



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

TO CABINET 11 MAY 2016

Report Title	RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – IMPACT OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ON THE TOWN
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Agenda Status: PUBLIC

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet for consideration, the comments and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the findings of the Review – Impact of Anti-Social Behaviour on the Town.
- 1.2 Members of Cabinet have been issued with a copy of the full report. All Overview and Scrutiny review reports are published on the Overview and Scrutiny page on the Council's Webpage and a copy of this report can be located:
www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny - Previous Scrutiny Reviews.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to Cabinet that:
 - 2.1.1 Ward Councillors and Partner Agencies are ask to promote the variety of projects that the Community Safety Partnership has put in place to address anti-social behaviour, such as Street Football, Street and School Pastors and Weeks of Action within their wards.
 - 2.1.2 Councillors give consideration, through the Councillor Community (Enabling) Fund, to supporting Junior Warden Schemes and other relevant youth schemes that address anti-social behaviour, in their local area.
 - 2.1.3 All Councillors, in particular the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, are encouraged to attend the open day at Hazard Alley, Milton Keynes on 24 July 2016.

- 2.1.4 The work of Hazard Alley is promoted to all primary schools in the borough.
- 2.1.5 Network Rail's 24-hour helpline number: 03457 11 41 41 and on-line form for reporting issues, including graffiti, is issued to all County Council and Northampton Borough Councillors .
- 2.1.6 It is ascertained whether the Council has authority to remove graffiti on railway land and buildings bordering the railway and train station.
- 2.1.7 Neighbourhood Wardens responsible for the town centre are issued with a body worn CCTV camera on a trial basis of six months, following which their effectiveness is assessed; with a view to extending the trial further, outside the town centre, to include parks and open spaces.
- 2.1.8 The Induction Training Programme for Neighbourhood Wardens includes the awareness of substance misuse and dealing with Street Drinkers.
- 2.1.9 When reports of fly-tipping are made by Neighbourhood Wardens the rubbish is collected as a matter of urgency.
- 2.1.10 The option of Neighbourhood Wardens working from a local community base on a regular basis is explored. The purpose being for residents to meet with the Neighbourhood Warden and share any issues they may have. The days and times that the Neighbourhood Warden is based at one of the community locations should be widely promoted within the ward.
- 2.1.11 Neighbourhood Wardens continue to patrol the town centre, twice a day, to discourage, and move on, Street Drinkers and Beggars.
- 2.1.12 Consideration is given to looking at the hours of operation for Neighbourhood Wardens.
- 2.1.13 The option of providing a shelter ("Wet Area"), or similar area, where Street Drinkers can congregate is explored.
- 2.1.14 The Council, together with relevant partner Agencies, adopts a zero tolerance approach to street drinking in the town.
- 2.1.15 In acknowledging the need to ascertain why individuals rough sleep and street drink; the development and implementation of the Council's Rough Sleepers Strategy is fully supported. This will include linking in with Voluntary Organisations to establish how they can and do provide assistance.

- 2.1.16 All Agencies dealing with anti-social behaviour are recommended to link in with, and make referrals to the Northampton Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU) to ensure effective management of anti-social behaviour issues/cases.
- 2.1.17 NBC, and its partner Agencies, utilise the Case Management System, called ECINs, as the central point for recording ASB issues and case building on individuals and problem premises.
- 2.1.18 All Agencies work together to ensure that both victims and perpetrators are aware of the anti-social behaviour support available.
- 2.1.19 A document, similar to the “Green Book” that provides information on the Agencies which provide support to vulnerable people is produced and distributed to all Councillors in the borough.
- 2.1.20 Existing resources are reviewed to ascertain whether a further multi-agency “Task Force” approach is required in addressing anti-social behaviours for the town.
- 2.1.21 Support is given through Partnership Grants for street based service to support substance misuse and Street Drinking.
- 2.1.22 Relevant Officers, such as Neighbourhood Wardens and Park Rangers, attend an awareness raising session around psychoactive substances and drug and alcohol misuse. A similar session is included within the Councillor Development Programme 2016/2017.
- 2.1.23 The Council supports any activity through the Health and Wellbeing Partnership in addressing issues caused by psychoactive substances, drug and alcohol misuse, such as the health implications and anti-social behaviour.
- 2.1.24 The Scrutiny Panel formally informs Cabinet that it fully supports the Community Protection Notice process and highlights the positive effect this has in addressing and reducing acts of anti-social behaviour.
- 2.1.25 The Council, together with its partners, look to implement a shadowing programme between staff from partner organisations, with the aim of better understanding what partner Agencies powers involve and how they can be effectively used in tackling anti-social behaviour.
- 2.1.26 Northampton Borough Council urges the new Police and Crime Commissioner, when developing his Policing Plan relevant to the borough of Northampton, to include a more proactive approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour issues, particularly relating to begging, Street Drinking, urinating and defecating in the street and the night time economy.

