

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 8 SEPTEMBER 2004

BUILDING STRONG SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on progress in implementing the Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities programme in East Ayrshire.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting held on 19 February 2004 the Policy and Resources Committee were advised that East Ayrshire's bid for funding under the Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities proposals had been approved by the Scottish Executive and that £1.050m had been awarded to the Council and its Community Planning Partners over the 2 year period from 2004/2005 to 2005/2006 for the introduction of a pilot community wardens service and other anti-social behaviour initiatives.

3. PROGRESS

- 3.1 During early summer 2004, steps were taken to recruit members of the new Anti-Social Behaviour Team including the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator and Investigator and the Community Wardens. In an attempt to engage the public at every level of the Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities initiative, invitations were extended to the representatives of relevant community groups within the project areas to take part in the interview and selection process. All posts were filled by 5 July 2004.

- 3.2 The new staff undertook a comprehensive three week training course covering a wide variety of subjects including:

- Crime Prevention Measures
- Fire Safety
- First Aid
- Antisocial behaviour legislation and mediation
- Health and Safety
- Customer Care.

Course tutors came from a variety of backgrounds e.g. Police, Fire Service, Registered Social Landlords, etc. A review of the content and effectiveness of the training programme is currently ongoing.

- 3.3 Community Wardens patrols within the identified neighbourhoods commenced on Wednesday 28 July 2004. Initial public feedback has been positive and good communication links have been established between the Wardens and the local Police.
- 3.4 A baseline survey of public opinion in the project areas is being developed to assist in monitoring and evaluating the projects progress in attaining the outcomes identified in the original funding bid.

4. SECOND ROUND FUNDING

- 4.1 In June 2004 the Scottish Executive advised East Ayrshire that subject to a successful funding bid, it would receive a further £317,730 in 2004/5 to tackle antisocial behaviour. The Executive also indicated that another £410,550 will be made available in 2005/06, to support the implementation of an antisocial behaviour strategy as required by the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004.
- 4.2 In respect of the £317,730 funding for 2004/2005 the Scottish Executive issued guidelines that this should be devoted to:
- Introducing or filling gaps in services for people (of all tenures) suffering antisocial behaviour
 - Introducing further warden schemes, where these are justified or improving existing warden schemes, and
 - Activities to support the preparation and implementation of local authority wide antisocial behaviour strategies.
- 4.3 At its meeting on 30 June 2004 the Emergency Powers Committee approved the East Ayrshire bid for second round funding for initiatives to tackle antisocial behaviour. The full content of the proposed bid is set out in Appendix One (attached) and are summarised as follows:
- Funding to transfer 2 Antisocial behaviour Investigators from Housing Revenue Account to cover all tenures in East Ayrshire
 - Extending 'Helpline' service provision
 - Purchase of additional support for victims and witnesses of antisocial behaviour
 - Funding for 'under-age drinking campaign
 - Upgrade of Respond Neighbour Complaints system to keep people informed of progress/outcome of their complaints
 - Creation of Independent Mediation Service for all tenures
 - Creation of a pool of Relief Wardens to provide cover for sickness, leave, etc.
 - Leasing additional vehicles for Community Wardens
 - Funding for Police/Council admin support
 - ASB Strategy Development Officer.

- 4.4 The Scottish Executive will issue guidelines in due course regarding the funding arrangements for the year 2005/06.
- 4.5 The Council has been advised by the Scottish Executive that the bid for second round funding to tackle antisocial behaviour has been successful. Steps are now being taken to implement the proposals identified in the bid and a separate report will be submitted in due course to the Corporate Governance Sub-Committee on staffing arrangements.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of providing the Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities initiative and the proposals for second round funding to tackle antisocial behaviour will be fully funded by Scottish Executive Grants until March 2006.

6. POLICY / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The proposals will support the efforts of the Council and Community Planning Partners in dealing with anti-social behaviour and will assist the Council in meeting its future statutory obligations in terms of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This report outlines the progress made in allocating the Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities first round funding from the Scottish Executive and the proposals for allocating the second round funding award to the Council and its partners in the initiative. The development of initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour supports the aims outlined in the Community Plan, and the East Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy to improve community safety.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that Members:
- i) note the progress in implementing the Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities initiative within East Ayrshire to date;
 - ii) authorise the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services to implement the proposals detailed in the second round funding bid;
 - iii) otherwise note the contents of the report

William Stafford
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/CMCA/LA
11 August 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1. Emergency Powers Committee Report dated 28 August 2003**
- 2. Policy and Resources Committee Report dated 19 February 2004**
- 3. Housing Committee Report dated 17 March 2004**
- 4. Corporate Governance Committee Report dated 31 March 2004**
- 5. Guidance to Local Authorities on Funding to Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour – Second Round**
- 6. Emergency Powers Committee Report dated 30 June 2004**
- 7. Improving Community Action Safety Plan 2003-2007**
- 8. East Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009.**

Any person wishing to inspect the background papers listed above or requiring further information should telephone 01563 576616 and ask for John Pilkington.

