

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

Report to:- **Council**

Date of Meeting:- **12th September 2006**

Agenda Item No:-

Public/Private*	Policy/Operational/Information	Delegated Yes/No
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Accompanying Comments and Statements		Required Included
Environmental Impact Statement:		No
Corporate Management Team Comments:		No
Financial Comments:		No
Legal Comments:		No
Personnel Comments:		No
Impact on Customers:		No
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Title:-	Report of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Anti-social Behaviour	
Report of:-	Head of Scrutiny and Emergency Planning Services	
Report reference:-	OS10/06	

Report:-

On 20th July 2006 the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the attached Final Report, containing 17 recommendations (see page 8 of the Final Report), following their review into Anti-social Behaviour.

On 29th August 2006 the Executive responded to that report and a minute excerpt of their resolution is attached.

The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee in turn considered the Executive's response at its meeting on 31st August 2006 and a minute excerpt of their resolution is also attached.

The Final report now falls to be considered by full council.

Recommendation:-

Council is recommended to endorse the Final Report and its recommendations.

Contact Officer: John Mallinson

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

31 August 2006



A Report from the Head of Scrutiny and Emergency Planning Services

June 2006

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GLOSSARY

CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
O&S	Overview and Scrutiny
ASB	Anti-social Behaviour
ASBO	Anti-social Behaviour Order
GRIP	Gradual Intervention Programme
VSW	Victim Support Workers
PSHE	Personal Social and Health Education
DFES	Department for Education and Skills
DSS	Department for Social Security (now DWP)
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
CHA	Carlisle Housing Association
CPO	Community Police Officer
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
ISO	Individual Support Order
ASSET	Youth Offending Service offending assessment tool
TOGETHER	Home Office ASB Campaign
ABC	Anti-Social Behaviour Contract
CUPS	Cumbria Partnership Support
NACRO	National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders
NCH	The Children's Charity (formerly National Children's Home)
IDeA	Improvement and Development Agency
GIS	Geographical Information System
ENCAMS	Environmental Campaigns (Keep Britain Tidy)
DJ	Disc Jockey

1. INTRODUCTION

Members of the committee were very keen to undertake a review of this topic as they had all experienced aspects of anti-social behaviour in their wards and were well aware of the community's views on the need to address such.

Members were pleased to learn that the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Leadership Group were supportive of the review.

Its key aim was to understand the issues and how best they could be tackled to the benefit of Carlisle.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference adopted were:-

- (a) to understand the nature, extent and distribution of anti social behaviour in Carlisle, including current trends;
- (b) to review current policies and processes in relation to anti social behaviour and Anti Social Behaviour Orders in Carlisle;
- (c) to review regional and national best practice and innovation in relation to anti social behaviour and Anti Social Behaviour Orders;
- (d) to make recommendations as to future policies and processes.

3. PROCESS

The committee adopted a 'select committee' style as being appropriate to this review/inquiry with the committee receiving evidence from various witnesses and asking them relevant questions to establish an evidence base on which to build any consequent findings/recommendations. The committee held evidence sessions on 6th January, 1st September, 13th October and 29th November 2005. The gap between the first session and the second one being due to the disruption caused by the floods in January 2005.

4. WITNESSES

The committee heard evidence from the following witnesses:-

Mr S O'Keefe, Community Safety Development Officer, Carlisle City Council

Ms Alex Rhind, Assistant Director, Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, Home Office

Mr Stephen Harrison, Tenancy Enforcement Officer, Carlisle Housing Association

Police Constable Malcolm Huddart, Cumbria Constabulary Anti-Social Behaviour Officer

Mr Amrik Panaser, Operations Manager, Carlisle & Eden, Youth Offending Team

Mr Kevin Royston, Development & Project Manager, Youth Offending Team

Ms Jan Gordon Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, Carlisle & Eden CDRP

Mr Mike Battersby – Director of Community Services, Carlisle City Council

Mr Mark Beveridge – Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport Services, Carlisle City Council

Mr Dave Ingham – Environmental Quality Manager, Carlisle City Council

The full minutes recording the verbal evidence received are attached as the Appendix to this report.

5. THE EVIDENCE RECEIVED – SUPPORTING PAPERS

In addition to the extensive verbal evidence the committee considered the following papers:-

- (a) Home Office Crime Reduction Tool Kit extracts
- (b) Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Anti Social Behaviour – Policy and Procedure – Guidance for Local Housing Authorities and Housing Action Trusts
- (c) Housing Corporation – Anti Social Behaviour – Policy and Procedure – Guidance for Housing Associations
- (d) Extracts from the BBC's website
- (e) Local Government Association – Guidance for Councillors on Tackling Anti Social Behaviour locally
- (f) The following documents from the Carlisle & Eden Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership:
 - Audit of Anti Social Behaviour
 - Initial Draft Strategy
 - Focus Group notes
- (g) Local Government Chronicle Article on Barnsley's approach
- (h) Details of Government's TOGETHER Campaign
- (i) Local Government Association Document – Guidance for Councillors on tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

- (j) Note prepared by Mr. Ian Johnson of Blythe Valley Housing
- (k) Notes of an evidence session at Nottingham Council attended by Professor Nick Tilley.

References and contacts for and /or copies of these documents are available from Overview and Scrutiny Support, Carlisle City Council, Civic Centre Carlisle CA3 8QG. Telephone 01228 817000. E-mail scrutiny@carlisle.gov.uk.

6. THE COMMITTEE'S FINDINGS FROM THE EVIDENCE RECEIVED

The committee found that whilst anti-social behaviour was clearly an issue in Carlisle District it was neither caused by exceptional factors nor at a level that was any different from other comparable places across the country. However it was a significant issue for the community, which the evidence and Members' own experiences clearly showed to be one, which requires a co-ordinated, focussed and sustained response.

Members were particularly impressed by best practise in relation to reporting such behaviour and for the type of multi-agency structure to be adopted to tackle it, as found in the documentation studied (see section 5 above), and in the evidence from M/s Alex Rhind. It was also clear from other local witnesses that a more effective structure was highly desirable. High performing authorities and their partners had adopted these working arrangements. This led them to the following conclusions:-

There should be a single multi-agency point for reporting all anti-social behaviour, modelled on the Home Office 'It's Your Call' campaign

There should either be:-

a multi-agency team meeting frequently to receive all reports of and task and co-ordinate action in relation to instances of anti-social behaviour.

or preferably

a dedicated co-located multi-agency team tackling anti-social behaviour.

If the first option is pursued then it should be seen as a stepping stone to the second over a defined period not exceeding a further financial year.

It is essential that the team established as above has representation, at an appropriate level of seniority, from all relevant agencies coupled with commitment to delivery on the actions flowing from it.

Advice and support for the effective establishment of the above team should be sought from the Home Office Anti-social Behaviour Unit.

Given the wide ranging nature of anti-social behaviour as understood by the committee through its research and the diverse range of responses which are required, the second conclusion reached was that Carlisle needed a specific, fit for purpose, strategy to effectively address this issue. Evidence from practitioners showed that they were presently operating without such. The committee felt strongly that their evidence demonstrated that such a strategy needs to cover the comprehensive variety of approaches it learned about in its evidence both verbal and written. There is also a compelling need for sound performance management. It therefore found that:-

A new action based strategy for tackling anti-social behaviour should be prepared for all agencies which utilises the full range of tools for prevention, support, intervention and enforcement activity and provides for timely, effective and ongoing feedback and support to victims.

The strategy should also put in place effective performance monitoring arrangements both in relation to overall impacts and to assess effectiveness of particular types of intervention and enforcement.

Given that this approach of a dedicated resource and a comprehensive strategy is accepted then Members believed that it was also essential to the delivery of an effective strategy that relevant key partners were clear about the priority given to this issue and therefore concluded that:-

The approach set out in the above findings should be a priority of the CDRP, and of the City Council under its Clean Green and Safe priority, and as a result also become a priority of the CDRP partners and be pursued by the City Council within its various partnerships.

As part of giving an appropriate priority to this issue, and to gaining public support, it was clear to Members from the evidence received that the public must be aware of the view that is taken in relation to the issue:-

The clear message must be that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated, and high profile publicity to this effect would be an essential part of adopting this approach, with similar high profile publicity to actions taken under the strategy.

During its work in monitoring performance in relation to Crime and Disorder the committee had reached the conclusion that, whilst considerable efforts had been made by the City Council, the issue was not satisfactorily mainstreamed as was required by legislation. They therefore recommend:-

The City Council should mainstream tackling anti-social behaviour as a key contribution to crime and disorder reduction.

Media support for the strategy and appropriate publicity were identified in evidence as important factors in achieving success. Equally the addressing of anti-social behaviour through education was seen to be vital. Despite evidence of good work the committee felt that not enough was being done and also that greater co-ordination would have significant benefit. They therefore believe that:-

A multi-agency communications strategy to complement the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy should be prepared and must include educational activity in schools.

The committee received direct evidence on the work of the CDRP and of the Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator but they also relied on their prior knowledge through their monitoring role to reinforce their strong view that:-

There needs to be a single senior officer responsible for line management of all staff working for the CDRP.

The Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator has too wide a remit and needs to have a clear focus on delivery of the strategy once prepared and not also be involved with other CDRP groups.

Members were impressed by the dedication of the practitioner witnesses they heard in evidence and none more so than City Council staff, as a result of their evidence and of the information received during its work outwith this review the committee were of the clear view that:-

Area teams will be crucial to the effectiveness of the City Council response and should aim to tackle aspects of anti-social behaviour like littering and graffiti immediately they occur.

The City Council must give high priority and adequate resources to developing its response to the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act reflecting the priorities identified at the recent O&S Workshop.

The findings of the Evening and Nighttime Economy Task Group are reinforced by this review and must be taken forward.

Evidence shows that much anti-social behaviour involves young people as either victims or perpetrators and the findings above should result in much more

effective action in relation to it. However, Members were absolutely clear that without suitable and accessible services and facilities for young people any strategy on anti-social behaviour would be only partly effective hence the need: -

To complement the strategy outlined above there should be a multi-agency Young People's Strategy providing for accessible services and facilities for Carlisle's young people. The City Council should take a lead in developing such a strategy (involving the Community O&S committee in such development) over a timescale, which would see the strategy in place during the 2006/07 civic year.

The committee feel that, whilst Scrutiny Reviews can produce good evidence-based outcomes, there is a risk that recommendations, even when accepted, can fail to be effectively delivered. They therefore conclude that: -

These findings if accepted should be action planned and that plan driven and monitored by both Carlisle City Council and CDRP.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be a single multi-agency point for reporting all anti-social behaviour, modelled on the Home Office 'It's Your Call' campaign.
2. There should either be:-
 - a multi-agency team meeting frequently to receive all reports of and task and co-ordinate action in relation to instances of anti-social behaviour.
 - or preferably
 - a dedicated co-located multi-agency team tackling anti-social behaviour.If the first option is pursued then it should be seen as a stepping stone to the second over a defined period not exceeding a further financial year.
3. It is essential that the team established under 2 above has representation, at an appropriate level of seniority, from all relevant agencies coupled with commitment to delivery on the actions flowing from it.
4. Advice and support for the effective establishment of the above team should be sought from the Home Office Anti-social Behaviour Unit.
5. A new action based strategy for tackling anti-social behaviour should be prepared for all agencies which utilises the full range of tools for prevention, support, intervention and enforcement activity and provides for timely, effective and ongoing feedback and support to victims.

6. The strategy should also put in place effective performance monitoring arrangements both in relation to overall impacts and to assess effectiveness of particular types of intervention and enforcement.
7. The approach set out in 1 to 6 above should be a priority of the CDRP, and of the City Council under its Clean Green and Safe priority, and as a result also become a priority of the CDRP partners and be pursued by the City Council within its various partnerships.
8. The clear message must be that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated, and high profile publicity to this effect would be an essential part of adopting this approach, with similar high profile publicity to actions taken under the strategy.
9. The City Council should mainstream tackling anti-social behaviour as a key contribution to crime and disorder reduction.
10. A multi-agency communications strategy to complement the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy should be prepared and must include educational activity in schools.
11. There needs to be a single senior officer responsible for line management of all staff working for the CDRP.
12. The Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator has too wide a remit and needs to have a clear focus on delivery of the strategy once prepared and not also be involved with other CDRP groups.
13. Area teams will be crucial to the effectiveness of the City Council response and should aim to tackle aspects of anti-social behaviour like littering and graffiti immediately they occur.
14. The City Council must give high priority and adequate resources to developing its response to the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act reflecting the priorities identified at the recent O&S Workshop.
15. The findings of the Evening and Nighttime Economy Task Group are reinforced by this review and must be taken forward.
16. To complement the strategy outlined above there should be a multi-agency Young People's Strategy providing for accessible services and facilities for Carlisle's young people. The City Council should take a lead in developing such a strategy (involving the Community O&S committee in such development) over a timescale, which would see the strategy in place during the 2006/07 civic year.

17. These findings if accepted should be action planned and that plan driven and monitored by both Carlisle City Council and CDRP.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The committee would like to express its gratitude to all those who gave evidence and otherwise supported their work in producing this report.

