

The Haulgh: Managing Prostitution, Regenerating the Community

Bolton Crime and Disorder Partnership

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The Haulgh: Managing prostitution, regenerating the community.

The Haulgh is a residential area on the outskirts of the town centre of Bolton. It consists of many large Victorian dwellings which have been converted into houses in multiple occupation (HIMOs). The main link road to Bolton (A666) lies next to the Haulgh and 100yards on is the industrial Shifnall Street area, the traditional venue of street prostitution.

The close proximity of a sex market, easy access and extensive HIMO provision provided ideal conditions for establishing a cocaine market which attracted crime gangs into Bolton. This caused the Haulgh area to have a 24 hour problem of drug dealing, anti-social activity and a rapidly expanding sex market into residential areas. It also had an abnormally high rate of murder and unnatural deaths.

This submission describes how the police and Local Authority tackled this problem by trying to isolate the sex market from provision of housing to anti-social tenants.

It tackled the sex market by getting all the agencies, businesses and residents to agree a managed solution for prostitution. The outcome is that the problem is now contained within the business area and only at night.

Efforts were made at the same time to change the nature of housing provision in the Haulgh. This involved some direct buying by the Local Authority, refusing planning permission for further HIMOs, placing asylum seekers in the area and putting less interested landlords under pressure to manage properties better, or sell to more reputable organisations.

The results have been spectacular with a near transformation of the area. Prostitution is effectively controlled and managed to limit its anti-social impact. House prices have risen dramatically, anti-social behaviour has fallen and fatal or near fatal incidents have decreased significantly. Street dealing has ended not only in the area but has not relocated to another area of Bolton. Community satisfaction has increased immeasurably.

We believe the submission contains many aspects of good practice in terms of curbing an expanding sex market, innovative use of housing policy in the private sector and contains some interesting insights into how flawed analysis caused the problem in the first place.

However, the major lesson is that divorcing the provision of HIMOs to anti-social groups from the sex market not only regenerated the particular area but also stopped street dealing in the borough. More tentatively, we believe that this has halted the growth of the cocaine supply to Bolton and, as such, there may be transferable learning for other metropolitan areas with such problems.

Introduction

The area

The Haulgh describes a residential area on the outskirts of the town centre of Bolton. It contains some 1,500 dwellings. Since the late 80's many large Victorian dwellings have been bought by landlords and turned into flats and bed-sits. In summer of 2002 there were 50 such houses in multiple occupation (HIMOs) accounting for some 300 flats/bedsits- mainly in the Bromwich Street area.

This area lies 50 yards from the main junction of the A666, the main link road from Manchester. 100 yards further on lies the Shifnall Street area at the edge of the town centre. It comprises a grid of unglamorous streets with light industry, offices and warehouses. With no residents and no activity at night, it has been the centre of the street sex market in Bolton for decades.

Scanning

Initial Paradigms of Problem Analysis.

It is perhaps best to illustrate the scale of the problem faced in Spring/Summer 2002 by outlining the initial paradigms of analysis and response by the individual agencies which helped generate the problem.

Prostitution. A Forum for Prostitution had been established by the agencies in 1999. In the absence of community representation, and with the acquiescence of police, the agenda was dominated by the concept of "harm prevention". The avoidance of spread of communicable diseases was the main concern. To tackle this, services were provided direct to the prostitutes in the red light area. The police were lobbied to keep away from enforcement on the grounds it would lessen the willingness of prostitutes to engage. More prostitutes accessing the services was seen as an unqualified success.

This had crime and disorder consequences. In the absence of a national strategy for prostitution, this relatively liberal agenda attracted more prostitution into the town. We observed two internet sites advertising Bolton as being soft on enforcing laws on prostitution. We also observed levels of prostitution dramatically rise following a Manchester city based enforcement crackdown, aimed at improving the image of the City Centre, ahead of the Commonwealth Games. The resulting over-supply caused prostitution to spill out of the small business area at night into residential areas at all times of the day.

Housing. In 1990's the policies of evicting anti-social tenants from Local Authority housing created a market for unscrupulous landlords on the Haulgh. These landlords were actually encouraged by the Housing department who saw them as a solution to housing problematic and homeless clients in the private sector. Eventually there was recognition that using such landlords was creating an environmental problem. A landlord registration scheme was set up in 2001 to tackle the environmental issues of the properties and actually helped subsidise the landlords to upkeep the properties. It did nothing to change the nature of the clientele.

