

Title of meeting: Safety in the Community Portfolio Meeting

Date of meeting: 20th March 2024

Subject: Restorative Plan for the Hotwalls and Camber Dock

Report by: Paddy May, Corporate Strategy Manager

Report written by: Lisa Wills, Community Safety Strategy and Partnerships Manager

Wards affected: All but especially St Thomas

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To provide the Cabinet Member for Safety in the Community with a summary of the work undertaken to address the issues of anti-social behaviour ("ASB") in and around the Hotwalls and Camber Dock, and to recommend the implementation of a co-ordinated action plan, for the Spring / Summer of 2024.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Cabinet Member for Safety in the Community is recommended to:

1. note the coordinated activity that took place in the summer of 2023 in response to the ASB in and around the Hotwalls and the Camber Dock (see sections 3, 4 and 5)
2. approve the action plan for the Spring / Summer of 2024 - see appendix 3 - which will be supported by Portsmouth Mediation Service and the chair of Operation Nautical and progress reported to future meetings of the Cabinet Member for Safety in the Community and to the Ward Councillors.
3. that delegated authority be given to the Corporate Strategy Manager in consultation with the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services, the Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services and the Cabinet Member for Safety in the Community to make any further necessary adjustments to the action plan.

3. Background

3.1 A report presented to the Cabinet Member for Safety in the Community in [October 2023](#) set out the background to the development of a long-term restorative plan in Old Portsmouth. Portsmouth Mediation Service (PMS) was commissioned in April 2022 to explore a different 'restorative' approach to



dealing with the ASB issues that present at the Camber Dock on the 'apron'¹ next to the BAR (Ineos) building.

- 3.2 PMS worked with residents, businesses, and youth organisations in the area over the winter of 2022 to agree plans for the spring/summer season 2023. These included:
- Co-ordinated youth outreach (funded by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner ("OPCC")) and additional activities in the area and on Southsea beach, including resident participation in youth outreach funded by the OPCC and PMS
 - Fortnightly meetings with the Hotwalls and Camber Dock Restorative Support Group
 - Flyer about the work delivered to all households in the area
 - Brief face-to-face surveys with residents and young people
 - Strong links with Operation Nautical
 - Filming in the area by a young person with funding from police community budgeting event (Mutual Gain)
 - Community Day
- 3.3 The very poor weather across most of the summer meant it was very difficult to achieve any real engagement with young people and by extension, evaluate the impact of any diversionary activities.
- 3.4 Before the co-ordinated programme of youth activities began, in the very hot weather leading up to the May half term holiday, South Parade Pier became the centre of significant ASB (and some reported violence). The Police managed the issues with dispersal powers and community engagement. Whilst this displacement was not related to the activities that were put in place later in the summer (see below) it does demonstrate the importance of being flexible in terms of responding to issues if the main focus of the ASB is not where initially expected.
- 3.5 The diversionary sporting activities at the Camber began on Monday 25th July, and included regular buses to paddleboarding on Eastney Beach, commissioned from the Andrew Simpson Centre, and photography 'Walkshops'. Youth outreach workers were present in the area for at least two hours per day on weekdays. Urbond were able to provide some cover at weekends, but this was dependant on capacity. Residents joined youth workers to engage with the young people on several occasions during the programme.
- 3.6 As a result of a faulty door mechanism, temporary fencing on the Camber apron was used to protect access to the building which also reduced the space available for young people to congregate and moved some smaller groups to other areas of the dock.
- 3.7 The presence of the huge Southeast Water pipe at Governor's Green, and the extremely wet weather during July and August, meant there were very few

¹ The paved area immediately outside the building, in front of the roll up door.

occasions when groups of young people gathered in the area. Despite the best efforts of staff and agencies, the programme failed to divert young people away from the Camber apron. Although there was a reduction in the numbers of young people coming to the area, the police were required to use their dispersal powers several times during the summer².

3.8 The October report concluded by identifying next steps which included the following:

- Explore potential links to coastal works;
- Increase crime and ASB reporting to police and council;
- Sustainability - explore community interest organisation;
- Community fundraising;
- Encouraging take up of a water safety programme in secondary schools, working with PCC colleagues;
- Information leaflet for residents with colleagues from Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services (CLRS);
- End of year event - using photos that show how the area and the seafront as a whole has changed since the 1950s.

