



**2019**

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**HERMAN GOLDSTEIN  
PROBLEM ORIENTED POLICING AWARD**

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The Redhill Project

## Project Owner

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### **Scanning:**

The nexus between deprivation and criminality can manifest itself in many ways and if not tackled head on the ASB, the damage, the general disorder corrodes the community further and the crisis deepens. The summer of 2017 saw a significant increase in ASB and in particular Hate crime targeting local businesses. The problem was multi-layered and complex and the scale of the endeavour defied local enforcement efforts.

### **Analysis:**

Addressing the problem down using Problem Solving methodology enabled us to break the problem down into scaleable and viable portions, which we could do something about. The main issues were:

- There had previously been little or no deterrent and no repercussions against the youths for the anti-social behaviour with little or no parental control.
- The involvement of OCG's and intimidation linked to money lending across the area was a complicating factor in an already complex problem
- Troubled families causing high demand and presenting with complex issues. There was often little engagement until they were in crisis and are on the brink of eviction/ child protection etc

### **Response:**

This wasn't a little problem and it spread across an entire area and had multiple hotspots. We embarked on an ambitious partnership programme of actions and responses in a classic "weed & seed" strategy. Intelligence lead arrests to tackle organised criminality, visible action to snuff out Hate crime and utilising a full range of powers and support to help build a more resilient community.

### **Assessment:**

Overall Crime down 8%

Hate crime down 65%

Burglary Dwelling down 48%

ASB down an average of 58%

Redhill ward has witnessed significant reductions in ASB, hate crime and burglary offences through focussed problem solving. The involvement of organised criminality added further layers of complexity to what was already a complex set of problems, by breaking the problem down and taking a methodical approach we were able to tackle this effectively.

Word Count: 312

## **Description**

### **Scanning:**

The Redhill electoral ward in Sunderland comprises the housing estates of Witherwack, Redhouse, Downhill and Town End Farm. It is classed as one of the top 10 most deprived wards in the city. It has a predominantly white community, very few residents are from a black or ethnic minority background. As with many areas, suffering high deprivation, it has the following types of issue:

- family breakdown often resulting in domestic violence
- youth crime and disorder.
- frequent neighbour disputes
- a number of families are well known to police due to persistent crime and anti- social behaviour.
- a number of individuals have loyalties to organised crime groups that operate across the city.
- violence and disorder are regular features on the ward , either within homes, between neighbours, people who are known to each other or between criminals who are trying to assert their authority or are engaging in feuds .

The area is policed by the Sunderland North Neighbourhood Team based at Southwick Police Station, Sunderland.

April to September 2017 witnessed a significant rise in the following offences in the ward :

- Racial Crime directed at two local shop owners and their families. 20 racial crimes recorded in 2017
- Burglary dwelling offences across the ward. 50 burglary dwellings recorded summer 2017
- Youth disorder linked to the racial crime in Witherwack and Downhill. 114 youth ASB incidents across summer 2017
- Violence/ intimidation offences across the ward

A problem solving approach, The Redhill Project, was adopted to tackle the above issues.

Whilst the project related to all of Redhill Ward it was focused on two priority areas in particular, Witherwack and Downhill. Both of these areas suffered from hate crime directed at businesses owned by Asian families. Many of the crimes across the ward, hate crime,

burglary and violence as well as ASB incidents were committed by the same core group of 10 offenders who attracted a wider group of youths and adults on occasion

Problem solving activity in Redhill has been driven by a 2 year focus on specific crime issues and the development of partnership structures to focus both police and partnership activity around this area.

Our key problem solving partners include, the housing association Gentoo, Sunderland Council's ASB team, Sunderland Council Community Safety Team and "Together for Children" Early Help Team, Wear Recovery – Sunderland Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service , the councilors for Sunderland North and local schools.

The problem solving meetings that help drive and deliver the plan are :

Sunderland North Safer Estates

- Sunderland North Safer Schools Partnership
- Sunderland North Local Multi Agency Partnership
- Raising Aspiration Projects

### **Analysis:**

### **Victims:**

Witherwack

- Businesses premises at Woolwich Road, namely Mann Stores at 3 Woolwich Road, Lee's Fish shop 6 Woolwich Road. However ASB calls are spread through the estate.

