

Cabinet – 16 September 2009

Anti-Social Behaviour Scrutiny Working Group

Portfolio:	Councillor Perry – Communities and Partnerships
Service:	Public Safety
Wards:	All
Key decision:	Yes
Forward plan:	Yes

1. Summary of report

The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Working Group established in 2008 by the Neighbourhoods' Scrutiny and Performance Panel, conducted a lengthy investigation into how this issue is addressed through a borough-wide multi-agency approach. The group witnessed examples of good practice and identified areas where process and service delivery could be enhanced.

Their findings were outlined in a report which was presented to the former Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 30 April 2009 and Council on 6 July 2009.

The final report included a number of recommendations based upon the group's experiences and observations covering issues such as the referral process for reporting ASB, the setting up of a mediation service and Councillor training. The Executive Summary of the Panel's report is attached as **Appendix B**. A copy of the full report is available at:

<http://cmis/CMISWebPublic/Binary.ashx?Document=7235> (pages 5 to 58).

The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet about this work and, in particular, make recommendations on the adoption of some of the findings to help improve the services provided by the Council to address the problems caused by ASB.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet welcomes the recommendations of the ASB Scrutiny Working Group.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet agree to the action plan attached to the report (**Appendix A**).

3. Background information

- 3.1 The former Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel (NSPP) appointed an Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group (ASBWG) at its meeting on 10 June 2008 following comments from residents about perceived high levels of anti-social behaviour in their wards. The Panel established a working group to investigate ASB policy and practice across Walsall and reported its findings to the former NSPP on 30 April 2009 who accepted the working group's recommendations and recommended that they were sent to Council for consideration.
- 3.2 The working group has conducted a long and varied investigation into ASB policy and practice which has involved attendance at numerous meetings and events to speak to and observe the people performing the hard task of tackling ASB in the borough.
- 3.3 The working group learned that the majority of ASB is actually caused by adults and not young people as is popularly perceived.
- 3.4 The working group came across many areas of good practice in the borough, such as the Young Persons Information Centre and its Young Advisors scheme in Blakenall. The working group were also pleased to note many different types of partnership working including the newly formed Borough Tasking Group. Whilst the working group were quick to discover the range of good work taking place they were concerned that awareness of worthwhile activities was low, particularly amongst elected Members, and would like to see this improved in the future.
- 3.5 The working group undertook a best practice visit to Manchester, where the City Council has a nationally recognised profile for addressing ASB. Members were impressed by Manchester City Council's highly organised area based structuring and the coordinated approach developed by the team with regard to social housing.
- 3.6 Members learned that a strong partnership approach to tackling ASB is necessary and that tackling ASB is not the sole responsibility of the Police. Enforcement is an important aspect of combating ASB but so are other methods such as: education, prevention and rehabilitation. Every local resident has a role to play in eliminating ASB in the area in which they live and it is only by everyone truly working together that problems with ASB can be eliminated.
- 3.7 At its meeting on 6 July 2009, the Council debated the Scrutiny Panel report and decided to request Cabinet to consider its findings.

4. Resource considerations

- 4.1 **Financial:** Most of the proposed actions can be delivered within existing resources where responsibility for delivery lies with the Council. Some require further investigation, often in conjunction with partners, and, should any proposals emerge that cannot be implemented within existing budgets, they will

be brought forward for Cabinet consideration within the context of future years' budget processes.

- 4.2 **Legal:** No recommendations are directly related to legal issues. However, there are areas where issues such as information sharing and data protection would need to be considered.

- 4.3 **Staffing:** Some of the recommendations would result in a significant impact on staffing both within the Council and its partners agencies.

5. **Citizen impact**

It is the aim of the ASB Working Group to enhance the way in which the Council and its key partners tackle anti-social behaviour across the borough.

6. **Community safety**

The recommendations of the group are intended to make a positive contribution to the broader community safety agenda by reducing incidents and fear of anti-social behaviour.

7. **Environmental impact**

ASB encompasses issues such as graffiti, vandalism, fly-tipping etc. A reduction in such environmental crimes would make a positive contribution to reducing the public's perception of ASB and contribute to a safer, cleaner, greener borough.

8. **Performance and risk management issues**

- 8.1 **Risk:** The recommendations, though all related to ASB, are quite diverse. The advantages of implementation would need to be balanced against impact on resources and any resultant improvement in performance. It would be necessary to consider current capacity issues within the partnership and the impact any significant demands may place upon its services.

- 8.2 **Performance management:** Performance against key indicators and targets related to anti-social behaviour and public perception is monitored across the partnership. The current Strategic Assessment shows a current year on year reduction of 8% in reports of ASB. The working group aims to make a positive contribution to meeting reporting and perception targets and sustaining the reduction.

- 8.3 Public perception of ASB is one of the local indicators included in Walsall Partnerships Local Area Agreement that is owned by the Council and its Partners. By investigating this issue and making recommendations the working group hope to make a positive contribution to the achievement of this key target.

9. Equality implications

The services of Safer Walsall Partnership are available to residents, visitors and businesses borough-wide and are specifically targeted to meet the needs of Walsall's diverse community.

10. Consultation

The final report of the ASB Working Group has been distributed amongst partners and discussions are continuing between the Council and key agencies. At its meeting on 18 June 2009, the Safer Walsall Board noted its content.

Background papers

1. Anti-social Behaviour Working Group Report to Neighbourhoods & Performance Panel - April 2009
2. Recommendations Action Plan

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Jamie Morris
Executive Director



4 September 2009

Councillor Garry Perry
Portfolio holder



7 September 2009

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACTION PLAN

Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Commentary	Proposed Action	Timescale
1. A borough-wide anti-social behaviour unit be introduced combining the ASB related resources of the Council and its Partners.	<p>The introduction of a borough-wide unit would have major implications for all current service providers and would require a total review of service delivery and resources across partner agencies. A complete buy-in to the borough-wide combined unit from all organisations would be necessary in order to provide a unified service. This may not realistically meet the needs or be deliverable within the resources of all current service providers.</p>	<p>Discussions to take place with Registered Providers (RPs) at senior strategic level to explore implications and opportunities for more effective working together through a more unified approach in lieu of a combined service.</p> <p>Develop an agreed joint protocol on service delivery targets for customers.</p>	<p>Sept/Oct 2009</p>
2. In the interim period before the establishment of a borough-wide Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU), consideration be given to Safer Walsall Partnership (SWP) ASBU obtaining external funding	<p>Current financial restraints have placed significant pressure on the ASB Unit in terms of expansion, service delivery and staff development. Bids have been made to external sources in order to meet the funding shortfall and address these areas. Other income streams will be explored as appropriate.</p>	<p>Explore further funding opportunities and deliver efficiencies through re-alignment of services. Continue to bid for external funding as appropriate.</p>	<p>Sept 2009 onwards</p>

Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Commentary	Proposed Action	Timescale
in order to further expand, be this from external sources or by recharging.			
<p>3. In the interim period before the establishment of a borough-wide ASB unit, a compilation document containing the range of ASB policy and practice across the borough be drafted and made publicly available.</p>	<p>ASB legislation is complex and the tools available to local authorities and partners to tackle issues change in response to shifting priorities and Home Office directives. The current resource document is out-dated and the full range of interventions has changed. It would be necessary to compile a 'living document' that is up-dated regularly in order to reflect these changes. This could make the production of one definitive guide a costly and labour intensive exercise. However, guidance on ASB is necessary and the ASB Unit and its partners are committed to improving communication with all service users.</p> <p>Accessible straightforward information must be made available for all service users. The ASB Unit is supporting this by taking a pro-active part in community events in order to distribute information and guidance.</p>	<p>The ASB Unit and partners will be addressing this issue as part of the proposed ASB Standards document and guidance will be contained therein.</p> <p>Look at positively promoting the work and outcomes of the ASBU, WHG and other agencies and develop ideas to address identified gaps in delivery.</p>	Commencing Sept/Oct 2009
<p>4. The 'Referral Process for ASB' protocol be implemented by SWP.</p>	<p>There are several referral methods currently in place, designed to meet the needs of our diverse community.</p>	<p>A more unified process will be developed to ensure efficiency of response is</p>	Commencing Sept 2009

Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Commentary	Proposed Action	Timescale
		<p>maximised and customers are aware of what to expect from the service. The referral process will form part of the planned ASB Standards document. This will then be publicised and introduced to all service users.</p>	
<p>5. A generic ASB referral form be developed for use by the Council and its partners.</p>	<p>Each organisation has its own referral process at the moment. The form currently in use within the ASB Unit required modification to enable officers to respond quickly and not be delayed by lack of information at the referral stage.</p> <p>A new referral form is being developed for use by the ASBU and will be consulted upon with key partners. It contains a 'check-list' to ensure that adequate information is being provided and appropriate avenues have been explored prior to referral to the ASB Unit. Use of the form is currently being developed.</p>	<p>New referral form to be developed further prior to introduction.</p>	<p>Sept 2009</p>
<p>6. Financial assistance is provided to SWP to improve the publication of ASB orders and other</p>	<p>It is current practice within the ASB Unit to produce information leaflets when an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) has been granted. This is designed to advise the immediate community</p>	<p>Explore with partners opportunities for additional funding to assist with publicising ASB Orders and</p>	<p>Sept 2009 onwards</p>

Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Commentary	Proposed Action	Timescale
similar convictions.	<p>which has often been affected by the actions of the perpetrator.</p> <p>The use of publicity where young people are involved is currently under review by the ASB Unit and Youth Offending Service (YOS). The production of publicity material must be contained within the budget available.</p> <p>Local media is currently being utilised to advise residents of any actions taken to tackle ASB.</p>	<p>similar convictions.</p> <p>Utilise opportunities within partner agencies to publicise activities.</p>	
<p>7. Walsall Council re-establish an ASB mediation service.</p>	<p>Mediation is recognised as a valuable approach to resolving conflict situations. An external service provider has been used in the past, but is no longer available. Accredited training of ten members of staff from SWP has now taken place so that this service can be delivered 'in-house.' This is in addition to the service provided by Walsall Housing Group (WHG) and other partners.</p> <p>SWP Mediation Service is currently in development with a proposed commencement date of September 2009. This date is dependent upon all accreditation from awarding body being in place.</p>	<p>Introduce the new SWP Mediation Service subject to accreditation from the awarding body.</p> <p>Maximise take up of SWP and WHG's service amongst customers.</p>	<p>Sept 2009</p>

Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Commentary	Proposed Action	Timescale
8. All Councillors trained in mediation techniques.	Ten officers within Safer Walsall Partnership have received accredited training on mediation. WHG also offers this service. Following discussion with the member development team, training of members may be cost and time prohibitive. It may also impact upon the development of the services already being set up within the partnership.	An awareness session will be delivered in order to advise members of the services available, what mediation entails and when it may be appropriate.	Oct/Nov 2009
9. Further training opportunities on ASB related topics be organised for all Councillors.	The training session delivered during the scrutiny process was very positively received. The potential for delivering an on-going programme of training on all community safety issues has been discussed with the member development team.	Training to be made available to all members on a twice yearly basis, commencing September/October 2009.	Sept/Oct 2009
10. Councillors be kept fully aware and informed of all activities and initiatives that are relevant to their responsibilities as ward and borough-wide Members.	<p>The group identified the need for improved communication between service providers and elected members.</p> <p>Current methods of communication include regular written updates to portfolio holders, CATS meetings, updates from individual service areas (i.e. Safer Walsall Newsletter.) Further methods will be explored through on-going work with the Corporate Communications Team and member Development Team. All service areas will be required to ensure information is shared with</p>	<p>Explore further opportunities to ensure that members are informed of all relevant issues relating to ASB and its management within their wards.</p> <p>Joint reporting mechanism developed with RPs – informing councillors of tools and techniques in use by RPs and raising awareness of</p>	April 2009 onwards

