

Report of: Communities & Environment

Report to: Inner North West Community Committee

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Date: 21st September 2017 To note

Tackling Noise Nuisance in the LS6 area – Update on Wellbeing Funded Project 2015/16 and Proposals for the use of Body Worn Cameras for the Out Of Hours Response Team

Purpose of report

1. To update members of the Inner North West Community Committee on the well-being funded noise nuisance project in the LS6 area of Leeds. The report also considers the use of body worn cameras for the Out Of hours Response Team (Appendix 1).

Background

2. A previous 2015/16 funding bid was submitted to the Community Committee to fund additional out of hour's patrols during the fresher's handover period of £10,000. A further successful bid of £6,000 was awarded for the 2016/2017 period. This report covers part of the funding for 2015/16 period as well as part funding for 2016/17 period. The Out of Hours Response Team comes under the management of Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team, the funding was passed to Angela Mawdsley and subsequently Gill Hunter, LASBT West Manager to manage.
3. Since coming into post on 2nd April, I have reviewed how we deliver this service in the LS6 area. Consideration has been given to how we add additionality in the most effective and efficient way. Having done an analysis over the last 3 years to look at peak periods, locations and dates, I planned some additional shifts to cover the end of exam periods and dates of the university balls. I have also looked at critical times for the

Out Of Hours service and reduced the length of the shifts so that staff are working during the most busiest /productive periods of the evening/early morning.

4. Given the high volume of complaints and the detrimental impact noise nuisance has on the communities within Hyde Park, Headingley and Burley and following consultation with West Yorkshire Police, Unipol and Leeds Universities, there is now a structured procedure for tackling noise from student properties.
5. A dedicated Case Officer is the single point of contact for all student-related cases, proactive visits are undertaken for first-time low-level complaints to provide consistent advice and guidance and additional out of hours patrols are carried out by both Out of Hours and LASBT Officers and these patrols are ringfenced to the LS6 area.

Main issues

6. The funding enabled additional proactive Out of Hours Patrols to take place in the LS6 area from the 16th September - end of July 2017 as well as some focused proactive work with students.
During the first 4 weeks of the new University term/ Fresher's period additional resources were allocated to the LS 6 area with twelve additional shifts provided by Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team as well as an additional van patrols manned by an Out of Hours Response Officer which was ring fenced to the LS6 area .
7. Using this funding, proactive patrols have also been carried out at other peak times. It was identified that additional out of hours patrols were required for the Halloween period which covered a week-end period from 28th – 31st October. With the funding we were able to provide six additional shifts to manage the high volume of noise nuisance complaints. The service also covered part of the Easter holidays from 7th – 13th April due to an increase in complaints and to cover the of end of term period.
8. Alongside the initial 4 week period, as well as responding to live complaints and patrolling hotspot areas, LASBT Officers completed approximately 423 proactive follow-up / home visits to addresses which had been subject of a complaint and provided appropriate advice as well as serving a formal warning letters. Where a statutory nuisance had been identified, Officers would visit within a one to two day period and serve noise abatement notices.
9. Staff have been doing some additional proactive visit prior to the end of term period when we noted that calls increased during this period. The LASBT staff spoke to over fifty students and delivered seventy section 80 notices/ reminder letters to those addresses that had previously received either a section 80 or 2 warning letters since September 2016.
10. In total, to end July 2017, LASBT has received 423 complaints about separate student properties the majority of which have received proactive home visits. Noise abatement

notices have been served on students at 138 addresses this equates to 580 named persons following large-scale parties and identified statutory noise nuisance. During this period we have also served 16 Noise Abatement Notice for Non student properties in the LS6 areas.

11. Two large student parties were prevented following likely to occur noise abatement notices being served. Each of the addresses were located in Headingley and had planned to have amplified sound systems at the address throughout the night.
12. There were three seizures that took place at student properties of noise equipment following breaches of noise abatement notices in the LS 6 area.
13. Looking ahead, the LASBT Service are planning for the start of the new university year/fresher period and as well as planning some additional OOH shifts. I have met with both Leeds Beckett's and Leeds University in preparation of the new term. I also discussed the best way of engaging with the students at the start of the academic year and we are planning some late afternoon/ early evening pop up sessions in key locations within the student area. The key locations have been discussed and we are looking at outside Sainsbury's on Brudenell Road, the Co-op on Cardigan Road and outside Sainsbury's in Headingley working with the police and universities. We are looking at providing some bespoke information and merchandise such as post –its fridge magnets with the OOH/ASB contact number as part of the engagement sessions with students. The intention is that we will run a number of sessions between September – December 2017.

Corporate considerations

a. Consultation and engagement

Tackling noise nuisance is a partnership approach and LASBT regularly consult and engage with partners such as West Yorkshire Police, Unipol and Leeds Universities.