Some landlords who had grown wealthy on these policies expanded their businesses by using these premises to import expendable drug dealers into their flats.

Crime, Drugs and Anti-social behaviour. The police did not recognise the problem. Two key factors contributed to this:

Enforcement by priorities. The police were working to national and local crime and disorder objectives. At the time this meant key crimes (Haulgh was average) and anti-social behaviour (Haulgh below average). The police did recognise drug dealing as being a problem and they pumped resources into it. Prostitution was not recorded as a priority and was thus low down the agenda.

Over-reliance on hard data. The example above is evidence of this. Moreover police were analysing nuisance by calls recorded as "youths causing annoyance". In the Haulgh the nuisance was caused by adults. Moreover we had encouraged people to complain about prostitution through a helpline which did not record such complaints into our systems. Thus our data showed anti-social behaviour to be low when the opposite was the case. The Local Authority were very much influenced by indices of deprivation for which the Haulgh was, by some degree, not the worst area of Bolton.

As a consequence-the newly formed Haulgh Community Partnership's (HCP) complaints were seen as effective lobbying but an objective view was that there were other areas of Bolton more deserving of attention.

Scanning

Recognition of the problem

Three issues eventually forced the Local Authority and police to face the fact the area was in crisis.

Sheer community intelligence and pressure. The HCP went so far as to write to the Prime Minister calling for a public enquiry. They referred to the Haulgh as "a no go area....a ghetto....the new Moss Side". Police had to admit they were more right than they realised when there was clear intelligence that a South Manchester drug gang, escaping a crowded market in the city, were now operating within the Haulgh.

The murder rate. Four out the six murders in Bolton had been within a 200 yard radius in the Haulgh. Two prostitutes had been found murdered, Carly Bateman 17yrs, in November 2001 on Crawford Avenue and Danielle Moorcroft 21yrs, in a separate incident eight months later, 50 yards away from Shifnall Street. There had been a domestic murder on Bromwich Street in 2001 and in July 2002 there was a murder of a "pimp" in a dispute over payment outside 20 Bromwich Street.

Failure to stem the drugs market. Police had arrested 61 dealers on the Haulgh in a undercover buying operation in 2001. Nothing changed. Moreover we had intelligence that it was landlords who were using the tenants, increasingly illegal immigrants, to deal. Thus all enforcement efforts at catching dealers to stop the problem were ultimately bound to be fruitless.

Analysis

Defining the problem

Drugs

We had no capability to map drugs but knew there was 24/7 dealing in cocaine and heroin in Bromwich Street. In terms of drugs we knew that no amount of enforcement made the remotest difference and had noted that the 70% rise in seizures in Bolton in 2001 had exclusively been because of the Haulgh. The Plain Clothes unit anecdotally spotted that we were finding more and more cocaine there.

Prostitution

Our arrest referral workers were reporting a massive rise in the use of crack/cocaine amongst the prostitutes. Community intelligence told us prostitution was completely out of hand, operating at all hours and was a massive anti-social nuisance. Health agencies could tell us there were 70 active street prostitutes working in the area. We projected, from arrest figures, that one third were from outside Bolton.

Out of this scant information we produced an analysis much informed by the Police Research Paper 118 "Street Business" (Appendix A) on the relationship between cocaine dealing and prostitution.

The analysis

Our analysis of the Haulgh is that it poses a unique threat to crime and disorder in Bolton. This is because of three factors

- 1. Its closeness to the A666 and the ease of accessibility to and from the entire North West region**
- 2. The close proximity of a vibrant sex market in Shifnall Street. This area provides, in prostitutes, staple customers of crack/cocaine for drug dealers on a 24 hour basis.**
- 3. The abundance of HIMOs in the Haulgh which provide fertile ground for drug dealers, transient anti-social offenders and prostitutes to operate.**

The proximity of these three factors has caused a critical degeneration so that the problems of drug dealing and prostitution, experienced in all metropolitan areas, has magnified in the Bolton. (extract from letter to ODPM requesting Special Control Measures for the Haulgh)

Our aim was to isolate these factors from each other to stop the critical degeneration. We recognised these markets would still exist but we wanted them separate and to be essentially local and not regional ones.

Analysis

Producing objectives

Accessibility

Altering access into Bolton via the A666 was critical for Bolton's economy, this factor could not be altered.

