

TITLE OF REPORT: ANTI – SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AT WINDMILL HILL**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE****1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the committee on how anti-social behaviour issues at Windmill Hill are to be addressed by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).
- 1.2 Following the report to the Area Committee meeting on March 18th the CDRP's Responsible Authority Group (RAG) have reviewed relevant statistics at both Windmill Hill, where a Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) is being considered, and Royston, where a DPPO is in place.
- 1.3 This report sets out a range of measures which can be put in place in the short term at Windmill Hill. Work on a DPPO will be progressed but there are statutory timetables to be followed which prevent it's immediate introduction.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the March meeting of the Area Committee, members received a report regarding Anti-Social behaviour issues in the Windmill Hill Area of Hitchin.
- 3.2 Members were advised that the councils Responsible Authority Group would consider the matter at its meeting on 16th April. RAG considered the following:
 - Analysis of all anti – social behaviour and crime in the Windmill Area;
 - A list of all possible interventions that should be considered as a response;
 - An interim review of the Royston Designated Public Place Order.

3.3 The following key points were considered:

3.3.1 DPPOs take several months to introduce due to the length of the consultation process and that in this particular case, due to concerns around displacement, the consultation around the actual parameters of the DPPO will be extensive.

3.3.2 There are cost implications involved and funding will need to be sought for some aspects of the proposals. Some funding is available via the RAG.

3.4 A summary of the information considered under the three headings is set out below.

Analysis of anti-social behaviour at Windmill Hill

3.5 Using Police data for the period 1st April 2005 to 31st October 2007 the crime analyst concluded that:

- There were 26 violent offences on Windmill Hill, 7 of which are recorded as aggravated by alcohol (26.9%);
- 12 robbery offences have occurred on Windmill Hill, where known age groups for offenders at the times of the offence are between 15-17 years old;
- It should be noted that a very insignificant number of anti-social incidents have been in relation to street drinking, 8 during the period analysed. (*Note; crime data in this area is not clear as often the perpetrator is not recorded as drunk, but they may have been*);
- The peak time for incidents and offences is on a Friday with a peak time of 10pm;
- There has been a higher number of incidents and offences on Windmill Hill during the summer months;
- The months of April and July have been the peak periods for incidents, this time period coincides with both Easter and Summer school holidays;
- The youths gathering, often in large numbers, cause a clear disturbance to residents who live close to the area. It is clear from reading the logs that local residents and people passing the area are intimidated by some of the actions and behaviour that occur on Windmill Hill;
- Between 01/04/2006 and 25/03/2008 there were 97 alcohol related stops on Windmill Hill and 9 at the Dell.

3.6 During the last 2½ years there have been a significant number of criminal activities in and around Windmill Hill. It is anticipated that this problem is likely to be exacerbated this year as internet sites, such as My Space and Face Book are encouraging young people from outside the district to travel into the town and meet at Windmill Hill.

3.7. The Dell area of Windmill Hill is where children convene, out of sight. Used condoms, empty alcohol containers and signs of drug use are apparent at the site. The Police believe that young adults are supplying alcohol to children. The Police already have the power to confiscate alcohol from young people and can seize alcohol from adults that they suspect will be supplied to under aged persons - but that suspicion must exist and be reasonable. A DPPO would give the Police the power to confiscate alcohol from everyone within the designated area.

List of interventions

3.8 Members of the RAG have agreed to proceed with the following list of interventions subject to suitable funding/resources being available:

