

# Herman Goldstein Award Submission 2019

## Cultivating Change

### 1. Summary of application

Peterlee has long suffered problems with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). Scanning of Police and Council systems gave some concern but community tension was more worrying. Recorded incidents from Police databases showed the problems involved youths congregating in large groups, causing annoyance around businesses, riding bicycles through the shopping precinct and throwing objects at passing cars. On Thursday and Friday evenings the Town Centre was a “no go” zone. Previous projects had not created a sustainable solution, how could we bring about this change through creative community projects?

On the face of it the problem is simplistic. We knew who the offenders were, we knew the victims ranged from businesses, shoppers and residents. The key to the analysis was understanding what had been done previously. This wasn't a new problem, it had persisted for many years. We discovered past plans were good but never sustained. When agencies turned their backs the problems resurfaced. Our hypothesis were drawn from the review of historic efforts to solve the issue. Was it poor engagement, culture or was it lack of diversion? What had worked? Why had those solutions not been sustainable?

Collating the scanning, analysis and hypothesis our response was *E...asy*. In partnership we were good at **E**nforcement but this was not a sustainable solution. '*Communities may be far more effective than legal authorities in deterring crime*' (David M. Kennedy, 2009). We focused upon **E**ducation and **E**ngagement, through securing funding for youth provision. We delivered what the children wanted, where they wanted it and they were educated through diversion. We created a community garden for the children to learn, grow and give produce back to the community. We gave ring leaders opportunities for trade apprenticeships with the “Sliding Doors” project. To consolidate this we created a “Young Hero” award which rewarded young people with recognition of their positive achievements. These awards didn't just identify young people who had improved their behaviour but allowed inspirational individuals to be recognised who had previously been overshadowed by negative youth related perceptions entrenched in local communities.

A holistic assessment was used. There was a 23% reduction in ASB during the 6 months after the initiative was implemented. Community consultation resulted in extremely positive feedback about reductions in ASB. One particular success was the appointment of one of the young people as an ambassador for the project and the transformation in her behaviour, which exemplified the benefits of the initiative.

## **2. Scanning:**

The problem this project aimed to tackle was youth-related ASB and negative perceptions of young people. The objective was to achieve sustainable long term reductions in ASB, acknowledging that it was not realistic to eradicate ASB entirely. It also aimed to improve perceptions of young people in the community.

Two elements of scanning were used.

Firstly did we have a problem with ASB? Statistical scanning was used to identify annual ASB patterns.

*Please refer to appendix 1.*

The graph above shows the number of ASB incidents recorded by the police mapped over only a 2 year period. During this period, there had been several interventions and multi-agency plans implemented to reduce the levels of ASB. For example “Street safe” operations which were essentially flooding an area with resources and seizing alcohol from young people. These were our “usual” tactics and were not a sustainable solution.

The below graph demonstrates seasonal trends over a 3 year period indicating how recorded ASB incidents increased during the winter months.

*Please refer to appendix 2.*

This chart below shows a time weighted analysis indicating most incidents occurred on Fridays followed by Saturdays.

*Please refer appendix 3.*

Locations from which ASB was reported were rank ordered as per the below table:

*Please refer to appendix 4.*

The second data source was community based scanning. Community members' views and their perceptions of the ASB were captured. Views were obtained through a series of video recorded interviews from a number of local stakeholders including business owners and Councillors. Those interviewed were asked to explain their concerns about ASB in the town.

Scanning also included holding a series of Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings. One particular PACT meeting typified concerns as residents perceived, which was that the town centre was lawless. This followed a rampage of youths who had thrown objects at moving traffic, created havoc in ASDA and McDonald's before damaging several taxi's. Accounts were received of youths exposing themselves to shoppers and throwing snowballs into shops.

This PACT meeting highlighted that ASB was under-reported. This was particularly concerning as it suggested that members of the community were not reporting serious incidents to the police.

Peterlee is a town which has suffered from some of the highest deprivation levels in the UK including high levels of unemployment following a decline in heavy industry over the past three decades. This has exacerbated trust and confidence in the authorities. Scanning of local social media indicated negative attitudes towards recent investments into the town centre and towards young people as well as a significant fear of crime.