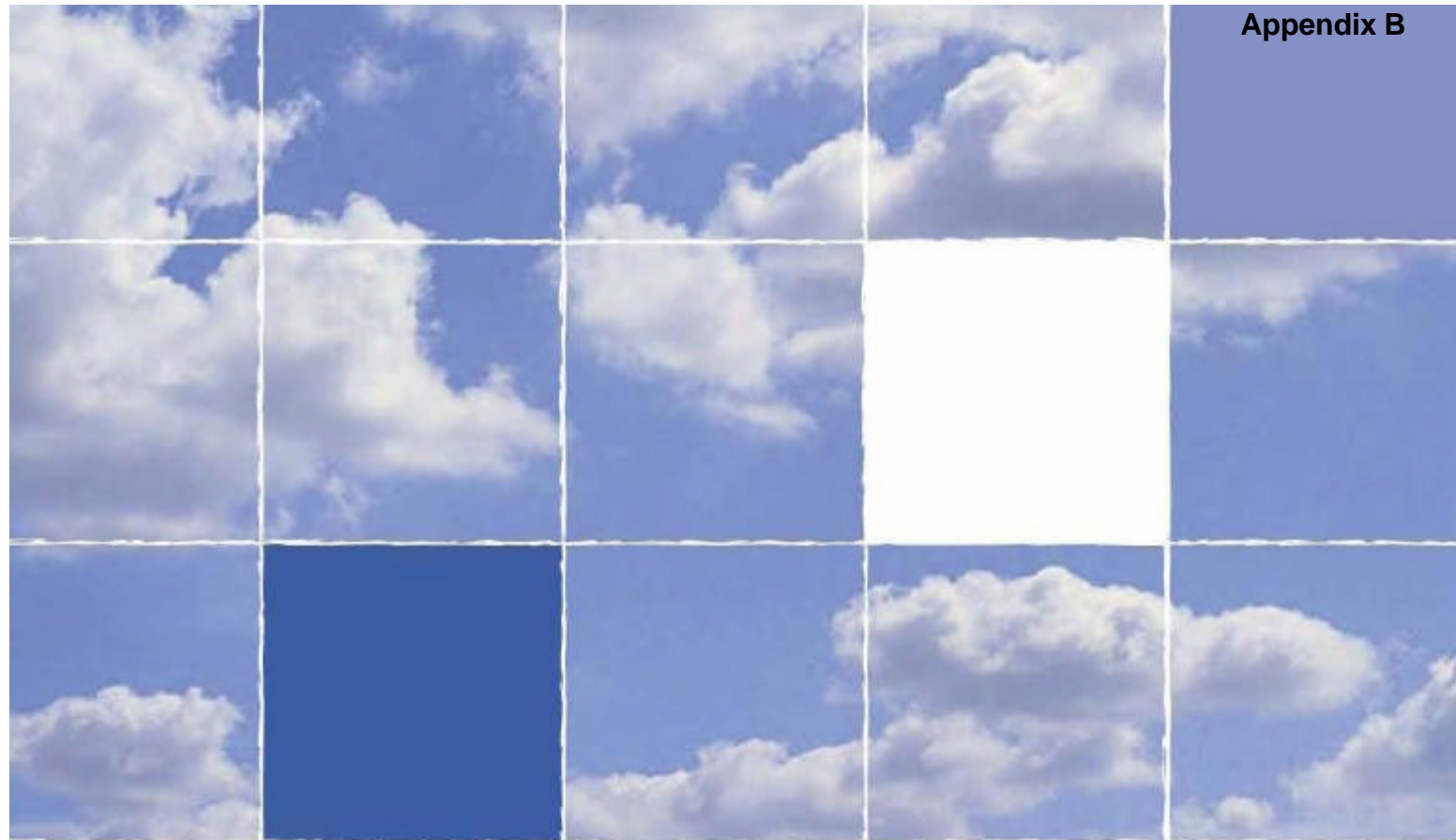
Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Commentary	Proposed Action	Timescale
	portfolio holders and relevant elected members.	what RPs do.	
11. RPs adopt a common database of tenants and common tenant application form to assist in vetting process of prospective tenants.	<p>Following a meeting of Walsall Housing Partnership in July, the RPs advised that ‘vetting’ was inappropriate terminology as prospective tenants should be assessed on their need for housing rather than their suitability.</p> <p>It is proposed that this will be discussed within the Respect group and as a part of the broader work for the forthcoming ASB standards document.</p>	It has since come to our notice that RPs are looking to implement a common housing register as Choose and Move is rolled out for use by all RPs operating in Walsall – which will result in a ‘common housing application form’.	August 2009 onwards
12. The Young Advisors Scheme, as utilised at the Young Persons Information Centre in Blakenall, be recognised as a model of good practice and rolled out across the borough.	<p>The group felt that the function of this service and the work carried out in areas such as peer mentoring was of particular merit and would be a positive addition to service provision across the borough.</p> <p>The Youth Service has now implemented a senior young person’s scheme which follows a similar process to the young advisors, and is accredited by OCN (Open College Network). Developing across localities.</p>	To note the recommendation and Youth Services’ response.	N/A
13. That a borough-wide comprehensive needs assessment be carried out as regards the	The group identified areas where youth provision was less apparent than in others. A borough wide assessment would identify gaps in provision and areas of need.	Further work is planned by IYPSS supported by Regeneration and Property services.	2009/10

Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Commentary	Proposed Action	Timescale
allocation of youth provision. This will ensure that resources are based on need not deprivation.	An audit of location of buildings and provision has taken place as a pre-cursor to the full exercise, which is currently pending.		
14. The Youth Service provides a seven days a week service.	<p>The group recognised the positive contribution of Youth Services in engaging young people who otherwise may be involved or at risk of becoming involved ASB. The need for provision at key times i.e. Friday, Sat evenings etc was identified.</p> <p>Provision is currently under review. Some localities are offering 6 days a week service to young people in partnership with YCAP developments. Further developments will be part of the IYPSS programme.</p>	Complete Youth Services' review.	2009/10
15. All school pupils be encouraged to participate in the Safer Schools Programme.	Safer Schools Partnership is an on-going process of working together with key agencies. Walsall Children's Services (Serco) has representation on the Borough Tasking Group. There have been a range of collaborative initiatives with the Police service within the Anti-Bullying Strategy through Helen Turnbull (Bloxwich Police Station). Safer Schools Partnership has presented to the Annual Anti-Bullying Conference which is open to all schools	<p>Participation at Borough Tasking will continue, with the partnership welcoming further engagement with appropriate agencies.</p> <p>ASBU will explore further appropriate engagement with Safer Schools Partnership.</p>	Oct. 2009

Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Commentary	Proposed Action	Timescale
	in the Borough.		
16. The Youth Warden Scheme to be rotated across all secondary schools that wish to take up the scheme and not be fixed on any particular schools for indefinite periods.	A strategy document outlining the possible future direction of the Youth Wardens has been prepared. This includes the preferred use of a rotation system and potential for development of their role.	Further consideration be given to the strategic response to this issue. Consultation with schools to be undertaken.	Sept 2009
17. Further targeted positive activities for young people of all ages should be operated in key periods, such as school holidays, to divert young people from anti-social behaviour.	Youth provision has a key role to play in positively engaging young people and diverting them away from negative behaviour during key periods. Core work is still targeted at 13 – 19 age group. See also response to recommendation 14 above. Work already completed or planned includes:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summer programmes/Half Term activities offered in partnerships with other agencies to ensure that all ages are catered for. - Over 100 activities were offered to young people across all districts throughout the summer i.e. residential, away days, trips to leisure facilities. Publicity book is available. - A Positive Activities TAP is being produced which involves key partner agencies. 	Complete Youth Services' Review.	2009/10

Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Commentary	Proposed Action	Timescale
18. The Youth Service and other key anti-social behaviour related Partners make reports and presentations to Local Neighbourhood Partnerships on local activities.	<p>The sharing of information about service delivery was identified by the group as a key area for proposed improvement. This would also serve to enhance intervention through improved coordination.</p> <p>Reports are taken to Borough Tasking and also YCAP steering group and LNPs.</p>	Note the recommendation and proposed response.	N/A
19. Key partners, such as Police, PCT and Council with the SWP Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) explore and implement further initiatives that could be introduced to better manage the quantity of needles supplied in a batch, improve both the return of needles by drug users and the removal of discharged needles, in line with practises in other boroughs.	<p>Service providers have been asked by DAAT to look at current practice on needle exchange and supply.</p> <p>This issue is being looked at as part of the current year's delivery and will form part of subsequent service level agreements to ensure on-going development takes place.</p>	Implement review.	Review date Mar 2010

Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Commentary	Proposed Action	Timescale
20. Consideration be given to continue support to Hi's and Low's to assist with needle clean-ups and to encourage drug users in treatment programmes.	Funding for provision of the Hi's and Low's clean-up function was temporarily halted from April 2009. The project's other services were unaffected. Funding was re-instated from July 2009 until March 2010.	Service to be reviewed in conjunction with relevant partners.	Review date Mar 2010
21. SWP investigates approaches to restorative justice in detail and considers where this type of approach could be considered for introduction in Walsall	The use of restorative justice would enable the ASB unit to explore alternative approaches to enforcement, where appropriate. This would enhance the work currently being developed through the Youth Offending Service (YOS) and support work to address emerging issues such as gang culture. However, the introduction of this approach would have resource implications and an appropriate funding stream would need to be sought. Training provision has been identified and an external funding bid has been submitted.	Staff training to be provided to inform practitioners of the methods available and how they should be used. This will be dependent upon sufficient funding being sourced.	2009/10
22. Consideration be given to a further investigation into alcohol related anti-social behaviour by the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny & Performance Panel.	The group identified the correlation between ASB and use of alcohol. It was recommended that a further scrutiny exercise be carried out around alcohol issues across the borough. However, this has now been postponed due to competing work priorities.	This recommendation will be actioned later in the year, pending completion of other areas of work.	2009



Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group

**Report to Neighbourhoods
Scrutiny & Performance Panel
30 April 2009**



Walsall Council

Chairman's Foreword

At one time or another we will have been effected by anti-social behaviour. To try and understand why we have the problem and how we try to deal with such issues the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel formed a working group in June 2008 to assist members and others in the future. The work has been wide-ranging, with recommendations that we believe will assist all those responsible for dealing with anti-social behaviour.

I would like to thank all those who assisted the working group over the past months including, the three other Members of the working group, co-opted advisors, witnesses, Manchester City Council for their hospitality and welcome and of course support officers of which I would wish to mention in particular Craig Goodall, Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer and Debbie Brogan, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, for their hard work and commitment throughout the year.



Councillor Chris Towe
Lead Member, Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group
Chair, Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel



Councillor Paul Bott



Councillor Les Beeley



Councillor Des Pitt



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel (NSPP) appointed an Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group (ASBWG) at its meeting on 10 June 2008 following comments from residents about perceived high levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their wards. Therefore the Panel established a working group to investigate ASB policy and practice across Walsall.

Public perception of ASB is one of the local indicators included in Walsall Partnerships Local Area Agreement that is owned by the Council and its Partners. By investigating this issue and making recommendations the working group hope to make a positive contribution to the achievement of this key target.

The working group has conducted a long and varied investigation into ASB policy and practice which has involved attendance at numerous meetings and events to speak to and observe the people performing the hard task of tackling ASB in the borough.

The working group learned that the majority of ASB is actually caused by adults and not young people as is popularly perceived.

The working group came across many areas of good practice in the borough, such as the Young Persons Information Centre and its Young Advisors scheme in Blakenall. The working group were also pleased to note many different types of partnership working including the newly formed Borough Tasking Group. Whilst the working group were quick to discover the range of good work taking place they were concerned that awareness of worthwhile activities was low, particularly amongst elected Members, and would like to see this improved in the future.

In addition to good practice the working group have also identified a number of areas for improvements in tackling ASB. For instance the working group discovered that the way residents reported ASB was not clear, as responsibility for dealing with ASB could often be spread between partners. For the time being the working group have recommended the introduction of a new single point of contact for reporting ASB and the development of a generic referral form for reporting problems, although, in the longer term the working group would like one integrated ASB Unit formed. This will improve local expertise and accountability. In the short term the working group would like all ASB service providers to produce one document for reference purposes that collates all ASB policy.

One of the working groups key conclusions is that prevention of ASB is better than cure. Hence the working group would like to see the improvement of preventative measures in the borough such as the re-establishment of a local mediation service, and improved services for young people including the provision of more positive activities.

The working group undertook a best practice visit to Manchester City Council who have a nationally recognised profile for addressing ASB.

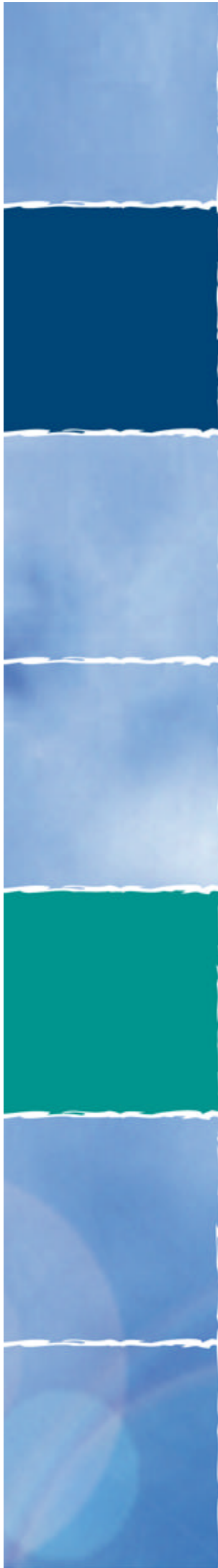
Members were impressed by Manchester City Councils highly organised area based structuring and the co-ordinated approach developed by the team with regard to social housing. At Manchester City Council all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) used a shared database of tenants which allowed data to be shared between RSLs and enabled them to identify troublesome tenants. The working group are recommending that this approach is implemented in Walsall.

