

COMMUNITY SAFETY and LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - Examination into Boro Buzz

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this Final Report is to present the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel's assessment and proposals on the Boro Buzz in relation to the Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Investigation.

BACKGROUND

The Overview and Scrutiny Board approved the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panels examination into Boro Buzz. Essentially, the Boro Buzz initiative is a two week festival targeted to divert attention away from anti social behaviour and into a programme of events to occupy the attention of young people in Middlesbrough.

The initiative was triggered due to a spate of anti social behaviour throughout the town in October 2003, which was considered to have been prompted by three events in the nation's social calendar – Mischief Night, Halloween and Bonfire Night. For some time there had been a problem for Local Authorities and other statutory services related to the November 5th "Bonfire Night" celebration; in particular, anti social behaviour related to the misuse of fireworks and illegal bonfires in public spaces. The development of "trick or treat" activities associated with "Mischief Night" and "Halloween" had increased.

Potentially unruly groups of young people persisted for two or three weeks after Bonfire Night and it took a measured and dedicated effort from the Police and Street Wardens to change the behaviour of many young people. The co-ordination of this activity was provided by the AIM (Active Intelligence Mapping) group, which was Chaired by Middlesbrough Council.

In an attempt to reduce the likelihood of the problems experienced in 2003 repeating, the AIM group commissioned a "think tank" to suggest a way of providing alternative and diversionary activity. This initiative would be targeted towards young people in Middlesbrough to prevent the issues experienced in

2003 becoming worse in 2004. Approximately 30 representative organisations attended and the Boro Buzz initiative was born.

SCRUTINY EXAMINATION

The aim of the Investigation was to assess the Boro Buzz initiative in relation to its impact in tackling anti social behaviour and the costs associated with the initiative.

The Panel examined the marketing of the events and also met a range of representative organisations to assess the impact these events were having as a diversionary tactic. There was clear evidence that the events were well attended by the 19 - 23 age group and that the number of anti social incidents in 2004 and 2005 were both lower than those experienced in 2003. Not only had the number of incidents dropped but key services such as Police, Wardens, Fire Crews all conveyed the reduction in the more serious encounters such as starting independent fires, violence against fire crews, vandalism, criminal behaviour.

The Panel also examined the issue of funding to support this initiative and the difficulties encountered in continuing such a programme without an identified budget. The Panel are aware that the funding directed to this festival was used for its marketing and that a number of the costs were carried by individual providers or support provided voluntarily.

CONCLUSION

The Panel is aware that the incidents of anti social behaviour have dropped during the fortnight the Boro Buzz initiatives ran. The Panel is also of the view that Boro Buzz has made a valuable contribution to this reduction. However, enquiries with partner organisations could not determine the degree to which Boro Buzz impacts on these incidents, as there are a number of factors including educational awareness, weather, resources applied from other services etc which all impact on Anti Social behaviour.

The Panel appreciated that a number of the events are targeted towards those known to provoke or partake in anti social behaviour, however, how attracted these individuals are to the events could not be quantified.

The Panel is clear that a cultural change is required to achieve a real reduction in anti social behaviour within Middlesbrough and that the Initiative of Boro Buzz certainly contributes towards that goal. The reductions achieved during a two week period are tangible and the Panel supports the continuation of this festival and presents a range of proposals which are considered will enhance future programmes in further reducing incidents during this period.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Community Safety and leisure Scrutiny Panel recommends to the Executive, that: -

- A That the Council consider organising and running an annual community firework display for the people of Middlesbrough on Bonfire Night.
- B That the Council no longer use the term "Mischief night in any of their publications.
- C That events and competitions associated with Mischief night be renamed as Boro Buzz night.
- D That a full programme for marketing and distribution of leaflets be prepared earlier for any future Boro Buzz festival.
- E That Schools should be encouraged to promote Boro Buzz and provide supervised facilities during this period as a contribution towards diverting attention from Anti Social behaviour.
- F That consideration be given to identifying a specific budget provision within the Councils base budget for any future Boro Buzz events.
- G That events which could be provided free through the Leisure Department during Boro Buzz, should be promoted to encourage attendance and divert youngsters away from mischief.
- H That Community Councils be directly approached in connection with any future Boro Buzz event in their ward and encouraged to financially support the events through the Community Council Grant.
- I That the Youth Service should examine their staff levels to for the period of Boro Buzz and that they consider providing additional activities to support the festival.
- J That the co-operation between Outreach Youth Workers and Wardens continues during Boro Buzz to prevent Anti Social behaviour.
- K That the Executive Member report back to the Panel in August on the progress in developing a programme for a 2006 Boro Buzz festival.

