

Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership

Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2004- 2005



“Working in partnership to promote safer communities”

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Introduction

In 1998 the Government brought into force the Crime and Disorder Act. The law was introduced in response to growing public concern about anti-social behaviour (ASB) from individuals or groups who cause alarm, distress or harassment within the community. On October 14th 2003 the Home Office launched the TOGETHER campaign and published an Action Plan 'Together: Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour'. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 received Royal Assent on 20th November 2003 and helps the Police and Local Authorities to work together with local people to tackle ASB.

Tackling ASB within Huntingdonshire is seen as a priority by all partner agencies of the HCSP, and it is intended that this Strategy will contribute to maintaining and improving the safety of Huntingdonshire as a place to live, work and visit.

There are currently six area based Community Safety Task Groups throughout Huntingdonshire, all of which report back to the HCSP that works at a District level. All of the Task Groups are currently addressing ASB and the problems surrounding this, as one of their action plans. Government funding received by the HCSP has been used in a number of different ways to address ASB, one of which being the provision of diversionary activities for young people in 'hot spot' areas. A Further £25,000 has been made available by the Home Office for two years from April 1st 2004 to address ASB. This funding is to be used by the HCSP to employ ASB Case Worker(s) to monitor and progress the work that is put in place to address ASB.

It is now necessary to establish the causes and root problems of ASB and ensure that, working in partnership, effective processes are in place to reduce levels of ASB in Huntingdonshire.

Purpose

The aim of this Strategy is to identify how the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership will work together to tackle ASB.

Background

Community Safety Partnerships, sometimes known as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, were established as a requirement of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to bring together the Police, Local Authorities and other public agencies to reduce crime and help tackle its causes. The HCSP put in place their first Community Safety Strategy in April 1999, and is currently working to the second Strategy that has been running since April 2002 and will end in April 2005, with a new Strategy being introduced for the period 2005-08.. This ASB Strategy, while a freestanding document in its own right, provides a structure for the work that needs to be carried out at a local level to deliver the targets and objectives set out in the current Community Safety Strategy 2002-05 and looking to the future 2005-08 Strategy. This ASB Strategy will also be adopted by individual partner agencies as appropriate, including Huntingdonshire District Council.

National Recognition to address ASB

Since the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Government has continued to introduce new legislation that gives the Police, Local Authorities and other responsible authorities, more power to address ASB. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, orders such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) were introduced as tools to try and reduce ASB and encourage the perpetrators to take responsibility for their behaviour.

The Home Office established the ASB Unit in January 2003 and since has been involved with the following:

- ASB Action Plan;
- ASB One day Count;
- The White Paper “Respect and Responsibility – Taking a Stand Against Anti-Social Behaviour”, published March 2003
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act, received royal assent on 20th November 2003. The Act will come into force gradually, with the first group of provisions commenced in mid January 2004, the next in February 2004 with the remainder later in the year.
- The new Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduces new powers to:
 - Close Premises where Drugs are used Unlawfully;
 - Provide New Powers for Social Landlords to tackle Anti-Social Tenants;
 - Address Parental Responsibilities;
 - Deal with Intimidating Groups;
 - Introduce new Prohibitions on Air Weapons and Imitation Firearms;
 - Provide Cleaner and Safer Communities;
 - High Hedges; and
 - Improve Enforcement Powers

Any of the above documents can be viewed on the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk

What is Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)?

ASB can be seen in a number of different forms, and may range from the dropping of litter to actual violence against people and property. Whatever the level of ASB, its effects are the same, and in many cases areas will experience levels of both crime and the fear of crime. For the purpose of this Strategy ASB will be described as per the multi agency ASB Protocol which builds on the primary definition from the Crime and Disorder Act 1998:

Anti-Social Behaviour is described in the Act as acting “in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself” and which is not reasonable in all circumstances”.

ASB does not have to be criminal. It can include criminal, racist or homophobic acts.

Behaviour that puts people in fear of crime, can amount to ASB where it causes, harassment, alarm or distress.

In addition it can incite people to commit crimes or violent acts.

