

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

# **OVERVIEW BOARD**

1st June 2010

### **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND ALCOHOL FREE ZONES TASK GROUP - REVIEW**

Relevant Portfolio Holder *	Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths
Relevant Head of Service *	Head of Street Scene and Community
Chairman of Task Group	Councillor C. B. Taylor
Non-Key Decision	
<i>* as at the date of publication of the Task Group report</i>	

#### 1. **SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 During 2008, Members requested an overview and scrutiny investigation to be taken in respect of a task and finish exercise on anti-social behaviour and alcohol free zones within the District. This report updates the Board on the progress against the approved recommendations.

#### 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the update report be noted.

#### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Steering Board (being the predecessor to the current Overview Board / Scrutiny Board arrangements) established the Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group in April 2008, and Councillor C. B. Taylor was appointed Chairman.

- 3.2 The Task Group's terms of reference, compiled by the Task Group itself at its first meeting in June 2008, were approved by the subsequent Board meeting in July 2008. In brief, the Task Group's assignment was to investigate the following:-

"To examine the causes of anti-social behaviour in 11 - 17 year olds, taking into account the Council policies, and the public perception and definition of this problem; also, to examine the use and effectiveness of Alcohol Free Zones looking into the impact on crime, public disorder, enforcement levels and the general effect of drinking in public places."

- 3.3 Membership of the Task Group, as agreed at the Board meeting in April 2008, originally included the following Members:- Councillors Mrs. M. Bunker, Ms. H. J. Jones, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, C. B. Taylor and C. J. Tidmarsh. Councillors Miss D. H. Campbell JP and D. L. Pardoe were also appointed to the Task Group following the Board meeting in July 2008.

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- 3.4 Members may recall that the first full meeting of the Task Group took place on 10th July 2008 with the intention of completing its Scrutiny Report with recommendations by November 2008. However, with both the size and scope of the subject matter to be considered, together with the August/summer holiday coinciding with the initial meetings of the Task Group, it was reported to the November 2008 Overview Board that the final report and recommendations would be delayed until January 2009. The Overview Board approved the Scrutiny Report on 3rd February 2009 and, on 4th March 2009, the report was considered by the Cabinet.
- 3.5 At the Cabinet meeting, both the Chairman of the Task Group, and the relevant Portfolio Holder (which, at the time, was Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths) presented the report. The Leader acknowledged the work which had been undertaken by the Task Group. It was reported at the meeting by the Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects that, in respect of Recommendation 4 (CCTV) in the report, a response from West Mercia Constabulary had been received since the publication of the Scrutiny Report and that, unfortunately, no funding would be available for additional lighting / CCTV cameras.
- 3.6 Following consideration of the Scrutiny Report, the Cabinet's decision was recorded as follows:-
- (a) *that approval be given to Recommendation 1, that the District Council work with its partner agencies to enhance lines of communication to inform the local media of events and good news stories with a view to encouraging more good publicity about young people, and thereby reduce the negative judgements placed on younger people in general;*
  - (b) *that approval be given to Recommendation 2, that whilst both the increased number of Police Community Support Officers and the enhanced powers granted of the District Council's Neighbourhood Wardens are to be welcomed, the North Worcestershire Division of the West Mercia Constabulary be urged to present a more visible presence in both the local community and at public events in order to maintain a low level of anti-social behaviour within the District;*
  - (c) *that Recommendation 3 be not approved due to the fact that since the recommendation had been agreed by the Task Group, the Council had agreed that Fixed Penalty Notices be ranked as a medium term priority and therefore funding was not included as part of the Medium Term Financial plan;*
  - (d) *that in relation to Recommendation 4, officers be tasked to carry out a review of the lighting around CCTV to identify if there are any issues and report back to Cabinet.*

Review / update

**3.7 Recommendation 1:**

**Enhance lines of communication with partners (High Priority)**

*It is recommended that the District Council work with its partner agencies to enhance lines of communication to inform the local media of events and good news stories with a view to encouraging more good publicity about young people, and thereby reduce the negative judgements placed on younger people in general.*

The Community Safety Team and Neighbourhood Wardens work closely with many partner agencies, including West Mercia Constabulary, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Local Strategic Partnership and Trading Standards, together with other groups throughout the district. The Council itself has numerous links with schools and sports groups with a specific focus on activities, events and education for young people, all of which are promoted to encourage attendance, with press releases issued by the Communications Team to enhance the positive publicity.

**3.8 Recommendation 2:**

**Visible policing within the local community (Medium / High Priority)**

*It is recommended that, whilst both the increased number of Police Community Support Officers and the enhanced powers granted of the District Council's Neighbourhood Wardens are to be welcomed, the North Worcestershire Division of the West Mercia Constabulary be urged to present a more visible presence in both the local community and at public events in order to maintain a low level of anti-social behaviour within the District.*

There were 530 reported incidents of anti-social behaviour during April 2008 to March 2009 whilst during the same period for 2009 / 2010 there were 370 - a reduction of approximately 30%. Furthermore, there has been a 17% reduction of reported anti-social behaviour incidents in Charford during March 2010, together with a 15% reduction of incidents in the first four months of the year as a whole.

Whilst the Council has minimal direct input into the allocation of police resources, the figures appear to demonstrate that the West Mercia Constabulary are dealing with anti-social behaviour in an effective manner and managing the problems associated with it. Anti-social behaviour probably cannot be eradicated completely so reductions in the number of reported incidents are a positive indication that the issue is being tackled effectively.