2.1.27 Cabinet recommends to the Licensing Committee that conditions on problem licensed premises are reviewed, when it is identified that their working practices are contributing to ASB in the town, and they are failing to meet their licensing responsibilities.

2.1.28 Cabinet recommends to the Licensing Committee that it reviews the Licensing Policy with a view to opposing the early morning sales of alcohol.

3. Background and Issues

3.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was to investigate the impact of anti-social behaviour on the town.

Key lines of Inquiry:

- To investigate the levels of anti-social behaviour in the town, such as tackling psychoactive substances, alcohol, littering (including chewing gum), graffiti, fly-tipping, street urination and dog fouling
- To consider the nature of the psychoactive substances market and any health consequences
- To review the policies and strategies for dealing with the impact of anti-social behaviour in the town
- To consider the paper/Bill that is currently being drafted by the Home Office to address the issue of psychoactive substances
- To identify the prevention strategies that can help to address anti-social behaviour on the town
- To identify 'hotspots' of the impact of anti-social behaviour on the town
- To consider the enforcement powers that the Council and other Agencies has in respect of anti-social behaviour
- To consider how Northampton Borough Council can work in partnership with local groups, Agencies, organisations and residents to reduce and prevent the impact anti-social behaviour has on the town

3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its work programming event in June 2015, agreed to include a review of the impact of anti-social behaviour on the town. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 2 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in July 2015 and concluded in March 2016.

3.3 This review links to the Council's corporate priorities, particularly corporate priority 2 - Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods - Creating an attractive, clean and safe environment.

3.4 The Scrutiny Panel established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:

Background data, including:

- Presentation to set the scene: “The Council’s responsibilities in respect of dealing with anti-social behaviour and how issues outside the Council’s responsibilities are dealt with” and “what psychoactive substances are”
- Relevant national, other background research papers and relevant Legislation, such as:
 - Environmental Protection Act 1990
 - Drug Strategy 2010
 - Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005
 - Fouling of Land By Dogs Order 2014
 - Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
 - Intoxicating Substances (Supply) Act 1985
 - Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2010
- Relevant data:
 - Hotspots and trends
 - Statistical data, such as Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN), Community Protection Notices (CPN)
 - Job descriptions of Neighbourhood Wardens and Park Rangers, Northampton Borough Council (NBC)
- Best practice and successful initiatives in both Northampton and elsewhere
- Case studies
- Witness evidence:

Internal

- Cabinet Member for Environment, Northampton Borough Council (NBC)
- Cabinet Member for Community Safety, NBC
- Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning, NBC
- Neighbourhood Wardens and Manager
- Park Rangers, NBC
- Community Safety Manager, NBC
- Town Centre Manager, NBC
- Environmental Health and Licensing Manager, NBC
- Town Centre Ranger

External

- Parish Councils
- Area Commander, Northants Police

- Town Centre Police Inspector, Northants Police
- Substance 2 Solutions (S2S), Northamptonshire (services for adults)
- CAN, Northamptonshire (services for young people)
- Director of Public Health, Northamptonshire County Council (NCC)
- Director, Accident and Emergency, Northampton General Hospital
- Director, East Midlands Ambulance Service
- Chief Executive, Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH)
- Chair, Market Action Group
- Chair, Town Centre BID
- Director, Trading Standards, NCC
- Conservation Area Committees
- Chair, PubWatch
- Chair, Northampton Retail Crime Initiative
- Director, Network Rail and Director, London Midland – Anti Graffiti Policies

3.6 In considering the evidence the following conclusions were made: -

3.6.1 The definition of anti-social behaviour is defined within section 2 (1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014:

- a) “Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person”
- b) “Conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person’s occupation of residential premises”
- c) “Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person”

Anti-Social behaviour (ASB) therefore includes:

- Rowdy, noisy behaviour, including night-time noise from houses or gardens
- Threatening, drunken or “yobbish” behaviour
- Vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
- Litter and fly-tipping rubbish
- Aggressive begging and street drinking

3.6.2 The Scrutiny Panel realises that when ASB is dealt with, the environment it is being committed in is also looked at. One size does not fit all.

3.6.3 There is a need for a consistent approach which looks to address the root causes of anti-social behaviour (ASB) rather than dealing with the end results.

