



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Parks and Leisure Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour Pilot
<b>Date:</b>	16 June 2008
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andrew Hassard, Director of Parks and Leisure
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Laura Hamill, Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator

### Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members with regard to the ongoing Safer Neighbourhood Antisocial Behaviour Pilot which commenced in Parks and Leisure in April 2007.

### Relevant Background Information

The Safer Neighbourhood Pilot originated from the Safer City Group to provide a co-ordinated, one Council approach towards tackling antisocial behaviour in agreed areas.

**Aim:** to reduce the levels of antisocial behaviour, improve the public's perception of antisocial behaviour and increase the feeling of safety when using Council facilities.

### Update

9 Action plans have been developed in full consultation with communities and agencies, linking into any other strategies or action plans for each area.  
(Appendix 1 – 9 Pilot areas)

Information gathered at consultation meetings has been drafted up into Action Plans covering the following themes:

- education and awareness;
- application of the bye-laws;
- environment;
- diversionary activities/programmes
- enforcement

Measures which have been implemented to assist with achieving a full picture of ASB and key concerns for the areas are outlined below;-

Mapping Exercise report:-

- recommended themes to include in the action plans to ensure all aspects of life and social factors are taken into consideration;
- hotspot and peak times for antisocial behaviour;
- existing diversionary provision
- key groups and organisations

**Initial finding;** Much of the diversionary provision was not being provided at the times ASB was found to be happening. As a result, many groups tailored their provision to times ASB was happening.

### Environmental

'Design Out Crime' Report - conducted by the PSNI Crime Prevention Team.

Recommendations from the Design Out Crime Report implemented to encourage community 'buy in' to development of action plans and increase the feeling of safety.

- graffiti removal
- new signage outlining bye-laws
- Defensive planting, cut back of vegetation and the pruning of trees
- Other recommendations were agreed with communities. Many have already been completed.

### Application of the bye-laws/enforcement

- The new ASB recording system has been piloted in all Parks & Leisure facilities since April 07. The incident reporting forms are submitted to Health and Safety. (*Appendix 2 – Year 1 Numbers of reported ASB incidents*)
- The Incident Reporting forms were adapted for use by police when reporting incidents regarding BCC Parks and Leisure facilities.
- Warning letters were introduced in July 07 and are sent to those involved in ASB /in breach of the Bye-laws. A spreadsheet of these names is being up-dated regularly so that we can monitor any repeat offenders for further action.
- This information is shared with other agencies at the ASB Forums.
- Monthly Parks and Leisure/PSNI meetings for north, south, east and west to deal with current and issues arising. Due to the benefits of this contact other sections within BCC have requested access to the meetings.
- High Visibility Operations targeting Off-Licenses, Parks/Leisure Facilities and other hotspots. In partnership with PSNI, ASB Pilot, Community Safety's Get Home Safe Project, Regulatory Services.

- During the ASB Pilot, Park Rangers and the Police have been coordinating patrols in Parks. Police Neighbourhood Teams and Response crews now have keys to Parks in order to gain access to 'Closed' Parks after the hours of closing.
- Park Rangers – Training; Report writing, personal safety, conflict resolution and techniques for approaching young people. The training was carried out in partnership with PSNI, BELB, Mediation NI and the Community Safety Roaming Wardens Scheme.
- New uniforms are also being discussed for increased visibility.
- Antisocial Behaviour Forums - Allows us to build up a full picture on individuals who have become known to the Police, NIHE or BCC so that the appropriate action can be decided upon and the lead agency agreed on.

**Casework** – The ASB Coordinator investigates incidents for follow up action where names and addresses or other details about perpetrators are available:-

- Warning letters
- Sharing of information with the ASB Forum.
- Work with the Police Liaison Sergeant to BCC and relevant police teams to clarify information on individual cases and build up a picture of behaviour.
- Coordination of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts etc. in partnership with the PSNI ASBO Officer and Neighbourhood Police.
- This process will be used to facilitate applications for ASBO or further prosecution where appropriate.
- Liaison with Legal Services.
- Implementation and tightening up of identified actions in the action plans to deal with seasonal escalations in ASB.

