

# Youth anti social behaviour – perception and reality

*“Youth ASB is not the biggest issue in Southend”*



**Report of Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee  
Spring 2012**

## 1. Purpose of Report

The Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee undertook an in depth study into youth anti social behaviour, 10 – 18 age group.

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*”.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee was supported by a Project Team comprising:

- Councillor Ashley (Chairman), Burdett (Vice-Chairman), Horrigan MBE, Robertson, Byford, Wexham, Lewin, Stafford and McMahon
- Councillors Day, Woodley, Kelly and Folkard were also involved in the project.
- Officer / partner support was provided by – Carol Compton, Anita McGinley, Simon Ford, Fiona Abbott and Matt Bennett (Police).
- Facilitators - Neil Keeler and Sandra Casey.

The project team met on 4 occasions and considered a wealth of evidence, including data from neighbourhood action panels and spent considerable time scrutinising the Youth Crime Profile 2010 / 2011 which provided excellent data on the low level of youth anti social behaviour in Southend<sup>2</sup>. The project team also decided that the best way to gather evidence from stakeholders would be through holding a stakeholder event.

Local agencies, organisations and elected Councillors were invited to a dedicated stakeholder event held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Councillor Mark Flewitt, the Executive Councillor with special responsibility for Children & Learning also attended. The aim of the event was to explore 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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’*.

<sup>2</sup> The project team briefly discussed issue of lead (metal) pollution and its impact on asb and also on foetal alcohol syndrome and this being a catalyst for asb. These are being explored separately with the Director of Public Health.

## 2. Stakeholder event

The Chairman, Councillor Peter Ashley (pictured) welcomed delegates to the event and set the scene for the day. He told delegates that the topic was agreed by the full Scrutiny Committee because of concerns around anti social behaviour (asb) and a desire to see if the concerns were true or one of perception.



This was followed by presentations from Simon Ford, Partnership Manager Community Safety, Carol Compton, Group Manager Integrated Youth & Support Service and Anita McGinley, ASB Partnership Manager. Their presentation covered:

- (a) The local context, including awareness of the role played by the Community Safety Partnership.
- (b) Myths & reality – a look at beliefs and perceptions. A short DVD was also shown at this point, prepared by young people in Southend; and
- (c) Outline of current work.

A copy of the presentation is attached at **Annex 1** at the end of this report.

### *Some key figures for 2010/11:*

- ✚ Borough has 39,000 children and young people aged between 0-19 with 15,951 of these aged 10-17.
- ✚ Challenge and support project worked with 604 children and young people;
- ✚ Peak age of young people engaged in asb is 14;
- ✚ 94 % of the young people were White British;
- ✚ 52 % occurring in Central Locality;
- ✚ 22 % in West Locality;
- ✚ 26 % in East Locality;
- ✚ Peak times young people cause asb is between 5pm – 7pm;
- ✚ 69 % of the young people referred were male;
- ✚ 29 % of the young people were stopped for alcohol related reasons;
- ✚ 71 % of the young people were involved in other forms of anti social behaviour.

