

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TASK & FINISH GROUP

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The Improvement and Review Commission set up a Task and Finish Group to answer the question 'Is there a problem with anti-social behaviour in the District, and if so what can Wycombe District Council do about it?'

The task and finish group was established following a motion by the Leader of the Council to the Council and a resolution of Council that the matter should be considered. The following is the motion from the Council Minutes of 18 December 2017.

A motion was submitted by Councillor Miss K S Wood (Leader of the Council) and seconded by Councillor D H G Barnes (the deputy Leader) and agreed by the Members.

"WDC notes the increasing concern of councillors and members of the public regarding an apparent rise in instances of anti-social behaviour across the district and within Wycombe Town Centre in particular.

WDC believes giving greater prioritisation to the enforcement of available anti-social behaviour measures by Thames Valley Police will improve the situation before it becomes overly detrimental to the residents, businesses and visitors to the district.

WDC resolves to seek swift re-prioritisation of TVP resources to tackle this issue in conjunction with improved partnership working with other stakeholders to improve neighbourhood policing."

Improvement and Review Commission

Following the decision by Council the Improvement and Review Commission met to set up a Task and Finish Group to look into antisocial behaviour in the district. The ASB Task and Finish Group (T&FG) was established by the Improvement and Review Commission and Councillor Chris Whitehead was appointed as chairman of the Task and Finish Group.

Membership of the Task and Finish Group

The Group Membership was as follows:

Chairman: Councillor Chris Whitehead

Vice-Chairman: Councillor Alex Collingwood

Membership:

Councillor Khalil Ahmed

Councillor Marten Clarke

Councillor Gary Hall

Councillor Arif Hussain

Councillor Mahboob Hussain JP

Councillor Hugh McCarthy

Method of T&FG

- A. The T&FG looked at the whole of the District, not just High Wycombe.
- B. The T&FG determined to make any recommendations in the light of hard evidence, not perception or anecdote. In particular the T&FG attempted to address three questions:
 - I. How does ASB in our area compare with crime in other similar areas?
 - II. How does ASB in our area compare with ASB in the Thames Valley Police Force area?
 - III. How has ASB changed over time in our area?

The T&FG found statistical evidence alone was unreliable (see below), so the recommendations were based on evidence from a number of sources:

- WDC officers:
- Neil Stannett, Environmental Health Manager (13.03.18)
 - Elaine Jewell, Head of Community (27.02.18 & 10.05.18)
 - Sarah McBrearty, Community Safety Team Leader (27.02.18, 10.05.18 & 19.07.18)
 - Nigel Dicker, Head of Environment (04.07.18)
 - Nick Adkins, ASB Officer (19.07.18)
- Police:
- Matthew Barber, Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner (14.06.18)
 - Francis Habgood, Chief Constable (14.06.18)
 - Lee Barnham, Acting LPA Commander (14.06.18)
 - Kevin Brown, LPA Commander Wycombe (27.03.18)
 - Dan Crook, Constable Local Policing Team (14.06.18)
- Other:
- James Boulton, Operations Manager Wycombe Homeless Connection (13.03.18)
 - Councillor Matt Knight, representative of Wycombe MIND (27.03.18)
 - Claire Daily, Red Kite, Interim Head of Experience (14.06.18)
 - Michael Bowker, Wycombe Workplace Charity Chairman (04.07.18)
 - Mark Harry, HWBIDCo Chairman (19.07.18)

The Chairman spent the afternoon of 08.08.18 with TVP Neighbourhood Sergeants Hughes and Binfield at Marlow Police Station.

He also had a detailed phone conversation with Chinda Virdee, WDC CCTV Supervisor on the same day.

The T&FG also considered reports of incidents from various Councillors such as twelve or so intoxicated people that were outside the pubs in Frogmoor during the day shouting, swearing and being generally aggressive.

Executive Summary

The ASB Task and Finish Group has 10 recommendations which will be presented to the Improvement & Review Commission on Wednesday 12 September 2018.