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BID FOR FUNDING TO TACKLE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SECOND ROUND

Submission for
EAST AYRSHIRE

June 2004



CONTENTS

Page

Introduction

Section 1: Anti-Social Behaviour Framework

Section 2: Services to Support People Suffering From
Anti-Social Behaviour

Section 3: Improving Existing Warden Schemes

Section 4: Activities to Support the Preparation and
Implementation of Local Authority Wide
Anti-Social Behaviour Strategies

The Way Forward

Liaison Point for Submission

APPENDICES

1. Anti-Social Behaviour Framework
2. Cost of Council Proposals

Introduction

In May 2004 the Scottish Executive issued guidance outlining the two-stage process local authorities should adopt when applying for funds from the second tranche of funding to tackle anti-social behaviour.

This guidance notes that funding in 2004/05 will be available for three purposes. In order of priority these are:

- Introducing or filling the gaps for people suffering anti-social behaviour
- Introducing further warden schemes, where these are justified or improving existing warden schemes
- Activities to support the preparation and implementation of local authority wide anti-social behaviour strategies.

Funding in 2005/06 will be linked to an outcome agreement with each local authority and its local community planning partners and will be based on the outcomes and outputs set out in local authority-wide anti-social behaviour strategies. This arrangement will enable East Ayrshire and its partners to use the funds to deliver locally agreed priorities, within an agreed national outcome/accountability framework currently being developed by the Scottish Executive, COSLA and other key stakeholders. Guidance on the content of outcome agreements will be issued for consultation in July 2004.

Section 1: Strategic Anti-Social Behaviour Framework

Within East Ayrshire, there already exists a strategic framework for tackling anti-social behaviour (See Appendix 1). Current arrangements for tackling anti-social behaviour are consistent with the Community Plan, one of the main themes of which is to Improve Community Safety. The Council's Housing Service has the lead role in implementing policies and procedures to tackle anti-social behaviour, in partnership with Strathclyde Police, Victim Support Scotland, Witness Support, other relevant Council Departments and stakeholders.

The funding allocated to East Ayrshire Council under "Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities" (BSSAC), for Community Based Initiatives to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour, allowed the Community Planning Partners to enhance and complement the good practice in place at that time, extending these initiatives to cover all residents living in the identified BSSAC areas:

- a comprehensive procedure with a strong emphasis on evidence gathering, corroboration, working with the police and victim support,
- specialist investigation staff - available for call out via 24-Hour Help Line to act as Professional Witnesses,
- support mechanisms for victims, complainants and witnesses,
- strong links and regular discussions with the police,
- a Fast-track system to report serious cases to legal services,
- use of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract scheme,
- mediation service, and
- links with Private Sector and RSLs.

Section 2: Services to Support People Suffering From Anti-Social Behaviour

Proposal 1: Dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Team for All Tenures

The provision of second round funding to tackle anti-social behaviour would enable East Ayrshire Council to create an investigation team responsible for the investigation of all complaints of anti-social behaviour arising in the local authority area.

The Council would work in partnership with the thirteen Registered Social Landlords operating in East Ayrshire, the wider community, the police and other relevant agencies to extend the initiatives currently underway in the BSSAC funded areas, making these services available across the whole Local Authority area.

