

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY



SCRUTINY PANEL 2 – THE IMPACT OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ON THE TOWN

CORE QUESTIONS – POLICE RESPONSES

CORE QUESTIONS:

- 1. Please provide details of your organisation and its role in addressing anti-social behaviour.**

To become the safest place, Northamptonshire Police has clear priorities, and the number one priority is to tackle and reduce violent crime, and to provide protection and support to vulnerable victims; addressing antisocial behaviour (ASB) is part of this drive.

Northamptonshire Police is the main organisation to receive calls about ASB from the public. The Force Control Room use a new incident assessment and screening system known as THRIVE:

Threat

Harm

Risk

Investigative Opportunities

Vulnerability

Engagement Opportunities

THRIVE is a matrix for assessing the level of risk and harm to ascertain whether or not there is a need to deploy to an incident – and if so, what grade of response would be appropriate.

Additionally, details of all calls about anti-social behaviour in the previous 24 hours are sent to one of our three Policing Sectors, identifying which are repeat callers. Sector staff will then manage cases involving repeat callers and any other cases where the victim is vulnerable.

The Police response options for tackling ASB are described in answer to Q3, and the new powers in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Partnership work is very much the best response, and we support this wherever possible.

Where appropriate, cases are referred to the Anti-social Behaviour Unit, managed by a Police Sergeant; this specialist team applies to civil or criminal courts for powers, like the old-style ASBOs, to manage offenders in order to protect victims.

2. What Strategies and Policies do you have in place for addressing anti-social behaviour?

The ASB and Hate Crime Strategy Group has produced countywide strategy and policies, in consultation with the Police and all local councils, the most significant document being the “Northamptonshire Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Strategy 2015-18” (attached). The group is now producing the “Northamptonshire ASB Action Plan for 2015-2018” (still at draft stage and not yet available.)

Northampton Community Safety Partnership Plan (2015-16)

Northamptonshire Police and Crime Plan (2014-17)

Information Sharing Agreement: ECINS- Partner Organisations of Northamptonshire

Northampton ASBU Data Exchange Agreement and Service Level Agreement

Information Sharing Agreement between Northamptonshire Police and Partner Organisations

3. What specific practices and measures do you currently undertake to address/tackle anti-social behaviour?

Police Community Support Officers provide our first line resource in tackling ASB supported by Sector resources ranging from response teams to proactive teams.

Tactics are many and varied, covert and overt, and include simple patrols to arrest, specific problem solving interventions, mediation.

Officers will offer support and provide reassurance to victims and witnesses, consider possible interventions as a single agency or in collaboration with partners, and also consider any enforcement action if appropriate. The following intervention pyramid shows the levels of actions taken.



Figure 1. Intervention Pyramid

The ASB Unit provides a unique and excellent level of specialist support. Referrals made to the Anti-social Behaviour Units provide the specialist options mentioned in the pyramid. In Northampton, the ASB Unit, managed by a Police Sergeant, has 1 Police Constable, 1 NBC Senior Case Manager & Data Analyst, 1 NBC Case Manager and 1 NBC ASB Support Worker. This team provides a coordinated specialist response, working closely with Northampton Partnership Homes, Youth Offending Service and other agencies. The Sergeant chairs a monthly partnership ASB Group meeting to discuss priority cases across the town and agree actions. This group includes: Police, Council, Environmental Health, Northampton Partnership Homes, Northants Youth Offending Service, S2S, Service Six and C2C Social Action.

In 2014/15, 71 referrals were made to Northampton ASB Unit, 17 more than the 54 referrals received in 2013/14. Of these referrals 50 (70%) were for adults and 18 (25%) were for juveniles (aged 17 or under). In the partnership ASB Action Group meeting, about 50 cases across the town are discussed. In a year, there are approximately 35 live ASBOs (or their new equivalent) in place, of varying duration, with about 10 new ones taken out each year. In most cases, these Orders effectively reduce ASB, but some persistent individuals continue to offend; there are about 70 arrests for breaching Orders each year, mostly resulting in convictions and prison sentences, which then reduce ASB.