Prostitution

Producing the objectives to limit prostitution from a regional market required the involvement of all partners and a political drive to find an agreed objective. An away day with all partners including businesses and community eventually concluded we had to limit and control prostitution to being a "local " problem. Everyone accepted enforcement would not get rid of the problem entirely. We believed that trying to move the area away from Shifnall Street would, as an act of social policy, have dubious legitimacy and, as such, could not be actively supported. Moreover we could not find researched evidence that such an approach could succeed.

HIMOs

This left the access issue next to the sex market. It thus became critical to thoroughly tackle the HIMO issue. The following options were considered by the police and the Local Authority:-

- changing the Local Authority's and Housing Associations' approach to anti-social behaviour. It was suggested that their policy of strict enforcement elsewhere generated the supply of anti-social individuals to the Haulgh. There was no enthusiasm to change policy. Moreover, whilst there was evidence this had originally caused the problem, there was an abundance of evidence that the anti-social population of the Haulgh was now coming from far afield
- the possibility of large-scale compulsory purchase in Bromwich Street area. Initially favoured by the police, the Local Authority believed it was simply too expensive, would take too long, there was no guarantee of success and we had no real idea of what to do with the land
- the possibility of attracting a private developer was seen as having all the same practical problems as option above

Thus the objective hit upon was three fold.

- i. Number of HIMOs on the Haulgh needed to decrease.
- ii. Efforts would be made to encourage a change of landlords who would attract a different clientele.
- iii. The image of the area needed to be improved to facilitate the above two processes.

Response

Prostitution Strategy-a workable solution

Implementing the solution to the prostitution problem required a clearly defined strategy which was eventually drawn up by the police and Local Authority. See Appendix B. However it has to be stressed this was based on an explicit hierarchy of three concepts- limitation, control and diversion.

The tactic for limitation was simple-a police crackdown. Arrests were made, fairly indiscriminately, to see how much of the problem could be squeezed out. The intention was not to try to eliminate the problem merely to establish that Bolton was not a soft option which would import problems from elsewhere.

Control was more difficult. In order to control prostitution all the stakeholders had to accept and support a protocol re the "rules" which governed zones, times and rules of engagement of prostitutes or else the problem would be endlessly displaced. This meant every stakeholder accepting a shift in position.

Diversion/harm reduction. There was, and always will be, some degree of tension between the "limitation/ control" and the "diversion/harm prevention" concepts. There is always the concern that "limitation/control" drives prostitution underground and into dangerous practices. It was deemed crucial, in Bolton's case, to establish limitation and control's primacy in the argument if we were ever to come close to a fully managed solution. The problem solving response thus became an overtly political process in which the Local Authority, police and the

Cabinet member for Social Inclusion sold the policy on a quid pro quo basis to businesses, residents and the treatment agencies on the basis they needed to agree to all the measures proposed to realise the full benefits.

The manoeuvrings of this of this "political " approach were tortuous and could take up the rest of this submission. However with £350,000 from SRB6 funds and Safer Communities monies the following was implemented and achieved

- An acceptance in the body politic of Bolton of the "control" concept. There were fears were that the public would not accept this, but a forthright approach to the politicians and positive honest stories in the media have not lead to any serious objections to the zoning policy
- Police, CPS and courts now seeking and imposing respectively bail conditions based on the policy
- ASBO orders now obtained for two prostitutes not complying
- Extra street cleaning early in the morning to remove detritus from the night before
- One-off ground maintenance improvements to fencing shrubbery etc. so area would still be attractive in day time for visitors to businesses
- Lorry parking banned (to stop the creation of unnecessary demand) and secure car park status achieved for all three car parks to make women who work in the area feel safer
- £30k of business grants given to businesses for additional security measures e.g. shuttering, to protect their premises from the minor damage caused by night time activity
- Court diversion scheme for prostitutes willing to accept treatment rather than a court punishment
- The Shifnall Street area has a new one way system with one means of access so all kerb crawlers can be captured on a strategically placed CCTV camera as they enter.

Response

HIMOs and Housing Policy in Haulgh.

The first realisation was that asylum seekers could be seen as part of a solution. Previously, the police had asked the Home Office not to place asylum seekers in the Haulgh on the simplistic rationale that the area had enough problems and asylum seekers represented further risk. It became clear that moving asylum seekers in meant they were occupying accommodation which otherwise may be taken by anti-social inhabitants.