- 1) Test purchasing operations with trading standards are scheduled to take place throughout the summer months;
- 2) PH paper alcohol test. The PH paper identifies that alcohol is present, therefore youths can not pretend they have a can of non alcoholic drink. Police Officers are already using PH paper to identify underage drinking;
- 3) Anti Social Behaviour Orders and Anti Social Behaviour Contracts are considered for offenders. Last month 3 Anti - Social Behaviour Contracts (ABC) were issued and a further 2 youths have been identified for ABC. This work is on-going;
- 4) Introduction of an age awareness scheme to local off licences 'Off Watch'. This action is included within the Community Safety Action Plan and work is scheduled to take place in this area by the community policing team;
- 5) Notice board erected on site detailing diversionary activities. This is being progressed by Inspector Julie Wheatley and Community Development Officer Margaret Bracey;
- 6) Dispersal orders. (Note - These orders only apply for a short time period and for persons under the age of 16 only.) Inspector Julie Wheatley will look to implement these when appropriate;
- 7) Targeted high visible patrols. This is already underway;
- 8) Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices for being drunk on a highway. The Police will make use of these powers;
- 9) Youth diversionary activity. The RAG is currently in the process of agreeing what diversionary activity to support. £3000 of funds is to be made available;
- 10) Designating a DPPO. Consultation will commence and be progressed by the Community Safety Team NHDC. As mentioned above due to time constraints it will not be possible to have a DPPO in place for this "summer season", however the combination of the various activities listed at 3.7 should help to control any issues. RAG members acknowledged there is a possibility that the problem may be displaced to Bancroft Park. The answer to this may be that two zones should be implemented at the same time, one at Windmill Hill and one at Bancroft Park. The RAG will be fully involved in agreeing boundaries/zones and will investigate this suggestion further;
- 11) Design out Crime. Provide additional lighting. The cost is estimated at £35,000. However, it should be noted that the lighting may have the opposite effect and attract more people to the area. If lighting were introduced additional CCTV coverage could be used at the top of the hill. Community Development Officer Margaret Bracey progressing funding/logistics. Clearly this is the most difficult option to resource.

Interim review of the Royston Designated Public Place Order

3.9 Using Police data for the period 1st October 2005 to 28th March 2008, the RAG concluded that it is still too early to gain a true picture of the impact of the Royston DPPO successes.

- 3.10 Initial analysis showed that there has been no identifiable reduction in anti – social behaviour or alcohol related crime as a direct result of the DPPO. There is a reduction in violent crime within the DPPO and anecdotal evidence suggests that the DPPO does send out a message that the CDRP are actively taking action to combat alcohol related ASB/crime. At this stage there are no obvious signs of displacement, although Baldock Street does remain vulnerable.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The power to designate a public place in its area as one where alcohol cannot be consumed is part of a package of measures put in place nationally to attempt to reduce alcohol related crime. In the Crime Related Toolkit entitled ‘Alcohol Related Crime’ anti-social behaviour from underage drinking is separately identified to those measures designed to tackle similar behaviour in adults.
- 4.2 The action plan to target underage drinking includes ‘proof of age’ schemes, alcohol education, alternative labelling of alcohol and wider use of the powers under the Confiscation of Alcohol (Young Persons) Act 1997. In addition the Licensing Act 2003 also creates offences for the sale of alcohol to or on behalf of children
- 4.3 The introduction of measures for the designation of DPPOs under section 13 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 and more recently alcohol disorder zones under the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (to tackle more serious alcohol related crime and disorder) appear to target adult related anti-social behaviour. A DPPO really does no more than replicate the right to seize alcohol from adults, similar to the powers under the Confiscation of Alcohol (Young Persons) Act 1997.
- 4.4 The Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 also introduced a new power (section 27) for a police officer to issue a direction to an individual requiring him to leave a locality for up to 48 hours if he is likely to cause or contribute to alcohol related crime or disorder in the locality. In addition the police have existing powers to issue on the spot penalties for being drunk in the highway or other public place (section 12 Licensing Act 1872) and for disorderly behaviour while drunk in a public place (section 91 Criminal Justice Act 1967).

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost of both Youth Diversion Activities (estimated at £3000) and the implementation of a DPPO (estimated at £3000) will be funded from the RAG’s partnership funding.
- 5.2 The cost of lighting (estimated at £35,000) and additional CCTV (estimated at £3000) will be investigated further by the Community Development Officer Margaret Bracey.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Hitchin Area Committee notes:
- a) The list of interventions (referred to in 3.7) are being implemented subject to the resource constraints explained in the report.
 - b) The intention to implement DPPO arrangements and that the necessary public consultation will now commence.

- 6.2 It is also recommended that the Area Committee agrees to receive regular updates on these matters from the Local Community Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To advise Hitchin Area Committee of the work being put in place to address issues in the Windmill Hill Area. The recommendations also suggest a mechanism for regular updates to the Area Committee via the Community Police Inspector Julie Wheatley.

8. CONTACT OFFICERS

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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

NHDC Designated Public Place Order Guidance – Papers held by the Community Safety Team.