There was a tsunami of negative feeling towards Police activity to tackle ASB problems. For example, traditional methods of tackling youth related ASB would involve chasing young people around the town centre and taking alcohol from them. We would all high five each other and post on Facebook (other social media sites are available) pictures of 'loot' only to find more negative responses than positive ones. But those responses told us a story. While

some people blamed parents for their childrens' behaviour a far greater number of responses indicated we were "The Fun Police" and "leave kids alone because we all did the same as kids" and "kids have nothing else to do in this town."

Whenever crime and disorder often went unreported and there was a clear reluctance to provide statements or even reveal the identity of the perpetrators to enable the Police to take action. This information evidenced the statistical scanning.

By attending community meetings and speaking with councillors, residents and business owners, we established the problem was greater than the statistics demonstrated. At the centre of Durham Constabulary's vision is inspiring confidence amongst our communities and victims. Effectively responding to this issue of under reported ASB was essential to improving local levels of satisfaction and confidence.

Groups of young people who enjoyed causing trouble were identified. No matter what projects or activities were put in place there appeared to be a core group of young people who caused ASB in prowess such as Asda or McDonalds. This was the same cohort of young people who were regularly caught drinking alcohol at weekends.

### **3. Analysis:**

It was important to acknowledge what had worked well historically, what we were good at (and needed to maintain) as well as what we needed to improve upon. The 3 E's of Educate, Enforce and Engage were used as a 'basis of analysis'.

The Enforcement was arguably what the Police were good at. We ran "Stay Safe" operations focusing upon underage drinking. We caught children, seized their alcohol, took them to a place of safety and called their parents to collect them. In partnership with the County Council we would drill into the issues of each child in order to prevent them "reoffending". We did our usual activities aimed at identifying those who had committed acts of ASB through either obtaining statements or reviewing CCTV.

However, these activities were resource intensive and reactive. These traditional methods were not providing a sustainable solution. The project needed more than this, it needed to be proactive and preventative.

We analysed what work had been done historically. We needed to understand what had not worked and what had worked. Of course we were successful at achieving reductions. This is the very reason those projects were closed. For example, McDonalds would have issues with youths congregating. Every McDonalds in the Country I would suggest has experienced this issue. In Peterlee, however, regular violence resulted in security guards being deployed with body cameras on (supplied by Police) to keep order. Security guards in McDonalds!!!!!! We found that the guards were part of the problem. Not the actual post but the person in it. They were antagonistic to the youths which created problems. On the reverse we had guards who didn't challenge the 12 youths sitting around 1 table sharing 1 coke between them. McDonalds had free Wi-Fi and iPads that attracted the youths. Outside they had large overgrown bushes that youths congregated within and out of sight. All of these issues we

asked McDonalds to address and they did. However, reductions in ASB were short lived and proved not to be sustained.

In a bid to understand our problem 3 hypothesis were considered:

- 1) Lack of youth provision significantly contributes to ASB.
- 2) Poor engagement with young people contributes to ASB.
- 3) ASB has become a natural pathway for young people to follow in Peterlee.

By analysing previous plans we could see reductions in ASB centred on Youth Provision. We had previously managed to secure sporadic provision through various funding streams which had reduced the problem. However it created another problem in that we couldn't sustain the funding. Furthermore, it seemed only the Police were pushing for this provision. We had a basis for our business case, we just needed to find a source for funding. This formed a major part of our Response through the first hypothesis.

It is necessary to assess the validity of the data we produced during the Scanning. We did just that by looking at both aspects of the scanning, our statistics did not marry up with the feeling captured in the many formats of consultation with the public.

What was important to the project was the sustained reduction aspect of the objective. This is where we really started to analyse public behaviour and where the significance of the hypothesis.

*Please refer to appendix 5.*

Victim – These were members of public using the town centre to shop. Businesses who were experiencing the problems around their premises, Residents in streets surrounding the town centre and the community as a whole.

Offender - How many of these youths have been identified? Of the remaining 341 incidents, how many have we attributed to a known offender? NEED TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTION

Location – The town centre and particularly the businesses identified as McDonalds, ASDA and Castledene shopping Centre

There was a realisation that when we had the ASB at a low rate we turned our backs and expected it to stay low. This allowed for the problem to resurface. We recognised that we needed to address real cultural issues to achieve the objective.

