

28 November 2012

REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR VICTIM AND WITNESS CHAMPION****EXEMPT INFORMATION**

None

PURPOSE

To seek approval to continue the grant funding of this post for a further three years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That cabinet approve further spend of the grant funding from the LPSA2 reward grant (received for tackling anti social behaviour and ring fenced for ASB) to continue the Victim and Witness Champion service for a further three years.
2. That Cabinet authorises the Director Communities Planning and Partnerships in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Development to tender the service and procure a provider.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 1st July 2010 a pilot scheme was implemented in Tamworth with the introduction of a ASB victims and witness champion service. This was enabled due to Tamworth being specifically selected by the Home Office due to the level of community perceptions of ASB which attracted funding for a half post for the year 2010/2011. Grant funding from LPAS2 reward for tackling anti social behaviour was used to secure the post for a further 2 years. The current contract is due to finish 31st March 2013. This original contract went out to tender for a service to provide 20 hours per week. The successful provider was Victim Support who deliver the service for an annual sum of £18K.

The current champion has offered practical and emotional support to victims and others affected by anti-social behaviour. This has involved an outreach service to victims in their own homes, at drop in centres and at victim support offices. The service has been victim led and the post holder has responded to need accordingly.

There is clear support for the role, as evidenced by the testimonials from clients and partners to help co-ordinate services and to establish responsibilities to move cases forward. Often the cases are long running disputes and it is recognised that agencies need to work together to resolve the situation. Working in silos does not remove the problem and this role has developed the required partnerships to be able to channel solutions.

The proposal is that for the service to continue for a further three years commencing April 2013. The service if approved will be commissioned through the Council procurement process.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The funding for the post will not effect internal Council budgets.
The costs for the project will not exceed £60K, which is a maximum of £20K per year. All costs will be met by the LPSA2 grant funding.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

Any decision made needs to have due regard to section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Since the commencement of the post it has been grant funded and the proposal is to continue grant funding. The option of mainstreaming this post either by a single agency or a collective of agencies will need to be made in 2016.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The purpose of the role is to support victims and witnesses of ASB and act as a 'critical friend' to various agencies involved to recommend action and accountability. Responsibilities shall include:

- a. provision of comprehensive and quality support and outreach service to victims and witnesses of antisocial behaviour;
- b. ensuring more victims and witnesses of ASB receive enhanced support;
- c. adding value to existing services by ensuring they are joined up and not duplicated;
- d. acting as a referral point for ASB teams for cases that need extra help;
- e. ensuring statutory agencies fulfil their responsibilities to the victim or witness by championing their cause;
- f. developing how victim and witness awareness in ASB is tackled locally;
- g. supporting the victim/witness at court and attending where required, making use of witness support facilities and support services (e.g., pre court visits etc)

Since the current Champion commenced her role they have supported 178 victims of anti social behaviour. A breakdown of the referrals is as follows;
July to December 2010 – 41 cases.

Hub ASB Team	19
Victim support	7
TBC Housing	5
Police	4
Self referral	4
Street Wardens	1
RSL	1

January to December 2011 – 78 cases

Police	27
Hub ASB Team	24
TBC Housing	11

Victim Support	6
Bromford Floating Support	5
Self Referral	2
RSL	2
Street Warden	1

January to October 2012 – 59 cases

TBC Housing	20
Police	16
Hub ASB Team	12
Self referral	6
Street Wardens	2
Councillor	1
Victim Support	1
Family Justice Centre	1

The Champion has developed methods of working which involves contacting ASB victims/witnesses, either by telephone or letter, to offer the service and act as a single point of contact for support and information and conduct assessments of risk with particular reference to home visits to ASB victims. The Champion will provide one to one support to victims and witnesses of antisocial behaviour and support victims over 12 years of age, with parental consent.

The Champion will also follow up work on behalf of victims of antisocial behaviour by contacting other agencies and obtaining expert and specialist advice where necessary and develop and monitor referral processes to ensure all ASB victims/witnesses attending court have access to a pre court visit and support on the day. It is the independence of the role which is crucial with the Champion acting as an advocate for the victims.

The role of the Champion is well evidenced by the testimonials received from victims they have worked with. Extracts from the letters include the following;

'I have been so worried of late but XXXX has given me such a lift knowing I could talk to her about my concerns'

'..is vital asset and without her professional support and advice me and my family would have struggled and perhaps given up hope'

'At the time we were at our wits end and did not know who to turn to or what to do for the best, XXXX filled that gap between police, local authority and others'

'The work you do is invaluable as without your support I would have sat in the corner and cried'

'..for being on the end of a phone it made me feel better and safe'

'You have dealt with the situation in a professional but sympathetic manor'

'At one point we pretty much gave up as the problems escalated and got more intense so much so it was effecting our work as well as our home lives but a meeting with XXXX.....we moved forward to where we are now, which is a much better place.'

The report on the recent successful TBC Housing Respect accreditation highlighted;

Summary of good practice examples

A number of examples of good practice in the area of ASB were identified during the assessment and these are summarised below:

Building Block 1.5

Partnership working is strength within Tamworth. The Tamworth Community Safety Partnership approach is centred on a well developed and effective hub based at Tamworth Police Station. The hub facilitates the co-location of key partners including Landlord Services who work together to investigate and tackle ASB.

The Champion works in the Community Safety Hub as an integral part of the ASB Team with police and Council ASB and Housing staff.

REPORT AUTHOR

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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

APPENDICES