



To add value to the Dispersal Order process

**Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Community Safety
(Evaluation of Dispersal Orders) Task and Finish Group**

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Foreword

The Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, comprising Councillors Brian Hoare, Andrew Simpson and Liz Tavener, was set up to investigate the effectiveness of Dispersal Orders.

The review was a short, focussed piece of work that reviewed the implementation of Dispersal Orders since the beginning of 2004. It also sought the views of Council officers and partners in the Police as to whether this form of intervention had achieved its objectives.

The Task and Finish Group reviewed a report detailing the first 16 Dispersal Orders initiated in Northampton and then considered the geographical distribution of those orders to see if there was a correlation with other factors such as areas of deprivation.

Verbal evidence was provided by the Borough Council's Anti Social Behaviour Unit and the Local Police Authority and ward Councillors were invited to provide evidence.

The planned outcome of the Task and Finish Group was to add value to existing process and practices in particular to help ward Councillors to understand the use of Dispersal Orders and in particular their role.

This review was carried out between January 2007 and March 2007.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B Hoare'.

Councillor B Hoare
Chair of the Community Safety
(Evaluation of Dispersal Orders)
Task and Finish Group



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Simpson'.

Cllr. A Simpson



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Tavener'.

Cllr L Tavener

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Task and Finish Group had evolved from the previous Overview and Scrutiny system, which had set up a Dispersal Orders Working Group that had requested an evaluation of Dispersal Orders. When the previous Overview and Scrutiny system ceased, the Community Safety Team had carried out the evaluation.

A significant amount of evidence was heard, details of which are contained in the report. After gathering evidence the Task and Finish Group established that:-

- When the Dispersal Order process was first implemented in Northampton, the monitoring process was not robust. However, the evaluation and monitoring process has improved and the evaluation undertaken by Northampton Borough Council is now very comprehensive.
- There is a need to ensure that ward Councillors receive proper communication and are engaged with regard to proposed Dispersal Orders within their wards. Councillors also need to be provided with guidance and assistance explaining how they can become involved in the Dispersal Order process. A flow chart detailing the Dispersal Order process would be useful, it could be widely circulated to ward Councillors and published on the Council's website.
- There are some links with areas of deprivation to Dispersal Orders but the link is weaker than was expected.
- The effectiveness of Joint Action Groups (JAGs), in areas where there had been a Dispersal Order was noted. It will be easier to set up JAGs in Neighbourhood Management Teams but there is a need to ensure that they are also set up if a Dispersal Order is considered in a co-ordinated area.
- The Borough Council 'owns' the Dispersal Order process as part of its contribution to the Safer Stronger Partnership but it needs to be seen as a partnership approach. The role of Neighbourhood Management Teams and the role of JAGs should be re-enforced.
- From the evidence provided the assumption was made that there appears to be a relationship between Dispersal Orders and the provision of youth facilities in the town.
- Dispersal Orders are a part of the wider plan to dealing with anti social behaviour however, for them to be effective they must contain Entry and Exit Strategies. These must be planned and agreed by all parties at the beginning of the process.
- There is a need for more Police statistical data to be provided when an evaluation of a Dispersal Order is undertaken. This data should be provided by the ComPaSS unit. A copy of the evaluation should be circulated to all stakeholders.

- The Anti Social Behaviour Unit when reporting to the Community Safety Partnership should include a summary of the evaluation of Dispersal Orders as part of their feedback.
- The evaluation of the Dispersal Order process should be reported to the Joint Action Groups (JAGs) so that they can feed back the information to residents. Due to the sensitivity of some of the data, a précis version needs to be put together for residents' information.
- The Task and Finish Group established that the Dispersal Order procedure is just one sort of intervention to achieve improved community safety. It would be a legitimate objective to eliminate Dispersal Orders as this would equal success and indicate that anti social behaviour problems were resolved at an earlier stage.
- It would be beneficial for this report to be used as part of the Councillor Induction process as it details the Dispersal Order process and the launch of the Safer Community Teams.

The above overall findings have formed the basis for the following recommendations. The Task and Finish Group asks the Cabinet to consider implementing the following recommendations:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Borough Councillors receive more training and understanding of the Dispersal Order process if they are to perform their community leadership role effectively.**
- 5.2 The Anti Social Behaviour Unit contributes to the Councillor Induction explaining how Councillors should engage in the Dispersal Order process. A copy of this report will be used as part of the Councillor Induction process.**
- 5.3 Greater emphasis should be placed by the Police on the gathering of evidence in support of Dispersal Orders or Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). This need should be emphasised to the new Community Safety Teams.**
- 5.4 Measuring the effectiveness of Dispersal Orders is essential and the ComPaSS Unit will be asked to provide statistical data before a Dispersal Order is implemented, during and once it has been completed. This data will inform the evaluation process.**
- 5.5 Prevention is better than cure. Joint Action Groups (JAGs) will engage with the community and inform residents prior to the implementation of a Dispersal Order. Resolution of the problem rather than implementing a Dispersal Order is the preferred outcome.**