The committee itself also acknowledges that its existing knowledge and experience, particularly its ongoing involvement in monitoring of Crime and Disorder Performance and the Carlisle and Eden CDRP provided an invaluable background to this review and thanks those who support it in that role also.

APPENDIX

Minute Excerpts re Anti-Social Behaviour Review/Inquiry

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 18 November 2004

COS.176/04 SUBJECT REVIEW / INQUIRY – ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS

With reference to Minute COS.146/04, the Overview & Scrutiny Manager presented Report OS.10/04 outlining the draft Terms of Reference for the Subject Review / Inquiry into anti social behaviour and Anti Social Behaviour Orders.

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Leadership Group had been informed of the Committee's intention and were supportive of the proposed review. The proposed Terms of Reference were:

- (e) to understand the nature, extent and distribution of anti social behaviour in Carlisle, including current trends;
- (f) to review current policies and processes in relation to anti social behaviour and Anti Social Behaviour Orders in Carlisle;
- (g) to review regional and national best practice and innovation in relation to anti social behaviour and Anti Social Behaviour Orders;
- (h) to make recommendations as to future policies and processes.

The proposed process for the review would include the production of an initial list of witnesses in consultation with the Chairman and an initial look at background papers and research information.

The proposed timetable for the review would be that the Committee receive background papers and research information at the meeting on 6th January 2005 and there then be two special meetings during January, February or March 2005 to take evidence from witnesses. The Committee on 24th March 2005 would then consider the draft report. This timetable is provisional, as the rate of progress would depend on the issues arising from the evidence received and the availability of witnesses.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Terms of Reference for the anti social behaviour and Anti Social Behaviour Orders Subject Review / Inquiry as outlined above be approved.

(2) That if any Members have suggestions of potential witnesses, they should advise the Overview and Scrutiny Manager of these as soon as possible.

(3) That a special meeting of the Committee be arranged for Wednesday 26th January 2005 at 10:00 am to take evidence from witnesses.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 6 January 2005

COS.006/05 SUBJECT REVIEW/INQUIRY INTO ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS

The Overview & Scrutiny Manager referred to the following reports which had been submitted to all Members of the Committee and which would be the background papers which would aid Members during the progress of this Review / Inquiry:

- (l) Home Office Crime Reduction Tool Kit extracts
- (m) Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Anti Social Behaviour – Policy and Procedure – Guidance for Local Housing Authorities and Housing Action Trusts
- (n) Housing Corporation – Anti Social Behaviour – Policy and Procedure – Guidance for Housing Associations
- (o) Extracts from the BBC's website
- (p) Local Government Association – Guidance for Councillors on Tackling Anti Social Behaviour locally

He asked Members to ensure that they bring these papers to all Committee meetings when this subject Review / Inquiry was being considered. He then explained that this meeting would focus on the following documents from the Carlisle & Eden Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership:

- (i) Audit of Anti Social Behaviour
- (ii) Initial Draft Strategy
- (iii) Focus Group notes

Mr S O'Keefe, Community Safety Development Officer

Mr O'Keefe – The Carlisle & Eden Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership appointed Ms Jan Gordon as Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator. As part of her work, an Audit of Anti-Social behaviour and an initial Draft Anti-Social Behaviour

Strategy has been prepared to take us forward 3 years from 2005 to 2008. This Strategy will be added into the Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy as a whole.

Audit of Anti Social Behaviour

On page 5 of the Audit there is a local definition of anti-social behaviour (ASB) which includes some criminal offences and also some which are not criminal. One concern I have is that in treating some things as anti-social behaviour, we stop being able to report them as crimes. There are also issues around tolerance and intolerance; for example, playing football on the street is not anti social behaviour in itself.

Question – If there is a group of children gathered on the street, is this anti-social behaviour or not?

Mr O’Keefe – It is in the eye of the beholder if they believe it is intimidation or harassment. Children often gather in groups as they feel safer in a group than as a vulnerable individual. A Police resource may not be sent for a group of children and work needs to be done on tolerance and intolerance so that people can realise that groups such as this are not necessarily a threat.

Page 20 of the Audit sets out a Partnership response to the problem. Table 12 sets out the targets and evaluates performance against these targets. The target for anti-social behaviour was a reduction of 10% in incidents over three years. So far we have achieved a reduction of 3.19% from 2001/02 to 2003/04. At local levels we can all give examples of where we think anti-social behaviour has increased, but overall it has decreased.

The target for “increasing the number of case conferences by 100% by March 2005 relates to ASBO’s and has been achieved.

From page 20 of the Audit onwards, details are provided of the various projects and interventions which have been put in place. I will now highlight a few of these:

Community Intelligence Reports (3.2.3) – the table is generated by speed reading through all the sets of minutes and noting the emerging issues.

Gradual Intervention Programme (GRIP) (3.2.5) – This is a system where there is a gradual increase in intervention. If young people are spoken to by a Police officer regarding a form of ASB the officer completes a short form which is sent to the Community Safety Unit. If the incident warrants a letter sending then a formatted letter is sent to the individual's parent/guardian. There are 3 letters – letter 1, if it is the first letter to be sent re that individual. Letter 1a if they have previously been sent a letter and letter 2 if it is the third incident and they have been sent 2 letters. The letter explains that their son/daughter has been spoken to by a Police officer and the reasons why, with an explanation that the process is about trying to reduce ASB. Those who receive final letters are offered a referral to Connexions.

Question – Table 13 is an evaluation of GRIP – could you explain how you got these figures?

Mr O'Keefe - I took a cohort group of 806 people out of the entire spreadsheet and tracked each of them, checking if they got letter 1, did they then go on to get letter 1a and did they then go on to get letter 2. Most people did not go beyond letter 1.

This is one of the most successful projects I have seen the Partnership run. But, people who receive letter 2 are our most problematic and after that they are only offered a voluntary intervention which they and their parent/guardian must agree to enter into voluntarily. Apart from this there are no interventions after letter 2.

Some children do realise at a young age that they could just give false details to a Police officer. But, we have had some parents thank us for this.

Question – One of your initiatives is the Anti-social behaviour roadshow, have you evaluated the success of this initiative?

Mr O'Keefe – Not yet, but it will be done now as part of the evaluation of the whole Strategy. If it is proven to be successful, we will look to repeating it.

Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – Peer Education (3.2.4)– This involved a group at Trinity in which they created a short documentary film interviewing members of the public, acting out anti-social behaviour scenes and giving out facts and figures regarding crime. The project was an excellent medium to raise the profile of the work of the CDRP as well as presenting a versatile vehicle to consult with young people.

Graffiti Removal Project (3.2.6) - sets out the process for the Graffiti removal. Over several months there were 70 referrals, a fraction of which were actually treated as crimes. In my view they should be automatically crimed, otherwise the problem is not getting the level of attention it deserves. It is a process we want to improve.

We want to achieve mainstream graffiti removal, but under the current process it is removed by a probation team who are only put out at the weekends. This means that there is not an immediate response.

Question – Why is it this level of response, is it a lack of resources or infrastructure at the Probation service? There should be an officer who manages that project as a community punishment. I am on the Probation Board and I think that this is a serious issue if we have requirement to do more community punishments. In order to do this we must have the infrastructure in place to have these community punishments.

Mr O'Keefe – The Community Safety Task Group have it as a key priority.

Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy

Mr O'Keefe – The Audit work was undertaken in order to prepare a Draft Strategy. The Strategy sets out a local definition of Anti-Social Behaviour, identifies the key issues from the Anti-Social Behaviour Audit and allocates these issues to responsible Task Groups.

Question – Is there any priority order given to the allocation of the issues to the Task Groups?

Mr O'Keefe – The priorities come with the money allocated. The following money has been allocated:

Rowdy/Nuisance Behaviour - £6,000

Teenagers hanging around the streets - £1,800

Lack of witness support/victim support - £24,000

Lack of awareness of anti-social behaviour - £1,400

Dog fouling - £5,000

Question – Is there more money to allocate?

Mr O'Keefe – There will be more money this year. £25,000 allocated to Carlisle and £25,000 to Eden for anti-social behaviour. I would welcome any other priorities from this Committee.

A Member commented that there are 13 issues in the Audit and although they are all important, if they are to be progressed, the key issues must be identified. 13 is a scatter gun approach. Under the phrase “teenagers hanging around the streets”, youth disorder may be a better description. It is difficult to get a handle on youth disorder. The Youth Bus tells us that we can do so much more that would make a difference.

A lot is related directly to youth disorder, the Member would like to see this as a priority.

Another Member commented that he hoped this Inquiry would impinge on the work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders – Focus Group Summary Reports

The Focus Groups were made up of a cross section of people who all had a story to tell. The strongest thing coming out was about parenting issues.

Question – If we asked local Police officers, they would be able to earmark or identify the troublemakers amongst young people and children. Why are they not named and shamed when they are taken to court? 95% of kids are great, but the others are not, but they can't be named.

Mr O'Keefe – It is an issue of age and the law says that young people should not be named. You should see the young person first not the offender because it is something they can grow out of. It is not difficult to identify the key people, but effectiveness can get lost as addressing the behaviour requires voluntary efforts from the parent and child.

Question – With the Freedom of Information Act. How does this tie in with names of young people being kept out of the public eye?

Mr O'Keefe – If someone writes to the Police asking what happened to a certain young person who committed a crime, I am not sure what their policy is?

What do you hope to achieve by naming and shaming? How do we stop them committing again? Shaming may not work for some individuals as effectively as it would for say you or me. There are people whose names are often in the papers connected with crime, and naming them does not necessarily change their activities. Often it is other factors which will change behaviour e.g. growing older.

Question – Some people will think, "I have an ASBO, so what"? The papers refer to ASBO's which were rejected – on what reasons were they rejected or removed?

Mr O'Keefe – I would have to check this. I think it is in the Focus Group notes, but it could just be someone saying this. To get an ASBO we have to show that we have used other methods e.g. case conferences. ASBO's become a problem to us because people breach them.

Question – A Home Office report on Cumbria Constabulary showed it as weak on reporting crime. It is worrying that we are at the bottom. How does this affect your work?

Mr O'Keefe – The Audit Commission says that burglary and vehicle crime only are reported correctly but it says that Cumbria is under recording.

It concerns me how I can set targets if the Audit Commission says there is not proper recording. Pressure must be applied to Cumbria Constabulary about this.

Question – What information do you get on truancy levels? Could these have a relevance to youth crime?

Mr O'Keefe – I see this type of information when it goes to the young persons drug and alcohol team, but we don't get truancy by Wards.

The Chairman then thanked Mr O'Keefe for attending the meeting and stated that the Committee would pick up on various issues as the Inquiry progresses.

The Inquiry would continue at a Special meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 January 2005 at 2.00pm.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1 September 2005

COS.122/05 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS SUBJECT REVIEW/ INQUIRY

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager reminded Members that the initial evidence session for this Subject Review/Inquiry had taken place on 6 January 2005 (COS.006/05). He had circulated the following documents to Members and asked them to retain them throughout the Review:

- (a) Local Government Chronicle Article on Barnsley's approach
- (b) Details of the Government's TOGETHER campaign
- (c) Local Government Association Document – Guidance for Councillors on Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

The Committee then took evidence from the following people:

Alex Rhind, Assistant Director, Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, Home Office

Ms Rhind – “I have been with Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in the Home Office for two years. Prior to that I spent twelve years in Local Government, including work as a Youth Offending Team Manager in the North East. I have also previous experience as a Crime Reduction Manager in a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, which involved work with substance misuse, drug advisory teams and domestic services. I managed and developed an Anti-Social Behaviour Unit.

I have been at the coalface in tackling anti-social behaviour and over the twelve years saw phenomenal changes. There are now a range of tools and powers to enable Council's to do something.

In my role at the Home Office, I support local areas and help to develop best practice for tackling anti-social behaviour. There are a number of Action Areas and twelve trailblazer Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) across the country. I have supported them in developing a range of services. Of the 50 Action Areas, I provide support to half of these. This involves visiting the areas, sitting in on CDRP meetings, trouble-shooting and being a critical friend to help unpick what they do and develop a better service, including better arrangements to allow people to report anti-social behaviour.

I have been developing and challenging these Areas and helping them to cut through the red tape and just get out there and do it. Glossy strategies don't change things, it is action by front line officers that helps to reduce anti-social behaviour".

Question - There have been a number of changes in powers recently, what things are coming forward as best practice and what things are working most effectively?

The Police will often say – it is not my problem, go to the Council – and then the Council will say the same.

A good starting point is how to report anti-social behaviour. We have a telephone advice line, a campaign called “It's Your Call, that makes a difference”. Twenty-five areas are running the campaign and another twenty-five launch on Monday with posters, adverts on buses, hoardings and a leaflet drop throughout the area. “Its Your Call makes a difference”, encourages the public to report anti-social behaviour Ms Rhind - "One thing to look at is the right balance between support and enforcement. Some people won't change their behaviour and there has to be enforcement. But there are a range of powers in place covering a range of activities including prostitution, begging, drinking, nuisance neighbours and also environmental things such as graffiti and vandalism.