At present the Council employs an Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, an Anti-Social Behaviour Investigator (both BSSAC funded) and two Neighbour Disputes Officers (funded from the Housing Revenue Account to investigate anti-social behaviour complaints made by/against council tenants). In order to provide an investigation service across all tenures in East Ayrshire, the Council propose bringing these staff together in to a co-ordinated team with altered remits and management arrangements. This would involve re-designating the two Neighbour Disputes Officers as Anti-Social Behaviour Investigators, to carry out the same duties as the existing Anti-Social Behaviour Investigator, and the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator having responsibility for the line management of these staff members.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Investigators would have the responsibility for:

- investigating all complaints of anti-social behaviour arising in East Ayrshire irrespective of tenure
- meeting the time targets set against each category of complaint in respect of making contact with the complainant and completing the initial stages of the investigation
- providing reports and recommendations on the results of anti-social behaviour investigations to the Council's Area Housing Team Management and Legal Services Section, RSL Management and Private Sector Landlords, as appropriate
- establishing effective working relationships with the Tenancy Support Team and other relevant partners including Community Wardens in their areas of responsibility
- implementing and overseeing Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC) and Unacceptable Behaviour Notices (UBN)
- ensuring that appropriate support mechanisms are put in place for victims, complainants and witnesses
- sharing appropriate information with the police, social services and other relevant stakeholders, and
- assisting the Co-ordinator with his responsibilities.

The co-ordination of the anti-social behaviour investigation team would result in greater efficiencies and enable the team to pool their knowledge, expertise and skills in tackling anti-social behaviour throughout East Ayrshire.

This proposal assumes that the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator and one Anti-Social Behaviour Investigator would continue to be BSSAC funded. However, in order to widen the remit of the two Neighbour Disputes Officers to undertake investigations of anti-social behaviour complaints from all tenures, the funding of their salaries requires to be transferred from the Housing Revenue Account to the Scottish Executive's second round funding.

Proposal 2: Anti-Social Behaviour Helpline – Accessed by All Tenures

East Ayrshire Council has a long established Helpline operated by the Department of Educational & Social Services. This offers out of hours assistance to individuals reporting anti-social behaviour connected to a council tenant or property. Recently the service has been extended to all residents living in the identified BSSAC neighbourhoods, and will also provide a point of public contact for residents in these areas to obtain the services of Community Wardens.

The Council propose to use second round funding to extend the remit of the existing Helpline to include the provision of help and assistance, including the call out of 'Professional Witnesses' to any resident of East Ayrshire suffering from anti-social behaviour.

The extension of the Helpline Service, which will be supported by the Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team, will involve:

- additional staffing and training arrangements for the helpline
- provision of additional publicity materials to raise public awareness.

Proposal 3: Support for Victims, Witnesses and Complainants - Across All Tenures

Within East Ayrshire there is a commitment to ensuring that victims, witnesses and complainants of anti-social behaviour receive the support they require to overcome the trauma associated with this type of behaviour. As a result referral mechanisms for Council tenants have been in place with the locally based branch of Victim Support Scotland since 1997 and with the Witness Service at Ayr and Kilmarnock Sheriff Courts since 2002. The Witness Service provides support to witnesses called to give evidence in ASBO and Eviction actions.

These services were recently extended to the victims, witnesses and complainants of anti-social behaviour across all tenures within the BSSAC neighbourhoods. The Council is now seeking to extend this service across all of East Ayrshire.

To date Victim and Witness Support have offered their services to the Council free of charge. In order to improve and publicise the services available, the council would look to use second round funding to provide appropriate financial support to these organisations.

Proposal 4: Prevention of Anti-Social Behaviour Linked to Under Age Drinking

East Ayrshire Council is aware of the prevalence of anti-social behaviour committed by young persons under the influence of alcohol.

The recently published Nicholson Committee report stated:

'Like so many other forms of alcohol abuse so-called "under-age drinking" is a cultural and social phenomenon of our time; and its causes, and the explanation for it, are not easy to discern with any certainty. We suspect that more might be done in our schools and communities in order to make young people aware of the dangers to health, which are associated with drinking at any age and in particular at a time when physical development is still taking place.'

Given this situation the Council propose to initiate a campaign to raise young peoples' awareness of the dangers of alcohol including its links with anti-social behaviour.

Second round funds would be used to finance a campaign which would include the provision of 'proof of age' cards, training for members of the licensing trade (particularly in 'off-sales') on how to deal with under age persons attempting to buy alcohol, and the education of young people in our schools and communities.

Proposal 5: Keeping People Informed of the Progress/Outcome of Complaints.

In September 2003 East Ayrshire Council's Housing Service adapted a computer software product marketed by Respond UK to record and track neighbour complaints made to the service.