- 5.6 Entry and Exit Strategies will form an integral part of the Dispersal Order Process. They will be formulated at the planning stage and without them the Dispersal Order is not an effective long-term intervention in the improvement of community safety.**
- 5.7 Monitoring and reporting back are essential elements in the process of improving community confidence. The Portfolio Holder for Business Intelligence, E-Government and People Support will present regular reports, including a summary of the evaluation of Dispersal Orders to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).**
- 5.8 It is also essential to improve the confidence of local communities following a Dispersal Order. Therefore a précised evaluation report will be sent to the local residents with details of ongoing plans to maintain community safety.**
- 5.9 The provision of diversionary youth facilities appears to be a potential contributor to the resolution of problems and therefore the lack of need to implement Dispersal Orders. The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Community Safety will ensure that there is a programme to improve youth facilities across Northampton as an “invest to save programme”.**
- 5.10 Northampton Borough Council, and other Agencies, will work towards zero Dispersal Orders and see this as a success with problems being resolved at an earlier stage. If Dispersal Orders are used it indicates that problems are being allowed to escalate where this level of intervention is required.**

Northampton Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny

Report of the Community Safety (Evaluation of Dispersal Orders) Task and Finish Group

1 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the Task and Finish Group was to add value to the Dispersal Order process. A copy of the Scope of the Review is attached at Appendix A.

2. Context and Background

- 2.1 The Task and Finish Group was established to undertake a short, focussed piece of work over three meetings between January 2007 and March 2007.
- 2.2 The Task and Finish Group was set up to conclude an incomplete piece of work from the previous Overview and Scrutiny system. The previous Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested an evaluation of Dispersal Orders and the primary aim of the Task and Finish Group was to review the report produced by the Community Safety Team reviewing the first 16 Dispersal Orders initiated in Northampton between February 2004 and September 2005.
- 2.3 The Group agreed that the following areas needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities: -
- The effectiveness of reporting on Dispersal Orders
 - Analysis of the 16 areas in the borough that have had Dispersal Orders, links to deprivation
 - Details of repeat Dispersal Orders
 - Details of Exit Strategies
 - Consultation process for Dispersal Orders
 - Anti Social Behaviour interventions within Northampton Borough Council's control
 - Police's views on Dispersal Orders, now and in the future
 - Dispersal Order response statistics
- 2.4 This review links to the Council's corporate priority of making Northampton a cleaner, safer and greener place to live. (Corporate Priority 4 refers).

3. Evidence Collection

In scoping this review it was decided that evidence would be collected from a variety of sources: -

3.1 Community Safety Manager

The Community Safety Manager provided two inputs to the Task and Finish Group. The initial input was the report prepared for the previous Overview and Scrutiny Committee which covered sixteen Dispersal Orders. The second input was an update to December 2006 and geographical analysis requested by the Task and Finish Group.

Dispersal Order Process and Evaluation of original Dispersal Order Report (February 2004 to September 2005)

3.1.1 Key evidence from the initial report: -

- The Police initiates Dispersal Orders having collated all the evidence. A proposed Dispersal Order is sent to the Borough Council who countersigns the Order. A Dispersal Order must be countersigned before it can be implemented. The Community Safety Manager will not countersign a Dispersal Order unless it has been agreed by at least one ward Councillor, and is supported by clear documented evidence of the problem.
- Dispersal Orders are intended to be a short-term measure as part of a longer-term solution. The Government anticipates Dispersal Orders to be used to combat residents' fear of crime.
- At the time of writing the initial report for Overview and Scrutiny there had been 16 Dispersal Orders granted in the borough.
- None of the 16 areas had had an Exit Strategy.
- The report provided statistics on just two Dispersal Order areas. There had been no consultation with the public on the remaining 14 Dispersal Orders to enable an evaluation to take place.
- Warning letters were sent to offenders who breached the Dispersal Order area and their parents/guardians were copied in. Often the parent or guardian will call and express their shock that the young person behaving in such a manner, commenting that they will address their behaviour. A record of all letters sent is kept by the Anti Social Behaviour Unit.
- There is not a designated 'owner' of the outcomes of the Dispersal Orders Report. Northampton Borough Council has chosen to carry out an evaluation, few others have.
- Youth Workers, from YMCA, have asked to find out the views of young people in dispersal areas to enable longer-term solutions to be identified.
- Many residents feel that although Dispersal Orders make them feel safer and reduce the fear of crime, they are apprehensive that

once the Dispersal Order has ended that the problems will reoccur.