Middlesbrough
Council


Middlesbrough
moving forward

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

7th FEBRUARY 2006

COMMUNITY SAFETY and LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL

FINAL REPORT

INVESTIGATION INTO BORO BUZZ

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 The purpose of this Final Report is to present the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel's assessment and proposals on the Boro Buzz in relation to the Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Investigation.

OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 2 The overall aim of the Scrutiny Investigation was to assess the Boro Buzz initiative in relation to its impact in tackling Anti social behaviour and the costs associated with the initiative.
- 3 To present the findings of the Scrutiny Investigation to the Executive for their consideration.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

- 4 The Scrutiny Panel met on 11th October 2005 and confirmed it would be addressing the Boro Buzz as its next subject of enquiry. Consequently the Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Investigation were established and are presented as follows: -

- (a) Assess the prime purpose of the “Boro Buzz” initiative.
- (b) Assess the quantifiable achievements and impact on anti social behaviour of the 2004/05 initiative.
- (c) Assess the lessons learnt and identify enhancements for the 2005/06 events.
- (d) Assess the financial implication and the sources of funding for these events.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 5 The Overview and Scrutiny Board approved the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panels Work Programme. The programme identified the Boro Buzz as being the third area of examination in the Panels work programme for 2005/06, and would follow the Panels assessment of the Warden Service.
- 6 **History** During October 2003 there was a spate of anti social behaviour throughout the town, which was considered to have been prompted by three events in the nation’s social calendar – Mischief Night, Halloween and Bonfire Night. For some time there had been a problem for Local Authorities and other statutory services related to the November 5th “Bonfire Night” celebration; in particular, anti social behaviour related to the misuse of fireworks and illegal bonfires in public spaces. The development of “trick or treat” activities associated with “Mischief Night” and “Halloween” had increased.
- 7 Potentially unruly groups of young people persisted for two or three weeks after Bonfire Night and it took a measured and dedicated effort from the Police and Street Wardens to change the behaviour of many young people. The co-ordination of this activity was provided by the AIM (Active Intelligence Mapping) group, chaired by the Council’s Executive Director of Environment & Neighbourhood Services. On Mischief Night of 2003, the Street Wardens in Middlesbrough received a total of 89 reports of anti-social behaviour. In addition, the type and severity of incidents was such that many incidents justified an urgent response
- 8 In an attempt to reduce the likelihood of the problems experienced in 2003 repeating, the AIM group commissioned a “think tank” to suggest a way of providing alternative and diversionary activity. This initiative would be targeted towards young people in Middlesbrough to prevent the issues that had been experienced in 2003 becoming worse in 2004. As a result, a meeting was held and attended by approximately 30 representatives from several organisations including Council departments and the Police. From this meeting, the concept of the Boro Buzz emerged. A list of organisations present at this meeting forms *Appendix A* to this report. It was considered that the Boro Buzz concept should be extended to all children and young

people with an element being targeted towards particular groups within the festival.