The Respond product has considerably strengthened the process of recording and managing complaints. The Respond system automatically sets predetermined time targets for the appointed investigator to make contact with the complainant, carry out the investigation and inform complainant of the progress and/or outcomes of complaints. Since the Respond system was adopted to deal with neighbour complaints the Council's Housing Service has met its set time targets in 92% of all neighbour complaints. This rate of achievement continues to improve on a monthly basis and clearly demonstrates that the Council is successfully tackling anti-social behaviour through early and effective action, and is keeping people informed of the progress and outcomes of complaints.

The Respond product also provides information that allows the housing service to fully understand the range and nature of anti-social behaviour across the Local Authority area, and assess the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at tackling this.

The Council propose to utilise second round funding to purchase 'Netpoint', an additional Respond UK product which will allow Registered Social Landlords, the Police and members of the public to log incidents of anti-social behaviour directly via the internet and/or at public intranet terminals already installed in Council Offices. This process would avoid a duplication of work and free up Council, RSL and Police staff time.

'Netpoint' is extremely simple to use and guides the user through every stage of the recording process. In addition it provides users with up to date feedback on the progress/outcome of the complaints they have registered. The system is very secure and can only be accessed after the user has entered his/her unique password.

Proposal 6: Community Based Independent Mediation Service

Since May 2002, East and South Ayrshire Councils have operated a joint Mediation Service, co-ordinated by East Ayrshire. The referral criteria for this service requires at least one of the parties to the dispute to have an association with a council tenancy. As a result of BSSAC funding East Ayrshire extended the mediation service to all tenures within the identified neighbourhoods. This extension involved a partnership between East Ayrshire Council, Registered Social Landlords operating within the identified neighbourhoods and volunteer mediators.

Under this arrangement East Ayrshire provides a co-ordination facility to allow:

- trained mediators from one RSL to mediate on behalf the tenants of another partner RSL who are involved in a dispute
- trained volunteer mediators to mediate disputes in the private sector.

Taking account of the Scottish Executive's guidance on the provision of a mediation service, the Council estimate that by making mediation available to all residents of East Ayrshire,

between 50 and 100 referrals would be generated during 2004/05, increasing to 150 in 2005/06. Given this, it would not be viable to extend the provision of mediation along current lines. Consequently, the Council proposes to create a small independent mediation service which would deal with neighbour disputes and provide mediation for homeless young people and their parents or guardians irrespective of tenure.

Section 3: Improving Existing Warden Schemes

Proposal 7: Relief Wardens

Until the existing community warden schemes operating in East Ayrshire are properly established and evaluated the Council do not intend to expand this service. However, in order to ensure that the service operates at full capacity at all times, a bank of trained relief Community Wardens is required to cover sickness, annual leave, resignations, etc. The Council propose to use second round funding to provide training for 4-6 relief wardens and cover salary costs as required.

Proposal 8: Provision of Additional Vehicles for Community Wardens

East Ayrshire Council believes that the objectives it has set for its Community Wardens can be best achieved by wardens patrolling the identified neighbourhoods on foot. As a result, when the bid was made for BSSAC funding the Council made provision for only two vehicles. One of these vehicles was allocated to the senior wardens in order to carry out supervisory visits to the wardens in identified neighbourhoods. The second vehicle was allocated to the wardens responsible for the Cumnock East (Barshare)/Auchinleck neighbourhoods to allow them to move between these two geographical areas.

Since the BSSAC bid was tendered council officers responsible for implementing the warden schemes in East Ayrshire have visited other local authorities with experience in operating warden services and carried out risk assessments in respect of the identified neighbourhoods in which the wardens will operate in East Ayrshire.

As a result of these site visits and risk assessments, the Council believes that the provision of a vehicle is an essential part of the wardens' toolkit which would enable them, when necessary, to attend urgent calls for assistance and escape potentially violent situations. Consequently, the Council proposes to bid for the provision of three additional leased vehicles for the wardens operating in the project areas.

The standing operating procedures for wardens will make it clear that these vehicles will not be used for mobile patrols as an alternative to foot patrols and that any use of the vehicles must be justified and will be carefully monitored.

Section 4: Activities to Support the Preparation and Implementation of Local Authority Wide Anti-Social Behaviour Strategies

East Ayrshire Council is proud of its strong tradition of partnership working and, more particularly, of its relationship, both formal and informal, with Strathclyde Police who have been active participants in the preparation of both this bid and our BSSAC bid. The Council welcomes the early opportunity provided by this second round of funding to continue to work in close co-operation with Strathclyde Police and other community planning partners to

support the preparation and implementation of East Ayrshire's Anti-Social Behaviour strategy.