- The success of Dispersal Orders is dependant on resources available to police the areas and the Police has indicated that it will not support a Dispersal Order unless it feels that it can support the implementation.

Further Analysis of Dispersal Orders up to December 2006

- 3.1.2 The Task and Finish Group requested two maps of the Borough detailing the areas and levels of deprivation across the town and the 28 Dispersal Order areas that have been implemented up to December 2006.
- 3.1.3 It was identified that there has been one repeat Dispersal Order in Kings Heath which is one of the most deprived areas and has received a lot of resources.
- 3.1.4 The Dispersal Order in St David's ward resolved the problem of anti social behaviour (harassment, threatening behaviour, underage drinking and vehicle damage) quickly. This Order was supported by the installation of a CCTV camera in the shopping area.
- 3.1.5 There is a lot of juvenile nuisance and criminal damage in Eastfield. A community shop will open shortly and there is now a Safer Community Team and Neighbourhood Co-ordinator for the area.
- 3.1.6 There are crime problems in Briar Hill and Thorpeland. The Police will increase patrols in these areas. There is currently a CASPAR project in the Thorplands area. The Police prescribes 'red routes' to high crime areas.
- 3.1.7 The main problem in Briar Hill is motorcycle nuisance and burglary.
- 3.1.8 A Dispersal Order was not implemented on the Racecourse as it was felt it could displace the problem into surrounding residential areas.
- 3.1.9 There have been three Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's) in Eastfield but these are due to come to an end on 31 March 2007.
- 3.1.10 Castle ward is within the 5% most deprived wards in the country. It has been awarded £4 million of funding from 2006, for the next four years.
- 3.1.11 When reviewing the maps it was observed that Dispersal Orders had not occurred in several wards where they may have been anticipated i.e. Lumbertubs and Thorplands and it was concluded that this reflected the level of policing in these areas and the provision of diversionary activities. Approximately three years ago an audit of youth facilities for 8-13 year olds in the town was undertaken and if further work on Dispersal Orders is undertaken then it might be appropriate to correlate with youth facilities provision.

Repeat Dispersal Order areas

3.1.12 The only area in Northampton that has had a Dispersal Order repeated is Kings Heath, around and including the shopping area of Park Square. The original Order ran from 21 October 2004 to 20 January 2005. There was positive feedback from the community and a reduction in anti-social behaviour but the Police still felt there were issues that needed to be resolved as it was still receiving calls from the public. This led to a further application being made for the period 22 February 2005 to 21 April 2005.

3.1.13 Duston has had three Dispersal Orders. A multi Agency Group was set up within six months after the end of the last Dispersal Order. It was very successful and its positive effects are still evident.

Exit Strategies

3.1.14 When reviewing the range of Dispersal Orders it was a concern to find that Exit Strategies were not established when preparing and applying for the Orders.

3.1.15 Since March 2006, Joint Action Groups (JAGs) have been set up in some of the Dispersal Order areas, to look more closely at the issues and identify actions that can be undertaken to address some of the problems. The Groups usually operate for a six-month period and are working well. An evaluation undertaken following the completion of work by the Duston Group showed a 14% reduction in overall crime, and early indications of the Semilong Group's work showed that there is an overall reduction in crime of 20%. There are currently three other Groups working in the areas of St James/Castle, Bellinge and Eastfield.

3.1.16 Unless Exit Strategies are in place for all Dispersal Orders they cannot serve their purpose of providing a "breathing space" for longer-term resolution of the problems.

Consultation process for Dispersal Orders

3.1.17 It was resolved by Northampton Borough Council's Executive of 10 May 2004 *'that the Chief Executive, Borough Solicitors or any Director be authorised to give the Councils consent to the issue by a relevant police officer of an authorisation under Part 4 of The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003'*.

3.1.18 In line with the legislation, any application received by Northampton Borough Council from the Police should be supported by:

- Clearly highlighted map of identified area
- Detailed reason for requesting the Order

Provision of significant recorded evidence of incidents of:

- Anti-social behaviour within the identified area.
- Consultation has taken place with local Councillors and written support/agreement included from at least one of them.
- Consultation with residents/groups has taken place.

3.1.19 The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit acts as the 'gatekeeper' for applications for Dispersal Orders and will not accept them if the above criteria has not been met. This is then further checked by the Community Safety Manager before seeking approval and signature. Dispersal Orders cannot go ahead if Northampton Borough Council does not approve them.

Anti Social Behaviour interventions within Northampton Borough Council's control

3.1.20 A multi-Agency approach has been adopted in the application of intervention work. It is co-ordinated through the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, Northampton Borough Council in consultation with partner Agencies through the six weekly NASBAG (Northampton Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group) meetings.