- 9 The Safer Middlesbrough Partnership created an initiative in 2004, which was targeted to reduce anti-social behaviour and nuisance in the town during Halloween. The initiative was aimed to encourage young people off the streets and into other activities during this period. Activities such as establishing a number of football teams, DJ workshops, production of film/video in addition to Halloween walks. Other participating events such as judo sessions and dance sessions were also created and attracted many young people to participate.
- 10 The Council received over a thousand enquiries in the run up to the initiative. In operation some 27 teams were formed for Football, over 100 young people joined in the dance sessions and performed to a sell out audience. With around a hundred individual events being organised in Middlesbrough the initiative was hailed a success by both the Police and the Council.
- 11 The number of incidents of anti-social behaviour reported to the Street Wardens on Mischief Night of 2004 was 63. This equated to a 29% reduction in anti-social behaviour as compared to the previous year (89). In addition, the Fire Service reported a decrease of 15% in fires, including bonfires, deliberate and accidental fires, dropping from a total of 139 during the period 25-31 October in 2003 to 118 in 2004.
- 12 Reports of criminal damage to the police fell by 13% (129 incidents for the period 25-31 October 2004 as compared to 149 incidents in 2003). An indication of the level of actual participation in Boro Buzz during the Festival period and a brief insight into the activities a summary is presented below: -
 - 62 young people attended the Powerboating events during the week
 - 110 young people attended the Dance Sensation 2004 at Middlesbrough Theatre
 - 50 people attended a Basketball event in Acklam
 - Over 20 people went by train to the National Railway Museum
 - Over 70 members of the public attended the Fire Engine pull in Albert Park
 - 160 young people took part in a "5-a-side" tournament
 - 65 people attended the Langdon Square Youth Disco
 - Over 35 children attended a Fancy Dress Party at Marton Community Centre
 - Over 60 children attended a Halloween Disco at Langdon Square Community Centre
 - 24 young people took part in outdoor activities at Peat Rigg
 - 50 children and 30 adults attended a Halloween Party at Breckon Hill Community Centre
 - 27 children took part in Mask Making and Painting activities at Teesside Play & Education Resource Centre (Percy)
 - 40 children and 15 parents took part at an event at ACE.

- 13 With this level of interest and the success it attracted, the Council had inserted an action within the 2005/06 Corporate Plan which was to hold a second Boro Buzz event and involve more young people in art and sports based activities.

PANELS SCRUTINY EXAMINATION

14 Setting the Scene

The Scrutiny Panel was aware that the Executive Member for Community Safety and Leisure had presented to Council in June 2004 the concerns regarding the level of anti social behaviour during Halloween and Bonfire night period. Particular reference was made to the issues relating to what has become known as "Mischief Night" and the effort to discourage the use of the term. During October 2004 the Local Press were publicly referencing the Impending Boro Buzz festival to coax young people off the streets with the provision of a range of events considered to be the largest programme of events for young people in the area.

- 15 These events were provided and co-ordinated by the Council, through the Lifelong Learning service and a number of other Agencies. The Panel invited the head of lifelong Learning to attend a meeting and inform the Panel on the actions and achievements of the 2004 initiative and also to outline the intentions of the 2005 festival.

- 16 The Panel were informed that there was a small-targeted number of youngsters (approx. 70) who were considered have taken or provoked anti social behaviour and the Boro Buzz initiative would be targeted towards them with the aim of diverting attention from committing Anti Social behaviour during this period.

- 17 The Panel was informed that approximately 180 events in 2004 were undertaken and although a number of activities were already being provided through youth clubs. an estimated 50% of these events were a direct response of Boro Buzz

Partner Agencies

- 18 The Panel had received information from the Service department co-ordinating the range of projects delivered during 2004 and an outline of what events were planned for 2005. The Panel appreciated that the selection and delivery of these events was determined by a number of agencies. One of the Panels key lines of enquiry was to ascertain if these projects had successfully targeted known individuals and if their delivery had been successful in achieving that objective.

- 19 The Panel was advised that a selection of agencies would provide the panel with information regarding the delivery and impact these events had had. Consequently the Panel selected six partner organisations and invited them to attend a Panel meeting and convey their evidence.

The Organisations invited were :-

- Police
- Fire Service
- Warden Service
- Connexions
- Helmington Linx Project
- Youth Service / Directions.

Police The police confirmed that over 100 police officers were deployed in Middlesbrough on Mischief night making this extremely demanding on police resources.

Fire Service The service confirmed it was very difficult to quantify the actual impact an initiative like Boro Buzz actually had as there are a number of issues running concurrently which all had an impact on the day's behaviour.