Members learned that a strong partnership approach to tackling ASB is necessary and that tackling ASB is not the sole responsibility of the Police. Enforcement is an important aspect of combating ASB but so are other methods such as: education, prevention and rehabilitation. Every local resident has a role to play in eliminating ASB in the area in which they live and it is only by everyone truly working together that problems with ASB can be eliminated.

Recommendations

That:

- 1. a boroughwide anti-social behaviour unit be introduced combining the anti-social behaviour related resources of the Council and its Partners;**
- 2. in the interim period before the establishment of a boroughwide anti-social behaviour unit, consideration be given to the Safer Walsall Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Unit obtaining external funding in order to further expand, be this from external sources or by recharging;**
- 3. in the interim period before the establishment of a boroughwide anti-social behaviour unit, a compilation document containing the range of anti-social behaviour policy and practice across the borough be drafted and made publicly available;**
- 4. the 'Referral Process for Anti-Social Behaviour' protocol be implemented by Safer Walsall Partnership;**
- 5. a generic anti-social behaviour referral form be developed for use by the Council and its Partners;**
- 6. financial assistance is provided to Safer Walsall Partnership to improve the publication of anti-social behaviour orders and other similar convictions;**
- 7. Walsall Council re-establish an anti-social behaviour mediation service;**
- 8. all Councillors be trained in mediation techniques;**

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- 9. further training opportunities on anti-social behaviour related topics be organised for all Councillors;**
 - 10. Councillors be kept fully aware and informed of all activities and initiatives that are relevant to their responsibilities as ward and boroughwide Members;**
 - 11. Registered Social Landlords adopt a common database of tenants and a common tenant application form to assist in vetting process of prospective tenants;**
 - 12. the Young Advisors Scheme, as utilised at the Young Persons Information Centre in Blakenall, be recognised as a model of good practice and rolled out across the borough;**
 - 13. that a borough wide comprehensive needs assessment be carried out as with regards the allocation of youth provision. This will ensure that resources are based on need not deprivation.**
 - 14. the Youth Service provides a seven days a week service;**
 - 15. all school pupils be encouraged to participate in the Safer Schools programme;**
 - 16. the Youth warden scheme to be rotated across all secondary schools that wish to take up the scheme and not be fixed on any particular schools for indefinite periods;**
 - 17. further targeted positive activities for young people of all ages should be operated in key periods, such as school holidays, to divert young people from anti-social behaviour;**
 - 18. the Youth Service and other key anti-social behaviour related Partners make reports and presentations to Local Neighbourhood Partnerships on local activities;**
 - 19. key partners, such as the Police, Primary Care trust and Council with the Safer Walsall Partnership Drug and Alcohol Team explore and implement further initiatives that could be introduced to better manage the quantity of needles supplied in a batch, improve both the return of needles by drug users and the removal of discharged needles, in line with practises in other boroughs;**
 - 20. consideration be given to continue support to Hi's and Low's to assist with needle clean ups and to encourage drug users into treatment programmes.**

- 21. Safer Walsall Partnership investigates approaches to restorative justice in detail and considers areas where this type of approach could be considered for introduction in Walsall;**
- 22. consideration be given to a further investigation into alcohol related anti-social behaviour by the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel.**

Background

The Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel (NSPP) appointed an Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group (ASBWG) at its meeting on 10 June 2008 following comments from residents about perceived high levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their wards. Therefore the Panel established a working group to investigate ASB policy and practice across Walsall.

Public perception of ASB is one of the local indicators included in Walsall Partnerships Local Area Agreement that is owned by the Council and its Partners. By investigating this issue and making recommendations the working group hope to make a positive contribution to the achievement of this key target.

Terms of Reference

The working group held one meeting to consider its terms of reference and agreed the following scope:

1. How anti-social behaviour is defined by residents and agencies.
2. To establish and consider where anti-social behaviour takes place and to what extent.
3. What is causing anti-social behaviour?
4. Review of effectiveness of current anti-social behaviour strategies, policies and practices including reporting procedures.

The NSPP approved terms of reference for the working group at its meeting on 29 July 2008. A full copy of the working group's terms of reference can be found at appendix 1 to the report.

Membership

Appointed to the working group were:

Councillors

Councillor Chris Towe (Lead Member)
Councillor Les Beeley
Councillor Paul Bott
Councillor Des Pitt

At the outset the working group recognised their own limitations as lay scrutineers and resolved to co-opt a range of expert advisors onto the working group to assist them in specialist areas.

Co-opted Advisors

Andy Grosvenor – Safer Walsall Partnership/West Midlands Fire Service

Irene Molyneux – Walsall Housing Group
Neeraj Malhotra – Walsall teaching Primary Care Trust
Sgt Kelvin Rowlands – West Midlands Police
Wendy Thompson – Youth Offending Service

Support Officers

Nozmul Hussain
Lynne Hughes
Debbie Brogan
Craig Goodall

Witnesses

The working group has met with, and spoken to, a significant number of witnesses during the course of its investigations. These include; members of the anti-social behaviour unit (ASBU) team at Safer Walsall Partnership, Youth Offending Service staff, West Midlands Police, Neighbourhood Watch chairs, registered social landlords, youth workers, youth wardens, local authority officers, young advisors, drug workers and other elected members. A full list of witnesses can be found at appendix 2.

Methodology

The working group held 17 meetings which were supplemented with other activities such as visits to ASB related organisations. At the various meetings of the working group Members would receive information on different aspects of ASB and take evidence from expert witnesses.


Other forms of evidence considered include:

- Policy and strategy documents
- Site visits
- Good practice visit to Manchester City Council
- Observation of meetings
- Training sessions
- Conferences

Report Format

This report is a meeting-by-meeting breakdown of the working group's investigation. A summary of each meeting is provided, typically highlighting areas of good practice identified and potential areas for improvement.

The report also includes a case study of anti-social behaviour in Pheasey Park Farm.



The report also comments on a series of recurring themes before concluding with the working group's recommendations.

What is Anti-Social Behaviour?

Right from the outset, Members recognised that they needed to understand what ASB is and the extent of the problem in Walsall.

The working group invited Safer Walsall Partnership (SWP) to host a training event to explain ASB and the holistic approach adopted by SWP to address it. It was acknowledged that ASB is hard to define and is often associated with, what is in fact, criminal behaviour.

Note the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defines ASB 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 the defendant.'

This definition was then broken down into four typologies:

1. Misuse of public space
2. Disregard for community/personal well-being
3. Acts directed at people
4. Environmental damage

One of the key factors in judging if an act is anti-social is by assessing if it has a negative impact on others. Also the *level* of negative impact, its regularity and the tolerance levels of victims.

The working group heard that the ASB Unit at SWP deal with between 5 and 50 reports of ASB a week of varying seriousness. It takes an average of 24 days to resolve each complaint received.

Perception of Anti-Social Behaviour

The working group quickly realised that there is a high level of perceived ASB in the borough that did not match the reported figures. The perception of residents is that the majority of ASB is typically seen to be caused by young people. In reality, the majority of the 105 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders that are currently live have been made against adults. The breakdown of ASBOs granted in Walsall (at time of writing) is as follows:

- 77 adult males
- 16 adult females
- 12 on persons under the age of 17.

Of the 105, 20 of these are related to behaviour that is driven by alcohol, 16 on adult males and 4 on adult females.

That said, Members realise that public perception is an important consideration.

The latest Hotspots in the monitoring period from 24/1/09 and 23/2/09 are in the following areas;

Town Centre: 92 Police recorded ASB incidents.

Caldmore remains the biggest non town centre hotspot with 95 ASB incidents reported to the police.

Pheasey has had a cluster of 6 ASB incidents reported from Collingwood Drive and 4 complaints from a fast food outlet on Beacon Road.

Willenhall and Darlaston, 9 reports from George Rose Park relating to motor bike activity and reports from Darlaston Town centre as with regards youths in a supermarket car park playing football, drinking and shouting abuse.

Bloxwich and Blakenall. Some youth related activity but mainly fire setting. 38 fires were attended by West Midlands Fire Service.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

Throughout their investigations the working group were pleased with the positive feedback that they received regarding the impact of anti-social behaviour orders and other similar methods such as Criminal Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

However, the working group did have some concerns about the cost of obtaining ASBOs against individuals and found that this could prevent some agencies from using them. One RSL reported that it could cost as much as £5,000 to secure an ASBO against a tenant.

One other concern the working group had about ASBOs was the lack of publicity. As these type of orders are often very specific about the restrictions placed on individuals (for example forbidding people from being in a specific area at a certain time) it is important that local people are empowered with the knowledge of the restrictions placed on individuals so that they can be enforced. The working group was pleased to hear that SWP often produces leaflets showing a picture of the offender alongside details of their offences and restrictions placed on them by the ASBO. However, the working group were concerned that a leaflet is not produced for every ASBO issued due to financial restrictions.

The working group strongly recommends that more financial assistance be provided to help publicise ASBOs and other similar orders.

Community Representative

Members recognised that they needed to gain an understanding of the range of ASB taking place throughout the borough. To that end, a meeting took place with a range of grass roots community representatives at Blakenall Village Centre. The working group learned about the range of problems experienced across the borough and the good work that is taking place to tackle them. An example of this is the Young Persons Information Centre at Blakenall (see below).

The working group established that provision for 6-12 year olds is limited. Members were concerned to learn that provision is only in place for 0-5 year's olds (Surestart) and 13-19 years olds (Youth Service). Members felt that it was important to bridge this gap as it was possible that young people could be learning 'anti-social' habits at a young age (6-12 year's old) which could be established by the time they come into contact with the Youth Service at 13.

Members also heard of the important role that registered social landlords and private landlords could play in preventing ASB amongst their tenants.

Young Advisors and Young Persons Information Centre

The Young Persons Information Centre (YPIC) is funded by the New Deal scheme and opened on 24 October 2007. The centre is aimed at hard to reach 11-19 year olds. Approximately 44 young people visit the centre each week-night the centres opening hours are:

Mon-Fri	Age Group	Saturday	Age Group
10am-12 noon	11-13	12noon-2pm	11-13
12noon-2pm	14-19	2pm-4pm	14-19
4pm-6pm	11-13	Closed on Sundays	
6pm-8.30pm	14-19		

The YPIC provided the following facilities:

- Disabled access and facilities;
- Walsall College reading and literacy courses;
- A Nurse and pregnancy advisor;
- Training kitchens for healthy eating;
- A dedicated job search computer;
- Additional computers for positive activities;
- Various themed clubs and evenings;
- A garden that was designed and kept by young people.

The YPIC operates a Young Advisor scheme whereby young people from the local area are employed by the centre to assist in its activities as well as act as positive role models to other young people. Young Advisors are paid £8 an hour for their work. The Young Advisors are trained and accredited in a qualification from the Awards Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. The working group has engaged with the Young Advisors and employed their services to assist with their investigations.

The working group was very impressed with the YPIC, and the work of the Young Advisors. They believe that the Young Advisor initiative should be rolled out across the entire borough.

Neighbourhood Watch Chairs

As part of the intelligence gathering stage of their investigations the working group attended a meeting of Neighbourhood Watch Chairs for the H1 part of the borough. This covers the East, West and South Borough. A listing of the Operational Command Units for West Midlands Police is in appendix three.

Members were impressed to hear about the range of activities taking place such as Operation Serene, Beat the Burglar and Copper Cards. Members also heard of other schemes to engage young people such as 'Me, Myself and I' which is a 10 week course operated by Crimestoppers that allows children to meet the Police and teaches good citizenship, how to report incidents and how to deal with bullying. Members also learned about the 'Junior Neighbourhood Watch' scheme that has been introduced into a number of junior schools for Year 5 and 6 pupils (9-11 year olds). Members believe that this was a worthwhile scheme for primary schools.

At this meeting some comments were raised about how registered social landlords enforced their tenancy agreements. This topic was investigated by the working group and is covered later in this report.

Member Training

As part of their investigation the working group asked Safer Walsall Partnership to host a training event to bring them up to speed on key local and national ASB issues. It was recognised that this type of event would probably be of interest to all Councillors, consequently all Members were invited and 16 Councillors attended the event.