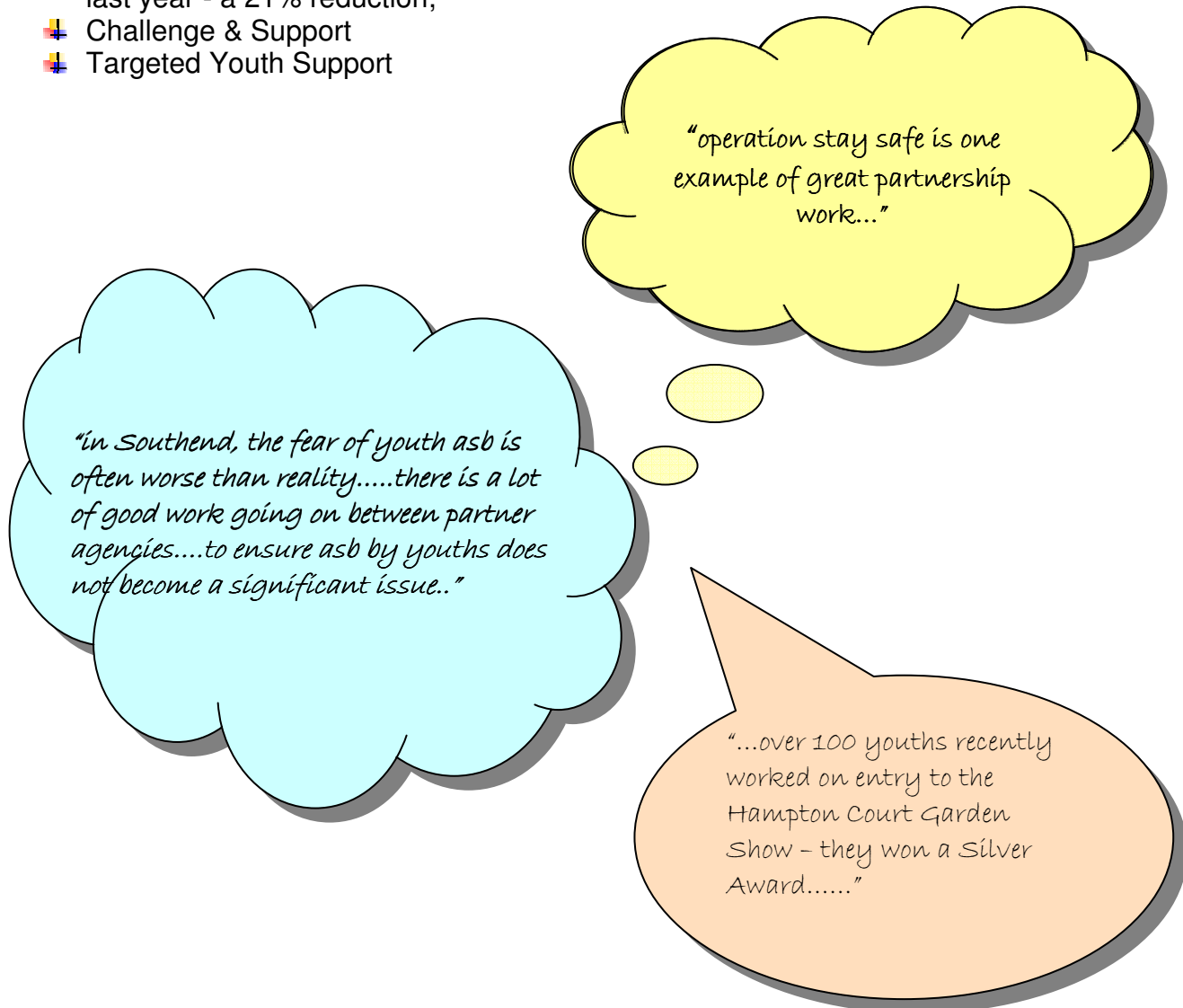
### *What happened in 2010/11:*

- ✚ 29 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- ✚ 0 anti social behaviour orders issued (last one was over 2 years ago)
- ✚ 588 Warning Letters
- ✚ 59 Home Visits
- ✚ 22 Parenting contracts

- ✚ Youth asb and youth crime police calls - reduction 16% as compared to April 09 – March 10.

*What's happening now:*

- ✚ Since April 2011 Street Engagement have undertaken 300 deployments to areas based on intelligence and engaged with 1705 children and young people;
- ✚ A total of 952 youth ASB calls were made to the police during April and Sept 2011, in comparison with 1204 call made during the same period last year - a 21% reduction;
- ✚ Challenge & Support
- ✚ Targeted Youth Support



Following the presentations, a short Q&A session followed

The Chairman then presented the main findings from the survey of ward councillors conducted as part of the scrutiny process. The survey was also made available to the Youth Mayor so that the views of the youth council could be brought into the mix. Nearly a quarter of councillors submitted their views, along with 2 members from the youth council. The aim of the survey was to establish the level of concern across the Borough / ward and asked questions around asb as it affects the person (e.g. alcohol), other people and property. The survey aimed to identify the differences between the perception

of the level of youth anti-social behaviour in the Borough and the reality. The majority of the responses indicated that youth asb was a 'minimum issue' in their ward / town, that when problems occur they are dealt with promptly and are often very 'localised'.

