Project

The 'Time to Engage' project in Torfaen was based on the notion of getting young people more involved in activities which would result in benefits for their community. The scheme was based in three areas of Torfaen: Trevethin, St Cadocs and Penygarn.

Focussing specifically on the most at risk young people in the community, namely those who were already known to be involved in anti-social behaviour, the project used a system of rewards to incentivise young people to spend time working on activities to help others.

A core group of ten young people were targeted by the project. A central tenet of the project was to involve these young people in sharing their own ideas about the types of things which they considered might benefit the community and determining appropriate rewards for taking part in different activities.

The types of activities that the young people undertook included litter picking in the local area, voluntary work on summer camp schemes for young people, painting an anti-graffiti wall in the Trevethin shopping area, working at youth centres, for example in the tuck shops, leaflet drops for various community organisations and gardening for elderly residents.

The type of rewards handed out by the scheme included purchase of bicycles and sports equipment, attendance at canoeing courses, swimming trips and archery lessons. Both the activities for earning credits and the rewards themselves had a physical, outdoor focus – a preference expressed by the young people involved.

Consultation with project participants suggests that the scheme was successful in increasing young people's community participation. For the young people involved, the immediate gratification of receiving rewards was cited as the main way in which they had benefited from the project. That said, they also recognised that they had achieved a greater appreciation of the need to engage with older members of the community in order to understand the origins of their attitudes towards young people, as well as to make older people more aware of young people's needs in the current social climate. There was evidence from the participants that they had developed a greater respect for older members of their community based simply on having spent time in their company and seeing that their efforts to help older people were appreciated. The young people who invested time in cleaning up their community also expressed views which indicated that they had developed a greater sense of community pride and ownership.

Changes in the young people's attitudes were complemented by a noticeable reduction in anti-social behaviour being committed by those involved in the scheme. At the general level, Torfaen experienced

an overall decrease in the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour reported during the project period. This was despite an increase in policing to target anti-social behaviour in the area over the time which would, intuitively, have led to an increase in recorded incidents.

When the project first began, all of the participants were in receipt of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract. However, no more sanctions were issued during the project and a displacement order which had been introduced in the local shopping area to prevent young people hanging around and causing nuisance was removed. This provided further tangible evidence of the success of the project.

The pilot project allowed the project team to explore the role of existing relationships with other youth agencies, and at the same time raised questions about utilising new partnerships. The reliance on internal networks within the youth service has emphasised the importance of collaborative work within the youth arena. Whilst this has benefited the running of this project and influenced the young people's experiences, stakeholders also noted incidental learning outcomes regarding their own understanding of partnership work. As such, the project has also enhanced the local youth workers' understanding of youth culture and aided their personal knowledge of available, and suitable, resources for engaging young people.

Unfortunately, from a limited number of consultations carried out with local residents, it appears that the outcomes of the project were not widely recognised. Local residents demonstrated only limited awareness of the project and some maintained that anti-social behaviour was still a problem in the area.

That said, a model has been developed which the team are confident can be rolled out elsewhere and they seem keen to widen the eligibility criteria in the future to ensure that more young people can benefit from the scheme. Funding to roll-out the model in other areas is currently being pursued.

Overall, the project appears to have had clear benefits for the young people involved and the staff who implemented the scheme. The consultative philosophy of the project appears to be one of the central features which helped in making it a success. The main question that remains is the extent to which work with such small numbers of young people can result in visible and readily identifiable differences in the community.

The Melin Project

The Melin project operated in the Neath East ward of Neath Port Talbot, a recognised Communities First area. Unemployment in Melin is above the national average for Wales and the area has a disproportionately large number of homes that are rented from the local authority, housing associations/registered social landlords.

Previous community surveys carried out in the Melin area suggest that there are considerable differences within the area with regards to the main types of incidents experienced. This made it difficult to operationalise the main issues that needed to be tackled in the area and the project's initial bid for funding was ambitious in that it sought to tackle a wide range of issues over the 12-month period. As the project progressed, however, there was some refinement of the project's objectives and the its remit became a focus on designing out crime through a programme of clean up activities in the local community as a first step towards increasing community pride and ownership among residents in the area.

The Melin project adopted a whole community approach rather than focussing on a specified age range of residents. The main restriction was a geographical one with efforts being concentrated on one main street in the area, Meadow Road, with wider community issues being a secondary concern.

The single biggest activity to be undertaken in this area was an effort to remove fly tipping and tidy up the area of garages in Meadow Road. In the first instance, a rubbish amnesty was carried out to remove small items of rubbish in the area and allow residents to dump unwanted larger items. Considerable efforts then went into organising the removal of a significant amount of refuse that had been dumped in the gardens of houses on the street, along with rubbish (including furniture and white goods) which had been dumped in the Valley. This was completed by the erection of two fences at either end of a row of houses which back onto the local Eaglesbush Valley to prevent anyone from accessing the site for rubbish dumping in the future.

To complement the fly-tipping work, the co-ordinator arranged for a large-scale garden tidy in Meadow Road, and in the communal walkways and lanes that link the community to the town. Brambles, bushes and grass were cut back which exposed rubbish (including a small number of syringes which may have been used for drug taking), which was also removed. The co-ordinator reported that many of the residents in the area had little or no means of maintaining the gardens, many were on short-term tenancies and did not care for their gardens and others were not aware that they had a garden.

The co-ordinator also worked with the local Probation Service to arrange a programme of work to remove some of the dilapidated garages that sit on one of the main pedestrian access routes onto Meadow Road. The garages are privately owned but sit on local authority land. They were considered to be dangerous and a place where local youths and those taking drugs may hang around.

Other activities included clean ups in other streets and work with young people to raise awareness of the consequences of anti-social behaviour. The coordinator was also central to the setting up of three new Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the area and the introduction of a regular article in the local newsletter keeping residents updated with local initiatives designed to tackle anti-social behaviour.

The main outcomes of the project appear to be the significant visual improvements in the area and the introduction of measures to prevent the re-emergence of fly-tipping in the future. The number of incidents of reported anti-social behaviour in the Meadow Road area of Melin also showed some decreases at the times when the project was most active in the area.

Another undisputable project success was the role of the co-ordinator in bringing together key partners in the community to affect change. In particular, the coordinator worked closely with the local authority to initiate several of the tidy up activities and to get local residents involved in setting up a tenants' association.

At the end of the project, there was still a lack of consensus among local residents about the extent to which anti-social behaviour had decreased as a result of the pilot project. Further, there was still some inconsistency in residents' views about whether the area was in need of attention to reduce anti-social behaviour and fear of crime. Indeed, some members of the public reported that they did not consider the area to be unsafe either pre- or post- pilot.

Most importantly, the evaluation failed to uncover robust evidence of attitude change in the area among residents, which is the key to creating long-term change in this model. What this shows is that physical interventions alone may not be sufficient to create long-term change and that this needs to be complemented by an active strategy for educating communities of their own role in ensuring that long-term solutions can be found.

The Lliswerry Project

Based in the east side of Newport, the Lliswerry project focussed specifically on reducing the number of disaffected young people who carry out anti-social behaviour, as a means of reducing fear of crime in the wider community. It also focussed on increasing young people's self-esteem and skills through education.

Known as the 'Young Empowered Lliswerry Leaders' (YELL) project, this pilot engaged both 'at risk' and 'in need' young people through offering youth service provision in an area that had previously received few or no such services. Two youth workers were moved into a local community building to work at the heart of the community in gaining the trust of young people and their parents and to encourage engagement in positive social activities. The staff carried out considerable outreach work to identify young people who would benefit from the scheme and introduced structured programmes of education and recreation to allow young people to develop their personal and social skills.

Unlike the Torfaen project, the Lliswerry scheme sought to reward young people's involvement by allowing them to work towards recognised qualifications and certificates including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which, it was hoped, would assist them in pursuing opportunities later in life. It also sought to develop young people's 'soft skills' including increased self-esteem, sociability, team work and negotiation skills.

Over the twelve months of the pilot, two core groups of young people took part in activities (one boys group and one girls group). They engaged with the project separately with the boys group preceding the girls group.

The boys group met weekly and comprised a core of 8-9 boys attending each week. They undertook a range of social and recreational activities but the main focus of their activity was organising a charity football match with the local police in the area. This event was held during the summer of 2006 and the police later asked for a rematch. All of the boys used the weekly sessions to carry out activities which fell in line with the requirements of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, as well as more broadly-based activities focussing on raising self-esteem and encouraging positive behaviour. Engagement with this group lasted around 16 weeks and was completed early in the pilot year.

The girls group, which had a core of four members, worked with the youth workers one evening a week over a 16 week period, meeting in a local community centre to undertake a range of activities including self-development awareness activities, discussions of social issues such as racism and discrimination, as well as to undertake physical activities (sports and arts). The central remit of the activities was delivering 'citizenship' education. That is, teaching the girls how to achieve change in the community by becoming active citizens and engaging with local residents to work together in tackling local issues.

The single biggest focus of the girls' group was the planning of a charity fashion event that was attended by members of the local community, Councillors and parents as well as other young people, at which over £110 was raised for the Breast Cancer Awareness charity. Over 25 young people were involved on the day, either performing or making up the audience.

The project appears to have provided some positive results for the young people involved, the main outcomes being greater community involvement and achievement of credits towards nationally recognised qualifications. This provided the biggest measure of success.

As with the Torfaen project, however, the main question that remains is the extent to which the work with these small numbers of young people impacted on a reduction in anti-social behaviour in the

Lliswerry area. In particular, how it has helped to reduce fear of crime in line with its original objectives. Whilst it is important to recognise that the lack of data collected to reflect this (which is, perhaps, a limitation of the evaluation project), it seems likely that there would not have been any tangible reduction in incidents due to the narrowly targeted nature of the project with small groups of young people. The team have made it clear that, in order to measure real impacts on reducing levels of anti-social behaviour, a longer period of engagement with young people may be required. They consider that this pilot had enabled them to make a valuable first step towards introducing a youth service presence in a previously un-serviced area and that, as they continue into the future with the funding that they have secured from elsewhere, levels of youth engagement will increase and diversionary activities will help to remove young people from the streets and from carrying out criminal acts or acts of nuisance behaviour.

Further, there is, perhaps, some doubt about the extent to which the project met its aims of engaging the most at risk individuals in the community since the girls group, who may be considered as more 'in need', were those who perhaps benefited most from the pilot. Problems with engaging the 'at risk' boys provided valuable lessons for the future and the team in Lliswerry have used mechanisms such as a formal debriefing exercise to ensure that this learning is not lost.

The conclusion to be drawn is, perhaps, that the model employed only allows for possible reduction in anti-social behaviour to be measured in the medium to long term.

The Cardiff Project

The Cardiff project had the biggest geographical remit of all four pilots, the focus being to reduce anti-social behaviour in Cardiff's parks and open spaces.

The project was based on historical evidence of a number of issues around anti-social behaviour in parks including gangs of youths, underage drinking, joyriding, illegal use of motorcycles, arson, vandalism, intimidation, drug and alcohol abuse, rough sleeping, aggressive begging, violence, dog fouling, litter, fly tipping and numerous other bylaw infringements. Of these, the two issues which were consistently most apparent in official statistics of recorded incidents, as well as being the issues raised most frequently by Council staff working in the parks and complaints received from the public, were sex and drug related litter and nuisance (over 800 needles were recovered in Cardiff parks and open spaces in 2004/05); and motorcycle nuisance. It is against this backdrop that the Cardiff Parks project was established.

In tackling motorcycle nuisance, the project set up new partnership working arrangements between the police and the council to allow them to target specific areas of concern and make arrests/confiscate bikes with greater efficiency. Council staff developed a bespoke database and recording forms that enabled them to keep a record of the main sites of motorcycle nuisance (and other anti-social behaviours) as well as the perpetrators of offences and this intelligence was shared with the police. By sharing their local knowledge of incidents and accompanying police staff to main sites of concern, there was a notable increase in the number of arrests made over the course of the pilot. Outcomes included over 1000 1st stage cautions being issued, 300 anti-social behaviour cautions being issued, 50 stolen motorbikes being recovered, over 200 motorbikes seized, arrests for various offences and numerous individuals reported for various document offences relating to road traffic infringements.

In tackling sex and drug related litter and nuisance, the co-ordinator undertook clean up activities along with park rangers to remove drugs paraphernalia which was hidden in bushes/shrubs around parks, as well as removing the belongings of rough sleepers who were using the parks out of hours. The same individuals who were involved in drug abuse and rough sleeping were also seen to be attracting sex crimes to the parks, for example, with people selling their bodies to earn money to pay for drugs.

Educating rangers to identify signs of drug and sex crimes and giving them support in the safe removal of associated paraphernalia was a focussed effort on behalf of the co-ordinator who was appointed.

A tertiary aim of this project was to divert young people away from carrying out acts of anti-social behaviour in parks by creating more social activities such as the provision of dedicated graffiti walls.

As with some of the other projects, there is little evidence to suggest any real public awareness of the council and police efforts to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour over the pilot period. Further, a park survey carried out as part of the evaluation suggested that some of the main concerns of members of the public using the parks were different from those that were targeted by the project (for example, dog fouling and general litter).

As a result of improved mechanisms for recording incidents of anti-social behaviour that were introduced by this project, it is also difficult to say whether the number of incidents increased or decreased as the pilot progressed. Indeed, an increase in the number of incidents may have been considered a success of the pilot insofar as it provided an indication that the new system of recording was working.

As with the Melin project, one of the greatest measures of success of this project was, perhaps, the role of the project in co-ordinating existing initiatives, rather than through the introduction of any 'new' methods of dealing with anti-social behaviour. The project co-ordinator led the way in improving local partnership working and sharing of intelligence between organisations to ensure a more efficient and collaborative response to anti-social behaviour in parks and this is a model which can be used in the future to continue to target local problems.

Key Findings

All schemes were at least partially successful in meeting their initial stated aims and objectives. In none of the areas were all of the initial stated aims met. In some cases, there was a redefinition of the pilot aims at an early stage, which meant that it was difficult to judge performance against initial targets. Instead, we have attempted to review performance against modified objectives. Whilst this is not problematic in itself, it may indicate a need for greater clarity and rationalisation at the early stages of planning for similar schemes in the future.

In each of the areas there appears to have been either a correlation between the operation of the projects and a reduction in the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour being reported to the police, or engagement with the populations most at risk of carrying out anti-social behaviour. It is, however, difficult to make explicit causal links between any reductions in reported levels of anti-social behaviour and the schemes' operations.

None of the projects have convincingly demonstrated a clear link between their operation and a perceived decrease in anti-social behaviour among members of the local community. Whilst qualitative data with some of the local residents in the areas suggest that the pilot schemes were welcomed, there does not appear to have been widespread awareness or resulting attitudinal change in perceptions of anti-social behaviour per se. Linked to this, it seems that some of the schemes may have been targeting types of anti-social behaviour that were not the main concerns of local people.

The financial and staff resources allocated to each of the projects appear to have been sufficient for a one-year period. Whilst there was a common view that the one-year pilot period was not sufficiently long to create a real presence and make a noticeable difference in the target areas, the schemes all managed

to operate reasonably unconstrained by resource issues over the year. In three cases, continuation funding has been secured.

Each of the pilots has demonstrated excellent practice in partnership working and the pilots appear to have generated much interest across a number of key stakeholder organisations. It seems that the pilots have acted as a driver for change in most areas and that there are sustainable outcomes in each area.

Lessons Learned

Across the four projects, several key points of learning emerged which would seem central to any thinking with regards to the development of similar schemes which may be introduced in the future. These were:

- the need for project aims and objectives to be clearly rationalised and based on evidence of real community need rather than that implied by small number of local people. The projects which appeared to demonstrate the greatest success were those which had the fewest and most clearly defined objectives.
- use of local known staff to ensure that the pilots were up and running as soon as possible after the award of funding and that projects could benefit from local knowledge held by such staff in bringing together local partners in delivery.
- use of local facilities to house the staff employed to work on the pilots. In all cases, it seems that this co-location of staff alongside existing stakeholders for the projects meant that they had easier access to some of the key stakeholders who they were required to work with to ensure the smooth running of projects. Importantly, the use of local accommodation seems to have benefited not only the projects but also those who acted as hosts. Qualitative consultation suggests that there were mutual benefits in sharing accommodation since partners were often able to draw on the skills/experience of the pilot staff.
- effective use of participatory, non directive approaches to working with the target communities. This is especially true of the two pilot projects that worked with young people (Torfaen and Lliswerry) where the young people were consulted at various stages in the year to help shape the way in which the schemes ran.
- creating exit routes for sustainability. The schemes that have demonstrated themselves to have the greatest potential for long-term sustainability are those that have created clear exit routes for their participants.
- in extending the scope of who was being targeted, the schemes seem to have captured participants who may not previously have been considered in scope for reducing or tackling anti-social behaviour. This was especially evidenced in the two schemes that worked with young people since working with young people on the periphery of risky behaviour seems to have helped in accessing the most at-risk friends in their peer groups.
- an unanticipated outcome of the schemes has been the reported levels of staff satisfaction among those employed to work on the projects. Whilst this is perhaps an added benefit of the schemes, it does not necessarily impact directly on reducing or tackling anti-social behaviour, except that increased motivation of staff may have facilitated greater levels of activity during the pilot period and into the future.

- the need for greater community engagement to ensure the long-term success of projects. Almost all of the projects accepted that they had been less successful than originally anticipated in undertaking proactive community engagement.
- arguably, each of the schemes could have benefited from more robust public consultation at an early stage to create a clear picture of the perceived problems regarding anti-social behaviour in the local area.
- where the objectives of the projects were revised during the pilot, it is not always clear that this was undertaken as a result of better understanding of the issues in local areas (which may have been considered positive), but instead, as a result of what was felt to be achievable having reassessed the initial aims and the timeframe available. An alternative interpretation may be that, in some cases, the projects chose to spend more time on tasks that the workers felt comfortable with rather than the more difficult issues that needed to be addressed. This may have been inevitable due the project being 'pilot' projects and is not, in itself, a negative indicator of the way in which the projects were run. Indeed, in all areas the schemes appeared to build on individuals' strengths and individual characteristics, including maximising on local knowledge held by the project staff. Where this would become problematic, however, is if the main focus of the project was directed by the strengths of the project staff such that projects were tailored around staff skills rather than local needs.
- finding a way for alienated young people to make a positive contribution to their communities may have the double benefit that these young people are less likely to behave in inconsiderate or anti-social ways (because of the respect they get from adults in the community) and, at the same time, reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour because the local young people are perceived more positively.
- there was an inherent assumption that the targeted behaviours would result in reduced levels of fear of crime or increased levels of feelings of safety. Despite this, in each of the projects, it might be argued that the main benefits to arise were for participants' quality of life rather than any notable decrease in communities' fear of crime or feelings of safety. This might suggest, again, a need for greater public consultation at an early stage of project planning to ensure that the activities undertaken are matched to the desired changes. It is recognised that this is a challenging target.
- continued funding of such projects may be critical to ensure that nothing undermines the development of durable links between local communities and service providers. The pilot seems to suggest that there is a danger of the schemes simply reinforcing short-term thinking of initiatives and lack of acceptance among communities unless longer-term commitments are made.

Conclusions

The spirit of the pilot schemes as an experimental exercise was, for the most part, embraced by the schemes and almost all were able to reflect on their experiences positively and highlight learning to emerge. The pilots have been useful in kick-starting continued efforts in the local areas and many of the key stakeholders consulted appear to have committed to long-term action to ensure that progress continues to be made.

1 The Research in Context

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 One of the main Welsh Assembly Government policies within the Social Justice and Regeneration Portfolio is to create safer communities and reduce fear of crime. As part of this agenda, the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration announced, in 2005, that the Assembly Government would fund four pilot projects to tackle anti-social behaviour. This report presents the findings from an independent evaluation of those projects.

1.2 Anti-Social Behaviour in Wales

- 1.2.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 builds on existing legislation to clarify, streamline and reinforce the powers that are available to tackle anti-social behaviour. Some of its main provisions are:

- the closure of crack houses;
- tackling environmental crime – stronger powers for local authorities to tackle fly-tipping and graffiti;
- enabling schools, local authorities and youth offending teams to offer a package of support and sanctions for parents to help them address anti-social behaviour by their children;
- extending the powers of environmental health officers to shut down noisy establishments such as pubs and clubs;
- ensuring courts consider the impact of anti-social behaviour on the wider community in all housing possession cases;
- expending the Fixed Penalty Notices scheme for anti-social behaviour to cover nuisance, truancy, graffiti, cycling on a pavement and extending them to 16-17 year olds;
- restricting the use of air weapons and replica guns and banning air cartridge weapons that are easily converted to fire live ammunition;
- improving the operation of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders – by adding housing action trusts to those who can apply for ASBOs in relation to premises owned or managed by them, by enabling a person to be joined in proceedings to enable an order to be made where anti-social acts are material to other court proceedings and by requiring the court, when making an ASBO in respect of a person aged 16, either to make a parenting order to say why it is not making the order;
- enabling the police to disperse groups behaving in an anti-social way;
- extending police powers to deal with illegal raves;
- giving the police a new power to move on unauthorised encampments where there is a relevant site available; and
- new powers to local authorities in England and Wales to deal with complaints about high hedges.

- 1.2.2 *Wales: A Better Country*¹ sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's commitment to reduce the fear of crime and address drug-related crime, including effective treatments for addicts; it focuses on policies to develop strong and safe communities.
- 1.2.3 The Welsh Assembly Government takes the problem of anti-social behaviour very seriously and supports Community Safety Partnerships to ensure a joined up, multi-agency approach to combating the problem in Wales. All Community Safety Partnerships in Wales have designated Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinators who are driving work forward on dealing with nuisance behaviour.
- 1.2.4 In addition, the Welsh Assembly Government's Communities First programme covers 142 of the most deprived wards in Wales. Each area has its own unique social needs, many of which have built up over generations and many of which have been linked to increased levels of anti-social behaviour. The factors involved include high levels of unemployment, transitory populations and lack of social and recreational opportunities. In some areas, the consequences of years of deprivation has resulted in visible effects on the local communities (for example, poor housing and run-down recreational space), as well as less visible indicators of disadvantage, including communities disengaged from participation in bettering their own environment.

1.3 Community Safety Partnerships

- 1.3.1 The 22 Community Safety Partnerships in Wales are each responsible for formulating and implementing a community safety strategy and a strategy for combating substance misuse in their areas. Members include the Chief Officers of police and local authorities, probation, police and fire authorities and local health boards. The partnerships encourage wider community involvement from local businesses, the voluntary sector, community groups and the public. The Partnership provisions of the Crime and Justice Act 2006 to make Community Safety Partnerships a more effective vehicle for tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in their communities and they are approaching local problems with a range of projects tailored to identified priorities.
- 1.3.2 In 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government invited the 22 Welsh Community Safety Partnerships to submit proposals for four anti-social behaviour pilot projects where partner agencies introduce linked interventions to address anti-social behaviour and improve the quality of lives in local communities. The Partnerships were asked to submit applications for projects that focussed on communities where there was evidence of neglect and decay in the built environment, erosion of attitudes of good citizenship and respect; unacceptable levels of offending and nuisance behaviour and a need to reassure those made fearful.
- 1.3.3 Thirteen proposals were received and four were awarded funding for a period of one year, commencing in April 2006. The four successful projects represented four different and innovative approaches to tackling specific problems of anti-social behaviour in their respective areas.

¹ Welsh Assembly Government (2003) *Wales: A Better Country*, The Strategic Agenda of the Welsh Assembly Government

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Evaluation

- 1.4.1 The evaluation sought to examine how each of these projects was established and managed since they began in April 2006. Where possible, it also sought to provide an indication of how successful each project had been in achieving its initial aims, and the extent to which they were able to tackle anti-social behaviour within their localities.
- 1.4.2 An additional aim was to identify incidental learning from the pilots, for example, the most effective ways to measure outcomes or engage with at-risk young people. The specific aims were to:
- systematically collect and analyse information about how the projects were operating during their first year of funding and to identify key factors affecting project implementation;
 - identify the key factors and underlying principles which allowed projects to successfully tackle anti-social behaviour;
 - where projects were less successful, to identify the factors and underlying principles which can prevent or undermine attempts to reduce antisocial behaviour; and
 - assess the extent to which the projects achieved the particular objectives they set when making their submissions for funding.
- 1.4.3 It is important to stress that the evaluation was not a critical review but was essentially about learning for the future.
- 1.4.4 The evaluation did not seek to compare the schemes that were implemented; rather, it sought to identify the key aspects of each which had acted as barriers or facilitators to reducing anti-social behaviour. That said, there were some inevitable similarities in the way in which the projects were implemented which meant that, on occasion, it was possible to compare and contrast the schemes.

1.5 The Evaluation Process

- 1.5.1 In order to assess the effectiveness and success of the schemes, a mixed-methods approach was employed that was largely dictated by the activities in each of the areas and was sufficiently flexible to allow key stakeholders to be consulted on the pilot operation.
- 1.5.2 In each of the areas, the main project staff were visited at least three times; at baseline, mid-year and at the end of the project. Given the timing of the evaluation start-up, this meant that visits took place in the early autumn of 2006, at Christmas/New Year and in March 2007. These interviews essentially provided an opportunity to speak with those managing and implementing the projects to explore progress to date as well as any problems encountered in achieving the initial aims and objectives as set out by each project.
- 1.5.3 In each of the areas, this project team liaison was complemented by separate consultation activity with local stakeholders and project participants. For each area, this included:
- **Cardiff:** a focus group with park rangers, a park users' survey and telephone interviews with local key stakeholders including members of the public;

- **Melin:** face-to-face and telephone interviews with partners in delivery, informal interviews with local residents and analysis of data from baseline and end of year residents' surveys;
- **Torfaen:** a focus group with project participants, a community survey, interviews with local residents and business owners and analysis of baseline survey data; and
- **Lliswerry:** interviews with Community Development staff and other local stakeholders, participant observation at two youth events and a focus group with young people.

1.5.4 In all of the projects, a background contextual review was also undertaken along with collation of secondary data for analysis. This essentially involved reviewing local documents such as Community Safety Strategies (for Cardiff, Neath Port Talbot and Newport), exploring 2001 Census data for the different areas and reviewing the local authority websites for the four areas to build up a composite picture of the local community demographics and broader local policy contexts in which the schemes were operating.

1.5.5 The evaluation of these pilot projects was seen as integral to the pilot process and was, in many ways, quite unique for projects of this kind being set up in Wales. Participation in the evaluation was also a stipulated requirement of funding for the four areas since it was considered essential that the pilots be used as a learning exercise for the future.

1.6 Research Caveats

1.6.1 The evaluation commenced some five months after the pilot projects had been established (September 2006) and ran until the end of April 2007. This meant that the evaluation was partially retrospective and was unable to collect some of the data directly, especially that related to the early days of the pilot schemes. Consequently, the evaluation had to use data collected by others, including those working on the pilots.

1.6.2 For some of the schemes, baseline surveys were carried out with local residents in the target areas to measure such things as fear of crime, feelings of safety and perceived levels of anti-social behaviour in their respective areas. These surveys were designed and administered before the evaluation team commenced its work and, as such, the survey forms were not independently assessed for quality. In almost all cases, the data generated by these surveys was somewhat crude and was difficult to analyse using robust interrogation methods.

1.6.3 Wherever possible, the research attempted to use data (both quantitative and qualitative) collected from outside of the schemes to provide an independent measure of their impact. That said, in some areas, the project activity was targeted at such small areas that it was not possible to use police-recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour, for example to measure success, since the statistics were collected at a larger geographical level. In these cases, the evaluation team depended largely on the incident data collected by individual schemes. It is important to recognise that some of these data may have been subject to bias introduced by the nature of the schemes themselves and the micro-level recording practices set up. In short, there is no common measure by which the success of all four of the schemes can be measured. This was not considered problematic, however, since the different aims and objectives of the four area pilots meant that the measurable outcomes were always intended to be different.

- 1.6.4 The evaluation was independent. It was non-directive and no attempt was made to lead or influence the schemes to change their practices during the pilot period, as this could potentially skew the evaluation findings. That said, the evaluation was not completely detached from the schemes' operations and many of the questions that were presented to the project teams over the evaluation period were designed to probe and explore possible areas which might require additional attention as the schemes evolved. Essentially, however, all changes that were made to the operation and implementation of the schemes were driven by the respective project managers, and not by the evaluation team.
- 1.6.5 Finally, both the pilot projects and the evaluation were time-limited. It was made clear to the four projects from the outset that funding would only be made available for one year and that there were no plans to continue or roll-out schemes in the medium or long term. Similarly, the evaluation ran for only seven months, ending at the same time as the pilot project funding. It is important to note that these time constraints will have inevitably restricted the scope of both the projects themselves and the evaluation. There is, therefore, a limit to what can be learnt from a short-term exercise and this report is written in the awareness that many of the real outcomes from the projects may not have been captured. This would be possible only with a longitudinal research design.

1.7 Report Presentation

- 1.7.1 The remainder of this report sets out the findings from the evaluation process. Chapters two to five address each of the projects in turn and make observations regarding the main learning points to emerge from each area pilot. It should be noted that, whilst attempts have been made to keep a common structure to the way in which information is presented for each project, the difference in data availability and the methods used for evaluating each of the four projects has resulted in some of the chapters being longer than others. The space attributed to each project in this report should not, in any way, be taken as a reflection of the relative value, importance or success of the projects.
- 1.7.2 Chapter six provides an overview of the incidental learning to arise from the four pilot projects and draws some conclusions regarding the success or otherwise of each of the schemes in addressing anti-social behaviour.
- 1.7.3 Again, it was made clear at the pilot inception stage that the four pilot projects would be funded for only one year and so this report does not attempt to make recommendations for how these schemes might be continued into the future. Individual chapters do explore the sustainability of the models that were adopted and it is assumed that this report will contribute to any future decisions regarding potential roll-out of similar schemes, rather than making direct recommendations about the continuation of these specific projects.