There are a range of powers and a raft of agencies who can act. Sometimes they can use Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's) or sometimes there is earlier intervention through Acceptable Behaviour Contracts or Agreements. The Police have powers to close drug houses and there have been instances recently of crack houses being closed in West Cumbria at Workington and Whitehaven. Housing providers have a vast range of powers which can be used to deal with nuisance neighbours, these include injunctive powers.

It's all about understanding which agency can do what. The key is to get in early, if the problem festers for years it is more difficult to resolve. The key questions would be – how do residents of Carlisle report anti-social behaviour? Do they know where to go? Would they go to the Police, to the Council or to a landlord? Often people don't end up reporting it as they don't know where to go or what to do. If it is a neighbour problem, and to hold agencies to account including the Police, Councils and Housing Associations.

In addition to legislation, further areas of support are being put in place, for example, developing parenting skills - nuisance neighbour problems often arise when there are parenting issues. If you can help parents to set boundaries and then help children to stick to behaviour contracts, the situation should improve.

It's about parenting, education and providing support for families. I would state that reporting of anti-social behaviour is the key starting point".

Question - Agencies can often respond by saying – it is not my problem – what mechanisms prevent this culture?

Ms Rhind -This is the second key point that I would raise. Once you have made it clear how to report anti-social behaviour this is the next point to address. *If* someone rings in with a problem, who deals with it, if it is abandoned cars it would be the Council, drug dealing - the Police, tenants – perhaps the Housing Associations or the Council if they are landlord.

How do you task and co-ordinate action following reports of anti-social behaviour? A lot of areas have multi-agency tasking and co-ordinating groups, for example, Middlesbrough have a group which meets every Thursday at 2.00 pm. If an Environmental Services Unit are tasked with dealing with an abandoned car problem then they need to get on and deal with it. There also needs to be a mechanism in place to track back and ensure that each issue has been resolved.

Do you have a prolific and priority offenders group in Carlisle? West Cumbria are looking at using this group to include anti-social behaviour. Other areas have ASB group meetings on a weekly basis and they feed in people on Acceptable Behaviour Contracts or just identify names which are coming up a lot. These approaches help to feed in to a multi-agency process.

Question - Do you have an example of one authority where it is working well and what should we look for in the perfect set up?

Ms Rhind - It's all about the process you adopt. There should be:

1. A mechanism to report
2. A mechanism of tasking and co-ordinating
3. How do you feed back on the action taken? If you don't tell the complainant about what you've done then they think that you haven't done anything.

The process should be that the public report the problem, the agencies act through enforcement or support and you then tell the public what you've done.

Tackling anti-social behaviour is not easy, but if officers are tenacious and don't give up and just get on with these three crucial points, as well as providing support to the victims and the witnesses of anti-social behaviour, then they are moving in the right direction.

Question - What about the witnesses of anti-social behaviour? It often takes place in local neighbourhoods and witnesses are fearful or worried about victimisation or retaliation?

Ms Rhind - The heart of the TOGETHER campaign is about supporting the victims of anti-social behaviour. Some are not prepared to give evidence and we don't always expect people to stand up and give evidence. It is about starting to mobilise non-tolerance of anti-social behaviour. It is about changing the culture so that people feel confident to report anonymously if they want to. Other people are willing to stand up and be counted and how they do so is crucial.

Two of our areas have dedicated Victim Support Workers (VSW). In these areas, the Enforcement Officers deal with the bad guy while the Victim Support Worker deals with the victim. The VSWs have a system where they will phone the victim to check on them once in a while and the victim also has a panic button and a named contact.

The worst thing to say to a victim in the first sentence is "are you willing to go to Court?" We have changed the legislation so that we don't need to have eyewitnesses. We can now take hearsay evidence on an anonymous basis and it can be given by Officers at Court. Officers can give evidence on behalf of a witness.

Question - In extreme cases, are the Court's backing the Police enough?

Ms Rhind - There has been a change in the last two years and there is now a good partnership between the Department of Constitutional Affairs, Expert Prosecutors, Crown Prosecution Service and the Anti-Social Behaviour lead in each Court area. There have been instances where decisions have been challenged if we didn't think they were right. There is an example in West Cumbria where someone was subject to an ASBO and breached it by crossing the threshold of a shop, that person is now serving five months in custody. We have made great roads into ensuring that the Criminal Justice system deals with anti-social behaviour.

*Question - Who is the lead agency in all this? Is it the Council or the Police?
Also, where does the finance come from, for example, for the "It's your Call"
campaign?*

Ms Rhind - Everyone should really try to take the lead. In reality, in some areas the Council takes the lead in others it is the Police, or a partnership of the Council and the Police. It really depends on the relationships in the CDRP. To be a success, tackling anti-social behaviour must be a priority in the current CDRP Strategy - the ultimate accountability does lie with the CDRP. Each Council Department also has responsibility to recognise its own role in relation to anti-social behaviour. It is a good idea to have Anti-Social Behaviour Champions ie a Senior named Officer in each Department of the Council.

Leadership is critical. At Political and Officer level you need to be giving the message that you will tackle and will not tolerate Anti-Social Behaviour. Front Line Officers need to know that they are fully supported at Senior Political and Officer levels. They need to have the commitment of the Leadership to the work they are doing. The area needs to develop a reputation for tackling not tolerating Anti-Social Behaviour.

In terms of money, we gave £25,000 to each CDRP to ensure that ASB Co-ordinators are put in place. We recently wrote to the Chairmen of CDRPs stating that we would continue the funding until 2008. Action areas have had small amounts of funding for example about £20,000 to support some technology in relation to It's your Call. Some areas managed to do leaflet drops, fridge magnets, mouse mats, adverts etc all promoting the campaign for approximately £10,000. It is relatively low cost. Lots of places use our Customer Contact Centre as the main contact and it can be done without being a costly exercise.

Question - How do you balance prevention and enforcement?

Ms Rhind - The Home Affairs Select Committee looked at the work and thought that the balance was right between prevention, intervention and enforcement. We have had feedback of good experiences. One example is a man who would say that an ASBO saved his life. He had previously refused treatment for alcoholism and through his behaviour received an ASBO. He breached the ASBO and ended up in Prison where he did a detox programme, he would testify that it saved his life. Some have to go through this process to make the change.

For others, for example, families with young children on the cusp of behaving badly with non-attendance at school and being out on the streets at night, then parent intervention and support can help. We had an experience of parenting support for a chaotic family. Parenting support was provided at a total cost of about £5,000 and it turned the whole families lives around. It seemed better to spend that amount on support and turning their lives around when compared to the amount that would have to have been spent on Courts and Custody.

Enforcement is key for some people whilst for others it is support that works.

Question - Are Magistrates given directives regarding Custodial Sentences or are they seen as a last resort?

Ms Rhind - Guidance was issued and it is clear that the first option of an ASBO breach is a Custodial Sentence. There are sentencing guidelines given to do with the extent of behaviour and any aggravating circumstances.

Question - How do you measure the relative effectiveness of your work in combating anti-social behaviour in different areas throughout the Country?

Ms Rhind - A one year on report was produced in October 2004 with the work broken down by Government Office Regions. It gave details of the number of ASBOs, Crack House closures, Dispersal Orders etc. The figures were very different across the Country and there has not really been an analysis across different areas of the Country.

Question - What are the areas of weakness or the things preventing positive steps to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour?

Ms Rhind - The negative things would be putting in to reverse everything that I have talked about, that is:

- Don't know where to report Anti-Social Behaviour.
- No multi-agency approach.
- A focus on strategies to get "ticks in boxes", but a lack of focus on action on the ground, people aren't just getting out there and doing it. A Practitioner in Manchester would say that the public thinks Police

and Local Authorities have a default button which is just to have a meeting about something.

- Not communicating what is happening.
- No Leadership at the top.

From my level, it is more than just an exhortation to change. We need to persuade people that they need to change the way services are delivered. We all recognise that we all do have to deal with a certain level of bureaucracy, but we need to keep the balance right. An effective ASB Strategy should state what are the problems, what will we do, who will do it, what will the outcomes be and how they will be measured.

Communication has to be from the public's perspective. What difference did the action that you took make to the public? An example is one Crack House closure that took place. There were 18 people in the house, some of whom ended up in treatment, but for the lady next door it meant that she was able to use her front door for the first time in months or even years. She had never wanted to use the front door as she would be seen leaving the house and leaving it vulnerable. The neighbour on the other side let her children out to play in the front garden for the first time in years. The difference was that families could get on with their lives.

The Key final part of the process is how you communicate the actions that you have taken to the Public.

Question - What are your views about naming and shaming perpetrators? If people are not aware that someone has received an ASBO and is not allowed to go in certain places, then how can they do anything about it. What are your views on leaflets naming and shaming perpetrators being pushed through the letterboxes in the vicinity as suggested in "It's your Call"?

Ms Rhind –I agree, that would be our best advice. A recent Court of Appeal ruling called it "informing the community". If people aren't told that someone has an ASBO and the conditions and terms on that ASBO, then how can they possibly report a breach of it? The local community needs to know that something has happened about the person who is tormenting their lives.

Question - Anti-Social Behaviour covers a vast range of actions by people and there are tools such as Warnings, Contracts and ASBOs. What do you find the most effective and are ASBO's reserved for the worst Offenders?

Ms Rhind - It really is horses for courses. We look at each case and it's merits. You need to look at the person, the circumstances, the behaviour and how it's impacting on the public. It's really about judgement calls from the practitioners on the best course of action.

Registered Social Landlords find that eviction of tenants just moves the problem on to somewhere else. However, an Injunction deals with the here and now, drug dealers should be evicted from houses but there are powers attached to Injunctions, Evictions or ASBO's. The judgement of multi-agency officers is best in terms of the course of action.

Question - I notice from the article in TOGETHER that none of the Council's mentioned are in Cumbria. Are we still deficient in that area or have a number of Cumbrian Authorities now joined the TOGETHER Academy?

Ms Rhind - The Academy is more about training events and a lot of Cumbrian Officers have attended these. We will offer support to anyone who asks for it and we are currently providing support to West Cumbria. I spoke at a Conference in Carlisle earlier in the year and we are always prepared to offer support. We will always give support to anyone wanting to be part of TOGETHER.

Question - Schools do Citizenship Programmes but there seems to be an insufficient amount of Information on the dangers and consequences of anti-social behaviour and the potential to get an ASBO?

Ms Rhind - Education is critical in setting behaviour standards. Children can end up excluded from school and then they end up wandering the streets during the day and there is potential for Anti-Social Behaviour. We constantly try to get onto the Curriculum for Schools via the PHSE Programme, but we are competing with so many other people and Agencies on Topics such as Drugs, Sex Education etc. We find it difficult to get a slot, still we need to get tackling Anti-Social Behaviour on to the agenda for Government and Local Authorities. It is not just the responsibility of one single Whitehall department, it runs right across DFES, DSS etc everyone has to do their bit.

Question - In relation to the TOGETHER Campaign, what are your next steps based on what you have learnt from the last two years?

Ms Rhind - The "Respect" Campaign has had media coverage recently and you will hear more about this in the near future.

Question - Carlisle has approximately 100,000 people, what are examples of Best Practice in areas of that size? We hear a lot about big City areas who have an Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, but we perhaps don't have that capacity. What things are common to Council areas similar to us?

Ms Rhind -The District of Easington in Country Durham is a small area with a small ASB Unit. In West Cumbria, the Police have a small ASB Unit with a Sergeant and two Constables, they are taking action and doing well in tackling Anti-Social Behaviour.

ASB Co-ordinators are in place and front-line officers are dealing with anti-social behaviour on a daily basis. It is about making the best use of the resources. The resources should be used to cover every tenant type, it shouldn't just be up to social landlords and housing associations to address anti-social behaviour. A small multi-agency team may be what is needed to cope.

Question - Is it more difficult where a local authority is not the landlord?

Ms Rhind - There are tensions between Councils and arms length management organisations and sometimes this relationship has been difficult. In some areas there are Housing Association Enforcement Teams and then a separate Council team to deal with other tenants, we would prefer to see one team dealing with anti-social behaviour. One team does help with solving problems of passing the buck between agencies and saying that street belongs to them and this one's ours.

Question - We have all seen the situation where there is a problem family who has caused difficulties over the year. All the agencies seem to be working to try to sort the problem, but continually neighbours have to move. As a result of all the agency hours and investment put into the problem it has often produced nothing as a result and the problem still goes on. I really hope that this can be seen as a new start to tackle problems of this kind.

Ms Rhind - Before the TOGETHER campaign this was even more common and everybody knows who the families are in their areas or neighbourhoods.

The Chairman then thanked Ms Rhind for the valuable input and information. He stated that the Committee had a lot to think about and it had been very informative to hear about national agendas in relation to anti-social behaviour.

Mr Stephen Harrison, Tenancy Enforcement Officer, Carlisle Housing Association (CHA)

Mr Harrison - I am the Senior Tenancy Enforcement Officer with CHA and have a team of three, one of whom is Sergeant Huddart who will be speaking to you later and the other is a Tenancy Enforcement Officer with legal experience. We support the Area Housing Teams who deal with tenancy breaches, anti-social behaviour and neighbour disputes. They call on us for further specialised interventions. We do a range of activities including evidence gathering, witness support, court appearance and looking at possible interventions.