At the event Members heard from the following:

Nozmul Hussain	Director, Safer Walsall Partnership
Lynne Hughes	Interim Community Reassurance Manager, Safer Walsall Partnership

Michael Carey	ASB Co-ordinator, Safer Walsall Partnership
Annette Harpin	Community Safety Manager, Walsall Housing Group
Georgina Atkins	Parenting Practitioner, Safer Walsall Partnership
Inspector Ian Redfearn	West Midlands Police and Safer Walsall Partnership
Frank Barnes	Walsall Children's Services – Serco
Wendy Thompson	Deputy Head of Youth Offending Service, Walsall Council

The majority of Members who attended felt the event was excellent and provide them with a lot of new information. With this in mind the working group recommend that further ASB related training events are organised for Members in the future.

Reporting ASB

Previous to the commencement of this investigation there were some differences in Member understanding of how to deal with and report ASB. The two principle ways working group Members have dealt with ASB were by either reporting to the ASBU or directly to the Police. Some of the working group were also aware that ASB could be reported directly to RSLs should the ASB complainant be one of their tenants.

The ASB Case Management Flowchart was explained to Members at the training session. Questions were asked about how ASB should be reported and the timescales for actions. This drew the attention of the working group to potential inconsistencies in the way that ASB is reported and the timescales within which cases are processed, albeit the working group noted that ASB cases can be complex, and cannot always be resolved within a set timescale. Added to this were additional complexities regarding RSLs, some of whom had their own ASB teams, such as Walsall Housing Group, but there were other smaller RSLs who used the ASBU at Safer Walsall Partnership.

Initially the working group requested that a handbook be produced to assist Members in identifying the preferred way to report particular types of ASB and who to report it to. However, over the course of their investigations, the focus changed to a more straightforward single point of contact, where all ASB related issues could be reported and dealt with or referred on, as appropriate. The working group has assisted in developing the protocol that outlines the principals on how this single point of contact will work. The protocol is attached at Appendix four. The working group is grateful to SWP for agreeing to be the first point of contact.

The working group would like to recommend the implementation of the 'Referral Protocol for Anti-Social Behaviour' as attached at Appendix 4 to this report.

In addition to the reporting protocol the working group would like all bodies operating an anti-social behaviour resource of some description to develop and implement a generic ASB referral form. Using a standardised form across partners will assist in the sharing of information as it could lead to all data being shared on a common platform.

Borough Tasking Group

The working group has observed two meetings of the Borough Tasking Group (BTG). The BTG includes a diverse range of partners who have an interest in tackling and co-ordinating responses to crime and ASB related issues.

Members were pleased that the BTG exists and co-ordinates responses to problems at the highest level. It is hoped that the formation of the BTG will lead to ASB issues being addressed in a clear and direct manner in the future.

Community Action Tasking

Linked to the BTG is the newly introduced Community Action Tasking (CAT) process. CATs have been formed based on Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNP) areas and are meetings of key operational staff from across the Council and its partners. At the meeting the staff will discuss issues raised by the local community and find ways to resolve any problems. If problems cannot be resolved by the CAT then the CAT will refer the issue to the BTG.

The working group have expressed some concerns about the CAT process and how elected Members can gain feedback on issues raised and dealt with. In response to this a system has been put in place to contact elected Members a week before for each CAT to be made aware of any issues to be discussed. The working group welcome this approach and are keen to monitor the implementation and development of CATs in the future.

Alcohol Conference

The working group Lead Member, Councillor Chris Towe, attended the 'Reduce Alcohol Harm Now' Conference in London on 17 October 2008. Speakers at the conference included representatives from:

- Alcohol Concern
- Home Office
- Metropolitan Police
- Department of Health

It was reported that alcohol related hospital admissions have doubled during the last ten years and are rising by 80,000 admissions each year. 45% of recorded crime and 26% of reported rowdy or disruptive behaviour is alcohol related.

Alcohol Concern suggested that the pricing of alcohol is key to controlling abuse. The example of Ireland was used, where increased taxes on alcohol in 2002 saw alcohol consumption fall by 6%, a 14% fall in alcohol poisoning deaths and 6% fall in public order offences.

The Department of Health concurred with the opinion that the consumption of alcohol could be controlled by its pricing and affordability. In terms of its impact on the nations health it was noted that:

- 85.9% of liver deaths are alcohol related
- Alcohol related deaths of 16-29 year olds have risen by 60% since 1991

In terms of alcohol consumption it was explained that 90% of the adult population drink alcohol. However, 25% of the alcohol drinking population consume 75% of all alcohol sold.


A new initiative called the 'Paddington Alcohol Test' has been introduced in some Accident & Emergency Departments. This is a clinical tool for Doctors to use in helping people change their lifestyle, in particular around drinking alcohol. Where this is practised they treat those that drink alcohol as 'sick' and there is a specialist nurse available to help. It has been shown to work, as only one out of every two who go through this process returns to A&E.

The Home Office concurred that where the price of alcohol is increased then consumption falls. A number of initiatives were outlined including the potential to introduce alcohol disorder zones and revoking licences for those premises caught selling alcohol to underage drinkers.

With regard to underage drinkers, 'Young People at Risk' reported that by the age of 15, 82% of young people had tried alcohol. The consumption of alcohol led to increased levels of underage sex and lower academic performance. It was suggested that the key to controlling alcohol abuse by young people was confiscation, dispersal orders and parenting orders.

Alcohol in Walsall

The working group were concerned that alcohol was being purchased by young people from retailers, but noted that a high percentage of age restricted substances were obtained from the parental home. This is evidenced by several studies including a Department of Health survey in 2004 where 51% of teenagers stated that alcohol is obtained from



home with 27% saying that parents give them the alcohol, 18% say that they take alcohol from the home and a further 6% admit to stealing alcohol from the home. Also the Institute of Alcohol Studies reported in January 2009 that parents are the main source of providing alcohol, with two thirds of 12-15 year olds being given alcohol in the home to drink elsewhere, usually in parks and open spaces.

Drinking in public places by young people remains a problem not only for the issues that this activity causes, but for the perceptions of ASB that it gives the public. However, the Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) is now in place across the borough, this should help with some of the issues being faced. The DPPO is not a drinking ban as some people believe, it is an order to assist the police to seize alcohol where it is believed its consumption in a public place could lead to disorder. It is not an offence to drink alcohol in a DPPO, however, it is an offence not to comply with a police officer's request to stop drinking and to hand alcohol over. Any alcohol seized by the police is poured away if it is open or confiscated and admitted into police property. If it is a young person they can be taken home to their parents if deemed necessary.

The working group welcome the introduction of the DPPO which should be an effective tool for the Police to reduce alcohol related ASB in Walsall.

With regard to alcohol being purchased from pubs and off licences, Trading Standards and the police work together in test purchasing. However, some off licences that are suspected of selling alcohol to young people avoid being caught by test purchasers by only selling alcohol to underage people they know. Off licences are being encouraged to participate in the Bottle Watch scheme, where cans and bottles are marked identifying the retailers so anyone picking them up knows which premises they have come from. The working group were impressed with the Bottle Watch scheme and hope to see more off licences participate in the future.

The working group recognise that West Midlands Police have contributed to reducing ASB in the night time economy by the introduction of Operation Be Safe. Additionally, Walsall Council has introduced a "Saturation Policy" to avoid more town centre clubs being set up unless they can demonstrate a need.

Working Group Comment

Whilst the initial intention was for the working group to investigate alcohol related anti-social behaviour in Walsall in more detail, competing priorities and resources have resulted in this topic not being considered. The working group would like to recommend that a separate investigation into this issue takes place in the future.

Good Practice Visit to Manchester City Council

The working group undertook a good practice visit to Manchester City Council (MCC) in January 2009 as the authority has a reputation for being tough on ASB.

Positive enforcement action has resulted in a decrease in ASBOs, due to the prompt and effective manner by which warnings are delivered. Residents of Manchester appreciate that action will be followed through unless their behaviour changes.

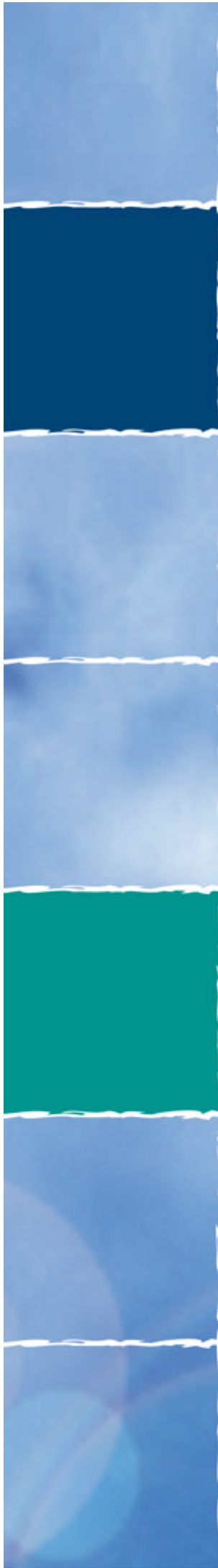
Note, since 2000 MCC has issued 682 ASBOs, compared to Walsall where 105 ASB's have been issued in the same period. According to the 2002 census Manchester have a population of 2,585,800 and Walsall has a population of 253,500.

The ASBU at MCC is not mainstream funded. Funding is obtained from Service Level Agreements and contracts with RSLs that were established at the time of stock transfer. Fees to the RSLs are based on running costs and staffing. Separate fees apply for any legal costs. The Working Neighbourhood Fund has been utilised to enable the ASBU to work with owner occupiers and private landlords. Some refer on to the ASBU on a case-by-case basis and are charged an hourly rate. It is anticipated that RSLs will only refer particularly challenging cases, where ASB has been proven, and all other remedies have been tried.

Members felt that this centralised and charged way of working was something that should be considered for introduction at Walsall.

A Common Housing Register is maintained at MCC. This is shared between the ASBU and the RSLs. A Rehousing Review List flags up arrears, abandoned tenancies and ASB. This helps to track whether a tenant who has been evicted has now modified their behaviour enough to be rehoused, or to apply for another tenancy. This database also allows for effective sharing of information and eases the vetting process for prospective tenants. In addition to this all prospective RSL tenants apply for housing on a common application form which feeds into the Common Housing Register. ***The working group was very impressed with this co-ordinated approach to managing RSL tenants and highly recommend that a similar system is introduced in Walsall.***

The ASBU also has an input into a Trailblazers Programme, where the top 8 families who have caused ASB issues are put into accommodation and monitored 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Extensive support is offered in order to improve parenting skills. In addition prevent and deter programmes are put into place. The project is based around a whole family approach, as ASB in a family can be due to a wide range of issues, such as economic poverty, drugs, alcohol and offending behaviour of siblings and parents.



Private landlords are engaged through Landlord Forums, recognising that private landlords are often difficult to deal with when it comes to supporting any action against tenants who cause ASB. There are two reasons for this, firstly, some landlords reluctant to take action against their tenants, secondly, some landlords may not be aware of how ASB can be tackled and the support available.

A Respect Members Group has been formed in Manchester and the ASBU feed into their quarterly meetings. Officers of the ASBU are held accountable to the Members of the group feeding back on progress made.

Manchester has also introduced a Mediation Service, 12 months ago, which consists of 16 Officers, of which 10 are full time and 6 part time. Also 35 members of the community have been trained in mediation and they work as volunteers in the local neighbourhood to deal with issues before they have a chance to escalate. All training is done in-house and any spare training places are sold to other organisations at a cost of £500 per head. MCC also provides training days to external organisations at a cost of £1000.

The profile of Manchester's drug addicts is of an aging injecting population, generally over the age of 35. Also there is also a higher than average population of 11-12 years olds that use cannabis. Younger age groups tend to favour cannabis, cocaine, alcohol and ecstasy as drugs of choice, probably because they are more easily obtainable. A partnership approach is adopted with a rapid response to clean up discarded needles. Additional needle exchanges are in operation. Manchester does not support shooting galleries. Their ASBU manage a transition programme for year 6 school pupils before they go onto senior school. This is run parallel to any programmes that also engage parents. There is also a significant group under the age of 15 who engage in solvent abuse, with a proportionally high number under the age of 12.

The Manchester ASBU also has an input into the Safeguarding Children's Board, local tasking meetings, and also into any licensing applications. They have also been given accredited powers by Environmental Health to execute warrants with the police for seizure of sound equipment.

Community Safety

MCC has a number of Community safety Officers responsible to a Neighbourhood Criminal Justice Co-ordinator. Working in partnership with others has seen crime being reduced by 25%. Initiatives called 'Weeks of Action' are completed across the 6 neighbourhoods identified as a priority by Greater Manchester Police, working not only with partners, but other agencies too. This can include the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Authority for untaxed vehicles, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals promoting neutering and health

checks on domestic animals, TV Licensing, British Gas and United Utilities, Nacro, Fire Service, RSLs and youth workers. It was identified through the weeks of actions that more youth activities were required on a Friday and Saturday night and such programmes have been put into place following local concerns. Each neighbourhood team have to do one action day a month around local concerns, and staff are paid overtime to run any out of hours provision. Councillors also participate in the walkabouts and door knocking. This maintains a high profile of Councillor involvement. An ASB officer is part of the group, so if someone wants to report an ASB issue the officer can be there within minutes to offer advice and to give out reporting diaries. The working group were impressed with the 'Weeks of Action' concept, particularly its high profile, multi agency approach and speed of dealing with issues which would then act as a deterrent to others.

