



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

Community Safety

Anti Social Behaviour Update





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Officers

NPTCBC

- Chris Millis – Head of Participation
- Claire Jones – Strategic Manager, Partnerships and Community Cohesion
- Elinor Wellington – Principal Officer, Community Safety

South Wales Police

- Inspector Matt Otteson, Neath Neighbourhood Team

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Background and Context

- In July 2020, there were increasing concerns around Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) in the Neath Town Centre area
- Residents and businesses were speaking to local Cllrs about issues of street drinking, noise nuisance, begging and other general ASB.
- It was perceived that the cause of these issues was the usage of the Ambassador Hotel by Housing Options, since the start of the pandemic

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Background and Context

- Official reports to the Police and to Council staff were very low and it was felt this may not have been a true reflection of what was happening in the town.
- The Community Safety Team called a partnership meeting to; better understand the problem; look at who was at the centre of the issues; and consider an appropriate action plan to ensure the situation improved and did not deteriorate
- The first meeting was held in July 2020, coordinated by Community Safety.
- The meeting was chaired by Cllr Leanne Jones and attended by ward Cllrs and relevant Cabinet Members, as well as representatives from;
 - South Wales Police (SWP)
 - Housing Options
 - WCADA
 - Licensing
 - Streetcare
 - Salvation Army
 - Neath Business Improvement District (BID)
 - Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP)
 - and many others

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The Approach

- Partner buy in was excellent from the outset and the initial, and all subsequent meetings, were very well attended.
- There was a will from all partners to take action and instigate change in the area
- It was decided to take a ‘two pronged’ approach;
 1. To identify who was at the centre of the issues and ensure appropriate support was available, and that appropriate measures could be put in place to resolve the issues of ASB
 2. To encourage residents to report any issues through to the right channels, to better equip services with the evidence they needed to address the problems.

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The Approach

- The group agreed to a series of short term, immediate actions to address the current problem
- The group also agreed to look at longer term, more strategic actions, to ensure the problems did not reoccur
- There was an understanding by all that this would not be an overnight process and would take considerable resource and effort from all partners
- There was a need to work towards improving public perception of the town, some issues were exacerbated by social media and made problems appear worse than they may have been – this is an ongoing challenge

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Initial Actions Taken

An example of some of the immediate actions taken;

- Licensing to meet all local licensed premises to remind them of responsible selling, and to brief them of the ongoing issues
- Housing Options and SWP to meet regularly and discuss / identify the individuals of most concern
- Increased Police presence in the town
- Press releases / social media posts to encourage reporting through to 101, to allow Police and partners to have a true reflection of concerns and to have hard evidence to take further action against those causing the issues
- To explore s.35 Dispersal Orders, Community Protection Warnings, Community Protection Notices, and Criminal Behaviour Orders for those identified
- To offer more diversionary activities and outreach support to those accommodated in the Ambassador.

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Longer Term Actions

An example of some of the longer term actions agreed;

- To work with wider council colleagues on the Regeneration Programme for Neath Town Centre – to improve the general look and feel of the town
- To employ more town centre staff to have an increased presence in the town
- To consider longer term Police operations to address the issues
- To speak to Welsh Government about funding to increase provision of Housing Options temporary accommodation so that residents are more dispersed

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Longer Term Actions, Continued....

- To develop and implement a robust Communications Plan to spread positive messages about the town, but also promote reporting mechanisms
- To resume engagement events, as soon as Covid restrictions allowed, to ensure a presence in the town and allow residents and businesses an appropriate place to share their concerns. Also to act as a deterrent to those at the centre of the issues.
- To revamp and extend the existing Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP) to look at further exclusions for prolific offenders, and increased support for traders

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Position Early 2021;

- By January 2021 it was decided to meet less frequently, as issues had subsided, however work was continuing behind the scenes
- Two isolated incidents then occurred in the town, unrelated to the Ambassador, which had much social media attention and took the work of the group back a considerable amount
- Public perception of the town worsened at this time
- Frequency of meetings increased again and initial actions were all revisited and longer term actions brought forward, where possible
- South Wales Police launched Operation Lileum in March 2021

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Current Position;

- There has been a marked improvement over the past 2 months
- Operation Lileum saw an increase in reports through to the right channels, this was made up of Police logging incidents whilst patrolling the town centre, and through regular encouragement of businesses and residents to report their concerns
- Reports are now gradually decreasing
- Traders in particular are reporting an improved 'feel' to the town in recent weeks, both to Police and Council staff
- Membership of the BCRP is increasing, with revised promotional literature and regular visits to traders

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Next Steps;

- Operation Lileum to continue, with added strands, to ensure opportunities for support are explored before further action is taken
- SWP and Housing Options to continue to meet to discuss those of most concern
- BCRP and Licensing to explore making it a requirement for licensed premises to sign up to the BCRP scheme, if appropriate
- Comms Plan implementation to continue, with launch of #NeathTogether webpage
- Regular / weekly briefings between officers and appropriate Councillors and or Deputy Leader / Leader

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Next Steps;

- Regeneration of the town continues
- Community Safety engagement events have resumed and will continue, restrictions permitting
- Welsh Government will continue review changes to Homelessness legislation that have been implemented since the start of the pandemic
- Outreach support will continue for those accessing help from WCADA and Salvation Army
- With increased businesses signing up to the BCRP, Neath Town Centre can become an 'Exclusion Zone' with a 'zero tolerance' to ASB – the more businesses in the scheme, the more effective it becomes



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