

**COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
20 APRIL 2010**

STUDY INTO ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR – DRAFT FINAL REPORT

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP5: Attractive and Inclusive City
CORPORATE PRIORITIES: CIO1: Delivering Customer Focused Services,
CIO4: Improving Partnership Working to Deliver 'One City'.**

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To receive the draft final report on the Committee's review into the action being taken by the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) to tackle anti social behaviour and perceptions of anti social behaviour in the city.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 On 15 June 2009, the Committee agreed to undertake an investigation into the action being taken by the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) to tackle anti social behaviour and fear of anti social behaviour in the city.

2.2 The Committee felt that it was important to look into this issue in view of the impact anti social behaviour can have on the quality of life of residents and the high priority accorded to it by both the Council and the Safer Sunderland Partnership.

3.0 Terms of Reference

3.1 The terms of reference for the study were to:-

- develop a clearer understanding of what actions constitute anti social behaviour (ASB);
- understand the legislative, policy and performance context of ASB;
- gain a better understanding of the approaches of Council and its partners in tackling anti social behaviour and ensure that a strategic approach is being adopted;
- identify any gaps in provision and suggest any improvements for service delivery.

4.0 Membership of the Committee

4.1 The membership of the Committee consisted of Councillors Robert Heron (Chair), Ellen Ball (Vice Chairman), Rosalind Copeland, Paul

Maddison, Anthony Morrissey, Kevin O'Connor, Bernard Scaplehorn, Derrick Smith, Mel Speding, Eric Timmins and John Walton.

5.0 Methods of Investigation

5.1 The following methods of investigation were used for the review:

- (a) Evidence from relevant Council officers and our partner organisations, including Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Gentoo, Nexus, Sunderland Magistrates Court;
- (b) Visit and discussions with police officers from the Central and East Area Police Areas;
- (c) Visit to the Council's CCTV Control Centre;
- (d) Participation and consultation with the Safer Sunderland Annual Forum;
- (e) Visit to the XL Village event held at Redhouse School;
- (f) Visit to G4S based at Washington in order to view the operation of the tagging system.

6.0 What Do We Mean By Anti Social Behaviour

6.1 From the outset, we felt that it was important to clearly define what we mean by the term "anti social behaviour"; as the phrase is often used to cover a wide spectrum of actions from minor neighbour disputes to more serious criminal activity and harassment.

6.2 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides us with a helpful starting point, defining anti-social behaviour as:

"Behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm and distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator."

6.3 In practice this can include a wide range of actions including:-

- Harassment, threatening language and behaviour;
- Nuisance caused by people drinking alcohol, or being under the influence of alcohol or drugs in public places;
- Rowdy behaviour;
- Hoax calls to emergency services;
- Vehicle nuisance;
- The dumping of rubbish and littering;
- Uncontrolled pets and fouling of public areas;
- Nuisance neighbours;
- Arson and secondary fires;

- Criminal damage and vandalism (including graffiti).

6.4 Before looking in detail at the action being taken by partners, we first considered the national legislative framework and the local policy agenda.

7.0 National and Local Policy Framework

National Framework

7.1 For more than a decade, tackling anti social behaviour has been a major priority for the Government. This has been reflected in a raft of legislation, including the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Police Reform Act 2002, Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003, Housing Act 2004, Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005 and the Police and Justice Act 2006.

7.2 The main consequence of this legislation has been to provide the police, local authorities and partners with an array of policy tools for tackling anti social behaviour. These include ASBO's, Fixed Penalty Notices, Drink Banning Orders, Acceptable behaviour Contracts, dispersal orders and premises closure orders.

7.3 During recent months, anti- social behaviour has taken on an even higher profile and priority. October 2009, saw the Home Office announce a package of new measures to improve the collective response to anti social behaviour, particularly services to victims, tougher action on ASBO breaches and the introduction of minimum service standards. There has been a commitment to ensure local action focuses on tackling and not tolerating ASB. The Government is clearly committed to seeing police and local authorities using their powers in a way that is effective and responds to peoples' needs at the right time.

Local Framework

7.4 In April 2008, the Safer Sunderland Partnership published a fifteen year strategy for the period 2008-2023. The strategy identifies a number of high level outcomes to be achieved by 2023 but also includes a number of key shorter term strategic priorities for the period 2008-2011, one of which is to 'reduce anti-social behaviour and people's perceptions of it'. Of particular relevance are:

- Creating a Safe Environment - Sunderland will have an environment that promotes safety and feelings of safety. By 2023 no one will feel very unsafe in their neighbourhood.

- Being Free from Crime, Disorder and Substance Misuse - people in Sunderland will be free from crime, disorder, and substance misuse. By 2023 residents will enjoy a city with its lowest ever recorded crime rate and perceptions of anti-social behaviour will be at their lowest level and be better than the national average
- Creating a Supportive Family Environment - people in Sunderland will have the supportive family environment they need to help them stay free from harm and crime and disorder. By 2023, more people than ever will perceive that parents take responsibility for the behaviour of their children.