4. Impact assessment of the work undertaken

4.1 The following paragraphs provide a summary of the work undertaken over the past 18 months in the area and its impact:

4.2 Managing increasing demand during summer months.

4.2.1 Council and police data suggests there is increased demand for management / enforcement of ASB hotspot areas right across the city during the summer months when young people are on holiday, and the community is out and about. The seafront, particularly around South Parade Pier, and Old Portsmouth are examples of these ASB hotspots that create this increased demand. 'Hotspot policing' is recommended in the national [ASB Action Plan](#) as a way of targeting resources. However, given existing police resources, enforcement is a last resort and council resources are also stretched. Skilful management and adult surveillance might prevent large groups of young people forming and CCTV can be used as a deterrent where clearly signposted.

4.3 Data report and survey findings

4.3.1 We have compared the number of ASB reports in 2023, with the number received in 2019³. A summary is provided below:

- Baseline data for 2019 was gathered from police, community wardens for postcodes or streets identified as being in the Camber / Hotwalls or seafront areas 4
- There was no significant change in the number of reports to police or community wardens. There were n139 reports to Community Wardens in

² 9 x s34 authorities, mostly covering weekends between the end of May and start of September.

³ Data for 2020, 2021 were impacted by Covid restrictions and are not reliable as comparisons.

⁴ A list of roads/postcodes is available on request.

2019 and n130 in 2023. There was a slight increase in incidents reported to the police of 4%, n6. These changes are relatively small and indicate a similar level of ASB in this area in the summers of 2019 and 2023.

- The very poor summer weather has likely played a major part in reducing reports to police and community wardens during July and August 2023.
- There were no reports of jumping from the Square Tower this year, but the IOW Ferry was prevented from docking on several separate occasions because young people were close by in the water.
- There was an increase in the number of times that 'Section 34'⁵ notices and subsequent powers have been used. Some of these were over the May bank holiday weekend and tended to coincide with the better weather.
- There have been suggestions that disorder around South Parade Pier in June could have been related to theft of alcohol from the local Co-Op. Whilst the disorder was not associated with displacement caused by the diversionary activities at the Camber, this is not to say that the people causing the disorder did not choose to move to a new location. This shows the importance of being flexible in how to respond to issues.
- Of the recorded incidents at the 'BAR' building, 69% (n200) specifically mention 'youths', with numbers ranging from 2 to 50. Only some of these reports were passed on to the police or community wardens.

4.3.2 Face to face surveys were also undertaken with residents and young people. 114 responses to the survey were analysed- 72 from residents and 42 from young people. The results indicate that young visitors are welcome in the area but that residents were concerned about the large numbers, noise and anti-social behaviour, and would like them to be more respectful of places and things. Residents also expressed concern that young people were putting themselves in physical danger. When asked what they would say to the young people if they could speak to them, residents said:

The issue is big groups of young people, often not Portsmouth people, who come to deliberately cause ASB

Just think about everyone else around you.

I would be too frightened to talk to the young visitors as I have witnessed them swearing at some who challenged their vandalism.

Enjoy the space.. pick up rubbish.. be part of the community.

Most young people did come from the Portsmouth area (n30/n42), although some did come from outside the city. When asked why they came, the majority said:

⁵ A dispersal order, granted under section 34 of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, gives police officers the power to disperse anyone for the purpose of reducing the likelihood of - (a) members of the public in the locality being harassed, alarmed or distressed, or (b) the occurrence of crime and disorder.



'....to hang out with friends..' or '.. to jump into the water'

4.4 Restorative Plan for Old Portsmouth

4.4.1 PMS have worked hard to deliver improved community relationships for the council and are committed to investing their time and energy in the area going forward. Please see their update on progress at Appendix 1 and the extracts below:

- *The ultimate aim is to help encourage and empower local people to work together for positive solutions and not to become dependent on outside agencies or indeed too reliant on the council.*
- *There is now more understanding of what can and can't be done in relation to these summertime challenges, this has helped to inject more realism and better manage expectations.*
- *Working with local people is a long game, but the years go quickly. The restorative journey contributes to a more resilient neighbourhood where the community feel more connected and empowered in working together on ideas that can help mitigate some of the negative impact of the young summertime visitors. Residents and traders understand that Old Portsmouth is hugely attractive for young people to visit and that many of them are actually very well behaved. There is also an increasing acknowledgment that some of the young people who get involved with ASB need support and help. Some local residents and business have emerged with a desire to use their time, resources, and energy in positive programs for some of our city's youth.*

4.5 Youth Outreach

4.5.1 It is clear from the Youth Outreach Report, and the survey responses, that despite significant attempts to divert young people away from the area, albeit hampered by the poor weather, groups of young people will continue to visit the area when the weather is hot. It is important that any diversion is not moving problems to different parts of the city.

