



Report of the Director of Environments and Neighbourhoods

South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 7th July 2008

Subject: Operation Champion

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ardsley and Robin Hood
Morley North
Morley South
Rothwell

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

To provide the Area Committee with an update on Operation Champion in the Outer South. The Committee are asked to consider and approve the proposed changes to the Operation. The Committee are also asked to approve Wellbeing Revenue funding of £400 to support the Operations during the remainder of 2008/09.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report summarises achievements of Operation Champion and its predecessor Operation Cava since they were launched in April 2005. It outlines some of the difficulties and challenges that the approach has presented. The report makes recommendations about proposed changes to future Operation Champion including the need for further resources from the Area Committee and partner agencies.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Operation Champion is a multi agency crime and grime initiative. It brings together a range of agencies working in partnership to:

- Reduce crime and anti social behaviour
- Tackle environmental issues such as litter, rubbish dumping and graffiti removal.
- Provide public reassurance and support.

- 2.2 The range of agencies involved in the operation has greatly expanded since the first operation (then known as Operation Cava) was delivered in April 2005. The current range of agencies includes Area Management, West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Fire Service, HM Courts Service, HM Customs and Excise, DVLA, Aire Valley Homes, ASBU, Environmental Services, Leeds NHS Stop Smoking Service, Environmental Health and Victim Support.
- 2.3 The planning of each operation takes into account any specific needs of the target community. There are several key areas of activity that are relevant to each operation. These are:
- Carrying out arrests and executing fine warrants
 - Targeting perpetrators of ASB and issuing warnings
 - Offering home fire safety checks and fitting free smoke alarms
 - Removing untaxed vehicles
 - Clean up operations including removing graffiti and dumped rubbish
 - Visit and support repeat victims of crime
 - Provide high visibility patrols in target areas
- 2.4 Each operation can take place over a three day period in an area of around 500-1000 properties. A calendar is prepared each year identifying which areas will be tackled each month. The Outer South currently has two operations scheduled to take place each year. This takes account of the lower crime levels in outer south when compared with inner south and the different resources that are available to support the operation.
- 2.5 The operation was originally established during 2005. It was given different names across the city and in south Leeds it was known as Operation Cava. In January 2007, the decision was taken by Safer Leeds to re-brand these operations as "Operation Champion" so that it could be better recognised across the city. There have been four operations in total in Outer South as shown in the list below:
- Operation Cava – Eastleighs/Fairleighs (Ardsley Robin Hood ward) April 05
Operation Champion – Newlands/Denshaws (Morley South ward) March 07
Operation Champion – Oakwells/Fairfaxes/Moorsides (Morley North ward) Dec 07
Operation Champion – Wood Lane (Rothwell ward) February 08.
- 2.6 There is another operation scheduled to take place in Outer South in October 08. An operation will also take place between January and March 09 although the date has not yet been agreed.
- 2.7 Results from previous operations have already been presented to the Area Committee at earlier meetings.

3.0 Identifying areas, frequency and duration of Operation Champion

- 3.1 The primary focus for Operation Champion has been to reduce crime. Therefore, police intelligence has been used to identify the high crime/hotspot area that would benefit from the attention of Operation Champion. In Outer South Leeds, there are pockets where crime is higher than the majority of the area however, using only crime data could lead to greater inequalities in service. It often means that the same areas are repeatedly targeted often leading to concerns that areas that are perceived as having fewer problems miss out. Given the limited availability of the resource (a maximum of two, 3 day operations. per year) it is important to ensure that the areas are chosen using broader criteria and with regard to ongoing activity.
- 3.2 Reviewing the way in which Operation Champion is targeted gives an opportunity to make sure the best use is being made of this initiative alongside other activity such as Environmental Pride and the Neighbourhood Improvement Action Plans. Environmental Pride is used to tackle low level or ongoing environmental issues. By planning the location of Champion with regard to the Pride calendar of activities ensures that a fairer distribution of resource is achieved. The Neighbourhood Improvement Plans aim to tackle a range of issues in each NIP area. The benefit of linking Champion into these activities is that it can offer support to the work that is already being carried out.
- 3.3 Given the relatively low levels of crime in Outer South it is suggested that using only crime data is not the best way of deciding where the two operations per year take place. Instead it is recommended that each ward receives an Operation Champion over a two year period. The specific area to be targeted within each ward would be decided at the planning meeting. Agencies including the Police, Fire Service and Area Management would look at relevant data that reflects the priorities of that ward. The planning meeting would also have regard for the wider programme of work taking place in the proposed neighbourhoods. In order to ensure that resources are being targeted according to need, the final decision (should any dispute arise) would remain with the police on the basis of their intelligence.
- 3.4 There are two Operation Champions allocated to Outer South each year. They are due to take place in October 08 and between January and March 09. The future scheduling of the operations will take account of ongoing work in Outer South and aim for a longer gap between the two operations. This will allow for greater variety in the themes of work delivered by making use of seasonal trends (eg sneak in burglary work during the summer, fireworks education during the winter months).