7.5 The SSP has also been developing an Anti Social Behaviour Strategy and Delivery Plan that is being presented to the SSP Board meeting of 30th April 2010, to seek its endorsement. **We feel that it is important that findings of this Committee should be reflected and incorporated into the Strategy and would stress the importance of the Strategy in coordinating the actions of partners.**

8.0 GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY

- 8.1 The Safer Communities Team, (SCT), co-ordinate partnership action to address crime, disorder, and substance misuse issues and support the delivery of the ASB Strategy on behalf of the SSP.
- 8.2 The Safer Sunderland Partnership Board brings together the key public, private, community and voluntary sectors to deliver the Safer Sunderland Strategy. These include the City Council, Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust, Northumbria Probations Service, Sunderland Youth Offending Service, Sunderland Victim Support, Gentoo, Nexus and Wearside Women in Need.
- 8.3 The ASB Delivery Group brings together representatives from agencies across the Safer Sunderland Partnership who are involved in addressing anti-social behaviour in order to develop and implement multi-agency solutions. Time limited Task and Finish Groups are formed as and when required from the membership of the group (and beyond, depending upon the expertise required), to address issues that require more detailed consideration to obtain a resolution.
- 8.4 It also provides a link to the eight Local Multi Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) delivery groups and considers LMAPS trends across the City.
- 8.5 The LMAPS provide a specific locality and neighbourhood approach to addressing problems of ASB as well as other problems. Chaired by the

Inspectors from the Neighbourhood Policing Teams the groups bring together local frontline agencies responsible for key safer communities services. These agencies include the police, environmental services, cross tenure housing providers and regulators of the private rented sector, youth offending and fire service. In addition an elected member representative attends to provide a community perspective.

8.6 The purpose of LMAPS can be summarised as:

- To identify, analyse and effectively resolve crime, fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse issues at a local/area level.
- To provide an accessible forum for local interests and residents to feed in relevant concerns
- To exchange information and practice between all eight LMAPS groups and relevant delivery groups within the SSP governance structure.
- To improve public confidence in the SSP
- To improve public satisfaction in our services and
- To reduce demand on our services.

8.7 In order to qualify as an LMAPS issue, the matter must be a 'community safety' matter, be seen as an ongoing or repeat problem, require multi agency resolution and therefore not simply be a single event, which is resolvable by one agency.

8.8 **During our study, feedback from the Police, Gentoo and other key players indicate that LMAPS are operating particularly well across the city and are an important forum for tackling anti social behaviour problems.**

9.0 **Anti Social Behaviour in Sunderland**

9.1 Anti Social Behaviour is measured by the Local Area Agreement Indicator "NI17 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour".

9.2 The Place Survey tells us that resident's perception of anti social behaviour as a problem has improved considerably in Sunderland. Out of those surveyed 23.5% of residents perceived anti-social behaviour to be a problem in their area compared to 30% in 2006 and 51% in 2003.

9.3 The SSP recognises that it will become increasingly difficult to keep making such significant reductions against this measure and has therefore agreed upon a 2 percentage point reduction against the 23.5% place survey baseline for the remaining term of the LAA agreement.

10.0 Action Being Taken by Partners to Deal with Anti Social Behaviour

10.1 During the course of the study, we have examined the action being taken by partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and the fear of anti-social behaviour and also highlight examples of good practice. This evidence is summarised across a number of the broad categories of anti social behaviour; and key issues including neighbourhood relations and housing, environment, transport and fire service. **This reflects what was immediately apparent to us – that no one agency has the power or expertise to tackle issues of anti social behaviour on their own and that the most deep seated problems can only be successfully addressed through joint coordinated action.**

Anti Social Behaviour Related to Neighbourhood Relations and Housing

10.2 In the course of our study, we spoke to two key agencies involved in the tackling anti social behaviour at the neighbourhood level – the Council's Anti Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Relations Teams and Gentoo, the city's largest Registered Social Landlord.

10.3 The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Renewal Teams work closely with partners to tackle anti-social behaviour in all housing tenures but with particular focus on the private rented sector. Their work therefore reflects the strong link between anti social behaviour and sub standard or mismanaged property and empty properties.

10.4 Alan Caddick, the Council's Head of Housing attended the Committee to provide details of the work of the team. This includes:-

- working with private landlords to develop good practice initiatives for reducing anti-social behaviour in the private rented sector;
- working with local communities to build up trust and encourage reporting of anti-social behaviour;
- identifying perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and developing appropriate interventions, in partnership with other agencies including, sending early warning letters to perpetrators regarding their alleged anti-social behaviour, undertaking and implementing and monitoring Acceptable Behaviour Agreements;
- addressing anti-social behaviour with young people at an early stage to prevent their behaviour from escalating;
- taking forward applications for Anti-social Behaviour Orders and monitoring the effectiveness of the ASBO on an annual basis;
- supporting victims and witnesses including accompanying to court, acting as third party witness and engaging witness protection services.