Other regular partnership meetings which address ASB include:
 Northampton Community Safety Partnership (see attached Action Plan)
 Town Centre Partnership Group
 Pub Watch
 Street Drinkers, Rough Sleepers and Beggars Group

Project Redemption provides an excellent example of how Northamptonshire Police is working with partners to tackle offending; while this is primarily aimed at Violence and Serious Acquisitive Crime offenders, success will incorporate the positive knock on effective in relation to ASB:

Project Redemption seeks to mirror the successes the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) has seen in Glasgow. The VRU has seen significant reductions in offending through various strands of work, perhaps most notable the mentoring of offenders by professional and peer mentors. It is absolutely clear that the successes witnessed have been down to the people involved in the project and their absolute commitment to what they are doing.

The mission of this project is to reduce crime and the continuous cycle of an offending culture within this community and it is not afraid to adopt completely different tactics and approaches to achieve this.

The objectives of Project Redemption are;

- To engage those who commit SAC crime, violent crime and other crimes where the impact on victims is significant and deter those individuals away from crime
- To prevent repeat offending and to engage those at risk of offending
- To get those meeting the criteria into work, further education or both
- To provide a sustainable method for reducing crime in both the short and long term through primary, secondary and tertiary prevention
- To develop an assets policing model for Blackthorn (like that of the beacon project in Falmouth) to develop a stronger community with greater long term resilience with lower demands on services
- To fully engage partners, education providers and social business to contribute to the solution
- To closely follow on the successes of the VRU and implement several strands of their proven work into the whole Eastern District of Northampton
- To mentor offenders and those at risk of offending by engaging with them not professionally but personally, giving them hope and building their resilience
- To focus particularly on offenders who are violent against women and domestic offenders
- Provide a cost effective model which can be replicated. To prove the VRU concept locally
- To be a benchmark for local policing
- To significantly decrease crime especially SAC and violent crime and reduce demand on services

'Operation Alloy' further encompasses partnership working, this time with the police and NHS. This is a jointly patrolling vehicle containing a Police Officer and MHA Practitioner which responds to incidents involving people with MH issues. This has provided another layer of support to both victims and perpetrators of ASB.

4. Do you have specific budget/resources/funding in relation to addressing anti-social behaviour, if so please provide further details.

Resourcing options are raised throughout this document.

The Office of Police and Crime Commissioner has provided funding to support Project Redemption and controls much of the 'community budget' available for multi-agency community based initiatives to tackle ASB

5. Are the current partnership arrangements for tackling anti-social behaviour sufficient, and if not where are the gaps?

The ASB and Hate Crime Strategy Group continues to improve the partnership arrangements for tackling ASB and the "Northamptonshire Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Strategy 2015-18" sets out best practice, with the "Northamptonshire ASB Action Plan for 2015-2018" describing how they will be achieved.

In Northampton, the Community Safety Partnership has a broad representation of partners which includes:

Statutory Partners

Northampton Borough Council

Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Police

Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service

Probation Service and BENCH Community Rehabilitation Company

Public Health

Clinical Commissioning Group

Other Partners with Key Interest

S2S

Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire

Northampton Partnership Homes

There is a strong Community Safety Partnership (CSP) The group has used Police and Borough Council analytical resources to identify priority areas within the town in order to focus joint partnership activity in the areas of greatest need. This is now a mature arrangement that has developed into a series of weeks of action where intensive engagement occurs within communities, door to door. Work includes environmental, household crime prevention, fire prevention and signposting to other agencies, in addition to Police visibility and enforcement. The priority areas are reviewed annually with fresh supporting documentation.

The priority area of Blackthorn was identified as being a historically challenging area in terms of crime levels and social deprivation. A large scale community engagement project has been set up which has identified key stakeholders in the area to identify long term community solutions to the relevant issues, most importantly in suppressing the emergence of gang culture by supporting diversionary youth activity. The level of co-operation is unprecedented for a project of this nature.