They can be summarised under four headings, all interrelated, and graphically represented as:

The Recommendations

The T&FG recommends that:

Wycombe District Council

1. WDC demonstrates its commitment to tackling ASB by:
 - a) Appointing a Cabinet Member (or Deputy Cabinet Member) with specific responsibility for ASB, and that progress is reviewed at every Cabinet meeting.
 - b) Identifying a single officer with lead responsibility for ASB, to be responsible for monitoring and reporting progress on tackling ASB.
2. That the working of the Community Safety Partnership be reviewed and tightened up to provide a stronger focus on tackling ASB through the relevant Portfolio holder and Lead officer identified in 1 above.
3. WDC improve the quality of data and information in relation to ASB by
 - a) Creating its own database of incidents from all partners, subject to appropriate data sharing considerations, similar to the Police Repeat ASB/Signal Crime Callers and Locations report,¹ plotting their locations precisely on a map, indicating exactly where and when they occurred.
 - b) Developing performance measures to enable progress in tackling ASB to be monitored.
4. WDC consider the implications and options for closing public toilets on an experimental basis and also consider whether pubs and local businesses could be encouraged to allow members of the public to use their toilet facilities when needed.

Enforcement

5. TVP should be encouraged to tackle ASB as follows:

¹ See Appendix 2.

- a) WDC support and encourage TVP to achieve their full manning levels in Wycombe District - to match the proposed investment in Street Wardens (see items 6 & 7 below).
 - b) WDC support and encourage TVP to improve responsiveness to the 101 emergency number.
 - c) WDC explore options for supporting TVP to carry out successful recruitment to vacant posts including the possible provision of free parking.
 - d) the feasibility of the Council having access to a TVP computer should be explored.
6. WDC should consider employing Street Wardens to enforce PSPOs, who would be directed by WDC officers, but would work closely with the Police. The location and number of street wardens to be determined according to need and best practice.
 7. The appointment of Street Wardens be accompanied by a stricter enforcement of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to demonstrate that the Council will not tolerate ASB.
 8. FPNs continue to be issued even if only PCs and the Council's own ASB officer are authorised to issue them.

Support

9. WDC put more resources into the understanding of these links (between begging, mental health and substance misuse), and actively support those agencies working to alleviate the problems.

Communications

10. The Council have a co-ordinated campaign, with partners, in relation to street begging involving posters, banners, press, social media and radio to cover the whole of the District, the purpose of which would be not only to educate the public as to what the Council is doing, but also to try to remove the source of funding in the hope that it may persuade beggars to seek help from agencies and deter begging.

What is Anti-social behaviour?

Although it may not necessarily be criminal behaviour, ASB invariably involves issues that adversely affect people's quality of life. At the heart of ASB lies a lack of respect for values and basic consideration for others. It may not necessarily be intentional, but it can intimidate, harass and be disproportionately distressing, particularly to vulnerable members of our community. It can also, in some circumstances, be a precursor to more serious types of offending and criminality, if left unchallenged.

Section 2(1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014) defines Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) as:

- Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person.
- Conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises.
- Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.

WDC's own ASB Policy refers to the earlier legislation *the Crime and Disorder Act 1998* which defines ASB as "*Behaviour which is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator*".

The Thames Valley Police ASB Policy also refers to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition of ASB: 'Behaviour by an individual or group that results in: - another party feeling personally threatened, - creates a public nuisance, or - has a detrimental impact upon the environment, or - has a detrimental effect upon the quality of life of an individual or the community as a whole.