Some comments recorded in the survey responses:

- ❖ "groups can be threatening but actually are fine";
- ❖ "(issues)....are often minor but major concern to those very local residents"
- ❖ "(problems) are attributed to the youths....main trouble makers are me in their 20's..."
- ❖ "they make a noise, drink plays a part and the majority of residents acknowledge that they are young and they need to blow off some steam..."

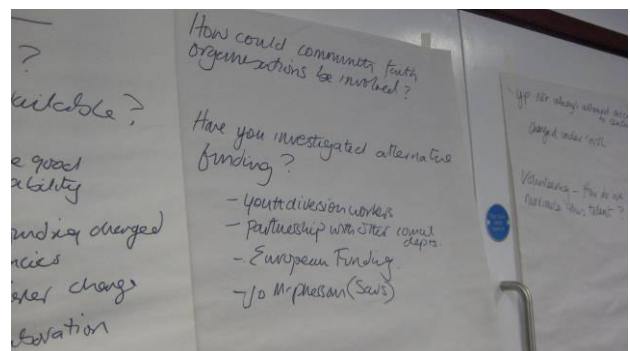
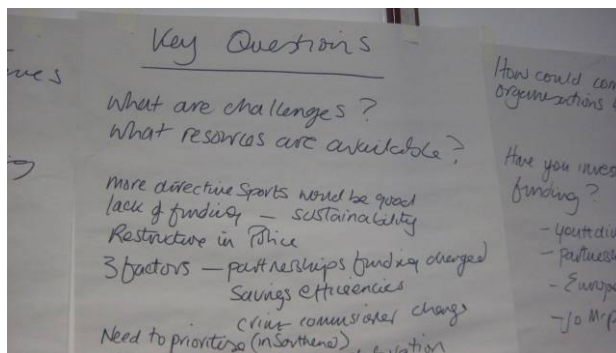
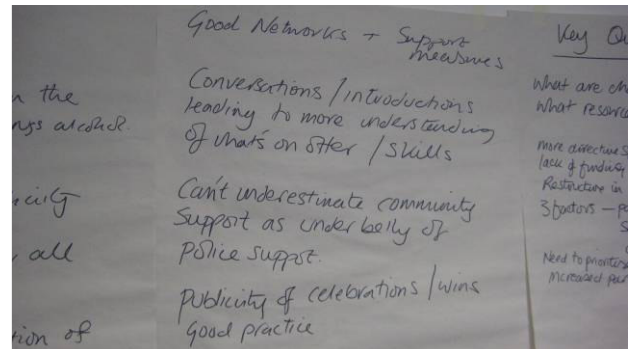
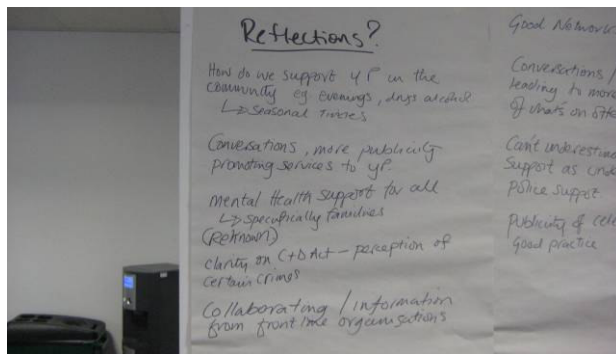
Some comments / information from young people on display at the event are attached at **Annex 2**.

### 3. Working together

The remainder of the event was led by colleagues from the People & Organisation Development Team. The session was interactive, with participants working together to talk about issues around youth anti social behaviour and to share stories.