- 10.5 The Anti Social Behaviour Unit is also responsible for carrying out 'vetting checks' on behalf of landlords who are members of the City Council's Accreditation Scheme.
- 10.6 The Unit encourages all Registered Social Landlords working in Sunderland to adopt and sign up to the Respect Standard for Housing Management.
- 10.7 In partnership with Gentoo, the Unit also commissions a mediation service to help resolve disputes involving neighbours, landlords and tenants. This service is available to all citizens of Sunderland.
- 10.8 The unit also commissions a Family Intervention Project (FIP), that deals with the most challenging families displaying anti-social behaviour and uses a persistent approach to assist families to modify their behaviour.

Gentoo – Registered Social Landlord

- 10.9 Gentoo is the largest Registered Social Landlord in the city. They provide neighbourhood relations services to address anti social behaviour and are an active partner on the LSP.
- 10.10 In order to obtain an insight into the work of Gentoo on anti social behaviour, we invited Michelle Meldrum, Managing Director of Gentoo (Sunderland) to speak to the Committee. She referred to their Neighbourhood Safety Strategy 2008 -2011 which sets four strategic objectives for tackling nuisance and anti-social behaviour. These are to:-
- prevent and minimise ASB and perceptions of it by taking a long-term approach which combines prevention and early intervention, support and swift enforcement;
 - empower neighbourhoods to feel safe and secure, particularly where there are more vulnerable groups;
 - provide tailored support to victims as well as offenders;
 - engage fully with others to deliver coherent, long-term solutions and communicate our actions to our partners, other organisations and our communities.
- 10.11 **We are impressed with the way the Council and Gentoo work together in tackling anti social behaviour. We support the principal of a balanced approach to tackling these issues. Intervention and preventative measures has a vital role in tackling anti social issues.**

- 10.12 **The evidence of Gentoo has also demonstrated the importance of accurate data capture in identifying where issues are occurring and putting prevention measures in place. We feel that there is an important role for GIS systems.**
- 10.13 **We would therefore suggest that the ASB Delivery Group considers options for a more unified system of ASB data capture across the housing sector, to improve the partnership response to addressing ASB.**
- 10.14 Additional funding has recently been provided to Victim Support Sunderland to fund a Victim Support Officer based within the ASP Unit to provide victims support to the private rented and owner occupied sector

Anti Social Behaviour Related to Alcohol

- 10.15 Alcohol is a key driver of anti social behaviour and the problems of underage drinking and public drunkenness are major priorities for the public.
- 10.16 During evidence to the Committee, the Police referred to the wide range of tools available to tackle unruly behaviour caused by alcohol. For example, people who are drunk and carrying out ASB can be arrested as drunk and disorderly. ASBO's can be used to exclude someone from an area in which they have been causing a problem and also from areas where they can obtain alcohol - thereby effectively banning them from a licensed premises where they have been causing disruption and disorder. Drink Banning Orders, which came into force in August 2009, target individuals who have engaged in criminal or disorderly conduct and protects against further misconduct.
- 10.17 The Council and the Police can also apply to the Magistrates Court for the imposition of a Drink Banning Order (DBO). Voluntary courses are offered to anyone receiving a DBO to seek to educate the person about the serious impact of heavy alcohol consumption.
- 10.18 A Police Constable has the power to issue a direction to an individual to leave an area if their presence is likely to cause an alcohol related crime or disorder. This also applies to persons aged 10-15 years as well as those aged over 16. The police can also take a young person home or to a place of safety if they are issued with Directions to Leave and the police suspect that they are under 16 years.

- 10.19 The Policing and Crime Act 2009 has introduced legislation which makes it an offence to persistently possess alcohol in public places. Young people under the age of 18 can be persecuted for this offence if they are caught with alcohol in a public place on three or more occasions within a 12 month period.
- 10.20 The Committee considered in detail the circumstances and value of introducing Designated Public Place Orders. These allow the designation of areas with restrictions on the consumption of alcohol. The designation area does not automatically ban alcohol consumption but does give the police the power to request that an individual stops drinking alcohol in that area if a police officer believes that the drinking is likely to cause anti social behaviour.
- 10.21 In Sunderland, there are currently designated areas covering the city centre, sea front area, Council parks, play areas, cemeteries and metro stations.
- 10.22 We noted that the introduction of such Orders required lengthy consultation and a strong evidence base. The police do not recommend the extension of such orders in view of the extensive powers already available to them for dealing with alcohol related incidents of anti social behaviour.
- 10.23 **Clearly, there are a wide range of powers available to partners when dealing with alcohol related anti social behaviour. But we do feel that the public need to be confident that these powers are being used and the problems addressed.**
- 10.24 **We would suggest that the ASB Delivery Board looks at actions to:**
- **review enforcement tools as a priority to maximise sanctions against offenders where appropriate, and**
 - **the knowledge on use of tools and powers needs to be refreshed and suitable guidance and training for staff should be considered as a high priority for 2010-11.**
- 10.25 Linkages are also being established between the ASB Delivery Plan and the Alcohol Delivery Plans.