Examples of ASB

The term (ASB) is broad in definition and the behaviours that are deemed to constitute it are similarly wide ranging. Such behaviour may include:

- Violence or threats of violence against people and property.
- Intimidation and harassment including begging.
- Criminal damage to property.
- Noisy and rowdy behaviour, including street drinking.
- Aggressive and threatening language and behaviour.
- Fouling of public areas, including dog fouling.
- Using accommodation to sell drugs or for other unlawful purposes.
- Inconsiderate or inappropriate use of a vehicle – such as racing or revving cars and the slamming of doors in built up areas during anti-social hours (such as 03:00).
- Hate behaviour directed at a person's race or nationality; gender; sexual orientation; disability; or faith.
- Other conduct likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to neighbours including acts which could be regarded as causing nuisance or annoyance.

- Environmental ASB: Dumping rubbish and littering, vandalism, graffiti, abandoned vehicles.

The majority of incidents arise from neighbourhood disputes - car parking issues and noise/disturbance – a point to be considered when deciding on planning applications.

A real-life example of anti-social behaviour listed in a very recent (August 8) Community Protection Notice, currently under review by WDC Legal Department, illustrates the width of the ASB scope:

- 1. It is reported that between 07/02/2018 and 07/08/18 (6 months):** you called police emergency services 244 times.
- 2. It is reported that on 06/07/18 at 2248hrs** you called 999 to say the end of the world was coming.
- 3. It is reported that on 06/07/18 at 2254hrs** you called 999 saying you were an alien.
- 4. It is reported that on 25/07/18** you were ranting incoherently outside your flat causing distress.
- 5. It is reported that on 26/07/18 at 2330hrs** you called 999 when drunk and said you were the devil.
- 6. It is reported that on 07/07/18 at 1425hrs** you called 999 and said your neighbours could see in your flat and you were a terror camp.
- 7. It is reported that on 06/04/18 at 1434hrs** you called 999 and told the call handler (female) that you wanted to [REDACTED] with her and offered £400.
- 8. It is reported that on 24/07/18 at 1500hrs** you offered to buy a child a comic in Sainsbury's if he came home with you.
- 9. It is reported that on 16/05/18** you grabbed a female's [REDACTED] and told her she could get £1000 for [REDACTED].
- 10. It is reported that on 25/07/18 at 0400hrs** you were banging on your neighbour's doors.
- 11. It is reported that on 22/07/18 at 2236hrs** you had youths in your flat and were not allowing them to leave.
- 12. It is reported that on 28/07/18 at 0336hrs** you made a false report to Red Kite that neighbours were banging on your ceiling.
- 13. It is reported that on 24/07/18** you were told off by your neighbour for making so much noise at night and you offered your neighbour a PlayStation 4 to [REDACTED] with his girlfriend.

Temple End Residents' Association has provided the following examples of ASB in their area, which includes Frogmoor:

1. Drunk people, including students walking past houses at night being loud, banging on doors, leaving drink bottles and takeaway boxes on window sills, putting takeaway bags through letter boxes and constantly littering the street.
2. Urinating - we get lots of men (usually drunk) stopping on their way from the town centre to urinate in broad daylight, often in front of families and children.
3. Drinking in Frogmoor. Frogmoor has become an area that is best to be avoided. The benches are always full of drunk people or men smoking

cannabis. Despite it being illegal to drink alcohol in the town centre, these men get away with it as there is no police presence.

4. Begging - is very uncomfortable and puts me as a woman off walking to the town centre on my own in the evening.
5. Buses and other vehicles speeding along Temple End, despite it being a 20 mile an hour zone.

ASB is therefore a broad ranging term encompassing a variety of situations and behaviours which can vary in complexity and seriousness, and which can very rarely be resolved by one organisation alone as it normally involves a combination of factors for which different agencies have expertise. To add to the complexity, the T&FG learned that some ASB was seasonal and occasional.

Detailed Report and Timelines

1. **The T&FG believe WDC should take the lead in dealing with ASB – that is the only way it will be in control of the problem. In doing so it will continue to need to work with the various partners involved including TVP.**

The Leader stated in the December 11 debate that she believed that.....

.....giving greater prioritisation to the enforcement of available anti- social behaviour measures by Thames Valley Police will improve the situation and that WDC resolves to seek swift re-prioritisation of TVP resources.

