

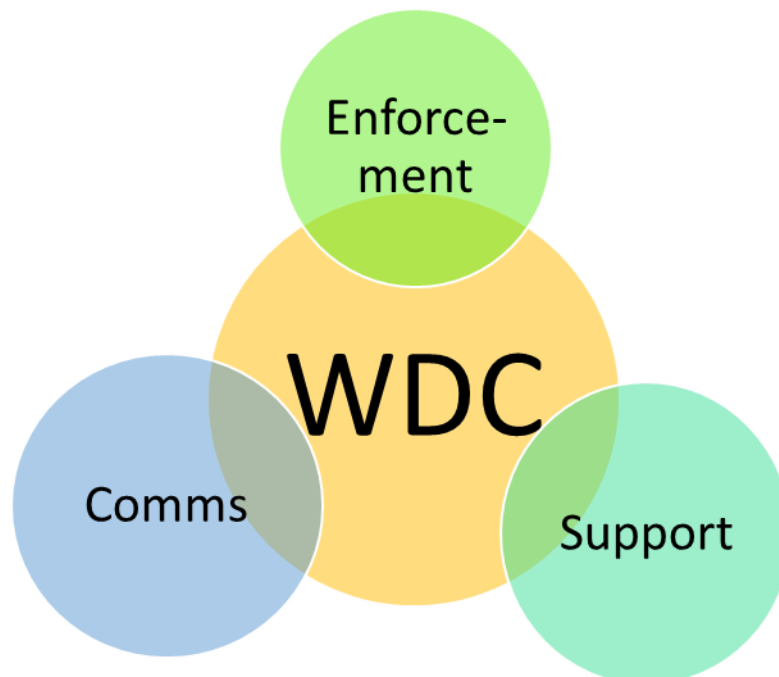
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE DISTRICT TASK & FINISH GROUP

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'Is there a problem with anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the District, and if so what can we do about it?'

Executive Summary

The ASB Task and Finish Group (T&FG) 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:



Background and Issues

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

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 we do about it?' The following is an extract from Council Minutes of 11 December 2017.

The points that the T&FG have addressed are highlighted in yellow below:

A motion was submitted by Councillor Miss K S Wood and seconded by Councillor D H G Barnes.

“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.”

In proposing the motion, the Leader began by emphasising that it gave her no pleasure in bringing this forward before Full Council. She stated that Thames Valley Police (TVP) was an outstanding and exemplary force providing an excellent service overall for our residents. As such she had a great deal of respect for the force and was very grateful for the work they did.

*The Leader stated that in spite of this she could not ignore that **anti -social behaviour across the district was on the rise**, and that implementation of policies and programmes alone designed to minimise such activity were ineffective in tackling the problems which presented themselves. **The only way to resolve such issues was by working in close collaboration with TVP.***

*The Leader went onto state that whilst she fully understood that the significant levels of operational rationalisation and efficiency measures had an impact, she felt that **TVP had not given the increasing level of disorder and unrest the focus required to shut it down before it became too established in such areas as Frogmoor**. She also gave mention to the negative response Councillor A Hussain had received from Chief Constable Habgood at a CC meeting with regards to the issue, whereby it had been asserted that enforcement was not the first option. **The importance of engaging and working closely with charitable organisations locally was re-emphasised**, but that TVP was now required to support us.*

In seconding the motion, the Deputy Leader stated that he wished to echo the proposer’s words and sentiments in every respect. He highlighted that he was

passionate about improving and protecting the community and had positive memories of working with the Police who had very much shared that passion. As such he felt a sense of disappointment in having to present such a motion.

He emphasised that he felt that TVP had focused resources and strategy away from dealing with the types of low level crimes rife at Frogmoor. He informed the Members that he had been alarmed that upon having challenged on the issues of concern, TVP had connected the problems to the current level of homelessness in the district. The Deputy Leader felt that it was essential to draw a clear distinction between homelessness and anti-social behaviour.

The seconder then reiterated the duty to work together in tackling the issues and expressed the Council's heartfelt desire to work, engage and achieve together.

In opening up the debate to members, Councillor Ms J Wassell stated that there should be an interagency effort towards contributing resources to the cause. This she emphasised may not be in the form of hard cash but may be achieved through a set of plans and initiatives. She stated that the origins of this behaviour were brought about by a very complex set of underlying issues, which TVP alone would struggle to tackle. As such she felt that a more generous spirit towards the TVP should be displayed.

Councillor Ms J Wassell wished to propose an amendment to the motion. The proposal included the insertion of additional wording in the third paragraph of the submitted motion which would read as follows. "WDC resolves to seek swift reprioritisation of TVP, WDC and partner agencies who need to ensure resources."

Debate on the amendment then followed:

Councillor M Knight agreed that the Police alone could not shoulder the responsibility particularly in the light of severe budget cuts to the Police on a national level. He expressed the view that other options besides enforcement should be considered and that there should be an equal emphasis to deliver the desired outcomes.

Another Member pointed out that neighbourhood policing was limited and that there was a strong need for people on the ground. It was also highlighted by Councillor A Turner that the amendment was unnecessary, as the motion in its current form already dealt with the issue of partnership and collaboration in its final paragraph.

Upon a vote being taken the amendment was lost and the debate returned to the motion as originally proposed.

Councillor A Hussain also commented that he was very passionate about the Town Centre and that the current situation there saddened him deeply. He stated that someone needed to take a leading role, with a set timeline put into place for action to be taken.

A number of other Members also rose to present their views. Councillor L Wood stated that WDC was already doing much in collaboration with Partners to tackle the situation, and it was through an act of desperation that TVP was now being asked to step up and play their part in dealing with the issue at hand.

In summing up the Leader concluded that she still believed that the Force was an outstanding one, but that there was a very real concern as to the rise in anti-social behaviour for which swift action was required to be taken. She had felt heartened by

Superintendent Brown`s willingness to engage, but that this attitude was required from officers at every level. As such she hoped that the Chief Constable would work with WDC to develop joint projects that addressed the needs of the whole District.

Upon a vote being taken, the motion was carried as a result of more than half of those Members present voting in favour of the Motion.

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 – so called 'Signal Crime'.

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, dated October 2014 defines ASB as:

Anti-social behaviour incorporates a host of activities but, in essence, is defined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 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.

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?

Sadly, the T&FG found statistical evidence to be 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, MIND Counsellor (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.

Conclusions/ Recommendations

The Group have taken evidence from a number of sources and identified a number of opportunities.

Next Steps

The Chairman of the ASB T&FG will be presenting the findings and recommendations at the meeting of the Improvement & Review Commission on Wednesday 12 September 2018 for onward referral, with endorsement, amendment or rejection, to Cabinet on 17 September 2018.

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