

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Corporate Director of Support Services
to
Cabinet

On
19th June 2012

Report prepared by: Fiona Abbott

**In depth scrutiny project
“Youth anti social behaviour – perception & reality”
A Part 1 Agenda Item**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the final report on the in depth scrutiny project on “Youth anti social behaviour – perception and reality”.

2. Recommendation

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approves the report and recommendations from the in depth scrutiny project – “Youth anti social behaviour – perception and reality”.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2011/12, the Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee decided to undertake an in depth scrutiny study on youth anti social behaviour. Anti social behaviour (asb) means acting in “*a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself*”.¹

- 3.2 The aim of the project was to promote awareness amongst elected Members, and the wider community as to the work undertaken by partners in the Borough in tackling youth anti-social behaviour, with the following objectives:

- (a) To identify the differences between the perception (via questionnaire to all Members) of the level of youth anti-social behaviour in the Borough and the reality.
- (b) To develop an understanding of the issues around youth anti-social behaviour in the Borough and evaluate the measures being undertaken by local organisations and voluntary groups in tackling it.

¹ However a more appropriate definition is detailed within the Housing Act 1996: ‘*engaging in or threatening to engage in conduct causing or likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to persons engaged in lawful activities*’.

Supporting this definition is the Chartered Institute of Housing (1995) which states: ‘*behaviour that unreasonably interferes with other peoples rights to the used and enjoyment of their home and community*’.

- (c) To increase awareness of the role played by the Community Safety Partnership.
- (d) To support the aims of the Council's Corporate Plan and Community Strategy.

3.3 The outcomes agreed by the Committee were:

- (a) inform the development of a specific youth asb strategy; and
- (b) produce a community safety booklet – as part of awareness raising – for Councillors and wider community.

3.4 The Committee was supported by a Member Project Team, Chaired by the former Chairman, Peter Ashley. Officer / partner support was provided by – Carol Compton, Anita McGinley, Simon Ford, Fiona Abbott and Matt Bennett (Police). Support was also provided by Neil Keeler and Sandra Casey, People Organisational Team.

3.5 Evidence was gathered through project team meetings and a one off stakeholder event held on 29th November 2011, involving representatives from local agencies, organisations and elected Councillors. The event explored issues around youth anti social behaviour in the Borough with the aim of developing a new youth strategy for the Borough. There were opportunities to listen to speakers who tackle anti-social behaviour and engage with young people.

3.6 The Project Team discussed the outcomes from the event and thought that the [key conclusions from the review](#) fell into the following 3 broad areas (with some overlap):

[Enhance communication:](#)

- (a) Felt there was a fragmented approach to communication which needs addressing.
- (b) Produce DVD for young people by young people showcasing someone with whom the young people could relate to.
- (c) Continue proactive approach working in intelligence identified areas to prevent youth asb.
- (d) Sign post and refer those involved in, or at risk of asb to positive activities.
- (e) Focus of work around asb should be family focused and need to undertake parenting interventions to address and reduce youth asb; need to challenge pro asb attitudes and behaviours and raise awareness through 'Challenge & Support' project.

[Improve access to information:](#)

- (a) Promotion of activities for young people in Southend (e.g. Youth Council), utilising media outlets already located across the borough, including information for parents / guardians. Need 'directory of services'.
- (b) Need to investigate further the issue of ability to access leisure / youth facilities.

[Alcohol](#) - incorporate young people in the Alcohol Strategy:

- (a) Review and revise borough wide alcohol strategy (adult / young).
- (b) Issue of underage selling needs to continue to be challenged.
- (c) Need for more targeted enforcement of irresponsible shops.

- (d) Image of drinking as 'cool' needs to change.
- (e) The effects of drinking on young people needs to be highlighted (in graphic ways).
- (f) Issue of drinking in parks highlighted.
- (g) Need for there to be positive role models for young people.

3.7 The draft scrutiny report was shared with the project team and then with those who took the time to attend meetings and also participate in the stakeholder event. One substantive comment was received from the YMCA which also mentioned a SOS Bus (short term) project Y:BeSafe.

3.8 The report has been considered by the Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 5th April 2012. At this meeting the Committee agreed that the report and its recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

4. Other Options

Not applicable.

5. Recommendations

5.1 In accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rule 10 (Part 4 (e) of the Constitution), the in depth scrutiny report is now attached at **Appendix 1** for approval by Cabinet. The recommendations are:

1. That the Community Safety Priority Leadership Group develop an Action Plan of delivery, detailing specific actions to take forward the [key conclusions from the review](#) for agreement and for implementation by relevant agencies. The Action Plan to focus on developing a specific youth asb strategy and include – connecting, communications / media, role of partners, access to information and incorporating young people specifically in the Alcohol Strategy.
2. That a community safety booklet be produced – as part of the awareness raising referred to in recommendation (1) above, for Councillors and the wider community (and also link in to project referred to in 3.7 above).
3. That in the longer term the work will help inform the evidence base to support for example the Health & Wellbeing Strategy and link to other work for example Youth Offending work, Alcohol Strategy etc.
4. That the Community Safety Priority Leadership Group monitor the Action Plan outcomes and provide feedback on progress to service providers and report back to scrutiny in 12 months.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Critical Priorities– Becoming an excellent and high performing organisation.

6.2 Resource Implications – The proposals contained within this report will need to be met from within existing resources.

- 6.3 Legal Implications – none.
- 6.4 People Implications – none.
- 6.5 Property Implications – none.
- 6.6 Consultation – as detailed in the report and through the scrutiny process.
- 6.7 Equalities Impact Assessment – the recommendations are geared to meet the needs of all sections of society.
- 6.8 Community Safety Implications – none.
- 6.9 Environmental Impact - none

7. **Background Papers** - None.

8. **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - In depth Scrutiny Project Final Report – “Youth anti social behaviour – perception & reality”