- 3.6.4 In ensuring that an effective response is provided in supporting victims/witnesses and addressing perpetrators behaviour, it is recognised that the ECIN's case management system is the central location for detailing and logging all anti-social behaviour cases for Northampton Borough Council and also its partners.
- 3.6.5 The Scrutiny Panel recognises the Multi-Agency approach to tackling ASB, supporting victims/witnesses and the range of support, interventions and enforcement options available/undertaken.
- 3.6.6 The Scrutiny Panel recognises the Council and the Police work in partnership to manage anti-social behaviour and maximise resources. However, as anti-social behaviour occurs any time of the day it is not possible to have resources on hand throughout 24 hours. There are limitations to resources and legislative powers which prevent the Council and Police, as well as differing priorities that can impact upon what action is taken.
- 3.6.7 The Scrutiny Panel recognised that the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit is a valuable resource in dealing with anti-social behaviour.
- 3.6.8 The relationship between the Police and licensees is a positive one. The Police continue to try new initiatives to improve their policing of the Night Time Economy, and that they continue to be willing to listen to Pubwatch's feedback. The Scrutiny Panel felt that this partnership is helping to reduce ASB within the night-time economy.
- 3.6.9 The Police become involved when ASB takes place. Offenders are signposted for the relevant support. Through the current Designated Public Spaces Order the Police and Neighbourhood Wardens have powers that, allow the designated person to confiscate alcohol where it is felt it could lead to ASB. This will be further broadened to deal with a wider range of ASB issues when the Public Spaces Order comes into force later this year. The Scrutiny Panel gives its support to the introduction of the proposed Public Spaces Protection Order.
- 3.6.10 In noting good examples of partnership working, the Scrutiny Panel felt there is an overriding need to deal with issues holistically and not in isolation by partner Agencies. The Scrutiny Panel felt it would be beneficial that consideration is given to a Task Force approach consisting of representatives from the Police, ASBU, Council Wardens, Housing, Health, Licensing and partners. It is important to note that a broad multi-Agency approach is already in place in addressing issues of ASB. The Scrutiny Panel emphasises however, that although evidence received suggests the need for a focussed Town Centre Task Force, the Northampton Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Group and its Working Groups – Rough Sleepers, Beggars, and Town Centre Task Group link to the Community Safety Partnership with a broad approach to ASB covering the whole town.

- 3.6.11 The Scrutiny Panel is pleased to note that ASB has been reducing within all three categories over the last three years. It highlights that Police recorded incidents differ to public perception on ASB. However, public perception on dealing with ASB is improving. The actual issues, versus perceived issues, are an area which should be clarified to ensure the appropriate actions and resources are made.
- 3.6.12 Evidence received indicates that Community Protection Notices (CPN) are proving effective. It is an escalation process. The Scrutiny Panel highlights that a lot of the legislation is newly implemented and that it will take time to embed.
- 3.6.13 The good work of the Street Pastors is commended. The Scrutiny Panel acknowledges that Street Pastors are volunteers.
- 3.6.14 The Scrutiny Panel welcomes the variety of projects that the Community Safety Partnership has put in place to address anti-social behaviour, such as street football, Street and School Pastors and Weeks of Action. In relation to how these are advertised and promoted it acknowledges that the Communication Team uses a variety of methods including social media to promote the activities. Ward Councillors could promote such activities within their wards, for example using community notices boards and their local surgeries.
- 3.6.15 The Scrutiny Panel supports the previous “Green Book” (that provided information on the Agencies which provide support to vulnerable people) that was issued to all Councillors back in 2003. This was a useful document that contained details of Agencies and contacts. It was felt that such a document should be re-visited. The Scrutiny Panel, therefore, highlights the need for an information leaflet that details where vulnerable people such as Street Drinkers, Rough Sleepers and Beggars can go for assistance. Councillors could then distribute such documents as appropriate.
- 3.6.16 From its site visit of the town centre, the Scrutiny Panel felt there is the need for continued training for Neighbourhood Wardens, particularly in relation to Street Drinkers. The Scrutiny Panel acknowledges that all newly recruited Neighbourhood Wardens have received training delivered by the University and all Neighbourhood Wardens have received training on handling confrontation situations.
- 3.6.17 Evidence received suggests that work shadowing between staff from partner organisations, with the aim of better understanding what partner Agencies powers involve and how they can be effectively used in tackling anti-social behaviour would be a useful exercise. An example of this is where trainee Police Officers shadow Officers at Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH).
- 3.6.18 Evidence received highlights that area based meetings at an operational level allows the sharing of information, intelligence and development of action plans at a local level to address issues of concern. It is felt this approach leads to a number of quick wins. The Scrutiny Panel acknowledges that it is apparent where perpetrators of ASB are youths or juveniles; a contributory factor is the lack of local facilities. It is often cited from those engaged in anti-social behaviour that they were bored and

had nothing better to do. This may also be linked to a lack of training and employment opportunities. The Scrutiny Panel realises that other towns provide areas for youths to congregate and that they have been successful.