#### **4. Response:**

We based our response on early intervention. Academic research has shown the positive effects of taking to the streets and engaging with people on their ground. Speaking to them and understanding their perspective was vital.

In David M. Kennedy's book *Deterrence and Crime Prevention (2009)* he challenges the traditionally punitive measures that law enforcement agencies use as a crime prevention tool. He makes us rethink our approach and suggests ways to focus upon partnerships with communities and other agencies to reduce crime.

Our response was based upon this guidance, not to focus on enforcement but to focus upon engagement and education with the community.

Youth provision was identified as a priority in implementing a sustainable solution. This is what we knew worked in the short term. The team prepared a case to put before Peterlee Town Council in an effort to secure funding for youth provision. Within the business case we stressed the importance youth provision had upon the reduction in ASB.

With some very willing and committed councillors we secured funding for youth provision in Peterlee Town Centre for 3 years which was £70,000 in real terms. We didn't just provide the youth club, we completed outreach with the children to find out what activities they wanted and also when they wanted it.

This outreach, combined with the scanning, told us the provision needed to be on a Thursday and Friday evening. These were the times ASB in particular was causing a problem. We monitored the attendance list (sign in sheets) which told us some of the target individuals were using the provision. Just as importantly, it told us who wasn't using the



provision which gave us the suspects for ASB in the Town Centre. Once we had a captivated audience within the youth provision it established who wanted to engage with us. It exposed the few individuals who wouldn't engage.

As the youth provision was being established we set about 3 further controversial projects based around the remaining Hypotheses.

Our first project was to look at the community perceptions of young people/ It came at a time of conversation with a young person, during which it was disclosed that there was a feeling of intolerance from adults. They felt stereotyped as being trouble makers. Whenever they were in shops they would be watched because the automatic reaction of staff was they would be 'up to no good' or 'shoplifting'. This was key. Not all young people were out to cause trouble. We also knew from the scanning the views on social media that young people were viewed as trouble makers.

We created the 'Young Heroes' award which set to reward, on a monthly basis, a young person aged 18 or under who has been nominated for an act of kindness or bravery. As partners, we all knew these positive stories were out there. We knew there we young people doing some incredible things, but their stories were not surfacing because of negativity and stereotypes. We never read on social media positive stories. We feel in life in general bad news always travels faster than good. This would change.

We set about running the award which produced nominations direct to the police Facebook page. We rewarded young people for some magnificent things. From young carers to young fundraisers. From children helping out at a road traffic collision to young people who helped and injured elderly woman who had fallen in the town centre.

The winners would be invited to the Police station and awarded by the Neighbourhood Inspector and a local Councillor (stakeholder), with a medal, certificate and a tour of the station. The local ASDA store (stakeholder), supplied vouchers too. They attended with their parents and we took every opportunity to promote this in the local media. The comments and good feeling in the community from this work was tangible.

With the reward, we also had nominations from young people who had perhaps fallen off the rails and had come back onto them. They were also the focus of our awards. Nominations came in from schools, police, staff, parents and GP's.

The key to the entire project was the buy in from the Town Council and Mayor of Peterlee, who was the chair of the Council. The launch of Young Heroes was an intensive process and was very much a similar format to the Pride of Britain awards. One single PCSO took the lead on this along with Peterlee Town Council who agreed to let us have full use of their conferencing suite at their Headquarters for the launch and they also agreed to provide food on the evening in the form of a small buffet and a bar, catering for up to 250 people.

Local businesses supplied table settings with a florist supplying flower arrangements and a local party shop supplying balloon arrangements in the colours of the Young Hero logo.

These were auctioned during the evening and raised £347 for the Bradley Lowery Foundation, a local child-cancer charity.

*Please refer to appendix 6.*

A great amount of thought went into the attendees for the evening. Local MP's, local County Councillors and Town Councillors were all invited. Our Deputy Chief Constable was invited to open the event along with our Police and Victims Crime Commissioner to close.