Question - Is this provided for CHA tenants only?

Mr Harrison - The law has changed and there is an anti-social behaviour injunction which can be against anyone who causes us a management issue or problem on our estate. Previously, for people who had bought the houses, we had to rely on the Right to Buy clauses and some of them just said that nuisance shouldn't be caused in a drying area for example. We have taken out injunctions against a home owner who was causing one of our tenants a problem, we have used this power.

Question - Do the Area Housing Teams identify the issues to refer to you, or can tenants refer directly to you?

Mr Harrison - I take calls from tenants and people with problems as well as from the Area Housing Teams. I have a big workload and try not to become bogged down with minor complaints. If I do take a call of a minor nature, I will pass it on to the Area Housing Officer dealing with that patch and if they need further support then we will provide that support. It tends to be that the lower level incidents go through the Housing Officer.

Question - Do you maintain good communications with the complainants throughout the process?

Mr Harrison - Yes, we now work to new policies and procedures from Riverside and we all work together to ensure continuity. It has worked differently in the

past when it was a computer based prompt that made Officers act, with calls and visits having to be made by a certain time. The prompts have improved over the last year.

Question - Do you collect data and report it to the CHA Board?

Mr Harrison - Yes.

Question - The key to success seems to be a multi-agency approach. Where do other agencies fit in with your work?

Mr Harrison - I work closely with the Police and Malcolm works at the desk opposite me in the office. Malcolm has access to the Police computer system, which is beneficial. It does help that we are working in an office together and ensures that we have a close partnership with the Police. We do also work with other members of the Police team. We now have a stronger link with Social Services and attend monthly Social Services team meetings. We are working well with a number of agencies, including the City Council, particularly in relation to gardens, parks and open spaces. Anti-social behaviour is not a problem which can be tackled alone and it also involves working with the community.

Question - How do you work with the community?

Mr Harrison - I speak to tenants' groups about any changes in the law and about the tool kit of measures we have to tackle problems. I illustrate cases of how we have tackled problems in the past. We have also recently introduced open days when the CHA offices have been open on a Saturday and the public and tenants are welcome to visit the offices. We do as much as we can to involve the community.

Question - Is there any way to improve the current set up?

Mr Harrison - There is always room for improvement and it would be good if the links between the City Council and CHA improved a lot more. We tackle most of the problems on our estates but there is still a city-wide responsibility and I would really like to see a closer link between the Council and ourselves.

I currently have a huge workload, which prevents me from doing some of things I want to. I wanted to go round the schools to make them aware of the effects of anti-social behaviour and how it can impact on their parents and their tenancies, but my workload currently prevents me from doing this.

Question - You mentioned your workload, how many open cases do you currently have?

Mr Harrison - When I first started the job, ten cases would be a lot but three to four years on I have got thirty plus of the serious cases to deal with, with the more minor ones being dealt with by the Estate Housing Officers. We now have a team working together. However, I would like to see Carlisle having a dedicated ASB team made up of key skilled people from the Police, Legal, Social Services, Housing and the City Council. This would be a forum to tackle the problem of anti-social behaviour across the city. It is a huge problem and it is a growing problem. We have more powers now than we had in the past, but we have found that there are more problems to tackle and the public have higher expectations of us in terms of tackling these behaviours.

Question - Do Carlisle Housing Association have any behaviour agreements or contracts?

Mr Harrison - We used to get a lot of ASBO's but the Police find it easier to get ASBO's and we are moving more towards injunctions, but agreements are used too, they are cheap in terms of legal services.

We did have some problems in Longtown and worked with the Police and parents and we got some of them and their children to sign up to the contracts. For those who refused to sign up we needed to look at further intervention. For some people contracts work, but there are others who we see where we know it won't work and yet others who refuse to sign, so you know that you've got a problem from that point.

Question - Were the open days on Saturday mornings a success?

Mr Harrison - There was a cross section of tenancies all invited. On the first open day there was a reasonable attendance but less on the second. We try to learn from the experience and we will choose different subjects next time. We had never done anything like this before, it was a new thing, and we will learn and do it differently next time.

Question - You mentioned that you address tenancy meetings and explain how you can tackle various problems. However, I hear of teenage boys playing football against the walls of some of your houses and when tenants complain the answer comes back from CHA that they can do nothing. Also, regarding your visits to schools, perhaps you could delegate this to other CHA Officers?

Mr Harrison - Not all of the Housing Officers would have the confidence to go and speak in public at schools. Also, as part of my job I follow closely any legislative changes and am up to date with that, but they may not follow these legislative changes so closely. I am involving staff more and trying to get them to spread the message, it is something that could be looked at.

I don't know anything about the specific incident you are talking about, but we do often have disappointed people who feel we aren't doing anything about their specific cases. Anti-social behaviour is a huge problem and we can't cover everything. I do hope that problems are reported and I want people to report them. This is one of many similar problems across the city. Cases generally don't come to my notice until a more serious intervention is required. In serious cases, we do use a surveillance team from an outside agency. We have a surveillance operation planned for next week. They are all ex-Special Services Officers and very experienced. We find that this is not cheap but it is the best way forward in certain instances. In cases where members of the community are frightened to come forward for fear of reprisals, we can use videos and diarised information obtained by surveillance.

Question - What are your views about informing people in surrounding areas of anyone who is the subject of an ASBO or has a Behaviour Agreement or Contract? Would CHA be prepared to do a leaflet drop informing people about someone who has received an ASBO?

Mr Harrison - I think they would be prepared to, but we have not done it yet. We would like to leaflet drop an entire estate. Recently we have shied away from ASBO's because we have found injunctions quicker and more efficient. The Police generally take the lead on ASBO's but a joint CHA and Police leaflet drop could be considered.

When we have had success in Court, we try to get as much positive TV or Press coverage as we can to show that we mean business.

Question - Press coverage is only for one night or only in one paper and it may just be a name to people, it might not mean anything. A leaflet drop of the type suggested by the TOGETHER academy would have a photo of the person and the conditions of their ASBO and would be placed through letterboxes. Then people can inform the Police if there has been an ASBO breach.

Mr Harrison - I agree.

Question - Two years down the road, what would you say have been the overall successes and failures and what are your future hopes?

Mr Harrison - In the area of anti-social behaviour there have been successes and ground breaking interventions. There have also been points of law forged to use in the future. There is a lot to do but we want to work in partnership with other agencies and expand the work to include private rented accommodation. If all the people tackling anti-social behaviour got together, including any ASB issues in the City Centre and environmental issues, such as vandalism and graffiti, we could widen our approach and tackle the problem more effectively.

Question - Are you getting the backing that you deserve from the Police?

Mr Harrison - The backing from the Police is great and we also support them. I would like to see more of a City wide approach including closer links with the City Council and other Agencies.

Question - Are your links mainly bi-lateral with the Police, or are there other instances where you have multi-agency approach.

Mr Harrison - We have case conferences which bring multiple agencies in and they are quite common. They involve Education, Social Services and Health Care Practitioners.

Question - Do you have a structure allowing you to do this?

Mr Harrison - Sometimes we take the lead or the Police or Jan Gordon the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator.

Question - With the multi-agency approach there could be problems as well, some Agencies may want to take more of the softly softly approach. This may happen if it is a problem with a large family and Social Services may want to take a softer approach because there are Children involved.

Mr Harrison - When you do have a case with a large family with small children the concerns of the family and the children are paramount. Agencies will try to ensure that the Tenancy is retained for the sake of the children and putting a family out on to the Street will always be the Court's last option and our last option. However, we have done it in the past and we will continue to do it if necessary.

Families can be given support but when we do get to Court we will refer back to the amount of chances one particular family has been given and the level of

support that they have been given over the years. In a case with a family where there were continual problems over the years and a number of agencies involved, in giving chances, then they may lose their Tenancy. Generally there is more a softly softly approach if there are young children involved as losing a home means that parents can lose their children and they have to go in to care.

A Member commented that very few things in life are straightforward.

I think I know the case you are talking about and I am sure that the community will return to normal soon.

Question - As the Tenancy Enforcement Officer what does CHA see as your role in prevention?

Mr Harrison - I find that with my current workload there is so much to do on enforcement that it takes up 90% of my time but I am conscious of the prevention element. There are Support Officers who work with people with social problems to help prevent problems from escalating into anti-social behaviour. We do well in trying to prevent this although there will always be some needing enforcement action. I would like to have more time to look at the prevention aspects.

Question - CHA as an Organisation may need to look at this being someone's particular responsibility.

Mr Harrison - We do have other departments including Regeneration which are working hard in this area. In fact one of the Estates in Carlisle has been put forward for an Award because of the amount of good work being done. There will always be the need for enforcement but it is about a balance between prevention and enforcement.

Question - Do you think there is more anti-social behaviour or has it just been reported more?

Mr Harrison - It is on the increase and this may be down to social problems or youth attitudes, but it is not a modern phenomenon. The media has a key role to play and they are very keen to highlight where ASBOs have not been working or where some offenders see it as giving themselves notoriety. I don't think they do enough to talk about the successes. If people were more aware of the successes of ASBOs and other interventions this would help.

Question - Has there been good publicity at a local level?

Mr Harrison - There are different perceptions and it is about getting everyone together to talk. An old woman might see boys with hoods and her perception may be that they are causing trouble, but that may not be the case. We do have to deal with some Anti-Social Old People too.

Question - Do you prefer Injunctions to ASBOs and what do you find are the practical differences.

Mr Harrison - In order for us to get an ASBO we would have to consult with the Local Authority, consult with the Head of Police, consult with the Police Team diarising and cataloguing case conferences and show that ABC intervention has been tried. This can be a long and protracted process, the Police have a short cut to ASBOs and generally that is the route that they will use.

Injunctions can be done without warning to the perpetrators and we can serve it on the person the same day. Once served, it is interim and they will have to go to Court and defend it, but we can go back to Court and get the Injunction in full. This process is quicker, smoother and cheaper. We have to pay for our legal services and we use two Legal Firms, one locally and one in Newcastle. Obtaining an ASBO has a large legal cost and Injunctions are quicker, cheaper and just as effective in some cases. If someone breaks an Injunction they can be sent to Prison.

Question - Does CHA have a document setting out the procedure on Anti-Social Behaviour?

Mr Harrison - Yes I am happy for you to have a look at that.

The Chairman then thanked Mr Harrison for his input to the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3.20 pm and reconvened at 3.25 pm.

Police Constable Malcolm Huddart, Cumbria Constabulary Anti-Social Behaviour Officer

PC Huddart - I currently have a joint role, I am the Police ASB Officer for the Northern Area and also a joint Tenancy Enforcement Assistant with CHA. I have done this role for one year and prior to that I was Community Officer for the City

Centre. My main areas of work are Anti-Social Behaviour, ASBOs, relevant interventions and multi Agency work.

Question - Is this a newly created role?

PC Huddart - I had two predecessors who did one year each. I think it originated with Carlisle Housing offering to part fund a Police Officer which would also give them access to Police Information.

Question - What are the main functions of the role one-year on?

PC Huddart - With the two separate roles initially I tried I to split my work but over the years as things have developed and the anti-social behaviour environment has developed most people who I was finding as cases in my Police role were also CHA cases. The Police and CHA are therefore working jointly on problems, it is not as simple as drawing a line down the middle of the two roles.

So far we have had quite productive links and outcomes. CHA can help to intervene with a problem and if it is a housing issue they can help to provide a solution the Police can help and CHA can help.

Question - Is the Police role more towards the top end of anti-social behaviour?

PC Huddart – No, I would see it as across the board. Anti-social behaviour is identified to me by Police or Housing Officers or else I get reports from an individual. It might be someone we have known or have been monitoring for a while. I get information on targets from various sources and I will start monitoring the number of complaints about them to a number of different Agencies. I could then call a Case Conference and often find out that the person is not just causing a problem to one agency but to many different agencies. Discussing a case in detail and actioning it straight away often means that intervention at this stage means we don't have to go any further. In other instances we need to monitor further and progress it to a Behaviour Order. ASBO's are seen as the ultimate sanction.

Question - Does this multi-agency approach tend to be on reactive by Case basis?

PC Huddart - Usually Case Conferences are tailored to individuals and for a teenager this would involve Social Services, Youth Offending Team, Education and Welfare. Information is the key, we need to know as much as possible in order to look at suitable outcomes.

Question - In relation to Community Police Officers, if all the information they received went from them to you I assume you would be swamped. What are the relationships between you and the Community Police Officers.

PC Huddart - The Community Police Officers will deal with a lot of low level anti-social behaviour, for example, football against the side of houses and the CPO should be able to solve this. If they have taken steps and are still continuing to experience the problems they feed the information to their Supervisors and then to me. I will look at the scale of the problem and if the person is a Tenant of CHA I will discuss it with Steve. I find this link valuable because if a Police Constable knocks at the door the tenant may not always answer. However, if the Landlord invites them to discuss the Tenancy they seem to turn up as it involves the roof over their heads. CHA can contribute to solving some of the low level behaviour as well as the higher level.

Question - If it does not involve CHA Property do you take it on?