The following types of intervention are used:

- Early warning letters
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- Notices of Seeking Possession (Housing)
- Outreach Youth Work
- Family Intervention via the U-Turn Project
- Local Action Groups
- Dispersal Orders
- Injunctions
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

3.2 Northants Police

3.2.1 A representative from Northants Police attended the meeting on 15 February 2007, a copy of the minutes of the meeting are attached at Appendix B. The key points of evidence are:

- Dispersal Orders provide a short-term solution to assist in resolving a long-term problem. It gives the partner Agencies time to get together to solve the problem.
- The evidence gathering process needs to be improved; incidents are not always logged but it is envisaged that the Safer Community Teams (SCTs) and extended Police family should be able to assist in this process.

- The Police suggested that the central collection point for such incidents should be the Anti Social Behaviour Unit.
- Dispersal Orders should only be used when other initiatives have been unsuccessful.
- Exit Strategies need to be put in place as part of the creation of Dispersal Orders and set up when the Dispersal Order is considered. It is important that good practice is encouraged.
- Safer Community Teams should negate the need for Dispersal Orders. Multi Agencies* should deal with the problem before it gets to the Dispersal Order stage.
(*Northampton Borough Council, Northants Police, Community Safety Unit, Anti Social Behaviour Unit, Youth Workers, Ward Councillors, Chairs of Residents Associations, head teachers of local schools, education officers, welfare officers and housing officers).
- The Police is responsible for identifying the problem and will initially lead the Dispersal Order process. The process has to be supported by a Police Superintendent and a local Councillor. The Community Safety Manager has to sign off all Dispersal Orders.
- The Police recognises the need to monitor and measure the performance of Dispersal Orders but acknowledge that there have been failures in the past.
- Measuring displacement is anecdotal, for example, the Dispersal Order at Semilong displaced to the Race Course. If it is the same group of young people that has displaced the Police will look at Anti Social Behaviour Initiatives.
- The Police looks at whether it will be able to enforce Dispersal Orders, but this should not be a limiting factor. With the establishment of Safer Community Teams it should be easier to organise the policing of support for Dispersal Orders. However, this should not be the sole responsibility of Safer Community Teams the responsibility should lay with the wider Joint Action Group.
- The Police recognises that Dispersal Orders need to be evaluated, but acknowledged that this had not been achieved. The Police is committed to improving the situation working with the other partners.
- The Police implements different operational approaches to policing a Dispersal Order area which could include a zero tolerance, or normal supervision by Community Beat Officers. Often just publicising a forthcoming Dispersal Order will alleviate the problem.

3.3 Ward Councillors

- 3.3.1 The Group invited ward Councillors to provide details of Dispersal Orders in their wards and whether they had been involved, details of any Exit Strategies, whether a Dispersal Order outside their ward had had an effective on their ward and the Councillors' awareness of the Dispersal Order process. A response was received from just two Ward Councillors in Headlands and East Hunsbury. Copies of the Ward Councillors responses are attached at Appendix C.

- 3.3.2 Both Councillors commented that they believed a Dispersal Order outside their ward had had effect on their wards.
- 3.3.3 It was disappointing to only receive two responses from the Councillors but this perhaps indicates the level of engagement that most Councillors have with Dispersal Orders that have been implemented to date.

4. Conclusions

After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn: -

- 4.1 When the Dispersal Order process was first implemented in Northampton, the monitoring process was not robust. However, the evaluation and monitoring process has improved and the evaluation undertaken by Northampton Borough Council is now very comprehensive.
- 4.2 There is a need to ensure that ward Councillors receive proper communication and are engaged with regard to proposed Dispersal Orders within their wards. Councillors also need to be provided with guidance and assistance explaining how they can become involved in the Dispersal Order process. A flow chart detailing the Dispersal Order process would be useful, it could be widely circulated to ward Councillors and published on the Council's website.
- 4.3 There are some links with areas of deprivation to Dispersal Orders but the link is weaker than was expected.
- 4.4 The effectiveness of Joint Action Groups (JAGs), in areas where there had been a Dispersal Order was noted. It will be easier to set up JAGs in Neighbourhood Management Teams but there is a need to ensure that they are also set up if a Dispersal Order is considered in a co-ordinated area.
- 4.5 The Borough Council 'owns' the Dispersal Order process as part of its contribution to the Safer Stronger Partnership but it needs to be seen as a partnership approach. The role of Neighbourhood Management Teams and the role of JAGs should be re-enforced.
- 4.6 From the evidence provided the assumption was made that there appears to be a relationship between Dispersal Orders and the provision of youth facilities in the town.
- 4.7 Dispersal Orders are a part of the wider plan to dealing with anti social behaviour however, for them to be effective they must contain Entry and Exit Strategies. These must be planned and agreed by all parties at the beginning of the process.
- 4.8 There is a need for more Police statistical data to be provided when an evaluation of a Dispersal Order is undertaken. This data should

be provided by the ComPaSS unit. A copy of the evaluation should be circulated to all stakeholders.