Downhill

- Pizza Hot , Keighley Avenue

Redhouse

- Victims who owe money to OCG groups

### **Offender**

Witherwack:

- Several youths had been identified to police from local residents, and there was CCTV at the general dealers as well as a 3G camera.

Downhill & Redhouse :

- Youths committing the ASB are often the same as in Witherwack
- Organised Crime Gang offenders operate across the ward
- Troubled families cause issues within the immediate vicinity where they live and their children are linked to the asb detailed above

**Location:**

- Woolwich Close, Witherwack is the main focal point, however the youths often wander around other streets on the Witherwack Estate. There are multiple footpaths and road allowing unlimited access to the surround streets and also into Marley Pots and Redhouse, the neighbouring estates.
- Keighley Avenue Downhill
- Rawmarsh Road, Redhouse

**Hypothesis:**

- There had previously been little or no deterrent and no repercussions against the youths for the anti-social behaviour with little or no parental control.
- The involvement of OCG's and intimidation linked to money lending across the area was a complicating factor in an already complex problem
- Troubled families causing high demand and presenting with complex issues. There was often little engagement until they were in crisis and are on the brink of eviction/ child protection etc

**Response:**

Sunderland North Neighbourhood Team, in conjunction with the housing provider Gentoo, Sunderland Council and other partners carried out a pro-active operation to tackle long term crime and ASB issues on Witherwack estate.

The estate has long term issues with crime and ASB committed by family's resident on the estate and their associates who visit.

## **Witherwack:**

### **Victim**

The main victims of crime were a Sikh Asian family, who owned the local post office and general store. In 2017 they were the victims of 16 racially motivated crimes. The premises were isolated and because they lived above the shop they endured the racial abuse and ASB all day, every day. The family was supported by Sunderland North NPT. They were assigned allocated points of contact in the two Neighbourhood officers for the area. Their support included:

- Addressing the security of the business and the home they occupied above it with the landlord
- Frequent drop-ins to the store when they were on patrol, especially on a late shift.
- Referring them to Victims First Northumbria and Advocacy Centre North.
- Linking in with colleagues at Southern Community Engagement Team to ensure all possible support was identified and offered. This support was key to protecting them and ensuring their support for the investigation of the many crimes against them and prosecution of offenders.
- Neighbourhood supervision visited the family and ensured that all crimes involving them were prioritised both in terms of safeguarding and investigation. (As an aside the family were so appreciative of the efforts of the Neighbourhood Officers that they were invited to a family wedding).

### **Arrest Action**

The operation led to the arrest of 9 individuals for racially aggravated criminal damage and public order offences. 5 were charged or cautioned for offences

### **Safer Estates**

Northumbria Police worked closely with Sunderland Council and Gentoo Housing via Safer Estates Sunderland North and this has led to the following results:

- 4 restraining orders were granted at court against identified offenders preventing them from making further contact with the Sikh family and other residents on the estate.
- One youth was also given a Youth Rehabilitation Order excluding him from Witherwack.
- As well as the arrests, a wider group of young people were identified as frequenting the estate causing issues. Leading to the issuing of 12 Acceptable Behaviour Agreements and 1 Community Protection Notice
- Tenancy action was taken by Gentoo and Sunderland Council ASB Team against the families involved and this led to 3 families being evicted from their homes and one family being made subject of a 3 year postponed possession order with conditions not to enter an exclusion zone which included the victims shop and home

### **Environmental Action and Youth Engagement**

As well as enforcement action the following environmental actions were actioned via The Sunderland North Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Partnership:

- The demolition of disused football changing rooms at Marley Pots field adjacent to Witherwack which was a focal point for ASB, alcohol misuse and drug taking
- A commitment from Sunderland Council to improve street lighting on the estate
- The use of Community Payback to carry out estate clean ups as an area behind Willowfields Primary School , Witherwack is a repeat location for fly-tipping and secondary ASB fires
- The deployment of a 4G camera to the street outside the row of shops where they Sikh family lived and worked. This visible support for the family captured a number of offences committed against them
- Allocation of resources by Sunderland Council to restrict access to the fields adjacent to the estate which are subject to motorcycle ASB. Much of the motorcycle ASB was carried out by the same group who were committing hate crime.