The Fire service had been visiting schools and had spoken to pupils regarding fire dangers and their safety. The service also placed additional fire engines on duty during this period.

Wardens A number of Wardens turned out voluntarily over this period to assist in limiting any anti social behaviour and also to ensure the projects operating during the festival ran as smoothly as possible. The Service was aware that a number of projects were targeted towards known individuals who had a reputation for being disruptive.

Connexions The actual events within the Boro Buzz festival was not part of the Connection brief; however, they did facilitate and fund the distribution of leaflets to every child in Middlesbrough to make this project a success.

Youth Service and Hemlington Linx. These organisations had played an active part in Boro Buzz and involved young people in all aspects of the programme. One project involved over 300 young people performing on stage. The service had extended its opening hours and offered such things as free swims, which over 2000 places were taken up.

Concerns were expressed that should Bonfire, mischief or Halloween fall on a weekend then on those occasions and later on in the evening Youth Workers were not scheduled to work and consequently at these times the number of diversionary activities fell.

Specifically the Hemlington Linx project was targeted to people prone to Anti Social behaviour, which had proven to be successful in attracted these people into diversionary activities.

Evidence of achievement

- 20 The Panel wanted to identify clear evidence that Boro Buzz was having a direct impact on reducing anti social behaviour during this period. Also if the known offenders of ASB whom the project targeted actually took part in the

events and that the facility was not simply being used by teenagers who would normally use other facilities, such as youth clubs etc as a means of recreational activity.

- 21 The Panel received a range of information including statistical, observational and perceived. The Panel was informed that it was not easy to clearly identify the actual impact the Boro Buzz festival had on combating anti social behaviour. The emergency services and other partner agencies acknowledged that there were a number of factors which influenced the statistics. Weather was considered to be a significant factor, which impacted on the volume and type of incidents encountered during this time. However, while it was difficult to identify actual tangible evidence that the Boro Buzz had reduced anti social behaviour. The Police, Fire Service and other key agencies conveyed to the Panel that they considered the Boro Buzz initiative did provide a substantial contribution in tackling such behaviour and should be promoted. The diversionary activities were considered to make a noticeable measured reduction in attacks and abuse on fire crews and general mischief had been noted since the festival was introduced.
- 22 The Fire Service did outline to the Panel that other actions such as Fire prevention publicity, Fire safety with schools, Promotion of organised events etc were also factors which improved peoples awareness of such dangers and activities which could collectively contribute to the reduction.
- 23 Regarding statistical information the Fire Service had recorded a drop in the starting of deliberate fires from 89 incidents in 2004 to 41 incidents in 2005. This was considered a significant reduction in terms of figures. However, it was noted that some anomalies had emerged at an AIMS meeting which indicated that instances of criminal damage in the week leading up to Mischief Night had increased significantly, yet surprisingly the starting of deliberate fires had not increased, as was the normal pattern. The Panel was advised that this needed to be monitored in the future.
- 24 The Fire Service was called to 233 incidents in 2004 and 205 incidents in 2005. The Fire Service also confirm there has been a reduction in the number of attacks on fire crews and commented that this may be due to diversionary actions but it could not be qualified.
- 25 The Police attended 257 extra anti social behaviour incidents over the period from mischief night to bonfire night. Mischief night encouraged incidents of vandalism and criminal damage as a form anti social behaviour. Consequently, the Police had 117 incidents on mischief night alone in 2005.
- 26 The statistical comparisons being made were 2004 against 2003 as a measure of the Boro Buzz achievement. However, the Panel was curious if 2003 was an exceptional year encountering a lot of mischief and criminal damage and in reality the 2004 figures may have been similar to previous years. Consequently, the Panel requested statistics for 2001 and 2002 to ascertain if the figure for 2003, which was used as a comparison, was exceptionally high and that the 2003 figure was not the norm. However, as the

Panel was compiling their findings they were informed the figures for 2001 and 2002 were not available.