Proposal 9: Dedicates Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Officer

The East Ayrshire Local Housing Strategy (2004-2009) sets out the strategy partners' commitment to developing an Anti-social behaviour strategy. In order to ensure this strategy is adopted by the residents of East Ayrshire it is essential that it is developed in close partnership with local communities. In this way the strategy will truly reflect local issues and residents will be encouraged to participate with local agencies to combat the blight of anti-social behaviour caused by a small group of people in the community.

Given the high priority attached to the development of a meaningful anti-social behaviour strategy for East Ayrshire, the Council propose to create a post within its Housing Service, which will be the lead agency in carrying forward this project. This post will involve:

- developing community planning structures
- facilitating community consultation
- establishing baselines for monitoring and evaluation processes
- developing protocols with the police and other relevant agencies
- putting in place a communications strategy to keep people informed.

Proposal 10: Police-Council Administration Support Officer

The final proposal reflects the joint commitment of the Council and Strathclyde Police to ensuring that anti-social behaviour investigations are not impeded by ineffective information exchange between agencies. Resources would be used to fund a Strathclyde Police civilian employee based in the local police divisional headquarters at Kilmarnock.

This post would primarily involve assisting the Chief Constable in the discharge of his duties under the Anti-Social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004 and ensuring further improvements in the exchange of information related to anti-social behaviour between the Police and the Council.

The cost details for proposals 1 to 10 are set out in Appendix 2.

The Way Forward

East Ayrshire Council and its partner agencies view the availability of the Executive's second round of funding to tackle anti-social behaviour as an opportunity to significantly improve the quality of life for all the people of East Ayrshire by ensuring that we are flexible and innovative in our approach to service delivery. As community planning partners, we will ensure that we maximise the benefit of this funding by linking to other relevant initiatives and providing a solid foundation on which to secure lasting change for our local communities. Our existing commitment to partnership working and community involvement will ensure the effective implementation of the programme to tackle anti-social behaviour and build strong, safe and attractive communities.

12. LIAISON POINT FOR SUBMISSION

For further information or clarification, please contact:

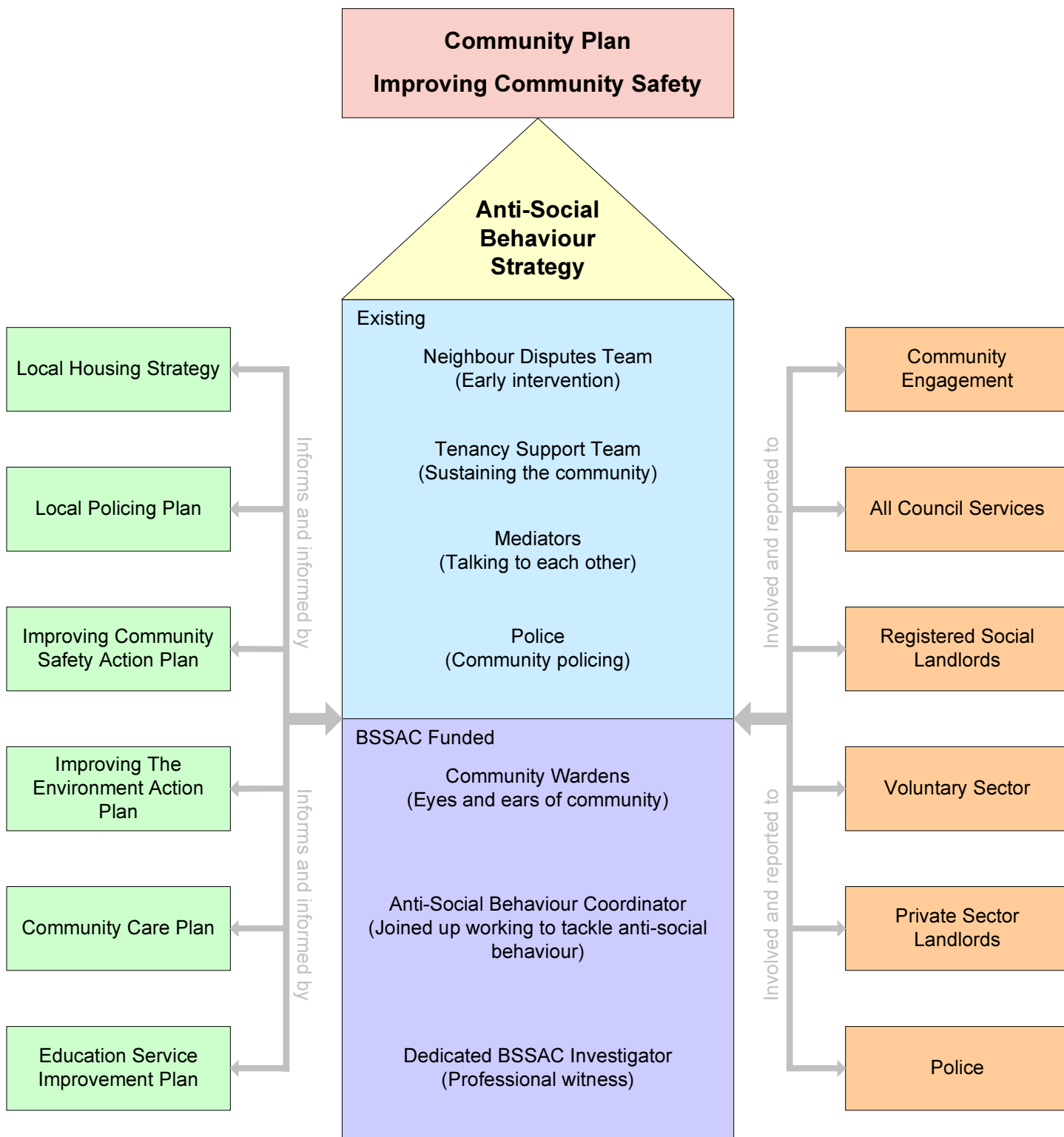
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BUILDING STRONG, SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES
COMMUNITY BASED WARDENS AND OTHER COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES TO TACKLE
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Anti-Social Behaviour Framework