- 4.9 The Anti Social Behaviour Unit when reporting to the Community Safety Partnership should include a summary of the evaluation of Dispersal Orders as part of their feedback.
- 4.10 The evaluation of the Dispersal Order process should be reported to the Joint Action Groups (JAGs) so that they can feed back the information to residents. Due to the sensitivity of some of the data, a précis version needs to be put together for residents' information.
- 4.11 The Task and Finish Group established that the Dispersal Order procedure is just one sort of intervention to achieve improved community safety. It would be a legitimate objective to eliminate Dispersal Orders as this would equal success and indicate that anti social behaviour problems were resolved at an earlier stage.
- 4.12 It would be beneficial for this report to be used as part of the Councillor Induction process as it details the Dispersal Order process and the launch of the Safer Community Teams.

5 Recommendations

The Task and Finish Group recommends to Cabinet to that: -

- 5.1 Borough Councillors receive more training and understanding of the Dispersal Order process if they are to perform their community leadership role effectively.
- 5.2 The Anti Social Behaviour Unit contributes to the Councillor Induction explaining how Councillors should engage in the Dispersal Order process. A copy of this report will be used as part of the Councillor Induction process.
- 5.3 Greater emphasis should be placed by the Police on reporting of Dispersal Orders or Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). This need should be emphasised to the new Community Safety Teams.
- 5.4 Measuring the effectiveness of Dispersal Orders is essential and the ComPaSS Unit will be asked to provide statistical data before a Dispersal Order is implemented, during and once it has been completed. This data will inform the evaluation process.
- 5.5 Prevention is better than cure. Joint Action Groups (JAGs) will engage with the community and inform residents prior to the implementation of a Dispersal Order. Resolution of the problem rather than implementing a Dispersal Order is the preferred outcome.

- 5.6 Entry and Exit Strategies will form an integral part of the Dispersal Order Process. They will be formulated at the planning stage and without them the Dispersal Order is not an effective long-term intervention in the improvement of community safety.
- 5.7 Monitoring and reporting back are essential elements in the process of improving community confidence. The Portfolio Holder for Business Intelligence, E-Government and People Support will present regular reports, including a summary of the evaluation of Dispersal Orders to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).
- 5.8 It is also essential to improve the confidence of local communities following a Dispersal Order. Therefore a précised evaluation report will be sent to the local residents with details of ongoing plans to maintain community safety.
- 5.9 The provision of diversionary youth facilities appears to be a potential contributor to the resolution of problems and therefore the lack of need to implement Dispersal Orders. The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Community Safety will ensure that there is a programme to improve youth facilities across Northampton as an “invest to save programme”.
- 5.10 Northampton Borough Council, and other Agencies, will work towards zero Dispersal Orders and see this as a success with problems being resolved at an earlier stage. If Dispersal Orders are used it indicates that problems are being allowed to escalate where this level of intervention is required.

Appendices

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

**COMMUNITY SAFETY
(EVALUATION OF DISPERSAL ORDERS)
TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

1. Purpose/Objectives of the Review

- To add value to the Dispersal Order process

2. Outcomes Required

- To make recommendations for better management and use of Dispersal Orders
- To help all Councillors understand the Dispersal Order process and how it fits into anti social initiatives in wards
- To make recommendations for multi agency working to deflect young people from anti social behaviour
- To share outcomes with partners
- To understand the effectiveness of Dispersal Orders

3. Information Required

- The effectiveness of reporting on Dispersal Orders
- Analysis of the 16 areas in the borough that have had Dispersal Orders, links to deprivation
- Details of repeat Dispersal Orders
- Details of Exit Strategies
- Consultation process for Dispersal Orders
- Anti Social Behaviour interventions within NBC's control
- Police's views on Dispersal Orders, now and in the future
- Dispersal Order response statistics

4. Format of Information

- Officer reports/presentations
- Baseline data
- Witness Interview with Senior Police Officer

5. Methods Used to Gather Information

- Minutes of meetings
- Desktop research

- Evidence from Northants Police
- Evidence from the Anti Social Behaviour Unit

6. Co-Options to the Review

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7. Evidence gathering Timetable

December 2006 to March 2007

23 January 2007

15 February

8 March

8. Responsible Officers

Lead Officer	Thomas Hall
Co-ordinator	Tracy Tiff

9. Resources and Budgets

D Ferguson, Community Safety Manager, to provide support and advice.