Role of Licensing and Trading Standards

- 10.26 The Council's Licensing Section administers and enforces the Licensing Act working closely with other statutory agencies. In so doing, it receives intelligence about anti-social behaviour associated with alcohol supplied from licensed premises, such as off licences and public

houses. This information is used to inform decision-making upon matters such as the grant of licences, variations of hours, the conditions imposed upon licences and the revocation of licences.

- 10.27 The Trading Standards Section has the responsibility for enforcing the law prohibiting the sale of alcohol to persons under 18. It also seeks to educate off licensees and their staff about avoiding such sales and, where appropriate, sends child volunteers into premises to attempt test purchases. Illegal sales can lead to prosecutions and reviews of offenders' licences.
- 10.28 Every encouragement is given to licensees to go beyond compliance with the law in reducing the potential for anti-social behaviour by delivering, in partnership with other agencies, a Best Bar None scheme.
- 10.29 The Licensing Section licenses also Hackney Carriages and, so, are involved in the arranging of the highly-regarded taxi marshal scheme in the City Centre. The feedback from both the taxi trade and the travelling public is that the scheme provides a safer and more pleasant transport experience.
- 10.30 We consider that the role of licensing is a very important aspect in the fight against alcohol and anti social behaviour. From the evidence received the Committee is concerned at the availability and proliferation of licences to sell alcohol.**
- 10.31 We recognise that this is a national issue requiring national legislation but we would call on partner and SSP to work to influence the Government in bringing forward legislation to provide greater regulation over the granting of licences for the sale of alcohol.**
- 10.32 In response to the above, we also suggest that the SSP delivery groups dealing with Alcohol and ASB work together to ensure that processes are joined up to help combat alcohol misuse and the anti-social behaviour that can arise.**

Anti Social Behaviour Related to Drugs

- 10.33 The possession and supply of controlled drugs is illegal and is firmly enforced by the police. Also, any tenant using drugs in a way that causes serious nuisance are breaching the terms of their tenancy agreement.
- 10.34 Civil measures such as ASBO's are available to protect the community from behaviour causing harassment. Intervention Orders are also

available through the Drugs Act and can be used to require individuals to comply with positive conditions that tackle their anti social behaviour.

- 10.35 In February 2008 the Government launched the new ten year national drug strategy entitled 'Drugs: Protecting Families and Communities'. As part of the delivery of the strategy it seeks to ensure action to tackle drug misuse is at the core of national, regional and local planning and the delivery processes of all departments and agencies that have a role to play in delivering the drug strategy.
- 10.36 The Safer Sunderland Partnership has a range of delivery groups which lead on various elements of the implementation of the drugs strategy. The Drug and Alcohol Strategy Manager, Leanne Davis outlined to us the work going on to tackle anti social behaviour relating to drugs.
- 10.37 Much drug related anti-social behaviour relates to people using secluded public areas as 'drug dens'. Any dens identified are discussed at the relevant Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving (LMAPS) Group and partners proactively work with the drug users, remove rubbish and ensuring the area is cleared and unable to be used again for a similar purpose. The Drug Related Litter Group of the Safer Sunderland Partnership has also developed numerous leaflets and posters for areas where drug related litter, including needles and syringes, are found encouraging local communities to report these incidents and how to be safe if they find any equipment. The City now has approximately 15 pharmacies who offer a needle exchange facility which increases the safe use and return of injecting equipment and numbers of drug related litter finds remain low.

Environmental Anti Social Behaviour

- 10.38 Environmental ASB includes a wide range of unacceptable behaviour such as fly tipping, dog fouling, noise nuisance, and litter and graffiti.
- 10.39 In May 2009, a team of Environmental Enforcement Officers and a Local Environment Manager were established within the Council's Environmental Services Department to tackle and combat environmental crime across the city.
- 10.40 The team, consisting of 12 officers and a manager, enforce all elements of environmental crime ranging from dog fouling and household waste to illegal dumping and street litter control.

- 10.41 Officers have been allocated areas throughout the city to identify and target hotspots or 'grot-spots' within their own areas. Working with the local businesses and residents these areas will be targeted and those individuals or companies found to be adversely affecting the local area will be targeted with a range of environmental powers including legal notices, fixed penalty notices and prosecutions.
- 10.42 Education campaigns are undertaken in conjunction with any enforcement to highlight the nuisance caused by litter and waste to any area but also to raise awareness of the potential consequence of such activities.
- 10.43 Environmental Health also employs officers to deal with a range of duties including noise investigation. They deal with in excess of 2,500 direct requests and referrals from the Neighbourhood Relations Team and the Police.
- 10.44 The Committee supports the establishment of the Enforcement Team and the important work they are doing in tackling environmental anti social behaviour. Anti social behaviour is a high priority and a major concern for local residents and it is important that the response of the Council and its partners reflects this importance. However, the level of resources available is clearly limited for dealing with these problems. **The Committee therefore urges the Council and its partners to place a high priority on environmental enforcement.**
- 10.45 We would suggest that the ASB Delivery Board considers the following actions:-
- Provide an enhanced Environmental Services response to ASB issues such as graffiti, litter, abandoned vehicles and requests for needle syringes to be removed.
 - Consider ways to combat fly-tipping in hot spot areas to increase evidence available when fly-tipping occurs (e.g by use of CCTV)
 - Greater emphasis to be placed upon Responsive Local Services.

