

Report

Report subject: Tackling anti-social behaviour

Report to: Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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Author: Kelly Bagley, Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer

Reason for Report to the Panel

To provide Panel members with an update on the work undertaken by the Council to improve the way it tackles cases of anti-social behaviour and community safety in general.

1. **Summary**

In July 2005, the Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel were given an update report 'improving the Council's contribution to tackling anti-social behaviour'.

This highlighted the council's achievements based on the 7 recommendations made in 2004. These consisted of:

- 1 - to ensure that the Council had an adequate funding source (to cover legal fees) for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC)
- 2 - to provide dedicated staff to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour, in terms of prevention, intervention, enforcement and rehabilitation.
- 3 - to adopt a protocol for the implementation of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) and working practices for tackling anti-social behaviour.
- 4 - to encourage residents to report crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 5 - to implement Parental Contracts as another measure to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- 6 - to continue to develop specific projects to engage with young people and ensure that they are diverted from anti-social behaviour
- 7 - to attempt to tackle alcohol related anti-social behaviour.

Each of these recommendations were discussed and an in depth account of progress was given.

To that end this report aims to highlight the continued good work carried out by the council in the area of community safety and anti-social behaviour.

2. **Progress against the Recommendations**

The original recommendations made in 2004 have formed a base line for a proportional amount of the work carried out by the council. These 7 areas have expanded and continued progress has been made:

Recommendation 1 – to ensure that the Council has an adequate funding source (to cover legal fees) for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

Since 2005, the South Wiltshire Anti-Social Behaviour Panel has applied for and been granted a further 5 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders all of the above were post conviction. The total issued, now stands at 19. Since the last report many of the original orders have expired (12 in total) a review form has been designed to monitor the overall successes and failures of an order. This document takes into account the kind of conditions applied for and the number of breaches recorded so that we can improve the use of these orders in the future. To date we have still not used the standalone option, mainly because of difficulties along the way. The process is extremely long winded and time consuming and we often find that supporting evidence can be deemed as out of date by the time the court date is set. We have also found that a number of individuals are already due in court and we have been able to tag an ASBO application onto this.

The Panel has issued a total of 30 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. Significantly only one of these contracts has required further action resulting in an Anti-Social Behaviour Order. The parents of every child issued with a contract are also given a parenting pack.

Recommendation 2 - to provide dedicated staff to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour, in terms of prevention, intervention, enforcement and rehabilitation.

Using Home Office funding, the South Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership appointed a Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer in July 2004. This funding has now been extended until March 2008; the officer is still based at Salisbury District Council and is now managed by the District Community Safety Projects Manager. Management responsibility changed from Wiltshire County Council to Salisbury District Council in 2006.

Three years on and the appointment of this officer has provided a much more consistent approach to cases of anti-social behaviour and has enabled a far more proactive response to problems. As a result all Acceptable Behaviour Contracts have a support package attached to them and all problems are properly analysed using the SARA/PAT model and have an intervention action plan attached to them. This technique is now being utilised by the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and has been adopted as good practice

Recommendation 3 - to adopt a protocol for the implementation of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and working practices for tackling anti-social behaviour.

July 2007 will see the adoption of a new Anti-Social Behaviour Order Protocol. This has been led by the Crown Prosecution Service but with the input from all key partner agencies. This will provide Wiltshire Police and local authorities with consistent and detailed guidance on post conviction and stand alone Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. The Crime Concern protocol for working practice is now three years old; whilst the document is still used it does require an update.

Anti-Social Behaviour /community safety is now also included in the safer strand of the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) and remains a national priority through the Government Respect Agenda.

Recommendation 4 - to encourage residents to report crime and anti-social behaviour.

Residents continue to be issued with log sheets in order that a comprehensive record of incidents can be provided. Wiltshire Police are also hand delivering Anti-Social Behaviour toolkits devised by the Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer, which give practical advice on what types of behaviour can be defined as anti-social and highlights the importance of reporting as well as providing information on support for victims and witnesses.

A leaflet 'Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in South Wiltshire' has also been designed and distributed to all households in the area. It is aimed at encouraging residents to report problems, detailing exactly how and where they should report different types of incidents. The panel originally requested that this be

circulated with the council tax leaflet. However at the time were told this was not permissible nor was the case with the Citizen due to their contract with Royal Mail. This left us with only one option, which was to pay a private distributor. Unfortunately this proven to be not entirely successful and in some cases was distributed with free mail.

The Portfolio Holder is looking into the possibility of it being sent out with the council tax leaflet next year and it will also be printed in the autumn addition of the Citizen.

