
Outcomes from District Council Debate on Anti-Social Behaviour

**Report by the Head of Environmental and
Community Health Services**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of Huntingdonshire District Council about the outcomes from the District Council's debate on 23rd September 2009.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The outcomes of the Huntingdonshire District Council's debate: "How successful is the Council and its partners in tackling anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime in Huntingdonshire?" were discussed at the meeting of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP) on 26th November 2009.
- 2.2 The relevant agencies represented on the HCSP were asked to respond to the issues raised at the debate and these are outlined below.

3. ISSUES RAISED IN DEBATE

- 3.1 The first issues arising in the debate concerned the needs of young people: importance of engaging young people in positive activities; careful spatial planning of developments and specific issues in relation to a lack of facilities for young people in St Neots. The HSP Children and Young People's Partnership were asked to detail their work in engaging young people in positive activities and the situation in St Neots. An outline of those activities is included at Appendix A to this report. It was also requested that a brief on the work of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer (ALO) and his involvement with the Council's Planning Officers be provided (bottom of Appendix A).
- 3.2 A number of issues were raised in connection with specific wards, such as: speeding, litter, dog-fouling and horse droppings.

Speeding: There is a scheme that already exists that may assist: the Community Speedwatch Scheme. This scheme allows the public to get actively involved in monitoring the speed of vehicles travelling through their neighbourhood. The point of contact is the Neighbourhood Policing Team, they have been alerted to concerns expressed.

Litter: This is not always the responsibility of the District Council. Some areas across the District are managed and maintained by Town and Parish Councils and this will involve litter picking as well as emptying the bins provided on footpaths and park areas. The Operations Division have not historically received many complaints about litter other than that associated with the late-night economy. Where this is the case, the team will work with the owner of the premises to encourage them to take responsibility; if this is not effective enforcement will be considered.

Dog-Fouling: The current Dog Fouling Control Order (2007) applies to certain areas of land. Under the order fixed penalty notices of £75 (or £50 if paid within ten days) are available for enforcement officers to use. The Council's Dog Warden Service will consider enforcement action against offenders where evidence supports such action.

Horse-droppings: Complaints have not been received, by the Streetscene Team, about horse-droppings being a problem in any particular area of Huntingdonshire. Huntingdonshire is made up of both rural and urban areas and it would be expected that horse-droppings would be seen in the rural areas of the District. It was felt that the level of droppings is not high enough in any area of the District to warrant the need for a policy-response. Any complaints will be investigated and are generally treated as litter.

- 3.3 The use and effectiveness of Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) in Huntingdonshire was raised during the debate. The nature and use of these in Huntingdonshire is outlined in Appendix C.
- 3.4 The issue of a fear of crime, particularly in rural areas featured in the debate. The Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP) identified 'addressing the fear of crime' as a priority for the period 2009 – 11 within their Community Safety Plan and intends to continue to focus on this area, in the coming year.
- 3.5 During the debate it was suggested that Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP) should explore ways of increasing engagement with the public through the Neighbourhood Forums, to be trialled in Huntingdonshire during 2010. The newly introduced forums are being led and supported by Huntingdonshire District Council with members of the Community Safety Partnership attending the Forum meetings to respond to any relevant questions and actions. It is intended that representatives from the HCSP will continue to attend the Forums and will encourage attendance and participation from others as appropriate.
- 3.6 Alcohol misuse was also raised as an issue affecting the incidence of anti-social behaviour. Alcohol related disorder has been prioritised by the HCSP for the period 2010 – 11, this means that targeted work will take place to address hotspot areas. Funding has been agreed to roll the 'Night Watch' scheme out to the Huntingdon area and it is hoped that the scheme will be up and running by March/ April 2010.

- 3.7 The debate centred for a while on the procedures and processes that exist to accept and deal with reports of all-types of hate crime in Huntingdonshire. Historically in Huntingdonshire, Open Out has offered victims of hate crime the opportunity to report an incident at locations/ services other than a police station. After a review (2009) of the Open Out reporting/ information centres and the continued low levels of reporting of this crime type, it was thought more sensible that one phone number be introduced that victims could call. This new scheme, still to be known as Open Out, will be launched in March 2010.
- 3.8 The disturbance caused by use of open spaces, for ball-games, in some residential areas was raised during the debate. Ball-games generally don't constitute anti-social behaviour but complaints in the summer about ball-games do account for a significant proportion of the Community Safety Team's workload each spring and summer. In order to seek ways to minimise the disturbance arising in some areas a conference was held in Huntingdonshire, November 2009. The outcomes and recommendations from this meeting are detailed in Appendix D.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The comments and issues that arose during the District Council's debate in September 2009 were reported Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership in November 2009. The various partners have subsequently considered how those issues are being addressed or can be addressed in the future.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Members are requested to note the actions currently in-hand or proposed to tackle anti-social behaviour, general disturbance and the fear of crime in Huntingdonshire.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 23 September 2009

Huntingdonshire Community Safety Plan 2008/11 at - <http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Community%20and%20People/Crime%20and%20disorder/Huntingdonshire%20Community%20Safety%20Partnership/Pages/default.aspx>

