

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Report**

Committee	River Hamble Harbour Board
Date:	20 April 2012
Title:	Asset Enhancement Reserve – Crime Deterrence
Reference:	3808
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This report proposes a crime deterrence measure which could be made available for all vessels berthed on the River Hamble and those kept ashore close to the River, as part of the wider Asset Enhancement project.

2. Background

- 2.1. Theft of equipment from vessels berthed on the River Hamble has been a persistent theme for many years, although there is evidence that the number of thefts has increased during the current economic downturn. Whilst close liaison with the Marine Police Unit and the local police has been useful, many dinghies, outboard motors and other items of equipment are still being stolen on a fairly regular basis. Entire boats have also been stolen in the past.
- 2.2. A new initiative (known as Project Kraken – River Hamble) was launched in February this year by the local police, in conjunction with the Marine Unit. It is a ‘spin-off’ from the existing Project Kraken but is tailored specifically for the River Hamble and is intended to further enhance the sharing of information and intelligence about suspicious activity throughout the River and its environs. Whilst this initiative is of considerable value, it doesn’t currently provide a significant deterrent to a determined thief. A more comprehensive and effective deterrent is therefore desirable.

3. Proposal

- 3.1. A variety of forensic marking products are commercially available and can be used to mark valuable items of property such as outboards, tenders,

liferrafts, electronics and even entire boats. Such products are simply 'painted' on to each item (in small quantities). Each container of forensic marking product contains a unique code or 'DNA' which can be used to identify items with the owner of the vessel or equipment, allowing stolen goods to be traced and returned more easily, whilst assisting to identify the thieves and those handling stolen goods. Some such products also contain microdots with a unique code number, allowing rapid identification of the legitimate owner.

- 3.2. Companies which market forensic marking products stress that they form part of an overall crime deterrence scheme which includes a publicity campaign, posters, notices and stickers, sufficient to warn all potential thieves that valuable property is forensically marked and to deter them from committing a crime.
- 3.3. It is proposed that part of the Asset Enhancement Reserve should be used to purchase a complete forensic marking solution for the River Hamble, including the initial provision of a forensic marking 'kit' to each boat owner who pays annual Harbour Dues, to be coupled with a wide-spread publicity and poster campaign. Preliminary discussions with the manufacturers of two such products have indicated that this could be achieved at a cost of about £50,000, with an ongoing revenue cost estimated at £3,000 per annum to ensure that all newly arrived boats are fully protected. This would be sufficient to include dry-sailed vessels which pay annual Harbour Dues, but not those kept permanently ashore.
- 3.4. An additional campaign will also be required, in order to encourage boat owners to apply the forensic marking to their valuables, and to register their details with the supplier. It is assumed that organisations such as the River Hamble Mooring Holders' Association, the Hamble River Boatyard and Marina Operators' Association, the Association of River Hamble Yacht Clubs, and individual sailing Clubs and berth holders associations would be willing to assist with this campaign.
- 3.5. In order to enhance the overall level of deterrence available, it is proposed that owners of vessels which do not ordinarily pay annual Harbour Dues should be able to purchase a forensic marking kit from the Harbour Authority at cost price (typically £10 plus VAT). This represents a considerable saving compared with the normal retail price.
- 3.6. Hampshire County Council's procurement rules require that, if approved by the Harbour Board, this project will have to be put out to tender in order to identify the preferred supplier. There is a cost associated with this process which will have to be added to the budget.
- 3.7. The data about individual boat owners would be protected in the event of fire, flood etc, and if the company involved goes into liquidation. Assurances have also been obtained that the data would never be sold or given to any third party for commercial purposes.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 This proposal has many advantages. By supplying forensic marking materials to boat owners throughout the River, together with a comprehensive publicity and awareness campaign, the River Hamble will become known as the harbour where thieves will be exposing themselves to a much greater risk of being caught than in most other harbours. This should have a positive effect by reducing the current levels of theft in the area, saving boat owners a great deal of money, worry and trouble. It will do a great deal to enhance the reputation of the Harbour and the Harbour Authority and may even have a positive effect on insurance premiums or excesses for vessels kept on the River.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that the River Hamble Harbour Board supports this proposal and allocates funding from the Asset Enhancement Reserve.**

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1. A full Equalities Impact Assessment for the River Hamble Harbour Authority's compliance with the Port Marine Safety Code has been carried out and this report does not raise any issues not previously covered by that Assessment.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. The proposals in this report, if approved, have the potential to have a positive impact on the incidence of crime on the River Hamble.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption? The contents of this report have no impact on carbon footprint or energy consumption.
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts? Not applicable to this report.