It was important to have our victims, such as local businesses, in attendance so they were aware of the achievements made. It was also key, politically, to have MP's involved in giving out awards. They were the ones who received complaints from constituents and could be the voice of reason to promote the positives back. By bringing these people together it conveyed how the police were working hard to break down barriers and engage with young people.

The success of the Young Heroes is captured in the assessment section.

The second project was laughed down by the community when it was suggested. A community garden would be the answer to reducing ASB. We were told a community garden will never work. We were asked exactly how a garden would help prevent kids causing havoc in a town centre. Well we showed them how.

The objective of the garden was for young people to build it, grow it, harvest the produce and give it back to the local community. This full circle would mean they were engaged and educated but also giving back to the vulnerable members of community e.g. foodbanks, care homes and schools. This was to bridge the gap and again display not all young people are bad.

The land was identified as waste land at the top of a public park. Youths had set fire to a porta-cabin some months earlier and it was an eye-sore. This secured our site.

*Please refer to appendix 7.*

Working with partners, we secured materials to build 7 raised beds and had local primary school children help to plant it out. Again, we involved the old and young. We had local young people engaged in youth provision come to the garden and take ownership of beds.

*Please refer to appendix 8.*

The response to the garden was overwhelmingly positive. Again, we used a launch event to open the garden and were very pleased with the attendance from both partners and the public. The garden really has brought the community together.

The final project is called 'Sliding Doors'.

After showing the creativity and success that can be achieved through the previous two projects, we wanted to give opportunity, or as we would call it in police terms 'diversion'. It offers the young people opportunity to take a different path in life. It is designed to offer them a chance when perhaps they have not been afforded that previously. The initial pilot was around 2 individuals whom we knew were involved in ASB and low level criminality. Through the County Council we secured trials for them with the estates department for apprenticeships. We trailed them both, one in joinery, and one in plumbing. The aim was for them to gain employment and security. A path to follow that would lead them away from ASB and crime.

This plan is a long term plan. It's objective cannot be achieved if a short term perception is taken.

## 5. Assessment

As with the scanning, there were two clear elements to the assessment, firstly the statistics:

*Please refer to appendix 9.*

The red line shows a projected reduction in ASB. ASB rates are sticking quite closely to the forecasted profile. We have seen seasonal increases in line with previous years but overall recorded incident levels are lower.

At the point of submitting this application we are recording 15% fewer incidents year to date.

The second aspect was the community feeling. We interviewed the same people post intervention to seek their views and this is where the real gains can be evidenced. It was unanimous that the feel of Peterlee town centre is different. People are no longer frightened to take their children to McDonalds on a Friday evening. The local businesses say there is a different feel and children are more respectful. There has been a reduction in the levels of negativity on social media posts.

Of the 2 young people who were given trials with Durham County Council, they both failed to secure posts through not obtaining sufficient grades in their GCSE's. For one of them this wasn't the only issue. They never applied themselves to the role and became disinterested in the opportunity. But despite disengaging completely from our project, he now works for his father who has a plumbing business. He has not resorted to ASB or crime.

The second candidate's story unravels as follows. This female was 16 years of age and finished her education in alternative provision after violent outbursts saw her excluded from mainstream education. This girl was a ringleader, she was always there when trouble was being caused. When windows were being smashed and when young people were

misbehaving she was there. This girl has a skill for joinery. She would often show the local PCSO what she had been making from scrap materials and the results were really quite impressive. Although she never really engaged in education she loved joinery. Unfortunately she didn't achieve her 4 standard grade GCSE's necessary to secure an apprenticeship. Given our close working relationship with the town council, the town mayor was opening a new show home in the area and spoke with the foreman about this young girl. She was offered a chance by way of interview and she is currently 3 months into her 3 year apprenticeship with Gleeson Homes.

We have commenced a similar project with the County Council who currently have 5 further young people working on a construction project which is refurbishing the local leisure centre and library. In conjunction with the college we will award (if successful) the candidates with a level 2 NVQ in construction.

As we submit this application, one further girl has not attended the refurbishment project operated by Durham County Council. She has failed to attend twice. Realistically, this is to be expected with such an ambitious project and we will try to re-engage with the individual.

This is an opportunity to re-assess and consider alternative responses. If people don't succeed we are not casting them aside. We will continue to look at different ways of solving problems.