Funding

- 27 The Panel were informed that the agencies involved with Boro Buzz had funded their own events contained within the festival and that any grants available, were very small and very few, with virtually no sponsorship from outside bodies.
- 28 For the 2005 Boro Buzz £20,000 had been made available (£5k various sources, £5k education £10k from CMT corporate) which the Lifelong service had managed. The majority of this budget was used on promoting the events. The promotional material included the publication and distribution of a leaflet to every 13 to 19 year old resident in Middlesbrough. It also funded direct advertising through Community Centres, Youth clubs and Schools.
- 29 The Panel was informed that the Budget for Boro Buzz was not embedded in the Councils core budget. Consequently, should the Boro Buzz continue in future years the issue of funding would need to be addressed.

FINDINGS

- 30 The Boro Buzz Festival ran from 21st October to 5th November 2005, with specific focus on the days known as Mischief Night, Halloween and Firework night. The Police confirmed that 117 incidents of Anti Social behaviour had been encountered on Mischief night alone, which was approximately twice the normal amount. Generally the Anti Social behaviour on mischief night had a different emphasis to normal nights with greater incidents of damage and vandalism. It is generally considered the name given to this night is tantamount to encouraging this sort of behaviour. Children normally required to be home by 8.30 by their parents are allowed to stay out until 9.30 –10.00 PM. Incidents where teenagers are found carrying building material, scaffolding etc was encountered on Mischief night, and was expressed as not being uncommon.
- 31 While 13000 leaflets were distributed throughout Middlesbrough, the organisations undertaking the task of collation and distribution expressed some concern regarding the limited time to package and distribute. The Panel considered that improved planning should be undertaken to ensure that the supporting organisations has sufficient time for this task. Another area the Panel considered could be further explored was the general marketing, as while it was expressed that Boro Buzz was advertised in the press, Panel Members had not seen any such advertisement.
- 32 The Panel had recognised the purpose of Boro Buzz and the difficulties increased Anti Social behaviour would have on the culture and living

environment. The Panel was conscious that it was important that the youth of Middlesbrough did not perceive the Boro Buzz festival as a reward for bad behaviour by providing an attractive event / trip which was only directed towards those who were known to be mischievous.

33 The Panel enquired as to the incidents of independent fires and the hazard that they had both in general safety and the trigger they had in violence against Fire crews. Although the incidence of independent fires was reducing, the Fire Service would support an organised community fire event run by the Council as a means of reducing independent fires and the associated dangers.

34 The Panel also explored issues associated with the Youth Service in its connection with Boro Buzz. Some of the problems considered by the Panel was that Youth Workers did not work on Sundays even during the Boro buzz period or if one of the three targeted nights fell on a Sunday. This may be associated with the employment of seasonal staff; however, as this period could be forecasted the Panel considered the staffing issue could be addressed. The Panel was also advised that Youth Clubs were closed on a night time and although this maybe a budgetary issue the Panel considered this should be further explored and consideration given to opening these facilities and providing additional activities during any future Boro Buzz festival.

The Panel explored the present use of Schools. recognising these were substantial facilities located in the centre of communities. The Panel was informed that some schools were reluctant to open the facilities for community use due to the risk of vandalism and also the additional cost of post activity cleaning. However, while some schools in Middlesbrough already had community facilities attached to them and allowed some community use after school hours. The Panel was informed that none of the Schools provided specific events targeted to assist the Boro Buzz initiative. Schools had a range of facilities and the Government had extended the School programme to provide the opportunity for community use. The Youth Service had also been celebrating a youth event during the week of Boro Buzz since 1999, which included initiatives such as taking kids away on residential events. The Panel considered that greater co-ordination could be achieved through improved communication between these services.

35 The Panel appreciated that there has been a diverse range of activities provided during this Boro Buzz period and that a range of organisations were involved in its delivery. Members of the Panel had intended to attend some of the events, however, unfortunately none actually did and therefore the information on the events success was from the service and partners. The Panel did consider that there were areas for improvement and should the Boro Buzz festival continue in 2006 then these proposals were considered.