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ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

HOLIDAY SCHEMES

A programme of activities are run via the four OCYPS locality teams across Huntingdonshire – jointly funded by LPSA, Lottery and BCU and supported by the partnerships. The size and scale of each project differs according to the size and need of the local area. All projects are aimed at providing positive activities for young people over the school holiday periods at local youth clubs and other venues. The projects started in 2009 and will run for 3 years. An overview of each project is as follows:

- **Ramsey, Sawtry and Yaxley:** Activities for young people (aged 11-16 yrs) in the summer and other holiday periods in this area. A range of activities will take place in each area and also joint activities across the three areas. This includes providing accreditation opportunities for young people in each of the three areas for 20 hours per week.
- **St Ives:** Activities for young people (aged 10 – 14) in St Ives in the Summer holidays 2009 - 2012.
- **St Neots:** Developing a second Proud-to-be-Loud site for young people aged 14+ named Fun 4 Teens (F4T's). To increase the breadth and depth of activities on offer and enable young people to develop personal and social skills. Activities included Jig, climbing wall, singing, Self-defence, sexual health workshop, bowling trip, pumpkin carving, cooking and power kiting.

This scheme also aims to help reduce anti-social behaviour statistics during holiday periods and build on community cohesion by encouraging young people to build positive relationships with their community and to increase the inclusion of young people from all sections of the community.

The target is to have achieved 2,700 attendances by the end of the project.

- **Huntingdon** The project is called Fusion. Activities for young people (aged 8-19yrs) during holiday periods. (8 weeks per year 2pm – 8pm Mon-Fri). The aims of the project are: to encourage personal and social development of young people – develop life skills, attitudes, knowledge which will positively impact their transition into adulthood. e.g. volunteering opportunities, to help reduce local anti-social behaviour statistics during holiday periods to encourage young people to build positive relationship with their community – build on community cohesion, barriers between generations, local partners i.e. the police and to increase the inclusion of young people from all sections of the community including traveller, young people from EU countries who have moved to the area.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT:

Recent developments in some key projects to actively involve children and young people in Huntingdonshire:

- The Area Manager for Hunts Localities (OCYPS, Cambridgeshire County Council) , Young Lives and the HSP Children Young People's Active Involvement officer meet every two months to look at involvement priorities and identify options for joint working.
- HSP Children Young People's Active Involvement officer, with representatives from St Peters school and Huntingdon leisure centre are to develop a quality award for 'young people friendly' services.
- Developing a model to involve children and young people in neighbourhood forums
- Successful holiday schemes run over October 2009 half-term in St Neots, Ramsey and Huntingdon-incorporating arts and culture.
- Anti-Bullying Week 16th-21st November. A variety of events took place across Huntingdonshire with schools and localities to promote awareness of cyber-bullying. Events included drama productions, stalls to raise awareness of bullying, events for parents and competitions.
- Following the arts and culture work with ADEC a newsletter has been produced to promote positive images of young people engaging in these activities

ARTS AND CULTURE:

Part of the area Children and Young Peoples' plan (point 1.1.6) aims to develop youth and arts facilities in areas where there are gaps. In order to meet this objective an arts consortium for Huntingdonshire has been organised to meet with all partners who have an interest in arts and culture work with young people.

In partnership with ADEC, arts and culture activities have been developed via the locality youth work and summer schemes to enable young people to take part in a variety of arts based positive activities e.g. dance, graffiti art, Ding, use of media, craft and arts. There has also been an opportunity for young people to undertake the arts award. Each locality has youth workers now trained to deliver the arts award.

ARCHITECTURAL LIAISON

Architectural Liaison is a task carried out within the Community Safety/ Crime Reduction Units of each Police Division by specially trained officers.

The primary function is to provide a service to Public, Local Authorities, Housing Associations, Architects and the Construction Industry by:-

- Providing advice on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED*)
- Carrying out Consultations with Local Authorities and Partner Agencies relating to proposed building developments and designing out crime.
- Providing advice on designing out crime in Environmental Improvements.
- Promoting, administering and advising on 'Secured by Design'©

- Promoting, administering and advising on 'Safer Parking Award'©

*'CPTED' is the creation, through design, of a physical environment that is conducive with a high level of security for the community.

ADVICE OFFERED

It is acknowledged that the built environment can influence behaviour. The ALO works closely with other agencies, public and private, in re-designing and altering the existing and future built environment, to address known crime and disorder generators. Applying the principles of defensible space and territoriality, together with good practice in building layout, car parking, natural surveillance, lighting and landscaping, can all contribute to reducing the opportunity for crime and disorder.

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APPENDIX C

EFFECTIVENESS OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS (ASBOS)

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced additional powers and tools that could be used by Local Authorities to address persistent offenders of anti-social behaviour.

Anti-social Behaviour is defined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 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". It does not have to be a criminal act. It can include a range of problems: noisy neighbours, abandoned cars, vandalism, graffiti, litter and intimidating groups. The police, local authorities and housing associations have been given powers to tackle this problem.