It is the T&FG's contention that the Council cannot rely on the Police to control ASB; the Council must take control over the situation itself.

<p>The T&FG recommends that WDC demonstrates its commitment to tackling ASB by appointing a Cabinet Member (or Deputy Cabinet Member) with specific responsibility for ASB, and that progress is reviewed at every Cabinet meeting.</p>	<p>Timeline Immediately</p>
<p>The T&FG recommends that a single officer should have lead accountability for ASB, and be responsible for monitoring progress on tackling ASB.</p>	

The TFG recognises that the Council has a range of statutory responsibilities to tackle ASB. These arise from two distinct roles, which are:

- I. The Council's role as part of the Wycombe Community Safety Partnership. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council to work with the Police and other agencies to reduce crime and disorder in Wycombe District. In this role the Council plays a key part in dealing with anti-social behaviour of all kinds, and also undertakes project and preventative work.
- II. The Council's environmental protection role. The Council has a range of responsibilities to deal with 'environmental' ASB, like noise, graffiti, dumped rubbish and abandoned cars. These responsibilities arise from a number of

Acts and local byelaws, but in particular from the Environmental Protection Act 1990, and the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005.²

Responsibility for ASB at WDC currently falls between two departments – Community and Environment – both staffed by very experienced and capable officers. The T&FG felt that the Council should examine the possibility of putting all ASB responsibility in one department to prevent the chance of an issue falling between the cracks – e.g. is street drinking an unruly and threatening behaviour issue (Community) or a licencing issue (Environment)? Whilst the T&FG heard evidence that current arrangements worked because of the size of the Council (relatively small) with a low staff turnover. Consequently, officers from both departments tended to work well together. However, the T&FG felt that there was scope for a single point of accountability on Cabinet with the appointment of a Cabinet (or deputy Cabinet) Member and an accountable officer within the Council to monitor and report on progress on tackling anti-social behaviour.

WDC should provide a single point of ownership within the officer structure to give ASB. At the moment ASB is dealt with by two departments. The T&FG believe there is scope for some issues to fall between the cracks.

2. The T&FG believes that there is greater scope for the Community Safety Partnership to provide the mechanism to provide an effective lead in the struggle against ASB.

The Wycombe Community Safety Partnership is referred to above. The Wycombe Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017-20 is attached as an Appendix. While there is a statutory duty to have a Community Safety Partnership, it is the view of the T&FG that the Partnership has a number of priorities in addition to those relating to ASB (it has other responsibilities such as domestic abuse, exploitation of the vulnerable, cybercrime).

The T&FG recommends that the working of the Partnership be reviewed and tightened up to provide a stronger focus on tackling ASB through the Portfolio holder and Lead Officer identified in 1 above.	Timeline By 31 October 2018
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3. There are several tables of ASB statistics available; the T&FG believe none of them are robust enough to be relied on, so the T&FG recommend that the recording of ASB must be improved.

The T&FG was presented with many sets of figures to show how good or bad WDC is at controlling ASB. It was pointed out to the T&FG that reports of ASB could be based on single incidents or multiple reports of the same incident, depending on when the calls were received by the Police and logged. It was noted that it also depended on how the calls were classified by the call handlers when they were originally logged. Neither incidents dealt with Housing Associations such as Red Kite, nor incidents dealt with solely by WDC officers.

² WDC Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Version 2 – October 2014

In other words, available statistics are not robust enough to be relied upon – although WDC seem to be improving in mid table within the TVP area, with Hazelmere being reported as having the biggest percentage increase. Micklefield, Totteridge and Downley are among the Councils worst areas relating to domestic/residential ASB.

