



**Title: Making Barrow a Graffiti Free Zone**

**Category: Crime Reduction**

**Force: Cumbria Constabulary**

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## History

Historically, graffiti and vandalism has been a problem in various communities throughout the Borough.

There are various reasons why graffiti appears, boredom, maliciousness, anger, revenge and leaving trademarks.

What can be said about graffiti and vandalism is that it distracts from the aesthetics of a community. Ownership of the community is reduced and it can be seen as the start of community degeneration. Statistics show that areas of high graffiti are "hot spot" areas for other offences such as anti-social behaviour, vehicle crime and burglary.

*Graffiti is very rarely reported to the Police as a crime. It is seen as a minor crime or acceptable by society. I believe graffiti should be seen as an indicator for further problems and should be tackled promptly by all agencies.*

The cost to agencies in clearing graffiti and repairing vandalism is shown in the table over. Graffiti is not removed in various parts of the borough. The occupants, because of pride in appearance, normally remove graffiti from privately owned property. Graffiti takes many forms, from drawings, signatures to pictures. Some is of an offensive nature including images of a racist or sexual format. All members of the community, including young children and elderly people, can see this clearly displayed. The victims feel angry, sad and frightened that their property has been damaged.

**Do we really want this to continue?**

## Aims

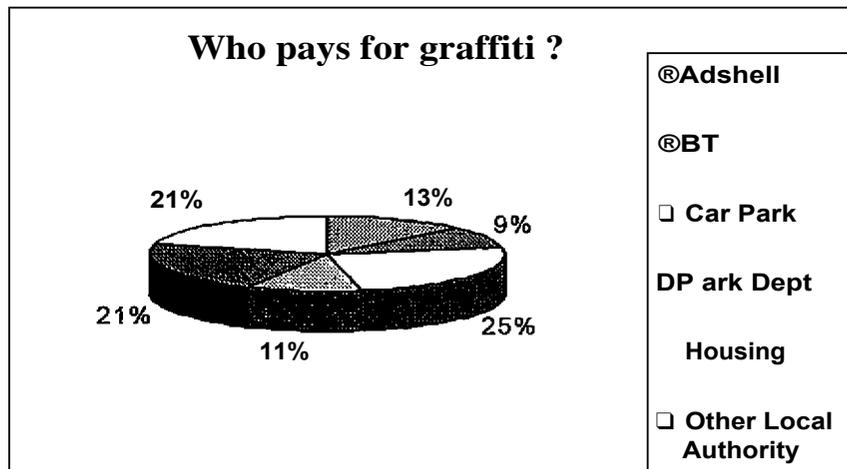
The aim of this project is to develop a long-term multi-agency initiative to reduce graffiti within Barrow Borough. The initiative will tackle the problem by removal, enforcement, education and promotion.

## Objectives

In a twelve-month initial pilot, reduce the cost of graffiti and vandalism by 50% for the Borough area. On achieving this, improving the aesthetics of communities throughout the Borough. It will also alter people's perceptions of graffiti and make it an unacceptable crime.

## Statistics

During the previous twelve months, the Police in Barrow have had 23 crimes of graffiti reported. The majority of these have been from commercial premises that have had to pay monies to have the graffiti removed. As you walk around any community you will see graffiti, the vast majority of which is unreported to the Police. Various agencies / companies have been contacted in relation to the cost of graffiti to their business / departments. It is estimated the overall cost in Barrow for graffiti during the past twelve month is **£21,100**. The chart below shows who does share the cost of graffiti.



Adshell state they have made 126 visits to the Barrow area to remove graffiti / fly posters from bus shelters. BT could only estimate the cost of removing graffiti as they sub contract the maintenance of telephone kiosks. The car parks in Barrow are currently suffering a huge amount of graffiti, which they are looking to remove. These figures do not take into account the cost of graffiti removal to commercial properties and private dwellings.