PC Huddart – Yes, if we have a problem family in a private rented house we can look at this because of their impact on the Estate. If drugs are dealt or taken from a particular house, we can look at a Drug House Closure Order and we are doing that and have done it in the past with private houses. When it comes to individuals, we can look at Acceptable Behaviour Contracts or ASBOs. Just because they are a Private Tenant doesn't mean we don't act.

Question - How often do you liaise with Jan Gordon.

PC Huddart - Face to face contact has become more difficult since the floods but we do have regular contact. She is invited to the Case Conferences or quite often she can be the first contact who approaches us with a problem.

As we are located under different roofs it is more difficult, it would be better if we had more face to face contacts and even worked from the same location.

Question - Could you tell us a bit more about Injunctions, Interim Injunctions and ASBOs.

PC Huddart - Injunctions are something that CHA can acquire through the Civil Courts. An ASBO is a Civil Order that we can acquire through the Criminal Courts. An ASBO is not a conviction, it is a Court Order but to break the ASBO is a Criminal Offence. If someone never breaks an ASBO then it will never appear on their convictions record. It is really a Court Order stating that they

have behave in a manner which doesn't cause alarm, concern or distress to other people.

There are two ASBO routes:

- A full Application through the Civil route where we have to show that someone has been behaving in a certain manner and there is a lot of evidence gathering required;
- On Conviction route - If someone is at Court for a Criminal Offence at that time we can invite the Court to consider an ASBO.

An Interim ASBO is where we have an urgent need for an ASBO but if we waited for the full application process then this would take longer than we think is necessary. It is like an emergency award. I don't know of any Interim ASBOs yet, the on conviction route is used far more.

Question - Steven O'Keefe talked at the previous meeting about the number of ASBOs which are never finalised. There are ASBOs applied for but never gone through what is the failure rate.

PC Huddart - If we are applying through the on conviction route we obviously have to wait for someone to get a conviction. It may take time to get someone to prison for a trial, our application goes in as quickly as the conviction is awarded. I think we currently have about four or five applications on file awaiting a Court case and conviction.

Question - What percentage are juvenile ASBOs?

PC Huddart - I am not sure of the exact figure but the majority are for young people. Often young people are not controlled properly or have not learnt self control and it is commonly a young person's problem and I would say that it is not all restricted to young males. We do have some adult ASBOs, I would say perhaps ten to fifteen percent.

Question - How often do the Police use Dispersal Orders?

PC Huddart - In Carlisle I don't think we have used it. It's not that we're not considering them but the problems requiring Dispersal Orders are fewer in

Carlisle. They are really about groups of people frequenting a location and causing problems to a community. Ten to fifteen years ago perhaps we had more groups hanging about shops but the problem doesn't seem to be so prevalent now.

Question - Is this experience common in rural and urban areas?

PC Huddart - I have experience in Carlisle, Brampton and Penrith and haven't known of a Dispersal Order being used.

Question - Do you think that the Courts support the Police as well as they could?

PC Huddart - I can't criticise the Courts really. Having said that I don't succeed in applications every single time but sometimes a positive outcome comes out of it. If we say we're applying to Court someone's behaviour can go quiet. Last Christmas we applied and told someone that we had applied for an ASBO. For six months all he talked about was what would happen if he got an ASBO and during that time we never had any complaints about his behaviour. He was convicted and at that time the Court decided that an ASBO was not appropriate, as there had been no complaints over that time period. I agree that he had no problems during that six months and we have told him that we are continuing to monitor his behaviour.

Question - What are your views on informing people in an area, say through the use of a leaflet drop, about a perpetrator receiving an ASBO?

PC Huddart - I always keep any person or agency involved in a case fully informed. They need to be kept informed to know what has happened. People in the area also need to be aware and I have considered leaflet drops but have as yet I haven't gone for this route and have just used more general publicity.

Most ASBOs are for young people and it can be a blow to their ego because it becomes a problem, as they can't go everywhere they want to. I like to hold something in reserve and if the behaviour continued I could go to the immediate neighbourhood with a photo of the person.

The Member commented that she had meant the immediate vicinity.

PC Huddart - There have been situations when someone has been banned from a street of shops, so we do report this to the shopkeepers.

Question - Community Police Officers often have to deal with scramble bikes on paths and cycleways and I understand the Police prefer to confiscate but very often they just seem to be taken home and warned.

PC Huddart - We do have the power to seize uninsured motor vehicles. I would like to think that we do consider confiscating. However, having said that, it is difficult to catch them and you have to consider whether chasing them causes a greater problem and danger for the public. They are committing offences against the Highways Act.

Question - I agree it's difficult to catch them but I don't understand why you don't have a policy to confiscate?

PC Huddart - Operation Takeaway has been an Operation across the Force and it is aimed at confiscating uninsured vehicles. Some Police Constables may be more soft hearted about motorcycles but it is all a matter of balance.

Question - In my Wards there are often parents dropping off youths at the cycle tracks with these scramble bikes and they then go on to cause havoc on footpaths.

PC Huddart - I suggest that you let us know about these incidents. People often assume that the Police know about these but we haven't always received the information. We do have the capacity to use video evidence now.

Question - Can you use CCTV for that purpose?

PC Huddart - Yes, and we use it for evidence gathering for anti-social behaviour.

Question - What about using CCTV for parking and double yellow lines or zig zags.

PC Huddart - I'm not sure that it goes that far.

Question - In Wigton they had a curfew for young people, is this now illegal?

PC Huddart - There did appear to be a problem element, however they were in the small minority and it should be that we should be able to tackle that minority appropriately. It would be good to be able to name individuals or a handful of

them and look at the ringleaders. Often if we can manage to take the ringleaders out the rest usually disappear.

Question - Do you think that your job is harder than a Community Police Officer who knows the people on the Estate and has gained their trust?

PC Huddart – I have worked on both sides and a CPO is a difficult job in itself. My role gives the CPOs a tool to help solve the problems on their patch. In a way my role is community policing in a different way as I'm looking at monitoring situations and looking at the possible interventions available. I get to know problems on all the Estates and not just on a localised patch.

Question - There are some semi-detached houses in my village where there are problems with hedges not being cut. The person came to the Council and was told that the Council couldn't make them take it down.

PC Huddart - Hedges do call a lot of neighbour disputes.

Question - The person was told that they couldn't make the neighbour take the hedges down as the house had been bought.

PC Huddart - There might be something in the lease to prevent it, but as in other situations there has to be a balance.

Question - The person did go to the Council for them to take action but the Council gave her the money back as they couldn't enforce it.

Mr Harrison - Part 9 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act would come into force here but people are shying away from it until test cases come through Court. There have been a few cases in the press where Courts have found in favour of the complainant and the hedges have had to be chopped down, but most people are waiting for the outcome of test cases.

Question – generally, in relation to anti-social behaviour, what sort of improvements could be made at a local level?

PC Huddart - We need a proper team of practitioners, the partnership with Steve and I has just happened. Anti-social behaviour is a growth industry and there is a greater need for people to work together in a multi-agency approach. In other parts of the country there are ASB teams and the Police Northern area have looked at Officers being designated as problem solvers at a local level including anti-social behaviour.

We need to be systematic, sometimes we pick up matters more by accident than by design. If we had regular contact on a multi-agency basis, including the Courts and CPS, this would help. We also need feedback. Often we have to chase Court results on cases and it would be better just to be able to get feedback directly. There is no fully fledged system for getting feedback from the Courts.

There is a significant amount of work after we have secured an ASBO to see if it continues to be necessary. When an individual had an ASBO for years it may not be necessary any more and we really should go back to have it recinded.

Question - Should ASBOs be reserved as a sanction for the top end of anti social behaviour?

PC Huddart - It shouldn't be the first resort. A decision has to be made on whether to go down the case conferences route or go for an early ASBO. If ASBOs aren't necessary for a person they shouldn't be hanging about that person's neck for a long time. We are just asking them to behave in a way that is not causing alarm or distress to others and if they stop that behaviour then there is no need for them to continue to have an ASBO.

A Member commented that it looked like as if there should be a multi-agency approach with a lead Agency to bring everything together. It seemed to be mainly young people who were receiving ASBOs and as they became more mature the ASBOs may be removed. Part of the remit of an ASBO Team could be to look at removing some ASBOs.

The Chairman then thanked PC Huddart for his time and input.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 13 October 2005

COS.123/05 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS SUBJECT REVIEW/INQUIRY

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager reminded Members that the Review/Inquiry had commenced at the meeting on 6 January 2005 (COS.006/05) and an evidence session had taken place on 1 September 2005 (COS.122/05).

The Committee was due to be considering evidence from a number of witnesses. Mr Ian Johnston, Blyth Valley Housing had indicated that he would be unable to attend this meeting.

The Committee then took evidence from the following people:

Mr Amrik Panaser, Operations Manager, Carlisle & Eden, Youth Offending Team

Mr Kevin Royston, Development & Project Manager, Youth Offending Team.

Mr Panaser – It is my remit to implement National and Local Strategies set by the Youth Justice Board and the Government and apply them locally. I intend to show you how we implement these ideas locally.

Mr Royston – I am the Development and Project Manager for the County and am delivering Strategies with Partner Agencies. I hope to show you how we work together on ASBOs and other measures. There are a number of strategies which we have in place.

Recently I met with Representatives from the Crown Prosecution Service, Police, Voluntary Agencies and other Statutory Agencies who all have an interest, to discuss the way forward so that we are not working against each other when matters come to Court or when we are seeking ASBOs. There are a number of issues which we face working in this area, one of which is a conflict between our work and others. We are charged with reducing entrants to the Criminal Justice system between the ages of 10 and 18 years by 2% and it is looking like we will meet this target for this year. However, this might work against the “Brought to Justice” initiative of the Home Office. Youth Offending has a goal of reducing

entrants to Criminal Justice but “Brought to Justice” wants to see more people brought to justice. The two targets both come from the Government but could be seen to be working against each other.

We look at young people creating anti-social behaviour and try to prevent escalation of this. Some would argue that the Police are reducing the level where they may prosecute as they are working to “Brought to Justice” targets but there is a strong Criminal Justice Board in Cumbria and the various parties work well on it.

The Youth Justice Board secured funding for individual Support Orders to go along with ASBOs. They have allocated £2,000 for each Individual Support Order (ISO) in order to secure further services to work with young people. We will probably commission the voluntary sector to undertake this work.

The ASSET Assessment looks at every aspect of a young person's life and has a score chart against which aggravating or protective elements are marked. As an example, if someone is removed from school this may be an aggravating circumstance. In this case we may commission training services to provide an alternative to formal school education for that young person. There are thirteen aspects of a young person's life to be assessed.

We need to ensure that we target the right people who may go on to be the most prolific offenders. In our work we ask a lot of questions, we go to voluntary and statutory agencies and people in the community with questions about individuals and from there an action plan is drawn up.

When ASBOs are applied for we usually get invited to a meeting before the application is made. We have information on that young person and it may even be that their parents have been under the Youth Offending Team in the past. We try to co-operate and indeed have a duty to co-operate under the Crime and Disorder Act. We must share information where it will be used to prevent further offending. ASBOs are a good thing to prevent offending and prevent people from entering the Criminal Justice system.

Question – When a young person is referred to you how does the process work?

Mr Panaser – People often become confused about the real definition of anti-social behaviour and indeed about the difference between anti-social behaviour contracts and ASBOs. We don't get direct referrals in addressing anti-social behaviour but the Prevent and Deter initiative is all about looking at kids who are on the cusp of criminal behaviour and may be showing signs of anti-social behaviour. There is a legal definition of anti-social behaviour but it is very often about people's perceptions. An elderly person may see young people on a street corner and feel threatened, but is that an offence per se, no not really but you may find out that the individuals on the street corner have offended in the past or are on our books or are they there during school time. They may be on the books of Prevent and Deter or have Court Orders or past Court Orders. We need to look at all these factors and look at certain types of behaviour.

Mr Royston – There is a Prevent and Deter Strategy which the Youth Offending Team has to chair and one of the things we are trying to develop is all agencies bringing the names of people who are being an annoyance or are leading towards anti-social behaviour or criminal behaviour. The Youth Offending Team chairs that group and it is the duty of that group to draw up an action plan for work with that young person. With many agencies involved, the problem has been in the past that each agency carries out a separate assessment of the young person and often more time is spent carrying out assessments than actually getting anything done. This group should be able to carry out one assessment.

There are Children's Trust like working arrangements with Education, Social Services and Health which use a common assessment framework. The common assessment framework is used by Prevent and Deter to look at the issues in a young person's life. If that young person changes and their behaviour modifies then there is a result, but if it doesn't work we don't want to just keep doing more of the same when it's not working. If it doesn't work children, parents and carers must understand the next stage which could be ASBO or Prosecution.

Question – Who brings the different agencies together?

Mr Panaser – This goes beyond anti-social behaviour and there has been a change Cumbria wide. County wide every Youth Offending Division has a Prevent and Deter obligation to bring the relevant agencies together. This would involve Educational Welfare, Police, Health, ourselves as Youth Offending Team,

Sergeant Malcolm Huddart, Connexions, Social Services, Youth Inclusion Project and any other agencies which may have an involvement. When all agencies are brought together we look at how some work can be done and this work must be focussed and targeted and right for the child's civil liberties whilst still protecting the public.