Anti Social Behaviour and Fire

- 10.46 Arson and secondary fires are important symptoms of anti social behaviour. In order to gauge the scale of the problem, together with the initiatives being taken to combat it, the Committee invited John Allison to review the work of the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

10.47 Mr Allison noted that latest figures show the Sunderland District as being disproportionately high in relation to other districts with regards to deliberate and anti-social fires. These fires include deliberate property fires, deliberate vehicle fires and deliberate secondary fires (usually rubbish and refuse). Indeed, the Sunderland District is responsible for 37% of all deliberate fires within the Tyne and Wear area and the Sunderland East station area being responsible for 12% of all deliberate fires within TWFRS area. Significantly the Hendon ward alone accounted for 4% of all deliberate fires across Tyne and Wear.

10.48 A range of initiatives have traditionally been employed to tackle this problem including: -

- The **Phoenix Project** is an award winning partnership initiative working with young people known to be, or at risk of, offending between the ages of 12 and 17. Phoenix provides a basic work experience programme and all participants volunteer to go on the course, which seeks to foster the benefits of working within a disciplined uniformed team.
- **Operation Heat** is an initiative in partnership with Northumbria Police whereby any fire call to which TWFRS are despatched to the Hendon Ward, automatically results in a call to Northumbria Police (NP) Control and the subsequent despatching of a NP attendance.
- **Operation Charlie** is a multi agency initiative in collaboration with NP's Perception Campaign involving education and enforcement activities in the Millfield Ward.
- **Bonfire Campaign** - Following on from the successes of previous years, TWFRS, in partnership with many agencies, are running an extensive campaign each year aimed at reducing the incidences of anti-social behaviour in relation to bonfires and fireworks across Sunderland.

10.49 We are impressed with the range of initiatives being undertaken by the Fire Service in collaboration with its partners. We are also pleased by the recognition that only joint action by partner can make a sustained improvements in the incidence of anti social fires. We support the prevention campaigns being undertaken by the Fire Service.

10.50 We would suggest that the ASB Delivery Board consider actions to assess if additional referrals could be sourced for the Phoenix Project from those areas experiencing higher levels of ASB fires.

Addressing anti-social behaviour on public transport

10.51 Whilst serious crime is rare on public transport, fear of crime is relatively high. This is because passengers are exposed daily to very visible anti-social behaviour, low level disorder, graffiti and glass etching which have a cumulative effect in terms of feeling intimidated and threatened.

10.52 Ken Wilson, Head of Security, NEXUS outlined for the Committee the wide range of initiatives being taken to tackle anti-social behaviour and reassure the users of public transport in Sunderland. These include:-

- A Nexus Bus Station Manager is responsible for security at Park Lane, Hetton, Concord and the Galleries bus stations;
- CCTV cameras are located at all 4 bus stations, to deter anti-social behaviour and reassure passengers;
- A Private Security company is employed at Park Lane because of past problems of antisocial behaviour;
- Nexus has matched funded programmes with bus operators to install CCTV cameras on buses. All metro cars and stations have CCTV cameras;
- Infrastructure providers have a rapid repair and maintenance policy for damaged bus shelters to minimise the impact of anti-social behaviour;
- Metro employs a Graffiti Cleaning team to minimise the impact of graffiti on the Metro network;
- shelters to prevent youths standing on seats and damaging lights
- Nexus are striving to provide lighting and trailing CCTV in more bus shelters to deter anti social behaviour;
- Nexus are working with some Sunderland Primary Schools in the early part of 2010 to deliver an “**It’s Your Choice**” event which looks to convey key messages about the consequences of anti-social behaviour.

10.53 The Committee is impressed by the range of initiatives to tackle anti social behaviour on our transport system. We feel that the visible presence of security staff and the police is a key element in making people feel safer and eradicating anti social behaviour.