Another priority area (Kingsthorpe/St David's) has been adopted as the county's first Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) due to levels of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and violence linked with underage drinking and alcohol abuse. This includes partnership working with local businesses, i.e., licensed premises (led by Waitrose) educating licensees in respect of the effects of alcohol harm locally – this is supported by a range of initiatives, eg, Check 25. Further wider activity includes

visits and alcohol harm presentations to all schools within the priority area, as well as a community questionnaire to capture the key concerns of local residents. CAP has shown to be a very successful model across the country.

Further examples of CSP co-operation include the establishment of community hubs, eg, Spring Boroughs – a visible patrol hub in the heart of one of the most historically challenging areas of Northampton in terms of crime, ASB and prostitution. This is sited next door to a primary school, and has been hugely welcomed by the local community.

Various third sector groups are supporting the CSP Plan, such as Street Pastors working with the night time economy, School Pastors providing a comfortable visible presence outside schools at home times, and the Alcohol Welfare Centre, which is being set up with the support of Pub Watch.

Housing and the CSP-funded organization Care & Repair, as members of the CSP, provide support and resources for identified vulnerable victims, eg, emergency housing (moves) as well as security and target hardening measures.

6. Do you feel there is adequate co-ordination between Agencies regarding dealing with anti-social behaviour? If not how could it be improved?

E-CINS is the cloud-based database used by the partners across the county which enables a coordinated response to ASB. There needs to be a better commitment across the board to inputting information on this system.

It is important that all partners see ASB as a joint responsibility to be tackled by all. There are various types of ASB, and the lead agency varies according to the type; the proposal for the Public Spaces Protection Order identifies the lead agency for the different types of ASB it seeks to address, which is useful. The Northamptonshire ASB Action Plan for 2015-2018 will be addressing the improvements needed.

The ASB and Hate Crime Strategic Group provides effective strategic links, and the Northampton ASB Action Group provides effective operational links to tackle ASB across the town. Our response to ASB will be most effective if all relevant agencies and partners sign up to the strategy and commit to the action plan.

7. How does anti-social behaviour impact upon you/organisation?

About 40% of ASB incidents reported to Northamptonshire Police occur within the district of Northampton. About 68% of incidents require attendance by a police resource, although this number varied by ASB sub-category.

17% of all calls to Northamptonshire Police are about ASB so it is a significant issue and a high demand on resources.

Northampton ASB stats up to end of November 2015:

Police recorded ASB incidents

All ASB incidents – reduction of 13.0% (-1727 incidents) since end of March 2015.

Personal ASB – reduction of 11.9% (-537 incidents) since end of March 2015.

Nuisance ASB – reduction of 10.8% (-748 incidents) since end of March 2015.

Environmental ASB – reduction of 23.9% (-442 incidents) since end of March 2015.

The table below shows the annual percentage change in the volume of Anti-Social Behaviour incidents in the past three years by incident type.

Northampton - Annual Anti-Social Behaviour Performance by Incident Type								
ASB Incident Type	2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15	
	Volume	Annual% Change	Volume	Annual% Change	Volume	Annual% Change	Volume	Annual% Change
Environmental	2460		2489	1.2%	1964	-21.1%	1848	-5.9%
Nuisance	7316		5804	-20.7%	6375	9.8%	6889	8.1%
Personal	4976		4965	-0.2%	5126	3.2%	4510	-12.0%
Total	14752		13258	-10.1%	13465	1.6%	13247	-1.6%

Public Perceptions of ASB

Data recovered from calls made to members of the public indicate that the perception of ASB being a negative issue have increased from 5.6% at end of March 2015 to 8.1% at the end of November.

The percentage of respondents who agreed/strongly agreed that the Police and local council are dealing with crime and ASB issues within their area has increased from 55.3% at the end of March 2015 to 57.1% at the end of November.