Anti-Social behaviour Orders (ASBOs) are just one of the many tools available and it is a statutory creation that carries legal force. ASBOs have been used in Huntingdonshire as appropriate, often after other interventions have been tried. The conditions in any ASBO are decided by the court; on the evidence provided to them by the agencies involved in the application. Prior to the application for an ASBO, other interventions such as an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) which is a voluntary contract based on agreed conditions signed by the perpetrator and the lead agencies, may have been tried.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Community Safety Team has two ASB Case Workers that cover the district. These two officers work to address complaints received about individuals, families and groups of people involved in anti-social behaviour from members of the public, local and District Councillors and partner agencies. The Case Workers support the monthly Police Sector ASB Problem Solving Groups that are attended by relevant organisations to agree action with regard to persistent offenders of anti-social behaviour.

Within Huntingdonshire, the Police have made use of CRASBOs. A CRASBO is an addition to a criminal sentence and is considered separately from the criminal part of proceedings. Usually the Crown Prosecution Service requests the court to impose the order. "CRASBOs" are based on the assumption that the individual will re-offend.

Table 1: showing the ASBOs (no. & type) put in place since 2003, in Huntingdonshire:

| Type | Number | Lead Agency |
|--------|--------|-----------------------------|
| ASBO | 2 | HDC |
| CRASBO | 25 | Cambridgeshire Constabulary |

Some successes have been seen from the CR/ASBOs but it is essential that the right conditions are attached.

It is important that ASBOs are not perceived to be the only remedy. For example, the Community Safety Team invests a lot of time in: educating young people on ASB and consequences– ASB Streetwise Days, Junior PCSO Scheme, Youth IMPACT; diversionary activities – FUSION Holiday Scheme, Street Sports Project; initiatives to address alcohol-related ASB – Night Watch Night Time Economy Scheme, CAP Project, etc.; support for victims and perpetrators of ASB – ASB Self Help Guide; Parenting Support Programme; Developing and using appropriate ABCs and offering appropriate support e.g. drug or alcohol referral; referrals to support services – Victim Support, Cambridge Mediation Service, Drinksense, DIAL DrugLink, etc.

The assumption is often made that it is only young people who are the perpetrators of ASB but it is more likely that young people are the victims of crime, disorder and ASB. The Community Safety Team works with perpetrators from the age of 10 years through and into adulthood and ensures that the most appropriate response to their behaviour is put in place in partnership with other relevant organisations.

APPENDIX D

BALL GAMES CONFERENCE

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Community Safety Team and other services at Huntingdonshire District Council recognised an increase in the calls for service associated with the playing of ballgames on grassed areas in residential areas. The District Council does not perceive the playing of ball games to be anti-social but does recognise the impact that behaviours associated with these activities can have a negative impact on some residents' quality of life.
- 1.2 To date, the Community Safety Team at the District Council has put in place a number of initiatives to address the issues raised, including:
- Red Card, Yellow Card Scheme
 - Fair Play for All
 - Considerate Use signs
- 1.3 Although some of these schemes have been successful in some areas, an increase in complaints has been seen and this was supported by the recent findings reported through the Strategic Assessment 2009.

2. PROCESS

- 2.1 At the beginning of November 2009 a Ball Games Conference, hosted by Huntingdonshire District Council was held at Huntingdon Leisure Centre to which a variety of partner agencies were invited to attend. Representatives from the following organisations were in attendance: Cambridgeshire Constabulary, OCYPS, Luminus Group, Nene Housing, Axiom Housing and Huntingdonshire District Council (Members and Officers).
- 2.2 The purpose of the conference was to agree a way forward for dealing with complaints about ball games.
- 2.3 The conference started with a presentation outlining the type of complaints that have been received and the increase in calls for service over the last 5 years. A second presentation followed outlining the Police's response to this type of complaint. A group discussion then followed before breaking into work-groups.
- 243 Each working group was asked to consider a scenario. Feedback and a group discussion on the way forward then followed.

3. OUTCOMES

- 3.1 The following suggestions were made:
- Developing some grassed areas into community gardens
 - Fencing grassed areas - balls less likely to damage property
 - Dispersal Orders where appropriate
 - Make parents aware and requesting their support
 - Make use of the Mediation Service
 - Establish Management Groups involving local residents
 - Parish and Town Councils on board where possible
 - Install additional litter bins where appropriate
 - Educate older young people: role models

- 'Considerate Use' signs to all green areas in the District
- Issues associated with ball games when considering new developments
- Look at local youth provision
- Shared database of issues– one central number/ point of contact

3.2 It was also recognised by those present that agencies had not just received complaints about ball games on grassed areas but also anti-social use of grassed areas in the form of the riding of mini-motos and parking of vehicles.

3.3 The group felt that it was important to address these issues as a whole and share the data that agencies with regard to all complaints associated with grassed areas.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It was recommended that as a result of the Ball games Conference, an 'Open Space Working Group' be formed that will meet on a quarterly basis to discuss and put actions in place to address the anti-social use of grassed areas. The Open Space Working Group be a task and finish group that works to an action plan that is reported to the Community Safety Partnership on a quarterly basis.

4.2 As this issue has been identified as a priority through the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership's Strategic Assessment 2009.