We are now starting to put an initiative in place at the pre-Court stage. An ABC (Anti-Social Behaviour Contract) is a Contract say between Housing and a family saying that if you don't change your behaviour we will then apply for an ASBO.

This new Prevent and Deter Group has only started to come together in the last three to four months and we are starting to share the names of certain young people around. The same names do seem to keep coming up. A lot of these young people are showing signs of anti-social behaviour.

There is also an anti-bullying initiative which is about what we can do about it locally.

Question – With the number of different partner agencies involved it can be difficult if they are all pulling in different directions. Could you tell us a bit about where you are wanting to go with this and how you are getting there? Also what are your views on an Elected Member role?

Mr Panaser – The Youth Justice Board gives us reams of guidance and we constantly have to consider are we providing a proper service.

Mr Royston – You have asked about a role for Elected Members. We operate on Local Authority boundaries and Amrik is the Officer for Carlisle and Eden. I am not really sure that Councillors know who we are and what we are supposed to be doing. We should be looking at local strategies but we also have National objectives and targets. However, if one of our National targets is to reduce car crime but I have been told that in Carlisle it is insignificant then why do we do it in Carlisle and Eden. Is there something of more importance to local Members in Carlisle and Eden that we should be targeting? We do receive intelligence profiles from CUPS, which is an information gathering service for the Police, which identifies hot-spots but information from Members would be valuable.

We have a Youth Justice Plan and I am not sure if any of you have seen it. (Councillor Parsons was the only Member who indicated that she had been the plan). There is a question as to why elected Members haven't seen the plan, why is it not available to District Councils, we should encourage you to read through it. If you have evidence of something happening that we haven't picked up you could say that in Carlisle as an addition to National targets there are particular tasks that need to be done. I would then be able to look and see if we could work with partner agencies to get a resource to target these areas.

There is a finite amount of resources but we have been successful in getting additional funds from the Criminal Justice Board for prevention work.

Question – Who are you accountable to?

Mr Royston – We come under the responsibility of the Chief Executive of Cumbria County Council but we also have a responsibility to the Home Office and we have funding from a range of organisations. We have Officers who are seconded from the Police, Health, Social Services, Education, Probation Service and Connexions and various different agencies put staff and finance in to the Youth Offending Service. The Youth Justice Board pay an amount of money depending on performance.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive sought permission to speak to the Committee on the Children's Act. The Committee agreed to this request.

Ms Mooney – I would like to add about the compliance under the new Children's Act where the District Council will become the first responders and key partners. A new Children's Board for the County and a new Safeguarding Board will take over Child Protection Committee work and will pick up on some of the work in overseeing what is happening regarding children and young people at risk. I represent the Council on the Board and the Safeguarding Board. There will be some training for Members on the Children's Act later in the year.

The Chairman added that this Committee was due to consider a Report on the Children's Act at its meeting in November 2005.

Question – Am I correct in assuming that you receive the names of people who may potentially cause anti-social behaviour and do you work closely with the schools?

Mr Panaser – We have an Education Welfare Officer for each Division and up until last week they were the main liaison with the schools. When a young person came onto our books the Education Welfare Officer would inform the school. But last week there was a new initiative within the Area Management Team where all people involved with school exclusions get together to consider young people who are out of school and what we can do about them. It is a brand new initiative which brings forward the names of young people who are out of the Education Service because they have been excluded or put out of school and look at how we can best utilise our specialisms to work for these young people.

Rod Morgan, Chairman of the Youth Justice Board, is quoted as saying that a prime indicator of anti-social behaviour is not being at school. This initiative gets people together to focus on the same goal and we are beginning to get the schools on board.

Question – What about intervention at school levels. These days it is good to be involved as early as possible. How much prevention work is done in the schools, especially in primary schools, as early intervention is important? At the School where I am a Governor we have a mentoring system where children can report bullying or just have someone else to talk to. This has been successful in reducing bullying. There does seem to be a bit of a gang culture which is not as bad as it appears in the South but we need to stop it at an as early an age as possible.

Mr Panaser – The Youth Offending Service by its name focuses on offending but prevention is a key element and we would really like to go into schools. There are junior and youth inclusion projects.

Mr Royston – In Cumbria we have almost two hundred primary schools and that means two hundred different organisations to work with. In other areas work is done with the Education Service to deliver to all Schools.

The Junior Youth Inclusion Programme which is Children's Fund funded is 25% targeted at people as young as 8. There is a successful Junior Youth Inclusion Programme in Carlisle and Eden for 8 – 13 year olds. We receive referrals from schools of young people acting in a particular way. NACRO deliver the programme for us in Cumbria and we are looking for additional funding as there is currently a waiting list and we want to reduce this list. Young people are different now and it may take a young person until they are about the age of 25 to stop a certain type of behaviour.

A range of educational and preventative work is done and recently Barrow received an award from the Youth Justice Board for an arts enhancement package. We deliver a large range of programmes. We have given £10,000 worth of work books on "Respect your Life Choices" which set out the consequences of certain life choices.

We have also recently had packages on bullying which were delivered to schools and done as a whole class project. We could send some of these resources for this Committee to look through.

Mr Panaser – I asked my colleagues what work we do with schools as I am new to the area in the last six months and I am still not aware of all the work that is carried out. A colleague said that occasionally the Youth Offending Service gets invited into schools and if you can get a Police Officer or a Youth Offending Service officer into school to talk to the children then this can make a difference. However, it is dependent on the capacity within the Youth Offending Team and the amount of work we would like to do is restricted by the resources we have.

Question – Often people are called into schools where there is a problem but it would be better to go in before the problem starts. Why can't Cumbria Education Authority give you the authority to go directly into schools.

Mr Royston – We do have a limited number of staff and supervising offenders in the community is 95% of our work which emanates from Courts and is based on Court Ordered Interventions but the Youth Justice Board has said that there will be additional money for prevention programmes.

The Education Authority could not get permission for us to go into all Schools. We would have to be invited by the Head Teacher and the Board of Governors. I was told by two different Head Teachers that they didn't have drugs problems in their schools and didn't want drugs awareness packages, but yet one of these schools had a pupil arrested for dealing on the premises. Either the Head Teacher didn't know of the problem or did not want it to be made public.

We do receive invitations from Head Teachers and Governors and it tends to be in Secondary Schools where we can deliver a six week package. The Local Education Authority would be delighted if we were invited into even more Schools but we would need to get other partner agencies involved to deliver the work.

Question – Does this not seem to be the wrong way of looking at it? Surely prevention is better?

Mr Royston and Mr Panaser – We both agree that prevention is best but a large amount of our work is based on Court Orders.

Question – I am concerned as you stated that Prevent and Deter has been around for three or four months when in fact it has been around for several years?

Mr Panaser – It has not been an application in the North until recent months. The Prolific Offending Strategy has three strands:-

Catch and Convict lead by Cumbria Constabulary
Resettle and Rehabilitate lead by Cumbria Probation Service and
Prevent and Deter led by Youth Offending Service and Social Services.

In my time in the North we have only really just got going with the structure in place for the Prevent and Deter element and we have just got round the table together over the last two to three months.

Question – You have mentioned a lot about Youth and schools but so far you have not mentioned anything about parents and parenting orders.

Mr Royston – We are very keen for parents to take responsibility for actions of their children and for themselves. In Cumbria we have a number of Parenting Orders which we supervise. A Parenting Order is not a criminal conviction but a breach of the Order will become a criminal conviction.

I worked for NACRO when the Orders first came out and I objected to them as parents who are practitioners often think there but for the grace of God. However the first Parenting Order was made in Sunderland and the Parents said that it was the best thing that could have happened as they got support which was not in place prior to that. One of the parents was a Prison officer.

We prefer people to come on to parenting programmes voluntarily but Parenting Orders are used. There is a need to increase parental responsibility and there are a range of ways of working with parents to help change a young person's behaviour. There are parenting programmes and we also refer to other agencies such as NCH to help with the problem.

Often parents just don't know what to do anymore and it is about getting parents support and finding ways to deal with disruptive and violent young people. In parenting groups you often find that parents draw strength from other parents.

Question – What specific work are you undertaking on parenting?

Mr Panaser – There are the Parenting Orders and we run Parenting Groups which address issues about how you parent and what to do in situations.

When we carry out assessments of young people if we find that their behaviour is related to parents then we address it as an intervention. It would be good if we

could work even more closely with Social Services, Education and Educational Welfare as one agency can't do everything on it's own.

If issues come up in the assessment of a young person then we will look at what we can do and part of this is considering Parenting Orders or Parenting Groups.

I would stress that our focus is on Court Orders but we do look at prevention and address things as they arise.

Question – In our village we have a young man who hit the Teacher when he was younger, was excluded from School, returned and did the same thing and was excluded again. Recently he became involved in a fight outside a pub at age 17 or 18. When do we stop the softly softly approach and intervene to change people?

Mr Panaser – If not speaking with my Youth Offending Team hat I would say that when the first assault took place why weren't other agencies involved, and what was the second intervention? I would agree that on the face of it it looks odd that there haven't been interventions but I can't give a full answer as there could have been so many variables involved.

We talk about getting tough but what does that mean? Prison does not work especially if you are put in at the age of 16. In prison you can just learn more tricks of the trade.

We do face a dilemma as we are part of the Criminal Justice system but we are also part of Children's Services.

Mr Royston – If young people are sent into custody it costs £680 per night to keep them there.

Mr Panaser – Hypothetically looking at this case, if the young person had been referred to us there would have been an assessment of the risk factors and we would have tried to do a piece of intervention work. I do believe in scrutiny and

accountability and if we had been involved and someone had come back and asked what did you do, I could explain the actions that we had taken.

Mr Royston – We will never make excuses for offending and custody may not be right but for some young people it is inevitable.

Question – Youth ASBOs can often be seen as a badge to be worn with pride. Do you think that they are effective?

Mr Royston – It is the same as any Court Order in that it depends on the willingness of someone to engage and change. It can also be a matter of personnel. In Youth Offending we can change a Supervising Officer and can often get a different response. Young people and their needs are really complex. In some cases ASBOs work but for some young people it will take a long time.

If what you see in your whole life from the age of 2 to 3 up until 14 to 15 is the Police at your door every day and your parents fighting with themselves and others, why would this not be normal behaviour to you? It is not an excuse, but it is a reason and it takes time to turn this situation around. ABCs or ASBOs may be a way of dealing with this. If we can get the right people involved in the lives of these young people then we hope it can get better, but it may not.

Mr Panaser – Young people have different educational stages of development. Anti-social behaviour has been around since the Vikings. The word vandal came from the Vikings. Young people are more or less the same, but part of it is in perception. If I as an Asian am confronted by a group of thirteen young people in a group my first response might be to run. But then I think about what I really see and hear them talking about. One of them may have an ASBO and one ABC, but they can just be talking about normal things like girls. What works for one young person might not work for another. They are children not adults and they will be mixed up and have a number of issues around them but it is about perceptions and what an elderly person sees in some young people may be a different view from others. It is a complicated area to address.

Question – Our Church sent the youth worker around the Estate to talk to young people on the Estate and all that he could really get out of them was that they wanted left alone and they didn't like the term youth, they saw it as derogatory.

Mr Royston – The Probation Service organised a Faith and Community group and a range of people to come to a meeting. It was brilliant there was a range of organisations who want to be involved. Communities with offenders living in them seem to want to rehabilitate them and bring them back in to the community.

We can't solve it on our own. We are the Statutory Agency but we want others to be involved, it is not a single Agency problem. We would embrace Church and Community Groups being another resource to help. You can't do it on your own but together in partnerships if we get joined up thinking we could do something as a whole.

Question – Putting aside all the strategies and programmes how do you think we should tackle Anti-Social Behaviour.

Mr Royston – Education is key we have a programme called "Fair Deal for the Excluded" which works with people who have been excluded from school. There are a number of providers who work to take them off the street and provide them with an education. Education is the single best factor in prevention.

Mr Panaser – It's all about Education. A famous politician once said Education, Education, Education and it is indeed all about Education. It does also fit in to the respect agenda.

Mr Royston – We would really love to deliver Citizenship Programmes in Schools.

Question – How well do you work together with other partners?

Mr Panaser – Locally, within the County, we have gone about a great deal of change and there are new people in place. There has got to be a cultural change and this is starting to happen. We now have a new head of Children's

Services and also a new Chief Executive at the County Council. I will be able to tell you in a year or two years if it works well. We are hit with so many strategies to deal with but we are hoping that we will be working well together.

Mr Royston – I heard the new Director of Children's Services speaking recently and she talked about the fact that we have obligations and want to work together for the benefit of young people and to prevent offending. Youth crime is reducing and we should feel proud of that.

The more we have forums like this or we can inform you and you can ask us questions which challenge what we do, the better things will be. We can't live in silos anymore and the country as a whole can't afford for us not to work together and ensure that we are doing the right things for the right people.

Question – I recently heard a programme on Five Live which said some worrying things about Witness Protection for Adults and Children. What Witness Protection do you have, as Witnesses can be targeted?