8. What do you think could be done to ensure effective strategic and operational links are made to tackle anti-social behaviour, or improve, on a town scale?

The ASB and Hate Crime Strategic Group provides effective strategic links, and the Northampton ASB Action Group provides effective operational links to tackle ASB across the town. Our response to ASB will be most effective if all relevant agencies and partners sign up to the strategy and commit to the action plan.

9 Please provide details of the enforcement powers that you have in respect of anti-social behaviour

The Police have extensive powers which enable us to effectively tackle ASB...many of these will not necessarily be instantly apparent in their use for ASB...for instance general powers of arrest for violent offences, public order, road traffic offences etc.

The new powers in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 are useful tools. These were summarised in the presentation on 10th September '15, available on this link:

<http://www.northamptonboroughcouncil.com/councillors/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=822&MId=7923> .

There are some additional powers such as Sect 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002, which allows the Police to seize vehicles being driven anti-socially and inconsiderately.

Section 34 of the Anti-Social Behavior, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provides us with the power to disperse individuals from a locality (where certain conditions apply) for up to 48 hours where it may be necessary for the purpose of removing or reducing the likelihood of -

(a) members of the public in the locality being harassed, alarmed or distressed, or
(b) the occurrence in the locality of crime or disorder. Dispersal Powers are in place in the town centre at the weekends and are proving to be very effective.

10 Do you have the resources to enforce the powers that you have? Please explain.

As a Police Force we constantly review our resourcing against demand. The powers we have in respect of ASB rely on a partnership/problem solving approach to achieve the greatest long-term success.

The Town centre of Northampton for instance has a number of issues which tend to be unique to high density retail locations, the below illustrates our response and considerations for just one area of Northampton:

The Town Centre of Northampton is covered by the Central Sector, based at Campbell Square Police Station.

The Community Policing part of the Town Centre is led by a Sergeant with 3 Police Constables and 5 Police Community Support Officers. These can be supplemented at times of high demand, such as during the Safer Shopping Christmas Campaign.

The sector is also policed by Response Teams from across the District, who are available to respond to immediate and urgent incidents on a 24 hour, 7 day a week basis. These Response Officers are also the resources used for policing the Night Time Economy on Friday and Saturday evenings, as well as on a few other high risk dates throughout the year.

The Community Officers patrol almost exclusively on foot and are the main contact for businesses, partner agencies and members of the public. These include Neighbourhood Wardens, University Halls of Residence, Casinos, Pub Watch, the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, BIDS and also the Northampton Retail Crime Initiative.

Apart from the usual police equipment the Officers also carry a digital CCTV radio, which links into the Borough Council CCTV Control Room and also a number of retail outlets across the Town Centre.

Although the CCTV Control Room does not dispatch Policer Officers, the Officers self-deploy to a whole range of low level anti-social type incidents, which are not phoned into the Force Control Room.

These vary from suspicious activity, potential shoplifters, rough sleepers, street drinkers, beggars, vulnerable people, youths gathering, assaults witnessed by the cameras, driving offences and even cycling on pavements.

Many of the issues raised by businesses in the Town are not necessarily Force Priorities. They often require a long term multi-agency response and cannot be solved by enforcement alone. One example of this is Street Drinking, which is currently governed by a Designated Public Places Order. This was brought in by the

Borough Council and enables Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens to require members of the public to stop drinking and hand over any alcohol if there is a link to anti-social behaviour. The only offence occurs when a person fails to hand over their alcohol. This DPPO is enforced on a daily basis by the local team, with PCs and PCSOs having seized 52 cans and bottles in July, 55 in August and 59 in September this year. These figures do not include any seized during the Operation Nightsafe deployments

Another issue is begging and although CCTV cameras can support investigations, prosecutions still rely on evidence of conversations, which cameras cannot provide. The local Town Centre Officers have a red and yellow card system for targeting begging, with a multi-agency supportive approach when offenders first come to light. Persistent offenders are then dealt with under Anti-Social Behaviour legislation culminating in an ASBO from court.