10. Final report resented by:

Completed 8 March 2007. Presented by the Chair of the Task and Finish Group to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its March meeting and then to Cabinet.

11. Monitoring procedure:

Review the impact of the report after six months.

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMUNITY SAFETY (EVALUATION OF
DISPERSAL ORDERS) TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Thursday, 15 February 2007

PRESENT: Councillor B Hoare (Chair)
Councillor A Simpson
Councillor L Tavener

Thomas Hall - Corporate Manager
Debbie Ferguson - Community Safety Manager
Tracy Tiff - Scrutiny Officer

Witness

Sergeant Mark Worthington (Northants Police)

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2007

Subject to the following amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2007 were agreed:

There had been **three** Dispersal Orders in Duston.

3. TO APPROVE THE DRAFT SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The Scope of the Review, as amended, was agreed. A copy of which is attached.

4. WITNESS EVIDENCE

(A) NORTHANTS POLICE

Sergeant Mark Worthington provided a response to the Task and Finish Group's core questions:

1 How do the Police view Dispersal Orders and in what circumstances does it see them as the most effective step in achieving long-term improvements in anti social behaviour?

Dispersal Orders provide a short-term solution to assist in resolving a long-term problem. It gives the partner Agencies time to get together to solve the problem.

At present, the evidence gathering process needs improvement; incidents are not always logged but it is envisaged that the Safer Community Teams, and extended police family should be able to assist in this process. There is, however, the need to determine who should be responsible for logging incidents. If incidents continually identify an individual, the Anti Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) route can

be taken. The central collection point for such incidents should be the Anti Social Behaviour Unit.

Sergeant Worthington advised that Dispersal Orders should only be used when other initiatives have been unsuccessful.

2 Do the Police believe that Exit Strategies are required, and if so, who should be responsible for their production?

Yes Exit Strategies should be set up when the Dispersal Order is considered. The Stronger Safer Community Teams will take on the ownership of Dispersal Orders.

Regarding Dispersal Orders in Bellinge, Eastfields and Castle Wards, D Ferguson advised that that there had been a multi agency approach in compiling Exit Strategies.

The Task and Finish Group commented and heard:-

- Safer Community Teams should negate the need for Dispersal Orders. Multi Agencies (NBC, Northants Police, Community Safety Unit, Anti Social Behaviour Unit, Youth Workers, Ward Councillors, Chairs of Residents Associations, head teachers of local schools, education officers, welfare officers and housing officers) should deal with the problem before it gets to the Dispersal Order stage.
- Exit Strategies need to be put in place as part of the creation of Dispersal Orders. It is important that good practice is encouraged.

2a Who leads the Dispersal Order process?

The Police identifies the problem and will initially lead the Dispersal Order process. The Police Superintendent will sign the request for a Dispersal Order but before it can be implemented it has to also be signed off by the Borough Council. There also needs to be at least one letter of support from a Councillor and written police evidence that the potential Dispersal Order has been discussed with local residents. The Anti Social Behaviour Unit acts as the gatekeeper. Referrals for Dispersal Orders can also come from Northampton Borough Council.

3 Are the Police committed to providing statistics during and post the Dispersal Order period in order to monitor the effectiveness of this form of intervention?

Yes, the Police are committed to provide statistics but there is a need to improve on how it is done. There were errors in the system but these have now been rectified. Data is now being gathered. The Police has recently carried out a review, and it was found that a Dispersal Order had been set up but no one had been dispersed. However, on the first day of the Dispersal Order, a number of young people had been dispersed but no data had been input.

The Task and Finish Group asked questions and heard: -

- The type of data that the Police will look at includes: -
 - Ø The number dispersed outside the area
 - Ø The number dispersed in the area
 - Ø The number of young people taken home

Crime Statistics and Incident statistics

- The Anti Social Behaviour Unit receives the above data.
- The Police issues a random number of questionnaires to residents asking whether Dispersal Orders make them feel safer. Comments received are recorded.
- In response to a query regarding measuring displacement, Sergeant Worthington advised that this is anecdotal, for example the Dispersal Order at the Race Course displaced to Semilong. If it is the same group of young people that has displaced the Police would look at Anti Social Behaviour Initiatives.
- The Dispersal Order at Abington displaced to Christchurch Road.
- Initially, the location of Dispersal Orders was very small, but future ones were wider to try and counter and displacement issues .

4 Are the number of Youth Dispersal Orders limited by Police resources?

No, the Police looks at whether it will be able to enforce Dispersal Orders, but this would not be a limiting factor. There is no point setting up a Dispersal Order if it could not be policed. Often the Police will have a maximum of three Dispersal Orders in one sector. Safer Community Teams will take ownership of Dispersal Orders, the Teams comprise: one Sergeant, two/three Police Officers, four/five Police Community Support Officers and a number of Special Constables .

