

# SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

27<sup>th</sup> May 2004



**Report of: Assistant Chief Executive**

**Subject: ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – FINAL REPORT**

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## 1. BACKGROUND

1.1 At the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee's meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2003 it was agreed that a review of the progress made in tackling anti-social behaviour would be timely following the comprehensive scrutiny that took place during 1999/2000.

1.2 The enquiry was introduced at Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committees meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2003. Members received an introductory report and presentation which started the process of reviewing how the council has contributed to tackling anti-social behaviour and invited members to consider the effectiveness of the Councils actions. The initial scrutiny of Anti-Social Behaviour in 2000 recognised that there were some very good building blocks in place however further work was required. In particular:

- The development of a pilot landlord registration scheme.
- The development of a focus for the co-ordination of complaints about anti-social behaviour.
- Tracking of information about the type of incidents.

1.3 Since the first enquiry in 2000, there has been some considerable progress, notably:-

- Publication of the Community Strategy – with key targets for Anti – Social Behaviour.
- Publication of the new Community Safety Strategy.
- The implementation, in some wards, of the Community Warden Scheme.
- The announcement of the Government pilot Landlord Registration scheme.
- Employment of Anti-Social Behaviour Officer.

## 2. REMIT OF THE ENQUIRY

2.1 A scoping paper was presented to the Forum on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2003. The paper outlined some of the issues the Forum might consider and also proposed a detailed framework for the conduct of the enquiry. Issues identified were:

- To examine the definition of Anti-Social Behaviour. Is it relevant? Is it working? How does it relate to current changes in policy?
- Interagency co-operation and co-ordination.
- Responses to anti-social behaviour incidents.
- The local policy context – in particular the Police Reform Document.

Progress since the previous enquiry.

- The development of the pilot landlord registration scheme.
- Young People and anti-social behaviour (both as victims and perpetrators)
- Community Wardens – their current role and the potential to expand this role to include some enforcement powers.

### 3. CONDUCT OF THE ENQUIRY

Meeting	Date	Issue
1	17-09-03	An overview of Anti Social Behaviour and the progress made since the last scrutiny enquiry.
2	11-11-03	An examination of the definition of anti-social behaviour, the role of community wardens and the potential of vesting enforcement powers to the wardens.
3	25-11-03	An examination of the issues affecting young people. The implications of tolerance, activities generally and diversion from crime, and prevention of activities which can lead young people into anti-social and criminal behaviour.
4	09-04-04	Examination of issues around private landlords and licensing.
5	Pending (Scheduled for 26 <sup>th</sup> May 04)	Examination of good practice. Site visits and evidence presented of how other areas tackle issues around anti-social behaviour.

#### Meeting One

3.1 Presented at this meeting was an overview of Anti Social Behaviour and the progress made since the last scrutiny enquiry. The Director of Community Services circulated a detailed report outlining both national and local policy in relation to this issue. Details were also provided of the scale of the problem in Hartlepool and the changes which have occurred in the past three years, including:

- ❖ **Establishment of the multi-agency Youth Offending Team** (Aimed at preventing offending by children and young people, utilising initiatives including the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP), Referral Panels and a Restorative Justice programme)
- ❖ **Establishment of the Children's Fund** (Aimed at children aged 5-13 and their families)
- ❖ **Establishment of a Community Warden Scheme** (Covering the Dyke House, Jackson, Stranton, Brinkburn, Owton and Park wards the scheme is aimed at

engaging all sectors of the community to reduce anti-social behaviour and crime (specifically house burglary) and reassuring residents, thereby reducing crime)

- ❖ **Recruitment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by Cleveland Police** (Aimed at improving public reassurance and dealing effectively with quality of life issues, including anti-social behaviour)
- ❖ **Establishment of a Voluntary Landlord Registration Scheme** (Registered landlords are required to meet basis criteria and ensure that their properties comply with basic standards of repair)
- ❖ **Hartlepool's selection as one of five national pilot sites to 'use the existing housing powers to their full extent'** (Two additional enforcement officers have been appointed to tackle the issues of housing disrepair and anti-social behaviour, with a strong link developing between the Councils Private Sector Housing Team and the Anti-social Behaviour Unit.

To demonstrate the practical application of some of these measures outlined above case studies were presented, by Angie Linford, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer and P.C Shelly Watson, following which a variety of issues were discussed. Details were also provided of the work of the Police Task Force established in February 2003, which had been targeting hot-spot areas for anti-social behaviour every Friday and Saturday night. This presentation was made by the District Commander and his staff.

### Meeting Two

- 3.2 The focus of this meeting was to consider in more detail a definition of what constitutes anti-social behaviour and consider enforcement powers for community wardens. Two community wardens were also present and made representations to the forum detailing 'a day in the life of a Hartlepool Warden'.
- 3.3 John Bentley from Safe in Tees Valley also provided an overview of the regions approach to Anti-Social Behaviour. John is the Governments Neighbourhood Warden Unit Regional Adviser. Members recognised the need to keep a balance between enforcement and support for the community.

