



Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales

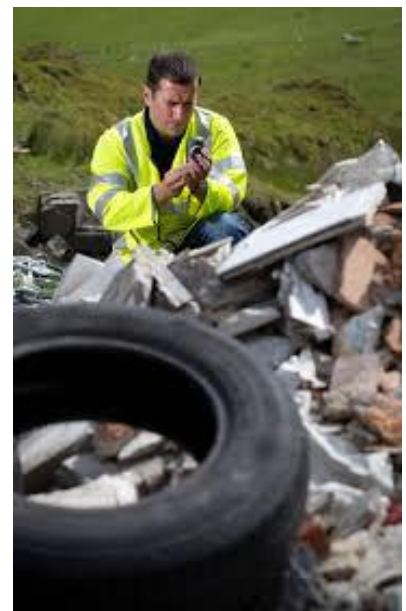
Rhondda trial case study

Creating safe, healthy and vibrant places

Summary of the project

Crime and anti-social behaviour is a constant challenge to partners, and significant barrier for people using and enjoying their local green spaces. It undermines the safety and wellbeing of residents, impacts the local economy and environment, hinders prosperity, and reinforces negative perceptions of the Rhondda and wider South Wales Valleys.

To explore how NRW and other organisations can tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, this project brought partners together to identify some of the underlying causes, seek clarity in relation to legal duties of NRW and its partners, and assess the financial and resource implications of crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate. This was progressed via three main workshops held in April, September and November 2015.



NRW is a victim of crime and costs are estimated to be up to £1m each year.

Approach

The project incorporated the principles of 'Appreciative Inquiry' in its approach to help identify strengths and focussed solutions.

This helped NRW and partners recognise the need to change their own perceptions and behaviours in order to achieve positive collaboration, both with internal colleagues and external partners.

What began as 'Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour' grew into an approach focussed on 'Creating safe, healthy and vibrant places for people to use and enjoy'.



Partners at a 'Creating safer places'

Why are we doing this?

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour was highlighted as one of the main priorities at the Rhondda trial stakeholder workshops, and via the Priority Woodlands work streams in 2014. It was also the most common response from residents of the Rhondda when asked what they would most like to see to improve their area (as part of the Rhondda trial's public engagement exercise, summer 2015). Its impacts are far-reaching.



Illegal activity

Some of the typical illegal / anti-social activities that take place on the estate include: metal theft, off-road trespassing, vandalism, fly-tipping, dog fouling, joy riding, fires, poaching and wildlife crime.



Aims of the project

- Develop NRW's understanding of how crime and anti-social behaviour impacts its role in managing Wales' natural resources.
- Assess the financial and resource implications of crime and anti-social behaviour for NRW.
- Identify some of the underlying causes of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Clarify the role of the Local Authority in relation to the Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and NRW's legal duties with regards to crime and anti-social behaviour on the estate.
- Identify the key challenges and opportunities.

What we learnt about sustainable management of natural resources

Key learning points










- The impact of crime and anti-social behavior is far reaching, affecting people, the environment and economy. It reinforces negative perceptions of areas.
- Uncertainty of the scale and cost of crime (evidence) and anti-social behaviour on the WGWE
- Clarification of NRW's legal powers in relation to criminal activity on the Welsh Government Woodland Estate (WGWE)
- A place based, local approach meant 'Tackling crime and anti-social behavior' was identified by the community as what they would most like to see in their area.
- Limited engagement from some key partners. Staff and departmental changes can be a barrier to collaborative approaches in the public sector.
- Better understanding of the implications of changes as part of the Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

- Weak quantifiable evidence exists of crime and anti-social behaviour costs for NRW (and others), but there are opportunities to build NRW's evidence base, e.g. All NRW field based staff could use Flymapper to report flytipping via smartphones (currently, only a few officers/teams use it).
- Medium-long term challenge and a collaborative approach is critical to help partners better tackle the threats and challenges. Intelligence sharing across organisations also required.
- The Rhondda is an appropriate scale to trial this work, and focusing on a place gives real focus.
- Developing positive environmental behaviours will have an immediate impact on the local environment. Increased local ownership of green spaces helps foster community intolerance to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Next steps

- Coordinate an NRW approach to the issues raised, and ensure effective communication and integration at a strategic level between NRW and its partners. This could pre-empt the role of Public Service Boards, and provide learning for organisations in working better together and developing a multi-agency approach.
- Work with partners to develop some of the ideas that have emerged.

How did this project meet the principles of sustainable management of natural resources?

Principle		How we met this principle
	Adaptive management	Approach built on existing evidence to approach the problem in an holistic way based not only on reports and strategies, but also on the knowledge of local staff and communities. Action Learning Sets in workshops promoted group learning and inspired proactive interventions.
	Collaboration and engagement	Effective internal engagement with officers from the various teams within NRW. The workshops sought the proactive involvement of officers from partners: RCT, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, South Wales Police and local community groups.
	Evidence	Weak quantifiable evidence of the scale of the problem on the NRW estate. Collaborative effort across intelligence agencies and buy-in from operational staff required to ensure that incidents are reported and monitored. This has been highlighted as part of NRW's Incident Response Review led by Paul Edmonds, KSP.
	Long term	Understood by all parties that this is a medium-long term process to address a complex problem.
	Scale	Rhondda was an appropriate scale to trial efforts, evaluate success and (potentially) roll-out appropriate interventions across the wider South Wales valleys.
	Multiple benefits	Environmental: a reduction in pollution and fly-tipping that's harmful to wildlife and habitats. Social: green spaces become more accessible for people to enjoy outdoor recreation, with the associated mental and physical health benefits. Increased pride in local communities has a positive effect on social cohesion. Economic: studies show that enhanced environmental quality has a positive effect on inward investment.
	Public participation	Crime and anti-social behaviour significantly impacts communities and people want the key organisations to tackle it. Careful consideration for the timing of involving the wider public, and ensure any wider engagement has the agreement of all key stakeholders.
	Preventative action	Working with stakeholders and a root-cause analysis revealed that positive preventative work with young people in the area would result in crime and anti-social reduction over the long term. Raising aspirations of young people and wider communities would result in positive behaviour and an intolerance to anti-social activity within the locality.
	Building resilience	Developing and supporting positive behaviour in communities can improve local environments. Less dependence on government interventions over time could foster greater community activity and resilience.

How did this project meet the well-being goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act?

Well-being goal	How does this project deliver against the goals?
A prosperous Wales	Fly-tipping and environmental crime has a negative impact on economic investment in areas. Addressing crime and anti-social behaviour in a meaningful way will mean that public resources can be spent on positive interventions to support the local economy.
A resilient Wales	Encouraging local ownership and use of local green spaces builds capacity and skills in communities to help manage other issues that affect well-being. Enhanced green infrastructure improves connectivity and resilience to climate change.
A healthier Wales	Better quality green space provides more opportunities for outdoor recreation and connection to nature, enhancing people's physical and emotional well-being. Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour has a direct negative effect on well-being.
A more equal Wales	Socially deprived communities have opportunities to experience unspoilt landscapes and feel safe.
A Wales of cohesive communities	Crime and anti-social behaviour can exacerbate social tensions. Creating places where people feel safe improves opportunities for people to interact and create social bonds.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	The South Wales valleys are landscapes of historic importance, with significant industrial heritage and the role they play in the 'Story of Wales.' All workshops run by NRW had a Welsh translator and links to Welsh culture were explicitly made in proceedings.
A globally responsible Wales	Environmental crimes negatively impact habitats, wildlife, and air, soil and water quality. These affect Wales' performance against the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.