5 Will the implementation of Safer Community Teams mean Dispersal Orders will be easier to police?

It is the intention to make them easier to police. However, it will not be the sole responsibility of Safer Community Teams' to Police dispersal Orders, it is also the responsibility of the Incident resolution teams , but the SCTs will be co-ordinating them. There will be more consistent coverage and the Police Community Support Officers are keen to liaise with young people.

A good working relationship with Councillors is essential, as is all Agencies working together. Joint Action Groups tackle low level anti social behaviour.

The Task and Finish Group commented and heard:-

- There is a need for all 47 Councillors to understand the Dispersal Order process
- Roll out of Neighbourhood Management should be complete by the end of April 2007

Sergeant Worthington undertook for forward information about the Safer Community Teams to the Chair.

6 Do the Police carry out its own evaluation of Dispersal Orders?

Yes the Police do carry out evaluations, it wants to make sure that Dispersal Orders are working, or not, and share the information between the sectors.

The Task and Finish Group asked questions and heard:-

- The factors that make Dispersal Orders work include a zero tolerance approach, but it is not clear whether this tactic on its own works. Often just

publicising a forthcoming Dispersal Order will alleviate the problem.

- Often when a Dispersal Order has been implemented, the problem will disappear within a week.

The Chair thanked Sergeant Worthington for his informative address.

5. OFFICER REPORTS - BASELINE DATA

(A) ANALYSIS OF 16 AREAS WITH DISPERSAL ORDERS

D Ferguson, Community Safety Manager, presented two maps of the borough. One detailing the areas and levels of deprivation across the town and the other showing the 28 Dispersal Order areas. Comprehensive details regarding the 28 Dispersal Orders was circulated.

The Task and Finish Group asked questions and heard: -

- There has been one repeat Dispersal Order in Kings Heath. This is one of the most deprived areas and has received a lot of resources.
- The Dispersal Order in St David's ward resolved the problem of anti social behaviour (harassment, threatening behaviour, underage drinking and vehicle damage) quickly
- There is a lot of juvenile nuisance and criminal damage in Eastfield. A community shop will open and there will be a Safer Community Team and Youth Worker for the area
- There are crime problems in Briar Hill and Thorpelands. The police will increase patrols in these areas. There will also be a CASPAR project in Thorpelands. The police prescribes 'red routes' to high crime areas.
- The main problem in Briar Hill is motorcycle nuisance and burglary.
- It was felt that a Dispersal Order could not be implemented on the Racecourse as it could displace the problem to residential areas.
- There has been three ASBO's in Eastfield but these are due to come to an end next month
- There appears to be a relationship between Dispersal Orders and the provision of youth facilities in the town. Approximately three years ago an audit of such facilities was undertaken.
- It was noted that Castle ward is within the 5% most deprived wards in the country. It has received £4 million of funding over four years.
- There are some links with areas of deprivation to Dispersal Orders but the link is weaker than was expected
- There is a need for Joint Action Groups in each Neighbourhood Management Area.

(B) RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

D Ferguson provided a written response to the Task and Finish Group's questions:-

1. Where are repeat Dispersal Order areas, why was the need for one?

The only area in Northampton that has had a dispersal order repeated is Kings Heath, around and including the shopping area of Park Square. The original order ran from 21 October 2004 to 20 January 2005. There was positive feedback from the community and a

reduction in anti-social behaviour but the Police still felt there were issues that needed to be resolved and they were still receiving calls from the public. This led to a further application being made for the period 22 February 2005 to 21 April 2005.

2. Details on any Exit Strategies

There is no specific exit strategy set up for Dispersal areas.

However since March 2006 multi-agency action groups have been set up in some of the dispersal areas to look more closely at the issues and identify actions that can be undertaken to address some of the problems. The groups usually operate for a 6-month period and are working well. An evaluation undertaken following the completion of work by the Duston group showed a 14% reduction in overall crime, and as we approach the end of the Semilong groups work, early indications are that there is an overall reduction in crime of 20% (this is to be confirmed by the Police).

There are currently three other groups working in the areas of St James/Castle, Bellinge and Eastfield.

3. Consultation process for Dispersal Orders

It was agreed by NBC Executive 10 May 2004 'that the Chief Executive, Borough Solicitors or any Director be authorised to give the Councils consent to the issue by a relevant police officer of an authorisation under Part 4 of The Anti-social behaviour Act 2003'.

As in line with the legislation any application received by NBC from the police should be supported by:

- Clearly highlighted map of identified area
- Detailed reason for requesting the Order
- Significant recorded evidence of incidents of anti-social behaviour within the identified area is provided.
- Consultation has taken place with local councillors and written support/agreement included from at least one of them.
- Consultation with residents/groups has taken place.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit act as the 'gatekeepers' for applications and will not accept them if the above criteria has not been met. This is then further checked by the Community Safety Manager before seeking approval and signature. Dispersal Orders cannot go ahead if NBC does not approve them.