2 The Torfaen Project

2.1 The Local Context

- 2.1.1 The 'Time to Engage' project was based in three areas of Torfaen: Trevethin, St Cadocs and Penygarn. The choice of this area was influenced by indicators of need including deprivation, crime statistics and anti-social behaviour, historical issues (with hostility being expressed towards newcomers to the area) and issues related to inter-generational conflict within small localities.
- 2.1.2 Before the start of the project, anti-social behaviour on local public transport networks had been identified as an inherent problem. This included attacks on bus drivers and general disruptive behaviour to other passengers. Local residents had also experienced attacks on their own vehicles, mostly vandalism related. Anti-social behaviour issues also extended to the shopping area in Trevethin. A dispersal order was used by the Police to prohibit the presence of young people in this area during evenings and weekends, as they were considered to be hanging around and intimidating older residents.
- 2.1.3 In September 2006, the main secondary school in Trevethin was closed. This further emphasised the need to signpost young people to other schools or suitable projects engaging youth culture and encouraging their participation in the community. Torfaen had a greater need to minimise any possibility of anti-social behaviour occurring, or potentially increasing, as a result of the school closure.
- 2.1.4 Due to the social landscape of the area, and its long-term association with anti-social behaviour problems, other initiatives existed within Torfaen before the Time to Engage project was implemented. Some of these specifically focused on young people, whilst others were more wide ranging. Examples of such groups included: Communities First, Police Community Support Officers, and drugs/alcohol workers from Social Services, all of which were involved in engaging excluded or disaffected individuals.
- 2.1.5 The geographical location in which Time to Engage was based comprised areas of high social deprivation. The area has a history of problems with anti-social behaviour, the main instigators being young people in the area. That said, anecdotal evidence collected at the start of the evaluation from informal interviews with project staff suggested that the area also experienced some problems with adults in the community demonstrating negative attitudes towards authority, a lack of community participation and feelings of negativity with regards to the potential for positive change in the local social climate. Issues around unemployment and social transience compounded this generally downbeat community spirit.
- 2.1.6 A commitment to confronting these background issues was apparent throughout discussions with those involved in defining the Time to Engage project and implementing it. This was important, it was noted, in order that the wider social environment in which the project was delivered did not hinder the long-term success of the project. Socialisation of the wider community was clearly beyond the scope of the project but the team's awareness of the wider social climate in Torfaen meant that they were able to take this into account in implementing the scheme.

2.2 Set Up and Operation

Defining the Project

2.2.1 When initially defining the scope of the project, the following objectives were set out by the project team:

- to recognise and tackle the effect of severe disadvantage and social exclusion amongst young people;
- to facilitate a meaningful contribution by young offenders and potential offenders to the development of their community, for the benefit of the community;
- to provide opportunities and support to young offenders to enable them to overcome existing disadvantage, and widen their social participation; and
- to offer the possibility of young offenders re-engaging through voluntary activity in which both the community in general and young people specifically see themselves as 'winners'.

2.2.2 The Torfaen project was underpinned by the concept of Timebanking. The idea of timebanks was devised by Edgar Cahn at the London School of Economics and was originally implemented in the USA. It is based around the idea of 'community enterprise' and enhancing social relationships through a community currency based on time. That is, people earn rewards for investing in positive social activities which are of benefit to the whole community, rather than the individual alone. The first 'official' timebanks opened in the UK in 1998.

2.2.3 Time to Engage adopted this philosophy with those involved in the project banking the time they spent on community activities in exchange for rewards. Although some members of the community showed concerns towards *"rewarding the baddies"* [Local resident], the project staff identified this aspect as essential for instigating an interest in the project amongst young people.

2.2.4 The project's co-ordinator described the importance of ensuring all rewards were tailored around the needs of each individual participant. As such, the reward scheme was structured so that participants were able to link rewards to their personal development plans or use them for helping other members of the community. This strategy enhanced the scope of the project's design by creating a more personalised resource for young people and also linked in with the objectives aimed at the community level.

2.2.5 The secondary aspect of the project highlighted the need to minimise the fear of anti-social behaviour within the local area. Interviewees had identified that the community's perspectives on anti-social behaviour were deeply embedded within their value systems (ie a scepticism that positive change could occur through better crime prevention enforcement or community participation by local residents). Attempting to change these attitudes was, perhaps, a little too ambitious for the pilot project to accomplish alone.

2.2.6 As a result, young people were the targeted audience in the design of the project. It was also hoped that working with younger members of the community may have an indirect impact on changing attitudes within the family environment, and perhaps reaching the wider community. It was stated by the project team that *"the young people have remained the central focus throughout."* [Project Team Member]

- 2.2.7 Despite the intention to use the young people as vehicles for changing attitudes amongst local residents, it was beyond the confines of this research to assess the project's long-term impact on wider social structures. Longitudinal research with the community, coupled with continued contact with the project team and participants would provide a more comprehensive understanding of any wider effects.
- 2.2.8 The specific identity of the project was designed to attend to some of the main anti-social behaviour issues facing residents in Torfaen. According to the views of the community these included: reducing numbers of young people "*hanging around*", stopping under-age drinking, (especially in public places) and removing graffiti. Despite the clarity of these aims, some of the project's objectives, particularly those relating to deeper attitudinal change, remained larger than the realistic remit of its operation.

Baseline Survey

- 2.2.9 In defining the project, the team undertook a survey of local residents' views. A single survey form was designed which was administered to four separate groups in the community, namely, school children in years seven, eight and nine as well as to a small sample of local residents. The total number of questionnaires returned was 107.
- 2.2.10 The questionnaire asked respondents how safe they felt at various times in their own home and walking around the community (using a scale of one to ten where one was 'not very safe' and ten was 'very safe'). Feelings of safety at home and walking around the community in the daytime were generally high (averaging around 8 out of 10 on the safety scale). Ratings for feelings of safety whilst walking around the community at night time were lower, averaging around 6 out of 10.
- 2.2.11 When asked about crimes affecting the area, under-age drinking was considered to be the most significant issue (63%), whilst drug taking/dealing was second (52%) and anti-social behaviour third (47%).
- 2.2.12 Respondents suggested that teenagers aged between 17 and 20 years old were responsible for the majority of crime in the area (59%). Those least likely to be considered as responsible for crime were those aged over 40 (4%).
- 2.2.13 Respondents were asked for suggestions as to how crime might be reduced in the area. As well as enforcement measures such as an increased police presence and CCTV, respondents also mentioned an increase in youth facilities as a way to decrease levels of crime in the area.

Project Implementation

- 2.2.14 Time to Engage began operating in May 2006. The first months of the project involved recruiting the participants and establishing some sessional work to introduce the young people into the scheme. This tactic offered a useful familiarisation process for the youth workers and enabled the participants to immediately begin working with the project staff, whilst the administration and management structures were still being established.
- 2.2.15 The team originally identified those they wished to engage as the top ten young people most at risk of participating in anti-social behaviour in Torfaen. This process involved a meeting between the local Community Safety Sergeant, the Project Leader from the local Youth

Service, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Officer and a representative from the local Community Safety Team. This small gathering shared intelligence from their respective organisations regarding those who might benefit most from engaging in the project. Although the team were aware that this strategy might have restricted the impact of the project, it was hoped that *“by taking out the ring leaders we can also reach other young people in the area, but indirectly.”* [Project worker]

- 2.2.16 Eight of the original ten members worked continuously with the team for the duration of the project. A further two were described by the project team as having *“dipped in and out”*. Essentially, these two showed less consistent behaviour with regards attendance at organised meetings and did not demonstrate any active interest in seeking out information on planned activities. Although no hard evidence is available, the project staff also indicated that there had been some ‘ripple effects’ of working with this core of ten people. They suggested that young people had passed on positive messages to their peers about the scheme and this was evidenced in a total of 86 young people accessing the project over the course of one year.
- 2.2.17 A youth centre at New Inn was used as a base for the project’s co-ordinator and youth workers. Rooms downstairs acted as a dedicated space for the young people, whilst the upstairs office space was used to record activities, credits and rewards. This was accomplished through use of an electronic database to keep information up-to-date and secure.
- 2.2.18 Despite originally intending to work closely with local schools, this did not happen for several reasons. Firstly, the closure of the secondary school severely limited possibilities for collaborating with schools. Secondly, as a result of this, the project’s participants were not automatically attached to a particular school, and so the agenda moved away from this initial focus in order to capture the young people in more appropriate settings. Consequently, the project team concentrated efforts in youth centres and with other youth groups in the area.

The Project Team

- 2.2.19 The project operated with a core team of one project manager, a co-ordinator, two part-time youth workers and an administrative assistant to organise the project’s finances. Whilst the project manager’s role required minimal contact with the young people, the youth workers took a more hands-on approach to the running of the activities and supervision of the participants. The co-ordinator adopted more of an intermediary role that included managing the project, organising activities and rewards, as well as conducting sessions with participants to complete individual development plans.
- 2.2.20 The project co-ordinator spent approximately half of her time on this project, whilst her remaining time was dedicated to other youth work in the area. However, due to the nature of the youth service, the time spent with the Time to Engage participants was not easily separated from other projects or restricted to set days or times. This was also because some of the project’s participants were involved in other youth activities organised by the co-ordinator.
- 2.2.21 Interviews with the project staff highlighted that the project co-ordinator’s role had been fundamental in establishing the pilot and beginning its speedy operation. The co-ordinator’s

previous positions within youth related areas of work proved an extremely valuable resource throughout the operation of the project.

- 2.2.22 The personal knowledge and experiences of the project's co-ordinator minimised the need for exploratory work to assess available resources or possible activities for the participants working with the team. Previous work within the youth service arena had shown that young people in this community had specific interests. Consequently, the co-ordinator was able to draw on informal networks within the youth service to ensure that the project progressed at a quicker rate than expected. This was described as an essential dimension to the operation of the project:

"Most of the people involved have been people known to us and so also known to the tasks required for the project and been able to drive the project." [Project Worker]

"I have worked as a development worker in Torfaen, as an outreach worker and detached worker so I was known by the young people and could hit the project running rather than an outsider coming in and having to build relationships." [Project Worker]

- 2.2.23 Although the project co-ordinator relied on past experiences of youth work when establishing a framework for the project, the team was also keen to experiment with new types of activities for the participants. Throughout the project the young people were provided with opportunities to make suggestions about areas of interest they would like to pursue. This strategy ensured that Time to Engage met the needs of its participants rather than offering unrealistic opportunities or restricting their experiences in any way.
- 2.2.24 In addition to this small group of dedicated staff, a Management Committee was established at the beginning of the project. Meetings were held at regular intervals throughout the project in various youth centres in Torfaen. The role of this group centred on the progress of the project and created a discussion forum in which to encourage partnership work and share information on anti-social behaviour. These meetings were attended by representatives from other youth groups in the area, the police force and some of the young people themselves.
- 2.2.25 The Management group created opportunities for sharing information and proved to be a useful resource during the operation of the project. It was noted during several interviews with the Management team that the group discussions had also offered important learning opportunities through feedback sessions with the young people.

Project Activities and Rewards

- 2.2.26 A participatory agenda permeated the ethos of the entire project. As such, the young people's involvement in the design of the project was especially valued by the project staff and was described as a key feature in securing the success of its operation. Interviewees agreed that it was imperative to involve the young people as much as possible in all aspects of the project's organisation and any decision-making processes. This ranged from the types of activities they undertook to the rewards offered in exchange for their credits:

"They would come weekly with suggestions for what they could do in the following week and obviously the learning part of that was that things don't happen over night, so we would sit with them and plan what equipment we would need and it would take place...similarly for the rewards and working out their credits." [Project Worker]

2.2.27 As well as the project team, the young people themselves noted that the participatory approach had allowed participants to take ownership of the project. This resulted in the design of a tailored programme that considered individual needs, as well as creating an open relationship between participants and staff members.

2.2.28 The young people were keen to work outdoors, thus encouraging the project staff to organise suitable activities with appropriate supervision. Examples of project activities, most of which were conceptualised by the young people themselves, included:

- litter picking in the local area;
- voluntary work on summer camp schemes for young people;
- painting an anti-graffiti wall in the Trevethin shopping area;
- working at youth centres, for example, in the tuck shops;
- leaflet drops for various community organisations; and
- gardening for elderly residents.

2.2.29 The rewards offered in exchange for participants' credits were more wide ranging than originally planned, and were also used to provide a more tailored service for the participants. The team used the rewards to enhance the outcomes of the project by supplying useful rewards that benefited the participants' personal circumstances and went some way towards achieving their personal development plans. Rewards comprised individual objects, as well as collective resources for the group, and community. Examples included:

- bicycles;
- sports equipment;
- canoeing courses;
- swimming trips; and
- archery lessons.

2.2.30 It was agreed between the stakeholders that the 'credits' and 'rewards' concepts were central to the operation of the project. This terminology had been especially useful in recruiting participants for the project and gaining their initial interest in the scheme; this was described as a crucial aspect for establishing the project:

"The rewards acted as an incentive for the young people in the first place; otherwise they probably wouldn't have just volunteered." [Project Worker]

2.2.31 Participants also agreed that the underpinning concepts of Time to Engage had made the project stand out from other schemes orientated towards engaging young people. In addition to gaining their interest, the rewards provided a way in which the young people could also be winners, as stated in the project's original aims, and supply immediate gratification for their efforts:

"Due to the commitment that the young people showed, the range of rewards has increased as the community have approached us about doing jobs in the local area too,

originally we thought a few litter picks but they have now got allotments² and helped elderly people with their gardens, cleared up paths in the local residential areas. That was their suggestion, coming from them all the time, and something we didn't think we would have in the beginning." [Project Worker]

- 2.2.32 The consultative element of the project was, in fact, a key success and the role of the young people in determining both the credit and reward activities offers an example of this.

2.3 Project Impact

- 2.3.1 Many impacts were detailed during discussions with the participants, project staff, stakeholders and wider community. These perspectives illustrated a spectrum of outcomes for the young people and residents in the locality.

Participants

- 2.3.2 Participants were keen to point out that the immediate impact of their participation in Time to Engage was mainly related to the credits and rewards scheme. This was because the scheme had provided a range of new activities for the young people to try out. Furthermore, the rewards acted as an important incentive to gain young people's interest in the project and maintain their enjoyment in the activities. For example, one participant particularly enjoyed the archery lessons, whilst another felt that *"Go-karting was quality, I hadn't been before so I probably wouldn't have gone if it wasn't for this project."* [Project Participant]

- 2.3.3 When participants were asked how they spent their spare time before the project, they indicated that they were uninterested in engaging with the community. Their spare time was often restricted to computer games or 'hanging around'. In comparison, when thinking about their experiences throughout the project, participants indicated an enthusiastic attitude towards new activities and recognised their own involvement within the community:

"We've done lots to clean up the community, we've been on litter picks, we've done old people's gardens because they're not able to do it themselves and we went down the residential home and like planted flowers down there and tidied up the gardens, cleared some of the paths too." [Project Participant]

- 2.3.4 This evidence suggests that the project was able to enhance participants' social participation and thus strengthen their community engagement in line with the project's objectives.

- 2.3.5 It was suggested by the project staff that the intensity of this work had been successful in ensuring that *"the young people about to enter the criminal justice system had been completely turned around"* [Project Worker]. However, it was unclear as to whether this impact was primarily due to the specific types of events or merely the fact that the young people were kept occupied.

- 2.3.6 The staff view was supported by the evidence that the one participant who had received an ASBO before the start of the project had since had some of the restrictions removed. In addition, the Community Safety Team had not issued any warning letters or Acceptable

² The young people were involved in maintaining allotments that were already in place in order to achieve credits, rather than acting as a reward. See paragraph 2.3.14

Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) to young people in the local area since the start of the project. Although this strongly suggests that the participants had improved their behaviour, this change may not have solely been due to the impact of Time to Engage.

- 2.3.7 Other outcomes noted included the personal development of the participants. The project team's dedication to the participatory agenda appears to have encouraged the young people to become more independent. This was achieved by allowing participants to take more control in organising activities and rewards. Consequently, the project enabled participants to take on more responsibility thus creating further opportunities for them to gain better people skills. This strategy was thought to have been *"part of confidence building, even though it's all fun too."* [Project Team Member]
- 2.3.8 Similarly, participants believed that the project experience had impacted on their behaviour around other young people and project staff, as well as the community. The group identified subsequent changes in their attitudes. For example, one participant noted that he *"didn't used to like talking to 'general' people [adults] but now I do."* Another participant had similar views: *"I didn't used to respect my elders, but now I do I reckon."* These attitudes were seen to have arisen from the young people spending more time speaking with adults in their communities, primarily as recipients of the young people's time-banking activities. The young people had come to realise that older people were not always critical of youth and that they could be viewed positively by adults if they contributed to the social good.
- 2.3.9 These impacts were recognised in both the short and long-term but were closely associated with the project's participatory agenda. It was the viewpoint of stakeholders that the pilot had been able to have a meaningful impact where other projects had not because all of the young people who took part in the scheme had been consulted about what they would like to do to earn credits, as well as to spend their rewards. The project team had *"listened to them and respected their suggestions, which encourages them to respect others back."* [Youth Service Representative] Mutual respect gained from listening to the views of others and having others listen to your own views was a 'soft skill' which this project was able to teach.
- 2.3.10 Another stakeholder commented on the repercussions this had for the participants:
- "They tell us they are bored and we ask them what they want to do with their time. It's about engaging them and treating them with respect and you'd be surprised about the impact it has on their behaviour. You don't dictate to them but treat them with respect, involve them and then they feel more involved and take more pride in the activity or their behaviour."* [Youth Service Representative]
- 2.3.11 Furthermore, participants suggested that this strategy also extended into the community and that residents consequently respected the young people more due to their active involvement in the community. When asked to describe their most memorable experience from the project, one participant demonstrated their particular support for the gardening projects:
- "Doing old people's gardens was the best, because you know you've done something to help them, made it a lot tidier and you gain more respect back from them for doing that."* [Project Participant]
- 2.3.12 These perspectives illustrate how the project was able to facilitate a meaningful contribution to the community by the young people involved in the project, as stated in the initial aims.

According to stakeholders and participants, it was assumed that this achievement would have longer lasting impacts due to the changes in attitude, and subsequent behaviour, which had been instilled during the operation of the project. The consultative element of this project was, undoubtedly, one of its main successes.

- 2.3.13 In addition to modifying behaviour and attitudes, the project also enabled the young people to gain educational achievements. The youth workers noted that *“The boys have also benefited in their careers. Like [name] has been working with painters and decorators and [name] is now training as a mechanic. They have had a taster for what they like and then they’re away.” [Project Participant]* According to participants, the project had acted as a useful forum to experience vocational activities and improve their knowledge of working environments. The project team suggested that such experiences enhanced their future potential inclusion in the workforce, despite their lack of qualifications gained through the educational system. This was considered to be a significant achievement of the project.
- 2.3.14 It was noted by the project team that the programme of activities had created more opportunities for the young people to experience otherwise unobtainable skills. The team were keen to introduce information technology into the project; many of the participants did not have access to such facilities prior to their involvement in the project.
- 2.3.15 According to stakeholders, working with the young people had also gone some way to influence attitudes within the family environment. One interviewee spoke about a selection of the group who had been involved in growing a vegetable garden. This proved a useful task in many ways, as detailed in the following quote:

“We’ve got an allotment project going on too which helps the environment and breeds life skills too. They grow their own food, cut it and eat it, things that they have probably never tried before and wouldn’t have otherwise. They try more stuff as they have grown it and cooked it. It makes a real impact and educates them about food; giving them knowledge that they can then take home, life at home has got to be easier as they tell their parents about things they have learnt about. They go home enthusiastic about it and want to share experiences.” [Local Resident]

- 2.3.16 The Time to Engage pilot has offered direct benefits for the young people by providing a focused agenda of activities to usefully occupy their spare time and through doing so has encouraged them to take ownership of their behaviour, as well as the project itself. This has created positive outcomes for the participants’ personal development and created a more inclusive framework for the project in which the young people feel happier and more confident to engage with the community.

Community

- 2.3.17 Written comments provided to the evaluation team from nine local residents, as well as informal, semi-structured interviews with three local residents revealed the outcomes of the project for the community as secondary to the impact on the participants. However, discussions with residents, together with statistics from the police, illustrate some of the corollary effects of the pilot within the local area.
- 2.3.18 Questionnaires returned as part of the baseline survey at the start of the project suggested that local residents strongly agreed that anti-social behaviour was a problem before the project began. Our informal consultation at the end of the project suggested that this

perspective had not changed. Despite the project's operation over the previous 11 months, the residents that we spoke to maintained that anti-social behaviour still needed to be reduced in Torfaen.

- 2.3.19 Consultees identified the main anti-social behaviour problems in the community as issues relating to the presence of young people in public areas. Generally, the residents who returned written comments to us felt that young people *'hanging around'* in groups was the main cause of problems, especially around the shops in Trevethin. Other issues identified by this small number of residents included:

- under age drinking;
- smoking;
- loud music; and
- vandalism.

- 2.3.20 Furthermore, when asked about the age of those committing the most anti-social behaviour in the area, the written responses indicated that it was attributed to young people, aged under 24. That said, among the few written contributions that were received, it was difficult to make any general assumptions about community views with regards to the age of the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. Indeed, opinions were also expressed that 'young people' included those up to the age of 35 and two members of the community also suggested that people over 65 years old commit anti-social behaviour. These views are clearly idiosyncratic and cannot be taken as a reliable indicator either of the problems that continue to exist in the community or the views of the community per se.

- 2.3.21 Whilst public awareness about Time to Engage was not as high as the team anticipated in the early stages of the project, those that had heard of the project felt that it had helped in the reduction of anti-social behaviour.

- 2.3.22 When asked to explain the ways in which the project had helped to manage behaviour, residents noted that, *"it's a lot quieter now" with "a bit less graffiti."* [Local Resident] Although a small group within the community were aware of the tangible outcomes of the project, most of the residents who were interviewed did not think that levels of anti-social behaviour had been reduced. Given that the project team was able to demonstrate a decrease in the actual sanctions handed out to young people after their pilot project involvement³, these views perhaps indicate a lack of public awareness of the outcomes rather than a lack of achievement made by the scheme.

- 2.3.23 Despite minimal public awareness regarding the project, the team thought the project had had an impact on the local social setting. These impacts included providing positive role models amongst young people:

"It works as a kind of role model thing; they look up to these young people anyway. They normally look up to the ones causing the trouble on the estate through fear or whatever, but now they see these young people working on the projects and say hang on, that's a great difference." [Project Worker]

³ See paragraph 2.3.28

- 2.3.24 Coupled with this suggested change in role model behaviour, there was increased ownership by young people of their impact in the community. This was particularly related to the wall which they had painted with anti-graffiti paint:

"It's important to them, like when they painted the anti-graffiti paint on the wall near the shops. Soon after that another bunch of kids came along and messed it up but they went over and stopped them and said hang on because they think of it as their property."
[Project Worker]

- 2.3.25 The project also led to more favourable images of the participants in the community. This was related to the belief that *"Young people seem less scary as they've seen them in Mr Bloggs garden up the road doing gardening and helping out with jobs."* [Project Worker]

- 2.3.26 Consequently, the project appears to have assisted young people in affirming a more constructive image of their own presence within the community. At present, this is only within certain sections of the community. Nevertheless, there remains the possibility that these views may filter into other sections of the local community and that other residents may acknowledge the contribution of the young people.

Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

- 2.3.27 The project has gone some way to combating disruptive behaviour in the community. Despite minimal recognition within the local community, discussions with a representative from the local police uncovered the extent of the project's impact on anti-social behaviour in the locality.

- 2.3.28 When the project first began, all of the participants were in receipt of an ABC and were described as *"particularly difficult youngsters."* [Stakeholder] However, no more sanctions were issued during the project and the displacement order was removed from the shops in Trevethin. Whilst Time to Engage has *"helped towards reducing anti-social behaviour, it is not just the project alone which has accomplished this."* [Project Team Member] As indicated during discussions with stakeholders, the young people have worked between various youth groups throughout the duration of the pilot project, and this coupled with other less obvious influences such as growing maturity and confidence, seems to have lessened the extent of anti-social behaviour amongst this particular group of individuals. This decrease in the need for sanctions is a clear indicator of the success of the project in reducing anti-social behaviour.

- 2.3.29 In addition to the tangible outcomes of the young people's work, the police representative felt that the subsequent change in attitude amongst this age group was much more beneficial. This was because *"the youths are putting something back in, making it a better place to live rather than destroying it."* [Local Resident] This suggests that enhancing levels of ownership by increasing community engagements can perhaps help reduce anti-social behaviour by young people.

- 2.3.30 This change in attitude was associated with the immediate impact of the project in providing activities to occupy the young people. This proved to have *"given youngsters a purpose and targets to work towards."* [Project Team Member] Furthermore, the design of the project also encouraged participants to maintain this lack of involvement in anti-social behaviour. The project team recognised that the credit and reward scheme remained central in sustaining their revised behaviour:

"The credits are important, very precious to them so they don't want to lose them by misbehaving when they have worked hard for the credits in the first place." [Project Worker]

- 2.3.31 The context in which anti-social behaviour statistics were recorded over the course of the project was that additional Police Officers were moved into the area and improvements made to the recording of disruptions within public spaces. Despite this change in reporting, which would have tended to lead to an increase in reported incidents, statistics for Torfaen show an overall decrease in the number of incidents during the project period.

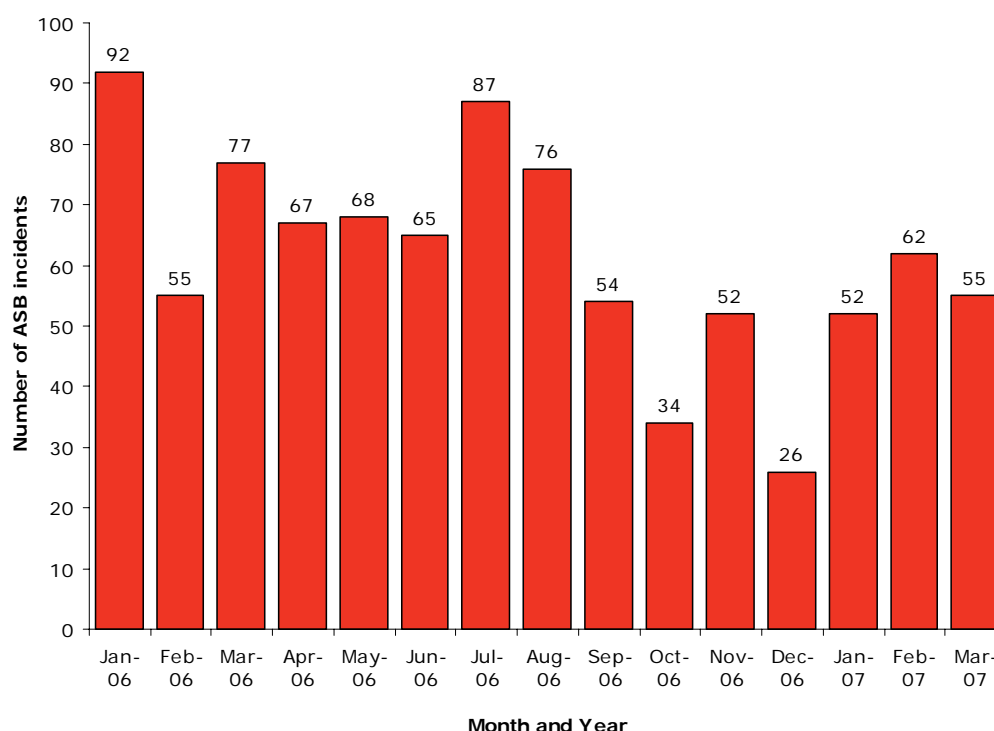


Figure 2-1 Total number of anti-social behaviour incidents in Trevethin, St Cadocs and Penygarn

Working in partnership

- 2.3.32 The pilot project has allowed the project team to explore the role of existing relationships with other youth agencies, and at the same time has raised questions about utilising new partnerships.
- 2.3.33 The reliance on internal networks within the youth service has emphasised the importance of collaborative work within the youth arena. Whilst this has benefited the running of this project and influenced the young people's experiences, stakeholders also noted incidental learning outcomes regarding their own understanding of partnership work. As such, the project has also enhanced the local youth workers' understanding of youth culture and aided their personal knowledge of available, and suitable, resources for engaging young people.

- 2.3.34 Evidence from this project suggests that partnership work can help to facilitate a wider impact on youth culture. Both stakeholders and the project staff described this as an integral aspect of the project, which helped to show a greater effect for all involved. The co-ordinator highlighted the importance of working with educational bodies and youth agencies in order to maximise impact and increase young people's social inclusion. Merely providing activities will not overcome the barriers of disadvantage and social exclusion.
- 2.3.35 The 'Savy' programme was subsequently highlighted as having a significant impact on the project's overall outcomes. This scheme was a Skills Apprenticeship course specifically aimed at involving the young people in non-academic achievements. The pilot project provided opportunities for participants to improve their practical skills, such as involving them with the painting and decorating of the youth centre. It was felt that this collaborative work had reduced some of the social disadvantages facing the young people, as well as sourcing other possibilities for future partnership work outside of the school environment:

"These projects don't stand independently from other youth work but provide a particular focus for just one aspect within a wider framework of youth work." [Youth Worker]

2.4 Cost and Resource Issues

- 2.4.1 Interviewees expressed mixed opinions about the availability of resources throughout the operation of this project. Despite original intentions to provide a 'hub' building for the participants, this was not achieved before the completion of the pilot. The project manager proposed that a dedicated building was an essential feature if the young people were to take full ownership of the project in the future. However, the co-ordinator did not feel that this was a crucial component as the youth club at New Inn could continue to act as a base for the project. Instead, the co-ordinator believed that greater barriers existed in the future operation of the project, such as: appropriate levels of funding, targeting suitable participants and creating a dedicated budget for publicising the project's impact.
- 2.4.2 A total of £10,000 was initially set aside for the participants' rewards. This was all spent during the project either directly on project rewards for the young people involved or in organising activities from which a number of young people benefited. The team estimated that the project helped in excess of 80 young people in all. It was agreed that this amount of money was sufficient in light of the short running of the project. However, a larger pot of money for the rewards would have enabled the young people to carry out more activities, enhancing the impact on both the participants and wider community.
- 2.4.3 To date, the management team has secured a small budget for the future of the project from a variety of sources, including: Neighbourhood Policing Team, the Regeneration Department of Torfaen Council, Communities First and the Community Safety Team. The Project team also plan to seek out alternative routes of funding from *"the bigger pots of money like the Big Lottery Fund."* [Project Team Member] However, this additional funding has not been confirmed at the time of writing.

2.5 Sustainability

- 2.5.1 In general, the focus of the work carried out by Time to Engage has mainly revolved around changing the behaviour and attitudes of only a small group of young people within Torfaen.

The project has undoubtedly helped modify the behaviour, as well as the attitudes displayed by this group of young people. The greatest impact of the project seems to have been on the eight participants rather than on the community.

- 2.5.2 The team recognised that the young people had taken precedence throughout the project and noted that this was an intended goal. Nonetheless, there was less certainty about the lasting effects of the project if the intensity of the work with these specific individuals was reduced or halted due to funding pressures:

"We can't just drop them at the end of the project; otherwise it might be more detrimental to them and potentially remove the work which has so far been accomplished with them. Especially due to the young people's own commitment to the project it wouldn't be fair to leave them." [Project Worker]

- 2.5.3 Similarly, local residents also expressed concerns about the future role of the project. Although the project created some visual impact on the community by improving local gardens, removing litter and reducing the amount of graffiti in the area, discussions with the community uncovered anxieties about whether such improvements would be extended to other communal facilities. This was because the young people's work had only benefited a small group of residents.
- 2.5.4 Among those consulted, very few local people agreed that the project should continue. However, this view was perhaps due to a lack of understanding about the project rather than a genuine disagreement with the project objectives.
- 2.5.5 Despite this viewpoint, the Project Manager explained that the principles of Time to Engage had already been used in other projects also aimed at targeting young people due to the level of positive feedback from the council and youth service. The pilot project acted as a useful template for similar projects thus illustrating its sustained presence within local youth provision, if perhaps under a slightly different guise.