Mr Royston – We get involved with Witnesses and Victims where we expect the Offender to do something directly for the Victim, but protection is left to the Crown Prosecution Service and the Police. Victims of young people's anti-Social Behaviour and Bullying are often other Young people and you're right, none of us do enough for them and we can't even begin to think of what it's like.

The Chairman then thanked Mr Panaser and Mr Royston for attending the meeting and for their valuable input to the review/inquiry.

Mr Royston – We welcome this contact and also further contact from any of you. There is not enough contact with local authorities and these are the sort of areas that we want to work together and develop.

Mr Panaser and Mr Royston left the meeting at 11.05 am.

Ms Jan Gordon Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, Carlisle City Council.

Ms Gordon – I work for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for Carlisle and Eden and my role covers both Carlisle and Eden. It is my job to bring together all the services who will be dealing with and tackling anti-social behaviour to deliver a co-ordinated joined up response to anti-social behaviour

Question – You have a co-ordinating role, but are you also directly contacted by individuals who contact the Council about anti-social behaviour?

Ms Gordon – I do review complaints which are received directly either from the public or from different agencies.

Question – What is your role with that?

Ms Gordon – It depends on the case, if I receive a call that relates to one individual then I will involve other Agencies in that, as necessary. It could be that the problems are for a geographic area with a group of youths in the area. I would then contact the agencies required to tackle that problem. If it is a Housing Association tenant, then I would refer it on to a named person in that organisation.

Question – What does the complainant get from us as a response?

Ms Gordon – The complaint will get listened to in quite some detail as I need to do this to understand the type of anti-social behaviour and to decide the best person to refer to in order to solve the problem.

Question – How do you decide what your objective is and how do you measure how you get there, also what is the role for elected Members?

Ms Gordon – It's a difficult and complex behaviour. Defining anti-social behaviour is difficult and it can be down to personal views. It is difficult for complainants and agencies to define anti-social behaviour and to decide how to solve it at multi-agency meeting can also be difficult. For example, I chair multi-agency Case Conferences which tackle anti-social behaviour. Firstly I decide

which agencies to invite to the Case Conference. We then decide what problem we are discussing and then agree an action plan. The difficulty is that for one Agency enforcement is a priority for another Agency it is prevention of offending and yet another Agency may be representing the offender. This means that the multi-agency approach can be difficult.

By ensuring my role is neutral as a Chairperson then they can all give their priorities and views on the problem and I have to ensure that they all have the chance to discuss the problem and go back and make sure that we have action. I could come up with options to consider but I try to ensure that the agreement is consensus, as they have to go back with an Action Plan they can deliver.

With regard to local Member involvement, I would welcome involvement in discussion on the problems and solutions to anti-social behaviour. However, Case Conferences are about individuals and cover sensitive issues and family backgrounds, so I have to be careful to ensure that the people who attend are the ones who deliver the action plan and are signed up to an information sharing protocol.

Councillors are vital in informing practitioners of the problems in their neighbourhoods and of local opinions in relation to Graffiti, Noise, Neighbour Dispute, Dogs etc. We must ensure that this information is fed back to us as we rely on this information. If the only information we regularly get is from a particular Agency, then the Community Intelligence part drops off.

Question – If someone gets an ASBO can you confirm it's not a Criminal Record unless the ASBO is broken?

Ms Gordon – It is not a Criminal Offence unless it is breached.

Question – The ASBO process seems to be very bureaucratic and takes a lot of time and form filling. Are we being too softly softly about depriving the liberty of people because they have done something against someone else. In America there are Boot Camps and Reform Schools with short sharp shock tactics. Why not use on the spot fines and also limit where they can go. For offenders, there could be strict regimes of exercise in the evenings for two to three hours each

evening and also at weekends restrict them as to where they can go and have a programme of exercise.

Ms Gordon – The answer is we don't know if ASBOs work. It is a Court Order, an injunction which prohibits you from doing something, but people have free will. If they breach the ASBO we are into a different sphere and they could be in Prison for five years.

We, as a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, have not done any evaluation of whether ASBOs are working. There are twenty-five live Orders in Carlisle and Eden, four of which are in Eden. Altogether there have been thirty-one since the start and they are time limited, but we haven't assessed them. Through the Priority and Prolific Offending Agenda we know how many people are on second or third ASBOs, but we haven't looked at whether it is working.

Some ASBOs have been breached and it has resulted in custodial sentences. But are less children or young people coming through as they know ASBOs are out there, well we don't know we haven't assessed it. What about ASBOs which have not been breached, we've never gone back to the victims or communities and asked them if it's worked. Was the ASBO a good thing for them? Do the people in the Community feel safer and protected? These are all things that we should be doing.

Question – Why haven't we done this?

Ms Gordon – Because the emphasis has been on getting the Orders.

Question – But that's wrong if we don't know whether it works.

Ms Gordon – We know there are lots of questions and its valuable to answer them.

Question – What is the balance of time in your role?

Ms Gordon – Case Conferences are on demand and I spend a lot of time on that. I have just heard that the Youth Offending Service have set up Case Conferencing for Prevent and Deter and I am surprised at the similarity with our Case Conferencing.

Question – It is two very similar services?

Ms Gordon – Yes, our Case Conferences have increased by three hundred percent and there does seem to be a duplication in attending meetings. But they seem to be limited in numbers in relation to the number of referrals they take, but we do Case Conferences on demand. There have been almost a hundred Case Conferences in the last eighteen months and it's been about three times a week or as necessary.

I would say of my time that perhaps sixty percent is spent on Case Conferencing. The rest of my time is split between:

- Task Group Work for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and attending Task Group Meetings;
- Early prevention and developing prevention work; and
- Getting other projects off the ground.

Question – So you have a limited involvement with Prevention?

Ms Gordon – Yes there has been less but I have been more involved in Prevention than other Agencies.

Question – We have the people from the Youth Offending Service telling us that in some schools the problems are not being addressed as Headteachers do not want bad news to be coming out, but the longer it goes on the worse it will get. It seems that some people are not reporting anti-social behaviour, do you think people just walk away or ignore it.

Ms Gordon – We have developed a good relationship with schools and Headteachers and we involve schools in Case Conferencing which other agencies were reluctant to do. We feel that schools know Children better than any of us and we have involved them in cases where they have been exclusions and asked questions about how their school attendance has been and where they are if they are not at school. Some people can be out of Education for up to two years.

We found the schools in Carlisle to be really helpful. Prevention works in schools and we have asked Teachers if they want us to come in and do anti-social behaviour roadshows. They welcomed us and we've 2,500 children in Carlisle and Eden's high schools.

When you talked about the people reporting did you mean anyone, or just in Schools?

Question – Well sometimes people won't pursue it because they just hope the problem will go away. I don't mean so much people in schools but perhaps people living in an area who don't see a Community Police Officer and just let the anti-social behaviour slide away.

Ms Gordon – It is all about Victims and Witnesses and why people don't report and also about what their perceptions of anti-social behaviour are. Some people don't perceive something as anti-social behaviour or are not confident to report. The CDRP and other Agencies are pursuing the reasons why it is not reported. Home Office funds to target anti-social behaviour of £25,000 per district which means a combined £50,000 are available. In some areas they've spent all the money on a Co-ordinator or a Paralegal but we are looking more at Witness Support. The Audit of Crime and Disorder on anti-social behaviour showed that Witness Support was a huge gap. There's nothing there to represent the witnesses, so the CDRP has used half of the budget to commission a Witness Support Service and we hope to have it in place by the beginning of next year.

Question – Could you explain what the CDRP Task Groups are?

Ms Gordon – There are five Task Groups. The Task Groups are the means of delivering a strategy to reduce Crime and Disorder in Carlisle and Eden. There are five Task Groups.

Drugs and Alcohol.

Young People.

Current and Repeat Crime.

Reassurance.

Community Safety.

Each of the Task Groups is made up of the relevant agencies and authorities. Anti-social behaviour is not a separate Task Group as it runs through all of them and I go to all of the Groups. Sometimes I can't go to all of the Group meetings. I hear today about the Youth Offending Service and think we could do Case Conferencing better together.

Question – If part of a Ward has bad lighting and retired people are frightened to go out, what pressure can you bring to bear? Can you go to Councils and make recommendations about lighting budgets.

Ms Gordon – It comes back to where we get our information or intelligence from and where our priorities are shaped. If we have more information from Community Groups, Residents, Housing Associations, then they are more likely to influence and become a priority. Inadequate lighting and fear of Crime won't be reported as a Police statistic. Unless there is a lot of Burglary or Car Crime it wouldn't get in to the Police statistics.

A Member commented that there used to be burglaries in the area but now people don't leave their homes after dark.

Question – Do you think your role has a high enough profile and is there enough awareness of the role within and out with the Council?

Ms Gordon – That's difficult to answer.

Question – It is a very important role but it seems to be reactive rather than proactive. Often proactive tends to mean a higher profile.

Ms Gordon – I would agree my role in how to tackle anti-social behaviour is driven by responses to an event that has happened, rather than examine what has been working and to assess where we've been putting our energies. With my role and who I report or don't report to, you don't have the clout to do very much and change things.

Case Conferencing has developed very good relationships but they all involve front line officers and they are useful in keeping me informed but not in taking things anywhere as I don't have the audience with the seniority to do this.

Question – Are there are improvements you would like to see in our organisation or others or any revolutionary ideas to improve the set up?

Ms Gordon – Ensuring there is clear leadership guidance and support to tackle anti-social behaviour is important. We need to have an agreed approach. For example, we need the discussions to be taking place about legal powers. There are a raft of legal powers out there and we have only used a fraction. We have the ability to use the powers but we haven't discussed this well enough. Recently, a local Member asked me about dispersing groups of young people and technically the legislation exists to do it but we have not put the processes in place to do so. It would be about asking who is the responsible person in the Local Authority to sign authority to the Chief Superintendent for legislation to be used.

Things get muddled and lost and front line officers get frustrated. I think there needs to be a clear line of command with senior people in Local Authorities and other responsible authorities of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Question – Is it better to report anti-social behaviour to you or if not to which agency?

Mr Gordon – It is fine to report it to me. It is part of my role and if it requires more than a single agency response I can pass it on and get other agencies around the table for a multi-agency approach.

The Chairman then thanked Ms Gordon for attending the meeting and for her input to the Review/Inquiry.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 29 November 2005

COS.161/05 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDERS SUBJECT REVIEW/INQUIRY

The Chairman commented that this session would focus on understanding the impacts of Anti-Social Behaviour on the Council and the Council's methods of response. The following three internal Councillor Officers would be the witnesses for this session:

Mr Mike Battersby – Director of Community Services

Mr Mark Beveridge – Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport Services

Mr Dave Ingham – Environmental Quality Manager

Mr Battersby – It is a fundamental precept that the quality of the environment in which we live reflects on our behaviour. If we maintain a clean and tidy environment we would hope that people would respect it but if it's dirty and there is a lot of litter then people respond accordingly.

We posed a number of questions in the last Citizens Panel questionnaire around the area of Environmental Quality and aspects of Anti-Social Behaviour. The Committee may not have details of the results of that Citizens Panel questionnaire yet. There were questions about Anti-Social Behaviour and what people perceived as being issues including noisy neighbours, noisy parties, joy riders, attacks in the street, litter and rubbish. The results have been analysed City wide and on a North, South, East and West basis. I suggest that it would be helpful for you as a Committee to have a look at that information.

The questions to the Citizens Panel were about beginning to try to understand from the community what they feel influences the quality of life in their area. We did have access to research from other areas but we thought it would be best to undertake our own research through the Citizens Panel.

There are five key areas that people felt affected the quality of life.

- Better maintenance of the area e.g pot holes, grass cutting etc
- More activities for young people.

- Less dog fouling
- Reduced crime.
- Cleaner streets and environment.

The information which we obtained will help to shape the services we deliver.

I will now tell you about what we are doing. The Clean Neighbourhoods Act is a work in progress and Members are having an input to that process. There is a balance between responding to problems and also being more proactive to prevent them occurring in the first place.

Area Teams have been going now for six months and the key aim was to engage with local Members and Community Representatives. This should help to enrich the role of Members in the community. We have found that the response has been patchy with some Members very enthusiastic. The intention was always to do this with an existing resources, it's not an initiative that we are throwing money at. There is some concern that some Ward Members have grasped it well and are working as our eyes and ears in the community, but others have not really got engaged in the process.

In relation to general areas of cleanliness we have tackled problem areas. The IDeA definition calls them "grot spots" and we have tried to blitz these. This has been successful in some areas but not so successful in others but we do believe that this is the way forward.

We have started to be engaged in Neighbourhood Forums and found that many of these are dealing with City Council issues. There is still some way to go in shaping the role of Neighbourhood Forums and responding to the community.

On graffiti, we are just about to launch a major initiative. We have established, resourced and trained a hit squad with the aim of responding within twenty-four hours, or earlier if the graffiti is of a racist or crude nature. It is our intention to present indemnity forms to private property owners to recover the costs of removal of graffiti. Watch this space, the initiative will be launched within the next few weeks and it will be initially for a six month trial period.

