

Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Single Issue meeting: Anti-Social Behaviour in Warwickshire

10.00am 8th February, 2006

1.0 Background

On 25th October, 2005 the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee received Part 1 of a two part report on the County Council's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy. The report concentrated on three of the seven thematic areas addressed by the Strategy:

- Fear of crime
- High crime areas
- Prolific and Priority offenders

The second part of the report was presented to the Committee's meeting of 15th December and concentrated on the remaining four priority areas, namely:

- Alcohol related violence
- Young People as victims and offenders
- Drug related crime
- Liveability

Members of the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee have also previously received reports on the Departmental Contributions to WCC Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (July, 2005) and the Action on Drugs and Alcohol and the Contribution to the Achievement of the Strategic Plan for Warwickshire Targets (September, 2005)

Receipt of these reports has generated strong feeling within the Committee and fueled a debate on the value, appropriateness and effectiveness of the current approaches employed to tackle anti-social behaviour within the communities served by Members of the Committee and in Warwickshire generally.

Committee members recognise that the County Council has a key contribution to make to the work of multi agency partnerships working towards safer communities and further acknowledge the valuable contribution which can potentially be made through the proposed Local Area Agreements Framework.

With this in mind the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee requested that a full scrutiny exercise be conducted, involving all community safety and criminal justice agencies to provide an opportunity for Members to understand how they can improve Community Safety in Warwickshire by addressing the current levels of anti-social behaviour.

2.0 Objectives

Following the successful delivery of the scrutiny event the Community Safety O&S Committee members will:

- 2.1 Understand what is currently recognised/defined as 'Anti-social behaviour'
- 2.2 Have an understanding of the County Council's remit and role in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour
- 2.3 Understand the contribution of Warwickshire County Council in reducing Anti Social Behaviour and be confident that the proposed actions will deliver real improvement in the level of Community Safety within Warwickshire.
- 2.4 Understand the current infrastructure within Warwickshire for addressing Anti-Social behaviour and the implication of any proposed changes
- 2.5 Have an understanding of current and future the roles and responsibilities of WCC and our partner agencies in working towards increasing Community Safety
- 2.6 Establish what further action needs to be taken to ensure Members of the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny are confident that Anti Social behaviour is being positively addressed in Warwickshire eg. Further scrutiny review, community consultation etc.
- 2.7 Agree what, if any recommendations should be made to Cabinet

3.0 Expert panel

In previous meetings of the Community Safety O&S Committee Members have highlighted the importance of a partnership approach to delivering Community Safety. In recognition of this the Community Safety Team have liaised with the Police, Criminal Justice agencies and CDRPs to provide an Expert Panel of broad experience and knowledge to which Members can ask questions relating to Anti-Social Behaviour in Warwickshire.

Panel member	Role/Job title
John Hedge	Chair Thames Valley Partnership
Andrew Lawrence	Head Of Community Support (WCC)
Julie Sullivan	Corporate Community Safety Manager (WCC)
Paul Littler	County Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator
Mike Slater	Chief Inspector Warwickshire Police
Diane Johnson	Manager Youth Offending Team
Michael Maguire	Manager Positive About Young People (WCC)
David Everett	Head of Magistrates Crown Prosecution
Mick Taylor	Chief Clerk to Magistrates Courts (Warwickshire)
Katherine Grasby	Senior Solicitor (WCC)
Spencer Payne	Community Safety Information Analyst (WCC)
Rachel Jackson	Regeneration Officer Nuneaton & Bedworth (CDRP officer)
Robert Beggs*	Corporate Services Officer Nth Warks (CDRP officer)
Dave Gormal	Head Of Community Safety Rugby Borough (CDRP officer)
Pete Cutts	Community Safety Officer Warwick District (CDRP officer)
Steve Newman	Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator - Stratford District Council (CDRP officer)
Ruth Mountstephen	Observer - Head of Community Services - Stratford District Council

Robert Walsh

Observer - Community Safety Co-ordinator - Stratford District Council

*Attendance to be confirmed

It is hoped that this event will reinforce the development of a cohesive approach to Anti Social Behaviour in Warwickshire in the future.

4.0 Key Lines of Enquiry

On 10th January, 2006 the Warwickshire Anti Social Behaviour Strategy was presented to the Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee

The issues raised by Members at this and previous Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings have been used to develop key lines of enquiry and potential questions for Members to put to the expert Panel.

The questions have been consolidated into broad subject areas and Members will have the opportunity to question the Expert Panel in sessions relating specifically to each of the categories below:

- A balanced approach to ASB (prevention, support and enforcement)
- Crime Statistics
- Neighbourhood solutions
- A Partnership approach

Session Number	ASB Area	Key lines of Enquiry
1	A Balanced approach to ASB	What preventative activity is being undertaken in and out of schools?
		There are currently, approximately 75 ASBOs in operation in Warwickshire, how does this compare to other counties of similar size and demography?
		Does the non-judgemental letter have a positive impact on re-offending rates?
		What role do parents play in addressing ASB with youths?
		What role can ABCs play in reducing ASB?
		How do we deliver a balanced approach (prevention, support and enforcement) to the reduction of ASB in Warwickshire?
		What approaches are being taken to name and shame ASB offenders?
		Does the low number of Dispersal orders currently enforced in Warwickshire (five) reflect the success of other methods used to tackle ASB?
		Is naming and shaming an effective way of reducing ASB or do offenders see it as an accolade?
		Are dispersal orders seen as a last resort?
		Are Magistrates aware of the frustration within the community which results from a perception that weak or no action is being taken on ASB offenders?
As ASBOs are civil actions until they are breached, how do the Magistrates Courts work with Police to deliver a 'joined up' approach to addressing ASB?		
2	Crime Statistics	How do the various agencies address the concern that recorded figures do not reflect what is happening 'on the ground'?
		How can we address the confusion caused by the use of varying sources of crime data/information?
		Are there plans in place to address the fact that current recorded figures do not include all incidents?
		What is being done to address the problem/apathy in reporting 'minor' crimes?
		What is the difference between actual crime and recorded crime?

		<p>What figures are available on re-offending rates?</p> <p>When will we be able to make decisions based upon figures which incorporate actual incidents of ASB rather than either reported crimes, arrests or convictions?</p>
3	Neighbourhood solutions	How can we capture and promote good practice like the positive impact of 'Community support officers'?
		How do the various agencies address the feeling of need for more enforcement to take ASB offenders out of the community?
		How do the agencies present address public confusion over powers of the various officers dealing with ASB eg. wardens, community police?
		When will the neighbourhoods be defined?
		Do the Police have the resources to provided dedicated officers to communities, who will not be taken out for other duties?
		How do we identify and address problem areas for ASB?
4	A Partnership approach	What promotional activity is being undertaken by the agencies present to tackle ASB?
		What is the role of WCC in allocating funds to CDRPs?
		How can the Community Safety O&S Committee work with CDRPs to deliver improvements to ASB within Warwickshire?
		How effective is the partnership working between agencies within Warwickshire in reducing ASB?