Next Steps for the Project

- 2.5.6 All members of the team were enthusiastic about remaining involved in the project in order to continue working with young people and further reduce anti-social behaviour. Stakeholders were also keen to develop partners outside of the youth service and create better direct links with the community. The partnership work proved integral to the running of this project and will remain a key feature for its future success.
- 2.5.7 In addition, it was also agreed that the boundaries of the project would be widened to include more individuals who were less seriously involved in anti-social behaviour. The project had initially targeted young people who had been labelled as those most likely to participate in anti-social behaviour; however, the team acknowledged that the next stage of the programme should encompass a wider section of the local youth:

"We now want to target other young people in the area and open the project up to those with less chance of committing anti-social behaviour, rather than just those who the community have already branded as outsiders." [Project Worker]

- 2.5.8 The team also intend to slightly amend the geographical focus to include Pontypool and New Inn. The Management team plan to eventually role the project out across Torfaen.

- 2.5.9 Project staff recognised the importance of enhancing media coverage of Time to Engage and improving communication channels with local residents to ensure that greater publicity of the project is achieved. These adjustments to the running of the scheme will greatly improve local residents' knowledge about the team's work thus improving the likelihood that the project will go some way to reduce the fear of crime within the community. Unless residents are made aware of the operation of the project, its impact on the community remains severely limited.
- 2.5.10 Changes to the staff structure have also been proposed if the project is to achieve a sustainable state. This is not because of any problems within the team but to accommodate changes in the personal lives of the youth workers. The team hope to maintain the role of the management committee and project co-ordinator, but make slight changes to the roles of the youth workers. It is hoped that one of the young people involved in the pilot project will become one of the youth workers, whilst one of the original workers will remain in post. The second of the existing youth workers will become a sessional worker and act as an additional resource on an ad hoc basis.
- 2.5.11 Finally, the team expressed a view that the project may benefit from the appointment of an administrator in the future. It was also noted that *"If we hadn't been able to tap into the Youth Service administrators then it would have made things more difficult. This was something which was overlooked at the start."* [Project Team Member] This is something which may also impact on the likely budget required to continue running the project at its current levels of efficiency.

The Future of Anti-Social Behaviour in the area

- 2.5.12 According to the perspectives of local residents and shop-keepers, anti-social behaviour remains a problem in Torfaen. The continuation of such views since the beginning of the project highlights the extent of continued concern about anti-social behaviour within the area. This perhaps raises a host of questions about the possibility of reducing community anxieties by targeting a limited number of at risk young people in this area.
- 2.5.13 As such, Time to Engage is perhaps most usefully recognised as representing only one source of change. The project provides an exemplar for the early stages of a more long-term programme that needs to be dedicated to changing attitudes amongst the young people, as well as within the wider community. As the operation of this pilot project has illustrated, partnership work is integral to this process of change, whilst collaborative work with schools may also assist with reaching as many young people as possible to provide positive messages about community engagement.
- 2.5.14 The project has reduced anti-social behaviour in the short-term by working closely with a small group of individuals who had participated in disruptive behaviour. This work will hopefully also have repercussions for future generations of young people as this project has shown the importance of the snowballing effect in reaching a wider section of the community and influencing socialisation processes. Although the future impact on change of attitude cannot be confirmed at this stage, it is important to note that the project is a useful tool for a pro-active agenda aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour rather than offering a reactive strategy to established problems. Time to Engage clearly illustrates the scope for encouraging young people to take ownership of their engagement within the community setting.

2.6 Summary

- 2.6.1 The project has gone some way to combating disruptive behaviour in the community despite perhaps not receiving the wider recognition of the community. The main limitations of the project appear to be that only a small number of young people have been engaged in the scheme and that local residents perhaps view that there are only a limited number of beneficiaries from the project. The question also remains as to how turning around the lives of such a small number of young people in a high risk group can impact on the long-term experiences of anti-social behaviour in an area such as Torfaen.
- 2.6.2 Interviews with the project staff (both the youth workers and the management staff) illustrated some overall weaknesses within the operation of the project. These mainly related to the lack of publicity about the project. The team also demonstrated awareness of the under-reporting of their work and felt that this had perhaps hindered its subsequent impact in the community.
- 2.6.3 Stakeholders⁴ identified only elements of the project that had worked well. These discussions emphasised the importance of building up more personal, and perhaps honest, relationships with the young people. Building rapport helped to ensure the functioning of this project was suitable for its participants. The creation of such relationships within Time to Engage was successfully achieved and helped facilitate the intended outcomes. Consequently, the personal enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, coupled with her extensive contacts and knowledge of the youth service, provided an essential starting point. The construction of long-term relations with young people in the area also assisted this. Project staff and participants described positive impacts for the wider community as well for participants.
- 2.6.4 The project team spoke about the “important lessons” which they had learnt during the pilot including the importance of the project’s underpinning concepts of credit and rewards as a useful model for working with young people, the need for enthusiasm and tenacity and the importance of established relationships with the wider youth service and other local stakeholders which the co-ordinator already held.
- 2.6.5 The reliance on internal networks within the youth service has emphasised the importance of collaborative work within the youth arena. Whilst this has benefited the running of this project and influenced the young people’s experiences, stakeholders also noted incidental learning outcomes regarding their own understanding of partnership work.
- 2.6.6 A model has been developed which the team are confident can be rolled out elsewhere and they seem keen to widen the eligibility criteria in the future to ensure that more young people can benefit from the scheme.
- 2.6.7 Arguably, this scheme has been the most successful in meeting its initial aims. Its aims were, however, also the most limited in scope.

⁴ The main project stakeholders were Trevethin Communities First Partnership, St Cadocs and Penygarn Communities First Partnership, Monmouthshire and Torfaen Youth Offending Team, B Div Heddlu Gwent Police, Torfaen Youth Service, Torfaen Community Safety Partnership, Torfaen Voluntary Alliance, Gwent Time Banks Project, Torfaen Youth Access and Project SAVY

3 The Melin Project

3.1 The Local Context

- 3.1.1 The town of Melincryddan (Melin) is situated in the Neath East ward of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. The ward, which also houses Penrhiwtyn and Pencaerau, has a population of approximately 5,933⁵. Roughly one quarter (24%) of the population are under 20 years of age and around 5% of the adult population aged between 16 and 74 are economically active but unemployed. This compares to a national average for Wales of around 3.5%.
- 3.1.2 There are around 2,745 households in the ward, the majority of which are owner occupied (31%), or owned by mortgage or loan (31%). Around 38% of homes are rented, the majority being rented from the local authority (18%) or housing associations/registered social landlords (8%). The proportion of homes in the area that are rented is around 10% higher than the national average for Wales (28%) and the average for the Neath Port Talbot Unitary Authority (29%).
- 3.1.3 In 2004, to help inform the Action Plan for the Communities First Programme in the area, a community consultation with residents of Neath East was undertaken for the Melincryddan Community Conference. A household-based face-to-face survey involving around 300 households in the ward was undertaken, along with two qualitative focus group sessions. The survey revealed that⁶:
- When asked if they considered a number of predetermined issues to be a serious problem in the local area, one in three respondents cited a “lack of police presence” as a serious problem, with one in four citing “gangs of roaming youths” and “drug and substance abuse” as serious local issues. Vandalism and underage drinking were mentioned by one in five adults.
 - Over half of respondents said that they felt very (23%) or fairly safe (35%) walking in their neighbourhood after dark, compared to 27% of said that they felt fairly unsafe and 15% who said that they felt very unsafe (15%). This compared to 2002/03⁷ British Crime Survey figures of 21% who felt fairly unsafe and 13% who felt very unsafe.
 - When asked openly what three things, if any, would help most in tackling safety issues in their community, over three quarters of respondents (77%) said more visible policing. A quarter (26%) said that provision of more/better facilities for young people would help to tackle the problem and 22% said that increased use of CCTV was needed. Tackling underage drinking, anti-drugs projects and a ban on alcohol in public places were cited as potential solutions by around one in every five respondents, along with increased parental responsibility. One in ten (11%) said that the increased use of anti-social behaviour orders was help to tackle safety issues in the community.

⁵ 2001 Census Data, valid as of April 2001

⁶ Opinion Research Services (2004) Community Consultation with Residents of Neath East: Report of Findings for Melincryddan Community Conference

⁷ Data for 2004 is not yet published

- Nearly three quarters (74%) of residents considered it was very (46%) or fairly important (28%) for them to have access a neighbourhood watch scheme (n=204). At the time of the survey, only 17% (n=54) said that their community had access to a scheme. Despite this mismatch in need and provision, only 2% (n=5) said that they would be willing to participate in a neighbourhood watch scheme;
 - Around one in four adults considered the standard of social rented properties to be fairly (16%) or very poor (12%), compared to 54% who said that the standard was fairly good and 17% very good.
 - The three aspects of the man-made community that were considered as being in need of change or improvements were condition of the roads (42%), pavements (40%) and cleanliness of streets (28%) followed by the need for more litter bins (25%) and improvements to play areas (20%).
 - When asked about the natural environment, just over half of respondents said that the general cleanliness of the area was very (14%) or fairly good (40%). The remainder said that it was fairly (27%) or very poor (19%).
 - The top three suggestions for things that would help most in improving or changing facilities for children and young people in the community were cheaper activities (n=117; 38%), meeting space, for example, cafes or drop in centres (n=98; 31%) and more supervised activities (n=89; 29%). Access to youth clubs was also seen as a potential solution (n=89; 28%).
 - When asked if they considered a “lack of community spirit” to be a serious problem in Neath East, 17% said yes, although an operational definition for this term was not given.
- 3.1.4 Qualitative consultation undertaken as part of the research confirmed that problems with litter and youth disturbance were common in the area and that there was a need for more youth recreational facilities. It also confirmed low levels of community participation in the area.
- 3.1.5 Whilst this survey provides an indication of the types of incidents that were considered by local residents to be of concern, the data are somewhat limited. Firstly, the recoded nature of questions means that some of the real issues of local concern may have been missed and, secondly, the pre-coded options may have encouraged greater reporting of local issues being considered as problematic than would have been the case if open-ended questions were used (ie questions were leading or directional). Conversely, some of the terminology used in the questionnaires is vague and it is difficult to gain a real understanding of what is meant, for example, “community spirit”.

3.2 Set Up and Operation

- 3.2.1 The initial stated aims of The Melin Project were to deter crime and social disorder, provide a capacity-building opportunity for the local community and improve community confidence and increase social inclusion. The main objectives included:

- building on and enhancing the work of the Communities First Programme;
- ongoing awareness raising for primary school children by the police schools liaison programme and Crucial Crew;

- ongoing work with junior crime prevention panels in secondary schools to address their issues of drugs and substance misuse, particularly alcohol;
- launching an environmental clean up campaign;
- to address such issues as fly tipping, abandoned vehicles, criminal damage and graffiti;
- improve security of vulnerable residents;
- build upon current work to improve the environment with young people during the school holidays;
- one-off project with a secondary school to link into the environmental development proposed by Communities First;
- reduce anti-social behaviour to increase community cohesion, reduce crime and the fear of crime;
- extend the pub watch scheme; and
- review Melin against Drugs project and resurrect taking into account alcohol misuse.

3.2.2 The team also set out very rigid statistical targets as a means of measuring the impact of the scheme, including a reduction in fly tipping of 30%, a reduction in criminal damage and arson of 25%, a reduction in the number of call outs and reported incidents of vehicle arson/abandoned vehicles of 50% and a reduction in the number of incidents of criminal damage over the 12 month period of 30%. A specific aim was also to reduce the number of anti-social behaviour referrals by 10%.

3.2.3 The Melin Action Area Co-ordinator commenced in post on 2nd April 2006, and for the duration of the pilot, was housed in the Communities First building in Neath East.

Refining the Project Aims

3.2.4 The objectives set out by this project were, perhaps, the most numerous and ambitious of all of the four projects. Indeed, in the early stages of the pilot, the team reflected on the initial aims and objectives of the pilot and the list was refined. In particular, they decided not to pursue the focus on drug use in the area because the duration of the project was too short to make any notable impact on the problem. In essence, although it was thought to be a considerable problem in the area, it was considered too big an issue to be tackled within this project. This meant that no targeted activities were undertaken to address the initial aim of carrying out ongoing work with junior crime prevention panels in secondary schools to address their issues of drugs and substance misuse, particularly alcohol.

3.2.5 The role of the co-ordinator was also shaped by the outcomes of a one-day conference held in the area, led by the Community Safety Team, to explore low level anti-social behaviour or low level nuisance in the area. The meeting brought together neighbourhood policing teams and representatives from the local authority to identify solutions to the problems in the community. This revealed to the team a lack of ownership of the problems among existing stakeholders and the need for the co-ordinator to help effect change:

"Some of the frustrations come from the fact that we had an expectation that local partners and the local authority would work together anyway, but they didn't. That was a shock to the system because you make the assumption that, if something needs to be done that's a local authority issue, that everyone understands that and takes action to address it." [Business Support Officer]

- 3.2.6 This shaped the role of the project worker who spent a considerable amount of his time developing relationships with local stakeholders and bringing them together to achieve pooling of funds and resources for the common goal:

"It seemed from that conference that what you needed was a conduit that would link these people together; not necessarily do things but facilitate, so that housing may not have been speaking to...officers, cleansing officers, not because they didn't speak to them, it was just they seemed to pass in the night." [Business Support Officer]

- 3.2.7 On the basis of these initial meetings, the team refined their approach to create an action plan which they thought would be achievable in the 12-month period and which would be sustainable in the long term without requiring considerable additional resources. The project, therefore, become largely focussed on the environmental clean up activities that could be undertaken in the community to help achieve a sense of community safety, to improve accessibility to the local amenities for people in the areas of highest deprivation by designing out crime from some of the main pedestrian routes and, overall, to encourage a greater sense of community pride in the area. Essentially, it was hoped that these activities would lead to greater ownership of the community among its residents and, as a consequence, a reduction in low level anti-social behaviour as the community became self-regulatory:

"The link [between the project and reducing anti-social behaviour] is about ownership in some respects so that people feel confident reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour." [Business Support Officer]

Baseline Survey

- 3.2.8 One of the earliest tasks undertaken by the project team was a residents' survey which was also designed to help inform the coordinator's activities. The survey was distributed to homes across Melin and a total of 101 questionnaire responses were returned to the team.
- 3.2.9 The low response rate means that many of the views expressed are somewhat idiosyncratic and it is not possible to say from this survey what the main issues of concern in the community were. The survey only provides an insight into the views of those who responded and the sample may have been inherently biased since only those with issues that they wished to raise may have responded.
- 3.2.10 The data, which is presented below, revealed some strong sentiments among individuals within the community but, again, there does not appear to have been strong consensus among respondents. Indeed, some of the responses were contradictory and perhaps reveal more about personal views of people living in different areas of the Melin rather than generic issues affecting the whole community. The contradictory nature of the data means that it should be interpreted with caution.
- 3.2.11 When asked what they liked about living in Melin, the main responses were:

- good transport links in the area with easy access to the motorway and a short walking distance to the town centre and local amenities. The closeness of local shops, the doctors surgery and the post office were specifically mentioned;
 - good reputation of the schools;
 - closeness of the woods and valley;
 - born in the area/have lived in their area for a long time/most of life and have become accustomed to the good and bad points; and
 - family and close friends living in the same neighbourhood.
- 3.2.12 Many of the young people (under 15 years old) stated the best aspects of their area were the park, the Boys and Girls Club and the fact that most of their friends lived in the same area. This response may have been biased by the inclusion of Boys and Girls Club members in the sample and it is not clear if/how many non members of the Club were canvassed. The views of many young people who did not use or value the Club may have been overlooked in the survey due to them being absent from the sample and would, perhaps, provided an insight into the needs of the wider youth in the area had they been achieved.
- 3.2.13 Most respondents mentioned that an important reason for living in their area was their friendly neighbours. Many people had lived in the area since they were born and had built up a good community spirit. Others said that the friendly people in Neath were one of the reasons they chose to stay in the area and not move away.
- 3.2.14 A minority of respondents noted that although the Neath area used to be a friendly, quiet neighbourhood, recently some young people and vandals had been making the area unpleasant to live in.
- 3.2.15 Several respondents stated that they liked “nothing” about the area they lived in. Many listed the bad points of the area and stated that they planed to move away as the area had become unbearable to live in. The main problems cited were:
- Vandalism - a recurring complaint was the high amount of vandalism that took place in Neath and surrounding areas. Many respondents stated they often saw burnt out cars in the street, graffiti on shops and walls, broken shop windows, vandalised play parks and fly tipping on the streets in which they lived.
 - Groups of young people - respondents who complained of vandalism also often complained of “gangs of youths” that hang around intimidating and swearing at the residents in the street and in the park. One respondent stated the gang of children that hang around Bowen Park *“make our lives hell”*. Other respondents mentioned these gangs but took a more sympathetic approach and complained about the lack of youth centres and multi-use games areas for children. Some stated the lack of a sufficient play area for children was also a reason for these gangs causing trouble as there was often nothing else for them to do.
 - Drink and drug use - many people mentioned they were unhappy about the numbers of *“druggies”* and drunks that hang around the Neath area. Some people thought the break-ins that took place in the area were drink and drug related. Others stated they mainly disliked the subways in Neath as there are often people drinking and taking drugs there.

- Streets - respondents often mentioned the large amount of litter that is dropped in the streets in Neath. Many were concerned that the streets are not swept often enough allowing the litter to pile up. Respondents also commented that they disliked wheelie rubbish bins being kept outside their house especially as these bins were often overfilled and messy. Several respondents commented on the *"rundown state of the neighbourhood"* - pot holes are often not fixed, the housing is left neglected and shabby and gardens are left untidy. Comments were also made about the amount of dog mess that is not cleaned up making Neath a place that many do not enjoy living in.
- Burglary/muggings – respondents mentioned incidents such as burglary and muggings in the area. Some stated that they thought the attacks were drug and alcohol related and that they were often scared to leave their home for fear of being attacked.
- Speeding cars/motorbikes - many people commented on the number of cars and motorbikes that speed up and down the main street in Melin. They stated not only that it was noisy, but also dangerous for children and adults crossing the road. Some respondents explained that the *"top of the town"* was the worst area with one respondent describing it as *"hell on earth"*. Residents stated the police hardly ever come to the area unless they have to deal with a crime and the council is *"worse than useless"*.
- Parking - parked lorries and large vans were often described as a cause of annoyance in streets as they cause delay and can be dangerous for people crossing in between. Resident parking also appears to cause some frustration with many people stating there were not enough spaces to accommodate all the residents.
- Losing village atmosphere - respondents stated they felt they were *"losing the village atmosphere"* in their area, although an operational definition of this term was not provided. Some people complained about the local shops, post office and telephone box which have been taken away and not replaced.
- Rented accommodation - some respondents expressed a view that the increase in rented accommodation was bringing the area down as people would move into the flats and not care about keeping them clean. One respondent stated that the council will *"rent them to anyone"* allowing the area to become run down with tenants having no respect for property, their neighbours or their neighbourhood.
- Social deprivation - high unemployment in the area and resulting social deprivation was mentioned by several residents as a reason to dislike where they lived. The bad atmosphere this created was often mentioned in the questionnaire responses, as some residents could not understand how some people were unemployed but still managed to have a mobile phone, drink and often take drugs. This was cited as a worrying problem by many residents.

3.2.16 Only a few people said that there was nothing that they disliked about their area.

3.2.17 A common request was for more police on the streets of Neath and for the small police station in the area to be re-opened. Respondents said they would feel safer and more comfortable in the neighbourhood if there was more of a police presence. Some respondents also stated the increased use of cameras in the park and surrounding areas may potentially increase security and make residents feel safer.

3.2.18 Other suggestions included:

- Better facilities in the neighbourhood - many people stated they would appreciate more local shops in the area and the post office re-opened as well as a supermarket opening a small shop in the area.
 - A “good clean up” - several respondents hoped the area would get a good clean up – streets swept, dog fouling prosecuted, litter picked up, overflowing rubbish bins taken away, gardens kept neat and tidy and shop fronts cleaned up in order to transform the look of the community.
 - Speeding cars stopped - some respondents mentioned they would like to see the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in the area around the school.
 - Facilities for children – respondents suggested that youth centres should be opened for children in the neighbourhood which would tackle a number of problems. Residents suggested that, if children had somewhere to go, it would stop them playing in the street, which is dangerous for them as well as being an annoyance for residents. A youth centre was also cited as the solution to stopping gangs hanging around the streets “*causing trouble and terrorising residents*”.
 - Tackle drugs/alcohol - many respondents stated they would like to see the “*druggies and drunks*” that hang around the area moved out. Some said they would like to see Neath Council take a lead in tackling drug and alcohol abuse as well as tackling the vandalism and crime which they feel often results from this abuse.
- 3.2.19 Although a significant number of people said ‘no’ when asked if they felt unsafe in their neighbourhood, the majority of respondents stated that there were at least some areas where they felt unsafe, including streets with speeding cars, on buses, the subway, the town centre, the “*top of the estate*” and the “*stairwell to the flats*”. Again, due to a lack of geographical data, it is not possible to isolate the areas to which respondents were referring.
- 3.2.20 Some people said they specifically disliked leaving their house at night in the dark. The main areas that were cited as being unsafe were: Bowen and Melin parks; Meadow Road; Brookdale; Cryddon Road; and Melvin Close.
- 3.2.21 Many respondents also stated that they felt safe in their neighbourhood only in daylight hours. At night time, respondents stated that they do not feel safe, especially as many areas are not well lit. Only main streets, such as Briton Ferry Road, are well lit and, even then, some people would not feel safe walking there at night.
- 3.2.22 Many of the children who responded to the questionnaire said that the only place they feel safe is the local Boys and Girls Club.
- 3.2.23 The findings from the pilot baseline survey supported many of the earlier observations from the 2004 Melin Residents’ survey. That said, the findings from the survey also provided somewhat mixed or contradictory messages about the Melin area. It seems that, whilst some residents were satisfied with the area, others were not. In the absence of detailed demographic data, or geographical data to allow responses to be profiled against the exact area of residence, it is not possible to explain the variation in views. Whilst this is not problematic in itself, it does mean that the data may not have provided a reliable basis on which to base decisions around the way in which the pilot was structured. Indeed, it is unclear from reading the survey responses why the team decided to focus on the areas that they did and not, for example, on issues such as gangs of young people, speeding and parking issues or drink and drug use.

- 3.2.24 As a pilot project, the Melin project was useful in highlighting the need for aims and objectives to be based clearly on firm evidence in order to achieve maximum impact in the community. The Melin project should perhaps be praised for its ambitious approach to target setting early on and for using the pilot as an opportunity to refine targets as more intelligence became available about what might be achievable during the funding period. It would have been even more helpful, however, to have documented more clearly the rationale for the redefinition of aims, objectives and targets to allow this process to have been evaluated. As it stands, the association between the baseline survey findings and the ultimate focus of the project is unclear.

3.3 Project Activities

Meadow Road

- 3.3.1 The main site to be targeted was the Meadow Road Housing Estate. This is street comprising approximately 162 properties, the majority of which are local authority owned and which sit collectively in a cul-de-sac at one of the uppermost extremities of the Melin area. The estate is surrounded by private housing and is within 5-10 minutes walk of all of the main town centre amenities.
- 3.3.2 Whilst the baseline survey findings do not provide any conclusive evidence for Meadow Road being selected as the main area of focus for the pilot project, interviews with project staff suggest that it was selected on the basis of local knowledge held by the co-ordinator and historical anecdotal evidence that the area was one of the most in need:

“The unfortunate part of the project is that it looks like an environmental project, but that’s not really what it’s about. It just so happens to be that was the most obvious and most apparent need. The first visual sign of anti-social behaviour in a run down area is that it’s a mess, isn’t it? To me, that’s always got to be the first step. It doesn’t address some of the deeper problems, but at least it changes, hopefully it changes people’s attitude and then, hopefully, gets them more cooperative.” [Project Co-ordinator]

- 3.3.3 The single biggest activity to be undertaken in this area was an effort to remove fly tipping and tidy up the garages in Meadow Road. In the first instance, a rubbish amnesty was carried out to remove small items of rubbish in the area and allow residents to dump unwanted larger items. Considerable efforts then went into organising the removal of a significant amount of refuse that had been dumped in the gardens of houses on the street, along with rubbish (including furniture and white goods) which had been dumped in the Valley. This was completed by the erection of two fences at either end of the row of houses which back onto the Eaglesbush Valley to prevent anyone from accessing the site for rubbish dumping in the future.
- 3.3.4 Following this clean up, the co-ordinator sent photographs of the properties to the local housing department to issue to residents, reminding them of their tenancy agreements and their obligations to maintain their outdoor areas. Interviews with the council representatives suggest that this would act as a first step towards helping them take action against residents who do not upkeep their gardens in the future, since it is the first time that they have had tangible evidence to support any claims made against the tenants. Whilst the council does have a policy of cleaning up both the inside and outside of properties before new tenants move in, they have not previously recorded the state of properties on entry. Attempts to

take action against tenants for poor upkeep of outside areas have often resulted in counter claims about the rubbish being in place before their occupancy began.

- 3.3.5 To complement the fly-tipping work, the co-ordinator arranged for a large-scale garden tidy in Meadow Road, and in the communal walkways and lanes that link the community to the town. Brambles, bushes and grass were cut back which exposed rubbish (including a small number of syringes which may have been used for drug taking), which was also removed. The co-ordinator reported that many of the residents in the area had little or no means of maintaining the gardens, many were on short-term tenancies and did not care for their gardens and others were not aware that they had a garden. This issue is compounded by the absence of fencing to separate different plots since the local housing department cannot afford to provide fencing in the area. This activity was led by the local Neighbourhood Team who provided staff over a three week period to tidy the gardens, under the supervision and guidance of the project co-ordinator. For the duration of the project, it seemed that gardens were being maintained. That said, the dumping of some household waste and large items of furniture in some of the gardens meant that some of the gardens still looked unkempt. Seasonal issues also made it difficult to assess the extent to which gardens were being maintained by tenants or simply had not 'grown back' due to poor weather. A truer picture of whether tenants were maintaining their gardens might be achieved in the spring/summer of 2007 when foliage starts to return and real maintenance is required.
- 3.3.6 The co-ordinator also worked with the local Probation Service to arrange a programme of work to remove some of the decrepit garages that sit on one of the main pedestrian access routes onto Meadow Road. The garages, which are privately owned, but sit on local authority land, were considered dangerous and a place where local youths and those taking drugs may hang around. Following removal of old/fallen garages (with permission from their owners), the co-ordinator is planning to arrange for the remaining garages to be painted to enhance the visual appearance of the area and make it a safer place for pedestrians to use. There is still some work to be undertaken to identify all owners of the garages before this can proceed. Plans are also underway to improve lighting in this area in collaboration with the local authority.
- 3.3.7 A similar clean up activity was undertaken in a smaller area of Melin – Melvyn Close/Old Furnace House – an area which sits close to 30 local authority flats and a residential home for older people. Here, a piece of privately owned land was considerably overgrown, attracting rubbish dumping, as well as drug users and people drinking in the area. The project co-ordinator worked closely with private contractors to clear the area in the hope that this would make a residential walkway close to the flats and a residential home a safer and more accessible route.

Other Project Activities

- 3.3.8 Other activities that the project worker was involved in included:
- **Pub Watch Scheme** – 13 landlords in the area were contacted and invited to attend two separate meetings to discuss the extension of the existing Neath scheme into Melin. The meetings were not well attended, and this scheme was abandoned due to a feeling among publicans that most pubs in the area already had anti-social behaviour under control.

- **Neighbourhood Watch Scheme** – the co-ordinator issued flyers across the whole of the Melin area advertising for local representatives to come forward to plan for new schemes to be set up. Three volunteers came forward as a result and the co-ordinator is continuing to act as a conduit between the local neighbourhood policing team and the volunteers to take forward three new schemes.
 - **Melin Matters** – a regular space in the local Communities First newsletter was negotiated which allowed the co-ordinator to prepare short written articles to inform local residents of the activities undertaken and any forthcoming meetings/events regarding community safety. This sought to raise awareness of the main issues affecting the area and raise the profile of efforts being made to eradicate anti-social behaviour.
 - **School Theatre Projects** – in collaboration with Theatr Na n'Og⁸, the project co-ordinator implemented a play by primary school pupils addressing the consequences of anti-social behaviour. A similar new project raising awareness of ecological issues was also run at the end of the pilot in one of the local schools in collaboration with Keep Wales Tidy. This complemented litter picking activities that were undertaken at various intervals during the pilot with children from a local secondary school.
 - **Boys and Girls Club** - a conservatory was been built onto the existing boys and girls club hall to create a "chill out place" for young people. The project used some resources to fund furniture for the new conservatory and the co-ordinator was involved in some outreach work to tell young people about this recreational resource. The co-ordinator also took part in a golf outing with four attendees of the club and this was cited by him as a positive educational experience for the young people. Early plans for a youth shelter project did not materialise due to a poor response from one of the land owners in the area where the shelter had been planned.
- 3.3.9 Other regular activities undertaken by the co-ordinator included attendance at local case review meetings to discuss individuals subject to anti-social behaviour contracts and orders, at which the co-ordinator presented a short report. The co-ordinator also met regularly with local councillors to keep them updated with the activities of the project.

3.4 Project Impact

- 3.4.1 Unlike the other projects, the Melin project experienced a significant shift in its original focus towards a more refined set of objectives, most of which centred on clean up activities in one area of the town. In light of this, the evaluation also took a change in direction to focus on those tasks that had been undertaken rather than those which had been originally planned but had not transpired.
- 3.4.2 The principal evaluation data collected was from qualitative interviews with the project team. Over the eight month evaluation period, four visits were made to the Melin Project and interviews were carried out with the Business Support Officer (September, November and April) and the Melin Action Co-ordinator (November, February and April).

⁸ Theatr na n'Og provide a Theatre-in-Education service to schools in Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Bridgend. For more information see <http://www.theatr-nanog.co.uk/>

- 3.4.3 Interviews were also carried out with a range of key partners at various stages throughout the project, including representatives from:

- Communities First;
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Housing Department;
- Local authority neighbourhood management team;
- Keep Wales Tidy;
- Groundwork; and
- Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

- 3.4.4 Repeat contact was made with the local authority representatives, especially at the end of the project to explore their plans for sustaining the good work undertaken.

- 3.4.5 Other evaluation activities included:

- analysis of the co-ordinator's daily diary;
- analysis of recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour in Neath East;
- consultation with local residents (informal face-to-face interviews and analysis of baseline and end of year household survey data); and
- analysis of survey data collected from other sources.