Examples of ASB that the HCSP consider to be anti-social are:

- Drug/ Substance misuse and drug dealing;
- Street drinking; begging;
- Prostitution; Kerb Crawling; Sexual acts;
- Abandoned vehicles;
- Vehicle related nuisance and inappropriate vehicle use;
- Noise;
- Rowdy behaviour;
- Nuisance behaviour;
- Hoax calls;
- Animal related problems;
- Intimidation/ Harassment;
- Criminal damage/ Vandalism; and
- Litter/ Rubbish

The Extent of Anti-Social Behaviour in Huntingdonshire

It is difficult to determine the extent of serious anti-social behaviour in Huntingdonshire, but the HCSP recognises that more and more communities are experiencing low levels of ASB on a regular occasion. Most areas in Huntingdonshire, both rural and urban, are experiencing ASB in the form of under-age drinking, graffiti, criminal damage, vehicle related nuisance and intimidating behaviour by groups of people.

The Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership recognises that anti-social behaviour can effect levels of crime and the fear of crime in any area of Huntingdonshire. The Partnership, through the Sector Based Problem Solving Groups, Area Based Community Safety Task Groups and Anti-Social Behaviour Forum, will aim to establish and address levels of anti-social behaviour across the district. These groups are committed to improving the methods of reporting anti-social behaviour in order to develop suitable action plans and monitor and evaluate where appropriate.

Reports about anti-social behaviour are received from a variety of different sources, and partnership working is essential. These reports may be in the form of a complaint from a member of the public or through the Police or a Housing Association. From community safety roadshows and community consultations it is known that anti-social behaviour is a concern to the residents of Huntingdonshire, and in some areas the concern is greater than in others. The Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership has funded a computerised consultation system that asks the community to identify their concerns around anti-social behaviour, the information obtained will help in the identification of 'hot spot' areas and the development of action plans.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy

The following pages of this document identify the seven objectives that the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership has agreed to work to, to address anti-social behaviour in Huntingdonshire.

The seven objectives that the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership will be working to are as follows:

1. **The Anti-Social Behaviour Forum** – To promote effective inter-agency working on ASB by establishing an ASB Forum at District level along with four Police Sector based Problem Solving Groups (PSGs).
2. **Geographical Anti-Social Behaviour** – To identify geographical hot spots and take action.
3. **Problem People** – To identify problem people and work with the relevant agencies to address the behaviour.
4. **Youth Issues** – To support young people both as victims and as a perpetrator of poor behaviour and deliver diversionary activities.
5. **Acknowledge the Rural/ Urban Difference** – To ensure the response to ASB is appropriate and best fits the rural or urban needs.
6. **Measurement/ Performance** – To use an appropriate model to ensure monitoring and evaluation of activity takes place.
7. **Community Engagement** – To increase active involvement of local people to address anti-social behaviour.

The Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP) Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy will be a working document by May 1st 2004 and will be reviewed again in March 2005, and will then run in line with the HCSP Community Safety Strategy 2005 – 08.

The success of the ASB Strategy will be determined by the following outcomes:

1. Reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour in Huntingdonshire.
2. Community involvement in the initiatives that are taking place to address ASB
3. Residents aware of who to contact with regard to an ASB complaint.
4. Increased levels of reassurance within the communities of Huntingdonshire.
5. Increased number of young people involved in diversionary activities within Huntingdonshire.
6. Timeliness of use of Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) or/and an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) where necessary.

7. Implementation of a witness protection scheme when thought necessary in cases of Anti-Social Behaviour.
8. Increased level of reassurance of those that have been a victim of Anti-Social Behaviour.

A review of the first year of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy will be carried out in March 2005 and amended as appropriate. It is hoped that by this time much experience will have been gained in addressing different types of anti-social behaviour and that the communities of Huntingdonshire will be working in partnership with all the identified agencies to reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour within the District.

During 2004/05 the Partnership will establish baseline data to monitor the outcomes of the strategy and agree the targets to be included in the 2005/06 – 2008/09 Community Safety Strategy.

ASB Strategy Objectives and Actions

1. The Anti-Social Behaviour Forum

The Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership recognise that effective interventions to reduce anti-social behaviour require the skills and resources of a number of agencies/ organisations and community members. That requires co-ordination at a strategic level and delivery at a local level.

Objective

Establish a district level ASB Forum to manage the PSGs and ensure delivery of the ASB Strategy.

