

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Safety in the Community

Date of meeting: 6th October 2023

Subject: Camber Dock and Hotwalls - Restorative Plan and young people's wellbeing

Report by: Lisa Wills, Strategy and Partnerships Manager

Wards affected: All - but specifically St Thomas

1. Information requested by Cllr Holder

2. Purpose of report

2.1 To provide the Cabinet Member with a summary of work undertaken to address the issues of anti-social behaviour in and around the Hotwalls and Camber Dock, and to recommend a further report is brought back to the Cabinet Member once the impact of current activity has been assessed.

3. Background

3.1 Developing positive relationships is one of the long-term priorities included in Portsmouth's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2030. This priority involves supporting and enabling individuals to grow their 'relational capital' and requires a step change in many areas of city life over the next 10 years. These changes can be categorised as:

A Organisational culture - the way we work with colleagues, deliver services to customers, and collaborate with other organisations

B Community - the way we relate to our neighbours and our 'place' including the environment, housing, and other public services

C The next generation - how we teach our children, at home and in school, to manage emotions and/or resolve conflict, how and when we need to intervene

3.2 The development of a long-term restorative plan in Old Portsmouth supports this city priority and addresses each of the above categories equally.

4. Context

4.1 From the May Bank Holiday, all through the summer, Southsea Seafront and the Old Portsmouth area attracts thousands of visitors. Over the years there has been a range of problems with groups of young people congregating around the Hotwalls, Victoria

Pier, and the Camber Dock and jumping into the sea where tides, currents, and marine traffic make it dangerous.

- 4.2 Despite serious injuries to individual young people in the past, the risk and excitement of this activity continues to draw young people from across the city, and from further afield. It is reportedly seen as a generational 'rite of passage' and is likely to continue despite attempts to stop it or divert young people to safer swimming areas. This is a perennial, 'wicked'¹ problem that will not be easily solved.
- 4.3 The presence of large groups of young people, also generates considerable annoyance, anxiety and sometimes fear in some of the older residents and business owners.
- 4.4 Conflict between generations is not a new phenomenon, but anecdotally, police colleagues report young people are generally polite when approached and just want to know what they can do and where. Risk taking behaviour is part of growing up but resident's concerns for the safety of young people, and their often-inconsiderate behaviour, can generate high emotions.
- 4.5 Diverting, containing, or moderating the behaviour of a small group of young people has been the subject of many multi-agency meetings, detailed discussions and research over the years involving staff from seafront management, community wardens and police etc.
- 4.6 In the summer of 2019, the problems at the Hotwalls became very serious when a PCSO was surrounded by youths, and involved significant disorder, bordering on violence. The following two years were less problematic, mainly because of Covid restrictions, although some problems were displaced to Southsea Common
- 4.7 Also in October 2019, the Seafront Manager commissioned a report from water safety consultants investigating the feasibility of a floating diving platform (see appendix 1). In summary floating platforms are designed for areas of calm inland water - lakes, lagoons, sheltered harbours etc., not for proximity to busy, tidal shipping lanes/coast lines. The report indicated that the management of the platform would be difficult and costly and might even increase levels of risk and anti-social behaviour for those using it.

5. Portsmouth Mediation Service - 2022

- 5.1 In April 2022, Portsmouth City Council commissioned the Portsmouth Mediation Service to develop a long-term restorative plan for the Old Portsmouth area. The 'Hotwalls and Camber Dock Restorative Support Group' (HCDRSG) was formed and has developed into a dynamic community group over the past 18 months, meeting monthly over the winter 2022 and twice a month from April 2023. Despite the frustration

¹ Complex problems that hold a multitude of other problems within them. There is no known solution. Sometimes they must be accepted and adapted to rather than overcome. These problems need leadership that involves everyone, and approaches that look into everything and every possibility.

<https://www.leadershipcentre.org.uk/artofchangemaking/theory/critical-tame-and-wicked-problems/>

with anti-social behaviour in the community, there is a lot of goodwill towards the young people themselves and concern for their safety.