Incidents of Anti-social Behaviour

- 3.4.6 Data were made available to the evaluation team from the local anti-social behaviour unit. The incidents recorded include written and telephone reports from members of the public to the Community Safety Team as well as those reported to the team directly by the police.
- 3.4.7 In 2005/06, the number of recorded anti-social behaviour incidents in the whole of the Melin area was 736. This compares to 526 in 2006/07, a decrease of almost 30%. Figure 3.1 provides a comparison for each of the three streets in the Neath East ward which had the greatest overall number of reported incidents of anti-social behaviour during the 12 months of the pilot project (April 2006 to March 2007).

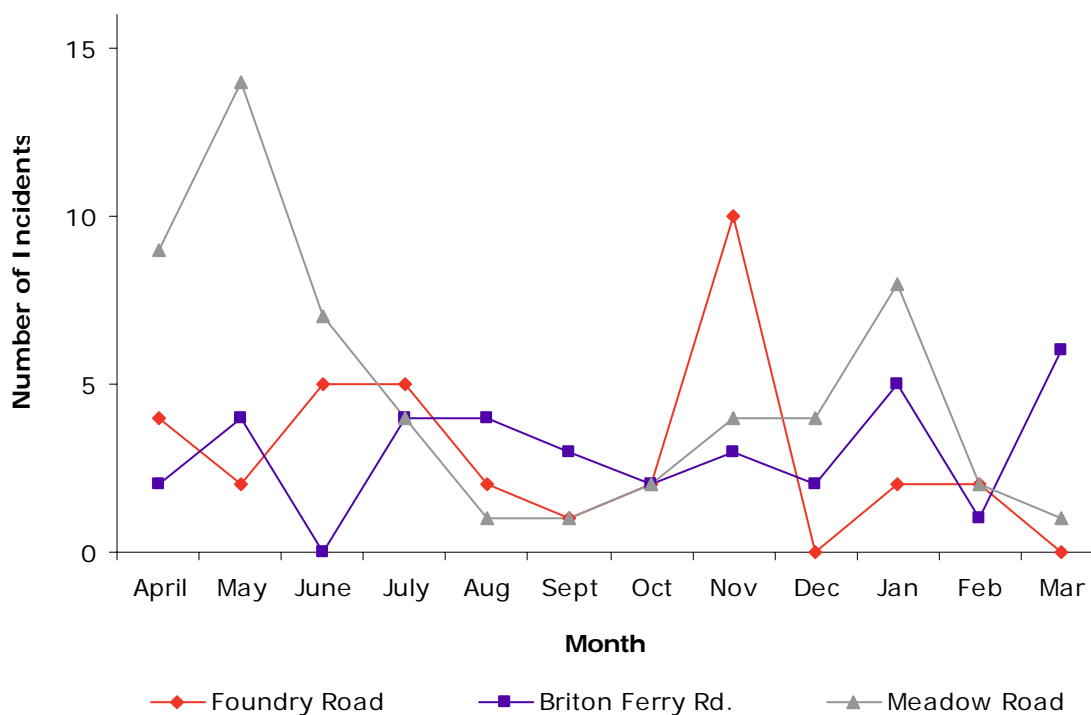


Figure 3-1 Number of incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit for Neath East from April 2006 to March 2007

- 3.4.8 The data show that Meadow Road had the greatest number of incidents reported over the twelve month period (n=57), compared to 36 incidents in Britton Ferry Road and 35 in Foundry Road.
- 3.4.9 The noticeable difference in the number of incidents reported at Meadow Road compared to each of the other two streets at the start of the pilot period decreased markedly after the pilot had been in operation for four months. This corresponded with the litter picking activities and garden tidy activities that were carried out around this time. Indeed, the majority of the clean up activities undertaken by the project took place mostly during the summer months, when a corresponding dip in incidents was noted. This is surprising since this is conventionally a time when we might expect incidents of anti-social behaviour to increase due to children and young people being on school holidays.
- 3.4.10 The graph also shows an increase in incidents in January which corresponds to lower levels of activity by the project team at that time and a drop in incidents around February when the celebration event was held.
- 3.4.11 What the data suggest is that the activities undertaken in Meadow Road did lead to a decrease in reported incidents of anti-social behaviour at the main points of activity. Compared to other streets in Neath, which showed relatively stable levels of reporting, there are clear patterns in Meadow Road, mostly in a downward direction. What might be inferred from the data is that, by concentrating on Meadow Road, the project neglected incidents that were occurring elsewhere. For example, there was peak in incidents of anti-social behaviour around November 5th (bonfire and fireworks season) for Foundry Road and a peak in incidents in Britton Ferry Road at the end of the project, which cannot be explained. Whilst

the data provide evidence for the success of the project, therefore, they also provide an indication that the scope of the project may have been too narrow to tackle wider issues affecting the Neath East area.

- 3.4.12 Figure 3.2 provides a breakdown of the number and type of incidents reported in Neath East over the pilot period. It shows that “youth” was the most frequently reported type of anti-social behaviour, followed by disturbance and neighbour problems.⁹ It is not clear whether “youth” simply involved the presence of young people, or whether particular forms of behaviour were involved.

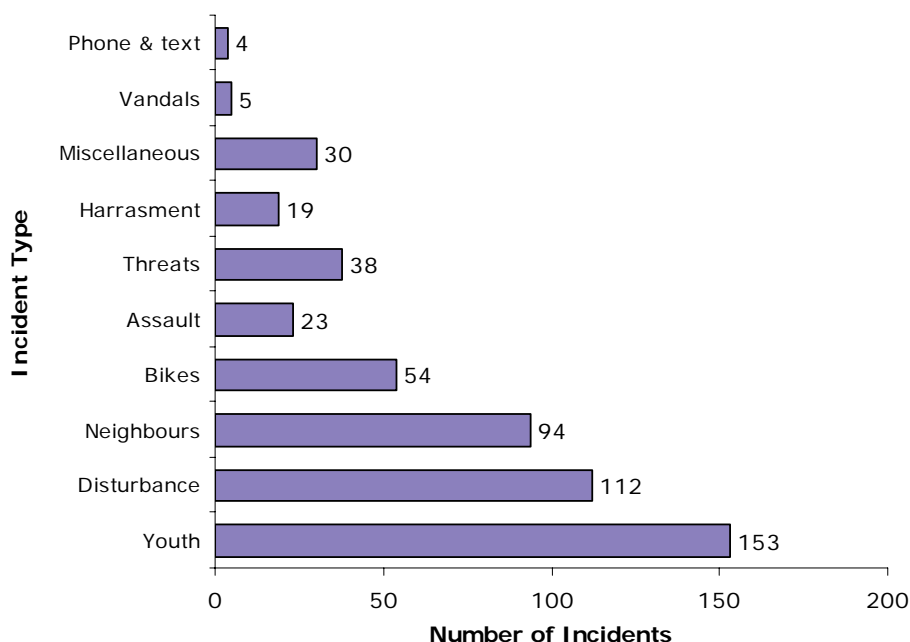


Figure 3-2 Number and type of incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit for Neath East from April 2006 to March 2007

- 3.4.13 When isolating the three types of incident that were reported most often over the pilot period, it seems that there was a notable decrease in all types of reports as the pilot progressed. Figure 3.3 shows that youth-related incidents showed the greatest decrease overall. Incidents related to general disturbance remained relatively stable with only one peak in January 2007. Incidents relating to neighbours fluctuated throughout the year, also showing peaks in November 2006 and January 2007, but showing a considerable decrease during August.

⁹ Note that the total number of incidents here is greater than the number of incidents reported at street level due to removal of some double counts in the street by street analysis.

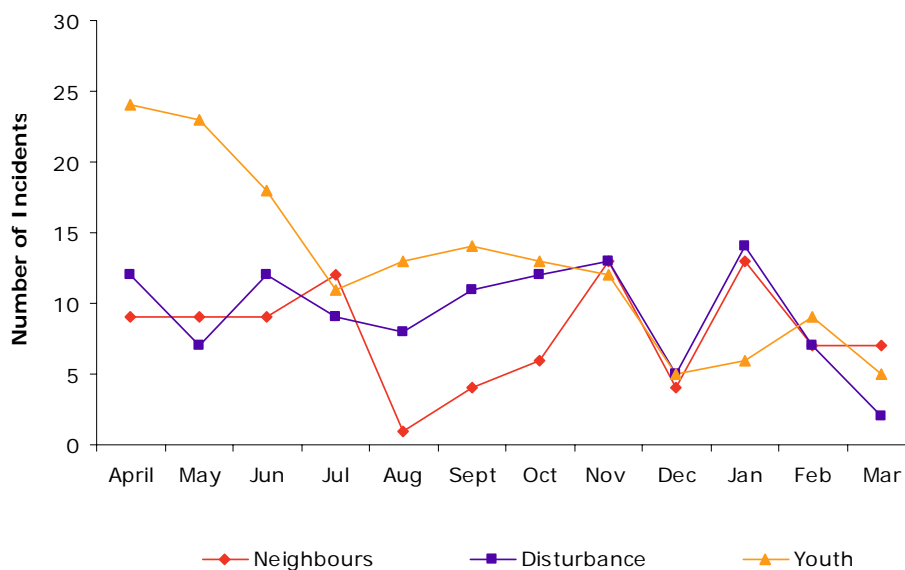


Figure 3-3 Number and type of incidents of anti-social behaviour by month reported to the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit for Neath East from April 2006 to March 2007

- 3.4.14 Whilst the data show encouraging trends overall, the lack of cross reference between type of incident and streets within Neath East means that it is not possible to say whether the decrease in incidents was witnessed in Meadow Road or in other areas of the ward¹⁰. That said, discussions with the anti-social behaviour co-ordinator for the area suggest that much of the decrease in overall figures was attributable to a drop in incidents being reported for Meadow Road.
- 3.4.15 Regardless of where the decrease took place, it could be argued that the overall activities of the project did correspond with a drop in reported incidents as the pilot year progressed.

Consultation with Residents

- 3.4.16 Over the eight months of the evaluation, four sources of data were used to assess the views of residents regarding the Action Project. These were:

- analysis of data from a household survey administered by the Action Co-ordinator at the start of the pilot. The data was imperfect and was largely qualitative in nature. The survey also did not collect any information relating to the respondents' street or area of residence and so it was impossible to analyse at local level.
- informal one-to-one interviews with eleven adults and two young people who attended the celebration day organisation by the Project;
- feedback obtained from Groundwork who attended the celebration day and carried out a survey of their own regarding residents' preferences for the future use of derelict land in the Meadow Road area; and
- analysis of an end of year household survey designed in collaboration with the Pilot Team and administered by the Action Co-ordinator.

¹⁰ A record of incident type for separate streets was not kept by the project team

Interviews with Residents

- 3.4.17 MVA attended a celebration day at Meadow Road on Tuesday 20th February which had been organised by the project co-ordinator. It was agreed in advance that the evaluation team could attend the event to speak with residents about their perceptions of the work that had been undertaken and the impact of the project on reducing anti-social behaviour and fear of crime.
- 3.4.18 The event ran between 11am and 2pm with stalls from the local community safety partnership, the police, local housing authority and Groundwork (the environmental regeneration charity). There was free food and drink for residents and a bouncy castle and other activities for children.
- 3.4.19 The main messages to arise from speaking with residents' on the day were:
- all had noticed the significant clean up activities that had been undertaken in the area and the clean up was unanimously welcomed.
 - despite this, some people expressed a view that the clean up activities had only been undertaken due to the planned celebration day and they suggested that there should not need to be a special occasion to carry out the work – it should happen automatically.
 - most respondents were not aware of the co-ordinator's role in the tidy up activities. For the most part, residents assumed that the work had been undertaken by the council and many suggested that the council should be carrying out such activities more often. In particular, providing skips more regularly was seen as something that would prevent future fly-tipping.
 - most respondents said that they did not feel unsafe in the area due to fear of crime or anti-social behaviour. The single biggest worry was about contact with a small handful of residents on Meadow Road who were considered to be *"out for trouble"* and likely to victimise people who *"stick their nose in"*. The street does house a number of ex-offenders and the local residents perceived their presence as the biggest concern. Youth crime and general disorder were not cited as problems.
 - residents would like to see further improvements in the area, including painting of the exterior of houses and erection of walls at the back of houses, especially those that back onto public lanes, as a means of increasing household security.
 - a metal fence that had been installed at either end of the row of houses that back onto the Eaglesbush valley was welcomed by local residents and seen as a clear deterrent to young people and others accessing the valley for littering and fly-tipping. That said, it was felt that the fence could be extended since young people had simply started using other people's back gardens to access the valley and this was a new nuisance.
 - the local parks were not seen to accommodate the recreational needs of young people due to older youths hanging around and/or drinking there.
 - the lighting which had been installed in the garage area was encouraging greater use of this route into the town and was said to make people feel safer at night; and
 - one of the benefits of the clean up activity is in letting people know that *"you're not forgotten by people"* (i.e. by the local authority).

- 3.4.20 Among the residents interviewed, there was a strong sense that many would like better community relations. Some parents expressed an interest in regular events to be held in Meadow Road for the children and to bring residents together. Many of the residents who were interviewed were single parents who said that they did not know anyone in the community and that the celebration day was the first opportunity they had had to meet people, especially other parents.
- 3.4.21 On the specific subject of a residents' association, there was a clear view that the 'top' of Meadow Road has a number of residents who would not wish to take part whilst the 'bottom' of the street was more proactive and more likely to take positive steps to bringing the community together (most of the ex-offenders are housed at the top of the street).
- 3.4.22 It also became clear from the consultation that, in order for a residents' association to be successful, it would need to be detached from the neighbourhood watch scheme. This was because a woman who had previously run a neighbourhood watch scheme in the area had been victimised (including verbal abuse and bricks through her windows) and this had put others off forming a new group. Residents suggested that neighbourhood watch schemes would not work in Meadow Road due to the numbers of ex-offenders living in the street who would be unwilling to get involved and who may cause problems for those who did. The residents' association was seen as a good alternative but something that would only work if packaged correctly.
- 3.4.23 An interesting issue to emerge from the consultation was that adults, in their 20s and early 30s, were perhaps those causing most problems, for example, racing motorbikes and cars in the street and drinking/being rowdy. Despite this, residents explained that these adults were never reported due to fear of "repercussions" and this perhaps creates an impression that it is young people who are causing the problems since residents are less likely to fear reporting their indiscretions.
- 3.4.24 The two young people consulted said that they were involved with the boys and girls club and that the tidy up activities were good fun and worthwhile. In particular, they reported that the "woods" (Eaglesbush valley) was a much more pleasant place to visit for recreational purposes than it had been before. The thing that they would most like to see in the area was somewhere to play football.
- 3.4.25 Overall, people were unaware of the Melin Matters articles produced by the co-ordinator and most did not feel that the area had particularly high crime rates or problems with anti-social behaviour. Littering is the biggest concern.

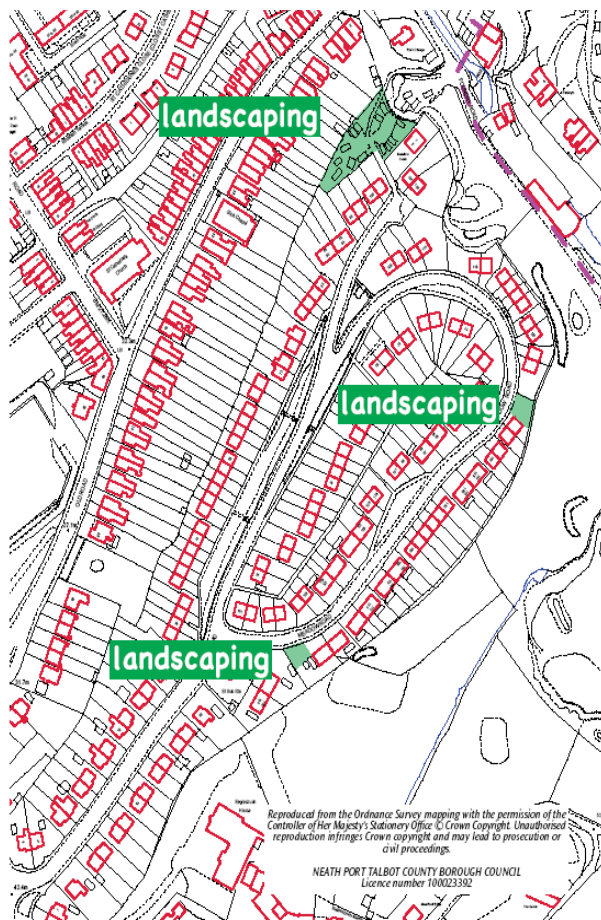
The Groundwork Survey

- 3.4.26 Groundwork carried out a survey at the celebration day to canvass the views of local residents with regards to future potential landscaping of three areas of waste ground on the Meadow Road. Figure 3.2 shows the three areas in question.

3.4.27 In total, 15 questionnaires were returned and the main results were as follow:

- 14 residents expressed a wish for a play area for children;
- 6 residents suggested sitting areas (either alone or as part of the play area);
- 6 residents suggested planting flowers and shrubs; and
- 2 residents suggested installing recycling bins in the area.

Figure 3-4 Map of Meadow Road showing the main areas identified by the Groundwork team as being suitable for future landscaping/recreational development



3.4.28 Groundwork concluded that the area in the centre of the map is the most suitable location for a play area as it is flat and fenced off on three sides. For Health and Safety reasons, an extra fence with a gate would be put on the roadside. The area is also currently poorly lit and extra lighting would need to be put in place to make this area safe and avoid vandalism.

3.4.29 Groundwork also concluded that the area at the base of the map should be turned into flower beds and shrubs and is recommending that local residents and children be included in the design and the planting to give them a feeling of ownership, avoid vandalism and encourage future maintenance of the area. Groundwork did not

get much feedback on the uppermost area marked on the map. This is the site of the old burnt out garages that the project co-ordinator has done much to fix. Our own consultation suggested that this area needs to remain an access point into the town from Meadow Road and the new lighting that has already been installed there has increased use among residents who previously found the route off-putting. That said, some of the young people and parents attending the celebration day suggested that there would also be room for a skate park/basketball court and were keen to see the garages removed.

- 3.4.30 Subject to authorisation from the Local Authority to develop the sites, Groundwork could fund or part-fund the projects and help in any application for external funding. To succeed in any application, they recommend that a community group or a residents' association is set up.
- 3.4.31 Out of 15 respondents who took part in the Groundwork survey, 12 said that they would be willing to do voluntary work.

End of Year Survey

- 3.4.32 In April 2007, an end-of-year survey was undertaken focussing solely in the Meadow Road area of Melin. The evaluation team designed a brief questionnaire which was administered by the Action Co-ordinator over two days. The survey involved mostly face-to-face doorstep interviews along with some self-completion of questionnaires among residents who expressed a preference to take part that way.
- 3.4.33 The aim of the survey was to gauge perceptions of residents living in the Meadow Road area of any changes that had been observed in the pilot year, as well as to ascertain views regarding the future maintenance of cleanliness in the area. The questions were qualitative and demographic data were also collected (age and gender).
- 3.4.34 A total of 63 responses were achieved - 35% males and 65% females. The majority of respondents were aged 25-59 (n=39; 62%), with nine young people aged 16-24 taking part (14%) and 14 people aged 60 or over (22%). Data was missing for one questionnaire (2%).
- 3.4.35 Respondents were asked to comment specifically on Meadow Road and the Eaglesbush Valley. In this context, most residents said that they had noticed a difference in the area over the last 12 months (n=44) and the main observations were that the area was quieter or that there were "general improvements". One respondent observed:

"I have noticed a lot of clearing has been done in Eaglesbush and its surrounding area. It's nice to see rubbish being moved at last." [Local Resident]

- 3.4.36 Only one person said that they had noticed a difference for the worse, and this was unrelated to anti-social behaviour or fly-tipping/cleanliness. They commented that they could "rarely park outside our house due to so many other cars on the road". [Local Resident]
- 3.4.37 Sixteen respondents said that they had not noticed any difference and four provided blank or illegible responses.
- 3.4.38 There was a generally positive response when asked if the area was a better place to live than 12 months ago and this was related to the visual appearance of the area (one of the projects specific aims). That said, it seems that the work undertaken was not sufficient alone to improve people's quality of life or overall satisfaction with living in the area. One respondent commented that:

"It's becoming a nicer place to look at! But I wouldn't say the work that has been done in the last 12 months has made it a better place to live." [Local Resident]

- 3.4.39 As a means of comparing baseline and end-of-pilot feelings of safety, residents were asked if they felt safe living in the neighbourhood. The majority (n=49; 78%) said that they felt safe

or fairly safe. The reasons given included: having family nearby; knowing everyone; good/friendly neighbours; quiet area and a good police presence.

- 3.4.40 Despite this, some of the comments received may be suggestive of fear of crime. People said that they felt safe because they could *“look after myself”*, because they had a dog, alarm, security camera and lights or lived in a “top” flat. Another commented that they were not easily intimidated. As evidenced during interviews at the celebration event, it seems that some people felt safe only because they limited their social circles:

“Yes and no - we keep to ourselves and don’t associate up here [Meadow Road], we feel it’s safer that way”. [Local Resident]

“Yes, if you don’t bother with bad neighbours it is okay”. [Local Resident]

- 3.4.41 Two residents said that they lived in the “better”, “quiet” or “safer” part of the estate and cited this as a reason for feeling safe. This supports earlier comments provided by residents at the celebration event which would suggest that the street is perceived by local residents to be split in two, with a good and less good area for living (i.e. the “top” versus the “bottom” of the estate.)
- 3.4.42 Fourteen people (22%) said that they did not feel safe living in the Meadow Road area. The main reasons cited were bad or noisy neighbours/residents, not trusting the people in the area, having been a victim of crime (break in/burglary), being aware of local crimes (shooting and stabbing in the town), fear of victimisation (*“someone will rob you”*), fighting and riots, too many druggies/alcoholics in the area, feeling intimidated by visitors to the area who drink too much, and being elderly.
- 3.4.43 None of the comments regarding safety related explicitly to the general appearance of the area.
- 3.4.44 When asked how much they were affected by fear of crime and/or anti-social behaviour in the Meadow Road area (on a scale of one to ten where one is ‘no effect’ and ten is a very significant effect), the average rating was four.
- 3.4.45 When asked what main changes they would like to see to their area to improve quality of life, the main issue appears to be the need to change the attitudes and behaviours of a core of local residents who are perceived to cause problems. This echoed some of the sentiments expressed at the celebration event and comments made during the baseline survey and suggests that this might be a potential area of focus for the future of the project. The same issue was also noted by one of the stakeholders interviewed as part of the evaluation process:

“Meadow Road is typical of many local authority housing estates that, in my opinion, have suffered from decades of neglect. The vast majority of people there are people who really want to make a difference. They want to improve their living standards and their living style. There is a limited minority who choose to act anti-socially, as you will find in most communities. But, in our experience, the minority have not been brought to book in any shape or form. This leads to other residents feeling, “Well, what can we do about it?” People begin to despair and that’s the beginnings of disintegration. We’ve tried to show the people in Meadow Road that, “Yes, we do care. We’re not just prepared to talk

about it, we will come and do something." We will not do it for them, we will help them do it." [Keep Wales Tidy]

- 3.4.46 Encouragingly, when asked who they thought was responsible for keeping the area clean and safe, most respondents said that they considered it to be a joint Council and resident responsibility. This might indicate some level of success in creating a sense of ownership among residents.

Stakeholder Interviews

- 3.4.47 Qualitative interview data collected from some of the main partners involved in this project suggest that the scheme has been successful in building better links between partner agencies in the local community.

- 3.4.48 For the project team, one of the biggest indicators of success has been that physical differences have been made to the area, which have resulted from joint efforts:

"I think the most important thing about clearing up the area is that we didn't do it independently." [Project Team]

- 3.4.49 The team and partner agencies also confirmed that the project had been successful in capacity building and acting as a driver for change in an area where it had long been recognised that action needed to be taken:

"I don't think they would have committed that money unless we had initiated the clean-up because the problem looked too large." [Project Team]

"[The co-ordinator] has done very well to get another arm of the authority to do these gardens because that would have cost us thousands and thousands of pounds. Now he's twisted somebody's arm, that's great. I think that's where the beauty of the project is. ...Because we are there dealing with the day-to-day matters, and we don't have the time or the financial resources to do it. We know what we'd like to do there, but the budget is so limited." [Local Authority Representative]

- 3.4.50 Importantly, it seems that the pilot was successful in addressing its specific aim of building on and enhancing the work of the Communities First Programme:

"Having somebody working on anti-social behaviour is like having somebody helping me to achieve one of the themes of Communities First. That is what the co-ordinator has been doing really." [Communities First]

3.5 Costs and Resource Issues

3.5.1 Over the pilot year, the project funding was used to pay for:

- the co-ordinator's salary and travel;
- accommodation and equipment;
- physical interventions;
- room hire and refreshments;
- schools and youth activities;
- celebration event; and
- rubbish amnesties.

3.5.2 The only paid role in the project was that of the project co-ordinator. All other management and supervision time, as well as time spent on community activities by the Business Support Manager, was been subsumed within other budgets.

3.5.3 The project benefited from the co-ordinator being based within the local Communities First building based in Neath East. This provided a number of key advantages including:

- co-location of the project co-ordinator and the Communities First co-ordinator which facilitates the exchange of information regarding activities being undertaken by each and co-ordination of efforts;
- opportunities for the project co-ordinator to meet with local residents and partners such as Police Community Support Officers using the Communities First drop-in facility; and
- low cost accommodation which benefits the project as well as providing valuable financial assistance to Communities First.

3.5.4 The project was also been successful in attracting financial support and voluntary time from a number of key partners (for example, Keep Wales Tidy and the Neighbourhood Team who provided support for the clean up activities).

3.5.5 The team expressed a view that the time period for the project was somewhat restrictive but the financial resources were allowing them to achieve their objectives without issue.

3.5.6 The project co-ordinator, who lives in the local area, will continue to play a voluntary role in the community and to offer his services to Communities First to help them in taking forward some of the initiatives that were started as part of this project.

3.6 Sustainability

3.6.1 This is the only project of the four that has not been successful in securing longer-term funding to continue its activities. That said, there are a number of features of the pilot that have produced sustainable outcomes and indications are positive that the pilot will lead to longer-term change in the area.

Residents' Association

- 3.6.2 At the celebration event, the local Resident Participation Officer from the Local Authority Housing Department was present to hand out questionnaires to gauge interest in setting up of a residents' association.
- 3.6.3 At the end of April, this had resulted in two meetings of a small core of residents (the representative explained that five people had attended). The authority representative described this as a *"potential success"* insofar as the long-term commitment of these residents was still to be tested. Engaging with a small number of residents at this stage may act as a trigger to long-term, wider community involvement. Conversely, if only a small number are involved early on, interest may dissipate as time goes by.
- 3.6.4 The view from the local authority housing department is that *"the work undertaken by Communities First requires minimum maintenance costs, that is, in the areas that they have tidied up, and we [the local authority] are prepared to commit to trying to maintain these areas"*.
- 3.6.5 One unexpected outcome of the work in the area has been the development of better working relationships between the local authority housing office responsible for the Meadow Road area and the residents living there. The residents have been more responsive and the officer feels that *"real achievements"* have been made in the areas which can be sustained (this includes the erection of new fences and removal of garages that would otherwise not have been undertaken).
- 3.6.6 As Communities First had hosted the Melin Project worker, who remains active in the community as a volunteer, there is seen to be a commitment from them to continue his work.

Neighbourhood Watch

- 3.6.7 The project has been successful in setting up 3 new neighbourhood watch schemes. This is a particular achievement for the project since the 2004 residents' survey indicated that less than 2% of the local community expressed a willingness to participate in such schemes. Interviews with the Action Co-ordinator suggest that setting up these schemes resulted from tenacity and perseverance. The hope is that similar schemes will spread more widely across the ward.
- 3.6.8 Whilst representing a key achievement, it is important to note that the areas in which these schemes were set up may not necessarily have been the areas of greatest need. Questions were asked about how/why the neighbourhood watch schemes had been set up in the areas selected. The co-ordinator explained that the areas were selected purely on the basis of available volunteers and were not necessarily those with the highest levels of anti-social behaviour. Although not ideal, he hoped that increasing the network of schemes locally may act as a prompt to schemes in more needy areas later on. He explained that:

"You cannot choose where a neighbourhood watch area is without support from the residents. We are working with the volunteers that we have and hope for organic growth. If you have a cared for neighbourhood it will reduce signal [minor] crime which will have a knock on effect." [Project Co-ordinator]

- 3.6.9 Similarly, a neighbourhood watch scheme was not established in Meadow Road and a residents' association was seen as more appropriate. Interviews with local residents at the celebration event and with the local authority Resident Participation Officer suggest that there had been problems in the past. This, in itself, may indicate the presence of remaining fear of crime or retribution in the Meadow Road area and could remain a key barrier to break down in affecting attitudinal and behavioural change there.

Fences and Walls

- 3.6.10 As part of the pilot project, two fences were erected at access/egress points between Meadow Road and the Eaglesbush Valley. This deters people living in the area from fly-tipping by preventing access to the site this way. The erection of fences on behalf of the Council shows their commitment to continuing the good work in the area, as this has commenced since the end of the pilot period.
- 3.6.11 The main areas of disappointment expressed by the project team were a lack of time to be able to tackle some of the wider drug and alcohol issues in the area and to follow up specific reports of anti-social behaviour.
- 3.6.12 The co-ordinator spent some of his time over the pilot period following up reports of anti-social behaviour that had been reported to the local police. These were often face-to-face calls at people's home addresses to enquire if the problem which they had complained about has dissipated and to offer further support or guidance. The project worker expressed some disappointment that there had not been more time available for carrying out more of this activity.
- 3.6.13 The co-ordinator suggested that, by not following up such calls, the perception of the community that things were not being tackled may persist. This may be something that the police and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in the local area could learn from the project.

3.7 Summary

- 3.7.1 The biggest achievements from this project appear to have been considerable visual differences to the Meadow Road area of Melin. The intention was that this activity would make people feel safer and would encourage more community ownership to reduce low level nuisance and, in particular fly tipping, in the future.
- 3.7.2 That said, evidence from the 2004 survey, the baseline survey and end of year survey show that, consistently, residents living in Neath East do not appear to feel unsafe. Interviews with residents of Meadow Road attending the celebration event support this, with many saying that they area was simply unclean, rather than unsafe.
- 3.7.3 The evaluation identified that community engagement was poor, and this supports earlier findings from the 2004 survey. Although some local residents did help with the tidy up activities, general awareness and contribution to the project appears to have been unremarkable. This is perhaps a negative indicator since the team identified community engagement and ownership as being central to the success of the project. Coupled with this, there is a lack of real evidence that fear of crime and feelings of safety have improved pre-

and post-pilot implementation. Indeed, many members of the public reported that they did not consider the area to be unsafe either pre- or post-pilot.