<p>The T&FG recommends that WDC start its own database of incidents from all partners, similar to the Police Repeat ASB/Signal Crime Callers and Locations report,³ plotting their locations precisely on a map, indicating exactly where and when they occurred.</p>	<p>Timeline By 31 October 2018</p>
<p>The T&FG recommends that WDC develop performance measures to enable progress in tackling ASB to be monitored.</p>	

In this way, the Council can create its own baseline against which progress can be measured, and resources (street wardens) can be directed to hot spots at hot times. For example, TVP advised the T&FG that Thursday evenings, between 16:00 and 04:00, were the worst time of day regarding ASB offences measures should also be reviewed to ensure that there is a way of measuring progress in tackling ASB.

4. The T&FG received evidence that public toilets in Wycombe were being used for the sale and use of illegal substances.

The T&FG had a specific request from the Cabinet Member for Environment, Julia Adey, to examine the problem of public toilets being used by drug users. A sticker on the window could indicate those premises that are part of the scheme. Details would also be included on the WDC website.

<p>The T&FG recommends that Cabinet should consider closing the public toilets on an experimental basis and also consider the implications and options for whether pubs and local businesses should be encouraged to allow members of the public to use their toilet facilities when needed.</p>	<p>Timeline After the appointment of Street Wardens</p>
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Enforcement

5. The T&FG would like to see the Council support TVP to achieve their full staffing strength.

TVP is one of WDC’s main partners when it comes to tackling ASB. The 24/7 non-emergency 101 number is invariably the number the public use to report an incident. We are advised that it can take up to **30 minutes** for this number to be answered. Lack of resources means that Police officers may be slow to follow it up, by which time the incident is likely to have passed.

³ See Appendix 2.

However, the T&FG heard that the Council's relationship with the Police was continuously improving, and in particular, it was noted that a former Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) is now employed as the Council's ASB Officer.

All the Police Officers that spoke to the T&FG expressed a keen willingness to work more closely with the Council to reduce ASB. Their problem is one of resources. Currently there are only 15 PCSOs in the District compared to a full complement of 24. All the gaps were in High Wycombe – the rural force at Marlow and Princes Risborough were at full complement. The 'rural' forces also incurred a very low staff turnover. The Chief Constable explained that although High Wycombe was number one on his priority list with regard to getting local force numbers back up to strength, part of the issue of recruitment and retention was that parking was felt to be an issue for TVP staff in the area. The T&FG noted that WDC could help the Police retain staff by providing free parking at the Park and Ride, and in front of the Council offices after 6pm.

The T&FG were advised that there was still a role for Special Constables in the Police force. It was noted that TVP currently had 400 out of their 700 target and that most of the Specials were University Students. The T&FG wondered whether this was something that WDC could encourage.

T&FG Members questioned whether having a TVP computer within the Council offices in High Wycombe, as they do at Cherwell District Council, to enable officers to access Police systems without having to attend a Police Station would be of benefit. The Community Safety Team Leader explained that the Council used to have access to a TVP computer and that this should be explored with TVP.

<p>The T&FG recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. WDC support and encourage TVP to achieve their full manning levels in Wycombe District - to match the proposed investment in Street Wardens (see items 6 & 7 below). ii. WDC support and encourage TVP to improve responsiveness to the 101 emergency number. iii. WDC explore options for supporting successful recruitment to vacant posts including the provision of free parking. iv. the feasibility of the Council having access to a TVP computer should be explored. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Timeline</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Immediately</p>
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6. Intervention on the streets is a joint effort between WDC and the Police. The T&FG know the Police are understaffed, but notwithstanding that, the T&FG believe WDC should employ Street Wardens for Wycombe, Marlow and Princes Risborough.