The next, and critical, move was that the proliferation of HIMOs had to be stopped. This meant the Local Authority objecting to future planning permissions. In order to achieve this, crime and disorder could not be the grounds on which planning permission could be refused, but they could be an otherwise material consideration. Two refusals for 11 Crawford Avenue and 39 Bromwich Street were taken to appeal in Bristol. The Local Authority won. Since then no further applications have been made. This was the single most important action which arrested decline. Soon after the landlord with the largest portfolio in Bromwich Street sold a property, which he had being planning to convert into flats, to the local Mosque next door.

The major thrust was to persuade landlords to sell up or smarten up. In order to do this, pressure needed to be put upon them to emphasise the message that the Haulgh area was an area in which the highest standards would be expected.

The idea was a series of joint inspections of police, environment, benefits agencies and fire brigade. The inspections have found some environmental faults but the biggest hits occurred with the Benefits Agency revealing fraudulent claims which deprived landlords of income and a prosecution of the major landlord.

This process was driven by monthly meetings involving police and the Local Authority to monitor progress. Quite quickly the seriousness of the situation became apparent. In the first six months of work there was

- one attempt murder (multiple stabbing) and two section 18 woundings (blows to head with weapons causing fractured skulls) on Bromwich Street.

-in the same period two people died of overdoses on Bromwich Street, one from heroin, one of solvent abuse.

This belated hard data confirmed our analysis of the Haulgh as the key strategic threat.

It was important, whilst the longer term work was progressing, to make police gains and improve the environment. A single police officer was given the beat of Crawford Street, Bradford Road, Bromwich Street, Hilden Street. His remit was to be a Community Beat Officer, not to the people who complained but to all the anti-social tenants and

landlords on the Haulgh-the people who would not usually make contact. As well as having the remit of targeting criminal and anti-social behaviour he created the perception of constant police activity amongst them.

During this time there was a large rise in calls of anti-social behaviour. We believe this both reflected the residents confidence in the police to tackle the problem combined with the degenerating situation. The residents stated they wanted an outdoor alcohol ban on the Haulgh to stop anti-social residents drinking outside their houses. This was instituted with alacrity and was in force by summer 2003. Four prosecutions resulted and effectively ended the problem.

Four telephone boxes stood at the junction of Bromwich Street and Bradford Street. In their heyday they were used 24hours for drug dealing and prostitution. Their use diminished but they continued to be a focus for anti-social activity. However demonstrations, covered by local TV, and meetings with BT failed to persuade them to move them-the single failure of the project. The police are now lobbying BT to change the boxes to sheer perspex or simply a roof to improve visibility.

Other visible environmental improvements were undertaken. Bromwich Street Park (at the junction with Bradford Road) has been redesigned by the HCP and improved lighting has been put at the rear of a number of premises on Bromwich Street. These improvements, funded by SRB6, improve visibility and sight lines thus making the area inimical to anti-social behaviour. The Highways Department are shortly to make the top of Bromwich Street one-way so that it becomes more difficult for visitors to turn into it straight off the A666.

The Local Authority became increasingly innovative in its dealings in Bromwich Street. Two houses at 19/21 Bromwich Street lay derelict. It bought 19 from an owner only too willing to sell. No 21 belonged to Bolton's major drug dealer who had recently been murdered. It used environmental powers to allow it to demolish the property and is now applying to compulsory purchase the remaining bricks and land. The plan is to sell the land to a local Housing Association to develop.

The Local Authority took the opportunity to lease three properties 35/39 on Bromwich Street from a landlord who was struggling. They were deteriorating in quality and he was in danger of losing his contract with the Local Authority to house asylum seekers. The Local Authority agreed to manage the properties while the landlord refurbished them. Bolton at Home, the arms-length housing arm of the Local Authority, bought the derelict Avoncliff Hotel and the property next door on Bromwich Street. Purchased with a private sector grant they are converting the properties into family accommodation to be sold back to the private sector.

Assessment

Outcomes

The outcome of all this has been success beyond what was expected.

Prostitution

Prostitution is now effectively controlled and managed with no complaints now about prostitution from residents or businesses in Bolton. Certainly there is no visible prostitution in the Haulgh or the Shifnall Street areas during the day. It is a constant war of attrition with the prostitutes who have tried to relocate to other residential areas but they are corralled back to adhere to the strategy. The police's calculation is that there are 58 potentially active prostitutes in Bolton compared to 70 in January 2002. Only one out of 34 different prostitutes arrested in last year has been from outside the area. This is entirely in line with our belief we could only marginally limit prostitution but that controlling and managing the problem would reduce complaints of anti-social behaviour.