Not only is there a sustained 23% reduction in ASB levels, but we are tackling the impact of the initiative on individual offenders. The children who were regularly engaged in ASB prior to the project are now not. We know this because they are engaged in activities with us. We know this because there are no reported incidents with their names on. They are not being identified through investigation and finally, they are the ones giving the police names of

those that are responsible. For a community so mistrusting of the police, this should be viewed as a significant success.

The challenge will come again to work with the next generation/cohort of potential offenders coming through. As experienced in criminality, if we arrest a drug dealer there is a tendency for two more to pop up. This is really where our next challenge lies, which demonstrates we are already scanning to go back to the start of the OSARA process again.

Temporary Chief Inspector 1831 Lee Blakelock,

Durham Police Headquarters,

Aykley Heads,

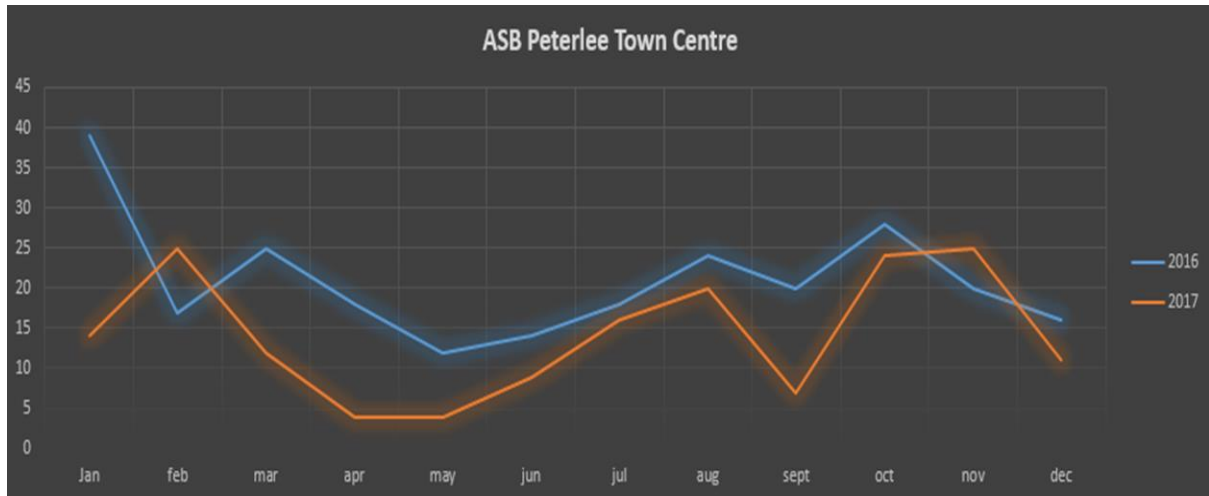
Durham,

DH1 5TT

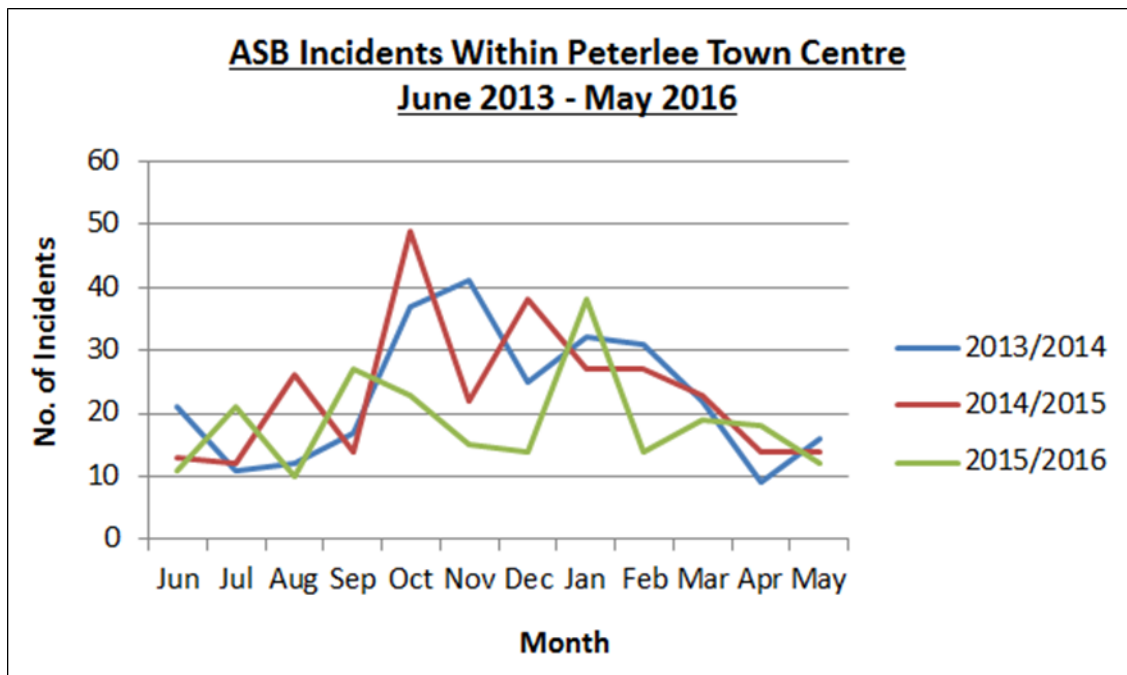
[lee.blakelock@durham.pnn.police.uk](mailto:lee.blakelock@durham.pnn.police.uk)