The conversations worked towards an understanding of the issues around youth anti-social behaviour in the Borough (perceptions and reality) and the measures being undertaken by local organisations and voluntary groups in tackling it.



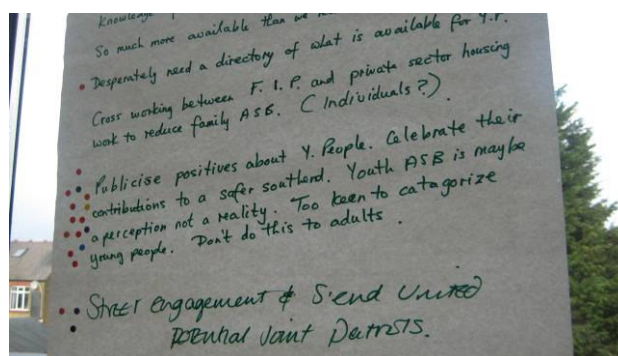
## Summary of reflections:

- 🚦 Young person where can they go, what facilities are there to give support.
- 🚦 Drugs / alcohol – when schools are out join group to not feel left out.
- 🚦 More publicity to inform young people on facilities available in town.
- 🚦 Times when ASB takes place – when walking home from school.
- 🚦 Provision of places and activities, publicise on central website area.



- ✚ Street pastors go on streets to help simmer down problems before police intervention is necessary
- ✚ Need to understand what all the agencies do to provide better services for youngsters. Lots happening, but don't always know what others are doing
- ✚ Young person – mental health of family on young person.
- ✚ Challenges ahead and need to keep hold of partnership.

The event finished with a Q&A session and group activity, using appreciative conversations, where ideas on how to develop a new youth asb strategy and what could be included in it were discussed.



## Summary of participant's comments and what needs to be included in the youth asb strategy:

<b>Connecting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• listening more - need to listen to young people more – engage more meaningfully (and act on it)</li> <li>• giving young people a voice – a 'voice in the community'</li> <li>• Conference for young people asking them 'what they want' (supported by organisations)</li> <li>• develop Youth Forum – sounding board</li> <li>• give feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop social networking</li> <li>• Organise young people events using IT / social networking?</li> <li>• Big screen on High Street (or 100 small screens)</li> <li>• DVD – develop that (using actors who are well known)</li> </ul>
<b>Partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• people need to trust / value the partnerships that are developed</li> <li>• Using existing offer (e.g. street engagement &amp; SUFC)</li> <li>• use / use of existing community centres</li> <li>• volunteers and partnership</li> <li>• partnership – need to 'know the bigger picture'.</li> </ul>
<b>Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• publicise the positives about young people ("the 99%") and celebrate contribution they make</li> <li>• perception of ASB with rest of community</li> <li>• mapping / 'marketing' of all facilities available</li> <li>• knowledge of partners work</li> <li>• create a directory of what is available for young people</li> <li>• working with parents / families as whole</li> </ul>

## 4. Conclusions and next steps

People wanted to be involved in the event and were surprised by the low numbers of youth asb. Some comments made following the event:

- ❖ *"A great chance to find out what's going on".*
- ❖ *"Good to hear views of others and what they have to offer to the community".*
- ❖ *"The meeting was very aware of the problems, the issue will be if we can move forward and make changes".*
- ❖ *"Excellent! I learned a lot of information about the other work going on in the community".*

Following the Conference, Members of the Scrutiny Project Team met to discuss how to take forward the discussions at the event and to frame recommendations. There was recognition that problems exist - as in all towns – but we need to highlight the good things that our youngsters do and spread the word that it is only the minority that cause anti social behaviour.

### Key conclusions of review:

The project team felt that the key conclusions from the review fell into 3 broad areas (with some overlap). These are:

#### 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.

## **5. Recommendations**

The recommendations link to the agreed project plan and the proposed outcomes of the project, which were to:

- inform the development of a specific youth asb strategy; and
  - produce a community safety booklet – as part of awareness raising – for Councillors and wider community.
- (a) That the Cabinet consider the in-depth scrutiny report on the anti social behaviour – 10 – 18 and agree the conclusions from the study.
  - (b) 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.
  - (c) That a community safety booklet be produced – as part of the awareness raising referred to in (b) above, for Councillors and the wider community.
  - (d) 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.
  - (e) 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.