We do not want to claim to have made prostitution safer. It is a risky business. We believe we have made the environment safer. We are increasing persuading the prostitutes to work in that environment and by doing so we have freed resources to make more arrests of kerb crawlers, to start to affect demand, rather than of non-compliant prostitutes. In the last six months we have arrested 5 kerb crawlers who we consider to be dangerous.

Haulgh

Estate Agents canvassed quote us prices indicating rises of 100-150% over the last 18 months, the largest rise in Bolton. They also anecdotally stated that families were starting to move into the Haulgh instead of moving away.

There have been no unnatural deaths, and one attempt murder on Bromwich Street in the last eight months. Key crime has remained roughly constant but anti-social behaviour has dropped from 78 reports in Summer/Autumn

2002 to 4 reports Summer/Autumn 2003, a staggering decrease, ascribable to anti-social tenants leaving and the success of the street drinking ban.

It was our explicit intention to displace the anti-social tenants into another HIMO market and there are indications of increased anti-social activity in the Chorley New Road/Park Road area of Bolton. This was anticipated and is indicative of success. We believe because it is divorced from the sex market and A666 it has not become a street dealing area, attracting clients from the North West.

When making a film for a presentation about the Haulgh we asked members of the HCP, who had hosted a meeting of 100 residents, for their views on the current situation compared to 18 months ago. "1000% better" " No comparison" "Its like a dream you feel safe walking the streets". Walter Scott, the author of HCP's report to the PM calling for a public enquiry, said this,

"Its astonishing. 18 months ago people complained about the murders, drugs being sold and prostitution. We asked people tonight and their main concern was litter. I can not believe the turn round"

Assessment back to new scanning and new analysis

Prostitution

The priority now will switch from the control concept to diversion. The new objective is in fully establishing in a centre for prostitutes, run by a charity, to operate every day on Shifnall Street. Its initial delay has been a deliberate political decision as it was judged full acceptance by the businesses was critical. We hope an established centre, run by a charity independent of the political pressures an agency can be subject to, with a consistent holistic approach to the problem, can have the best chance of engaging the prostitutes to exit the lifestyle. It already has five clients who are some way towards this.

Haulgh

At the time of writing only the handful of HIMOs mentioned above have actually changed in nature. The refusal of further HIMOs and joint inspections has not lead to sales as quickly as expected but had a profound effect on the landlords. The management of some properties simply improved both in terms of the standard of the properties but also of the clientele. Landlords, some disingenuously, started to approach the local Community Beat Officer about the activities of their tenants. The success of the campaign caused property prices to rise suddenly which lead to the unanticipated problem of landlords holding out for a rise in value. Price is currently stalling negotiations between the largest landlord who is trying to sell his portfolio. Thus, for the time being, the police and Local Authority will pursue current tactics to maintain pressure.

We still, though, see the sustainable endgame to be one in which landlords sell to large reputable organisations. Moreover to ensure high standards of compliance for landlords in the Haulgh the Local Authority has thus applied to the government for Special Control Measures to be put on housing on the Bromwich Street area and if granted, we believe only Oxford and Bolton would be towns with such schemes.

We have just appointed a drugs analyst so we will, in future, be able to map and quantify our drugs problem as it develops.

Learning lessons

Community Intelligence

This is a lesson of failure. This paper demonstrates the problems caused by priorities established by, and overly reliant on, analysis by hard data. It was only community pressure that forced the agencies to properly analyse the problem and alter their paradigms.

Prostitution

When we were analysing our problems we could find no strategy for prostitution that seemed to fit our needs. We would offer our strategy for other areas who have a sex market which is expanding quickly. Ultimately a national strategy is required to prevent areas displacing the problem.

HIMOs

Many of the innovative solutions the Local Authority has adopted, foreshadow measures in the forthcoming Housing Bill. These measures can be taken further upon adoption and we hope to be seen as a beacon area for other boroughs with similar problems with HIMOs.

Drugs

The most conclusive claim this paper can make is this. By a deliberate effort to shift the area of anti-social tenants away from the sex market it halted street dealing in the borough.