<p>The T&FG recommends considering the use of Street Wardens to enforce PSPOs, who would be directed by WDC officers, but would work closely with the Police. The number and location of wardens to be determined according to need</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Timelines</p> <p style="text-align: center;">By 31 March 2019.</p>
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and best practice.	
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- 7. The Council should not be afraid to issue Fixed Penalty Notices if necessary, and to follow them up – as far as the Magistrates’ Court to demonstrate that ASB will not be tolerated. Fines received would go some way to allay the costs of the Wardens. The T&FG appreciate that this may involve a review of staffing capacity in the Community and/or Legal Departments.**

The T&FG also recommends that the appointment of Street Wardens should be accompanied by a stricter enforcement of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to demonstrate that the Council will not tolerate ASB.	Immediately
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The wardens would not only enforce PSPO clauses – this is only one aspect of a more rounded enforcement approach. The wardens may also cover enforcement of other council regulatory functions – e.g. licensing, taxi licensing, waste management, littering, illegal street traders, parks by-laws, idling motor vehicles etc. etc. Other types of legislation are available to the Council to achieve the ASB enforcement and environmental / street scene outcomes important to residents and therefore elected Members. Income raised would part fund their cost.

The T&FG do not suggest enforcement by any potential WDC warden service would replace the Police; they would work together in partnership, but the T&FG stress that they would be directed by WDC officers. This joint ASB solution would free up Police time by streamlining prosecution for more minor offences and would deliver at least some kind of response to lower level crime or ASB. Wardens would be a visible indication that the Council is serious about the problem.

The view of the Neighbourhood police is that Wardens would be a good idea. They said that the only way to deal with ASB was by ‘feet on the ground’, working together. Swift early intervention is key to nipping low level ASB in the bud before the perpetrator escalates his/her behaviour into more serious offending. Prevention is always better and less resource intensive than later enforcement, helping to preserve relationships between the enforcement officers (police, wardens, Red Kite), perpetrators and those affected by the behaviour.

A good warden service could also do publicity work, school visits and educate and inform, and would be a visible deterrent. The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead website describes their Community Wardens as follows:

The main purpose of the community wardens' scheme is to reduce crime and disorder and link together all parts of the community, acting as a highly visible reassuring presence.

Wardens visit schools, day centres, businesses and liaise closely with other agencies and departments within the borough to try to solve problems in the community as quickly and efficiently as possible.

They are empowered to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (or FPNs) for littering and dog-fouling.

To be successful with a warden scheme and when using PSPOs, additional Council resource may be needed, in the Legal and Community departments in particular, as court work and associated preparation of evidence will be required to prosecute non-payment of fixed penalty notices. If contracted out, the warden services could handle FPN issue, collection of fines, and statement preparation and provide these to the Council to a good standard, thus reducing the extra workload for existing officers. However, it would be wrong to pretend that a team of eight wardens with supporting legal and management input would not be an additional cost to the Council, though the Chairman of HWBIDCo indicated to the T&FG that he would be happy to consider contributing to the scheme. It is noted that the Council now employs two experienced senior prosecutors and a para-legal and one has higher rights of audience.

8. The T&FG are disappointed that the Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) for Wycombe Town Centre and Desborough are still not in place.

On 11 July 2016 Cabinet approval was sought to commence public consultation on the implementation of two Public Spaces Protection Orders for High Wycombe Town Centre and surrounding areas. The implementation of two Public Spaces Protection Orders for the High Wycombe Town Centre and the surrounding area was agreed by Cabinet on 12 December 2016 with an implementation date of 01 February 2017.

Since then just two FPNs have been issued, but prosecutions did not proceed due to lack of evidence. Subsequently, the wording on the PSPOs has been reviewed with the Police and WDC officers. It was agreed by everyone that there was a need to amend the wording of the town centre PSPO to give the Police and authorised officers the power to remove cans of alcohol, giving additional powers and making prosecuting for breach easier. The wording of the fixed penalty notice in connection with these PSPOs was also reviewed and has subsequently been amended.

Due to changes in the law the only way that Police Community Support Officers can have powers to issue FPNs for breach of a PSPO is if they are given a specific discretionary power by Chief Constables. Legal Services wrote to the Police on 17 May 2018, seeking confirmation that the Chief Constable has revised and updated the list of discretionary powers conferred on PCSOs since the changes to the law came into force on 15 December 2017. TVP have indicated that at least a further 2-3 weeks are needed to look into this matter. It is hoped that the Force Solicitors will respond within that time frame.