- 3.7.4 The evaluation failed to uncover robust evidence of attitudinal change in the area among residents, which is key to creating long-term change, and also noted some re-emergence of rubbish dumping during the pilot period. In particular, white goods reappeared in some gardens along with large items of furniture (sofas, etc) and there was some evidence of build-up of household litter which was not being disposed of using local authority bins. Encouragingly, however, there does appear to be a commitment from the local authority in this area to build on the good work and keep working towards the goals of the pilot project. If a residents' association is successful, further tidy up activities may be organised by the local residents to remove any rubbish that has built up since the end of the project.
- 3.7.5 There does appear to be a core of people in the Meadow Road area that are responsible for some of the fear expressed. It seems that this core may also be responsible for deterring other residents from getting more involved in community engagement, including the residents' association. It seems that targeting this small core of people may go a long way to encouraging more community participation in the area and encouraging an overall sense of neighborhood cohesion.
- 3.7.6 There does appear to have been a reduction in the number of anti-social behaviour incidents at certain times during the project period, and these do appear to have correlated with key project activities.
- 3.7.7 There appears to be a lack of differentiation between the achievements of the project, Communities First and the local authority. Some of the stakeholders interviewed talked about the achievements as if they were led by Communities First. This is not a problem in itself, as one of the aims of the project was to integrate and build on their good work. It simply means that the good work was not correctly attributed. Others, in particular the local residents, talked about the improvements as if they had been local authority led. This was perhaps more disappointing since there was an expectation that these activities should have been undertaken by the Council rather than recognising that a separate project had led the way.
- 3.7.8 The team accepts that the project worker has played a co-ordination role, bringing partners together, and that much of the work undertaken by the project may fall within the remit of other people's jobs. Despite this, the role was defended since the co-ordinator was seen as *"keeping people focussed on anti-social behaviour"* instead of officials *"getting lost or distracted by generic issues relevant to their own department"*. The team also suggested that some of the problems, in particular in Meadow Road, have been long standing and really too big to be dealt with by one department. What this project has shown is that small area-focused management can bring together several departments to work together to help find solutions. The solutions have to be sustainable and the 'problem solving group' has been able to advise on the type of work that may be sustainable e.g. high profile rubbish clearance, fencing off of access to tipping sites, letters to residents advising them about the clearance work, (photographs of cleared areas) and information about the repercussions of fly tipping. That said, measuring the long-term impact and sustainability of these approaches still remains to be shown.

- 3.7.9 The bias towards the environmental focus was defended in terms of being a “first step” towards tackling anti-social behaviour. That is, *“you need to first remove the physical signs of anti-social behaviour before you can tackle the deeper issues.”* [Project Co-ordinator] That said, it seems that the evidence used to influence the focus of the project may not have been completely objective:

“You think you know what’s going to make a difference if you measure it, or things that you can impact on that you think will make a difference, but they might not necessarily be the things that mean most to people. Because I guess, those burnt down garages, to the people who walk up and down that road, they probably just shrug their shoulders when they see it.” [Business Support Officer]

- 3.7.10 The project also set ambitious targets and these changed as the pilot progressed. The team recognised this:

“I think that when we put the figures together, in retrospect, we probably would have tried to measure different things. But I think it’s about, how do you measure change in perception? How do you measure fear of crime? It’s quite difficult...These were some of the things we used when we were measuring which area we would choose because they were the figures that were readily available to us.” [Business Support Officer]

- 3.7.11 The change in the projects aims, objectives and targets as the pilot progressed presents itself as a significant learning point. It seems that, with a more narrowly defined set of objectives, the project was able to make considerable achievements in improving the visual appearance of one area of Melin. What was done was done well and received support from local stakeholders as well as some local residents. That said, it is unclear how the available evidence from local residents was used to inform the projects activities since many of the issues raised by locals were not addressed. The views of those living in or adjacent to a small area of Melin (Meadow Road) played a key role in shaping the project but there is no evidence to suggest that these were the views shared by residents in other areas of the town. The main lesson is that aims and objectives can be refined in order to maximize impacts but ensuring that these are evidenced based, are shared by the target community and that their rationale is clearly documented may maximize impacts even further.

4 The Newport (Lliswerry) Project

4.1 The Local Context

- 4.1.1 Newport is a City of social extremes. The overall index of multiple deprivation shows that, of the 865 wards in Wales, four Newport wards are in the most deprived top 100. Four wards and five sub-ward areas have Community First status. At the opposite end of the scale, the City has five wards in the hundred least deprived areas in Wales, and three of these are in the top fifty.¹¹ Lliswerry itself is not currently a Communities First area.
- 4.1.2 Lliswerry sits on the east side of the City and has a population of 10,616, around a quarter of whom are aged under 16 (24%). Within the Lliswerry ward is the residential area of Broadmead Park and Moorland Park. These housing estates were developed in the 1970s and comprise mostly social housing. The estates are geographically isolated with only one main road providing access/exit to the housing estates with heavy and light industrial sites surrounding the residential areas.

Anti-Social Behaviour in Newport

- 4.1.3 Newport Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008 asserts that young people hanging around in the streets is one of the greatest concerns among local residents¹². As a result, the strategy sets out a need to work with young people to engage them in diversionary activities and to support communities who feel at risk of disorder.
- 4.1.4 In 2003/04, Community Safety Wardens responded to 1127 incidents in Lliswerry, making it one of highest wards for reported anti-social and nuisance behaviour. At the start of the pilot period, there were six Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) currently in place on individuals within the Lliswerry Ward.

Youth Work in Newport

- 4.1.5 Newport Council has an active Youth Work Service. The Newport Young People's Partnership brings together organisations that provide services for young people aged 11-25 years including education, social services, health, careers, youth work and the criminal justice system as well as representatives from a number of different voluntary organisations.
- 4.1.6 The Newport Young People's Partnership Strategy for 2002-2007 sets out their vision for Newport to become a City which *"values its young people and where each young person will have equal opportunity to access a wide range of appropriate services and high quality provision, regardless of gender, religion, ethnic origin, any disability or illness or any other factors which may disadvantage them."*¹³

¹¹ Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales (2005) Quality and Standards in Education and Training in Wales A Report on the Quality of Youth Support Services

¹² Based on the Crime and Disorder Audit, 2005, which involved questionnaire surveys of local residents and young people as well as focus groups with hard to reach groups, stakeholder conferences and a focus group with elected members.

¹³ Newport City Council (2002) Newport Young People's Partnership Strategy 2002-2007: Working together to make Newport a Place where young people want to live and work

- 4.1.7 Newport Youth Services actively work towards encouraging young people in the area to achieve Duke of Edinburgh accreditation. Indeed, the scheme operates in most secondary schools in the area and is promoted among the youth services operating in the City. The Award is widely recognised by employers and universities as a sign of community participation and self-development.
- 4.1.8 The scheme operates for all young people, regardless of background or ability and is offered to those aged between 14 and 25. Three levels of award are available, depending on age (bronze, silver and gold). At all levels, the scheme requires young people to satisfy the requirements of four core components, these being: service, skill, physical recreation and an expedition. For the Gold Award, a young person must also undertake a residential project.
- 4.1.9 In Newport, the Youth Services offer the programme to encourage young people to build their self-esteem, to make friends and learn in a positive environment. In addition to actively promoting the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Newport Youth Services have developed a bespoke Passport Award, a scheme that enables young people in the area to build up and transfer credits to gain a recognised qualification.
- 4.1.10 Against this backdrop, the Newport (Lliswerry) Project was set up.

4.2 Set Up and Operation

Establishing the Pilot Project

- 4.2.1 The specific aims of the Newport project were to:

- reduce the number of disaffected 10-17 year olds who carry out anti-social behaviour;
- tackle fear of crime in the Lliswerry area;
- reduce community problems such as property damage, graffiti and fly tipping; and
- improve the self esteem and skills of young people through education.

- 4.2.2 The aims of this project were clearly defined and followed on from previous work in the Lliswerry area – the SPLASH project¹⁴. The SPLASH project, operated by the local youth service, provided opportunities for young people to attend sports and recreational activities during the summer holidays as well as giving young people an opportunity to work towards a Duke of Edinburgh's award. The 2005 SPLASH project identified low uptake in the Lliswerry area of Newport, and it was considered that this was largely due to the fact that there had been no previous youth service provision in the area, meaning that young people were reluctant to engage. Further exploratory work by the Youth Service in Newport revealed that there were few opportunities for young people in the area and the only recreational space in the community (a small area of grass in the middle of a circular arrangement of local authority owned housing) was being use by gangs of youths using drugs/alcohol. For this reason, the area was chosen for the anti-social behaviour pilot project.

¹⁴ The SPLASH project is aimed at young people aged 11-15 years old and operates during school holidays to provide young people with social and recreational activities (including outdoor pursuits), participation in which may contribute towards Duke of Edinburgh qualifications. The scheme is funded from central government.

- 4.2.3 The philosophy of the Project Management Team was that this work should not be labelled as 'anti-social behaviour' work. The team were keen to convey the message to the young people involved that they are working towards empowerment, pride and self-development. For this reason, the staff and the young people involved locally refer to the project as the YELL (Young Empowered Lliswerry Leaders) project.

The Project in Operation

- 4.2.4 The YELL project was managed by two youth workers for the duration of the pilot period. They were supported by the local Area Youth Worker and the Newport Youth Development Officer.
- 4.2.5 One of the first tasks undertaken by the project team was a community profile. This was used by the team as a familiarisation exercise to provide them with a firm grounding in the main social and demographic characteristics of the area in which they would be working. A copy of the profile was provided to the evaluation team and seems to be a thoroughly researched document, containing information relating to:

- the history of the Lliswerry area;
- population profile statistics taken from the Census;
- an overview of educational and recreational opportunities available to young people living in the Lliswerry area (including information on schools, after school and holiday projects);
- an overview of youth provision in the local area;
- an index of social and recreational facilities in the area including churches and sports clubs;
- details of local transport provision in the area, including bus timetables and fares, community transport provision and road network details;
- details of the main stakeholders of relevance to the project including names and details of local councillors, community development workers, youth workers, police and health providers; and
- findings from local fear of crime surveys and summaries of the main issues regarding anti-social behaviour in the ward; and
- details of schemes that had previously operated in the area, including environmental campaigns.

- 4.2.6 The next stage of the project implementation involved considerable outreach work in the community, designed to raise awareness of the new project among young people. Youth workers undertook outreach work three times a week during May and June 2006 and were able to establish a wealth of intelligence regarding main issues affecting young people in the area as well as those young people who were most at risk and therefore who should be invited to get involved in the project. This was used as the main basis for recruitment to the project along with referrals from youth services, neighbourhood wardens and the police.

4.2.7 The team sent letters to the parents of the young people who had been identified as potential participants by the police, youth workers and social services, as well as approaching parents and young people on the street. As the project focused mostly on young people aged 12-17, consent was required for work with most young people (i.e. all those aged under 16).

4.2.8 The project team reported that a number of young people chose not to engage with the project and, in some cases, parents or guardians refused permission for their child's involvement. This issue was explored early in the evaluation and it became clear that the main reason for non-engagement was a lack of interest in the scheme among parents:

"They didn't want their children to be doing something formal if they didn't want to. I think the instances cited were where the parents were unsupportive or uninterested in the development of their children and so, if the young person said, "Oh, I don't want to do it", they said, "Fine, you don't have to do it" instead of saying, "Well, okay, what path are you going down? And, if this is going to give you any sort of learning, then it might be worth doing it."" [Area Youth Worker]

4.2.9 Inevitably, this meant that some of the most at risk people were not recruited into the scheme.

4.2.10 Despite this, the project recruited two core groups of young people over the year - one group of girls and one group of boys. The decision to separate out the boys and girls groups was made because young people themselves requested separate groups. The youth workers were also of the view that separate group activities worked better and encouraged greater self-disclosure and more relaxed participation in activities. This perhaps provides useful learning regarding 'what works' in engaging with young people.

4.2.11 The boys group met weekly and comprised a core of 8-9 boys attending each week. They undertook a range of social and recreational activities but the main focus of their activity was organising a charity football match with the local police in the area. This event was held during the summer of 2006 and the police later asked for a rematch. All of the boys used the weekly sessions to carry out activities which fell in line with the requirements of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, as well as more broadly based activities focussing on raising self-esteem and encouraging positive behaviour. Engagement with this group lasted around 16 weeks.

4.2.12 The girls group, which had a core of four members, worked with the youth workers one evening a week over a 16 week period, meeting in a local community centre to undertake a range of activities including self-development awareness activities, discussions of social issues such as racism and discrimination, as well as to undertake physical activities (sports and arts). The central remit of the activities was delivering 'citizenship' education. That is, teaching the girls how to achieve change in the community by becoming active citizens and engaging with local residents to work together in tackling local issues.

4.2.13 The single biggest focus of the girls' group was the planning of a charity fashion event. They were involved in writing letters to local businesses to seek support, as well as planning themes for the event and planning and purchasing all materials required on the night. In planning this event, the girls group attended a Fair Trade fashion show to collect ideas for their own production. The planning culminated in an event that was attended by members

of the local community, Councillors and parents as well as other young people, at which over £110 was raised for the Breast Cancer Awareness charity. Over 25 young people were involved on the day, either performing or making up the audience. Others who attended included the Newport Youth Service, Community Development staff, Sports and Arts Development staff, Moorland and Broadmead Community Association representatives, members of the local Mary Dunn Community Centre Committee, teachers from the local school and local councillors.

- 4.2.14 The girls group also took part in a residential activity which served as recognition and reward for the young people's commitment to the YELL project. Here, they took part in physical team building events and relaxation sessions.
- 4.2.15 Some of the young people involved in the project were channelled into a separate project that was run jointly between the YELL project, Community Development and Arts Development working on a DVD project looking at anti-social behaviour in the community. The young people were involved in producing, directing and filming a DVD to be used as an educational resource by the youth service.
- 4.2.16 The quality management system operated by this project was comprehensive and robust. Detailed recording sheets were filled in by the youth workers recording attendance at sessions for each of the young people, which they followed up with visits or calls to young people to try to maintain attendance if they failed to arrive on any given week. For each session attended, both the young people and youth workers filled in observation sheets to record comments on the running of the session and any incidental learning. The two core youth workers, both of whom were based in the same premises, provided constant feedback to one another to complement the self-reflection activities undertaken. This was coupled with regular meetings with the management team.
- 4.2.17 Individual young people also completed activity sheets and created case study folders for their own involvement in the project. These were used as evidence in the accreditation of any awards to result from their participation in the scheme. All of the activities undertaken as part of the project were designed to assist the young people in working towards accredited certificates which, it was hoped, would assist them in future self-development endeavours.
- 4.2.18 Taking into account the core group attendees, as well as young people who came into contact with the YELL pilot through the DVD project attendance at the fashion show or the football match, it was estimated that over 40 young people will have benefited from the project in some way. One group of young people who were not part of the core YELL pilot provided entertainment at the Charity fashion show (playing music at the interval) and were present when the local Councillor and Youth Manager provided feedback on the purpose and outcomes of the event. The team estimated that around 25 young people attended the event which would have helped to raise awareness of the projects aims and, again, encouraged youth work engagement in the future. The presence of the two youth workers in the Communities House building also means that they came into contact with other young people which will, hopefully, break down barriers for youth staff hoping to work in the area in the future.

4.3 Project Impact

4.3.1 This project had the least objectively measurable set of outcomes. That is, it did not seek to reduce anti-social behaviour incidents *per se*, but rather focussed on attitudinal and behaviour change among the young people involved as well as those living in the local community. The one objective outcome (to reduce community problems such as property damage, graffiti and fly tipping) appeared not to be actively pursued as the pilot progressed. Interviews with the project team suggested that these issues would be addressed by the removal of disaffected youth from the streets, rather than being something they would target directly. The team recognised that, in the timeframe of this pilot and with their engagement with only a relatively small number of young people, they may not have made any progress against this aim.

4.3.2 The Youth Development Officer who oversaw the project did believe, however, that whilst it may not be possible to measure the impact of the scheme on incidents of anti-social behaviour directly, there might be reason to believe that the scheme had helped to reduce the problem:

"The groups, largely the boys group, I am certain that purely on diversionary activities, it was taking them out of the loop for a period of time when they would otherwise have been doing other less positive things." [Youth Development Officer]

4.3.3 For this reason, the impact of the project was measured largely in terms of qualitative feedback from the young people and the community regarding noticeable differences in the local area and changes in attitudes directly brought about by the scheme.

4.3.4 The main evaluation data collection activities were baseline, mid-year and end of year interviews with the project team (including the Youth Development Officer, the Area Youth Worker, the Project Leader and Youth Worker), as well as observation work with the girls group who engaged with the project through attendance at an evening youth session and the charity fashion show. A focus group was also undertaken with the girls and members of the community, including some parents of the project participants, were interviewed informally at the evening event. The local Community Development Worker also contributed to the consultation along with a local Councillor who attended the charity event.

4.3.5 It is worth highlighting that none of the boys who engaged with the project took part in the evaluation activities. The main reason for this was that their participation in the scheme took place largely before the evaluation began (in the summer of 2006). Further, as some of them failed to engage long-term through regular contact with the project team, it was impractical to set up consultations. This presents a limitation to the evaluation since the boys group may, perhaps, have been considered more 'at risk' whilst the girls group were 'in need'. The difference in the views of the two groups would have been useful to compare and would, no doubt, have added some further depth to the evaluation findings.

Impact on Young People

- 4.3.6 One of the biggest outcomes for the young people involved was a greater sense of community acceptance. The young people discussed feelings of social acceptance especially among older people in the area who could see that they were using their time to undertake learning activities as well as to organise social event, such as the charity fashion show. The young people expressed a view that, prior to their involvement in the project, they had perhaps felt stigmatised and largely misunderstood by their older neighbours:

"I think we all feel special because everyone is looking at us and everyone is giving us their attention. Usually, they look at us and think, "I don't want to speak to them". They just judge us by, like, where we live, the area we live in." [Girls Group]

- 4.3.7 In addition to achieving what they perceived to be increased status and understanding from the wider community, the young people demonstrated a greater awareness of needs for respect of their own peers. They mentioned such things as being tolerant, team work and respecting others as new skills added to their repertoire due to participating in the scheme:

"Working together and being patient is important. You need to let everyone have their turn." [Girls Group]

- 4.3.8 Other learning outcomes for the young people involved included greater awareness of community participation

"It's good to do something to raise money for something else, not just for ourselves." [Girls Group]

- 4.3.9 It appears that the scheme was also instrumental in achieving a high community profile among other young people in the area:

"The fact that we used the YELL brand has had a massive impact on helping us to spread the message about the pilot project. When we meet young people in the streets, they already know about the project as it has a well known name." [Project Workers]

- 4.3.10 This was confirmed by the young people themselves who explained that:

"At school, other people wish that they could be a part of it. I think they are jealous." [Girls Group]

- 4.3.11 Perhaps one of the biggest outcomes of the scheme, however, was the achievement of recognisable qualifications and certificates relating to community participation for the young people involved. All of the young people who took part in the scheme were registered to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (Bronze award) or the Newport Youth Service's Passport Award (depending on their age).

- 4.3.12 During their pilot engagement, the girls group achieved:

- completion of parts of an Open College Network qualification in positive change;
- weekly attendance at step aerobics classes at the nearby Velodrome;
- a residential activity to contribute towards the Duke of Edinburgh's Award; and

- the organisation of a charity fashion show event attended by local Councillors, members of the community and parents of the young people involved which also contributed to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

4.3.13 It is important to note that, of the two groups who participated in the YELL project, the team considered that the work with the girls group had been more effective in achieving positive outcomes than the work with the boys group. That said, all were exited from the pilot project onto the local youth club, the Newport Information Shop and a DVD project which was just starting to be set up at the end of the pilot period.

4.3.14 The young people involved expressed real pride, not only in themselves, but their peers, for the achievements that they had made:

"If you work together and plan then you feel really good at the end. I think we'll feel proud of ourselves at the end of this and think, "Yeah, I'm glad I done all of that, it was well worth it". [Girls Group]

4.3.15 Interviews with project staff also revealed that the young people had developed 'softer' skills (including increased self-esteem, sociability, teamwork and negotiation skills) which had been one of the main aims of the project:

"More importantly, we've also got people who've improved their soft skills, relationships among these young people generally." [Youth Development Officer]

4.3.16 Again, it is important to highlight that the lack of consultation activity with the boys group means that it is not possible to say whether similar achievements were made by them. Anecdotal evidence from the project staff suggests that the boys were less successful in obtaining 'soft skills' (such as improved communication with peers, development of team skills or engaging with the community) and that the main benefits for them were moving away from anti-social or disruptive behaviour and spending their time more positively by engaging in such things as football or other creative activities. The only evidence that suggests that the boys did also make progress towards better community integration was feedback received by the team from the police, who commented favourably on the organisation and behaviour of the boys who took part in the football match against them. It was suggested by the project staff that the boys had gained better respect for the police following their involvement in this event.

Impact in the Community

4.3.17 The community was involved in the project primarily through contact with the local Community Development Worker and outreach youth work carried out by the team.

4.3.18 Undoubtedly, the team felt that one of the biggest successes of the project implementation had been the decision to co-locate the workers in the Community Development office located at the heart of the community in Lliswerry:

"The main outcomes of the project, firstly, are that there is now a much stronger youth service and youth worker engagement with the local community and with young people. And that's a significant change. We're now operating from a base within the community, and we work on a daily basis with the Community Development Worker, the community and young people who come through the door and the engagement is quite strong."

Before the pilot, we had zero. And that's been appreciated and celebrated by everyone concerned, I think." [Youth Development Officer]

- 4.3.19 Seven members of the public were consulted at the evening fashion show event organised by the scheme along with two sets of parents/family and a local Councillor. These informal discussions also revealed high levels of satisfaction with the project, and this was confirmed during interview with the local Community Development Worker and the project staff:

"It was desperately needed and the young people have really engaged. They respect the service that is being offered. What we do need, though, is to keep things consistent. To take services away breaks confidence." [Community Development Worker]

"This area has had a lack of youth provision in the past and so when we went into the area we were welcomed with open arms. In some other areas, we may have faced difficulties but, in Lliswerry, because people wanted us so much, it made things a bit easier." [Youth Worker]

- 4.3.20 Indeed, a common theme from discussions with community stakeholders and project workers was a recognised need for the project to be long-term in order to achieve real community impacts. In particular, it was felt that some members of the community may be reluctant to engage with the project until it became more established. There was some concern that it might be considered "flash in the pan" and this in itself may have contributed to some of the negative parental attitudes towards letting their children take part. The team were confident that the co-location of the youth workers in the Communities House building had made a big difference to raising community confidence in the scheme and that they could continue to build on this in the future:

"The longer we're there, the better it is. If we are consistently in the community, and young people who have been known to be difficult have been involved and have done something productive then that breaks down barriers in perception." [Area Youth Worker]

- 4.3.21 The project appears to have been successful in bringing in outside agencies to liaise with the young people involved, including:

- a workshop delivered by a sexual health outreach worker around contemporary sexual health issues; and
- an interactive workshop run by Fusion (the substance misuse agency) exploring issues around drug and alcohol abuse.

- 4.3.22 Members of the community were invited to the charity fashion show and the football match organised by the young people and separate presentations were put on by the team towards the end of the project to celebrate their achievements. These attracted a high level of stakeholder interest:

"We've done presentations of their work and people who have attended have included a goodly number of elected members, including the Mayor. They've included strategic directors, heads of service in the local authority, youth offending service and the Divisional Commander for the police. The list is significant in terms of raising the profile of this work in a positive way and celebrating the success of these young people." [Youth Development Officer]

- 4.3.23 Finally, although the team did not undertake any explicit public engagement work (other than inviting them to events and being co-located in the community building), one of the principles of the project was to use local facilities and business in helping them to implement activities and to raise general awareness of the scheme by showing a commitment to use and respect local facilities:

"Some progress has been made with using local businesses and facilities in the area. For the fashion show, we've only used local suppliers. It's all been in Lliswerry, and they've all been told about the project. It's not a big thing, but it does increase awareness." [Area Youth Worker]

"We wanted people in the area to see that we could make positive use of the facilities (accommodation) that were already in the area and that we could respect it properly. That was important for us rather than just arguing for new resources." [Youth Worker]

Impact on Project Workers

- 4.3.24 Of all of the schemes, the Lliswerry project adopted the most flexible approach to implementation over the 12-month period. In the true spirit of a pilot, the team adopted an experimental approach to their work with young people.

"The fact that the pilot has allowed us to experiment has been a good thing. It means that we can take some of the positive learning to our next project. We weren't constrained in any way, and that was good for learning." [Youth Worker]

"The nature and flexibility of the Pilot Project being a 'pilot' has provided the youth work staff with the opportunity to modify and change ways of working with young people...delivering sessions on an ad hoc basis to suit the ever changing needs of the young people. All of these factors have made the Pilot Project innovative and exciting" [End of Project Exit Report]

- 4.3.25 In essence, the project was needs-led and the staff embraced the need to adapt their approach as the pilot progressed in order to maximise the benefits of the project for the young people.
- 4.3.26 At the start of the project, the initial plans to engage with disaffected youth for a period of 12 months also appeared to be challenging. This was raised with the team at early meetings and they agreed that it may be difficult to retain the interest of young people for this duration. That said, however, as the project progressed, it became clear that the 12-week sessions were not proving sufficient for young people or the worker involved and, in fact, both expressed a view for longer-term engagement.

"It takes time to engage with these young people. They are very cautious about relationships with adults and you can't engage with young people in the street and get them working with you. They've got to see you, get to know you and build trust." [Youth Development Officer]

- 4.3.27 The pilot youth workers completed an Open College Network accredited Child Protection Training Course and 'Willy-Nilly' training, a project which enables youth workers in Newport

to distribute condoms at suitable outlets and to provide information to young people regarding safer sex.

- 4.3.28 Although, arguably, the positive outcomes for project staff did not help to reduce anti-social behaviour directly as part of this project, the increased skills and abilities of the team, and valuable learning that they will carry forward may be considered as assisting in future attempts to disengage young people in the area from anti-social behaviour.

- 4.3.29 This project also appeared to enjoy a great deal of support from the local authority and local councillors in the area. There appeared to be strong links to a number of different committees and working groups of which members of the management team were a part. This helped to ensure that the project was congruent with other local youth work activities:

"A 12-month project from a standing start is hugely difficult in this area of work. The reason why this project was highly successful was because we literally carved out a case of the youth system putting in place an infrastructure and using the Council network to support its development." [Youth Development Officer]

- 4.3.30 A final presentation event held by the project team in April 2006 provided an opportunity for all of the workers and senior youth service staff to get together and discuss the outcomes of the scheme. Here, the Youth Development Officer presented five key learning points from the project, these being:

- the considerable value in making young people aware of their rights and responsibilities to the community;
- adopting a flexible and needs-led approach to youth work that takes account of different needs and looks beyond conventional youth work methods;
- creating exit routes for young people;
- promoting and developing outreach work and using detached teams to carry out on street recruitment work that is not necessarily focussed solely on those most at risk; and
- establishing wider youth provision that meets the needs of people in high need as well as those at high risk.

- 4.3.31 This last point is perhaps the single biggest factor that the team recognised as a learning outcome. Indeed, towards the end of the pilot, the workers began to adopt a broad approach to working with young people:

"If they [the most at risk people] do not want to voluntarily take part, we can't make them. So, in one or two occasions, the youth workers have worked with a group where they've got loose connections with those targeted ones and, in some cases, even in a group, where you've got young people who are okay, working with the group has benefits for all of them." [Area Youth Worker]

- 4.3.32 Arguably, this scheme appears to have been the most willing to embrace learning from the pilot and to use it to inform their future activities. An end-of-year exit report produced by the youth workers, alongside three one-day debriefing sessions were used to draw together

all learning from the project. The team embraced observations from the evaluation team and were also realistic in recognising the limitations of the model that was employed.

4.4 Cost and Resource Issues

- 4.4.1 In developing the project, the team were keen to point out that their approach had been developed without being confined by the available budget. The team developed a project model that they felt would work rather than one which was affordable and resource driven. They were able to meet the project's demands within existing budgets but were keen to point out that the project may not have been a success had their initial thinking been constrained by financial concerns.
- 4.4.2 As with some of the other schemes, one of the core strengths of the project was the appointment of a project co-ordinator who was already working in the area and who had previously established relationships with local service providers which facilitated use of facilities such as the local church for group work with the project participants. This undoubtedly added value to the project.

4.5 Sustainability

- 4.5.1 The short-term nature of the project funding meant that there were some anxieties about the retention of staff working on the YELL project. During the baseline interviews, it became clear that two members of the initial team had already moved on and one remaining member of the youth work team was considering movement to another appointment before the end of the funded period. Indeed, this did occur and there was a period of transition in the final three months of the scheme.
- 4.5.2 As with the Melin project, the youth workers were housed in an existing property, which helped to keep accommodation costs to a minimum. The core team were based in a community house situated in the heart of the estate operated by the Community development team. The location of the team in the centre of the community provided invaluable opportunities for the staff to build relationships with local residents as they become familiar over time, as well as allowing them to maximise on the opportunities to engage with young people or their parents who are using the existing drop in facilities operated by the community development worker. Plans are in place for youth workers to retain a presence in this house and to maintain community engagement.
- 4.5.3 Lliswerry is also expecting the erection of a new community centre in the short term which will help to take forward the positive work already carried out by the project. This will provide a new facility for the whole community, including young people, and the pilot project team are already planning for the ways in which the lessons learnt from their current project may be transferred into new activities at the centre (with funding from elsewhere). The centre will primarily act as a social hub offering a safe environment for young people in which they can engage in social activities such as sports, organising community events or creative activities (including taking part in the setting up of a band). The youth workers will also use this as an access point to engage with young people and offer them opportunities to become involved in the Newport Youth Services wider programmes including accredited courses.

4.5.4 This project has also secured funding from the Welsh Assembly Government's Safer Communities Fund for the period 1st April 2007 to March 2009 to enable the team to roll-out a revised model of the pilot anti-social behaviour project, learning from the pilot and building on achievements so far. One of the things that the project team hope to achieve within this new funding is to use some of the pilot project participants to act as peer educators of new young people coming into the scheme. This was considered as a viable exit route for some of the pilot group and is another indicator of sustainable outcomes.

4.5.5 Learning from the pilot, this new scheme will have a broader recruitment remit. The team explained that:

"The thing we would re-look at is the targeting. The boys group was dead on the target group that we wanted and there was police referral into that and it worked well. The girls group were not of high risk but they were in high need, in terms of wanting to be positively contributing to the community but didn't have the means or where-with-all to do it. And that's the dilemma. Do you reject a group of young people who want to become active citizens, just because they've not come up on police radars? That was a dilemma for us and we'll have to look at that in the future - responding to the needs of the wider youth instead of a targeted group. Having said that, the vast majority of people were at risk, either because of their behaviour or because of the nature of the community they were living in." [Youth Development Officer]

4.5.6 SPLASH funding to operate a summer project in Lliswerry has also been secured and the involvement in the pilot project helped the team to prepare a business case for SPLASH youth provision in Lliswerry.

4.6 Summary

4.6.1 The project appears to be providing some positive results for the young people involved, the main outcomes being greater community involvement and achievement of credits towards nationally recognised qualifications. This provides the biggest measure of success.