10.54 The Committee also feels that there is potential in introducing some form of security personnel on buses.

- 10.55 **That Committee also asks that the SSP look further at a pilot scheme being implemented in Gateshead which involves youth workers engaging with youths in bus shelters and seeking to involve them in alternative activities.**
- 10.56 **In response to the above, the ASB Delivery Plan includes actions to investigate the issues of security personnel on buses and youth engagement at bus shelters.**

Neighbourhood Helpline

- 10.57 In June 2006, the Northumbria Partnership launched a Home Office funded initiative, the 101 Non Emergency Helpline. Sunderland was one of 14 partners involved in the initiative along with other Local Authorities and the Police.
- 10.58 In March 2008, the Home Office withdrew the funding for the initiative. Two of the partners, Sunderland and Newcastle decided to continue what had become, a very successful Helpline.
- 10.59 On 1st April 2008, a new 'It's your Service Partnership' was formed and the 101 service transitioned into the 'Neighbourhood Helpline'. The Helpline is delivered in partnership by Sunderland and Newcastle City Councils. Liz St Louis advised the Committee of the operation of the Neighbourhood Helpline.
- 10.60 The Helpline operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with Customer Service Advocates trained to handle a range of enquiries and requests for service. All requests for service are logged immediately onto the Customer Contact System and referred to Service Delivery Teams within relevant Departments. The arrangement allows for the direct dial into emergency services if required to ensure the appropriate level of response is provided, especially during unsociable hours
- 10.61 A breakdown of service request types shows rubbish and litter to be the most popular issue raised by the public.
- 10.62 Quite clearly, the Neighbourhood Helpline is a very popular service with residents with high levels of customer satisfaction. **The Neighbourhood Helpline is an excellent example of a front office shared service and demonstrates a robust partnership between Sunderland and Newcastle City Council's.** As calls are answered for and on behalf of each local authority, business continuity and resilience is an integral part of the service provision.

10.63 We also feel that the potential exists to expand to other similar service providers and / or out of hour's services in the future.

CCTV

10.64 As part of its study, the Committee visited the CCTV Control Centre based in the Civic Centre in order to view at first hand the operation of the system.

10.65 The CCTV system clearly has a very important role to play in tackling anti social behaviour in the city allowing a rapid response to incidences of anti social behaviour and close partnership working and collaboration.

10.66 City Security Service also provides a range of system to tackle anti social behaviour in the city. These include:-

- 3G Rapid Deployment Cameras, which can be deployed at short notice to monitor crime or ASB Hotspots.
- Flashcams, which can be deployed at short notice to combat Fly tipping, graffiti and ASB.
- CAEC (City Alarm and Emergency Centre) who currently monitor in excess of 600 CCTv cameras City Wide as well as property alarms, emergency support services, lone worker support, vehicular panic attack monitoring and response and Major Incident initiation on behalf of the Council and its partners.

10.67 We were most impressed by the very professional nature of the system and the staff involved.

10.68 The Committee commends the operation of the CCTV monitoring system and recommend its extension in the event of resources being available.

11.0 Support and Diversionary Activities

11.1 During the study, we received evidence on the range of services available to provide support and intervention to tackle anti social behaviour, including:-

- Family Intervention Project (FIP) – provides intensive support to problem families;
- Parenting Programmes - a range of targeted and specialist parenting provision;
- Targeted Youth Support – coordination of resources for young people (13-19yrs);

- Challenge and Support - which aims to stop poor behaviour in young people from escalating;
- Youth Offending Service – provides a range of services including which works with young people 8-13 who are beginning to become involved in Anti-Social Behaviour or who have siblings who already are susceptible to peer pressure;
- Youth Development Group – XL Village Events

Example of Good Practice - Winter Weekend XL Village at Redhouse School

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.

A wide range of activities were on offer including wall climbing, football, dancing, computer games etc.

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.

Victim and Witness Support

- 11.2 An integral part of improving perception of anti social behaviour rests on providing real and meaningful support for the victims of anti social behaviour and its witnesses and the Committee heard about the range of support being offered by a range of organisations.
- 11.3 All victims of anti social behaviour taking the stand in the Magistrates Courts will be offered help by the Victim Support Witness Service.
- 11.4 A network of 85 victims and witnesses champions has been established in priority areas across the country to stand alongside victims, delivering practical help to those taking a stand. This will include support in court

proceedings prior to, and when giving evidence and providing follow up assistance and support when the court case is over.

11.5 The Sunderland audit of anti-social behaviour services confirmed that witnesses and victims affected by ASB do not receive as much support as victims and witnesses of other crimes and there is a clear service gap. Funding of £10,000 was obtained in the summer of 2009 to:

- Improve the consistency/widen the support available to ASB victims and witnesses;
- Ensure ASB victims and witnesses are aware of the range of support available how to access and how to report ASB;
- Publicise the services through various marketing techniques to increase public confidence that local services are on the side of victims and witnesses.

11.6 The City was allocated additional funding of £5,000 in 09/10 and £20,000 in 10/11 to establish a Victims Champion role. The aim of the role is to quality assure, improve and design new systems, and it is intended that the role will result in:

- More victims and witnesses of ASB receiving support.
- Creation of a partnership wide service;
- Adding value to services to ensure they are joined up;
- Acting as a referral point for ASB teams for cases that need extra help.

11.7 The Committee heard evidence from Victim Support Sunderland on their work supporting the victims of anti social behaviour and other crimes. In doing so they work closely with key partners such as the Council, housing providers and the Northumbria Police. As well providing practical and emotional support to victims, they also 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 criminal justice process.

