

Police Oracle News Item
“Councils, Not Police, Deal With Antisocial Behaviour”

Recommendation(s):

- (i) For the Community Engagement Committee to note and endorse the contents of this report.
- (ii) For members of the Community Engagement Committee to promote the contribution of local agencies and organisations together with the police in the resolution of Antisocial Behaviour issues identified by local communities.

Introduction/Summary

1. At an inquest following the deaths of Fiona Pilkington and her disabled daughter Francecca Hardwick, who had been tormented by groups of youths for many years, Superintendent Steve Harrod, head of Criminal Justice at the Leicestershire Constabulary spoke of how the Police and Council officials work in partnership. He went on to say, “I’m not sure people do know that low-level antisocial behaviour is mainly the responsibility of the council.” Together with the process and procedural concerns raised by Olivia Davidson, the assistant deputy coroner who presided over the inquest, it seems that this use of words has been seized upon by the media to feed the enormous public interest in this particular case of antisocial behaviour which resulted in such a tragic outcome.
2. This paper sets out the position of the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary in relation to the issues raised by the Police Oracle news article, “Councils, Not Police, Deal With Antisocial Behaviour”.

Introduction to Antisocial Behaviour

3. The definition of anti social behaviour is broad, allows a range of activities to be included and reflects the subjective nature of Antisocial Behaviour.
4. People’s understanding of what constitutes Antisocial Behaviour is determined by a series of factors including context, location, community tolerance and quality of life expectations.
5. Examples of Antisocial Behaviour can range from children playing football in the street, inconvenient parking to drunken behaviour, begging and drug. It can also include dropping litter and fly tipping. Whilst the general public perception that anti social behaviour is criminal activity, some behaviour will fall short of this.

The response to Antisocial Behaviour

7. The Devon & Cornwall Constabulary tackles Antisocial Behaviour through Neighbourhood Policing Teams working with local communities in partnership with local agencies and organisations. Our priority is to balance swift visible enforcement action with long term sustainable solutions. The police perspective brings a focus on public protection, action, enforcement and supports efforts of education, prevention and reduction. Our Neighbourhood Teams are ideally placed to intervene early, work with partners and communities to develop sustainable solutions. In addition to enforcing the criminal law Neighbourhood Policing Teams play a crucial role in many other enforcement actions to tackle Antisocial Behaviour. Such as issuing penalty notices, providing and giving evidence in support of Antisocial Behaviour Injunctions or possession action by Local Authorities or Social Landlords and applying for Antisocial Behaviour Orders as a lead agency.

9. The partnership approach at the local level ensures that a wider range of resources and powers are available to respond to Antisocial Behaviour. These partners can include Education, Social Services, Health, Environmental Health, The Youth Service and Housing Associations. For example in response to the problem of underage drinking a typical response may well involve the Police in disrupting the behaviour, confiscating alcohol and gathering intelligence. Passing any relevant information to the local schools to allow them to facilitate a response, alerting the health authority as to the need for local input regarding the drug and alcohol service, working with the Youth Service and local Councillors to help provide viable alternative activities and perhaps working with Local Authority Licensing Officers to tackle underage sales of alcohol.

Conclusion

11. Devon & Cornwall Constabulary tackle Antisocial Behaviour together with partners. There are many occasions where it is necessary for us to take the lead. There will be incidents where we support our partners in building a case. Where the anti social behaviour impinges on the core role of policing e.g. enforcement of the criminal law and bringing people to justice The Police Authority can be assured we will take every measure we can as the lead agency.

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