There are currently over 13 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (or Criminal behaviour Orders, which are the new-style ASBOs) against prolific individuals who commit ASB in the Town Centre. Each of these referrals and applications required a significant amount of evidence gathering and work from the local Policing Team, as well as those based at the Guildhall in the multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Unit.

The Town Centre Team forms a core part of a number of a number of multi-agency meetings that can tackle these problems, including The Community Safety Partnership Meeting, The Town Centre Tasking Group, the Rough Sleepers, Street Drinkers and Beggars Group.

11 Do you have information regarding the nature of the psychoactive substances market that you are able to inform the Scrutiny Panel of?

We are in possession of intelligence around the psychoactive substances market, but our ability to respond is limited by the current legislation. Our powers enable us to respond to potential consequences of their use, such as ASB, but not to address the cause.

The proposals included in the Public Spaces Protection Order, to be considered by the Council in February, include reference to “intoxication substances” which would allow confiscation of psychoactive substances, not just alcohol.

Please see below from CAN:

In 2014-15, Council on Addiction Northamptonshire (CAN) treated 189 young people in the county aged 18 or under with drug and alcohol issues.

The drugs the young people stated they had a problem with are shown in the table below. Many young people had a problem with more than one drug. The table below shows figures for the past two years:

Substances used by young people on entering treatment:

Drug:	% in 2014-15	% in 2013-14
Cannabis	86.7%	87.8%
Alcohol	44.1%	45.4%
Legal highs (NPS)	16.9%	11.4%
Cocaine (exc. crack)	13.3%	7.4%
Amphetamines (exc. ecstasy)	9.7%	9.6%
Other drugs	7.2%	10.5%
Ecstasy	5.6%	5.2%
Hallucinogens	0%	1.7%

Cannabis and alcohol remain the most common substance problem. The number of young people seeking help for cocaine use has almost doubled in the last year. There has also been a significant increase in the number of young people being treated for ‘legal highs’ (Novel Psychoactive Substances) and this now appears to be above the national average.

12 Please can you provide details of any health consequences of using psychoactive substances

Not our expertise. However, we do have to deal with the consequences of their use, which can include erratic or violent behaviour, and health crises requiring emergency care. This will often necessitate officers being diverted from other duties in order to respond to related issues or providing support to our medical colleagues in safeguarding individuals

13 Do you have any suggestions on how, as partners, we can improve our approach in addressing anti-social behaviour?

We have been consulted on the ASB Strategy document and Action Plan, and suggested improvements which are being taken forward. The Community Safety Partnership also leads locally on approaches to topical issues.

14 What do you think is the key contributing factor to anti-social behaviour across Northampton?

There are a number of key contributory factors: Alcohol and drugs fuel much of the behaviour associated with neighbour disputes, public disorder and noise. Some people suffering with Mental Health problems will often present as victims/perpetrators of ASB.

15 Do you have further information regarding the impact of anti-social behaviour on the town of which you would like to inform the Scrutiny Panel?

- a) It is important to recognise the deep impact that ASB can have on victims, as ASB tends to be a pattern of persistent problems, which can have greater impact on victims than a single event such as a theft. It is very time-consuming to provide support to victims of ASB, particularly to those at high risk and vulnerable victims.
- b) Mental health problems are very common amongst our persistent ASB offenders, which means we are dealing with complex issues; often these individuals refuse to engage with assessments or with treatment, or have conditions such as personality disorders which are not easily treated.
- c) It is common for agencies such as NBC and the Police to find that there is no easy solution to ongoing issues and that some members of the public have unrealistic expectations; often people's tolerance levels are adversely affected by an ongoing situation which is negatively impacting on their lives and wellbeing. We as services need to focus on victims who are significantly impacted on by ASB, and provide honest and open dialogue and use powers/tools available to tackle ASB.