11.8 Gentoo already employs two Victim Support officers and are currently running a campaign to encourage people to report ASB. One of the positive impacts of the Victim Support Service is that customers feel much safer in their homes i.e. only 15% of customers felt very or fairly safe prior to receiving the service and this increases to 71% after receiving the service. It is also positive to note that 98% of customers felt the level of support they received was just right.

11.9 At the Safer Sunderland Partnership level we might also give consideration as to how we might better identify potential victims of crime and ASB. This could include giving consideration as to how we might engage with potentially at risk groups, e.g. Filipinos in the Health Service, Students at the University etc

11.10 In response to the above, the ASB Delivery Plan acknowledges that there is an intelligence gap around victim profiles for different types of ASB. Information is known on geographical hot spots, but not about who is most likely to be a repeat victim and why. The agencies supporting victims of ASB should be asked to provide victim profile data for inclusion in future Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessments. The partnership should also continue to fully support and advertise those agencies and support services available to victims so that they can self refer crimes and anti social behaviour incidents.

11.11 Victim Support outreach workers have been actively researching which helping approaches work best in the recovery process. The ASB Delivery Plan recommends that this analysis be extended to identify which helping approaches impact most on improving feelings of safety.

11.12 The Delivery Plan also recognises that the care of victims should remain high on the agenda of the SSP to ensure that risks of victimisation are reduced and the right levels of support and feedback are provided once someone becomes a victim. Police are working with partners to implement a system to protect, reassure and empower vulnerable victims of crime and the use of a case conferencing approach to high risk victims of ASB is being considered.

11.13 Funding has recently been allocated for an additional Victim Support worker to be based in the Council's ASB Unit to work with victims of ASB in the Private Rented and owner occupied sectors.

12.0 Neighbourhood Action – Closer Engagement with the Public

12.1 The White Paper Protecting the Public emphasises the importance of tackling anti social behaviour and perceptions of anti social behaviour and highlights the importance of neighbourhood policing and joint working between partners.

12.2 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 are now much more involved in neighbourhood work and are 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 and anti social behaviour.

12.3 During our visit to Sunderland Area Command, it was clear that officers are committed to Neighbourhood Policing which is provided by teams of Police Officers, CSOs and Special Constables with support from partners. The key objective in the Northumbria Police Strategy for 2008-2011 is 'to build trust and confidence in the community and reduce crime and disorder'. Policing priorities to support this key objective include:

- re-assure the public, reduce the fear of crime and ASB;
- improve public perception of the fear of crime and ASB;
- increase visibility of staff and community engagement, especially amongst those hard to reach communities;
- Engage and listen to the community and deal with those issues that affect the quality of life of community members;
- Keep the community and partners updated.

12.4 Events such as Not in My Neighbourhood Week can play an important part in raising awareness of action being taken to combat anti social behaviour in local communities.

12.5 As part of the Home Office Crime and Justice Programme, a number of further initiatives are designed to demonstrate to the public that the criminal justice system in their area listens to their priorities and acts upon them. These include:-

- The Policing Pledge (including PACT meetings) - the Pledge informs communities of the minimum standards of service they can expect from Northumbria Police;
- Highly visible Community Payback (Justice Seen, Justice Done Campaign) - scheme sets out to raise public awareness and increase confidence in community sentences;
- Community Crime Fighters Scheme - provides members of the public who are already active in their communities with training, information and support to work with neighbourhood policing teams and local authorities to help make communities safer;
- Minimum Standards of Service (ASB, Witness Charter);
- Victims Champion

13.0 Communication and Marketing

- 13.1 A key driver of the crime and justice programme is to ensure the public are aware of the support available and their individual rights when accessing criminal justice services. It is important to provide regular information to communities on what is being done to tackle ASB, including an expectation to publicise ASBOs to the local community residents on what action is being taken to tackle ASB.
- 13.2 The partnership works hard to tell people how it is making the City safer. Twenty-five plasma TV screens in community venues around the City are used to provide information to residents. Eighty-one per cent of residents generally feel safe in Sunderland.
- 13.3 Communities are kept updated on what is being done to tackle ASB in a number of ways. For example:
- ASB Officers from the Council's Neighbourhood Relation's Team are dedicated to particular framework areas and maintain contact with complainants in their particular area.
 - The SSP Marketing Group produce an ongoing series of 'You said...we did' postcards which publicise what action has been undertaken to tackle ASB and other issues.
 - When issues have been considered by LMAPS, feedback is provided to the complainant on the action that has been taken, before the item is closed.
 - The Police Authority regularly arranges Police and Community events to enable local residents to meet with the Police to raise issues of concern. A number of the Area Fora also include Police consultation as a regular agenda item at their monthly meetings.
 - The Safer Sunderland Partnership TV (SSPTV) system regularly includes information on what is being done to tackle ASB and how to report it.
- 13.4 Improving public confidence in the criminal justice system by engaging directly with communities is a key driver of the Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Programme. In October 2008 Sunderland was granted pioneer status to go further and faster in improving services for victims and witnesses of crime including anti-social behaviour. The Louise Casey review 'Engaging Communities in Crime' (2008) revealed that nationally the public want to receive more communication around action taken to tackle crime by the police and what has happened to offenders who have committed crime. Information to be publicised will include the name, age, and street name of those who have been convicted of an anti-social behaviour related offence. Work will continue throughout 2010 to ensure

community residents are actively engaged in action to tackle not tolerate anti-social behaviour.