An update has also been provided at the 3rd July 2017 University Crime Reduction partnership and we are involved in the Student Changeover meetings managed by the Communities Team.

b. Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

Noise nuisance is not an issue exclusive to areas heavily populated by the student community and LASBT investigates complaints of noise in all areas of the city. However evidence does show that significantly more complaints are received in well-known student areas such as Hyde Park, Headingley and Burley. All cases regardless of tenure are assessed on an individual basis and any enforcement action taken is based upon available evidence.

c. Council policies and city priorities

The project fits within the City Priority Plan namely Best City for Communities and Best City to Live. It also meets the Best Council Plan outcome to improve the quality of life for residents.

d. Resources and value for money

As stated above, the funding has been invaluable in increasing the capacity of the existing LASBT service to meet the needs of local residents during an extremely busy period. The funding has also enabled us to take a more proactive approach this year to try and reduce the impact of noise nuisance in the LS 6 area.

e. Legal implications, access to information and call in

Evidence gathered during out of hours patrols could be used to initiate and progress legal cases.

f. Risk management

Out of Hours Response Officers and LASBT Case Officers are at risk from violence and aggression with aggravating factors such as individuals they deal with using drugs and alcohol. Lone working procedures are in place to try to address any such risks. We are also currently exploring the use of body worn cameras. Please see attached appendix 1 for information for the use of Body Worn Cameras for the OOH Response Team.

Conclusion

14. The funding has been invaluable in increasing the capacity of the service and has resulted in 100% of calls followed up with a visit /information pack in September and October 2016. It has also enabled LASBT Officers to carry out approximately 150 additional proactive home visits to provide advice and guidance to students over a twelve month period. This year funding will enable us to be more proactive in raising awareness of the Noise Nuisance process through the development of the pop up sessions around the LS6 area.

Recommendations

15. This year funding will again target the end of term and student changeover times, which are traditionally the periods when complaints increase, the Halloween period towards the end of October as well as focussing on some proactive /educational/ engagement work through the pop up sessions in Headingley and Hyde Park. It is recommended that Councillors note the content of this report and comment on appendix 1 in relation to the planned use of body worn cameras.

Appendix 1

Use of Body Worn Cameras by Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Out of Hours Response Team

Briefing Paper for Consultation

Background

The Out of Hours Response Team is responsible for responding to and dealing with calls received about noise nuisance between 6pm and 4am. The Team currently comprises of four Response Officers managed by an OOH Team Supervisor.

On Friday and Saturday nights, the team are accompanied by two PCSO's which enables them to operate two vehicles to meet the peak demand.

Due to the nature of the work, officers often face situations where violence or aggression is a factor often due to alcohol and substance misuse. They also attend properties where enforcement action is ongoing and evidence is being gathered.

There have been several incidents of late where officers have been faced with verbal abuse, hate crime and intimidation. CF50a's were completed for all incidents. Examples include;

6th March 2017 @ 01:57am - Seacroft – OOH Officer was subjected to hate crime and verbal abuse. Officers were also followed to the van by two men who behaved in an aggressive and threatening manner.

28th January 2017 @ 01:23 – Cross Gates – OOH Officer knocked on the door of a property and the perpetrator shouted he was 'going to rip his head off'

14th January 2017 @ 00:28am – Headingley – PCSO accompanying OOH Officer was subjected to hate crime.

23rd July 2016 @ 22:00 – East Ardsley – OOH Officer attended a property and the perpetrator had to be restrained by other occupants as he was very aggressive and had a glass in his hand which the officer feared would be used as a weapon

17th July 2016 @00:34 – Bramley – OOH Officer was bitten by a dog which belonged to the perpetrator.

As such, the Out of Hours Response Team will be introducing the use of body worn cameras (BWC's). Any project or set of new processes that involve exchanging personal information, inevitably gives rise to privacy concerns from both the authority controlling the

data and the general public. The data collection, sharing and processing must be undertaken within a clear and regulatory framework with minimum intrusion on an individual's right to privacy.

Benefits to Leeds City Council;

- Provides protection for Response Officers who can experience volatile situations
- Assists in the investigation of any allegations of improper conduct by Response Officers
- Resolves incidents more quickly and effectively saving both time and council money
- Ensures standards are consistently and professionally delivered across the service

Benefits to the community;

- Keeps people safe and help protect communities using the latest technology
- Serves as a deterrent to acts of aggression, verbal abuse, threats and physical violence
- Provides evidence to support action taken against anti-social behaviour such as closure orders, possession case, injunctions and prosecutions for breaches of noise abatement notices.
- Acts as an independent witness

Constraints

Data Protection 1998 -adhering to the act

- Human Rights act 1998- adhering to the act
- Surveillance Camera Code of Practice- compliance with the code of practice
- CCTV code of practice- compliance with the code of practise

Body Warn Cameras' will only be activated for recording in certain circumstances and there will be no unnecessary recording.

BWC's are used overtly and the officer will wear clear identification to indicate that it is a device capable of audio and visual recording. Prior to starting any recording, the officer will also give a clear verbal instruction that recording is taking place.

The Out of hours Team Supervisor will undertake a monthly audit of all recorded footage to ensure it is adequate, relevant and necessary.

An Impact Policy Assessment has been carried out the final stage of this to carry out consultation with local resident groups, local universities and social housing providers.

If you have views/comments please can you email these to Gill.hunter@leeds.gov.uk by 1st October 2017.