## **Downhill:**

The ASB problems in Downhill centred on two particular locations Keighley Avenue and Baxter Avenue. Both locations involved many of the same individuals involved in crime and ASB in Witherwack. Keighley Avenue contains a row of shops which include a late night take away premises owned by an Asian family. Baxter Avenue contained a problematic address where many of those involved in crime and ASB migrated to. A problem solving plan in conjunction with the plan at Witherwack was prepared and the following was achieved:

### Victim

The victim of repeated racial crime was the owner of a local takeaway called Pizza Hot located on Keighley Avenue, Downhill.

- He was allocated a point of contact within the neighbourhood team,
- All crimes relating to the store were allocated to the point of contact to investigate
- The officer made regularly made contact with the victim and ensured he visited his shop throughout his tours of duty.
- Sunderland Council fitted overt CCTV to the area to demonstrate police and council support. Once again this camera was key in capturing evidence of offending

### Arrests and Enforcement

- Five arrests were made for racially aggravated offences. One of the males was sentenced to six months custody and made subject of a 3 year Criminal Behaviour Order banning him from Downhill, Redhouse, Town End Farm, Hylton Castle and Castletown . This male was a key ringleader in events at Downhill.
- Two youths were placed in secure youth care for a period of six months by Children Together Sunderland at the request of Inspector Wade and members of the Neighbourhood Team
- Targeted use of housing and ASB legislation against 11 identified persistent youth ASB offenders and their families, led to the signing of Acceptable Behaviour Agreements and warnings to parents with regards to their tenancy
- An address in Baxter Road, Town End Farm was identified as a problem address. A number of individuals were arrested from this location for a variety offences including aggravated burglary. The neighbourhood team successfully applied for a

closure order on the address. This led to the eviction of the occupant and the address closed down for 3 months.

- The main perpetrators for racial crime were also identified as committing burglaries throughout the sector. This led to their arrest and conviction for burglary offences.

#### Location:

- Keighley Avenue became an Op Secure location and was subject of regular patrols by both 24/7 and neighbourhood staff .
- Dispersal Notices were authorised for both Witherwack and Downhill for each weekend throughout summer 2017 and continued throughout summer 2018, providing staff with additional powers to remove disorderly individuals from the area
- Additional CCTV was deployed in the area through LMAPS funding. £ 30,000 was secured leading to the purchase of 4, 4G cameras
- The Redhill ward youth project was set up aimed at diverting youths on the fringes of ASB away from this type of behaviour

#### Organised Criminality

Particular effort was taken to tackle those individuals associated with organised crime and their involvement in violence and intimidation. Ongoing police and partner activity identified the presence of illegal money lending in the area with as many as 85 vulnerable victims living on the ward. A joint operation between Police and the National Illegal Money Lending Team, Operation Abbotsley, led to the arrest of two individuals for money lending and the recovery of significant sums of money and evidence pointing to money lending. We have lifted those 85 vulnerable people out of the trap of money lenders and we are conducting further enquiries, but given clear evidence that we will not accept the cancer of criminal money lending in our communities.

#### Safer Estates

Sunderland North Safer Estates is a monthly meet chaired by the Neighbourhood Inspector and also includes representatives from Gentoo and Sunderland Council ASB team. The meeting has been running for two years. The meet identifies repeat offenders and families engaged in crime and ASB and supports repeat victims. The meeting draws upon the

operational experience of those present to problem solve issues around offenders and victims.

Offenders are always offered help to address their issues. Substance abuse, lack of parenting skills and mental health to name but a few of the identified underlying issues. But if the offer of help is refused, then enforcement action is taken via crime, ASB and housing legislation.

The enforcement action taken in Redhill over a two year period is as follows:

1 x Criminal Behaviour Orders

2 x Civil Injunctions

2 x Closure Orders

15 x Community Protection Notices

37 x Acceptable Behaviour Agreements

2 x Postponed Possession Orders

6 x Evictions

35 X Homes on Redhill ward were subject of Safer Estates action over 2 years.

#### Sunderland North Safer Schools Partnership

Sunderland North Neighbourhood team have worked alongside Early Help, Children Together, Sunderland Council, and local schools to push forward the Early Help Scheme in Sunderland North. Early Help is aimed at diverting young people and their families away from crime and ASB.