#### Education/awareness

- Updates and 'good news' stories to the newspapers and radio by elected members and ASB Coordinator, emphasising the one council approach links to the Safer Belfast Agenda.
- Web-site outlines the aims and objectives of the Pilot. This also includes an e-mail address for the public to contact the Council regarding antisocial behaviour in Parks/Leisure facilities, [asb@belfastcity.gov.uk](mailto:asb@belfastcity.gov.uk) . This is being up-dated to include the Partnership Action Plans for each area.
- The ASB Coordinator has been visiting schools to inform and advise pupils of all ages about the consequences of engaging in antisocial behaviour in BCC Parks and Leisure facilities. This has also resulted in new recruits to the BCC Youth Forum and raised interest in the Parks educational and outreach projects since talks also included positive ways in which young people can contribute and become involved in moulding facilities and activities for their age group.

## Diversions Activities/Programmes

The antisocial behaviour pilot has been providing assistance to groups within the pilot areas who wish to develop and implement activities/programmes targeting the problem of antisocial behaviour in the area.

## Partnership Action Plans

Partnership Action Plans have now all been signed off with communities in each area. The actions are being monitored and reviewed regularly through meetings with all those involved in the development to ensure the action plans continue to address the needs of the area.

The Plans have been received positively with recognition that a lot of work has been done within the past year and visible changes have been made. Communities are very keen that the relationship building, the area up-dates, monitoring and review of the plans remains ongoing to ensure that targets are being met and that identified actions remain appropriate to the current issues. We continue to work with residents, Friends Groups, other community/voluntary groups and other agencies within each area in order to ensure that this carried out.

## Enforcement News

- Warning letters - 98 sent to individuals involved in antisocial behaviour in Parks and Leisure facilities. Some of these have also been backed up with an ASBO warning letter from the ASB Forum. The majority of parents receiving a letter about their child have called the ASB Coordinator to gain more information on the possible consequences of antisocial behaviour and expressed gratitude for the early warning so that they may talk to their child about their behaviour.
- **Acceptable Behaviour Contracts** - in keeping accurate record of warning letters, it can be seen that a number of names have been re-appearing due to continued antisocial behaviour. At present we, in partnership with police, are in the process of setting up Acceptable Behaviour Contracts with 12 individuals. This is a voluntary contract used as an early intervention method for curtailing ASB and guiding the individuals behaviour into more positive ways of spending their time.
- A number of prosecutions are linked to the Pilot areas as a result of the partnership working;-
  - **Woodvale Park** – a scrambler user was caught and prosecuted.
  - **Belfast Castle Estate** – Youth Conferencing was carried out with a young person who was drunk and disorderly.
  - **Waterworks Park** – an individual was prosecuted for being in possession of a petrol bomb (possibly intended for the ducks and swans due to the behaviour at the waters edge)
  - **Falls Park** – 2 scramblers were seized weekend of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May.
  - **Orangefield/Greenville Park** – prosecution pending for an adult involved in arson.

- ACC McCausland has agreed to allocate dedicated police resources to work in Parks across Belfast with BCC staff for the month of June and possibly over the summer months.
- This joint work will continue to contribute to the strong message of zero tolerance towards antisocial behaviour.

### **Evaluation**

As agreed at Committee an evaluation of Year 1 of the ASB Pilot will be carried out – a specification for this evaluation is currently under development. It is anticipated that this will be conducted independently over the next few months. A report will be presented to committee on completion of the evaluation.

### **Resource Implications**

There are no resource implications at this time.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

### **Key to Abbreviations**

ASB – Antisocial Behaviour  
ASBO – Antisocial Behaviour Order  
PSNI – Police Service Northern Ireland  
ABC – Acceptable Behaviour Contract  
ACC – Assistant Chief Constable

### **Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – The 9 agreed Pilot areas  
Appendix 2 – Numbers of reported ASB Incidents in Year 1 of the ASB Pilot

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