To improve community engagement in the process an innovative way of consultation has been devised by MCC. Family fun days are held when in excess of 500 members of the public will turn up. Officers also attend school open evenings to get the message across both to young people and parents about community safety and ASB.

Manchester's ASBU make referrals to assist with any health challenges in the family, unemployment, parenting etc.

It was identified in Manchester that the ASBU is not so good in feeding back any successes to the public. However, one Community Safety Officer (CSO) in Manchester has a weekly radio show on local radio that feeds back information to the community. The CSO's are also looking at how they can utilise other communication tools as a feedback process.

Key Individual Networks

Key Individual Networks (KIN) are also consulted. These networks are made up of individuals who have an input into community safety and crime and include charity groups and Neighbourhood Watches. Consultation takes place every 6 months with the feedback used to target specific problem areas.

Youth Workers

Youth workers patrol in certain cases with the Police to engage young people on the streets. Although some youth workers have fragile relationships with some groups of young people therefore they will not approach them with the police present.

Youth worker contracts have been changed to reflect that they are now expected to work on Friday nights.



Schools

It was established that some schools needed help in using enforcement tools to manage ASB in schools. A comprehensive education programme is in place where seminars are held for headteachers. The outcome is that ASBO's have been used to manage behaviour and to set boundaries within those schools. However, the ASBU is conscious of the fact that they are not there to replace the schools own systems. The unit works closely with the Police and with the Safer Schools Partnership (SSP). The SSP was formed in 2002 as a response to the "Every Child Matters" agenda. The SSP builds on early intervention and prevention and the aims are to encourage positive relationships and mutual trust between police, children and young people. At Manchester the SSP invoke Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC), warnings and other interventions. They also hold a transition programme for year 6.

Safer Walsall Partnership Anti Social Behaviour Unit

For the purposes of this report this section covers the processes within the ASBU at Safer Walsall Partnership.

A Parenting Practitioner has been in place in the SWP since August 2007. The practitioner is trained to deliver the Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P) and at the time of writing 115 referrals, of which 52% have engaged with the process. This is better than the national average of an engagement rate of only 40%. A high percentage of parents fail to engage first time round and will only engage on a 2nd or 3rd referral. These referrals can be taken from a range of sources, with the only criteria being that the children/young people in the family are committing ASB in the community, or they are at risk of causing ASB. Some of the risk factors could be due to poor parenting skills, parental boundaries or by a sibling that is already causing ASB. In the SWP Triple P programme 70% of parents stated that they were glad that the programme had been made available to them, and that it had assisted the family. The first programmes were successfully concluded by December 2007.

Further support is also given to any families who have contact with the ASB unit. The case officer will refer onto other organisations that may be able to assist such as Social Services, Benefits, Education Welfare etc.

As with Manchester, private landlords are engaged via the landlords' forum in order to inform them of what anti social behaviour is and the impact that it can have on the community. An ASBU Officer will be doing a presentation at the next landlords' forum in July 2009 in order to highlight current legislation and how ASB is tackled across the borough.

Currently case referrals from other organisations, for example RSLs, are dealt with free of charge by the ASBU.

The working group learned that mediation in Walsall was a service no longer provided in house due to the ill health of the officer responsible. Recent training has been undertaken by the ASBU to reintroduce mediation. ***The working group welcome the reintroduction of mediation in tackling ASB in the borough and this forms part of the working group's recommendations.***

A Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Co-ordinator has been employed by SWP and has been in post since March 2009. This new post will make improvements in the service that the public get from the criminal justice system and therefore increase public confidence. Walsall has been chosen to take part in a Home Office Priorities for Pioneer Area scheme (HOPPA). An outline of the HOPPA is in appendix five.

'Weeks of Action' are run in Walsall by the Community Safety teams and these are carried out across different LNP areas. Community Safety Officers are attached to a particular "Hotspot" area where it is known that there are high incidents of ASB. They work closely with the community and other agencies to deliver programmes aimed at increasing community reassurance. These programmes include a week of action where clean ups are done and skips put in place for the removal of bulky items to prevent fly tipping. There are also walkabouts with the Police which give the opportunity for residents to air their concerns. Any information gathered is brought to the attention of agencies who may be able to assist, such as ASBU, Greenspaces, Street Pride etc.

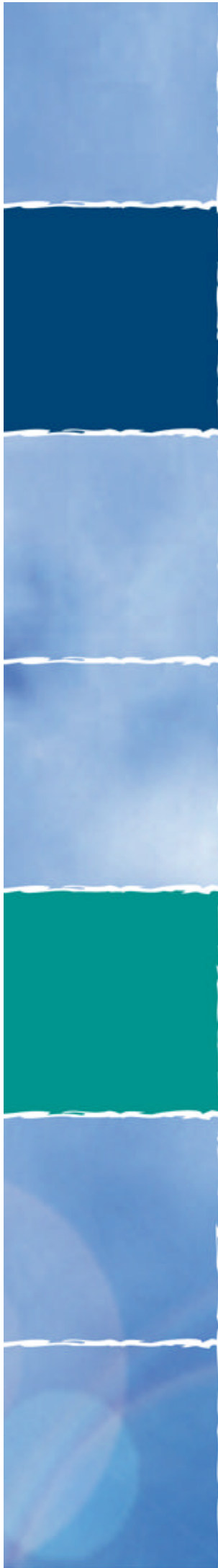
SWP ASBU work closely with schools. The ASBU are working with local schools to deliver Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's). Walsall ASBU have forged strong links with police neighbourhood teams and council departments in order to deliver joint enforcement activities as this has been demonstrated to have more impact.

SWP ASBU also work alongside Walsall Youth Services in tackling ASB and work jointly in engaging young people through project work.

West Midlands Police

Walsall and Bloxwich Operation Command Units of West Midlands Police (WMP) work closely with SWP in dealing with crime and disorder and they have two police officers seconded to the ASBU from the Borough Community Safety Team. Their role is to act as a centre of excellence in terms of guidance to operational police officers across the borough together with support from and to the ASB case officers within the partnership and RSL's.

WMP have also adopted the policing pledge that was rolled out by the Home Secretary in 2008. The pledge will impact and improve police



performance in relation to ASB and Neighbourhood Teams are being increasingly encouraged to solve ASB and to deal with the issues. A greater visible police presence will decrease reports and enable problems to be solved more efficiently to the public's satisfaction.

Police operations have been carried out in order to deal with ASB in a swift and responsive manner and in 2008 Operation Storm Cloud was implemented in which the ASB patrol car was made available to respond to reported incidents of ASB as they arose. This was a successful strategy especially in reducing the number of reports of ASB in the H2 area. The police also make use of Dispersal Orders in localities where there have been issues of ASB due to large gatherings of, usually, young people. The working group note that Dispersal Orders can be effective in preventing ASB so long as the consequences of the order are thought through to ensure that the ASB problem is not simply moved to another area.

ASB is not an issue that can be dealt with by a sole agency and partnership working is crucial in order to gather evidence and to take action. The police work alongside RSLs such as Walsall Housing Group in order to target ASB in residential areas.

The working group acknowledge and appreciate the range of initiatives and good work being completed by West Midlands Police in combating ASB.

Registered Social Landlords

As mentioned earlier in this report, following feedback from various sources the working group wanted to investigate how registered social landlords tackle ASB.

Representatives from the majority of RSLs in the area attended the meeting.

The working group heard how Beechdale Housing Association (BHA) is working with the SWP ASBU in dealing with problem tenants.

One case study given was that BHA had been continually receiving complaints of missiles being thrown at houses, youths hanging around and being verbally abusive, motorbikes being used to cause a nuisance with one family in particular being targeted quite badly. The family was initially frightened and worried about possible repercussions and in the first instance had to be engaged by BHA and the ASBU so that a level of trust could be established. Statements were obtained from those affected by the ASB which led to court proceedings on the young people involved, resulting in three ASBOs. The working group recognised that there was a close working relationship between BHA and SWP ASB team and the way in which the two partners dealt with the ASB issue.

The type of enforcement action that could be taken was also discussed, with the agreement that voluntary methods of tackling ASB are preferable to more formal interventions. Acceptable Behaviour

Contracts and parenting interventions being the first choices before taking legal action. As all partner agencies take a very similar approach to dealing with ASB, partner work is crucial and assists in disseminating local knowledge.

The RSLs agreed that early intervention is paramount and that this sometimes helps to control issues before they get out of hand. Also by getting people to talk to each other, for example through mediation, can be a useful tool in nipping ASB in the bud. Walsall previously had access to a free mediation service but unfortunately this is no longer available, this has led to the working group making a recommendation that a mediation service for the local area be re-established. WHG has set up a fledgling mediation service and it is initially provided at no charge. However, they are considering a recharge at a later stage. One RSL used a West Bromwich company but found that they were expensive and ineffective and is now talking to WHG about using their service. The SWP ASBU has recognised the need for a mediation service and training for ASB staff has been organised.

Restorative Justice was discussed. This involves the perpetrator making amends for their actions by, for example, submitting a written apology or doing work in the community.

One of the issues raised was that the RSLs believe they cannot carry out a comprehensive vetting process of prospective tenants without police checks. A Police representative explained that this is not possible as a lot of the data held is confidential and subject to the Data Protection Act. Also, the information required would need to be put in statement form and this takes a considerable amount of time. Some RSLs commented that they cannot obtain information to consider whether or not to take action against a tenant. The Police representative explained that information requests can be made for the purposes of eviction but not to determine if a tenancy offer is to be withdrawn as it would be a drain on resources and reduce the time available to the officers to deal with ASB, especially as there are only two police officers within the ASBU. One RSL mentioned that in Castle Vale, Birmingham, housing associations could carry out checks with the police as part of the pre tenancy vetting and that this scheme had proved to be successful.

An information sharing protocol is being developed but landlords do currently share information either informally or via a landlord's forum.

It was mentioned that Wolverhampton Council has a policy that partners carry out checks on prospective tenants as part of the lettings process.

RSLs also expressed concerns that information from Social Services was not forthcoming and although they may refer cases involving child protection or vulnerable adults issues there is no feedback on how the case is progressing. The RSLs feel that better communication needs to be opened up especially where there are problem families.

One RSL stated that the Community Action Tasking groups are very useful as the major partners are there such as the police. However, Social Services are not represented. WHG stated that they have written

to Social Services three times asking them if they wish to be represented and inviting them to meetings and there has been no response. The general consensus was that Social Services are not very responsive. In terms of vulnerable adults cases the working group have been advised that the Council would advise RSLs of appropriate information on tenants only.

RSLs do use demoted tenancies where they can evict very quickly should the problems continue and starter tenancies too. Tenants can change their ways if a demoted tenancy is served and the family is also offered support to be able to sustain their tenancy

A common database was proposed as used in Manchester. However, funding may prove to be an issue. One RSL was under the impression that if all the RSLs signed up to Respect Standards for Housing Management then the Local Authority would be receiving extra money. This has been investigated and any extra money received by the Local Authority would only be used for expanding the Respect Parenting Service within the ASBU.

The React database currently used within the ASBU and shared with WHG is deemed to be too expensive to be installed by the smaller RSLs.

Working Group Comment

The working group felt that the boroughs RSLs are working together in a good co-ordinated way. However, it was apparent that when it came to sharing information between parties then much could be done to improve the way this took place, particularly when it came to pre-tenancy checks between RSLs within the borough.

To address this issue, the working group strongly believes that a common housing register and housing application form should be introduced for Walsall, used by and accessible to all of the RSLs in the borough. The working group recognises the cost and resource issues in establishing such a system but strongly believes the future benefits of establishing such a scheme would be worth the investment.

The working group strongly believe that mediation is a service that should be used to solve ASB related issues at an early stage and again urges that investment is provided for training. Investing in mediators could save the area time and money in solving ASB cases that could have been addressed at an early stage.

Respect Landlords Forum

The Respect Landlords Forum meets on a monthly basis and membership comprises of managers from the borough's RSLs.

A meeting was held at WHG Bloxwich Housing Trust where a presentation was given on the support and services offered by the trust.

Bloxwich Trust offers several initiatives to support tenants in incidents involving crime and ASB.

The main services offered are:

Victim and witness support groups. Witness support is very important as quite often victims feel vulnerable, exposed and fear retribution. The chances of reprisal are very low but this perception can have quite an impact on the victim who may decide not to co operate with an investigation. This could mean that the case against the perpetrators cannot continue.