With abandoned vehicles perhaps the perception is greater than the reality. We are launching a Car Clear pilot scheme on 1 December 2005 which will be aimed at removing abandoned vehicles more quickly.

These are examples of the sorts of areas we can move in. We need to be smarter in the way that we provide services, for example, if people see a street cleaner on a street they perceive that the street is clean but if a street is not dirty in the first place then why clean it. We need to be tackling problem areas.

There has been a lot of post flood work and back lanes are still a big issue and continue to be a challenge. If we can improve the quality of back lanes we should do so and we are continuing to explore Alley Gates, with two or three trial locations selected. If we did move along the road of wheeled bins this may help as some people put rubbish bags out two or three days in advance and cats or dogs get at them and rubbish is spread everywhere. Back lanes are still an important issue.

Question – A lot of incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour are related to substance misuse and a lot of debris can be left behind in hedgerows, back lanes or play areas. Do you undertake any monitoring of where this type of litter is found, so that the various organisations involved could monitor those areas more closely?

Mr Battersby – Where an area is identified to us as having problems, for example, with needles being left, then it has to be treated differently. If we don't know about it then we can't remove it. It's impossible to walk every street in the city every single day. Interface with the Community Police teams does give us that type of intelligence and directs a cleaning operation. As the GIS (Geographical Information System) takes off we will record that type of information and incidents and this will give us a more accurate picture in locational terms.

Question – I was interested in your comments on graffiti. Does this organisation have a working relationship with the Probation Board for example on the Community Pay Back Scheme? Given that there are never enough resources to do all the work that's out there, what is the relationship or use of the probation service?

Mr Battersby – We have been involved with the Community Pay Back Scheme particularly working on Beck clearance. There is a slight problem with graffiti in that it is more of a technical operation but there is a great scope to be involved and it would be putting something back into the Community. Community Service does work on general tidying up and it could be expanded. We did start an initiative a couple of weeks ago.

Question – One of the biggest causes of vandalism and urban disruption is drinking. I have been told by Inspector Jardine that we could help the Police by bringing forward bylaws to stop people buying drink and binge drinking. Is it possible to look at a link up with the Police for bylaws to prevent this.

There are all sorts of Anti-Social Behaviour, such as littering, breaking windows, graffiti and we need to have a clear direction with the County Council and Connexions to know where they are going with young people. We should be returning to a Youth Club or Youth Service system and attempts are being made to return to this. We need to have our finger on the pulse with the County Youth Service and ensure that these youth facilities are built up rather than the present situation of having young people on the street.

Can Legal Officers talk to the Police about Bylaws to prevent binge drinking on the streets? And, can we have a finger on the pulse regarding the Youth Service?

Mr Battersby – Having things for young people to do is an important issue and part of this may be picked up in Mark Beveridge's Play Strategy. It would help to find out what young people want to do. With the area team working and emphasis on enviro enforcement we do need to work with Police teams to solve the problems and an integrated approach will help.

Mr Mallinson – With regard to Bylaws we had a report on this some time ago at the start of Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Committee considered the report which stated that at that time the City Centre did not qualify for that Bylaw. For the Bylaw it would have to be a designated area and there was only the City Centre area that stood any chance of meeting it. We could look at the situation again.

Question – In relation to dog fouling and littering do you have anything built in to your budget for media involvement?

I regularly collect bags of litter from my area and I feel that something could be done in the local media to try to encourage people to clean up after themselves and even to put pressure on manufacturers so that they do not put as much wrapping on items. Another message which could be communicated is that people should not put things in plastic bags before placing them in the Green boxes as the paper is removed from bags and then the plastic bags are blown around everywhere. How much money do you have in your budget to use the media to provide information to the public?

Mr Battersby – The media has a role in raising public awareness but it really has to come from within the Community and we hope that we will be able to engage Community representatives. Community pride may be naïve and old fashioned but pride does come from within a Community.

It can be a double-edged sword with the media. I do not have a specific budget to go through the media but we can raise public awareness by getting out into the community and involve people in tidy up operations. The media has a more focused role and there are also other means of raising awareness.

Question – How much involvement do you have with ENCAMS which runs the Keep Britain Tidy campaign.

Mr Battersby – We have been involved in various promotional projects and initiatives but any involvement does tend to be initiative focused.

Question – I am surprised that it is only the City Centre area that we have looked at to be alcohol free. I have made attempts to get some of the parks in my area alcohol free. I have been to Officers in the Council but often they just raise other problems, for example with St James Park they said they would need to check the deeds. I have kept pushing along and have been referred to the CDRP (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) people and they said I would need a survey of the whole area to see what the will of the people was and if they wanted it to be alcohol free. I did this and a high percentage wanted it. When I take complaints or problems to Officers I want them to take ownership of it but I just keep getting pushed about to different Officers.

Mr Battersby – With the new configuration of services within the authority, the grouping together of Community Services will set me a challenge of ensuring an integrated approach. Ultimately it depends on the Council's priorities. If something has a Council priority then it is resourced but if resources are not put to resolve the issue then these resources have to be taken from elsewhere.

Mr Beveridge – To get a Bylaw implemented we have to get an Act of Parliament. There are other options under new powers where an order can be passed and it doesn't mean that a whole area is alcohol free. There is a down side to making an area alcohol free, for example, with Bitts Park this would mean that responsible people would not be allowed to have alcohol with a picnic. There is a provision in the Act to allow Police to take action against individuals whose behaviour is affecting others and I have been in discussions with the Police about this.

Question – I was given a very firm reply by Inspector Jardine that there were City Bylaws which could be brought in. It is important for Officers to link up with this Police Inspector.

Also with the new scope for removing abandoned cars will we be able to cope with this?

Mr Battersby – We are introducing a Car Clear scheme on a six month pilot basis and we think that we can cope but we will assess it after the pilot. The perception of the problem may be greater than the reality and we've now been given the remit to remove abandoned vehicles more quickly.

The Chairman suggested that the Deputy Chief Executive should follow-up on the Bylaws issue to get some clarity on the powers of the City Council in relation to Bylaws and any other powers in this area.

Dr Gooding – I will write to the Legal Department at Cumbria Constabulary and provide a response back to the Committee.

Question – I want to broaden this out now to look at other issues. Anti-social behaviour has an impact on environmental quality and there is an issue between our reactive work and our role as a proactive Authority. Where does the balance

currently lie? If I take noise awareness as an example, are incidents and reports on the increase and is this due to there being more noise or are people more sensitive to the issues?

Mr Ingham – we do take a proactive approach for example with dog fouling we are taking a proactive approach since the Dogs Fouling of Land Legislation. We were one of the first cities to designate areas and we started with two part-time Officers but this has now been rolled out to one full-time and three part-time. We are proactive and we also have a strong enforcement role. We will respond to reports of dog fouling and carry out surveillance and then issue fixed penalty notices. If the notices are not paid then we will prosecute. We do adopt a firm stick approach. In our carrot approach we work with Community Forums and carry out education in schools. We have taken sessions in 40 schools in this current year. We link and overlap our message in schools with the message about litter and it is about educating children about the consequences of their actions. We were also involved in the “Eye of a Child” exhibition at Tullie House.

Education is important but strong enforcement is also necessary it is a waste of time without strong enforcement.

People have talked about the litter problem after the Christmas light switch-on but you just need to go into the pedestrianised area at lunchtime everyday and see the school children leaving litter on the ground. Enforcement with children is a difficult area but I feel that we do need to act.

In relation to noise this Citizens Panel responses show that 91% of respondents said that noisy neighbours were not a problem but this leaves 9% who think they are a problem. 9% is quite a lot. There has been a continual increase in the number of reports of noise complaints, for example noisy neighbours. We don't deal with noise in the street as it is a Police matter and we do not have the enforcement powers, but we do deal with noise from premises or noisy neighbours. Noise complaints are certainly on the increase. We try to promote Noise Action Days and the next one will be targeted at noise from Licensed Premises and will include advertising to encourage people to leave a premises quietly. We act proactively in that way too.

A Member commented that as a point of information a scheme to advertise on beer mats will be happening this Christmas funded by the Drug Alcohol Team.

This will also involve the issuing of lollipops to stop noise nuisance when people leave premises.

Question – the Citizen's Panel responses highlighted dog fouling as a problem. Is this one of these areas where people's perceptions of the problem may be greater than the reality?

Mr Battersby – The Dog Fouling Team has been very effective. It is difficult to blend enforcement and raising awareness functions into one but the Dog Team have done this effectively. In the Citizen's Panel this was judged as a factor affecting the quality of life. The comments do not reflect the problem with dog fouling but they reflect the fact that we assess it as part of our quality of life.

Mr Ingham – If you travel to other cities you will notice the difference and they have a lot worse problems than we do. We can issue 156 Penalty Notices within a year, as a comparison Copeland issue about 33 for a variety of different things and Eden might only issue 1 or 2. We are at the forefront of tackling the dog fouling problem.

Question – What part could the Council play in instigating the process for parenting and Acceptable Behaviour Orders?

Dr Gooding – I will raise this issue with Legal Services.

Question – You said that 9% did have a problem with noisy neighbours, is much of this attributable to specific areas?

Mr Ingham – The Citizen's Panel showed that 91% said that noisy neighbours were not a problem but this does leave another 9%. Their recourse is to report the problem to us.

A Member commented on the work being undertaken by the Council in relation to environmental quality. He referred to Officers involved in dog fouling and noise nuisance and stated that everytime he had approached them the service provided was excellent.

Mr Ingham – Thank you for your comments. I would add that using CCTV we have picked up instances of fly tipping and have subsequently tracked the person, interviewed them under caution and issued a Summons.

Question – Regarding the difficulties of school children in the City Centre at lunchtime, is there any mileage in looking at getting evidence of their activities and taking them back into the schools, for example, photographs of littering on a naming and shaming basis? There are proactive things which could be done if we engaged with the schools.

Another Member commented on problems he had heard of with children from schools pushing elderly people out of the way at bus stops. He had written to the schools and been referred to the bus company and when he had written to the bus company they had said it was a Police issue.

Mr Battersby – The issue of school children and engagement with schools is well worth pursuing, not just in relation to the City Centre but in other areas and also about general behaviour. At the moment the only action we have is to get street cleaners to pick up after the school children, but maybe a more proactive approach should be called for.

A Member commented that Councillors could make contact with schools. She stated that all schools had an Assembly Governor and Councillors could arrange to get into the school where Councillors or Officers could have photos of what's happening outside the schools.

Another Member added that the media could help with this approach.

Question – In parks and play areas we often see examples of Anti-Social behaviour. In my ward there were problems in unadopted playareas but since they have been adopted and managed properly the situation has improved. Mr Beveridge what is the impact on your Departmental Area?

Mr Beveridge – Graffiti, physical damage and behaviour in parks and open spaces often cause nuisance for others. We are doing a number of things to try to address these issues.

We have worked extensively with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. We have had a targeted approach to graffiti and have photographed “target marks”, “tags” or “signatures”. The kids have individual tags and the police know who they are and can take action against them. We have also worked with Voluntary Groups and schools on clean-ups. For example this is Tree Week and there is an educational element to that. By involving the young people in planting trees we teach them that the environment is as much their responsibility as anyone else’s.

We have worked with Connexions on specific disorder problems and with people who have offended. We have the NACRO (National Association for Care and Resettlement of Offenders) Football in the Community post and they run schemes to provide activities for young people in areas in Carlisle South. We have also run midnight basketball schemes which run from 7pm to 10pm in the evenings and we have a range of play in youth work.

It is not just about sporting activities, we also provide art activities in their broadest sense. Art is an important activity and 35-38% of young people engage with art in some form, for example Drama or DJ workshops as well as conventional art. The community section have engaged with young people through youth activities provided on the bus, which is in the process of being replaced after the flooding.

We provide a range of activities to people with diverse interests and there is an educational element that goes hand-in-hand with this. As an example the Play Fair Scheme which we run with Carlisle United, in conjunction with the Police and the Fire Service, means that young people can go to see the football but we also get a message across that their behaviour impacts on different people. We hope to develop this initiative further.

It is about broadening of the approach and this is a crucial part of how we address Anti-Social Behaviour issues.

We need to find out the views of young people. Some of them want activities indoors but some of them seem quite happy to sit on a park bench in the middle of winter. We need to engage with them about what they want in specific areas. As part of this approach we have introduced two multi-use sports areas in Carlisle South. Play areas have also been designed for different age groups.

A Member commented that it was important to find out about the things that the Council was doing in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour it was also going to be important to engage with young people and find out what they need from us and try to respond to these.

The Chairman then thanked Mr Battersby, Mr Ingham and Mr Beveridge for their contributions to the meeting.

The Overview & Scrutiny Manager advised that the Committee had now heard from all the witnesses who had been able to attend sessions. In addition, he had circulated written evidence from one of the Academics and an Officer from Blyth Valley Housing. The only other areas the Committee would need information on were the legal questions raised at this meeting and the Citizens Panel survey findings. Members then discussed the next step.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Manager and the Chairman meet to review the evidence and draw out bullet points/key issues for discussion by Members informally outwith a normal meeting. The informal session could be held after the Diversity & Quality session on 12 January or after one of the other special workshop sessions being arranged for the Committee.