Actions

- i. The Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership structure is shown below. It can be seen that the ASB Forum reports to the Executive Group. The strategic ASB Forum will be formed and membership will include representatives from:
 - Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC)
 - Police
 - Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC)
 - Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)/ Housing Actions Trusts (HATs)
 - Youth Offending Service (YOS)
 - Probation Service
 - Fire and Rescue Service
 - Community representatives
 - Hunts. Primary Care Trust (PCT)
 - Connexions
 - Huntingdon Drug and Alcohol Reference Group (HDARG)
 - Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) when thought appropriate

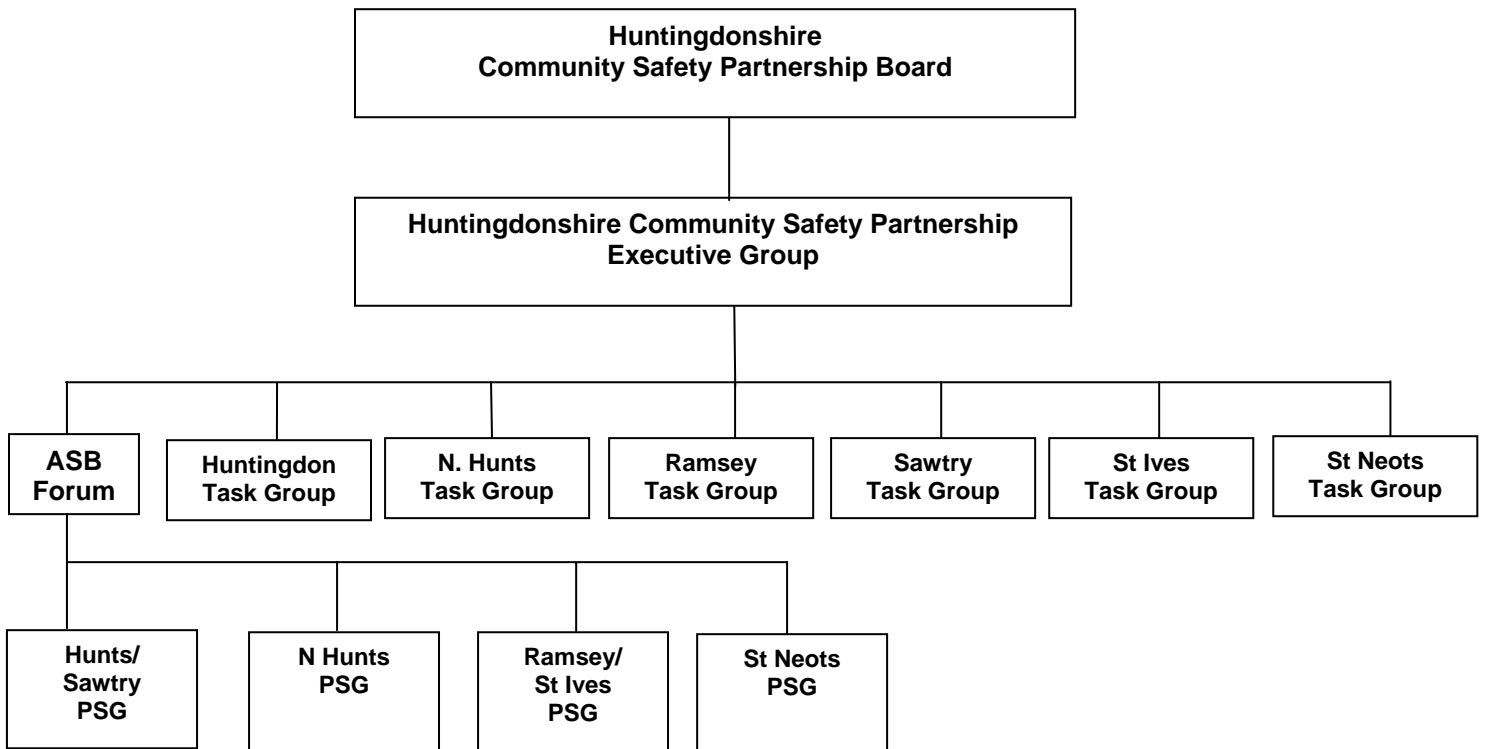


Diagram 1. Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership Structure

- ii. The ASB Forums role will include a management overview of the four problem solving groups (PSGs).
- iii. The ASB Forums role will also include responsibility for delivery of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership ASB Strategy.

2. Geographical ASB

Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership recognise that the symptoms of anti-social behaviour (ASB), such as abandoned cars, graffiti, disorder, can affect whole communities or parts of them.