The reporting of racial and hate crime. This is victim led and is used to monitor tensions in any particular area, enabling the targeting of early interventions.

Demoted tenancies. These are easier to obtain and involves the loss of an assured status so is quicker to evict any tenants causing issues should the behaviour continue.

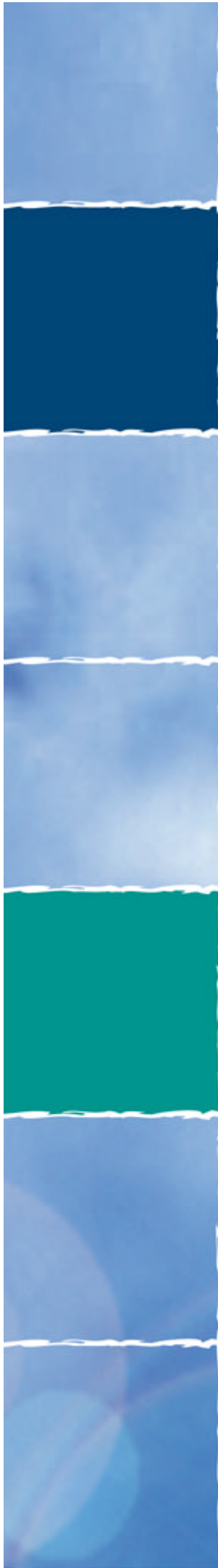
Access to the SWP ASBU React reporting system. This enables WHG to be aware of any issues among their customers and how cases are progressing.

Staff have been trained to offer in-house mediation. Three residents who volunteer their services have also been trained. Mediators contact both parties within 2 days and all cases are resolved within 14 days. Special rooms that are more conducive to mediation are to be provided and will be put into trust offices across the borough.

The trust is also 'designing out' any opportunities for crime and ASB in new builds such as alleyways etc and is working towards 'Secure by Design' standards.

Youth Workers

Whilst recognising that the majority of ASBOs are awarded against adults the working group wanted to investigate the issues around perceived ASB by young people. Often people perceived young people to be acting anti-socially simply because they were out in the streets in large groups. The working group wanted to consider if this problem was linked to a lack of positive activities in the borough for young people. In addition to this feedback, throughout the investigation various sources had reiterated a lack of provision for young people aged 6-12 years. There was also a perception by working group Members that the youth service provision for 13-19 year olds was limited. This perception was reinforced by the feedback the working group received after employing the YPIC to undertake research around the Collingwood Centre.



To discuss these issues the working group met with a range of youth workers from across the borough.

The working group learnt from an outreach youth worker that a previously completed mapping exercise across the Darlaston area had demonstrated that there were no facilities for 6-12 year olds in their area. Children's Services have commented that there has been a general decline in the Play services offered by the Local Authority.

There was also discussion around funding and it was mentioned that core funding is based on area deprivation not need.

However the working group did learn about the Safer Schools Programme that is held every June and July for 10-11 year olds that are currently in year 6 and will be undergoing the transition to senior school in September. The aim of Safer Schools is to tackle such issues as ASB, child safety and bullying, something that every young person will face during their secondary education. The young people have the opportunity to speak to many of the organisations that are available to support them including police, fire service, Street Pride, Safer Walsall Partnership etc. Youth Wardens complete role play and 'Act the Bully' with one or two young people where the teacher has identified that that young person would benefit. They also look at smoking, drugs and joy riding with the young people to make them aware of the consequences of these activities.

The working group thought that this was an excellent scheme and felt that all children in the borough should attend the event before starting secondary school.

The working group also learnt about the youth wardens' scheme which was rolled out four years ago to 6 core secondary schools across the borough. These schools are Joseph Leckie, Bluecoats, Alumwell, Sneyd, Willenhall and Pool Hayes. There is a team of 4 youth wardens and the schools have been chosen on the basis that that there is a higher proportion than average of young people known to the Youth Offending Team. The team have also worked for a trial period of 6 months with primary school children who were in years 5 & 6 at Salisbury Street primary school. The children/young people are introduced to good citizenship, community cohesion, perceptions and littering amongst other topics. ***The working group felt that the youth warden scheme was worthwhile and that all schools in the borough would benefit from having access to a youth warden should they require one. Therefore the working group recommend that the criteria used to deploy youth wardens be revised to allow them to be redistributed across the borough as and when required.***

Integrated Young Peoples Support Services

The working group learnt that on 1 October 2009 Walsall's Integrated Young People's Support Services (IYPSS) will commence with a focus

on improving outcomes for young people and the need for the integration of young people's services. External consultancy has been engaged to review the existing arrangements within Walsall and the report proposed a project management approach and therefore a interim project manager will, with key partners develop a strategy for the implementation of the integrated young people's services in order to deliver government requirements. The IYPSS delivery model will mirror Walsall's aim for the increasing localisation of services. ***The working group welcome the creation of IYPSS and call on it to provide positive activities for 6-12 year olds.***

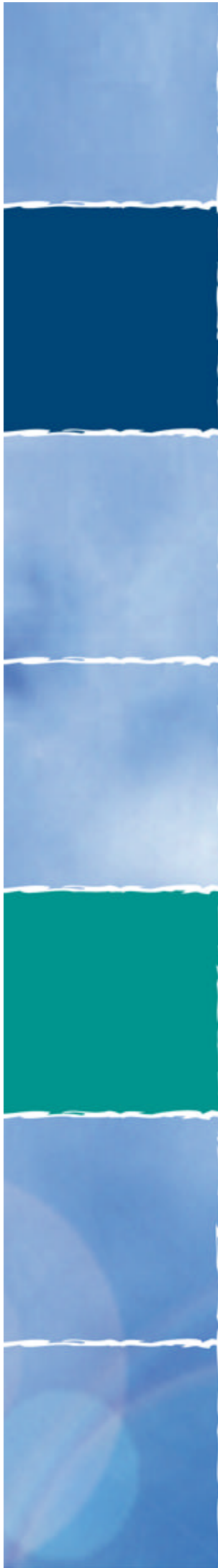
Pheasey Park Farm – Case Study

At the Member Training event and the Borough Tasking Group it was reported that Collingwood Drive, Pheasey Park Farm, had the highest levels of reported ASB in the borough in August 2008. The working group learned that for the period February 2008 to January 2009 there were 502 reported incidents and 72% of these incidents were youth related. This is an average of 42 complaints per month. The makeup of the population also needs to be taken into account as in some areas the populace are more eager to report incidents than in other wards.

The working group decided to investigate this issue further and use it as a case study to assist their work.

It was established that the cause of the ASB was young people being out on the streets. The working group were informed that this was a seasonal problem that reoccurred most summers whilst schools were closed. This finding is supported as reported ASB declined in the autumn with an average of 34 complaints per month from October to December 2008. However, the working group was aware that there was still a perception that ASB in this area was high so they decided to look into it further.

As the ASB in this area had been strongly linked to young people, the working group employed the services of the young advisors from the Young Persons Information Centre, Blakenall, to complete outreach work and engage with the young people of this area. Three visits were made to this area, but due to very cold weather conditions no young people were encountered on two of the visits. On the occasion that young people were met a group of approximately 15 young people, aged 12-20 years old were encountered. They were hanging around a bus shelter smoking cannabis and did not want to engage with the young advisors. On the same evening the young advisors engaged with three young people who had travelled to the Collingwood area from over the Birmingham border. They were able to establish from these young people that they believed there were no organised activities taking place. The young advisors visited the local community centre with the three young people and established that there were activities for young people taking place two evenings a week, one was an



accreditation night and the other a dance night. The three young people were not interested in these activities. The working group were also disappointed with the range of activities that were available.

Children's Services have asked that the working group note that there are other facilities available as well as partnership working to support young people into positive activities.

Since the work of the young advisors two outreach workers have been recently allocated to the area to do outreach work with the young people. An officer supporting the working group later met with one of the outreach youth workers who has been allocated to the area. The youth worker stated that there should be a programme of activities running three nights a week in the area but due to Health and Safety concerns they were only able to operate two nights a week. He stated that he was aware of cross border issues with large numbers of youths coming in from the Kingstanding area and that he was going to form links with Birmingham youth services to see how this problem could be approached. One of the issues that he raised was that youth workers are not permitted to spend substantial periods of time in the area in order to form relationships and to implement activities. The youth worker is also aware of the potential for further issues during the summer and is trying to engage with the young people prior to the lighter nights. The outreach workers were trying to source funding for projects and were looking to bring the Tech Bus into the area. The bus would be placed within walking distance for the young people but would be situated away from the regular haunts of the teenagers so they would be tempted away from residential areas and would not be left wandering around those areas when the bus had left the area at 9.30pm. A drugs worker from the Darlaston team was also being allocated to the area for a period of time and activities such as bike projects, anti-drugs work and trips to a gym. These are all subject to funding being found.

It is also noted for the purposes of this report that a pro social modelling pilot was undertaken by an ASBU Officer in Summer 2007. This was based at the local community centre and 6 young people worked for eight Saturday mornings on projects such as car washing, working with Green Spaces on open land and distributing information leaflets. The young people were rewarded with a goodie bag at the end of the project in order to reinforce good behaviour. The feedback was very positive both from young people and their parents and more importantly the group continued to do voluntary work in the community.

In terms of dealing with ASB caused by young people the working group learnt that any young people who are consistently causing ASB and are known to the youth service are reported to the ASBU where warning letters are then sent out to the young person and their parents to make them aware of the behaviour. If the behaviour continues the ASBU then follow this up with personal visits to both parents and to the young person. The ASBU now work with young people on a

preventative as well as enforcement basis, working collaboratively with youth services on projects to engage and deter.

The working group felt it would be beneficial for the youth service to raise awareness of their activities and felt that they should provide feedback in each area of its work through Local Neighbourhood Partnerships. This could be supplemented by other ASB related information/presentations from other partners, such as the Police, to raise awareness of issues and facilitate partnership working at a local level.

Increased awareness of youth service activity to all local people could help to improve youth engagement. The working group strongly felt that if young people were more engaged with the youth service this would have a positive impact on the levels of ASB across the borough. In addition to this further targeted activities for young people should be operated during key times, such as school holidays, to divert young people from ASB.

The working group were in favour of the extension of youth service hours and would like to see it become a seven days a week service rather than the mixed levels of service that are currently received.

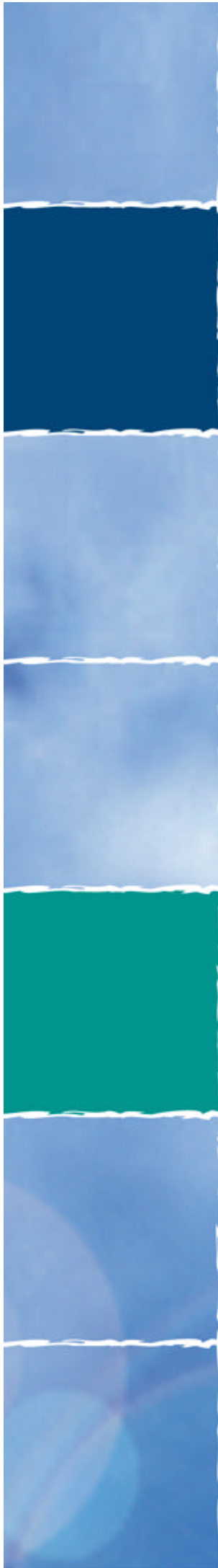
Feedback from Children's Services has revealed that JNC Conditions of Service for youth workers do not prohibit this and no overtime payment would be required, however to increase the amount of provision over and above what is already provided then there would be a cost implication which the working group recognise. The working group is looking forward to the establishment IYPSS in October 2009 and hope that it will offer more flexible working hours.

The working group are aware that core funding for the youth service is based on an area deprivation funding model. The working group would like to recommend that a comprehensive needs assessment is carried out across the borough for youth services to ensure that funding and resources are timely and appropriate as with regards the needs of local areas.

Drug Use and Needle Exchange

One of the principle concerns from the outset of the working group's investigations was drug use and needle exchanges in Walsall. Members had concerns about shooting galleries and carelessly discarded needles and sought further information.

There is a 14% needle return rate to pharmacies and clean needles are given out depending on what the user requires varying amounts of needles are required on a daily basis. Pharmacists that dispense needles are authorised by a treatment provider. This prevents anyone going into a pharmacy and asking for syringes and needles.



