

**REPORT TO:** HOUSING, DUNDEE CONTRACT SERVICES & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE (24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007)

**REPORT ON:** THE IMPACT OF THE INAUGURAL YEAR OF THE NIGHT TIME NOISE TEAM

**REPORT BY:** HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & TRADING STANDARDS

**REPORT NO:** 417-2007

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To provide the Committee with a review of the first year of the Night Time Noise Team.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The committee is asked to note the contents of this report and to continue supporting the work of the team by raising awareness of the need for continued funding from the Scottish Executive.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The Scottish Executive awarded funding of £554,097.60 for 2006/07 and £557,569.80 for 2007/08. It should be noted that the service did not become operational until 5th June 2007, resulting in only £386,843.98 of the funding being required in 2006/07. It is anticipated that the funding for 2007/08 will be utilised as detailed in Appendix 1.

3.2 The continued provision of funding from the Scottish Executive is crucial to the success of this service. It is anticipated that an indication on future funding will be forthcoming in autumn 2007.

## **4.0 MAIN TEXT**

### **4.1 BACKGROUND**

4.1.1 At the meeting of the Environmental Services and Sustainability Committee on 20th February 2006 (Reference Report 140-2006) the Council resolved to adopt the provisions of Part 5 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004 (the Act) in respect of noise intrusion.

4.1.2 The committee agreed to apply the provisions of the Act for the whole of the city, Monday - Sunday 1900hours -0700 hours every week with the exception of the Christmas /New Year closure periods.

The committee further delegated responsibility to the Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards, to make arrangements as necessary to set up and operate the Night Time Noise Team

### **4.2 UPDATE**

4.2.1 The Council formally resolved to adopt the provisions of Part 5 of the Act by notice on the 24th March, 2006 and in accordance with the terms of the Act the commencement date of the service was set for, on or after 29th May 2006 for the noise provisions to come into effect for the time periods detailed in 6.1.2 of this report. It should be noted that complaints classed as falling under Part 5 which occur outwith the timeframe of the council's resolution are dealt with by Tayside Police(Central Division).

4.2.2 The existing responsibility of Environmental Health Officers to enforce noise nuisance legislation was augmented by the recruitment of a specialist team comprising, a Team

Leader, two Senior Enforcement Officers, six Enforcement Officers and two Admin Officers was completed in mid May 2006 and following a period of training the Night Time Noise Team became operational on the 5th June 2006. The service has become a much valued partner in the multi agency approach to tackling antisocial behaviour in the city. In particular, through the adoption of Part 5 and the provision of a dedicated resource, night-time noise complaints are being handled more quickly with a greater uniformity of action, thus allowing police resources to be freed up for other priorities

4.2.3 A marketing campaign was run to coincide with the Scottish Executive's Antisocial Behaviour Roadshow at the end July 2006. The service was formally launched through the local media. Posters and leaflets were distributed to a wide range of outlets and advertising space was taken on local buses. The marketing campaign and ongoing awareness raising activities within the community have had a positive effect on the uptake of the service and resulted in a marked reduction in the number of anonymous calls received by the service. This has allowed the team to deal more effectively with complaints and ensures that appropriate action is taken against individuals who act in an antisocial manner.

#### 4.3 **OUTCOMES**

4.3.1 During the first year of operation the Night Time Noise Team dealt with 3651 complaints, issued 1,499 verbal warnings, 185 written warnings, 33 of which required the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice in order to resolve the problem. The team's average response time from receiving a complaint to attendance on site is just over 15 minutes, thereby bringing a quick resolution to antisocial noise problems within domestic properties.

A breakdown of the categories of complaints dealt with by the team is as follows:

2984 Loud Music complaints	e.g. parties, BBQs, various types of music, sub woofers, loud base etc
129 Loud TV complaints	e.g. surround sound, sub woofers. Mainly elderly offenders
46 DIY complaints	e.g. laying laminate flooring, drilling, hammering, wacker plates etc
110 Dog Barking complaints	e.g. dogs left outside and indoors, or in outside pens/gardens, unattended etc
383 Other complaints	e.g. playing of drums/ piano/ guitar, washing machines, intimate activities

4.3.2 Although the majority of the offenders respond in a positive manner, a considerable degree of tact is required where drink, drugs or mental health issues are evident. Unfortunately during the first ten months of operation the team has been involved in a number of potentially violent incidents. Seven of these were deemed to be serious in nature resulting in the details being reported to the police.

4.3.3 The Night Time Noise Team is dealing with approximately 70% of the domestic noise nuisance calls received by the police control room. Tayside Police, as mentioned previously, deal with the calls that come in outwith the council's resolution period and this currently equates to 30%. It can be demonstrated from figures originally received from Tayside Police (Central Division) for the year 2005/2006, there has been approximately 30% increase in the number of complaints received.

4.3.4 As well as actively working in partnership with the police, the team has worked with the council's Antisocial Behaviour Team and has provided supporting evidence for cases which are being investigated for further action. The Night Time Noise Team has integrated well with the other agencies involved in tackling antisocial behaviour and enhanced the partnership approach in dealing with noise intrusion between domestic properties.

4.3.5 A customer survey was undertaken in early January 2007 and the outcome was very encouraging with 88% finding it easy to make initial contact with the service and 82% being satisfied with the service.

#### 4.4 **FUTURE**

4.4.1 The work carried out by the Night Time Noise Team in conjunction with Tayside Police (Central Division) and other Community Planning partners is fundamental to the aims of the Dundee Antisocial Behaviour Strategy and will contribute greatly in terms of the wellbeing of the wider community.

4.4.2 Dundee City Council was awarded funding of £557,569.80 for 2007/08. This will provide 100% funding for this current year and it is anticipated that the funding will be utilised as detailed in Appendix 1 of this report. The continued provision of funding from the Scottish Executive is crucial to the success of this service. It is hoped that an indication on future funding will be forthcoming in early autumn 2007.

#### 5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-poverty and Equality Impact Assessment.

The major issues identified are:

##### 5.1 Sustainability

5.1.1 The sustainability policy principles that are addressed in this Report are -

- ensure compliance with relevant environmental legislation and related policy guidance
- minimise the impact of Council activities on air and water quality and adopt measures to reduce noise intrusion

5.1.2 The impact of noise intrusion to residents within domestic properties will be reduced through the continued operation of the Night Time Noise Team in the city.

#### 6.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 The Chief Executive,  
Depute Chief Executive (Support Services)  
Depute Chief Executive (Finance)  
Head of Finance  
Director of Leisure and Communities  
Director of Housing  
Divisional Commander Tayside Police (Central Division)

#### 7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None

**Albert Oswald**  
**Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards**

**August 2007**

**Night-time Noise Team - Estimated Expenditure 2007/08**

Staff Costs:	Salaries	£432,814
	Training	£6,000
Property:	Accommodation	£8,500
Supplies & Services:	Equipment	£2,500
	Furniture	£2,000
	Telephones	£1,700
	Others	£15,700
	Advertising & Publicity	£15,000
Transport:	Hire of Vehicles	£5,270
	Fuel	£3,000
	Travel & Subsistence	£1,500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£493,984</b>

Any movement from the above will be adjusted within the funding approved.