### Meeting Three

- 3.4 This meeting was the third in a series of five meetings to review this issue. The focus of this meeting was on issues affecting young people and presentations were delivered covering the following areas:
- 1) Youth Justice System – current remit and future work – Operations Manager
  - 2) Risk factors in predicting poor outcomes and IRT project – Director of Community Services
  - 3) Parents and Children/Family Support – John Robinson
  - 4) Young people – discussion of needs and Young People as victims and offenders – Youth Service Operations Manager
  - 5) Video presentation by FC4U/Community Network – a video made by young people which highlighted 'their' issues.

#### 3.4.1 Issues discussed included the following:

- Family involvement

- The value of prevention
- The importance of providing a voice for young people and establishing mechanisms for the Council to respond to their concerns.
- The effect of the congregation of large groups of youths
- The success of the placement a Police Officer at St Hilds school
- Resources to deliver programmes to support intensive work with families and to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour.

### Meeting Four

3.5 This phase of the anti-social behaviour scrutiny enquiry focussed upon two key issues, namely licensing and private landlords. Detailed presentations were delivered on these issues which covered:

- Private Landlord/Tenant Issues
  - The causes and effect of low demand
  - The Voluntary Landlord registration scheme
  - Actions for improvement
  - The ODPM Low Housing Demand Pilot Scheme
  - Enforcement Powers in respect of securing empty properties, noisy neighbours and public health nuisances
  - The role of residents in controlling landlord/tenant problems
  - Advice and support available to landlord and tenants
  - Future actions via the Housing Bill 2003 and Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003
- Licensing Issues
  - Public Entertainment Licenses (PELs)
  - The regulation of the sale of alcohol and fireworks to children
  - The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
  - The Licensing Act 2003
  - Age restricted sales

### 3.6 Meeting Five

Site visit to Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council to take place on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2004 and a report on this will be delivered to this meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

## 4.0 ENQUIRY FINDINGS

### • Definition

4.1 Members of the forum approved the definition of Anti-social behaviour in Hartlepool as that defined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998:

*For the purposes of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, a person is guilty of anti-social behaviour when they have “acted in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not the same household as himself.”*

They were content with the analysis of anti-social behaviour which the unit uses to count and process incidents.

- **Resources**

- 4.2 A key concern that members expressed was in relation to the resources required to ensure continuation, and possible expansion of much of the work undertaken in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour as many of the present initiatives are financed via time limited funds (Neighbourhood Renewal, Children's Fund etc). Members had been impressed by the level of work undertaken and the results achieved. However, there were concerns expressed regarding long term sustainability of these programmes.

- **Co-ordination**

- 4.3 Co-ordination of activity by the Police and the Anti-Social behaviour unit should be more closely integrated and this should be examined further. Although the Police and the local authority worked well together co-ordination and tasking of the staffing resources across the organisations may result in more effective use of resources.

- **Young People**

- 4.4 The importance of involving young people in the development of schemes and initiatives was stressed throughout the enquiry. Specific matters raised by members were:
- Portrayal of the young in the media – Concern was expressed at the often negative portrayal of young people in the media and the effect this had on how they were perceived by residents.
  - The importance of involving young people in the development of schemes and initiatives to address anti-social behaviour and crime – Following on from the comments made in the video presentation, emphasis was placed upon the importance of the involvement of young people in the development of schemes and initiatives. It was also felt that the most effective results could only be obtained with the involvement of those who use the services.
  - The effect of the congregation of large groups of youths – Whilst it was recognised that large groups of youths could be very intimidating for other residents it was also felt that boredom was very often the starting point for anti-social behaviour problems. The Youth Service representative indicated that in a lot of instances young people simply did not understand where other residents were coming from in relation to their fears and lacked the necessary maturity to deal with the situations that arise. Despite this there was a concern that communities do have a tendency to short change, and typecast, young people and although the problems couldn't be remedied immediately work was being successfully undertaken.
  - Young people needed to be involved in the processes and to have their voice heard and work should be undertaken to ensure that mechanisms to deliver this needed to be put in place. Consultation and involvement of young people in this way should be developed is essential.

- **Community Wardens**

4.5 Given the effectiveness of the Hartlepool Community Safety Warden scheme members emphasised the need for the scheme to continue and moreover, expand given the danger that having wardens in selected wards would only displace the problem. However the expansion of the Community Support Officers to the Police service did mean that the whole area was now served in some respects.

- **Preventative Measures**

4.6 Whilst the importance of punishment as a means of dealing with anti-social behaviour and crime was recognised attention was also drawn to the great importance of prevention.

4.7 Schemes were being developed and Members felt that the model of good practice demonstrated by the Children's Fund project of intensive support to the whole family should be continued and supported.

## 5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members of the forum are requested to approve or amend the following recommendations:

1. The Scrutiny Coordinating Committee has identified the need where possible to expand the Community Warden Scheme.
2. There were very real concerns that many of the current schemes including Community Wardens and Children's Fund are based on short term (NRF and NDC) funding. Although this is not an issue for 2005/2006 it will be for subsequent years and therefore should be considered as part of the Zero Based Budgetary review being undertaken in 2004/2006.
3. Development of a 'voice for young people' and involvement of young people in this should be a priority.
4. Co-ordination of the response to Anti-Social behaviour and to tasking of all combined resources should be examined to improve efficiency in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour problems.