## 6. Appendices

### Appendix 1

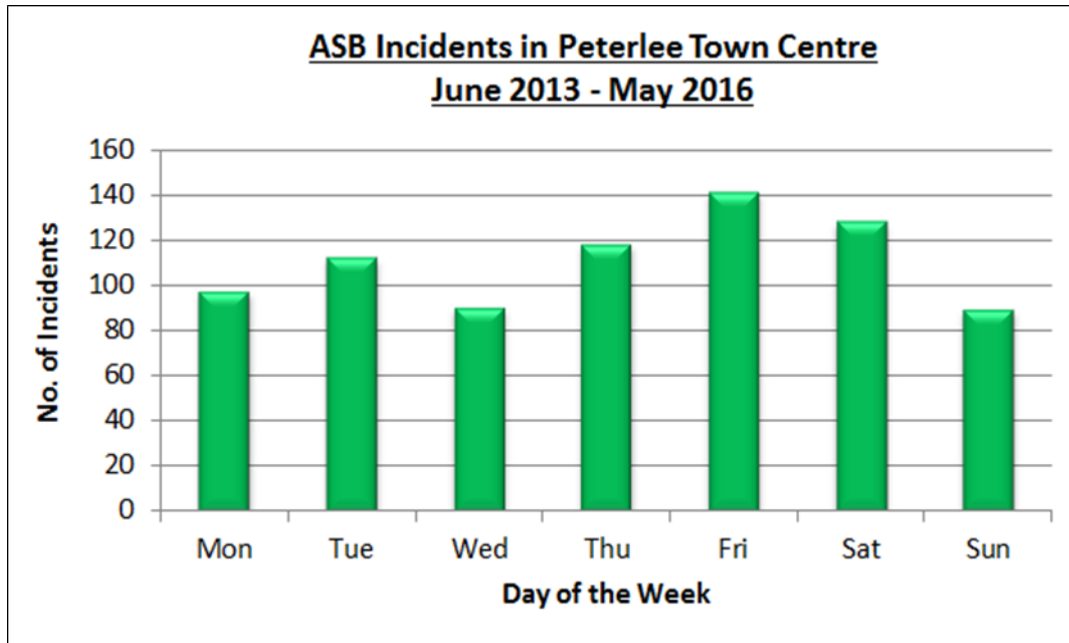


### Appendix 2





Appendix 3



Appendix 4

Incident Address	No. of ASB Incidents in E1G June 2013 - May 2016
MCDONALDS RESTAURANTS LTD, SURTEES RD	205
ASDA STORES LTD, SURTEES RD	197
CASTLE DENE SHOPPING CENTRE, 30 YODEN WAY	56
PETERLEE LODGE HOTEL, BEDE WAY	29
WETHERSPOONS, HAILSHAM PL	13

Appendix 5



## Appendix 6



## Appendix 7



## Appendix 8