The T&FG recommends that FPNs continue to be issued even if only PCs and the Council's own ASB officer are authorised to issue FPNs. ⁴	Timeframe By 30 September 2018
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The Chairman of the T&FG has spoken to the legal department; and has been assured that Street Wardens can be authorised by the Council to issue FPNs by an

⁴ Since writing the above, the Chairman has been advised that changes to the Town Centre PSPO have been agreed between Legal and Communities. The Desborough Road PSPO for Prostitution will be discussed between TVP, Communities and Legal Services at the beginning of September to ensure the process (for dealing with kerb crawlers) works and can be enforced.

However, it is plain that the implementation of PSPOs is a process that can be improved.

internal scheme of delegation should the Council choose to go down this route. The Chairman of the T&FG was also reassured that, at present there are sufficient resources in the Legal Department to prosecute FPNs should that be necessary; however, if Street Wardens are in place, the position may have to be reviewed.

Support

9. Developing a deeper understanding of the complex issues that lie behind ASB.

The causes of ASB are a complex amalgam of substance abuse and mental health issues – but the T&FG did not find evidence that homelessness was a factor. The Council needs to understand the underlying causes and provide support through focussed objectives for each issue across the district, and must be proactive in taking the lead in working with other agencies and the third sector to try to find long term solutions.

The T&FG's view is that tackling ASB is about more than using the law.

The T&FG heard evidence that there is little link between homelessness and begging but a big link between mental health and vagrancy / begging.

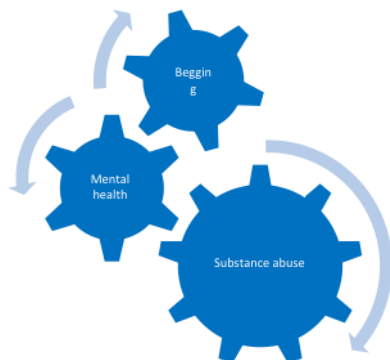
The T&FG were advised that begging is not primarily a homelessness issue, it's an addiction issue. Whilst some homeless people do beg the majority do not, and the majority of beggars are not homeless. The Operations Manager of Wycombe Homeless Connection told Members that he was sure that no one begging in Wycombe was genuinely trying to raise money to resolve their homelessness; they are almost all, almost always, begging to feed addictions.

By way of example, the T&FG were advised of the case in which the Police had tried to help a drug user who had been found rough sleeping in the Town Centre on one of the coldest nights of the year. The rough sleeper had initially accepted an offer of accommodation, but when he was told it was on the outskirts of Wycombe, he turned it down as he had to remain in the Town Centre to stay close to his drugs supplier.

The T&FG were also advised that most street beggars who purported to be homeless were frauds, and were not considered to be Wycombe residents. They came from out of town and could earn up to £100 a day begging – students were thought to be especially easy targets.

The T&FG were also advised (by Councillor Matt Knight) that there was a link between mental health issues and substance abuse – especially if they were unable to access appropriate support services. Councillor Matt Knight added that statistically mental health sufferers were more likely to be victims of ASB rather than offenders.

The T&FG are therefore presented with a curious inter-relationship of:



<p>The T&FG recommends that WDC put more resources into the understanding of these links, and actively support those agencies working to alleviate the problems.</p>	<p>Timeline Immediately</p>
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The Council needs to avoid demonising people with addictions who have resorted to begging. For example, the Council needs to explore whether services designed to support people with addiction problems are coping, and if not why not?

The issue of substance abuse & ASB has been brought sharply into focus with the recent case of a teenager who has been imprisoned for manslaughter after causing the death of an innocent woman who was accidentally splashed with high-strength acid from a bottle that was pushed towards her as she attempted to steal a bike from another man in Frogmoor at 4.50pm. The court was told that the accused claimed the altercation happened because he had been sold the drug spice rather than cannabis. If it had not resulted in the poor woman's death, this would have been recorded as drug related ASB. The T&FG felt that this demonstrated why getting to grips with the causes of ASB is so important.