# Tackling the problem

The project is a multi-agency approach to tackling the anti-social crime of graffiti. Every agency involved will play an important role. The project is divided up into four categories, which are

## **Referral**

## **Removal**

## **Action**

## **Education**

### Referral and removal

This is the main thrust of the project. Growing Concerns, a Community Action Furness Project, will take all referrals and remove the graffiti. Any organisation and members of the public can make the referrals. A telephone number will be made available though personal contact and by a media strategy. Once removed, positive and swift action *must* be taken to remove any new graffiti that appears.

### Action

The Youth Offending Team (YOT) works with, and assists the courts about young offenders (under 18). If a young offender is found guilty of, or admits an offence of graffiti, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour they will be considered for the project.

Court imposed orders such as Action Plan, or Reparation Order, could include the offender working with Growing Concerns. They will be supervised, and will remove graffiti from around the Borough.

If found guilty of an offence at court, it is envisaged the young offender will still have to pay compensation for their crime (if applicable) but can be ordered to work with the project as part of their punishment.

The Police may also refer young offenders directly to Growing Concerns, avoiding the court process, if they feel it is appropriate. This will be on a voluntary basis and common sense will be applied.

### Education

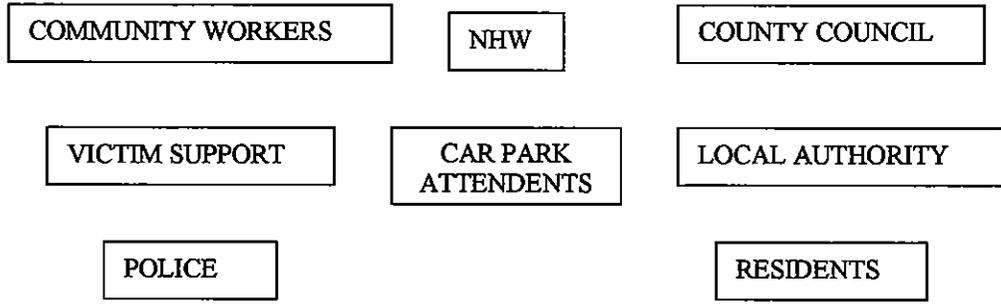
Various agencies will work together to educate young people in relation to the affects graffiti can cause on a community.

It is realised that the young people may state they have little to do throughout evening times etc and this will be tackled by agencies in a long-term plan. A recent success of this is the Youth Club, which will be opening soon at the George Public House on Walney.

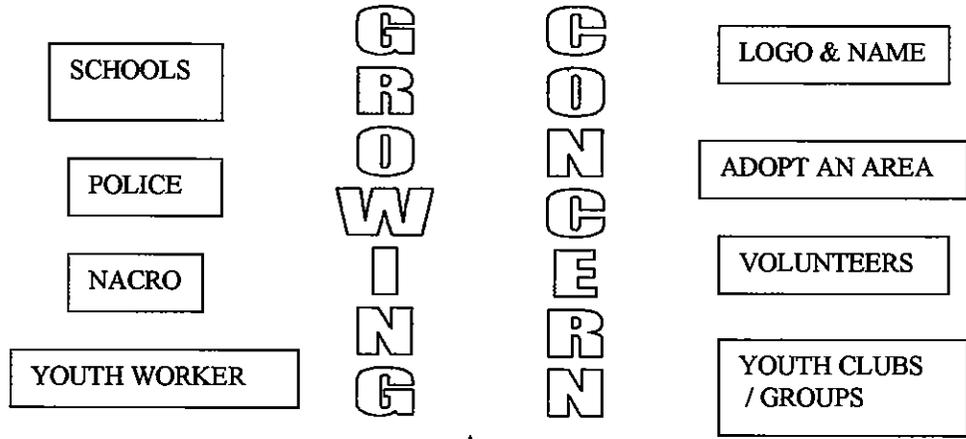
The scheme will be asking for schools to name the project and to give it a logo. This will be run in conjunction with the schools program ran by the Police. Schools and Youth Groups will be asked to adopt an area, making it a graffiti free zone. It is an option to consider giving some kind of reward to the school / group that keeps the cleanest area. In conjunction with this, this scheme will consider developing an area wall that can be used for **STREET ART**. This will be a fully supervised session.