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### **3.9 Recommendation 3:**

#### **Tackling anti-social behaviour by way of Fixed Penalty Notices (*Medium / High Priority*)**

*It is recommended that, given the support shown by residents for fixed penalty notices as a means of tackling anti-social behaviour and drinking in an 'alcohol free zone', the Council investigate the feasibility of introducing Penalty Notices for such disorder.*

As this was not approved by the Cabinet, no action has been taken in respect of this recommendation. However, the police representatives did state at the time of the Task Group's scrutiny investigation that powers already exist to deal with young (underage) persons consuming alcohol whether in an area covered by a Designated Public Places Order [DPPO] ('alcohol free zone') or not.

### **3.10 Recommendation 4:**

#### **Maximise use and effectiveness of CCTV (*Low / Medium Priority*)**

*It is recommended that, where lighting around the Council's CCTV cameras is negligible or non-existent, especially within designated 'alcohol free zones', the Council investigate enhancing visibility by either introducing additional lighting and / or additional CCTV cameras and, if this should be feasible, whether funding may also be available from the police.*

Shortly after the Task Group published its report, a response was received from West Mercia Constabulary to say that "unfortunately, no funding would be available for additional lighting / CCTV cameras." However, a planned upgrade to many of the CCTV cameras was underway during the early part of 2009 which modernised the camera system and improved the quality fed back to the CCTV Control Room.

Furthermore, whilst the Task Group identified the existing DPPOs within the district and were able to consider their effectiveness, the West Mercia Constabulary do not appear to actively support the creation of new ones; for example:

<u>Date of Licensing Committee</u>	<u>Location of DPPO applied for</u>	<u>Police view</u>
21st July 2008	Charford Recreation Ground	Not supported
21st July 2008	Compass Way, Breme Park, Bromsgrove	Not supported
30th November 2009	Cofton Hackett	Not supported

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<u>Date of Licensing Committee</u>	<u>Location of DPPO applied for</u>	<u>Police view</u>
11th January 2010	Humphrey Avenue, Charford	Not supported
24th May 2010	Bromsgrove Railway Station	Not supported

At the meeting of the Licensing Committee on 18th May 2009, a procedure for the consideration of applications and requests for DPPOs was approved which, amongst other things, sought to ensure the attendance of a representative from West Mercia Constabulary at future meetings when such issues were dealt with.

The decision of the Licensing Committee on 24th May 2010 will be reported at the meeting of the Board. It is interesting to note however that the views of West Mercia Constabulary conflict with those of the British Transport Police who were also consulted on the application for a DPPO, indicating that there appears to be a difference of opinion as to the effectiveness of such a designation. West Mercia Constabulary have explained in the past that they have alternative powers by which they can prevent the consumption of alcohol in a public place and, if the reduction in anti-social behaviour referred to in 3.8 above can be used as an indication, it would appear that their methods are proving effective.

#### 4. **KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The key issues are identified in the previous section of the report.

#### 5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### 6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

#### 7. **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no direct policy implications arising from this report.

#### 8. **COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

8.1 One Community

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### **9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

9.1 There are no issues in respect of risk management or health and safety arising from this report.

### **10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 It is anticipated that the residents within the district will benefit from the improving situation in respect of anti-social behaviour, and the continuing improvements and maintenance to the CCTV system.

### **11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no direct equalities and diversity implications arising from this report.

### **12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

12.1 There are no issues in respect of value for money, procurement and / or asset management arising from this report.

### **13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

13.1 There are no issues in respect of climate change, carbon implications and / or biodiversity arising from this report.

### **14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report.

### **15. GOVERNANCE / PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 There are no direct governance / performance management implications arising from this report.

### **16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998**

16.1 The Community Safety Team and the neighbourhood wardens continually work in partnership with the West Mercia Constabulary and other agencies to reduce anti-social behaviour within the District. Furthermore, Members should note that the Council has a duty to consider how its actions and decisions play a part in crime and disorder.

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#### **17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

17.1 There are no direct health inequalities implications arising from this report.

#### **18. LESSONS LEARNT**

18.1 There is no simple solution to the prevention of anti-social behaviour. However, by working in partnership with the West Mercia Constabulary and other related agencies, the problem can be tackled and, as the figures illustrate in section 3. of this report, cases of anti-social behaviour appear to be falling.

18.2 In general, West Mercia Constabulary do not appear to support applications for DPPOs ('Alcohol Free Zones') stating that other powers are available for them to take action against persons consuming alcohol in public places. As noted in section 3. above, two recent requests for DPPO's were refused on the basis of the lack of support for them by West Mercia Constabulary. However, the conflicting views of West Mercia Constabulary and the British Transport Police in respect of the application for a DPPO at Bromsgrove Railway Station indicate that there appears to be a difference of opinion as to the effectiveness of such a designation. The decision of the Licensing Committee will be reported at the meeting of the Board.

#### **19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

19.1 The Community Safety Team maintain links with West Mercia Constabulary, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Local Strategic Partnership, Trading Standards and many community groups and agencies in the normal course of their activities.

#### **20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	No
Executive Director - Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	No
Executive Director - Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	No

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Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	No
Head of Resources	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

21. **WARDS AFFECTED**

21.1 All wards

22. **APPENDICES**

22.1 None

23. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

23.1 None

24. **KEY**

CCTV - Closed Circuit Television (surveillance camera)  
DPPO - Designated Public Places Order

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