Safer Estates was designed to tackle the most problematic addresses and individuals, but it was identified that more needed to be done to prevent future persistent cases developing .This work has included working with schools and Early Help to identify youths and families suitable for the scheme, and encouraging families resistant to the scheme to see the long term benefits and become involved. Currently there are approximately 108 families on Early Help in Sunderland North, many of them from Redhill ward

## Sunderland North Multi- Agency Locality Problem Solving

This meeting is attended by Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire Brigade, a Sunderland North Councilor's representative, Gentoo management, Sunderland Council's ASB Team, Community Safety team, Environmental Health, Volunteer coordinator , and Trading Standards.

- LMAPS aims to tackle environmental crime and ASB through use of allocated funds. It has allocated resources to carry out the following in support of the Redhill project:
- Increased CCTV capacity through purchasing cameras and having CCTV columns fitted in areas to allow for easy deployment
- Funded area clean ups, to remove fly tipping material, thereby stopping secondary ASB fires
- Allocation of resources by Sunderland Council to restrict access to the Fulwell Quarry, a site of Special Scientific Interest adjacent to Witherwack which is subject to motorcycle ASB

## **Raising Aspirations**

Raising Aspirations Projects are ward based projects In Sunderland North aimed at engaging local communities. Each ward was given £50,000. The 5 wards in the area have used the money to engage in a variety of projects to support communities. Redhill used the money to engage in youth diversion projects. Redhill Raising Aspirations has a board to help coordinate activity and the Neighbourhood officers for the ward, sit on the board. This allows local officers to help direct activity and outreach work suffering most from ASB.

The rationale for our focus on youth diversion was informed by what we learnt about that offending cohort during the response stage. The core group involved in the crime and disorder at both sites were the same group and they all had common themes of being from very troubled dysfunctional families who held very racist and homophobic views.

## **Assessment:**

### **Results**

The results from the Redhill Project , comparing summer 2017 to summer 2018 are as follows:

#### **Current Crime**

April - September 2017 : 781 crimes

April- September 2018 : 717 crimes

**reduction 8%**

#### **Hate crime**

2017- 20 crimes

2018- 7 crimes

**reduction 65%**

#### **Burglary Dwelling**

2017- 50 crimes

2018- 26 crimes

**reduction 48%**

The reductions in ASB in Redhill Ward are as follows:

<b>Youth ASB</b>	<b>1 Apr – 1 Sept 2018</b>	<b>1 Apr – 1 Sept 2017</b>	<b>Vol. change</b>	<b>% change</b>
A5P4 Redhouse	2	5	-3	-60%
A5P5 Redhouse	2	7	-5	-71%
A5P6 Witherwack	5	12	-7	-58%
A5Q7 Downhill	12	80	-68	-85%
A5Q8 Downhill	5	10	-5	-50%

<b>All ASB</b>	<b>1 Apr – 1 Sept 2018</b>	<b>1 Apr – 1 Sept 2017</b>	<b>Vol. change</b>	<b>% change</b>
A5P4 Redhouse	7	17	-10	-59%
A5P5 Redhouse	12	25	-13	-52%
A5P6 Witherwack	13	33	-20	-61%
A5Q7 Downhill	36	162	-126	-78%
A5Q8 Downhill	28	46	-18	-39%

## Conclusion

Redhill ward has witnessed significant reductions in ASB, hate crime and burglary offences through focussed problem solving. The involvement of organised criminality added further layers of complexity to what was already a complex set of problems, by breaking the problem down and taking a methodical approach we were able to tackle this effectively. The above results were only achieved due to a focussed problem solving approach and the commitment and support of partners.

The US Democrat Carrie.P.Meek once said "If we were really tough on crime, we'd try to save our children from the desperation and deprivation that leave them primed for a life of crime."

What successes we have had in Redhill have been hard won and we have made an ongoing commitment not to give ground, to lift the yoke of desperation through strong engagement and support, and meet the challenges of deprivation head on. The Redhill Project continues to tackle crime and ASB, support vulnerable victims and make Redhill a better place in which to live and leaves none of our young people primed for crime.

Number of words: 2793