## ANNEX 1

### Presentation at stakeholder event

#### Anti-social behaviour 10-18 year olds

Southend Community Safety Partnership



Simon Ford  
Group Manager  
Community Safety

An introduction to the  
Community Safety Partnership

Southend Community Safety Partnership



- Crime and Disorder Act 1998



Thank you!

Southend Community Safety Partnership



#### Southend CSP Structure

- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships now re labelled as Community Safety Partnerships (**CSP**)
- Statutory partners are:  
**District and Borough Councils / Police / Fire Service / PCT's and Police Authority / Probation Service**



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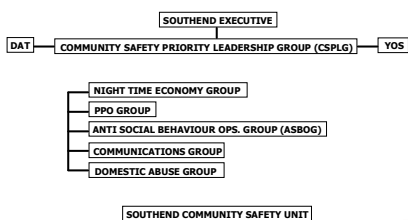
- Under Crime and Disorder Act 1998 all CSP's have a **statutory duty** to:
  - Conduct an annual **Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA)**.  
This means :
    - a) Collating all partnership data
    - b) Consulting with community and stakeholders
- With the view of identifying the **crime priorities** of the Borough
- c) Priorities need to be agreed
  - d) Partnership Plan produced



Southend Community Safety Partnership



#### Southend CSP Structure



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#### Southend Community Safety Unit

- Multi-agency seconded unit
- Based at Southend Police Station
- Action end of CSP
- Within CSU – Southend's ASB Team sit (SMAART)

Southend Community Safety Partnership



## Challenges

- Funding
- Potential changes to ASB law
- New Police Crime Commissioners to be elected (NOV 12) this may impact on the CSPs

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## Safer Priorities 11/12

- Night Time Crime in Town Centre (alcohol related)
- **Anti-Social Behaviour**
- Domestic Abuse
- High Risk Offenders (PPO's)
- Community Engagement

Southend Community Safety Partnership



## Anita McGinley ASB Partnership Manager

Myths vs Reality

Southend Community Safety Partnership



## Headlines on ASB in Southend



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## Youth perception of ASB

- The following DVD has been made by our young people of Southend
- It is what **they** think of **anti-social behaviour** in Southend...

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## Reality

**Apr – Sept 2011 reports of ASB to police**  
5011 reports received  
819 relate specifically to youth ASB (16.34%)

Youth anti-social behaviour is **not** the biggest ASB issue in Southend

Southend Community Safety Partnership



## Carol Compton

Group Manager  
Integrated Youth Support Service

Southend Community Safety Partnership



## Youth ASB

April 2010- March 2011 - 604  
Peak age of young people engaged in ASB **14**  
•94 % of the young people were White British  
•52 % occurring in Central Locality  
•22 % in West Locality  
•26 % in East Locality

- 5pm – 7pm
- 69 % of the young people referred were male
- 29 % of the young people were stopped for alcohol related reasons
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## So what did we do?

- 29 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- 0 ASBO's
- 588 Warning Letters
- 59 Home Visits
- 22 Parenting Orders

### **YOUTH ASB AND YOUTH CRIME POLICE CALLS**

- Reduction 16% as compared to April 09 – March 10

Southend Community Safety Partnership



## What's happening now?

Since April Street Engagement have undertaken **300** deployments to areas based on intelligence and engaged with **1705** children and young people

A total of **952** youth ASB calls were made to the police during April and Sept 2011, in comparison with **1204** call made during the same period last year; a **21%** reduction