4.6.2 Further, the project was successful in facilitating entry into a community which had previously received no youth provision. Anecdotally, Youth Service staff in Newport had been aware of a tremendous need in the Lliswerry community and the pilot provided an injection of funding to undertake face-to-face work with community representatives and young people in the area, providing a foundation on which trust relationships might be built. Through making use of local facilities and showing that young people could work responsibly to engage in positive activities without causing disruption to the buildings, the project has contributed to opening doors for future youth work provision in the area.

4.6.3 As with the Melin project, it may be argued that the Lliswerry project focussed more on meeting two of its initial aims at the expense of others (i.e. improving the self-esteem and skills of young people through education and reducing the number of disaffected 10-17 year olds who carry out anti-social behaviour).

4.6.4 Further, there is, perhaps, some doubt about the extent to which the project met its aims of engaging the most at risk individuals in the community since the girls group, who may be considered as more 'in need', were those who perhaps benefited most from the pilot. Problems with engaging the 'at risk' boys provided valuable lessons for the future and the

team in Lliswerry has used mechanisms such as the formal debriefing exercise to ensure that this learning is not lost. Whilst the lack of consultation with the boys is a limitation of the evaluation, therefore, the experiences of the project team in attempting to work with this group has been valuable in increasing awareness of how to work with young people from different backgrounds.

- 4.6.5 The main question that remains, however, is the extent to which the work with these small numbers of young people has impacted on a reduction in anti-social behaviour in the Lliswerry area. In particular, how it has helped to reduce fear of crime in line with its original objectives. Whilst it is important to recognise that the lack of data collected to reflect this (which is, perhaps, a limitation of the evaluation project), it seems likely that there would not have been any tangible reduction in incidents due to the very targeted nature of the project with small groups of young people. The team have made it clear that, in order to measure real impacts on reducing levels of anti-social behaviour, a longer period of engagement with young people may be required. They consider that this pilot had enabled them to make a valuable first step towards introducing a youth service presence in a previously un-serviced area and that, as they continue into the future with the funding that they have secured from elsewhere, levels of youth engagement will increase and diversionary activities will help to remove young people from the streets and from carrying out criminal acts or acts of nuisance behaviour. The conclusion to be drawn is, perhaps, that the model employed only allows for possible reduction in anti-social behaviour to be measured in the medium to long term.

5 The Cardiff Project

5.1 The Local Context

- 5.1.1 Cardiff parks and open spaces make up 10% of the total area of the city and include three parks that have achieved national Green Flag status¹⁵.
- 5.1.2 Cardiff City Council owns and manages over 1,500 hectares including: 25 formal parks, 77 recreational grounds, 135 areas of informal open space, 12 countryside areas, 15 woodlands, 25 allotment sites, 150 sports pitches and 7 cemeteries. Within the parks and green spaces, the Council provides facilities for a number of recreational activities including children's playgrounds, football/rugby/cricket pitches, tennis courts, bowling greens, a boating lake and a caravan park. It is the Council's role to manage and maintain this extensive estate through regular maintenance, upgrading of facilities and the continuous development of new landscape designs. Parks are managed by the Parks Division within the portfolio of Culture Leisure and Parks.
- 5.1.3 The vast majority of Cardiff parks and open spaces are open at all times, but some are locked-up outside of daylight hours. In general, these parks are open by around 7.30am and are locked approximately 30 minutes before the nationally published sunset time for Cardiff.
- 5.1.4 Examples of the parks managed by the City Council include Bute Park and Splott Park. Bute Park is an extensive mature parkland easily accessible from the city centre. It is flanked by the River Taff, Sophia Gardens, Pontcanna Fields and Cardiff Castle. Few cities have such a spacious green area in the heart of their city. Splott Park is a large park in the heart of Splott with a wide variety of recreational facilities to appeal to all ages. The large playing fields are suitable for many different sporting activities and Splott Swimming Pool is situated in the park's centre.
- 5.1.5 The parks are patrolled by a team of Park Rangers whose job it is to try to ensure that visitors have safe and enjoyable access to Cardiff's open spaces. The Park Ranger service is made up of two main strands; park rangers and community park rangers. The park rangers undertake the traditional role of the 'park keeper', and ensure that the park is a safe place for visitors to enjoy, by regularly checking the play equipment, park furniture, fences and trees, etc. They also assist with events and activities in the parks and enforce the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996¹⁶. Community park rangers have a different role, complementing that of the park rangers. They run a programme of guided walks and events throughout the year and work with other volunteers and 'Friends Groups' in carrying out conservation work. They assist schools in covering the environmental aspect of the National Curriculum making use of the parks' natural resources and also give talks to local interest groups.

¹⁵ The Green Flag Award is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales which began in 1996. It recognises and rewards the best green spaces in the country and sets benchmarks of excellence in recreational green areas. For more information see <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/>

¹⁶ To date, this has resulted in 31 fixed penalties and three pending prosecutions

Anti-social behaviour in Cardiff parks

- 5.1.6 Cardiff's Parks and Green Spaces Strategy: Background Paper 3: Anti-social behaviour in parks (2006) explains that, *"Much of what is termed anti-social behaviour in parks is the type of teenage behaviour that has always existed. This has become a major social issue because of increasing pressure on land use. Whereas several decades ago, all towns had areas of peripheral or wasteland that were out of sight and sound of most people, these days, public parks are where the behaviour of teenagers is seen and heard by a great majority of the population"*.
- 5.1.7 Historically, park-based staff have been trained to routinely report to the police problems with gangs of youths, underage drinking, joyriding, illegal use of motorcycles, arson, vandalism, intimidation, drug and alcohol abuse, rough sleeping, aggressive begging, violence, dog fouling, litter, fly tipping and numerous other bylaw infringements. The South Wales Police report for the year 2004/05 shows over 12,500 reported incidents of anti-social behaviour within the City of Cardiff as a whole¹⁷. Anecdotally, however, Council reports suggest that the scale of anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces is grossly under-reported¹⁸.
- 5.1.8 The provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Police Reform Act 2002 now place a statutory responsibility upon local authorities to actively consider anti-social behaviour and take all reasonable steps to reduce the problem in everything it does. Cardiff City Council's Parks Division has therefore acted to reduce anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces; with the aim of creating lasting mechanisms by which anti-social behaviour can be addressed within its public parks.
- 5.1.9 Prior to the start of the pilot projects, the Parks Division had identified two current issues that particularly required attention within Cardiff's parks: sex and drug related litter and nuisance (over 800 needles were recovered in Cardiff parks and open spaces in 2004/05); and motorcycle nuisance. These issues were consistently apparent in official statistics of recorded incidents as well as being the issues raised most frequently by Council staff working in the parks and complaints received from the public. It is against this backdrop that the Cardiff Parks project was established.

5.2 Set Up and Operation

- 5.2.1 The Parks Community Safety Initiative was set up as a city-wide project as it was felt that the anti-social behaviour problems in Cardiff's parks and open spaces were city wide rather than confined to specific sites.

¹⁷ More recent data has not yet been published

¹⁸ Cardiff's Parks and Green Spaces Strategy: Background Paper 3: Anti-social behaviour in parks (2006)

5.2.2 The project aims and expected outcomes were:

- to reduce anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces (POS) and create lasting mechanisms by which anti-social behaviours could be actioned within the Parks Services;
- to ensure visitors to POS have a safe and enjoyable experience;
- to reduce public costs associated with ASB and the misuse of POS;
- to ensure park-based Accredited Community Support Officers (ACSO) are correctly targeted at addressing anti-social behaviour;
- to co-ordinate the activities of rangers and ACSOs in targeting anti-social behaviour in POS;
- to identify patterns of abuse and liaise with Statutory Partnership agencies in order to target resources;
- to initiate anti-social behaviour referral system in parks; and
- to advise on effective measures to design out crime and anti-social behaviour within parks.

5.2.3 It was felt that anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces in Cardiff was grossly underreported. The project team highlighted issues that they thought were reducing crime reporting (i.e. fear, embarrassment or a 'what's the point?' attitude). Rangers' experiences of contacting the police to report incidents of anti-social behaviour were that the reports did not seem to be taken seriously by the authorities and this was seen as a further deterrent to accurate recording.

5.2.4 This was supported by early interviews with the park rangers who participated in this evaluation, who stated that:

"If we called the police, it would just be classed as low priority and no-one would ever come, or not in time anyway. So we just stopped bothering." [Park Ranger]

"We did have [incident reporting] forms, but we never bothered filling them in, they just sat there, nothing was done with them." [Park Ranger]

5.2.5 As well as pointing out the lack of response from police to anti-social behaviour in parks, the project team thought that the method of mapping incidents was weak. For example, using postcodes to plot anti-social behaviour incidents geographically may have resulted in parks remaining unnoticed as sites of anti-social behaviour in official statistics as parks do not have postcodes.

5.2.6 The 2004 Cardiff Parks Consultation carried out by Council also cited anti-social behaviour by teenagers as a major issue within parks:

"Anti-social behaviour from teenagers is a deterrent to visiting parks. The behaviour of groups of teenagers can be intimidating, particularly in the evening and puts me off visiting local parks for running/jogging." [Member of Public]

"With two young children, I am put off using parks by the number of teenage gangs hanging around smoking, drinking and swearing." [Member of Public]

- 5.2.7 In addition, some of the comments highlighted concerns regarding the absence of parks staff and fear of crime:

"Groups of teenagers are intimidating and off-putting, greater staff is needed in parks to increase feelings of security." [Member of Public]

"Cardiff has fantastic green areas and I would use them more if I felt safer. I don't have a garden and in the summer wanted to use Hailey Park for sunbathing but as a lone woman I felt afraid about this so didn't use it." [Member of Public]

- 5.2.8 Similar comments were made in the 2002 Capital Times Survey¹⁹ on use of parks and suggest that, anti-social behaviour, if not checked, is likely to increase the public's resistance to using parks. These surveys have indicated that anti-social behaviour may be perceived to cause degeneration of public services, with areas becoming 'no-go' zones, further exacerbating anti-social behaviour and the public's lack of confidence in using the sites.

- 5.2.9 On this basis, the police and Parks Division felt that having an anti-social behaviour case worker, working within the parks, would be an effective way to co-ordinate activities to reduce anti-social behaviour. Further, given previous problems with communication between park rangers and the police and a perceived need for greater awareness of anti-social behaviour characteristics, a decision was made that employment of an ex-police officer might benefit the project:

"I suggested that we should employ an ex-policeman. Someone operational, hands on, straight out of the job, get them in the position, and they will know exactly what the structures are in the police, who to speak to, and that's how all this idea came about." [Council Representative]

- 5.2.10 Recognising the scale of the problem in parks, it was decided from the outset that the case worker employed on the pilot would need to work alongside park rangers to co-ordinate activities with those of ACSOs²⁰ working in the parks. Their joint remit would be to target anti-social behaviour, identify patterns of abuse and liaise with the Statutory Partnership agencies in order to target resources, to initiate an anti-social behaviour notification system in the park and advise on effective measures to design out crime and anti-social behaviour in parks.

- 5.2.11 The project team did not highlight any major barriers to project start-up.

Recording/Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour

- 5.2.12 A project co-ordinator was in post by the end of May 2006. His first role was to set up a system for recording all incidents of anti-social behaviour in Cardiff's parks which enable more efficient monitoring of problem areas and allow targeted activity to reduce anti-social behaviour.

- 5.2.13 A bespoke database set up by the co-ordinator was designed to allow members of the park

¹⁹ Cardiff Research Centre (2002) Capital Times Parks Questionnaire

²⁰ Accredited Community Safety Officers (ACSOs) provide a presence in local communities with a wide range of powers to deal with anti-social behaviour. ACSOs are tasked via Cardiff City Council whilst Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are tasked directly by the police. ACSOs are not police officers and do not have the same range of powers as PCSOs.

team to enter and extract data highlighting issues in specific parks and in specified timeframes. Data could also be stored and analysed by area, type of incident, and state of incident, ie whether the police are involved. This helps the co-ordinator to identify and track offenders and offences, thus providing intelligence to the police and instigating anti-social behaviour referral systems in parks.

- 5.2.14 The new system provides an additional source of data to complement that held by the police, as well as data held by 101, a database which lists incidents reported to a dedicated 24 hour 101 telephone line provided jointly by the police and local authority. Its main strength is that it brings together data from the 101 database (approximately 90% of its content is from 101), as well as data collected by park rangers (making up around 5% of information held) and direct reports from members of the public (also around 5% of information held on the database). The database enabled separate incidents to be marked to identify the source of the report or intelligence (i.e. 101, ranger or public) and is entered in line with the direct reports received. The rangers did not act as gatekeepers in filtering or redefining incidents reported from the public.

- 5.2.15 As the project progressed, members of the public got to know the project co-ordinator and his role and also helped provide him with information:

"One lady took photos of kids graffitiing the bowling green, so that is going to the local safety conference [meeting of the local police and other community safety partners] to see if anyone recognises them." [Project Co-ordinator]

- 5.2.16 The database was managed by the project co-ordinator, spending around three to four hours per day based at his desk inputting incidents into the system, making phone calls and addressing the issues that arose. He spent the remaining time (three to four hours) in and around the parks.

- 5.2.17 As well as setting up the recording system, the project co-ordinator trained park ranger staff in completion of the anti-social behaviour recording form, detailing how the data would be used to track individual offenders and feed into police and shared Council intelligence sources. The co-ordinator encouraged park rangers to record incidents of anti-social behaviour immediately using their digital camera/videos as well as generating written records. A catalogue of offenders was collated for rangers to ensure they were fully aware of those individuals who were not permitted in the parks. Photographs of convicted offenders were stored on paper files rather than the electronic database.

- 5.2.18 The main strength of the new database was its capacity to pull together intelligence from a range of sources. A more systematic plan of action could then be developed to target the most at-risk areas in the parks and target the highest level offenders. The main limitations of the database were there need to manually enter data from different sources (rather than being able to electronically merge data) and the limits to the time available to the co-ordinator for entering data. The co-ordinator explained that, although all direct reports from the rangers and members of the public were entered onto the database, there was a need to be more selective regarding incidents taken from the 101 database due to the sheer volume of incidents that would otherwise be duplicated on the two systems. Therefore, a decision was made to focus mainly on incidents of motorcycle annoyance when interrogating the 101 system.

- 5.2.19 A final problem with the database was the lack of capacity to automatically merge police intelligence which also needed to be entered manually from paper incident reports from the police (regarding offences, offenders and complaints from the public). This meant that 'data runs' were carried out less frequently than may have been desirable. That said, the co-ordinator met at least once a month with the police to share relevant intelligence regarding incidents in the parks. In addition, every month, the project co-ordinator has been attending a case conference, where a number of key partners (including housing, sheltered accommodation, housing associations, the police and the education department) meet to share intelligence regarding specific individuals and incidents.
- 5.2.20 Whilst the database setup required a large proportion of the co-ordinator's time, as part of his remit to 'design out' anti-social behaviour, the project co-ordinator also arranged for visits to parks that were not previously regularly patrolled. With the help of Rangers, he undertook thinning down of bushes to open up the parks and make them feel more accessible. Other off-site-based activities included removal of sex and drug paraphernalia from parks as well as property belonging to homeless people who were using the parks at nights (when locked) for rough sleeping. This was to deter use of the parks by drug users and homeless people out of hours.

Partnership Working

- 5.2.21 One of the main aims of the project was to improve partnership working between the Council and others involved in reducing or tackling anti-social behaviour. Interviews with stakeholders suggest that the background of the project co-ordinator was key to both project set-up and relationships with staff and partners.
- 5.2.22 As a former acting police sergeant with a long career in Cardiff, the co-ordinator had worked with the park rangers on previous police campaigns and was therefore known to them. This reduced the time required for familiarisation and trust building. Through his previous police contacts, an efficient communication process was established between park rangers, the Council and the police and this fed directly into intelligence sharing outcomes.
- 5.2.23 The project co-ordinator works with a wide range of partners as part of the scheme, including:

- arson reduction team;
- substance misuse lead officer;
- city centre management team (who deal with alcohol problems in the city centre);
- city centre outreach workers;
- city centre homeless team;
- British Transport Police; and
- others working within the authority (e.g. traffic, transportation and highways, education).

- 5.2.24 The formation of these new links and partnerships was considered by the team to have helped when dealing with instances of crime and anti-social behaviour. For example, following an attack on a woman on the Taff Trail, the partners worked together immediately in order to look at ways of preventing a similar repeat incident:

"Because of my local knowledge now within the Council I know who to contact, and there is a robbery forum that comes together every two weeks which I'm included in because of two robberies specifically. So the police called me and we brought the robbery forum together to deal with the issue...As soon as that happened, everyone kicked into action to say "What can we do so this doesn't happen again?" And we sat down and said, "Well, we'll do this, and we'll do this. And that was done the day the attack happened. And it never used to happen." [Project Co-ordinator]

- 5.2.25 Throughout the evaluation, the project co-ordinator did not report any problems with partnership working, and felt that the project partnerships worked well due to the existence of prior relationships and personalities of those involved. South Wales Police, representatives at 101 and the local councillors also commented on positive working relationships with the project co-ordinator:

"We quickly developed a relationship with the team and it's working well. We provide them with the initial information and they take it further. We get a lot of calls about less serious incidents that the police would be unable to respond to." [101 representative]

- 5.2.26 Both the team and the police stated that neither can tackle the problem on their own, but *"working together, we can."* [South Wales Police]
- 5.2.27 As part of the project, parks-based Accredited Community Support Officers (ACSOs) were also initiated. This gave staff the ability to deal with a number of low-level nuisance problems more effectively due simply to increased capacity. ACSOs were selected from existing council staff (eg litter officers), and worked as ACSOs on an overtime basis.
- 5.2.28 Originally the project team planned for there to be two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) working in the parks alongside the project co-ordinator, however, this took longer to arrange with partners and, at the end of the 12-month pilot period, was still to be actioned. End of year interviews revealed that funding has, however, been found to support the appointment of 14 PCSOs in the near future, two of whom will be based in the parks²¹.

Motorcycle Nuisance

- 5.2.29 Policing off-road motorcycle nuisance was a key project aim. It was a major concern for all areas across South Wales, being the most frequently discussed topic at PACT (Police and Communities Together) meetings. In 2005 there were 1417 recorded complaints about off-road motorcycles across Cardiff city.
- 5.2.30 Staff were given specific training regarding the use of motorbikes, quads and four-wheel drive vehicles. Over the year, project staff worked closely with a dedicated team of ACSO motorcyclists and with South Wales Police in order to tackle the problem of illegal motorbikes. This was seen by the team as one of the biggest outcomes of improved partnership working which came about following the co-ordinators' appointment.
- 5.2.31 The project team explained that, historically, South Wales police officers were often from outside the Cardiff area and so had limited geographical knowledge of the area. The project

²¹ Accredited Community Safety Officers (ACSOs) provide a presence in local communities with a wide range of powers to deal with anti-social behaviour. ACSOs are tasked via Cardiff City Council whilst Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are tasked directly by the police. ACSOs are not police officers and do not have the same range of powers as PCSOs.

team was able to use their knowledge of the area to work closely with the police. The parks division would supply off-road motorcyclists to take police officers to where a problem was; the officer would deal with the problem appropriately, and an arrest sweeper team would remove the vehicle and deal with the necessary administration/paperwork, allowing the bike team to move onto the next problem.

- 5.2.32 The project team and other stakeholders considered this part of the project to be a big success:

"We trialled it, and it was such a success that we had to stop it after two hours, as there were 35 arrests for various offences. It had a big impact." [Project Team Member]

- 5.2.33 Although the scheme began before the arrival of the project co-ordinator, it has now expanded and become fully operational. Since his appointment last year, the team has also demonstrated their working practices to other local authorities and police divisions by invitation.

- 5.2.34 Collectively, the activities of the project team have resulted in a number of tangible outcomes from the project, including:

- over 1000 1st stage cautions being issued;
- 300 ASB cautions issued;
- 50 stolen motorbikes recovered;
- over 200 motorbikes seized;
- arrests for various offences; and
- stolen property recovered and numerous individuals reported for various document offences relating to road traffic infringements.

5.3 Project Impact

Recording/Reporting of Anti-Social Behaviour

- 5.3.1 A measure of success for this project was considered to be an increase in the levels of reporting of anti-social behaviour in parks in order to create better intelligence than had previously existed in this area. Figure 2.1 shows recorded levels of anti-social behaviour from the project team database since the pilot project began.

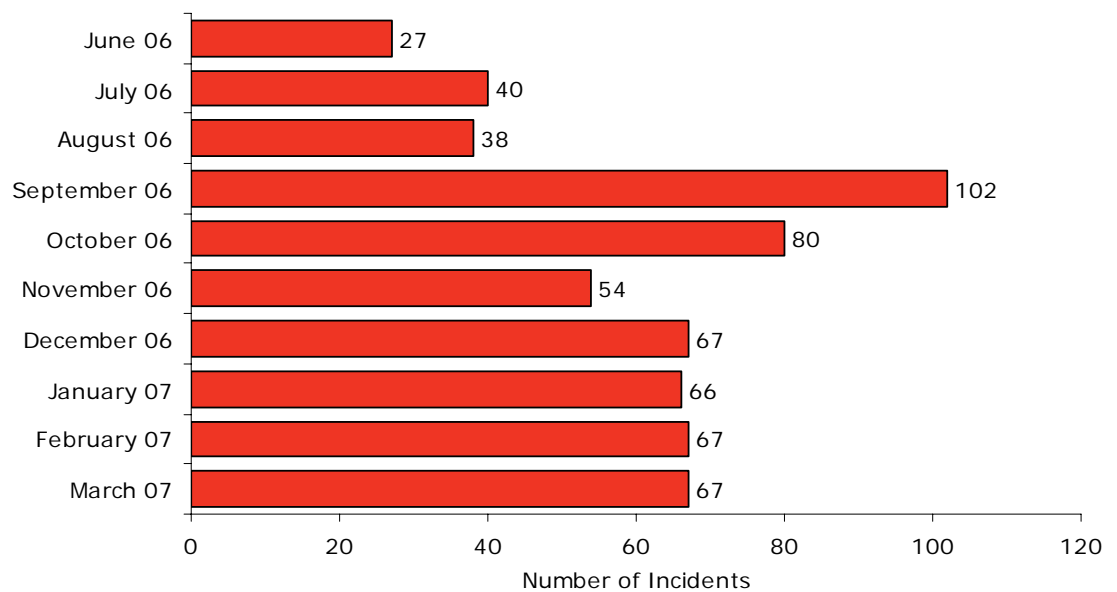


Figure 5-1 Recorded levels of anti-social behaviour

- 5.3.2 In the first few months of the project, recording levels were still low as the project co-ordinator was training park rangers to record all incidents. However, as the chart shows, the number of incidents reported increased as the pilot developed and as rangers became more familiar with the recording and reporting practices.
- 5.3.3 In the absence of reliable pre-pilot data regarding the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour in parks, it is impossible to say whether incidents have gone up or down as a result of the project. Qualitative interview data from the police and project workers suggest, however, that the quality of data is much improved and is far more useful for the police and Council to act upon.
- 5.3.4 A separate Park Users' Survey conducted by the evaluation team at the end of the pilot sought to establish levels of victimisation relating to anti-social behaviour in Cardiff's Parks. From the 438 people who took part in the survey, across four sites (Bute, Roath, Thompson and Victoria Parks) just over one in ten (12%, n=52) reported ever having been a victim of anti-social behaviour. Of these, less than half (40%) said that they had reported the incident. This highlights the under-reporting of incidents that may have existed in the parks prior to the pilot operation.
- 5.3.5 Reasons given for not reporting incidents were:

- don't know who to report it to (29%, n=9);
- incident wasn't serious enough (29%, n=9);
- no chance of catching culprit (16%, n=5);
- nothing would get done about it (16%, n=5);
- dealt with it myself (6%, n=2);

- appointment needed, could not be bothered (3%, n=1); and
- no need, the park warden was watching them do it (3%, n=1).

- 5.3.6 All respondents (regardless of previous victimisation) were asked, if they now witnessed or were a victim of anti-social behaviour, would they report the incident. Of the 386 people who responded, 68% said that they would always report the incident, 26% said 'maybe' and 6% said no. This might suggest that, compared to people who had been victimised in the past, the pilot project has increased the likelihood that future victims will report incidents of anti-social behaviour. The responses, however, give intentions, rather than report behaviour, and also include attitudes regarding witnessed incidents not just victimisation incidents.
- 5.3.7 The same respondents were asked to whom they would report anti-social behaviour incidents. Users were most likely to report incidents to the police (60%). That said, one third of respondents (33%) said that they would report incidents to the park rangers, 4% to the Council and 3% to someone else. Whilst the police are considered the main agents for reporting, therefore, the pilot may have been successful in making the public aware that they could report incidents to the rangers.
- 5.3.8 Despite the lack of meaningful statistics to compare levels of anti-social behaviour prior to the start of the project, the team, local police and local councillors did talk about a positive change. The project has involved patrols in the main parks. This was something that was not previously conducted. It was felt that a 'truer' level of anti-social behaviour is now being recorded and the improved relationship with the police has resulted in quicker response times and a greater police presence in the parks.
- 5.3.9 The team stated that, although they and their partners feel that the project has been extremely successful in its first year, it is difficult to demonstrate measurable levels of success so early into the project. The first year has, to a large extent, been about setting up database systems and intelligence gathering.

Park Users' Perceptions of Anti-Social Behaviour

- 5.3.10 As part of the survey carried out by the evaluation team at the end of the pilot, park users were asked if they considered anti-social behaviour to be a problem in Cardiff's parks. Of the 438 respondents, over half (55%) did not consider anti-social behaviour to be a problem. Around one in four said that anti-social behaviour in Cardiff parks was problematic.
- 5.3.11 Park users were asked to what extent they felt certain types of anti-social behaviour were a problem in Cardiff parks. They were presented with a list of types of anti-social behaviour and asked to rate each on a scale from one to five, where one was not a problem at all, and five was a serious problem.
- 5.3.12 Figure 5.2 shows that the main issues that were considered problematic in Cardiff's parks were dog fouling, litter/rubbish and drinking/drug use in public.

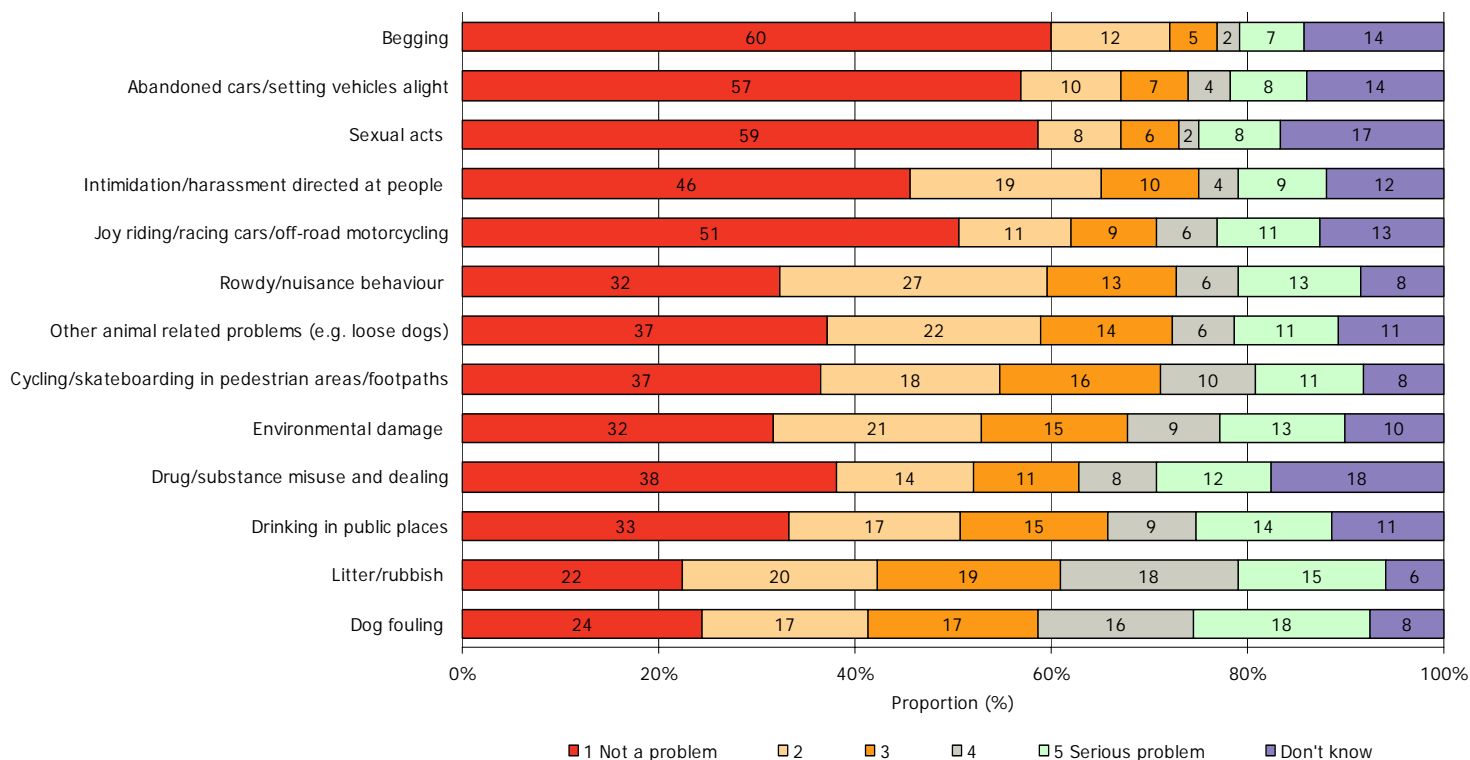


Figure 5-2 Types of anti-social behaviour considered to be problematic

5.3.13 Types of anti-social behaviour that park users felt were a minor problem (or not a problem at all) were:

- begging (72%);
- abandoned cars/setting vehicles alight (67%);
- sexual acts (67%);
- intimidation/harassment directed at people (65%); and
- joy riding/racing cars/off-road motorcycling (62%).

5.3.14 In interpreting the data, it may be possible to conclude that the pilot project was successful in targeting joy riding/off road motorcycling since this was considered a problem by only one in ten respondents. Alternatively, it could be that this is seen more of a problem in open spaces, rather than in the parks themselves.

- 5.3.15 Figure 5.3 shows that the majority of park users (64%) felt that levels of anti-social behaviour had remained the same in Cardiff's parks over the pilot period. Only 4% of the 438 people surveyed felt that there had been a decrease in anti-social behaviour. In this context, it is possible that park users had not noticed reductions in off-road biking and joy-riding as targeted by the project. The parks included in the survey were not locations where off-road biking or joy-riding had been a problem.

