

COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

POLICY REVIEW - ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR- EVIDENCE GATHERING

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

9 MARCH 2010

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To receive further evidence as part of the Committee's study into the work being taken by the Safer Sunderland Partnership into tackling anti social behaviour in the city.
- 1.2 To provide feedback to the Committee on recent visits undertaken by the Committee.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 15 June 2009, the Committee agreed to pursue a review of the measures being taken to tackle anti social behaviour in the city.
- 2.2 It was suggested that the following areas be included within the study:-
 - (a) To gain an understanding of approaches of Council and its partners in tackling anti social behaviour and ensure that strategic approach is being taken;
 - (b) To map service provision to identify hotspots or any gaps in provision
 - (c) To examine the issue of underage drinking (note - Childrens Services Review Committee scrutinised Alcohol and Young People in 2008/09)
 - (d) Strengthen the environmental services connection with LMAPS
 - (e) To consider the balance between preventative and enforcement action
 - (f) Developing activities and interventions for young people and families that helps meet their needs
 - (g) Look at perceptions of anti social behaviour (Local Area Agreement)
 - (h) Progress of Local Multi Agency Problem Solving Groups

3 Current Position

- 3.1 As part of the evidence gathering process, the Committee will receive evidence from Gillian Thirlwell, Victim Support Sunderland.
- 3.2 Victim Support Sunderland work to help support the victims of antisocial behaviour and other crimes. In doing so, they work closely with key partners such as the Council, housing providers and Northumbria Police.

- 3.3 As well as providing practical and emotional support to victims, they also help access better security measures, deal with insurance markets, liaise with the police and other agencies, help in applying for criminal insurance compensation and provide support throughout the court or criminal justice process.
- 3.4 Members will have the opportunity to ask questions of Ms Thirlwell on the work of Victim Support Sunderland.

4 Committee Visits

- 4.1 During the last month, members of the Committee have been involved in a number of visits. Members are invited to discuss feedback from the visits.

Winter Weekend XL Village

- 4.2 On the evening of Friday 12 February 2010, Councillor Bob Heron, Councillor Ellen Ball and Councillor Rosalind Copeland visited the Winter Weekend XL Village Event held at the Red House Academy, Sunderland. The purpose of the visit was to discuss and view the innovative work going on to engage young people in positive activities and help reduce the incidence of anti social behaviour.
- 4.3 Members commented on the valuable and innovative approach being taken at the event which included outdoor and indoor sport and leisure activities. The event attracted around 80 youngsters. The event made full use of the facilities available at the school which had been provided by the school free of charge. Members commented on the potential of extending the Village concept to other areas and other schools in the city. It was noted that the holding of such events had led to a significant fall in incidence of anti social behaviour on the evening the events were held. Members commented on the commitment of all of the staff involved and the potential to extend such events to other areas.

Area Policing Teams

- 4.4 On Wednesday 17 February 2010, Councillors Bob Heron, Ellen Ball, Rosalind Copeland, Paul Maddison, Bernard Scaplehorn and Jack Walton visited Gillbridge Police Station to speak to officers from the City Centre and East Area Police Teams. The purpose of the visit was to discuss with the Police their approach to dealing with anti social behaviour within the city. Inspector Neal Craig and Inspector Mark Ord were in attendance.
- 4.5 It was noted that the White Paper Protecting the Public emphasised the importance of tackling anti social behaviour and perceptions of anti social behaviour and highlighted the importance of neighbourhood policing and joint working between partners. Closer engagement between the police and local communities and better joint working between partners was seen as vital to improving the public's confidence in the criminal justice system. It was felt that the police were now much more involved in neighbourhood work and were more visible in local communities. It was important that recent falls in the level

of crime and anti social behaviour was matched by changes in the perception of local people and a reduction in the fear of crime

- 4.6 The role of CSO's was discussed and in particular their importance in engaging with the public. There was some discussion as to whether increasing their powers could lead to a dilution of this role. Operation Griffin had proved a great success with CSO's playing an important role in liaising with the Anti Social Behaviour Team and schools in dealing with young people found in possession of alcohol. It was however, felt that partners needed to press for firmer action to control the number of licences granted permitting the sale of alcohol. Reference was also made to the effect of alcohol abuse on A&E Departments and the city centre.
- 4.7 LMPAS were felt to be operating particularly well across the city and were an important forum for tackling local anti social behaviour problems.
- 4.8 It was recognised that more needed to be done to improve PACT attendance levels in some areas but they were seen as an important means of partnership working and community engagement.
- 4.9 The importance of partnership working was exemplified in both the private and social housing sectors. The proactive approach of housing providers such as gentoo was applauded but it was noted that more needed to be done in relation to the actions of many private rented landlords.
- 4.10 Members also had the opportunity to view the operation of the CCTV surveillance facility based at the Civic Centre, Sunderland and a number of "hotspots" in the city. Members were most impressed by the operation of the CCTV facility and the contribution it made to tackling crime and fear of crime in the city. It was also a very good example of successful joint working between the Council and its partners.

G4S Visit – Electronic Tagging

- 4.11 On Monday 1 March 2010, members are scheduled to visit Washington in order to view the operation of the G4S electronic tagging system and to discuss its operation with staff. Members will be provided with a verbal report on the key issues raised during the visit.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 Members are requested to consider the evidence submitted as part of its study into anti social behaviour together with the proposed visits.

6. Background Papers

Safer Sunderland Strategy

Anti Social Behaviour Strategy (draft 2009)

Contact Officer: - Jim Diamond, Review Coordinator
0191 561 1396