We can make a further, more tentative claim. Borough wide seizures for cocaine are down and the level of people testing positive for cocaine under Mandatory Drug Testing has remained the same as 18 months ago. We believe we have effectively halted and arrested the growth in the cocaine market in Bolton. We feel there is transferable learning about disrupting drug supplies in urban areas near sex markets which, in turn, gives great support to the Police Research paper "Street Business" upon which we based our analysis.

Discussion paper for Bolton Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Group.

A Strategic threat assessment crack cocaine and sex market.

Report prepared by Inspector Dave Flitcroft, Local Authority Liaison Officer.

1. Purpose of report.

The purpose of this report is to assess the scale and rate of increase of crack cocaine use in Bolton in particular around the Haulgh area and identify the impact of the sex market on this trend. Inform the partnership in order that strategic direction can be given.

2. Introduction.

Recent targeted policing operations by Bolton and Astley Bridge Drug Units indicate a significant recent increase in the prevalence of crack cocaine as a drug of choice.

Recent operations and investigations centered upon the sex market known as the "Shiffnal Street area" indicate that crack misuse is prevalent amongst prostitutes. Analysis of a sample of 100 known prostitutes active in the area shows that whilst they "work" in the Shiffnal Street area, they live throughout the borough. 43% reside on the Astley Bridge sub Division.

Discussions at the CDRP "Prostitute Forum" indicate that the residential community of the Haulgh, and the business community from the Shiffnal Street area recognise a change in market state which is significantly increasing the fear of crime, and increasing the community's reluctance to support Bolton's draft Prostitution strategy.

I have been asked by the chair of the forum, Councillor Frank White, to prepare this paper for discussion by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership in order to agree strategic direction.

3. Market state.

Bolton Drug Unit identify the houses in multiple occupancy (HIMO) in the area of the Haulgh comprising mainly Bromwich Street, Chadwick Street, Bradford Street, Crawford Avenue, Radcliffe Road as a particular core of drug dealing activity. Whilst historically this area has been a "closed" market, i.e. dealers supplying to known users using technology such as mobile phones and pager units, market is increasingly changing to a more "open" style where "anyone can go to score". The prostitutes play an active role in this change in market by "signposting" users to dealers.

The area has been the subject of many targeted policing operations which have been successful in securing the arrest and prosecution of dealers. Over the past 12 months, the focus of the operations has changed from heroin to crack cocaine dealers. The last ten operations have targeted crack dealers in this area, all have secured the arrest and conviction of the dealers targeted. In 8 of the operations the dealer has been found to be a Jamaican National illegally overstaying in the UK.

4. An Example of scale "Operation Resident".

An example of the scale of dealing can be seen from the arrest of the "Bobsleigh Team" during Operation Resident. Four Jamaican Nationals from Kingston, Jamaica, all illegal overstayers, arrived in Bolton over a period of a month, all four had been sent from London by unknowns. None of the four had reason to be in Bolton, other than to deal to a developing market. The four obtained accommodation in a Bradford Street bedsit, which was the centre of their operations. A successful, intelligence led operation resulted in their arrest and recovery of 6oz crack cocaine, which represents approximately 850 "rocks" (0.2g each) valued at £20/ rock thus totalling £17000 street value, and 1oz heroin, valued £600. The investigation revealed that this amount was 2 days supply. That level of dealing by one team represents an annual potential of supplying 31kg crack at a street value of £3.1million by the one team.

The experience of the Drug Unit is that this intense level of activity has failed to make an impact in reducing the level of dealing from the area, or the availability of crack. Intelligence suggests that the average daily spend on crack by a crack user is £200/day.

Each successful enforcement operation results in adaptation by the dealers in order to negate police tactics. The ability to frustrate enforcement tactics relies heavily on the availability of a transient population in HIMO accommodation.

5. Evidence of scale from data sources.

Data from Arrest Referral indicates a significant association between crack use and “admitted soliciting” (prostitution), namely that those who solicit are more likely to use crack (60% compared to 30% of other offenders)

Also that those who use crack are more likely to solicit (5.7% compared to 2.1%).

If this information was extrapolated across the 140 known prostitutes active in the Shiffnal Street area sex market, it would mean that 60% of prostitutes use crack cocaine i.e. 84 prostitutes.

Knowledge held within treatment services and police suggests that some prostitutes use up to £400 crack/day. (20 rocks)

Police intelligence suggests that average daily use is approximately £200 (10 rocks) or £1400/week.