The working group met with Hi's and Lows, a locally based organisation, who specialise in needle pickups, and engaging with drug users. They learned that Hi's and Low's had funding issues and limited resources, and on occasions have had difficulty responding to reports of discarded needles. Workers knew the favoured sites of drug users and it allowed them to engage with the more 'hard to reach' addicts. They have developed a rapport with the addicts who make them aware of new sites following which drug workers could place yellow sharps buckets to try and reduce the incidents of publicly discarded needles and infections caused by discarded needles. Drug users also notified the workers when the buckets were full. Some addicts also clean up sites. Drug workers monitor the sites that the public are not aware of. There are currently 42 active sites in Walsall.

Street Pride also contact Hi's and Lows and ask them to clear needles and this is done free of charge. A Member suggested that the owners of private properties should be recharged for needle pickups and should take responsibility for their own sites.

Hi's and Lows offers support with information on harm reduction and treatment programmes that are available. SWP awarded £6,000 in funding for the year 2008/09 to Hi's and Lows, leaving a considerable shortfall. Patrick Duffy, who commissions drug and alcohol services for the partnership, stated that there are considerable funding issues around needle pickups. The Police do not offer any funding as it is seen as a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership issue.

The drug workers also offer needle exchange from backpacks. Users can contact them, following which they go out to sites to offer clean needles.

The working group considered the impact of not issuing clean needles unless used needles were returned. They felt this could mitigate the risk of needles being discarded inappropriately and hence the potential for needle stick injuries. The working group learned that needle exchange programmes were designed to limit the spread of Hepatitis C, which is still rising nationally. Due to the excellent work being carried out in Walsall incidences are decreasing due to the effectiveness of the needle exchange programme. If as suggested needles were not given out unless used needles had been returned then the incidences of Hepatitis C would rise as users would share needles or use old ones that they had found. Hi's n' Lows felt that this type of policy was fraught with difficulty for drug users as if there is any residual drugs in the syringes they could be stopped by the police while on their way to exchange needles and would technically be in possession of a class A drug, albeit in a small amount. The working group felt that so long as the drug user was only in possession of a residual amount of drugs on their way to the needle exchange then they should not be of risk of prosecution.

The working group would like key partners such as the Police, Primary Care Trust and Council to explore further initiatives that

could be introduced to improve the return of needles and prevent the discarding of discharged needles.

Members also felt that awareness training on how to approach and resolve problems with discarded needles would be beneficial so that they could deal with these problems in their communities and signpost local people to services to assist in getting discarded removed from the streets quickly and safely.

The working group would like to congratulate Hi's and Lows on the excellent and often unsung work that they perform protecting local communities and strongly urge that funding is provided to the organisation so that they can maintain their current efforts in this area.

Note: An update from Walsall Drugs and Alcohol Team (DAAT) in March 2009 states that the needle returns rate to Addaction in February were 56% higher than the number actually issued the previous month. This was due to a flat clearance that Hi's and Lows did in addition to the normal sites. However the return rates the local pharmacies are still low. The DATT team are making contact with individual pharmacies in order to encourage returns.


Youth Offending Team

The working group wanted to learn more about rehabilitation schemes and met with the Youth Offending Team to discuss programmes that are put in place both on the prevention side and post-court.

In summary the programmes consist of one-to-one or group sessions. The most common referrals are to Yisp which is for 8-18's respectively and this is looking at modifying behaviour. The referral criteria is for those who are already committing ASB, or have siblings causing ASB/crime. The criteria also takes into account other factors such as school exclusions, high crime areas, social deprivation. There can be an initial reluctance to engage therefore a whole family approach is looked at, especially if there are parenting needs or substance and alcohol misuse. Child protection referrals are also followed.

Group work can be done around drama and art programmes or a fishing programme. The programmes work on self image and how the young person sees the world and how they are viewed. The art and drama courses are accredited so there is a certificate at the end of the course. There is also behaviour reinforcement carried out in the form of a contract, this is especially pertinent to the organised activities whereby poor behaviour results in exclusion.

The respect programme runs for 10 weeks and is currently at the Joseph Leckie School working with year 8's that fall into black and minority ethnic groups. They are taken out of school for an afternoon to participate in the programme. Peer support is encouraged and needs are often multiple and complex and there may have to be appropriate



referrals made to other agencies. Local schools across the borough have also run programmes around arson and ASB.

The working group welcome the work undertaken by the Youth Offending Team and support its future development.

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Ongoing themes

There were a number of ongoing themes that reoccurred throughout the working group. This section of the report will cover each of recurring themes before concluding the working group's findings.

Restorative Justice

A recurring theme throughout the working group's considerations was the use of restorative justice. In restorative justice processes, the person who has harmed takes responsibility for their actions and the person who has been harmed may take a central role in the process, in many instances receiving an apology directly or indirectly from the person who has caused them harm.

The working group were unable to investigate the use of this idea in Walsall but were aware of a number of instances where the approach had been used successfully: for example at Willenhall and Joseph Leckie Schools.

The working group believe that there is value in researching additional uses of this approach and would like Safer Walsall Partnership to investigate this further.

Communication

Councillors

A significant fact that was apparent throughout the investigations carried out by the working group was the recognition of the good work taking place throughout Walsall. An area of major concern though was the lack of awareness of this by Members, and on occasion by other partners.

The working group felt that it was vitally important that all elected Members were kept fully informed of activities and operations that are initiated by the Council in their wards. For example with ASB, a fully informed Member should be able to advise residents of ongoing activities, such as the availability of the youth service activities, and be able to signpost residents to helpful services via the ASB unit who could then make referrals into other support services such as the Parenting Practitioner. The lack of Councillor communication is further illustrated by the point that even amongst the working group there were differing levels of knowledge on how and where to report ASB. One Member was unaware of the existence of the SWP ASBU until the training event. It is vital that the Council and its Partners communicates fully and effectively with all Members on relevant borough wide activities and ward related issues.

The working group felt particularly disengaged when it came to activities undertaken by partner organisations. Although, the working group

recognise that it is not practical for partners to inform Councillors of all the activity they are undertaking, particularly if there are operational sensitivities around an event or activity. ***However, the working group felt it was very important that partners shared their main activities with all Councillors and then targeted individual ward Members with information on more localised activity.***

Public

The working group felt that their lack of project and programme awareness led them to question what the wider awareness of the general public was like. Whilst conducting its investigations the working group have received many flyers, programmes and leaflets around worthwhile schemes, and encourage the Council and all its partners to continue publicising all ASB related schemes widely across the borough to capture as many interested people as possible.

Mediation

Mediation and the lack of an appropriate service in Walsall was an ongoing theme throughout the working group's investigations.

The working group quickly recognised that prevention was better than cure with ASB related issues. Particularly with neighbour disputes. To this end mediation could provide a quick fix to minor ASB related problems and prevent them becoming full scale enforcement operations. During the course of their work Members have learned that Walsall Housing Group have trained mediators that can be engaged, at a cost, by others in the borough. The working group also welcome the proposed mediation training of the Safer Walsall Partnerships ASB Officers.

A goal for the future will be to provide mediation training for local Councillors who can often become involved in ward disputes between two or more parties.

Note: The above issue was raised at a recent visit to the SWP ASBU and it was felt that as mediation can be a lengthy and time consuming process then it may be of an advantage to Members to have awareness training around mediation so they could determine if a referral into mediation would be appropriate.

Inter-Agency Working

Another highly significant ongoing theme was inter-agency working and the need for improved partnership working is a requirement to deliver effective services. Throughout their investigations the working group have come across many and varied groups linking activities of a similar nature. The range of organisations working together is impressive and wide ranging. The working group recognise that the principal of

partnership working is still a relatively new culture. It has come on leaps and bounds in recent years, but the bringing together of such diverse organisations and purposes is still in need of improving.

For example: RSLs. All of Walsall's major RSLs sit on Walsall Housing Partnership. This is an excellent forum for RSLs to learn and share best practice and discuss common issues. However communicating in meetings can only achieve so much. As learnt on the visit to Manchester City Council, RSLs could still work in partnership to a greater degree, for example, by using a common application form and tenant database. The working group accepts that changes such as these will be time and resource intensive to establish but believe the benefits of setting up these systems will be borne out in the long term. This type of partnership was in existence throughout the borough. For partnership working to move onto the next level, sharing resources and information needs to become a right rather than an expected privilege. As aforementioned the working group understand that this represents a massive cultural shift in the way that organisations work and conduct business. The working group recognise the excellent work that has already taken place and urge partners to work in closer and more innovative ways to deliver first class services to local residents.

The working group would like to see this achieved is through the development of a compilation document that contains all ASB policy and practice that exists in the Council and its Partners across the borough. This would produce a one-stop reference guide for the whole borough on how to report and deal with different kinds of ASB.


Boroughwide Anti-Social Behaviour Unit

As aforementioned in this report, ASB resources are currently spread through many varied organisations, such as Safer Walsall Partnership, RSLs and the Police. There is good partnership working taking place between these organisations already but the working group would like this taken to the next level.

The working group believe that significant improvements, and efficiencies in the way that ASB cases are resourced and dealt with could be achieved by creating a fully integrated ASBU for the whole of Walsall. This should combine all current ASB resources across different organisations into a single team accessible by all residents, organisations and partners in Walsall. The ASB Team would then sell their services to local organisations who require ASB related services such as the local council, police and RSLs.

On the good practice visit to Manchester City Council the working group learnt about how the ASBU there was solely funded by Service Level Agreements with service commissioners. The working group were highly impressed with this way of working and think that this should be the model for establishing Walsall's very own integrated ASBU.

The working group recognise that this recommendation cannot be implemented immediately and that it will take time to map current ASB



related service provision and create the principal of how the new unit will be funded and operated but firmly and strongly believe that this step change in ASB service delivery will deliver tangible benefits for local residents.

Conclusion

The working group are incredibly pleased with the hard and excellent work that is taking place in the borough to tackle anti-social behaviour and would like to thank all of the individuals, organisations and partnership bodies that they have met with during the course of their investigations.

Members learnt that the majority of ASBOs are issued against adults rather than young people and that the Police are one partner amongst many in the fight against ASB.

The working group have identified a number of areas where they believe improvements can be made and look forward to working with people across the local area in developing and monitoring these ideas in the future.

Members would like to reinforce that a strong partnership approach to tackling ASB is a necessity and that every local resident has a role to play in eliminating ASB in the local area and it is only by everyone truly working together that problems with ASB can be eliminated.

Recommendations

That:

- 1. a boroughwide anti-social behaviour unit be introduced combining the anti-social behaviour related resources of the Council and its Partners;**
- 2. in the interim period before the establishment of a boroughwide anti-social behaviour unit, consideration be given to the Safer Walsall Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Unit obtaining external funding in order to further expand, be this from external sources or by recharging;**
- 3. in the interim period before the establishment of a boroughwide anti-social behaviour unit, a compilation document containing the range of anti-social behaviour policy and practice across the borough be drafted and made publicly available;**
- 4. the 'Referral Process for Anti-Social Behaviour' protocol be implemented by Safer Walsall Partnership;**
- 5. a generic anti-social behaviour referral form be developed for use by the Council and its Partners;**
- 6. financial assistance is provided to Safer Walsall Partnership to improve the publication of anti-social behaviour orders and other similar convictions;**
- 7. Walsall Council re-establish an anti-social behaviour mediation service;**
- 8. all Councillors be trained in mediation techniques;**
- 9. further training opportunities on anti-social behaviour related topics be organised for all Councillors;**
- 10. Councillors be kept fully aware and informed of all activities and initiatives that are relevant to their responsibilities as ward and boroughwide Members;**
- 11. Registered Social Landlords adopt a common database of tenants and a common tenant application form to assist in vetting process of prospective tenants;**
- 12. the Young Advisors Scheme, as utilised at the Young Persons Information Centre in Blakenall, be recognised as a model of good practice and rolled out across the borough;**
- 13. that a borough wide comprehensive needs assessment be carried out as with regards the allocation of youth provision.**

This will ensure that resources are based on need not deprivation.

- 14. the Youth Service provides a seven days a week service;**
- 15. all school pupils be encouraged to participate in the Safer Schools programme;**
- 16. the Youth warden scheme to be rotated across all secondary schools that wish to take up the scheme and not be fixed on any particular schools for indefinite periods;**
- 17. further targeted positive activities for young people of all ages should be operated in key periods, such as school holidays, to divert young people from anti-social behaviour;**
- 18. the Youth Service and other key anti-social behaviour related Partners make reports and presentations to Local Neighbourhood Partnerships on local activities;**
- 19. key partners, such as the Police, Primary Care trust and Council with the Safer Walsall Partnership Drug and Alcohol Team explore and implement further initiatives that could be introduced to better manage the quantity of needles supplied in a batch, improve both the return of needles by drug users and the removal of discharged needles, in line with practises in other boroughs;**
- 20. consideration be given to continue support to Hi's and Low's to assist with needle clean ups and to encourage drug users into treatment programmes;**
- 21. Safer Walsall Partnership investigates approaches to restorative justice in detail and considers areas where this type of approach could be considered for introduction in Walsall;**
- 22. consideration be given to a further investigation into alcohol related anti-social behaviour by the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel.**

Glossary

ABC

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. A voluntary agreement between the perpetrator of anti social behaviour and the local authority or other organisations such as the police. The contract sets out clear guidelines on behaviour that is not acceptable, i.e. swearing in public places, throwing missiles etc.