4.0 Availability of resources

- 4.1 Outer South Leeds receives little in the way of external funding that has benefited other areas of Leeds. As a consequence, operations are reliant on agencies offering extra capacity rather than additional services. This means that although Champions are able to deliver a focused, multi agency approach, there is sometimes nothing new or different that can be provided. When extra funding is made available however, it is possible to be innovative in how it's used to achieve a more positive response from local residents.

- 4.2 The operation in the Oakwells/Fairfaxes/Moorsides area of Morley benefited from funding from Safer Leeds that was available to all Champions at that point in the year. CASAC were able to offer free target hardening to residents and people were given vouchers to buy reduced price disklocks from the Crime Reduction Officer at Morley Police Station. However, this funding was not available for the following operation and therefore these services could not be provided.
- 4.3 Several partner agencies (West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Fire Service, Aire Valley Homes, Safer Leeds) have been asked to make a financial contribution of £400 each to support the next two operations in Outer South. The Outer South Area Committee is asked to contribute £400 Wellbeing Revenue to the Operation. It is intended that this pool of funding is administered by the Area Management Team in order to provide additional resources for Operation Champion. The planning meeting for each operation would determine how best to spend these resources and could include crime reduction products, buying in temporary services where no alternative exists (e.g. sessional youth workers to deliver a one off activity with young people), additional publicity materials or running costs to support engagement events.

5.0 Improving community engagement

- 5.1 It is proposed that future operations place greater emphasis on engaging with the community rather than having an enforcement focus. The existing enforcement agencies (Civilian Warrants, DVLA, HM Revenue and Customs, West Yorkshire Police and ASBU) will continue to be part of the operation and the specific nature/location of their activity will need to remain confidential prior to the operation. However, other activity does not need to be confidential and would benefit from greater publicity and the opportunity for local people to become more involved in the planning/delivery of the programme.
- 5.2 To achieve this, operations will have a longer lead in time and will be publicised locally. The Area Community Safety Coordinator and Area Management Team will contact local groups prior to the operation to support them to become involved. The range of activity in Champion could be extended to provide more activity for young people in schools, specific crime reduction work with vulnerable groups, involving local people in identifying and tackling the crime or nuisance problems that mean the most to them.
- 5.3 As part of the Delegated Functions, Area Committees have a primary role to drive community engagement in each area. It is proposed that Operation Champions develop a stronger community engagement role that is linked more clearly to service improvement and area delivery plan priorities. Supporting the development of Operation Champion therefore contributes to the delivery of the delegated function of community engagement.

6.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

- 6.1 There are no direct implications for the above as a result of this report.

7.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.
- 7.2 There is a resource implication on the Wellbeing funding if Area Committee agree to support Operation Champions as outlined in this report.

8.0 Conclusion

- 8.1 Operation Champion has been successful in delivering a co-ordinated approach to crime and grime issues in Outer South Leeds. It can be improved by integrating its planning with the work that is currently being delivered by the Area Management Team and partner agencies. Further benefits can be achieved by more focused activity that aims to engage local people in the planning and delivery of the operation.

9.0 Recommendations

- 9.1 The Outer South Area Committee is asked to note and approve the changes in this report.
- 9.2 Members are asked to consider and approve £400 Wellbeing Revenue to support the activity of Operation Champion in Outer South for 2008/09.