# The MECHANISM

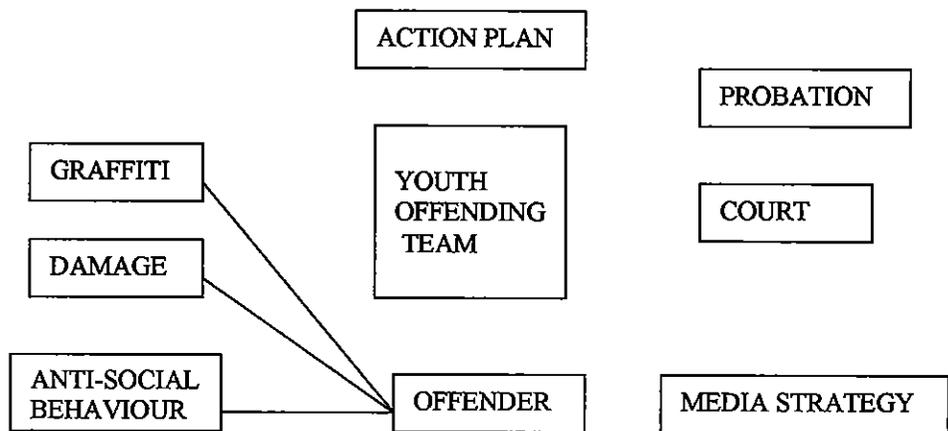
PLANNING



COORDINATION



ACTION



## **Proposed partnership and their roles**

### **Community Action Furness — Growing Concerns**

#### *Be the work force for the program.*

Provide staff to supervise offenders  
Provide staff to carry out the graffiti removal  
Provide safety equipment to carry out the tasks.  
Develop an audit trail with the nominated fund holders.  
Provide hot line referral telephone number  
In conjunction with YOT, provide insurance cover for the scheme  
Provide Health and Safety assessment for the project  
Provide photographic evidence of graffiti (before removal) for Police intelligence purposes

### **Community Regeneration Company**

Community workers to identify areas of graffiti within their specific areas.  
Gain permission from owners in relation removing graffiti (appendix 1)  
Be a contact point for the community to pass information freely to other agencies.

### **Local Authority**

Provide a nominated person to assist in the communication process  
Rewards for areas with most cost-incident reduction  
Lighting surveys for hot spot areas  
Utilise Town centre Parking wardens to identify areas of graffiti

### **County Council**

Provide additional funding and support for the program

### **Cumbria Police**

To provide data for analysis  
Develop the communication structure of the initiative  
Provide a central point of contact for the program.  
Encourage the flow of information in relation to graffiti and offenders.  
Develop processes within the organisation for offenders to be identified, processed and referred to the scheme.  
Encourage Neighbourhood Watch schemes to report incidents of graffiti promptly  
With other key partners, develop a media strategy for the scheme  
Schools – education program  
Pump prime the initiative with funding and resources

## **Youth Offending Team**

Processing of young offenders  
Divise Action Plans to incorporate the project  
Accredit Supervisor at Growing Concerns.  
Pass freely information on Young offenders

## **CPS**

Be aware of the scheme, and when offenders are processed at court, make recommendations that the offender is included in the scheme as part of their punishment.

## **Magistrates**

At the present time, when sentencing youths, the Magistrates refer to Action Plans or recommendations made by the YOT. This programme will not alter this.

## **Youth Service**

Outreach worker to work to hot spot areas  
Education  
Diversionary tactics

## **Schools**

Support educational process  
*Tackle in house graffiti*  
Be involved with the adoption of local communities.  
Support any in house youth projects to tackle the problem

## **Nacro**

Work with young offenders  
Assist in the education process

## **Evening Mail**

Publicity / assist with media strategy

## **The Communities**

Provide information on graffiti and offenders

## **Will it work?**

The initiative was first developed as part of the Central Ward project. Arthur Street and the surrounding area were riddled with graffiti. The project raised £2,000 and the graffiti was removed. The aesthetics of the area were immediately improved and the community commented this on. As a knock on effect, residents then took more pride in their own properties as did Housing Associations who also improved the appearance of their properties.