Objective

To identify geographical hot spots and take positive expeditious action.

Actions

- i. Through the area based Community Safety Task Groups, regular problem analysis will be carried out.
- ii. Making best use of other sources of information, such as Police Local Consultation Groups, Parish/ Town Councils, Community Groups.
- iii. Having identified problems we will work with the relevant agencies who can impact on the solution.
- iv. We will make best use of available legislation and support including the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the National Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan.
- v. We will manage and monitor our response to ensure our action is as effective as it can be.

3. Problem People

Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership recognise there are individuals and whole family units whose ASB has a devastating affect on the wider community.

Objective

To actively identify problem people through analysis and as a response to complaints, and work with partner agencies to deliver effective and rapid interventions to address the behaviour.

Actions

- i. To make best use of existing collation and referral systems which routinely identify problem individuals prior to a complaint being made, for example the enhanced Police GAP System, the Police Final Warning Scheme and YOS referrals.
- ii. The Partnership will receive complaints from a variety of internal and external sources. We will acknowledge each complaint and if action is necessary, ensure the appropriate measures are followed or referrals are made.
- iii. We will establish a multi-agency partnership problem solving group known as the ASB Forum. The Forum is tasked with receiving ASB referrals and offering suitable interventions.
- iv. We will learn from best practice and what works, and introduce innovative measures to best fit our communities.
- v. We will make best use of available legislation and support including the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the National Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan.
- vi. We will endeavour to work to the timescales and evaluation criteria as set out in the multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Protocol.
- vii. We will support the work of the 'Open Out' Scheme

4. Youth Issues

Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership recognise young people are sometimes seen as both the cause and the victim of ASB.

Objective

We seek to support the young person as a victim or as a perpetrator of the unacceptable behaviour.

Actions

- i. Co-ordinate provisions and promote activity which supports young people as potential victims of ASB. For example anti-bullying initiatives and work with task groups on challenging the community's negative perceptions of young people.
- ii. Support consultation with young people as to their needs and fears, whilst actively seeking their engagement.
- iii. Where unacceptable behaviour of young people is identified the Partnership will support the most appropriate interventions to redress that behaviour.
- iv. We will maintain a formal problem solving structure specifically to deal with more serious ASB through the multi-agency ASB Forum.

5. Acknowledging the Rural/ Urban Difference

Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership acknowledges that the perception of ASB is difference in rural and urban communities therefore the response may also need to be different.

Objective

We will tailor our response to best fit the rural or urban perceptions and needs.

Actions

- i. We will identify and acknowledge the different ASB trends/ types through partnership scoping studies and localised research, for example the Rural Crime Group, Rural Crime Event and Police ASB Problem Profile.
- ii. The Partnership will also instigate stand-alone mapping exercises to arrive at local pictures of ASB, such as visual audits.
- iii. We will inform a) the other partnership task groups for the relevant urban/ rural area and b) other appropriate community safety agendas, of our findings.
- iv. We will offer expertise and guidance based on best practice and drawing on the experience of ASB practioners up to a national level, such as the National ASB Academy, the Together East Action Plan and the Eastern Region ASB Forum.

6. Measurement/ Performance

Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership needs to know we are making a difference. For that we must agree on what success looks like and if we are on the right tracks to achieving it.

Objective

To follow an appropriate model for monitoring and evaluating activity.

Actions

- i. We will adhere to the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership's targets which are relevant to ASB.
- ii. We will work towards a standard model of tracking activity and effect.
- iii. We will systematically and routinely monitor the progress of interventions of the ASB Forum. We will have an overview of partnership activity where appropriate.
- iv. We will consider best practice and guidelines on evaluation as promoted by relevant bodies such as the Home Office, the ODPM and LGA.
- v. We will also adhere to the requirements of the multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Protocol.

7. Community Engagement

Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership recognises that most ASB is localised. Therefore the best solutions will also be locally driven, that requires the active engagement and support of the communities themselves.

Objective

We will increase the active involvement of local people in partnership ASB reduction activities.

Actions

- i. Carry out a feasibility/ scoping exercise to establish:
 - a) Which existing groups would benefit from community representation
 - b) The case for establishing new groups/ forums, such as Citizens Panel
 - c) Agree criteria and capacity for membership
- ii. Developing the results of the feasibility/ scoping exercise to identify members.
- iii. Evaluate the benefits of this enhanced membership.