- 3.6.19 Evidence received emphasises Street Drinkers and Beggars congregate around the town. It would be useful for these areas to be patrolled regularly by Neighbourhood Wardens. Some individuals also congregate on the Market Square at night.
- 3.6.20 The Scrutiny Panel is impressed by the work of “Hazard Alley” in Milton Keynes and commends its effectiveness. It is a unit that has a mock set up of various scenes such as fire safety, home safety etc. Hazard Alley is run by a Charity and a visit forms part of the Junior Warden Scheme in Northampton.
- 3.6.21 The Scrutiny Panel conveys its concerns regarding some licensed establishments serving small quantities of alcohol to Street Drinkers early in the morning. The Scrutiny Panel was pleased to note that two Off Licences in the town centre are not now permitted to serve alcohol before 10am and cannot sell less than four cans at a time.
- 3.6.22 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledges that alcohol and drug usage are a key factor to anti-social behaviour and there is a need to look at opening hours. The Scrutiny Panel would welcome support that can be provided through Partnership Grants for street based service to support substance abuse.
- 3.6.23 The Scrutiny Panel is aware that a wet area in the town for Street Drinkers is subject to discussion. Other areas in the county have such an area, for example Corby. It acknowledges that previously the town did have a wet area located near to the old Fish Market and it had been entitled “Tolerance area”. Drinkers became badly behaved and it impacted upon nearby businesses and it was removed. A wet area has to be supervised and can be resource intensive.
- 3.6.24 The Scrutiny Panel felt that issues such as times that shops can sell alcohol, such as early in the morning, causes such problems. There is a need for such conditions on certain licences to be reviewed, such as the sale of alcohol early in the morning. This would take away the problems of street drinkers that are present early in the morning in the town centre. It is acknowledged that licences can only be reviewed if there are issues with how a premise is operating. However, evidence received highlights that restricting alcohol early in the morning to those dependent on it can cause them to go into “dependency mode” and require medical assistance.
- 3.6.25 Psychoactive substances are sold in the town and are known nationally as ‘legal highs’. There has been a swift increase in the amount and range of new substances, with their open sale in retail outlets and through the Internet. Evidence received highlights these substances pose a serious risk to public health.

- 3.6.26 Evidence received highlights the need for awareness raising around the issues caused by psychoactive substances, such as the health implications and resulting anti-social behaviour. Evidence demonstrates the health consequences of using psychoactive drugs include people having panic attacks, feeling extreme paranoia or anxiety. Several young people and adults have been hospitalised with some needing mental health support. Some people have had severe nose bleeds or had severe cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Some individuals may develop short term mental health problems through the use of these substances.
- 3.6.27 Evidence received confirms that based on local knowledge of Northampton, the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU) is currently aware of two outlets for psychoactive substances. The ASBU served a Community Protection Notice warning letter in relation to one of these premises in February 2015 due to the volume of people attending the shop and congregating outside causing disturbances within the street prior to the premises opening. Since that time, complaints regarding the issues surrounding the shop have ceased.
- 3.6.28 The Scrutiny Panel supports the Government Bill in relation to psychoactive substances. It realises that such an Act will stop retailing and wholesaling of psychoactive substances in the UK. The Act was published on 29 January 2016 but requires commencement Orders to give it effect.
- 3.6.29 The Scrutiny Panel felt that the hotline number of Network Rail would be useful for all ward Councillors to be aware of in respect of reporting issues such as graffiti on Network Rail land.
- 3.6.30 Evidence received confirms that due to spells of severe weather and reduced temperatures in the winter, more rough sleepers will choose to engage with advice and support services and ask for help during this time of the year. It does not necessarily mean that more people are sleeping rough.

4. Options

- 4.1 Cabinet will need to consider the possible options as part of its response to the recommendations.

5. Implications (including financial implications)

5.1 Policy

- 5.1.1 The work of Overview and Scrutiny plays a major part in the development of the Council's policy framework through its work programme.

5.1.2 The report and its recommendations have policy implications in relation the impact of anti-social behaviour on the town. Cabinet’s response will need to consider these issues in detail.

5.2 Resources and Risk

5.2.1 Cabinet will need to consider the resourcing issues for the recommendations made.

5.3 Legal

5.3.1 Legal issues will need to be considered as part of Cabinet’s response to the recommendations.

5.4 Equality

5.4.1 Equality issues will need to be considered as part of Cabinet’s response to the recommendations.

5.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

5.5.1 The Committee consulted and took evidence from a variety of sources as detailed in paragraph 3.5 of this report.

6. Background Papers

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee report – Impact of Anti-Social Behaviour on the Town
- Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 11 April 2016

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