(C) ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTIONS WITHIN NBC'S CONTROL

D Ferguson provided details on Anti Social Behaviour within Northampton Borough Council's control.

A multi agency approach has been adopted in the application of intervention work. It is co-ordinated through the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, NBC in consultation with partner agencies through the 6 weekly NASBAG (Northampton Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group)

meetings. The following types of intervention are used:

- Early warning letters
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- Notices of Seeking Possession (Housing)
- Outreach Youth Work
- Family Intervention via the UTurn Project
- Local Action Groups
- Dispersal Orders
- Injunctions
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders

6. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The next meeting was noted as Thursday 8 March 2007 commencing at 6.30pm in the Jeffery Room.

The next meeting was noted as Thursday 8 March 2007 commencing at 6.30pm in the Jeffery Room.

The agenda will include:-

Councillors responses to the Dispersal Order questionnaire

Issues to capture in the Chair's final report, including:-

- What has been learnt from the Task and Finish Group process
- What the Group has covered/unable to cover

The Chair suggested that the following information be circulated to the Group:-

Details of the Safer Community Teams - Sergeant Mark Worthington

Summary on three/four Dispersal Orders – D Ferguson

A copy of the Anti Social Behaviour Strategy – T Tiff

The meeting concluded at 7:50 pm

O & S Task & Finish Group
Evaluation of Dispersal Orders

Appendix C

Councillor Name	Brian Markham
Ward	Headlands

Question Number	Question	NBC Councillor Response
1	Have you been approached by the police to support a Dispersal Order and have felt unable to or chosen not to support the proposal? Is there any information on this decision that you would like to bring to the attention of the Task & Finish Group?	No
2	Have you been involved with a Dispersal Order in your Ward in during 2005 or 2006?	No
3	If YES, are there any aspects of the management of the dispersal order or your view on the effectiveness of making use of this form of intervention to improve Anti Social Behaviour in your Ward?	(If necessary please use a separate document to provide comprehensive information)
4	Was there an Exit Strategy associated with the Dispersal Order? Were you involved in its formulation and implementation?	
5	Has there been a Dispersal Order outside your ward which you believe has had an effect on your ward. Please give details.	Yes in Eastfield and also in Thorplands. There is a view from residents in Boothville and in Fullingdale Road that these had an effect on increasing problems in those areas. However I can't confirm that that crime or ASB actually increased.
6	Do you feel that you have a sufficient knowledge / awareness of the implementation of Dispersal Orders and how they could assist you in your role addressing anti social behaviour in your ward?	No
7	Are there any aspects of Dispersal Orders which you would like to bring to the attention of the Task & Finish group which is not covered by the above questions?	

Please Return to Tracey Tiff in electronic or hard copy by the 1st March 2007

O & S Task & Finish Group
Evaluation of Dispersal Orders

Councillor Name	Phil Larratt
Ward	East Hunsbury

Question Number	Question	NBC Councillor Response
1	Have you been approached by the police to support a Dispersal Order and have felt unable to or chosen not to support the proposal? Is there any information on this decision that you would like to bring to the attention of the Task & Finish Group?	Approached but have not been unable to support.
2	Have you been involved with a Dispersal Order in your Ward in during 2005 or 2006?	Yes, I have been involved in an order at Butts Road Shopping Centre in east Hunsbury but I can't remember when it was!
3	If YES, are there any aspects of the management of the dispersal order or your view on the effectiveness of making use of this form of intervention to improve Anti Social Behaviour in your Ward?	(If necessary please use a separate document to provide comprehensive information) It worked well and I would support greater use of these orders.
4	Was there an Exit Strategy associated with the Dispersal Order? Were you involved in its formulation and implementation?	I don't recall there being one, nor can I remember being in any consultation about it.
5	Has there been a Dispersal Order outside your ward which you believe has had an effect on your ward. Please give details.	Yes. One in Delapre transferred the problem to East Hunsbury and a similar order there resolved the problem. Others I believe have impacted on other areas of East Hunsbury, mainly around Tesco's, but further orders have not been taken out due to a lack of police support.
6	Do you feel that you have a sufficient knowledge / awareness of the implementation of Dispersal Orders and how they could assist you in your role addressing anti social behaviour in your ward?	There could have been better liaison between the police and Ward Councillors.
7	Are there any aspects of Dispersal Orders which you would like to bring to the attention of the Task & Finish group which is not covered by the above questions?	No.

Please Return to Tracey Tiff in electronic or hard copy by the 1st March 2007