ASB

Anti Social Behaviour. Behaviour defined as acting in a manner that causes harassment, alarm and distress to others not of the same household as themselves.

ASBU

Anti Social Behaviour Unit. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 promoted the practice of partnership working to reduce crime and disorder and places a duty on the police and local authorities to develop strategies in their area. ASBU's have been set up in order to combat ASB in partnership with other organisations.

ASBO

Anti Social Behaviour Order. An order obtained on any person over the age of 10 years where it is demonstrated that that person has been acting in an anti social manner and the order is required to prevent others from suffering further harassment. The order is for a minimum term of two years and any breach is a criminal offence.

CAT

Community Action Tasking Group. These groups have been set up on a local level. Various organisations and departments meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues that affect the local community and to look at a resolution.

CSO

Community Safety Officer. Officers employed by Safer Walsall Partnership whose main role is to engage with the local community and to work on projects which promote community reassurance, safety and cohesion.

DPPO

Designated Public Place Order. As of December 2008 Walsall Borough has been granted a DPPO. This means a uniformed police officer who feels that any person who consumes alcohol in a public place is at risk of causing crime or disorder can be asked to leave the area. The police officer can also seize open and closed containers of alcohol.

HOPPA

Home Office Priorities for Pioneer Area. The scheme is designed to support the governments drive to make improvements in the Criminal Justice System and to improve public confidence.

IYPPS

Integrated Young Persons Support Service will be in place within Walsall MBC by October 2009. The focus will be on ensuring that outcomes for young people improve with a focus on the need for integration of young people's services.

The four key challenges will be;

How to engage more young people in positive activities and to empower them to shape the services that they receive.

How to encourage more young people to volunteer and become involved in their communities.

How to provide better information, advice and guidance to young people to help them make informed choices about their lives.

How to provide better and more personalised intensive support for each young person who has a serious problem or gets into trouble.

LNP

Local Neighbourhood Partnership's are area based committees that comprise of elected members and representatives of partners.

RSL

Registered Social Landlord. RSLs are independent housing organisations registered with the housing corporation under the Housing Act 1996.

WHG

Walsall Housing Group. The largest Registered Social Landlord in the borough of Walsall.

YISP

Youth Inclusion Support Panel. Multi agency planning groups that offer support to 8-19 year olds that are deemed as at risk of offending or causing anti social behaviour. This support can be in the form of constructive leisure activities outside of school hours and referral to other support agencies as required to cope with issues such as drugs and alcohol abuse.



Appendices

1. Terms of Reference for Working Group as approved by the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 29 July 2009.
2. List of witnesses engaged during working group considerations
3. Listing of police neighbourhood beats that form Operational Command Units H1 and H2.
4. Referral protocol for ASB complaints into Safer Walsall Partnership.
5. The four strands to the HOPPA scheme which the Walsall MBC and West Midlands Police have signed up to.

Appendix 1

Work Group Name:	Anti-Social Behaviour
Panel:	Neighbourhoods
Municipal Year:	2008/09
Lead Member:	Councillor Chris Towe
Lead Officer:	Nozmul Hussain
Support Officer:	Craig Goodall Debbie Brogan
Membership:	Councillor Chris Towe Councillor Les Beeley Councillor Paul Bott Councillor Des Pitt Andy Grosvenor - Safer Walsall Partnership Sgt Kelvin Rowlands – West Midlands Police Irene Molyneux - Walsall Housing Group Wendy Thompson – Youth Offending Service Neeraj Malhotra – Walsall PCT

1.	Context
	The working group has been established by the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel following Member concerns about the extent and levels of anti-social behaviour in the borough.
2.	Objectives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To learn from residents, community groups and agencies what their experience/understanding is of anti-social behaviour in Walsall ii. To better understand policy and practice in addressing ASB in Walsall by individual agencies and collective working iii. To explore good practice in addressing ASB within the borough and other boroughs. iv. To highlight findings and report to Cabinet/Council and Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership Board.
3.	Scope
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. how anti-social behaviour is defined by residents and agencies 2. to establish and consider where anti-social behaviour takes place and to what extent 3. what is causing anti-social behaviour 4. review of effectiveness of current anti-social behaviour strategies, policies and practices
6.	Equalities Implications
	There is a legal and moral obligation to ensure that, when undertaking a scrutiny review, the impact of policies; procedures; strategies and activities is considered within the 6 strands of equality (Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Religion or Belief, and

	<p>Sexual Orientation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration will be given to equalities issues in current strategies, policies and practices. • Any recommendations that the working group make will be tested to ensure they are compliant with equality requirements • An Equality Impact Assessment of this work by the group will undertake during the course of the review 		
4.	<p>Who else will you want to take part?</p> <p>Due to the cross cutting nature of the issues that are related to anti-social behaviour the working group anticipates engaging with a wide range of individuals and organisations to assist in its investigations.</p> <p>This includes representatives of the remaining Walsall Council Scrutiny and Performance Panels as required.</p> <p>To assist the working group with professional expertise a number of agencies will be approached to be co-opted as advisers to the group from the following agencies:</p> <p>Safer Walsall Partnership Police Walsall Housing Group Children's Services Health Services</p> <p>In order to ensure a holistic view is taken of ASB, covering prevention, education, enforcement and rehabilitation, the Working Group seeks to engage with the following stakeholders:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Residents (Young People, Elderly, BME & Faith groups, Women & Parents) • Local Businesses • Community & Voluntary Groups • Teachers & Governors • Neighbourhood Watch Groups • Drug/Alcohol Treatment Agencies • Parks and Leisure • Walsall Primary Care Trust • Pub Watch • Registered Social Landlords </td><td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courts • Probation service • Police (senior officers & PCSOs) • Youth Service • Youth Offending Team • Safer Walsall Partnership Teams • Parenting officers • Public Protection/Licensing Team • Education Walsall (Serco) • Legal Services • WHG Community Safety Team </td></tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Residents (Young People, Elderly, BME & Faith groups, Women & Parents) • Local Businesses • Community & Voluntary Groups • Teachers & Governors • Neighbourhood Watch Groups • Drug/Alcohol Treatment Agencies • Parks and Leisure • Walsall Primary Care Trust • Pub Watch • Registered Social Landlords 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courts • Probation service • Police (senior officers & PCSOs) • Youth Service • Youth Offending Team • Safer Walsall Partnership Teams • Parenting officers • Public Protection/Licensing Team • Education Walsall (Serco) • Legal Services • WHG Community Safety Team
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5.	Timescales & Reporting Schedule
	TBC – see timetable
6.	Risk factors
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Difficulty in recruiting proposed co-opted advisors onto to the working group 2. Delays in securing witnesses to attend meetings <p>These factors will be mitigated by future planning. One proposal is to complete the investigations in themes. This should enable greater co-ordination with co-opted advisors and witnesses.</p>

Timetable:

DATE	ISSUE
22 July	Working Group agree draft terms of reference and outline programme
29 July	Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel consider draft terms of reference
August	Host Anti-Social Behaviour Training event open to all Members to learn about anti-social behaviour in Walsall and role of agencies.
August	Identify and invite co-opted advisors to join working group.
September	Meet with a range of community based representatives to establish the perception of anti-social behaviour on the ground.
September-March	Meet with a range of stakeholders to establish the perception of anti-social behaviour, and policy and practice.
March 2009	Working Group meeting with advisors to review findings and agree direction of travel.
April 2009	Report to Cabinet/Council & SSCP Board
Further meetings as required	

Witnesses

Co-opted Advisors Sgt Kelvin Rowlands – West Midlands Police Irene Molyneux – Walsall Housing Group Wendy Thompson – Youth Offending Team Neeraj Malhotra – Walsall teaching Primary Care Trust Andy Grovesnor – West Midlands Fire Service and substitute Mike Birch
H1 Neighbourhood Watch Chairs
Michelle Parry and Jayne Read – Young Persons Information Centre
Amy Beetley, Tammy Stonnard, Jamie McDonald and James Tolley – Young Advisors
Registered Social Landlord Representatives Donna Fletcher Rajit Sall Annette Harpin Gary Brooks Jan Clarke Sarah Lloyd Shireen Mabley Cam Dee Howard Campbell
Youth Worker and Warden Representatives Jan Madeley Wayne Palmer Ravi Pannu Lorraine Randall
Safer Walsall Partnership Representatives Nozmul Hussain Lynne Hughes Michael Carey Debbie Brogan Patrick Duffy Barry Keogh Inspector Ian Redfearn PC Alan Poole C. Donlin Georgina Atkins
Bernard Moore – Interim Youth Services Manager
Hi's and Lows Tracy Gibbs Phil Mason
Manchester City Council Joanne Dalton Rebecca Bryant Justin Williams
Borough Tasking Group
Respect Landlords Forum
Walsall Housing Partnership

The working group met with many people and organisations, apologies are made to anyone who has been left out inadvertently.

Appendix 3

West Midlands Police have two Operational Command Units (OCU's) and these are referred to as H1 and H2.

H1 covers the following areas;

Sheffield & Rushall

North Aldridge

South Aldridge

Streetly

Pheasey

Park Hall & Chuckery

Alumwell

Birchills

Central (Walsall Town Centre)

Caldmore

Palfrey

Delves

Pleck

Coalpool

Hatherton

H2 covers the following areas;

Moxley

Darlaston

Rough Hay

Bentley

Spring Bank/Little London

North Willenhall/New Invention

Short Heath

Leamore & Harden

Blakenhall Heath & Little Bromwich

Dudley Fields & Bloxwich West

Pelsall

Walsall Wood

Brownhills

Appendix 4

Referral Protocol for Anti Social Behaviour.

There are 4 ways to refer cases of anti social behaviour to the ASB Unit.

By phone:

Direct ASB line 01922 648291.

Contact Safer Walsall Partnership on 01922 709189 and ask for the ASBU admin officer.

By email:

ASB@walsall.gov.uk

By letter:

Write to the ASB Unit, c/o 191a Broadway, Delves, Walsall, WS13HD

To the Partnership Director:

Referrals from Councillors/MP/Senior Management/Tell Us forms.

If an Elected Member is making a referral, please make the complainant aware that a referral to the ASBU has been made. We need complainants name, address and telephone number with a brief summary of the problem. Alternatively supply the complainant with our contact details and ask them to call us direct.

N.B. The ASBU does not act on anonymous complaints. However, please reassure complainant's of the confidentiality of any information provided especially if they are worried about recriminations.

Once received, the unit will endeavour to contact the complainant and log the referral within one working day. The complainant will be contacted and notified of the appropriate officer with a confirmation letter and reporting diary is then sent to them.

To progress the complaint the allocated ASB Officer will make contact with the complainant within **five** working days, subject to seasonal variations such as summer holidays etc.

Following this contact the ASB Officer will investigate the complaint and agree with the complainant an action plan to reduce/stop the ASB or explain why no action can be taken. This should happen with **28 days**. If more time is needed, as can happen with complex cases, then the complainant will be informed of this, and the reasons why.

N.B. Individual complaints cannot be discussed with Elected Members without the consent of the complainant.

Home Office Priorities for Pioneer Area (HOPPA)

Walsall has been selected to pilot the **Home Office Priorities for Pioneer Area Scheme**. The scheme is designed to support the government's drive to make improvements in the service the public get from the Criminal Justice System and through this improve public confidence.

There are four strands to the HOPPA scheme, which the council and the police have signed up to:

i. One dialogue with the public on crime

The police and the Council are required to work collaboratively in each Neighbourhood police area to listen to resident's community safety concerns, respond and then give update on progress.

ii. Promoting the Policing Pledge

WM Police have signed the new Policing Pledge setting out minimum standards of service the public can expect. The SWP is working with the Police to further publicise the pledge locally.

iii. Highly visible Community Payback

People carrying out Community Payback are now expected to wear high visibility vests carrying the Community Payback logo, to raise the visibility of Justice of being carried out.

From April we will be allocated a minimum number of hours of community payback that have to be 'visible' to the public.

iv. Community Crime Fighters

The Home Office Community Crime Fighters scheme is designed to provide selected members of the public with training, information and support to work with neighbourhood policing teams and local authorities to help make their communities safer. In Walsall we have had the Street Champions Scheme running for two years, which although is primarily geared toward enviro-crime, our plan is to extend this to cover all issues of community safety.