Recommendation 5 - to implement Parental Contracts as another measure to tackle anti-social behaviour.

To date no parental contracts have proved necessary as a tool to tackle problems. Parents who warrant intervention have received the same treatment as young people and been subject to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract. Every parent is also offered a range of support including parenting classes which have had proven success. The panel will use this method of intervention as and when appropriate. We now also have the option to apply for Parenting Orders, however to date only Education and Youth Offending Teams can apply.

Recommendation 6 - to continue to develop specific projects to engage with young people and ensure that they are diverted from anti-social behaviour

A great deal of work is ongoing with regards to providing diversionary activities in problem areas for young people. In the past we have targeted work at Harnham, Bemerton Heath, Durrington and Amesbury in partnership with Wiltshire Youth Development Services and local community groups and organisations. These have had a positive impact and have shown to reduce anti-social behaviour through Police statistics.

Recommendation 7 - to attempt to tackle alcohol related anti-social behaviour

The district council is currently carrying out a review of the Alcohol Exclusion Zones. Key members are currently being consulted. The Zone remains in place in Amesbury Town Centre and Salisbury City. In addition, Wiltshire Police have been carrying out operations aimed at tackling under age drinking. This has resulted in a number of fines aimed at both establishments and individual staff members. The Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer has also worked with pub watch members on the setting up of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts to run alongside pub bans. The council continues to work closely with our partners to reduce disorder in our night-time economy. New initiatives will continue with the implementation of the forthcoming smoking ban.

3. Other progress

Whilst these seven priorities are still very much pivotal in the work carried out in the field of community safety/ anti social behaviour. There are a number of other initiatives and projects currently taking place. Over the past 12 months the council have been part of the implementation of Neighbourhood Policing Teams the aim is for a community to have a designated Beat Manager who will work with other agencies to resolve local issues. There have been 18 set up in South Wiltshire. The council's input and resources are currently under review. As part of this initiative, problem-solving training will be given to police and community support officers to ensure there is consistency in the way problems are dealt with at a local level.

Other projects include the implementation of school workshops to educate young people on Anti –Social Behaviour and Restorative Justice training. Increased support for Victims and Witnesses with the help of victim support and additional press coverage are all part of a package to increase awareness and reduce the fear of crime.

4. Considerations for the future

Much of the work described is ongoing and the council and its partners will continue to maintain this important work at this level, particularly whilst anti-social behaviour continues to remain high profile, of concern to residents and the community and important at a national level.

The development of the new neighbourhood-policing framework will govern operationally how our resources are utilised. However these will continue to be deployed in the areas deemed as highest priorities.

This work is now set and delivered within the framework of the Wiltshire Strategy for Reducing Crime and Combating Drug Misuse. Reducing anti-social behaviour in parallel with improving Wiltshire's 'street scene' is a key priority at the heart of the strategy. The council and key partners aim to increase the number of clean up days as part of this initiative. As part of Neighbourhood policing, local action plans are being developed across all priority areas. The Community Safety Partnership is now governed by the South Wiltshire Strategic Alliance and is responsible for driving forward the Respect agenda. The partnership also has targets set as part of the safer strand of the local area agreement (LAA), which includes the reduction of comparator crimes and the achievement of Local Public Service Agreement targets around domestic violence, alcohol related offending and perceptions of anti-social behaviour. These areas will fundamentally form the basis for much of our future work.

At present the Wiltshire Community Safety Partnerships have set themselves the target of reducing crime (as defined by the Home Office comparator crime categories) by 12.5% by 2008. However they are currently underperforming and future resources will be targeted in the key areas of woundings, criminal damage and theft of pedal cycles. This is also the last year of the current community safety strategy. To date no decision has been made as to how these targets will be measured and managed.

A further concern for community safety partners at this time is the need to ensure ongoing funding for the Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Officer Post. At present Home Office funding has been provided for 2 years (we are just entering year 2 of that funding) and at this time there are no guarantees that further funding will be available beyond this point.

Officers are currently discussing other funding sources and how the Post may well need to be mainstreamed within one of the partner agencies.

As and when appropriate, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be kept informed of these discussions and any recommendations.

5. **Recommendations**

(a) That the information contained within the report is noted.

6. **Implications:**

Core Values: All

Financial: None

Legal: None

Human Rights: None

Personnel: None

Community Safety: None

Environmental: None

Wards Affected: None

Background Papers

Improving the Council's contribution to tackling anti-social behaviour – a report prepared and delivered to the Community And Housing Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet – July 2005.