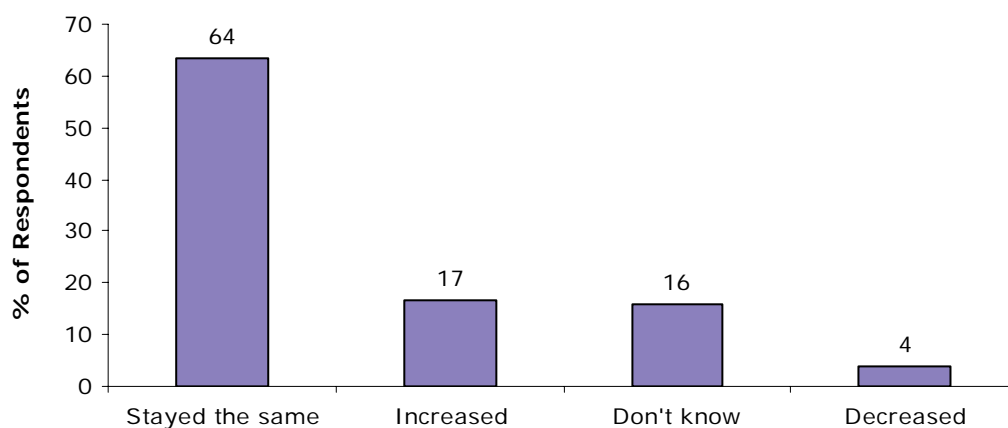


Figure 5-3 Perceived Increase/Decrease in Anti-social Behaviour

- 5.3.16 Finally, respondents were asked how safe they felt using Cardiff's parks compared to 12 months ago. Figure 5.4 shows that there were only very small increases in feelings of safety.

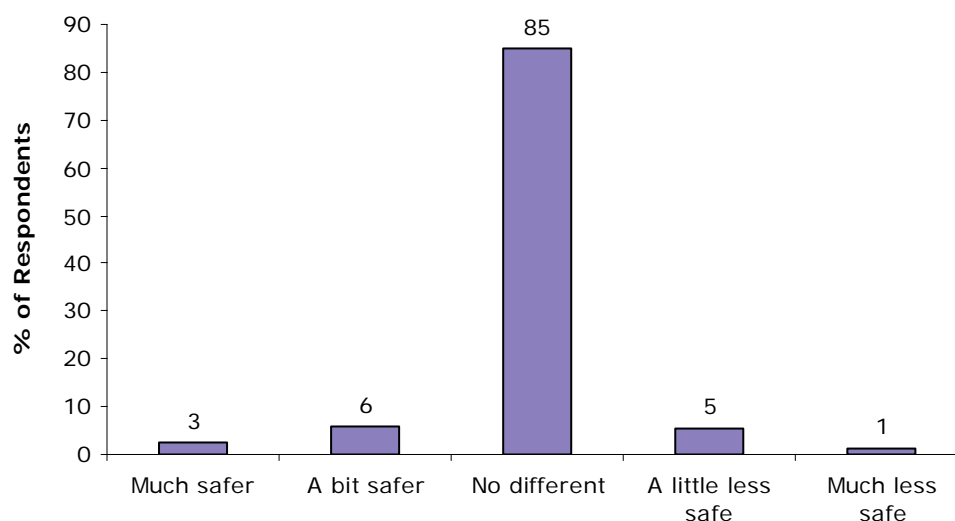


Figure 5-4 Feelings of safety in Cardiff's parks compared to 12 months ago

In summary, the park survey suggested that:

- around one in four park users considered anti-social behaviour to be a problem in Cardiff's parks;
- dog fouling, litter and public drug/alcohol use are main concerns;
- joy riding and off-road biking were not considered to be specifically problematic in Cardiff's parks (but may be seen as an open space problem);
- people see the police as being the organisation that victimisation should be reported to but there is also some evidence that the scheme might encourage people to report incidents to the park rangers; and
- there appears to have been only a very small increase in feelings of safety in Cardiff's parks over the 12 months in which the pilot operated.

Public Awareness of the Project

- 5.3.17 The pilot team recognised that greater public consultation may have increased awareness of their work. The team said that there had been little public awareness raising activities and that those who would have noticed the pilot impacts were those directly affected. The team had planned to do a leaflet drop in some of the parks, but this was going to be part of the introduction of park PCSOs:

"We were going to target a couple of parks, leaflet drop all the local residents and park users, get the staff in there, and it would be along the lines of reclaim the parks for the local community, have you any concerns about anti-social behaviour?, if you have contact us. If you want to report anti-social behaviour or criminal activity then contact...We haven't had the PCSOs, through no fault of our own, so we haven't had the impact with the public that we want." [Project Co-ordinator]

- 5.3.18 The team stated that with the introduction of visible PCSOs in the park, public awareness and perceptions of feeling safe may increase. This was supported by findings from the park users' survey. Figure 5.5 shows that park attendants and park security (in addition to adequate lighting) were considered by respondents to be important in preventing future anti-social behaviour. Park users also commented that they would like to see greater supervision in the parks.

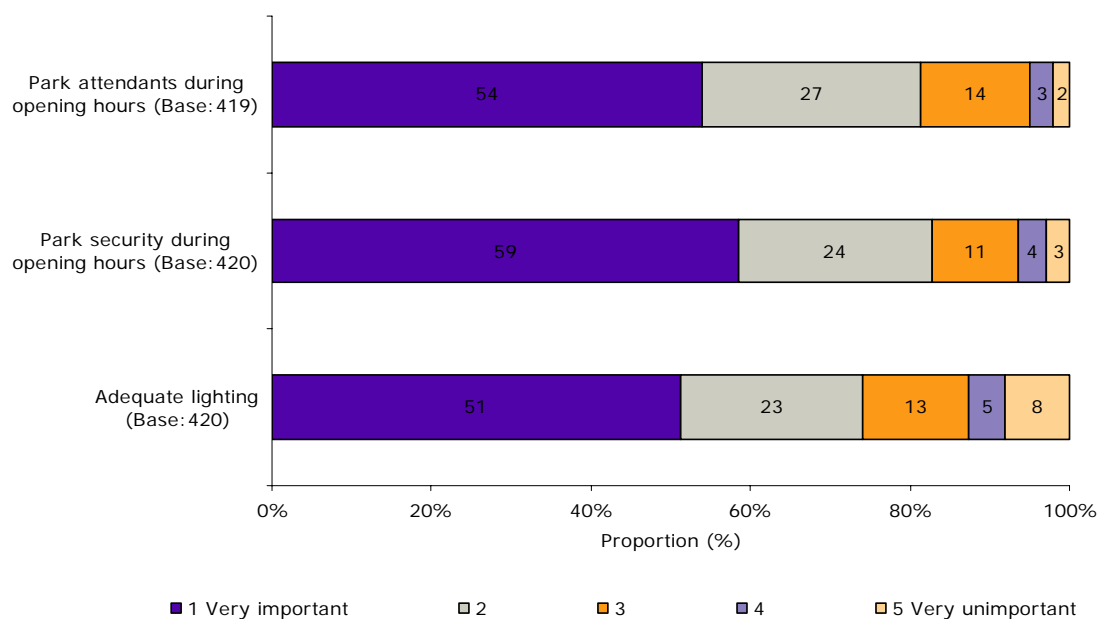


Figure 5-5 Perceived importance of anti-social behaviour prevention methods

5.3.19 Fewer than one in ten respondents (8%, n=37) said that they were aware of any measures that had been carried out to reduce or prevent anti-social behaviour in Cardiff's parks. The measures that were mentioned were:

- increased visibility of park rangers (20);
- removal of vegetation to increase park visibility (4);
- designated graffiti walls (3);
- more police patrols (2);
- lighting (1);
- looking after cars, lots get broken into (1);
- parks are locked (1);
- repair car park (1); and
- signs directed at the public (1).

5.3.20 A cross-tabulation revealed a link between those who were aware of measures that had been introduced and frequency of using Cardiff's parks. Just under half (43%) of those who said that they had noticed new measures to reduce or prevent anti-social behaviour used Cardiff's parks every day/almost every day.

5.3.21 Prior to carrying out the park users' survey, the team predicted that knowledge of their work would be little to none:

"That's one of the things that concern me about the evaluation process. If you go to one of those parks and say 'what impact has this project had, they are going to go, what project?' They are not going to know." [Project Co-ordinator]

5.3.22 The team suggested that, having only gone through one summer since the project began,

shortly after the project inception; it would take longer for the impacts to be acknowledged by the public.

- 5.3.23 The team stated that more planned schemes to tackle areas with specific problems will help to build up awareness and recognition with local communities:

"What we did in Llanederyn [described in paragraph 2.3.26] with the motorcycles is a good example of us bridging that gap with the public. And we are trying to do similar things in other areas." [Project Co-ordinator]

- 5.3.24 The team also would not wish for the public to be fully aware of the extent, or potential problems of some types of anti-social behaviour as this may be counterproductive, increasing fear and reducing park use. This would apply to the more serious aspects that the teams are working to tackle, such as drug abuse and sexual acts:

"If you went into Bute Park and did your study with the public and say what do you think about the anti-social behaviour case worker, they wouldn't have a clue what is going on to make Bute Park safe for them. We keep that very private. There are a lot of beatings [due to homophobic crimes at night] going on which the public are not aware of, and we're keeping on top of it." [Project Co-ordinator]

- 5.3.25 Indeed, raising public awareness of anti-social behaviour and the project were not specific aims for this pilot and this should not, therefore be considered a negative indicator as regards the success of the project. Instead the observations made by the team about the need for future sensitive and targeted awareness-raising may be considered an important learning point from this project.

Motorcycle Nuisance

- 5.3.26 Undoubtedly, the greatest and most visible impact of the project so far has been the reduction in the number of complaints made regarding motorcycle nuisance:

"I think we've got a unique system with the motorcycles that no one else in the country has. It's sustainable, it's cheap and it works [as evidenced by the number of arrests and confiscations made in such a short period of time]." [Project Team Member]

- 5.3.27 The partnership between the Council and the police is what makes the scheme so unique as it is the only partnership that currently has this kind of mechanism to specifically target off road biking.
- 5.3.28 In Llanederyn, an area with acknowledged social deprivation, situated in the north east of Cardiff, the Parks division was getting approximately 11 complaints about youth annoyance every day, particularly concerning motorcycles. Over the summer holiday period 2006, this area was jointly targeted by the project team and the police. At the end of the summer holiday period, and since then, they have been receiving around three complaints a week.
- 5.3.29 The Police Inspector involved in leading the team in South Wales Police (Head of the All Terrain Motorcycle Unit) highlighted his full support for the project. Although the scheme is in place across the whole of South Wales, he stressed how Cardiff has seen by far the greatest impacts due to the role of the project co-ordinator and project team:

"It's worked really well in Cardiff because of the off-road bike team." [South Wales Police]

- 5.3.30 As South Wales Police cover such a large area, officers who are unfamiliar with the local area can be guided by local Council staff and this is why the scheme is considered to be so successful. The Inspector mentioned how some local sergeants have claimed that the scheme has led to a reduction of motorcycle nuisance complaints by up to 80% in some areas in Cardiff.

- 5.3.31 One resident whose home backs onto one of Cardiff's parks highlighted how much of a difference he had noted in the past year. He claimed that motorcycle nuisance in the park had been a constant problem for over 26 years and that he has been complaining about them (to 101) twice a week. He acknowledged that over the past year the level of motorcycle nuisance had greatly decreased and that he now only needs to complain once every other week:

"This year there has been a big improvement in terms of off road bikes in parks." [Local Resident]

- 5.3.32 The project team also highlighted wider impacts of the motorcycle scheme, in that a number of people stopped for being on illegal/off road bikes had led to the police recovering more illegal goods and information regarding drug deals/dealers:

"The very first operation we did, we stopped a guy, and the bike was suspect, so on the strength of that the police went round to his house. It took two removal vans to remove all of the goods he found. It had a huge impact." [Project Co-ordinator]

"One we did in Hailey Park the other week, purely by accident, we interrupted a heroin deal going down. As a result of this, the police now know that this is where a load of deals are going on. It was then that we started recognising a load of people hanging around waiting for dealers." [Project Co-ordinator]

Youth Nuisance

- 5.3.33 With regards youth annoyance, the team have begun to examine their statistics and the demography of the area, (e.g. the age range of the people, what's going to happen in the future, the facilities they're going to provide for them). By identifying trends, the team is attempting to identify whether it is something where they can become involved in the future:

"We've actually started looking at the information now for the first time, and using it for a management tool to go onto the next step." [Project Team Member]

- 5.3.34 The team highlighted an example of how a large student population near to Roath Park led to a playground often being heavily littered, including broken glass. As a result of this, the team have redesigned the playground so it is more suitable for teenagers and young people, and provided a toddlers playground elsewhere:

"The playground wasn't being used because it had a large group of students hanging around causing problems. And in fairness they weren't being nasty, it was the aftermath of the McDonalds, the beer, the wine, they had a few to many beers and start breaking glass, so we've turned it on its head and said, ok, they want to go to a playground, we'll make it more appropriate for them, so we're putting in great big climbing boulders that

they can use. So we are actually looking at putting in things for teenagers and young adults, in a safe environment.” [Project Co-ordinator]

Graffiti

- 5.3.35 In order to tackle problems of graffiti the team worked alongside the British Transport Police, who have a large local education project and anti-graffiti team which the project co-ordinator has been able to link into:

“In terms of the intelligence I gather, photographic wise, I pass that onto the BTP, they then get their people to look at it to try and identify certain people.” [Project Co-ordinator]

- 5.3.36 The team recognised that it would be impossible to prevent young people graffitiing, and so are aiming to encourage them to graffiti in designated areas on specially placed graffiti boards. The young people are allowed to graffiti the boards providing the graffiti is not racist or sexual in content.

Drugs, Homelessness and Sex Trade problems

- 5.3.37 Beyond minor occurrences of anti-social behaviour, the team also deal with more serious issues involving drug addicts in parks and open spaces:

“Six years ago I could count on one hand the number of needles we dealt with in the city, now we don’t bother counting. It’s thousands.” [Council Representative]

- 5.3.38 The team explained how effective measures in the city centre by the city centre security teams and the police, has displaced the addicts into Cardiff’s parks and open spaces. As a result, needles in the park also present an extreme health risk to park users:

“What they tend to do then is protect their stash that they are using, so all the needles that they use they push through the twigs of braches, to stop my staff and police going in and throwing them away.” [Project Co-ordinator]

- 5.3.39 This behaviour had been witnessed despite the operation of a ‘night bus’ operated in the area by the Council. The night bus provides access to sharps bins but it seems that some drugs paraphernalia are still being left in the parks. At the time of writing, the co-ordinator is working with partners to try and develop more accurate estimates of the drug problem in Cardiff’s parks but offered an estimate of around 5,000 needles a week that are currently being removed from parks and open spaces. The exact number is difficult to cite since many of the needles are thought to be disposed of in the rivers and canals that run through the parks, as well as in the drains and toilets of the public washrooms.

- 5.3.40 The team highlighted how, in the initial stages of the project, drug users would simply be physically removed from the park if caught taking drugs. However, they recognised that this would not solve the wider problem, and are now moving them to one area of the park that is out of the way of children and other park users:

“I have now stopped throwing them out of the park, but I will move them into a corner during daylight hours when other people are there because of the dangers to children. At

least by moving them to a certain area, regardless of what they are doing, myself or the rangers can police that and keep an eye on them.” [Project Co-ordinator]

- 5.3.41 At the end of the pilot, the project co-ordinator was working alongside the substance misuse unit and the city centre homeless team to look at ways of dealing with the problems. The view at this stage is that the main agencies need to get together to consider ways to accommodate the problem:

“What I’m saying is, like it or lump it, we’ve got to provide an area of open space, where these people can do what they do in safety, where the health care professionals can go in and deal with it, and my staff can go in and clean up after them. Because all that’s happening at the moment is, that as fast as we are clearing up in one area, they are popping up somewhere else. We have to be realistic. The issues with substance misuse are not going to go away, and if anything they are going to get worse.” [Council Representative]

- 5.3.42 However, although the issue has been debated at operational level, it is not something that has been discussed within the political spectrum. The team and partners have recognised that accommodating the problem is beyond the current powers of the law and so at present cannot do anything until there is a change at government level.
- 5.3.43 The team thought that many of the drug addicts in the parks were unlikely ever to be able to enter rehab and so it is not, at present, a realistic option for tackling the problem. They have multiple problems, including homelessness and ill-health (including mental ill-health) and would need integrated support to be able to deal with these issues.
- 5.3.44 Indeed, anecdotally, the co-ordinator reported that there had been an increase in the physical evidence to suggest that parks and open spaces were being used for male-on-male sex offences. Items such as used condoms, tissues, wet wipes had been found and police and ACSO patrols had also revealed male cottaging taking place. Physical evidence also suggests that this be linked to the drugs scene with needles and burnt tinfoil being found at the same sites. The co-ordinator suggested that this be the result of some males selling their bodies to fund drug habits.
- 5.3.45 The team pointed out that ACSOs have limited powers to arrest people found engaging in such behaviours and hence, there are limited official records or prosecutions. A more immediate worry, however, is that some males who engage in this behaviour may be targets of homophobic violence and theft of personal belongings from others using the parks (i.e. homeless people and drug users) since they are unlikely to report victimisation. If victimised, these males may be reluctant to present themselves to police for fear of having to explain their presence in the park after hours and, as a result, be considered perpetrators themselves. All of this makes it difficult to provide tangible and reliable evidence regarding the likely scale of the problem in Cardiff’s parks.

Unanticipated Outcomes

- 5.3.46 To date, the project has had a huge impact on the park rangers themselves. Those interviewed are more positive about their job as they feel they now have the necessary back-up both from the project co-ordinator, their colleagues and the police. They stated that the parks have improved and that people do now feel safer.

- 5.3.47 The project has been so well received that the Council now wishes to roll the scheme to other services within the authority area. The team is in discussion with Leisure Services about installing a similar database for them, linked to the Parks database. This would be specifically designed to target incidents of anti-social behaviour occurring at sites of leisure, for example, leisure centres, historic sites, museums, etc.
- 5.3.48 The motorcycle scheme has received attention from outside of the local authority area and the four-wheel drive vehicle is now sometimes used in conjunction with the police in demonstrations to other authorities. Other areas recognise the scheme as an example of good practice.

5.4 Cost and Resource Issues

- 5.4.1 The project funding was used to pay for:

- the co-ordinators' post (full time for one year, based in the Parks Division at the Council);
- part-purchase of a four wheel drive vehicle to aid in identification of illegal riding of motorcycles/quad bikes;
- purchase of hand-held computerised devices to record incidents, a computer and other equipment for the co-ordinator, a digital camera; and
- new uniforms for park rangers to make them "more visible".

- 5.4.2 Having the funding from the Welsh Assembly Government, allowed the Parks Division to "kick-start" the project; they then sought funding from elsewhere in order to increase their capabilities. For example, additional funding was secured to purchase the four-wheel drive vehicle.
- 5.4.3 The project team and park rangers have identified the need for additional park rangers in order to deliver a better service to park users. However, it is accepted that this is outside the remit of the project.
- 5.4.4 Such has been the success of the project to-date, on completion of the pilot project, additional funding has been agreed by the Council to allow the co-ordinator's post to continue.

5.5 Sustainability

Ensuring sustainability of the project

- 5.5.1 Following project set-up, the team recognised that the initial success relied upon relationships between individuals in the different agencies and that this was not sustainable. The project co-ordinator's links to other agencies and the project manager's links within the Council were recognised as being critical to the success of the project:

"We can't continue to rely on the old boys' network. We need to put systems in place that can work without the individuals." [Council Representative]

- 5.5.2 The project co-ordinator established a good partnership with South Wales Police, which the team is confident will continue. The team stated that systems are now in place to allow smooth operation of the project even if key team members leave:

"We couldn't have had the successes we've had without the co-ordinator and his knowledge, that's certainly true, but I don't think that those relationships are going to erode over time now, because we are putting the linkages in to make sure it's sustainable. What we are doing now is developing the systems to make this sustainable. And that's important." [Council Representative]

- 5.5.3 By setting up a database and referral system, the team now feel that structures are set up that can continue into the future:

"What we are doing now are building the systems in, and that's where database comes in, the referral system comes in, we are building the structures in place now so that this is sustainable and will work when Bob or I go, someone can come straight in and that there is a system in place, and this is what we do, and this is how it works. So we've started that." [Project Team Member]

"My shelf life also depends on my colleagues who I've left in my old job, who I can ring and they will do things fairly quickly because they know it's me, and they respond to me. But those guys are moving on in their careers, and sooner or later they will be gone. But that's when the systems kick in." [Project Team Member]

- 5.5.4 The team stated that internal and external links are now in place and therefore any future post holder would continue to be represented on all the relevant forums:

"The contacts we've made, with 101, the city centre management team, crime prevention, robbery forums, all the strings that are there, won't go away, because I'll keep my database on, as will case officers." [Project Team Member]

"So it doesn't matter if the co-ordinator moves on now, we'd have someone else who would automatically be linked in with all of those." [Project Team Member]

- 5.5.5 This aside, it is also perhaps worth noting that some of the informal networks that operated alongside the formal partnerships may not be so easily achieved if a new co-ordinator came into post. It seems that there might also be value in an induction process by which the existing coordinator might pass on valuable 'informal' links to complement the formal partnership working or, perhaps, offer advice on how to develop such links at the personal level.

- 5.5.6 The team believes that issues are being dealt with more quickly and efficiently than in the past because of the co-ordinator position. Prior to the pilot, the Parks Community Liaison Manager commented on how complaints would come to the Council at ground level, go up to him, he would talk to someone senior in the police, this would then go down their organisational structure and be put onto their case load. However, this was extremely time consuming and ineffective:

"You'd be lucky if something happened in 6-8 weeks. Bear in mind that that structure goes the other way too, so for a police officer to try and get anything done in local

government must have been a minefield for them trying to find the right person to speak to.” [Project Team Member]

- 5.5.7 The team recognises that there are things they can deal with themselves or alongside other agencies so they are tackling problems that they would previously have expected the police to deal with:

“We are working a lot more closely now with all the other partnerships and organisations, trying to get on top of the problems.” [Project Team Member]

Displacing Anti-Social Behaviour

- 5.5.8 Police architectural engineers have worked alongside the parks department examining ways to ‘design out crime’. However, the team have recognised that they need to do more than this as it does not tackle the root cause of the problem:

“All that does is design out the anti-social behaviour; it doesn’t tackle the root cause, why did it happen there? All we are doing in that is displacing the problem elsewhere. What I’m anxious for is that with all of the stats that we get is that we start looking at what we do to make sure that it doesn’t happen. You know, not just displace it, what can we do to find these people other things to do.” [Project Team Member]

- 5.5.9 In achieving this, the team plans to analyse statistics from the 101 database to identify youth annoyance issues in specific areas. They will then use outreach workers to engage and assess the effectiveness of any outreach initiatives introduced.
- 5.5.10 The team discussed the fact that the core role of the project is about identifying the problems and working with partners to address them. The project team have recognised that other agencies could simply move the problem on where it then becomes someone else’s problem to deal with, but that this is not acceptable and all those who can help should work together:

“As a result of this project, we are now starting to think wider than just tackling the problems in the park, and we are going to start looking at problems more realistically.” [Project Team Member]

- 5.5.11 As a result of intelligence gathered, and work carried out on off-road motorcycle nuisance, a new bike track in Cardiff is to open shortly. According to the project co-ordinator, this will have an impact not just in Cardiff, but also the surrounding areas, as the population watershed for the track extends to Swansea, Newport and parts of the South Wales Valleys. It remains to be seen if the Cardiff track will attract bikers from so wide an area.
- 5.5.12 When the project initially started, the majority of people being stopped were youths on illegal or stolen motorcycles. However, over time, the team saw a shift in the types of people they were stopping on bikes, to those who are not on illegal bikes, but are simply riding in open spaces and parks because they have no other places to ride:

"What has happened is, over the year as we've been collecting the information, is that suddenly we've seen a big shift and we are now hitting people, who, for want of a better expression, you would classify as tidy people." [Project Team Member]

- 5.5.13 The team recognised that they were 'hitting' these people, but at the same time were not providing alternative provisions:

"We know if we carried on like this its not going to get any better, its going to get worse if anything, and if we don't provide anything we're failing." [Project Team Member]

"And in fairness the politicians and senior officers listened because even the police were saying look you can't carry on like this, yeah we can go round and arrest and give cautions. But it comes back to that we were targeting tidy people, and why should they have their life chances spoiled because politicians have decided that we are making this an offence." [Project Team Member]

- 5.5.14 The team carried out an impact assessment and located an area of appropriate land on which to build a motorcycle track. Funding was identified through the Community Safety Capital Funding Private Sector, and the net result being *"what started out as a basic idea, has now developed into a project worth about 4million pounds."* [Project Team Member]

- 5.5.15 Cardiff's Community Safety Partnership has set up various leisure projects to divert young people away from crime, some of which are linked to the provision of recreational facilities in parks (e.g. provision of a skate-park), but these are limited in scope at present. These parallel activities are needed to ensure that the problem of anti-social behaviour amongst teenagers in parks has not just been moved elsewhere.

- 5.5.16 In future, the team would like to go into certain areas to conduct outreach work to identify what facilities/provisions youths want, and look at what they could put in that is sustainable:

"If what they want is an area where they can go and chill out and be on their own and not cause any nuisance then we'll provide that, providing we can send cleaners to go in on a weekly basis to clean up after them." [Project Team Member]

"The way we researched the motorcycle scheme is the same way that I want to research all the other problems we've got with youth annoyance. Once we start identifying where the problems are, and we've got the intelligence coming through now, we can start looking at the stats, we can start looking at the demography of the area, how things are moving, what money is available in the area." [Project Team Member]

"The systems we set up to create the off-road motorbike team, and the analysis we used to justify providing the facility to get on top of the problem, we are going to use the same tools for all the other problems we come across." [Project Team Member]

- 5.5.17 The team wishes to consider new ways of providing facilities in the future, building on successful ideas from other areas. For example, the design or location of children's play areas often lend themselves towards the play area being vandalised, and there may be more appropriate areas in which to situate equipment to help prevent this:

"Typically ward members want us to provide a children's playground, but we who provide play services are saying can't we look at this a different way please. If you look at other

countries, toddlers playgrounds are within the schools, there is no need for it to be in a park else it gets trashed by teenagers. They leave it in the school and parents can go in with their children during normal daylight hours and go into a nice clean safe environment. School shuts down, no problem. Equipment is clean and tidy, no graffiti nothing. Whereas here, we'll put it in, and leave it, we wonder why it gets trashed. Teenagers go in there because it's the one meeting place where they can sit down, hang around, there is shelter, and we wonder why it gets trashed. So we've started re-looking at that, in terms of provision of what we provide." [Project Team Member]

- 5.5.18 The team is also re-looking at resources, and what facilities they should provide. For example, for provision of a bowling green, the costs of installation, upkeep and staff management does not bear any relation to the level of use and arguably this resource could be better targeted:

"The cost of maintaining them is 60-odd thousand, a huge amount of money, and some of them only furnish 20-30 people, and then are staffing costs are on top of that. Bowling greens cost us about £8000 a year to man them part time, yet our income from that is about 2-3 thousand per year." [Project Team Member]

"It's about re-shifting resources to meet what is needed." [Project Team Member]

PCSOs

- 5.5.19 The team stated that with the arrival of two PCSOs working full time in the parks, the project will be able to do more in terms of addressing anti-social behaviour.
- 5.5.20 Although the team believes that that this will help take the pressure off the police, they do stress that they would still expect the police to come into the parks as and when required, just as they would expect their PCSOs to go out of the parks to assist police.
- 5.5.21 The team is also working alongside other departments to look at the feasibility of them providing part time PCSOs:

"We are working with the substance misuse lead officer, looking at her to deploy us a third PCSO. So that PCSO would spend 60-70% of their time just dealing with drug people. And deal with the necessary people." [Project Co-ordinator]

- 5.5.22 The team feel that the addition of PCSOs to the project team will greatly help to support the project co-ordinator, and pressure on his time:

"Because to get out in the field, and go to meeting after meeting, as much as it is a requirement, if I did, I'd have no time at all to be out on the ground." [Project Co-ordinator]

"We've got almost 600 reports in relation to various incidents, but, if we took more on [without the support of more staff], I'd stay here all day just writing down, which is not what they have employed me for. I need to be out in the parks." [Project Co-ordinator]

- 5.5.23 The project co-ordinator has highlighted how the addition of PCSOs will mean an increase in the recording of anti-social behaviour, which may look like actual levels are increasing. Therefore early statistics on levels after they have been introduced should be viewed with

caution:

“When the PCSOs are here, you will look at our database in a years time and it will have tripled. I know we will because I can see the way it will go.” [Project Co-ordinator]

5.6 Summary

- 5.6.1 The project had adopted an enforcement approach to reducing anti-social behaviour in Cardiff’s parks and appears to have been effective in meeting many of its initial objectives. In particular, a sustainable approach appears to have been developed for bringing together key partners in delivery and ensuring that there is greater capacity in targeting those committing acts of anti-social behaviour. The model is well documented and there has been sufficient training to ensure that it can be continued by a number of staff into the future.
- 5.6.2 In terms of setting up the project and systems, the project has carried out what it planned. The team has put mechanisms in place, such as the database and partnerships, to ensure that the scheme continues to remain sustainable. ACSOs and park rangers are working to address minor incidents of anti-social behaviour. Shortly there will also be PCSOs operating in the parks. The team has set up partnerships with other local agencies. Intelligence is collated and shared by different agencies as well as the team. Patterns of anti-social behaviour are tracked and operations put in place to address them. Repeat offenders are also tracked.
- 5.6.3 It is, perhaps, important to note that one element of incidental learning to arise from this project was the difficulty in comparing data from different sources in order to achieve a composite picture of anti-social behaviour in parks. The project was useful in identifying some of the gaps in current databases and helping to fill these with the design of pro formas for more comprehensive data collection. Consequently, however, it has been difficult for the team to compare levels of anti-social behaviour pre and post pilot since there is no ‘common’ measure.
- 5.6.4 The team has carried out a number of measures within the parks in order to ‘design out’ crime and anti-social behaviour. Using these design principles can make committing an offence more difficult, and therefore improves the urban ‘ambiance’ by reducing fear of crime.
- 5.6.5 Whilst the scheme has developed systems for reducing anti-social behaviour (especially off road biking and the discouragement of drug users and homeless people from inappropriately using the parks), the data do not reliably indicate that people feel safer using the parks now than they did before the pilot. There is also little evidence that the public have noticed differences in the parks.
- 5.6.6 The team themselves also recognised that anti-social behaviour is related to other issues, such as mental and physical health. For example, they highlighted that driving drug users out of the parks could just be moving the problem elsewhere and they stressed the need for a safe area for drug takers in Cardiff. The focus of the project to date has been on increasing policing of the parks rather than on solving the problem of why anti-social behaviour is being conducted in the first place.
- 5.6.7 A positive aspect of the scheme seems to be the team’s intentions to create diversionary

activities for young people to prevent incidents of anti-social behaviour in the future. That said, they have been unable to undertake any targeted consultative work with young people to date in order to establish needs and preferences and this, it seems, would be key to ensuring the most appropriate solutions in the future.