4.5.2 The view of youth workers is that young people are allowed to be there and are generally well-behaved, but often over exuberant. This being the case, careful and co-ordinated management of the area will be required by all parties to prevent large groups forming and minimise nuisance, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. This is a multi-generational issue and as such sustainable and consistent youth outreach work should be considered to develop a restorative response to problems; building relationships between young people and residents.

5. Area context

5.1 Land ownership and management in the Camber area is complex. Some residents in the area were unhappy about the decision to accommodate Ben Ainslie's Ineos Team for the Americas Cup in 2014. The council is currently awaiting the conclusion of a recent Planning Inspectorate hearing relating to the alleged existence of a public Right of Way around the Camber quay - including the 'apron' area and the building.



- 5.2 The current leaseholders (BA Technologies Holdings Ltd) have use of the 'apron' area immediately outside the building (where young people often gather). The lease arrangements for the building are managed by the council's asset management team. Both the Right of Way decision and lease arrangements could impact on the community tensions in the area.
- 6. The proposed content for an action plan - see appendix 3**
- 6.1 Based on the above outcomes and work, this section of the report suggests the content which has been used to develop an area action plan. The [October report](#) put forward several ideas from members of the Hotwalls and Camber Dock Restorative Support Group. Some of these ideas are set out below, alongside plans that have been developed by officers. Some of these recommendations have been developed into an action plan for the area which will be supported by Portsmouth Mediation Service and others and progress reported to the Cabinet Member for Safety in the Community and the Ward Councillors. A number of these actions are likely to be able to be implemented as no cost / low cost actions but others may require formal approval to be taken forward.
- 6.2 **Other developments**
- 6.2.1 As well as providing new signage, the international port is supporting the fishing community by applying for grants to install onshore power and providing new loading/unloading equipment. Fish Portsmouth have increased their activity by approximately 30% since taking over the business and the expansion of facilities will continue to increase the number of fishing vessels, which may also help to provide 'natural surveillance'⁶ when moored alongside the 'apron'. Adult activity such as this is likely to deter large groups from gathering.
- 6.2.2 A new association of local fishermen is in development which is likely to help improve communication and working arrangements. The owners of Fish Portsmouth are already members of the Hotwalls and Camber Dock Restorative Support Group.
- 6.2.3 The council has recently approved a new and comprehensive **Water Safety Management Strategy** that includes a regular review of signage around the island, and the requirement to deliver water safety sessions in secondary schools (section 9).
- 7. Reason for recommendations**
- 7.1 As outlined in sections three to six, considerable work has been undertaken to deal with ASB at the Hotwalls and the Camber Dock. As this report also outlines this is a complicated issue and there are many variables, many of them outside the direct remit of the Council, that impacts on this issue. It is recommended that the Cabinet Member notes all the activity that took place in 2023 and the impact of this activity.
- 7.2 It is proposed that the action plan attached as Appendix 3 to this report be approved. This plan is based on the suggested approach detailed in this

⁶[Natural surveillance - Wikipedia](#)

report. The content has been discussed and agreed with the relevant parts of the Council and with relevant partners. This will put in place measures that should help manage the potential ASB over the Spring / Summer of 2024.

7.3 It is proposed that delegated authority be given to the Corporate Strategy Manager in consultation with the Director of Housing, Neighbourhood and Building Services, the Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services and the Cabinet Member for Safety in the Community to make any further adjustments to the action plan. This will enable the plan to be put in place in a timely manner to influence the Spring / Summer of 2024.

7.4 The Cabinet Member for Safety in the Community working with the other Ward Councillors for St Thomas will receive progress reports on the action plan. The Head of Community Safety along with the Corporate Projects Manager, the agencies forming Operation Nautical and CLRS have agreed to work with PMS to oversee the delivery of the action plan for the next 12 months. The action plan includes activity that would have happened anyway, as well as community action driven by residents themselves.

8. Integrated impact assessment

8.1 See Appendix 2 attached.

9. Legal implications

9.1 The report is clear that the Police hold the chief legal powers to deal with anti-social behaviour at the Camber. The Council through Portsmouth International Port is engaged with the issue as landowner and statutory harbour authority for the Camber dock.