Red Kite have to deal with many relatively minor incidents of inter-domestic ASB; invariably they attempt to find a middle ground by way of mediation between disputing neighbours. It was noted that they had an 83% success rate with regard to mediation via Mediation Bucks.

Communications

10. Not only must the Council do all the above, but it must tell the public what it is doing.

It was noted that a poster campaign concentrating on begging had taken place in the Town Centre to try to deter people from giving money directly to beggars. The message showed a picture of a beggar saying 'Don't give change, support change' and suggested giving money to a local charity rather than directly to the beggar.

<p>The T&FG recommends that the Council have a co-ordinated campaign in relation to street begging involving posters, banners, press, social media and radio to cover the whole of the District, the purpose of which would be not only to educate the public as to what the Council is doing, but also to try to remove the source of funding in the hope that it may persuade beggars to seek help from agencies and</p>	<p>Timeline Immediately</p>
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deter begging.	
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Timeline

Apart from Street Wardens, it is felt that there are no recommendations that could not be implemented immediately.

The T&FG **recommend** that progress against the recommendations detailed above should be reviewed by the Improvement and Review Commission at its meeting in December 2018.

A Note on CCTV

As at **December 2015**, the District had 118 CCTV cameras, located as follows:

Location	Pan, tilt, zoom	Static	Total
High Wycombe	31	2	33
High Wycombe ANPR	2	3	5
WDC Office Reception	1	12	13
WDC Office Rear Car Park	1	3	4
Easton St Car Park	2	19	21
Swan Car Park	2	13	15
Castlefield	4	0	4
Park Parade, Hazlemere	1	0	1
Marlow	14	0	14
Princes Risborough	8	0	8
	66	52	118

The T&FG were advised that the system is under review by WDC and TVP as to how the CCTV should be monitored and that this review has been going on for several years.

The system needs an upgrade but that cannot happen until the review is complete. However, that does not mean that it keeps breaking down or is not fit for purpose. Cameras are being replaced with current models as/when/where required. Although the new replacement cameras are HD day/night, our current system is not HD compatible so the picture quality is standard density. It is however of evidence quality. All camera footage is retained for 31 days which is the national norm.

The cameras cannot monitor all areas all the time and are set to patrol viewing "hot-spots" areas unless the operator takes control and then, if there is a good reason, can zoom in on a suspected offender. The system is operated strictly in compliance with WDC's internal Code of Practice, the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Acts

and the police within the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. All operators are DBS (Basic Disclosure) cleared every 3 years and are holders of the Security Industries Authority licence.

In addition, to providing footage for the recent acid attack, the system was also responsible for locating suspects following 4 murder cases, numerous assaults and providing CCTV footage evidence. Since 2001, CCTV has instigated and/or assisted in over 900 arrests, assisted the police the over 66,000 times, carried out over 11,000 footage reviews and provided over 6,000 video evidence packs to police for use in Law Court. The system has also provided over 200 copies (during the last 5 years) to members of the public mainly regarding road traffic collisions or car damages in car parks in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Conclusions/ Recommendations

The Group have taken evidence from a number of sources and after identifying a number of opportunities have arrived at the recommendations featured at the head of this report.

Next Steps

Referral to Improvement & Review Commission on Wednesday 12 September 2018 for onward referral, with endorsement, amendment or rejection, to Cabinet on 17 September 2018.

Background Papers

Appendix 1 - Wycombe Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017 - 2020

Appendix 2 - Wycombe Anti-Social Behaviour Policy – October 2014

Appendix 3 – Repeat ASB/Signal Crime Report - 02.08.18 (TVP)

Abbreviations:

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
FPNs	Fixed Penalty Notices
PC	Police Constable
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PSPO	Public Space Protection Order
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time constrained
T&FG	Task & Finish Group
TVP	Thames Valley Police
WDC	Wycombe District Council