Challenge & Support

YISP

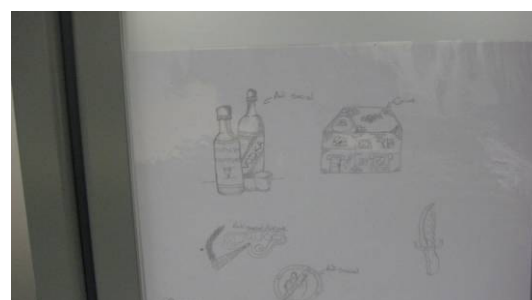
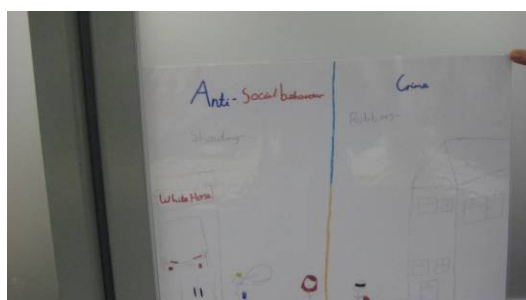
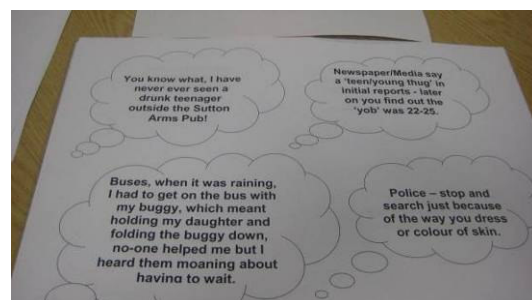
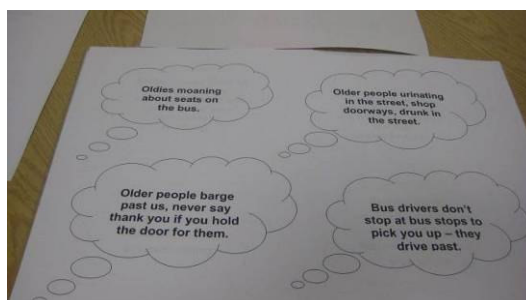
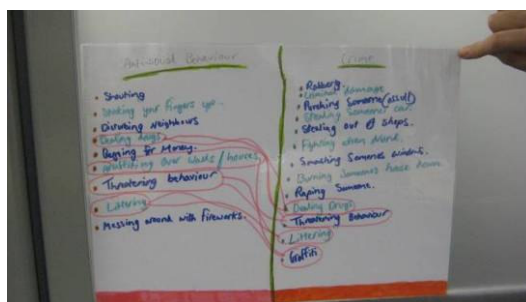
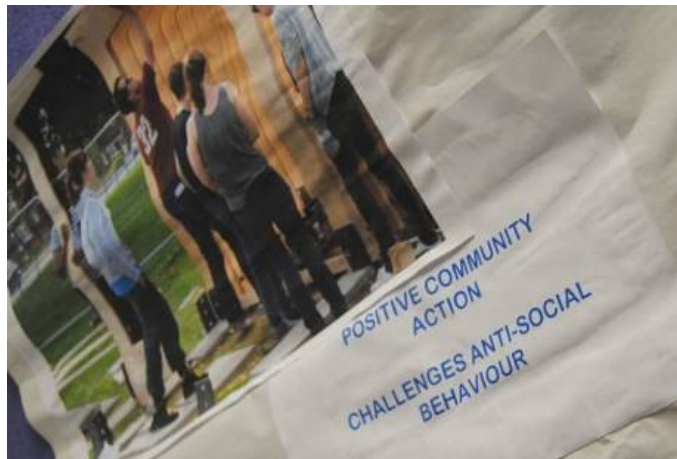
Targeted Youth Support

Southend Community Safety Partnership



## ANNEX 2

Some comments / reflections from young people on display at the event



For further information about this report please contact:

Fiona Abbott  
Project coordinator  
Legal & Democratic Services  
Support Services Directorate  
PO Box 6  
Civic Centre  
Victoria Avenue  
Southend-on-Sea  
Essex  
SS2 6ER

01702 215104

[www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk)

[fionaabbott@southend.gov.uk](mailto:fionaabbott@southend.gov.uk)