9.2 The report also notes the complexity of the legal relationships between occupiers and visitors to the Camber, and the potential for conflict arising from difference of opinion in relation to an alleged right of way and leasehold matters. The anti-social behaviour at the centre of this report has the potential to aggravate the likelihood of any legal dispute between the Council, occupiers and visitors.

9.3 Fostering good relations between different groups in a community is a widely recognised local authority function, with a particular statutory dimension under the public sector equality duty (s.149 Equality Act 2010) where persons with protected characteristics are engaged, for example by virtue of age. To this end, a community action plan is an entirely appropriate course of action.

10. Director of Finance's comments

10.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation of this report although the final action plan will have financial implications.

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Signed by:
Paddy May

Corporate Strategy Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Portsmouth Mediation Service Update - Restorative Plan for Hotwalls & Camber Dock - January 2024

Appendix 2 - The Integrated Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 - The Action Plan

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Youth Outreach Report	Strategy Unit/PMS
Data report	Strategy Unit
Survey Findings	Strategy Unit

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by:

Portsmouth Mediation Service Update

Restorative Plan for Hotwalls & Camber Dock - January 2024

There has over recent years become a gradual and growing realisation among various local stakeholders, agencies, and council that we cannot police or patrol our way out of the perennial summertime problems associated with large groups of young people visiting the area to swim, dive and hang out.

In commissioning Portsmouth Mediation Service (PMS) to help develop a restorative plan for these recurring issues PCC became specifically intentional about developing greater communication, cooperation and collaboration among local people & business and the agencies and organisations that were seeking to support and serve them.

At the core of this restorative approach was the idea of working WITH people and not doing things TO them or FOR them. It is a key principle that PCC has adopted in other spheres of city life such as social services and education. The ultimate aim is to help encourage and empower local people to work together for positive solutions and not to become dependent on outside agencies or indeed too reliant on the council. 'Together we are Stronger' has become a strapline for this restorative journey.

In a world where everyone wants a fast fix to toxic situations it's important to remind ourselves that there is no quick way to build strong positive relationships. The PMS team have spent many painstaking hours in developing and nurturing personal relationships with some of the key movers and shakers in the locality. The PMS spade work for this project has been numerous one to one meetings over coffee and lunch, encouraging local people who live and work in the neighbourhood to come and work together on ideas and solutions that can each incrementally help make the summer situation better. This work of helping to envision and enlist local restorative champions and ambassadors is ongoing and PMS are currently meeting new people who they have connected with via the public surveys that we have so far conducted.

A direct result of this 'spadework' was the formation of the Hotwalls & Camber Dock Restorative Support Group. A group of local residents and stakeholders along with various support agencies and organisations. The group meets once a month in the winter and twice a month in the summertime, it has now been meeting in various venues across Old Portsmouth regularly for over 14 months.

It is fair to say that a feature of many of these meetings has been the anger and frustration vented by many of its local members. In most mediation events this is entirely normal and to be expected, before people are ready to look and move forward, they need to deal with the frustrations of the past. It's part of a process where people feel that they are being listened to and it's a major step towards moving forward. Difficult conversations never feel positive, yet they need to take place and the restorative group has become a safe environment for honest communication between many partners with different perspectives. There is now more understanding of what can and can't be done in relation to these summertime challenges, this has helped to inject more realism and better manage expectations.

Working with local people is a long game, but the years go quickly. The restorative journey contributes to a more resilient neighbourhood where the community feel more connected and empowered in working together on ideas that can help mitigate some of the negative impact of the young summertime visitors. Residents and traders understand that Old Portsmouth is hugely attractive for young people to visit and that many of them are actually very well behaved. There is also an increasing acknowledgment that some of the young people who get involved with ASB need support and help. Some local residents and business have emerged with a desire to use their time, resources, and energy in positive Programmes for some of our city's youth.

PMS have also taken the restorative leadership in supporting our local youth organisations to coordinate and collaborate on a joined-up approach to youth outreach and activities. Again, the restorative message here is that Together we are Stronger. The aim for this summer will be to build on this Youth Support Alliance and relieve further pressure on our hard-pressed Police and PCC wardens.

This summer will see a greater emphasis on connecting with the young people who visit the Hotwalls & Camber Dock on hot summer days. Building positive relationships with some of these visitors and connecting them to some of the local people will be another key step forward in this ongoing journey.

It is also worth noting that while PCC commissioned this restorative approach primarily to help reduce the summer anti-social behaviour. The benefits of local people working more closely together will have a positive impact on the local neighbourhood and economy throughout the whole year.

Steve Rolls
Portsmouth Mediation Service