36 The Panel was aware that the Boro Buzz festival runs for a fortnight and that a number of facilities are not made available during Sundays. As the purpose of Boro buzz is to provide a diversionary alternative to mischief and other forms of anti social behaviour the panel considers that facilities normally unavailable

to the public on Sundays should endeavour to provide the facilities daily throughout the festival period.

CONCLUSION

- 37 The Panel commenced its examination in October 2005 and concluded its enquiries in December.
- 38 The Panel wanted to identify quantifiable evidence that Boro Buzz was impacting on the targeted individuals who promoted or actioned anti social behaviour. They could not find direct evidence to support this; however, the Panel and the partners were convinced that tackling this issue required some cultural change and that the Boro buzz initiative was contributing towards that goal. The Panel would have preferred to look at trends beyond 2003, however, it was evident that there was a noticeable reduction in incidents in the two years the Boro Buzz event had been operating and 2003.
- 39 Boro Buzz was clearly a festival of activities targeted to a period of time around Mischief night, Halloween and Bonfire night. Its purpose was to divert attention away from anti social behaviour towards greater engagement in alternative activities. The target band for marketing was 13 to 19 year olds yet it also focuses on those up to 23 into activities which are provided between the hours of 3.00 PM and 11.00 PM. The Panel recognised that these events did attract people within the targeted age band. However, the Panel are aware there are a range of issues which could contribute to the reduction in anti social behaviour during this period including, education, engagement with the emergency services, the volume of police / wardens, etc and the weather on these days.
- 40 The Panel concluded that this was one initiative, which could contribute to the development of cultural change, which was targeted, to arrest the incidence of anti social behaviour in Middlesbrough. To achieve such a substantial objective, this report was presenting some proposals which were considered would contribute towards achieving that goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 41 The Panel's key recommendations to the Executive are as outlined below.
- A That the Council consider organising and running an annual community firework display for the people of Middlesbrough on Bonfire Night.
- B That the Council no longer use the term "Mischief night in any of their publications.
- C That events and competitions associated with Mischief night is renamed as Boro Buzz night.

- D That a full programme for marketing and distribution of leaflets be prepared earlier for any future Boro Buzz festival.
- E That Schools should be encouraged to promote Boro Buzz and provide supervised facilities during this period as a contribution towards diverting attention from Anti Social behaviour.
- F That consideration be given to identifying a specific budget provision within the Councils base budget for any future Boro Buzz events.
- G That events which could be provided free through the Leisure Department during Boro Buzz, should be promoted to encourage attendance and divert youngsters away from mischief.
- H That Community Councils be directly approached in connection with any future Boro Buzz event in their ward and encouraged to financially support the events through the Community Council Grant.
- I That the Youth Service should examine their staff levels to for the period of Boro Buzz and that they consider providing additional activities to support the festival.
- J That the cooperation between Outreach Youth Workers and Wardens continues during Boro Buzz to prevent Anti Social behaviour.
- K That the Executive Member report back to the Panel in August on the progress in developing a programme for a 2006 Boro Buzz festival.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 42 The Panel is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular the co-operation we have received from the following: -

Cllr Paul Thompson	Executive Member for Education and Skills
Andy White	Head of Community Education
Terry Murphy	Locality manager - Education
Guy Hall	Inspector, Cleveland Police
Tony Marwood	Cleveland Fire Brigade
Bill Thompson	Warden Service Middlesbrough
David Goats	Connexions
John Burn	Hemlington Linx
Becky Roberts	Helmlington Linx
Hazel Morris	Youth Service
Jackie Lodge	Youth Service

**COUNCILLOR CHRIS ROBSON
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January 2006

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were consulted or referenced to during this Scrutiny and in the compilation of this report:

- (a) Evaluation of the Boro Buzz Festival. report to Executive December 2004
- (b) Minutes of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panels of 11th October, 19th October, 8th November, 29th November 2005
- (c) Notes of inquaret meeting 17th January 2006

ABBREVIATIONS

Used within the Report, Minutes or Presentations

AIM	Active Intelligence mapping
ASB	Anti Social Behaviour