5.2 Terms of Reference (see Appendix 2) were agreed, and the stated aims of the group are:

1. *Ongoing engagement and positive relationship building with the local community, businesses, and other stakeholders*
2. *Helping facilitate ongoing opportunities for forums and meetings where local people can be heard and are motivated to help become part of new ideas and solutions.*
3. *Help foster new partnerships that facilitates communication and understanding between the various different opinions and agendas*
4. *Provision of training that envisions and equips the local community and young people with a personal restorative tool kit which can help strengthen relationships and prevent conflict from breaking out and escalating.*
5. *Facilitating community circles and restorative meetings*
6. *Identifying the institutions that some of the young people attend and working directly with schools, colleges and youth services to help build understanding and trust.*
7. *Working with local police and law enforcement to help keep people from being expelled from family and community by referring individual cases for restorative interventions*

5.3 Membership of the group includes the BAR property management, international port, the fish market, Hotwalls Artists, Cathedral representatives, ward councillors as well as a core group of residents and Southsea Neighbourhood Police². Two group 'white board' sessions have produced a number of positive responses to the issues identified, some of which have been taken forward in the youth outreach programme delivered between 24th July - 1st September (see appendix 3). However, residents continue to put forward alternative jumping/diving provision as a long-term solution to the problems.

5.4 Information about the summer programme was delivered to all households in Old Portsmouth on 18-20th July (see appendix 4) along with information on how to report crime and ASB.

5.5 Funding was secured from the OPCC's ASB Task Force to extend youth outreach work over the summer, with Pompey in the Community, Urbond, Motiv8 and the council's Play, Youth and Community service, Andrew Simpson Centre and Strong Island Media - providing a co-ordinated and flexible response to need.

6. Impact assessment

6.1 An experimental face-to-face survey with young people and residents carried out on mobile phones, and a baseline data set have been developed to support an evaluation. Youth organisations have agreed to facilitate restorative conversations between the young jumpers and residents towards the end of September, as well as provide access to anonymised engagement reports.

² Notes of the meeting are available on request

6.2 A data report has also been prepared and will be updated with reports from this summer enabling comparison with previous years.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The extremely wet weather during July and August and the presence of the huge Southeast Water pipe at Governor's Green have both had a significant impact on the delivery of planned activities to divert young people away from the area - not least because there have been far fewer young people congregating on the Camber Apron to engage with. As a result of a faulty door mechanism, temporary fencing on the Camber Apron has been used to protect access to the building which has also had an impact on the number of young people able to congregate, although it has moved smaller groups to other areas of the dock. This being the case, it will be difficult to assess the impact of the work with any confidence.

7.2 Interestingly, South Parade Pier turned out to be the centre of significant anti-social behaviour (and some reported violence), with young people during the very hot weather at the end of May/June. This was not 'displacement' of the Camber issues as work with the young people did not begin until half term.

8. Next steps

8.1 The group will continue to meet every month from September through the winter to assess the impact of the work, gather the views of residents, agree new signage with the Port, and explore the top 5-10 ideas that have been put forward in the past few weeks. This will include the following:

- Explore potential links to coastal works;
- Increase crime and ASB reporting to police and council
- Sustainability - explore community interest organisation;
- Community fundraising;
- Develop a Water Safety Programme in schools and colleges, working with PCC colleagues;
- Information leaflet for residents with colleagues from Event Management.
- End of year event - using photos that show how the area and the seafront as a whole has changed since the 1950s;

8.2 We hope to be able to put forward options for 2024 towards the end of the year and bring forward a further report for approval.

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Signed by
Paddy May
Corporate Strategy Manager

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Water Safety - Review Tombstoning and Tarzan Boat - October 2019

Appendix 2 - Hotwalls and Camber Dock Restorative Group - Terms of Reference

Appendix 3 - Youth Outreach Programme

Appendix 4 - Summer Programme

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