- 13.5 The Safer Sunderland Partnership Annual Forum has been another method of raising the profile of action being taken by the partnership on issues such as anti social behaviour. Members of the Committee attended the last forum held on 23 October 2009 at the Stadium of Light, Sunderland. From that event, it was clear that anti social behaviour remains a key issue for residents and has been identified as a priority during the year and that community empowerment is a key factor in tackling anti social behaviour.

14.0 Conclusions

14.1 The Committee concluded:-

- Council and partners have developed a clear vision for defining ASB aspirations and objectives for preventing and tackling ASB. The ASB Strategy and Delivery Plan that has been produced (awaiting SSP Board endorsement), together with the SSP Governance structures, (including the ASB Delivery Group and the LMAPS), provides this. A review of ASB Services is planned to further develop the response.
- An effective communication strategy to inform residents of services dedicated to preventing and tackling ASB and feedback on action taken in individual cases is essential. It is recognised that this is in part provided via the work of the SSP Marketing group, initiatives such as the Policing Pledge and ASB Minimum Standards publicity. However a neighbourhood focus to ask people about ASB in their neighbourhood and actions being taken to resolve problems at a local level would be beneficial as it is important that residents have confidence in our response to incidents of ASB and feel that their concerns are being taken seriously.
- There is a need for a partnership wide system of capturing and recording reports of ASB and the action taken to resolve issues. Options for the development of such a system are being examined by the ASB Delivery Group.
- There is a need to be clear about respective partner roles to avoid duplication of service provision, at the same time ensuring that delivery is joined up. The review of ASB Services should help to develop this.

- As a result of Sunderland's balanced approach to tackling Anti Social Behaviour through prevention, early intervention, enforcement and support, there are a low number of ASBOs and CRASBOs occurring in the City.
- It is recognised that high levels of deprivation and disadvantage are associated with ASB and help in the creation of an alienated younger generation. Tackling anti social behaviour will not be effective in the long term unless action is also taken to tackle deprivation. Poverty of place refers to, for instance, the way the look of an area can increase fear of crime, can reinforce low aspirations, Poor environmental quality is linked to a perception that the social norms of wider society are breaking down (social norms being the reason why people don't litter, vandalise, graffiti and so on) where this is the case there can either be an actual or a perceived increase in anti-social behaviour and property related crime
- Public Agency Policies are important in that ASB can be designed out to be minimised at the planning stage of major developments. Estates that are designed with few amenities and public spaces are more conducive to anti social behaviour.
- It is recognised that a lack of trust between residents, young and old people, has resulted in a decline in the quality of life and diminished capacity to tackle ASB.
- It is important to note that while young people can be perpetrators of ASB they are also more likely to be the victims of crime and disorder than any other age group.
- It is recognised that anti social behaviour, combined with environmental factors such as graffiti and litter has a greater impact on how people feel than harder crimes like robbery.
- Public confidence in the criminal justice system can be improved. Residents need to know how to make a complaint, understand what the process is for dealing with it and believe that the issue is being addressed and have feedback on what action has been taken.
- The Committee is very impressed with the youth villages and would like to see a roll out of the Winter Village programme and look to expand to other areas;

15 Recommendations

15.1 The Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee has taken evidence from a variety of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Committees key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below:-

- (a) That the comments and recommendations of this report be incorporated into the forthcoming SSP Anti Social Behaviour Strategy;
- (b) That the partnership considers the options for a more unified system of data capture, particularly across the housing sector, in order to improve the response of partners to ASB;
- (c) That the partnership investigate how we might better identify potential victims of anti social behaviour;
- (d) That the partnership review the enforcement measures available to partners and provide staff with guidance on the powers currently available for tackling ASB;
- (e) That the Council and its partners investigate options for improving the enforcement of environmental ASB and combat issues such as graffiti, litter and fly-tipping;
- (f) That partners investigate ways of expanding the operation of the Phoenix project in order to help tackle areas experiencing higher levels of ASB fires;
- (g) That partners investigate the potential of expanding the operation of the XL Village concept throughout the city;
- (h) That partners investigate the potential of introducing improved security on buses and the potential of the youth work pilot operating working with young people;
- (i) That the Council and its partners consider the extension of the CCTV monitoring system subject to the availability of resources,

16.0 Acknowledgements

16.1 The Group is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our review. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

Chief Inspector Carol Parkes, Northumbria Police
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Inspector Mark Ord, Northumbria Police
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