Arrest referral information suggests that cost per week for crack use is approximately £300. The accurate picture is not known, but is assumed to be somewhere in between.

2001-2002 Annual reports of CDT, ADS, Project 360 and Step by Step, the four treatment services in Bolton all reflect this significant increase in Crack Misuse. The CDT report shows that 84 clients (10% of all clients) use crack. The concern is that 58 (69%) of client crack users are new clients.

Appendix B

Strategic Approach to Prostitution

Background

Bolton has a sex market, which is long established in the Shifnall Street area of the town. The existence of a sex market has brought with it problems to the business community and residential areas that lie on the periphery of the Town Centre such as the Haulgh. However, the longevity of the sex market means that bringing it to an end altogether would be difficult to achieve through enforcement alone.

Three stage approach

There is clearly a need for a more comprehensive approach to tackle the problem. A three stage approach has now been agreed by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and is based on:

- ◆ **Control** – confined to an area and time where the impact on communities is limited.
- ◆ **Limitation** – to a local “acceptable” level.
- ◆ **Safety/Treatment** - reduce risk/harm and develop services to divert women away from prostitution.

Improving the environment and community safety

In order to negate the impact of prostitution on communities and improve community safety generally a number of improvements are required. These have been put forward separately by residents in the Haulgh and by the business communities.

Understanding zero tolerance

Incidents of loitering or soliciting for the purpose of prostitution and kerb crawling in any residential area will be robustly dealt with by the authorities through criminal prosecution and civil actions such as injunctions of Anti-social Behaviour Orders. A similar approach will be taken towards those who cause a problem during the day or early evening anywhere in Bolton. In addition too large a growth in numbers of prostitutes and/or punters would lead to enforcement being stepped up to ensure that an “acceptable” level remained.

Providing exit opportunities for women

A key part of the approach would be to reduce the risk/harm faced by the prostitutes both in an immediate way and as part of a longer-term attempt to divert the women away from prostitution. This falls into 3 main areas:

- ◆ **Short Term Health Needs** – the existence of services such as free condoms, needles, etc., in the area is important in reducing the risk of infection for both prostitutes and clients. These services also offer an opportunity to make links to prostitutes therefore increasing the possibility of them accessing longer-term health projects.
- ◆ **Longer Term Needs** - while drug addiction, for most on-street prostitutes is the overwhelming driver there are a number of other issues that add to both their vulnerability and their chaotic lifestyles these are:
 - ◆ Rooflessness and homelessness
 - ◆ Emotional and mental health issues.
 - ◆ Isolated from family support networks
 - ◆ Practical assistance e.g. in making benefit applications

Urban Outreach already plan to move their office accommodation to the area. Their existing charitable work with young people involved in prostitution and street life means that they are well placed to extend their services to include women who work on the streets in Bolton and

are involved in prostitution. They are in a unique position as they are able to offer an impartial, non-statutory service to the women that will ensure that the women are able to access and engage with statutory agencies.

It is intended that as this outreach work develops there will be opportunities to develop permanent, off-street services in the area. A more permanent base would allow services to be developed in the field of education and employment and with drug treatment and housing services thereby increasing the chances of diversion being successful. The best chance of “diversion” from prostitution is through drug treatment services and the existence of treatment within the area identified for the sex market it is felt significantly increases the chance this will be accessed.

Court diversion project – the aim of this project is to divert women from the court process and achieve alternative lifestyles. The project is aimed at women who are facing their first court appearance and ensures that a full assessment is done of the women’s needs and actions put in place to address these needs. In cases where women do not engage with the process, these proceed to court.

Tackling issues in the private rented sector

There are close links between prostitution and the bedsit accommodation and empty properties situated in parts of the Haulgh. Some residents and visitors of these properties often indulge in anti-social activity. For this reason it is important that ways of managing these issues within the private rented sector are developed at the same time.

Community development is essential to any successful initiative and a wide range of activities are being delivered or further developed under the Haulgh steering group.

Conclusion

This approach has been agreed by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, who have given a firm and long-term commitment to this work. Funding opportunities are being explored to meet some of the improvements put forward by businesses and residents and these improvements will be co-ordinated and closely monitored and reviewed by the CDRP.

The complex and changing nature of this problem means that creating a “win win” situation will be very difficult especially relating to the balance between enforcement and the provision of treatment services. However an excellent level of partnership working currently exists between all stakeholders which will help ensure the success of this approach both in the short and long term.