

## **Assisting Vulnerable Persons Strategy Summary**

The proposed PSPO covers a number of specific activities taking place in Southend town centre and seafront areas, under the following headings:

### **General Anti-Social Behaviour**

#### **Rough Sleeping causing Anti-Social Behaviour**

#### **Aggressive Begging**

#### **Soliciting for money in the street**

#### **Alcohol and Drugs**

The Council and its partners have undertaken a wide range of initiatives in recent years to tackle these issues and to support the vulnerable individuals who can become involved in these activities.

- Regular work by commissioned Outreach Services to liaise with and support homeless individuals and rough sleepers.
- A dedicated partnership Outreach support programme was undertaken during July and August 2018. This involved Outreach Services with support from the Council and Police, working with individuals in the town centre who were known to be rough sleeping, with the specific aim of introducing them into support services.
- York Road multi-agency initiative - Op Stonegate involved more than 30 partner agencies and services to help tackle a number of area based problems including town centre drinkers in York Road and a wide range of other ASB.
- Introduction of mobile toilets in the town centre to prevent urine flooding in shop fronts, especially deployed for the night time economy.
- Introduction of Purple Flag scheme to address town centre crime and disorder associated with alcohol. The Purple Flag has been awarded for the past 4 years, with a multi-agency and partnership approach to developing a vibrant and safe town centre for the night time economy.
- The Business Improvement District (BID) has introduced a team of Street Rangers to provide a visible welcoming approach to visitors to the town centre, and who support other partners in and around the town centre and central seafront areas.
- Police and partner Operation Red Bull introduced, to engage with young people drinking in and around the town centre.
- Police Operation Reflex introduced visible town centre focussed Police patrols in response to provide increased assurance in and around the town centre.
- Specific Youth Offending Team (YOT) outreach schemes in and around the Forum in last 12 months in response to an incident at the Forum in the early summer of 2018.

- Under the responsibility of the Community Safety Partnership, a specific steering group, the Community Action Group (CAG), has been set up to tackle priorities issues including town centres across Southend. The multi-agency CAG looks at implementing coordinated actions to solve some of the more complex problems that require a range of inputs from partner services.
- Police use of Knife Arches at various times and locations to identify and deter the carrying of weapons.

In October 2018, following a High Street Summit Meeting in the summer of 2018, involving the public, business representatives, Council Member representatives, as well as Council, Police and partner officers, a High Street Action Plan was implemented. The Plan included a number of partner actions that brought together the work around some of the issues being experienced, under the following broad headings: Magnetism of the Town Centre / Communications / Rough Sleeping / Street Drinking & Aggressive Begging / Enforcement. Specific actions included:

- Recruitment of a temporary Community Safety Team in October 2018 to engage with rough sleepers, street drinkers and those engaged in begging, with the aim of introducing individuals into support services. The permanent team was appointed in March 2019 and continues to engage with individuals. The team works in shifts covering 7 days per week and is operating from 8am to 8pm each day, also supporting Police and other partners as necessary.
- A multi-agency day of activity in November 2018 aimed at liaising with town centre visitors, businesses and also to liaise with those who were engaging in street drinking and begging, with the aim of introducing individuals into support services.
- Communications systems set up to enable various agencies to quickly communicate and to provide timely support to individuals who are rough sleeping, street drinking or engaging in begging, with the aim of introducing individuals into support services.
- Removal of a specific public toilet block and regeneration of an area that had become a magnet for rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour, including regular drug use, alcohol consumption and prostitution.
- Annual provision of Church Night Shelters for the homeless during the winter months to provide food and a place to sleep as well as liaise with them with the aim of introducing individuals into support services.

The Action Plan built on many of the existing actions and introduced new actions which would help to tackle some of the issues being experienced.

The Action Plan is now coordinated and monitored through the Community Action Group (CAG) which reports directly to the strategic Community Safety Partnership. Ongoing actions and new actions in response to growing issues will be regularly monitored and updated.