- 5.6.8 Overall those involved in the pilot do believe it is having a positive impact on anti-social behaviour in parks. The success has been due to the co-ordination of existing initiatives, rather than through the introduction of any 'new' methods to deal with anti-social behaviour. In many instances, the project co-ordinator has triggered the intervention of organisations with more appropriate expertise and resources rather than attempting to resolve the issue himself.

6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The pilot project appraisal has particular strengths and limitations. The limitations are that it is not possible to show a causal link between what the projects did and changes in levels of reported anti-social behaviour. To show such a link would require a 'field experiment', a comparison between similar areas, one of which received the intervention (the project activities) and the other which did not. The strengths of the pilot project approach lie in its ability to identify key factors which are likely to affect the success or otherwise of such schemes. These factors, described in what follows, include a clear analysis and understanding of the community targeted, and of the rationale for tackling the kind of anti-social behaviour identified as a priority.
- 6.1.2 The aims of this evaluation were to:
- systematically collect and analyse information about how the projects were operating during their first year of funding and to identify key factors affecting project implementation;
 - identify the key factors and underlying principles which allowed projects to successfully tackle anti-social behaviour;
 - where projects were less successful, to identify the factors and underlying principles which can prevent or undermine attempts to reduce antisocial behaviour; and
 - assess the extent to which the projects achieved the particular objectives they set when making their submissions for funding.
- 6.1.3 This report has sought to describe the activities undertaken over a 12-month period by four independent and quite distinct pilot projects. Data from the project staff and from those who helped in their implementation, as well as from those who benefited from their presence, were collected and used as a measure of the relative successes of each project.
- 6.1.4 This final chapter seeks to pull together some of the main findings from the data presented above regarding the facilitators and barriers to successful implementation, operation and outcomes of the four schemes, as well as to highlight some of the incidental learning that may be taken from this exercise to inform future, similar initiatives.
- 6.1.5 First, however, it is important to summarise the key findings from the work.

Key Findings

- All schemes were at least partially successful in meeting their initial stated aims and objectives. In none of the areas were all of the initial stated aims met. In some cases, there was a redefinition of the pilot aims at an early stage, which meant that it was difficult to judge performance against initial targets. Instead, we have attempted to review performance against modified objectives. Whilst this is not problematic in itself, it may indicate a need for greater clarity and rationalisation at the early stages of planning for similar schemes in the future.
- In each of the areas there appears to have been either a correlation between the operation of the projects and a reduction in the number of incidents of anti-social

behaviour being reported to the police, or engagement with the populations most at risk of carrying out anti-social behaviour. It is, however, difficult to make explicit causal links between any reductions in reported levels of anti-social behaviour and the schemes' operations.

- None of the projects have convincingly demonstrated a clear link between their operation and a perceived decrease in anti-social behaviour among members of the local community. Whilst qualitative data with some of the local residents in the areas suggest that the pilot schemes were welcomed, there does not appear to have been widespread awareness of anti-social behaviour per se. Linked to this, it seems that some of the schemes may have been targeting types of anti-social behaviour that were not the main concerns of local people.
- The financial and staff resources allocated to each of the projects appear to have been sufficient for a one-year period. Whilst there was a common view that the one-year pilot period was not sufficiently long to create a real presence and make a noticeable difference in the target areas, the schemes all managed to operate reasonably unconstrained by resource issues over the year. In three cases, continuation funding has been secured.
- Each of the pilots has demonstrated excellent practice in partnership working and the pilots appear to have generated much interest across a number of key stakeholder organisations. It seems that the pilots have acted as a driver for change in most areas and that there are sustainable outcomes in each area.

6.2 Defining the Problem

- 6.2.1 Understanding the communities they were working in, and the particular issues concerning anti-social behaviour, was key to all four projects. A number of approaches were used, including surveys, (Melin and Cardiff), community profiling, (Lliswerry), analysis of available statistics of anti-social behaviour from police and other sources, (Cardiff, Torfaen and Melin) and knowledge gained through living or working in the area (Melin and Torfaen). While this preparatory work was done in all the areas, there were gaps, which should be addressed in future projects.
- 6.2.2 Specifically, there was no analysis of the different groups within each community, the different problems they might have faced, and the different perspectives they might have had. This was less of an issue in the Torfaen and Lliswerry projects, since these seemed to be relatively homogeneous communities. In the Melin, however, it seemed that an area of social housing was surrounded by owner occupied housing. In a survey conducted at the start of the project, concern had been raised that the increase in rented accommodation, was "bringing the area down", and the area of social housing at the top of the town was described as "hell on earth". This is not to suggest that there were not issues in these areas, but there is a risk of regarding some groups of residents as the problem, rather than as the groups who may be most likely to suffer from anti-social behaviour. The group of residents living in a nearby run down block of flats, for example, do not seem to have been targeted by the project's activities.
- 6.2.3 Attitude surveys that do not attempt to ground reported problems in observed experience risk confusing general fears, or labels applied to a disadvantaged group, with concrete evidence of a social problem. Where possible, problems identified in attitude surveys should

be triangulated by looking at other sources of evidence. For example, if there are reports of drug taking, these should be corroborated by evidence from drug agencies, and 'beat' police officers. In future, projects should ensure that the views of different sections of the community are compared, and that disadvantaged groups are specifically included.

- 6.2.4 Both the Torfaen and Lliswerry projects made reference to what they saw as the negative culture of residents, without describing what that culture was. If the attitudes are similar to those on disadvantaged estates in other areas, it is likely that they included mistrust of officialdom, an inward-looking solidarity, and low expectations for themselves and their children. These attitudes often stem from the experiences of these communities, including sub-standard public services, low wages, and unemployment. Having knowledge of, and some understanding of these attitudes, is part of the necessary context for doing effective work in these communities.
- 6.2.5 In projects intended to deal with anti-social behaviour, an audit of the level of, and attractiveness of, provision for young people should be carried out.
- 6.2.6 Fear of crime and fear of anti-social behaviour are not very useful in measuring the impact of schemes intended to tackle anti-social behaviour. Research has shown that a significant part of the fear of crime is due to other factors apart from the actual risk of being a victim. These other factors include a general anxiety, which is unrelated to the actual level of crime. It is possible to reduce, but not eliminate the impact of these other factors by using new, more specific questions on this issue now used in the British Crime Survey. Fear of anti-social behaviour is even harder to tackle than fear of crime, since it is even more diffuse. In Neath East, for example, the largest category of anti-social behaviour was simply headed "Youth". Young people doing no more than standing on a street corner, talking to friends, may be seen as threatening and reported for anti-social behaviour.

6.3 Explanatory Models

- 6.3.1 All of the schemes had underlying models (or 'Theories of Change') which explained why the project activities would deal effectively with the identified problem. These models were partly spelled out (explicit), but were also based on hidden assumptions (implicit). Some of these explanations were modified or altered during the course of the project. For each of the projects, these were:

Torfaen

- the Time Bank would engage at risk young people and stop (or greatly reduce) their level of anti-social behaviour; and
 - working with the 10 most prolific offenders would noticeably reduce the overall level of anti-social behaviour in the communities targeted. This would partly be due to the positive influence, by example, of the young people targeted, on a wider group of young people in the community.
- 6.3.2 In the absence of before and after figures for anti-social behaviour in the area targeted, it is not possible to say if the actual level of anti-social behaviour was reduced. The perception of local people surveyed was that it had not been. Three explanations are possible. One was that the reduction of anti-social behaviour by the targeted young people was masked by the level of anti-social behaviour by the larger number of non-targeted young people. Secondly,

while more serious anti-social behaviour may have decreased, young people hanging around the streets was still apparent and may have influenced local attitudes. Thirdly, the most serious offenders had not been targeted. The demonstrated success of the Torfaen project can be partly seen as a response to the question “How do we engage young people back into education and employment?”

Melin

- the problems were centred on a particular area of council housing and caused by some of the residents that lived there;
- lack of community involvement was an underlying issue; and
- inter-agency work to improve the appearance of the area, and to maintain the improvement would improve morale, and create the possibility of greater community involvement (for example, the Residents’ Association and Neighbourhood Watch Schemes).

In making these assumptions, the project perhaps failed to engage in necessary levels of public consultation to explore issues of concern in the wider community. Outreach youth work was not conducted, despite ‘youth’ problems clearly being an issue in the area.

Lliswerry

- to engage young people at risk of anti-social behaviour, and to change their attitudes by an educational programme, which included a substantial element of self reflection. The underlying model was that of John Huskins, a former Government Inspector of Youth Services (HMI), who has written extensively in this area. His model is basically a social deficit model, in which young people “at risk”, are regarded as lacking appropriate behaviour and attitudes. They are taken through a programme, from initial contact by a youth worker through to the young person taking on a leadership role.

- 6.3.3 The project had difficulty in engaging at risk young people. One group of at risk boys was engaged, but mainly in sporting activities, The group of girls who were successfully engaged, and seemed to gain a great deal from the project, were described as “in need” rather than at risk. From a Huskins perspective this would not matter greatly, since he has said that “many young people in deprived urban and rural areas are not well-adjusted”. Working with the “in need” group seems unlikely to reduce the level of anti-social behaviour in this community, although it seems to have had positive benefits for the girls involved. The difficulties in fully engaging at risk young people are probably a reflection on the feasibility of engaging these young people in such an intensive educational programme.

Cardiff

- improved efficiency through effective monitoring of anti-social behaviour, improving morale in the Park Ranger service by a more proactive approach, additional resources (off road vehicle, two ACSOs and close liaison with the police);
- law enforcement against off road bikers, moving on rough sleepers, and taking names and addresses of suspected offenders; and
- substitute provision (bike track, Roath Park play area being turned into a space for young people).

Action to date has not treated some issues of concern to the public (dog fouling) as a priority. The next phase of the work will require effective use of soft skills (working with young people to create new provision, developing more effective mechanisms for finding out views of park users).

6.4 Incidental Learning – What Helps?

- 6.4.1 All of the schemes were successful in identifying lessons for the future which might help to shape new initiatives for tackling anti-social behaviour. Common threads from across the four projects are presented here.

Characteristics of the Staff

- 6.4.2 Several of the schemes made good use of local known staff to ensure that the pilots were up and running as soon as possible after the award of funding. In Cardiff, an ex-police officer was employed to take forward the scheme who was able to bring invaluable knowledge of how police recording and reporting systems worked, as well as operational knowledge about the conduct of anti-social behaviour and its indicators. His contacts within the police also enabled the project to build relationships early on which might have taken longer had there been no known history between the co-ordinator and the local force.
- 6.4.3 The Melin project employed a local resident who was already actively involved in voluntary community work and who was again, already known to some of the local stakeholders. The added value brought to this project by this appointment also included invaluable local knowledge regarding the area and its history. The worker's familiarity with the area arguably made him more effective at targeting the sites most in need compared to someone new to the Melin district. It is perhaps worth noting that this familiarity may also have skewed the direction of the work that was undertaken away from the evidence that was collected as part of the baseline survey, such that it is not entirely clear why Meadow Road was selected over other domains.
- 6.4.4 The two youth work projects appear to have benefited from employing youth workers who were already known to their respective youth service teams and both, it seems, were also supported by the wider youth service in their area in implementing the projects.

Use of Local Facilities

- 6.4.5 All of the projects appear to have made good use of local facilities to house the staff employed to work on the pilots. In Cardiff, the co-ordinator was housed in the Council building, whilst in Melin, the Communities First office offered a home for the project staff. The two youth work projects were based in local community buildings at the heart of the communities that they were trying to work with.
- 6.4.6 In all cases, it seems that this co-location of staff alongside existing stakeholders for the projects meant that they had easier access to some of the key stakeholders who they were required to work with to ensure the smooth running of projects.
- 6.4.7 Importantly, the use of local accommodation seems to have benefited not only the projects but also those who acted as hosts. Qualitative consultation suggests that there were mutual

benefits in sharing accommodation since partners were often able to draw on the skills/experience of the pilot staff.

Participatory Approaches

- 6.4.8 All schemes appear to have benefited from employing a participatory, non directive approach to working with their target communities. This is especially true of the two pilot projects that worked with young people (Torfaen and Lliswerry) where the young people were consulted at various stages in the year to help shape the way in which the schemes ran. For example, in Torfaen, young people played a role in determining the type of rewards that would be made available and in Lliswerry the young people led and managed the charity events that marked the end of their engagement with the project. The two young people's schemes also appear to have benefited from using innovative and wide-ranging activities to engage with young people.
- 6.4.9 Although a participatory approach was also employed in the Melin area, with local residents being asked to participate in the garden tidy-up activities and fly-tipping removal, there has, perhaps, been less evidence of this approach being effective with adult populations.

Community integration

- 6.4.10 Finding a way for alienated young people to make a positive contribution to their communities may have the double benefit that these young people are less likely to behave in inconsiderate or anti-social ways (because of the respect they get from adults in the community) and, at the same time, reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour because the local young people are perceived more positively. The two projects that worked only with young people, (Lliswerry and Torfaen), discovered that one of the benefits of their schemes was that young people felt they had gained the approval of adults in the community and appreciated this approval. In the case of Torfaen, there was also evidence that community members, who directly benefited from the activities of young people engaged in the project, changed their views of these people in a positive direction.

Creating exit routes for sustainability

- 6.4.11 The schemes that have demonstrated themselves to have the greatest potential for long-term sustainability are those that have created clear exit routes for their participants. The Lliswerry project has, perhaps, been the most successful in demonstrating this with the direct signposting of young people into neighbouring youth projects to ensure that they maintain contact with the youth services team. The focus on gaining certificated outcomes in this area also means that the young people involved will have a permanent outcome, which can be used as a foundation for future self-development.
- 6.4.12 In Melin, the setting up of a resident's association also demonstrates a recognised need for long-term arrangements in order to sustain the good work done so far. Whilst the initial interest/uptake among residents is low, the principle of setting up the scheme shows that the local partners in delivery recognise that success is not self-sustaining.
- 6.4.13 The one area where exit routes were not necessarily created, namely Cardiff, recognised this as a limitation of the project and suggested that this would be a major focus of their continued work. Specifically, creating safe havens for drug/alcohol users and homeless people, which are an alternative to using Cardiff's parks would, it seems, help to reduce the

burden of activity currently being undertaken by the team in constantly removing associated paraphernalia from park sites.

Broadening eligibility criteria

- 6.4.14 The evidence suggests that all of the schemes undertook to broaden the remit of their targeting activities as the schemes developed. That is, in extending the scope of who was being targeted, the schemes seem to have captured participants who may not previously have been considered in scope for reducing or tackling anti-social behaviour. This was especially evidenced in the two schemes that worked with young people, since working with young people on the periphery of risky behaviour seems to have helped in accessing the most at-risk friends in their peer groups. Including people 'in need' rather than only people 'at risk' was also used in the Melin project where there was some contact with young people from the Boys and Girls Club, and support for an educational theatre production, with an anti-social behaviour theme, at the local primary school. In neither Torfaen nor Lliswerry were the criteria for identifying 'at risk' young people entirely clear. This is not to suggest that the judgements in making these decisions were necessarily wrong. It is to request transparency in these processes. Without this, when attempts are made to replicate these schemes in other areas, the criteria may be either too 'loose' and miss the young people who are most responsible for anti-social behaviour, or, alternatively, too 'tight', and limit the intervention to young people who are too far down the road to offending behaviour and may not be helped by such schemes.

Added value for staff

- 6.4.15 Perhaps an unanticipated outcome of the schemes has been the reported levels of staff satisfaction among those employed to work on the projects. Examples include a greater level of job satisfaction and feeling of ownership expressed by park rangers working on the Cardiff pilot, as well as the considerable opportunities presented to the youth workers in Lliswerry for developing their own understanding of approaches to youth work and the range of activities available to them in working with young people. In Melin, there was also a perceived impact on local authority staff who felt more mobilised to continue working in the pilot area following the kick-start provided by this initiative.
- 6.4.16 Whilst this is perhaps an added benefit of the schemes, it does not necessarily impact directly on reducing or tackling anti-social behaviour per se, except that increased motivation of staff may have facilitated greater levels of activity during the pilot period and into the future.

6.5 Incidental Learning – What Hinders?

- 6.5.1 Having highlighted some of the learning to emerge from across the four schemes, it is important to set out some of the features of the pilot schemes that might be considered as hindering the success of the schemes.

Community engagement

- 6.5.2 Almost all of the projects accepted that they had been less successful than originally anticipated in undertaking proactive community engagement. Even where this was specific target for the pilot (for example, in Melin), and where community engagement activities

were attempted, the evidence collected does not demonstrate that levels of uptake were strong.

- 6.5.3 The Melin project perhaps had the greatest focus on achieving community engagement and is also the scheme which, arguably, has the greatest need for community engagement to be successful (that is, for owners to take responsibility for their properties and to become self-regulatory). It is perhaps here that the lack of community engagement presents the greatest barrier to implementation of the model in the long term. In Melin, greater engagement of local residents may have helped to deter some of the re-emergence of fly-tipping that occurred. Importantly, some attempts to engage with the public were made (for example, through newsletters such as Melin Matters, or through leaflet drops in local areas). Perhaps, however, more face-to-face work was needed to generate real interest.
- 6.5.4 In other areas, focussing on the project participants meant that community engagement at the wider level was neglected. Whilst some of the schemes did not include this in their initial scope, it might be argued that all could have benefited from greater levels of awareness-raising among the public to facilitate their project's implementation.
- 6.5.5 In Lliswerry, the team attempted to use local facilities to engage with local residents, but recognised that a core of parents may have been hostile towards the scheme due to a lack of understanding of its aims. Similarly, in Torfaen, some residents perceived that the scheme had limited benefits and therefore did not engage as fully with it as they might.
- 6.5.6 In Cardiff, a sensitive approach to raising awareness of reporting mechanisms may have assisted rangers in recording more incidents of anti-social behaviour and uncovering new issues of nuisance for them to target.
- 6.5.7 That said, it is important to recognise that there is little research that provides conclusive evidence that community engagement on issues such as crime can actually help to reduce its prevalence. The 2006 interim evaluation of the Communities First Programme in Wales asserts that this may be because the majority of research to date has not been *"sufficiently rigorous or long-term (most taking the form of individual case studies), but also because of the difficulties of attributing change to community engagement per se, i.e. of isolating community engagement from other factors, which may either contribute to, or prevent, change."* (p.31) It also recognises that considerable timescales are required to reliably demonstrate or achieve sustainable change.

Identifying problems

- 6.5.8 Arguably, each of the schemes could have benefited from more robust public consultation at an early stage to create a clear picture of the perceived problems regarding anti-social behaviour in the local area. It seems that issues such as dog fouling, litter and public drink/drug use are common concerns that exist in communities and none of these projects sought to tackle these issues directly (except the Melin project which tackled litter in terms of fly-tipping).
- 6.5.9 Where the objectives of the projects were revised during the pilot, it is not always clear that this was undertaken as a result of better understanding of the issues in local areas (which may have been considered positive), but instead, as a result of what was felt to be achievable having reassessed the initial aims and the timeframe available. An alternative interpretation may be that, in some cases, the projects chose to spend more time on tasks

that the workers felt comfortable with rather than the more difficult issues that needed to be addressed. This may have been inevitable due the project being 'pilot' projects and is not, in itself, a negative indicator of the way in which the projects were run. Indeed, in all areas the schemes appeared to build on individuals' strengths and individual characteristics, including maximising on local knowledge held by the project staff. Where this would become problematic, however, is if the main focus of the project was directed by the strengths of the project staff such that projects were tailored around staff skills rather than local needs.

Achieving attitude change

- 6.5.10 Each of the schemes was premised, to some degree, on the need for attitude change regarding anti-social acts (among people using parks for illicit reasons, local residents who disrespect their neighbourhood or young people who needed to be diverted away from anti-social acts). There was also an assumption that the targeted behaviours would result in reduced levels of fear of crime or increased levels of feelings of safety. Despite this, in each of the projects, it might be argued that the main benefits to arise were for participants' quality of life rather than any notable decrease in communities' fear of crime or feelings of safety.
- 6.5.11 This might suggest, again, a need for greater public consultation at an early stage of project planning to ensure that the activities undertaken are matched to the desired changes. It is recognised that this is a challenging target.

Continuity of resources

- 6.5.12 None of the schemes were constrained by lack of budget during the project year. Indeed, some reported small underspends at the conclusion of the financial year. The main problems, however, appear to be related to the continuation of funding into future years to ensure that staff can be kept on-board and that communities do not perceive such pilots to be a *"flash in the pan."*
- 6.5.13 Continued funding of such projects may be critical to ensure that nothing undermines the development of durable links between local communities and service providers. The pilot seems to suggest that there is a danger of the schemes simply reinforcing short-term thinking of initiatives and lack of acceptance among communities unless longer-term commitments are made.
- 6.5.14 This is evidenced quite clearly in the Cardiff and Melin projects where traditional authority figures (ie police and local authority) remained the main focus of accountability. Whilst it is not suggested that individual schemes should seek to take over conventional roles in the community, some of the reasons that informed the pilot developments arose from a perceived lack of time and resources among traditional authority figures to deal appropriately with small level instances of anti-social behaviour. The capacity building that is achieved from such pilots can only be maximised, it seems, if they have a sufficiently long and robust presence in the community that they can become trusted sources of support. Similarly, longevity is clearly required in projects that work with young people due to the time required to establish trust between young people and those who are there to help.

6.6 Conclusions

- 6.6.1 The projects involved in this evaluation all differed quite significantly in their approach to reducing anti-social behaviour. Some adopted an enforcement role (Cardiff and Melin), whilst others focussed on prevention (Lliswerry and Torfaen) and education (Melin, Lliswerry and Torfaen).
- 6.6.2 It is difficult from this evaluation to say that any of the projects provided an 'ideal' model for tackling anti-social behaviour but, undoubtedly, they all contributed something to our awareness of what works in tackling local issues.
- 6.6.3 The spirit of the pilot schemes as an experimental exercise was, for the most part, embraced by the schemes and almost all were able to reflect on their experiences positively and highlight learning to emerge. The pilots have been useful in kick-starting continued efforts in the local areas and many of the key stakeholders consulted appear to have committed to long-term action to ensure that progress continues to be made.
- 6.6.4 The main learning point from the evaluation is, perhaps, that a 12-month period is insufficient to collect reliable evidence on which to adequately measure the success of the schemes. Short-term projects such as these are perhaps best assessed in terms of the rigour with which problems are identified, approaches to deal with the problems arrived at and implemented, the degree of reflection on progress by the projects towards targets and the perceptions of the participants and beneficiaries.
- 6.6.5 The projects' attempts to achieve attitudinal change among local residents and the young people involved in the schemes is likely to be demonstrated more in the long term. Only in the future will it be possible to monitor the incidents of involvement in anti-social behaviour carried out by these young people or their successes based on the exit routes provided by the schemes. Similarly, the success of the Meadow Road resident's association and the new neighbourhood watch schemes in tackling anti-social behaviour is yet to be proven. The true success of these pilot projects is, therefore, not likely to be known until some point in the future.
- 6.6.6 Understanding the issues, and understanding the communities, is key to effective work. Taking time to understand the issues, and the perspectives of different groups in the community, including disadvantaged groups, and young people, will pay dividends in longer-term success.
- 6.6.7 The approach to tackle the particular problem identified should follow from careful specification of the problem. In particular, there should be clarity about the 'Theory of Change'. What are the underlying assumptions behind the expectation that the approach advocated is going to work?
- 6.6.8 Contingent factors will probably determine both the shape of the project and its success. Some of these factors, revealed in this evaluation, are the local culture, the value of previous work with young people in the area, and the comfort zones of staff (which may constrain what projects can do). The evaluation itself, during which project staff were questioned on the rationale of their approach, and its implementation, seems to have had the positive effect of encouraging self-reflection. In the absence of external evaluation, projects should carry out their own evaluation at key stages, during which they stand back and consider the project as a whole, aided by stakeholders.

7 Summary of Learning Points for New Projects

- 7.1.1 A good start does not guarantee a successful project but imperfect planning can jeopardise future outcomes greatly. Here are a few learning points gained from this evaluation that are important when setting up a new project.
- 7.1.2 Begin by gaining an understanding of the community that your project is working in, and the particular issues concerning anti-social behaviour. Knowing these things at the outset is the key to effective work. Recognise that contingent factors such as the local culture, the value of previous work with young people in the area, and the comfort zones of staff (which may constrain what projects can do) will probably determine both the shape of the project and its success.
- 7.1.3 Take time to understand the issues and the perspectives of different groups in the community, including disadvantaged groups and young people. It will pay dividends in longer-term success. Different groups within each community may face different problems and might have different perspectives.
- 7.1.4 You can gain this understanding through a number of different approaches including: surveys; community profiling; analysis of available statistics of anti-social behaviour from police and other sources; and knowledge gained through living or working in the area.
- 7.1.5 Take care when doing each of these. Attitude surveys taken out of context risk confusing general fears, or labels applied to a disadvantaged group, with concrete evidence of a social problem. Try to relate people's perceptions to observed experience. If your attitude survey identifies a particular problem, look for other sources of evidence to corroborate it. For example, reports of drug taking could be corroborated by evidence from drug agencies, and 'beat' police officers.
- 7.1.6 Make sure that any survey includes all sections of the community and specifically include disadvantaged groups, in order to ensure that your survey is comprehensive and representative. Compare the views of different groups. Make sure that your criteria for identifying 'at risk' young people are entirely clear.
- 7.1.7 A community profile can draw on sources such as population profile statistics, an overview of educational and recreational opportunities available to young people, details of local transport provision, details of the main stakeholders of relevance to the project etc. Carry out an audit of the level of, and attractiveness of, provision for young people. Bring all of this information together in one place.
- 7.1.8 Be cautious in interpreting statistics setting out fear of crime and fear of anti-social behaviour. They are not very useful in measuring the impact of schemes intended to tackle anti-social behaviour. Research has shown that a significant part of the fear of crime is due to other factors apart from the actual risk of being a victim.
- 7.1.9 Set out an underlying model (or 'theory of change') that explains why your project activities will deal effectively with the problems that you have identified. What are the assumptions that lead you to expect that the approach advocated is going to work? Be clear about the extent to which your assumptions and model are spelled out (explicit) or are based on

hidden assumptions (implicit). Be prepared to modify or discard and replace some of these explanations during the course of the project because you will undoubtedly find that you learn as you go along. Keep your progress against your objectives under review.

- 7.1.10 If you use local known staff it will help to ensure that your project is up and running as quickly as possible. They may already have contacts who can help (eg within the police) and they may have invaluable local knowledge regarding the area and its history. Familiarity with the area may enable staff to target the sites most in need more effectively than could someone new to the district. Beware though, of allowing this familiarity to skew the direction of the work away from the evidence that was collected as part of the local area and local issues. Also beware of setting the main focus of the project in response to the strengths of the project staff so that your project becomes tailored around staff skills rather than local needs.
- 7.1.11 When possible, use local facilities to house the staff employed to work on the project. Co-location of staff alongside existing stakeholders for the projects will mean that they have easier access to some of the people with whom they have to work to ensure the smooth running of projects. Sharing local accommodation in this way is likely to benefit not only your project's staff but also their hosts.
- 7.1.12 Benefit from employing a participatory, non-directive approach to working with your target communities, especially if these comprise young people. Finding a way for alienated young people to make a positive contribution to their communities may have the double benefit that these young people are less likely to behave in inconsiderate or anti-social ways (because of the respect they get from adults in the community) and, at the same time, reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour because the local young people are perceived more positively.
- 7.1.13 Create clear exit routes for the participants in the project. The schemes that have done so have shown the greatest potential for long-term sustainability. For example, signpost young people who participate in your project into other nearby youth projects to ensure that they maintain contact with the youth services team. If the young people involved gain from the project certificated outcomes that they can use as a foundation for future self-development that will be a permanent outcome of the work.
- 7.1.14 Plan to undertake proactive community engagement but do not underestimate the difficulty of doing so. Focussing on your project's participants is understandable but it can mean that you neglect community engagement at the wider level. Your project will benefit from greater levels of awareness-raising among the public to facilitate its implementation. Your project will also benefit from early and robust public consultation to create a clear picture of the perceived problems of anti-social behaviour in the local area.
- 7.1.15 Do not be afraid to revise your project's objectives if this is as a result of better understanding of the issues in local areas. If, instead, you do so in response to what you feel to be achievable, having reassessed the initial aims and the timeframe available it could indicate that the initial aims were not realistically specified.
- 7.1.16 The capacity building that you may hope to achieve from through your project requires a sufficiently long and robust presence in the community for the project workers to become trusted sources of support. Similarly, longevity is required in projects that work with young

people due to the time required to establish trust between them and those who are there to help.

- 7.1.17 Finally, in the absence of external evaluation, carry out your own evaluation at key stages, during which you should stand back and consider the project as a whole, aided by stakeholders. Review the rationale of your approach, and the method of its implementation. This can bring the positive effect of encouraging self-reflection.

MVA Consultancy provides advice on transport and other policy areas, to central, regional and local government, agencies, developers, operators and financiers.

A diverse group of results-oriented people, we are part of a 350-strong team worldwide. Through client business planning, customer research and strategy development we create solutions that work for real people in the real world.

For more information visit www.mvaconsultancy.com

Birmingham

Second Floor, 37a Waterloo Street
Birmingham B2 5TJ United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)121 233 7680 F: +44 (0)121 233 7681

Dubai

PO Box 123166 Dubai, 803 - 805 Arbift Tower
Baniyas Road, Deira, Dubai UAE
T: +971 (0)4 223 0144 F: +971 (0)4 223 1088

Dublin

First Floor, 12/13 Exchange Place
Custom House Docks, IFSC, Dublin 1, Ireland
T: +353 (0)1 542 6000 F: +353 (0)1 542 6001

Edinburgh

Stewart House, Thistle Street, North West Lane
Edinburgh EH2 1BY United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)131 220 6966 F: +44 (0)131 220 6087

Glasgow

Seventh Floor, 78 St Vincent Street
Glasgow G2 5UB United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)141 225 4400 F: +44 (0)141 225 4401

London

Second Floor, 17 Hanover Square
London W1S 1HU United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)20 7529 6500 F: +44 (0)20 7529 6556

Lyon

11, rue de la République, 69001 Lyon, France
T: +33 (0)4 72 10 29 29 F: +33 (0)4 72 10 29 28

Manchester

25th Floor, City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza
Manchester M1 4BT United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)161 236 0282 F: +44 (0)161 236 0095

Marseille

76, rue de la République, 13002 Marseille, France
T: +33 (0)4 91 37 35 15 F: +33 (0)4 91 91 90 14

Paris

12-14, rue Jules César, 75012 Paris, France
T: +33 (0)1 53 17 36 00 F: +33 (0)1 53 17 36 01

Woking

First Floor, Dukes Court, Duke Street
Woking, Surrey GU21 5BH United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)1483 728051 F: +44 (0)1483 755207

Email: info@mvaconsultancy.com

Offices also in

Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Singapore

mvaconsultancy