The Police also processed three young offenders for historical graffiti in the area. As part of their punishment, each of these youths worked with Growing Concerns, removing the graffiti. This was not publicised, but again the local community, who fully supported the programme, noted it.

The graffiti was fully removed and only a small fraction re-appeared. This was again removed, and to date no or very little graffiti appears in Arthur Street. Out of the £2,000 funding the project received, there is still £1,100 remaining.

This was seen as a very successful project by the Central Ward Committee and does indicate that a larger, more formal programme will work.

## **Auditing**

The process of invoices, payment and work approval should be arranged between the Local Authority and Growing Concerns.

## **Exit Strategy**

The Graffiti programme is a pilot scheme that will run for one year. It will then be fully evaluated by the COPS. The programme, if successful, will be expanded to include the Probation Service scheme (adults). Avenues for future funding will be explored.

## **Monitoring**

It is very hard to monitor the levels of graffiti when the only figures we have are the cost of funding and crime figures the Police have. As we have stated previously, there is a lack of response in reporting this crime. The Community Workers and resident groups can monitor the levels of graffiti within communities. The referrals in place will be altered if any problems do occur.

## Costing

The average cost for Graffiti removal by Growing Concern is £10 per meter. For the scheme to run efficiently for the first year, the group is applying for **£6,500**. This will cover the cost of the graffiti removal in the five priority wards. The equipment used to remove the graffiti is already in place, but obviously there will be ongoing costs for the purchase of chemicals, photographic equipment etc.

### Costs

Removal of Graffiti, average cost of £10 per metre	<b>£5,500</b>
Purchase of chemicals, safety equipment etc	<b>£1,000</b>

The Police will fund the purchase of photographic equipment, films and film development. **£1,000**

The scheme will be matched funded by the following agencies; the costs shown are the annual match funds.

### Matched Funding

#### Community Action Furness –

Managing and administration for the scheme. This will include CAF Senior Management and secretarial support. **£2,500**

#### Police —

School talks, preventative measures and COPS involvement based on 3hrs per week, and COPS Team 2hrs per week on the project **£17,500**  
Purchase of photographic equipment, films and film development **£1,000**

YOT -Devising Youth Action Plans and working with other agencies **£6,000**

#### Education Authority –

Tackle in house graffiti and education, 1hr per week for each school **£15,000**

CRC - Working with Communities to identify areas / offenders **£1,000**

Youth Service – assist with outreach worker, diversionary tactics **£2,000**

**Total Match Funding **£44,000****

The cost of removing any graffiti will be funded out of the budget. However, any applicants who pay business rate on any property / land that requires the removal of graffiti, will be charged at the standard rate that Growing Concerns would levee.

## **Evaluation**

To this date, over 9,000 square meters of graffiti have been removed from throughout the Borough. 6,500 square meters of this graffiti was located within the five main priority wards. These areas are seen as the most deprived areas within the Borough.

The Police have pro-actively utilised the photographs in schools. This has led to the identification of young offenders who have been processed by the Police.

To date, seven youths have admitted offences of graffiti throughout the area and have volunteered to work for a day with Growing Concerns. None of them have re-offended.

The scheme has received a lot of media attention and has received a large number of letters of appreciation.

The scheme is applying for funding from the local authority for the next financial year. The scheme will expand to cover chewing gum removal. This will work exactly the same as the graffiti project.

## **Conclusion**

This multi-agency programme will pull together various Organisations to achieve a common goal. Initially it will be a twelve-month pilot, with the aim in reducing the cost of graffiti by 50%. The scheme will vastly improve the aesthetics of many communities within the Borough whilst acting as a deterrent and preventative measure. It is a very cost-effective way of tackling this issue. Diversionary tactics for the young will be introduced to areas with the most problems.

**The COPS believe that through this programme a positive improvement will be evident in the appearance of communities, the attitude of the residents and most importantly the satisfaction that the people of Barrow will have from knowing that positive action is being taken against the perpetrators of this anti-social crime.**

Central Ward COPS

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# Graffiti isn't FUNNY