Second Round Funding to Tackle Anti-social Behaviour

Appendix Two – Budget Breakdown 2004/05

PROPOSAL 1	TRANSFER OF 2 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR INVESTIGATORS FROM HRA	
	SALARIES/ NATIONAL INSURANCE/SUPPERANUATION	£42,000
	TOTAL	£42,000
PROPOSAL 2	UPGRADED ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR HELPLINE	
	ADDITIONAL STAFFING AND TRAINING	£25,000
	PUBLICITY MATERIALS FOR EXTENDED SERVICE	£3,000
	TOTAL	£28,000
PROPOSAL 3	EXTENSION OF VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT SCHEME	
	FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS	£3,000
	PUBLICITY MATERIALS FOR EXTENDED SERVICE	£1,000
	TOTAL	£4,000
PROPOSAL 4	ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR/UNDER AGE DRINKING CAMPAIGN	
	TRAINING AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN	£10,000
	TOTAL	£10,000
PROPOSAL 5	KEEPING PEOPLE INFORMED OF PROGRESS ETC.	
	PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF RESPOND UK NETPOINT SYSTEM	£45,000
	TOTAL	£45,000
PROPOSAL 6	COMMUNITY BASED INDEPENDENT MEDIATION	
	CREATION OF SMALL INDEPENDENT MEDIATION SERVICE	£70,000
	TOTAL	£70,000
PROPOSAL 7	BANK OF RELIEF WARDENS	
	DRAW-DOWN ACCOUNT TO TRAIN AND SALARY RELIEF WARDENS	£40,000
	TOTAL	£40,000

PROPOSAL 8	PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL VEHICLES FOR COMMUNITY VEHICLES	
	HIRE OF 3 VEHICLES @ £60 PER WEEK	£9,360
	RUNNING COSTS OF 3 VEHICLES @ £40 PER WEEK	£6,240
	TOTAL	£15,600
PROPOSAL 9	NEW POST OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY OFFICER	
	SALARY/NATIONAL INSURANCE AND SUPERANNUATION	£28,000
	PURCHASE OF IT EQUIPMENT AND OFFICE FURNITURE	£5,000
	TOTAL	£33,000
PROPOSAL 10	NEW POST OF POLICE-COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT OFFICER	
	SALARY/NATIONAL INSURANCE AND SUPERANNUATION	£20,000
	PURCHASE OF IT EQUIPMENT AND OFFICE FURNITURE	£5,000
	TOTAL	£25,000
	TOTAL COST OF PROPOSALS 1 TO 10	£312,600
	CONTINGENCY FUND	£5,130
	TOTAL BID AMOUNT	£317,730.00