

**Final Report of the
Anti-Social Behaviour
Task Group**

A report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

December 2008

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1. Foreword

As I write this forward I have just heard reports of the United Nation's criticism of the way that the UK treats young people; in particular how young people are demonised by society. It is sad to reflect that it was similar concerns about our own area and policies that led Overview and Scrutiny to establish this task group. Against a background of calls for greater use of ASBOs and the banning of young people over 14 from our play areas it seemed appropriate for the Council to look at just how effective its reaction to anti-social behaviour was.

The Task Group report highlights the fact that anti-social behaviour is not a 'young person' problem. It affects all groups in society and is perpetrated by all age ranges. The report points out that the area is a safe and pleasant place to live - and that the perception and fear on anti-social behaviour is greater than the actual incidence of it. Noise nuisance and speeding traffic feature highly amongst the most reported problems reported by the public.

The report outlines where the Council's own procedure in handling reports of anti-social behaviour could be improved. It also proposes that a preventative approach could be taken in order to reduce anti-social behaviour caused by boredom. Through being creative, resources can be used to add value to community life -rather than just be spent clearing up the results of problems.

I would like to thank the councillors, officers, organisations and members of the public who have been involved in the production of this report. I would particularly like to thank the Rev. Tim Horobin, who chaired the public meetings; without his willingness to be involved the work would not have been possible. Can I commend its recommendations to the Cabinet.

Councillor Stuart Langhorn
Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Lancaster City Council

2. Introduction

When the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to set up a task group to look at anti-social behaviour in the Lancaster area, they decided an evidence gathering task group that met at different locations across the district, and invited members of the public to come along and voice their concerns, to tell of their experiences of anti-social behaviour, would be a good way for this task group to gather evidence. They also decided to have a Chairman for the public meetings that wasn't connected to the City Council and the Rev Tim Horobin accepted the challenge and chaired the public meetings.

The public meetings took place in Lancaster Town Hall, Carnforth Railway Station, Heysham High School and Halton Community Centre, unfortunately we didn't have a lot of members of the public attending the meetings, particularly the one in Halton.

The people who did come along shared their experiences with us, some had stories of vandalism and verbal abuse caused by people of all ages, all their views have been taken into consideration when putting together these recommendations together. It has been an interesting task group to chair, I have enjoyed listening to the views of the people in our district, and the officers of the Council who have contributed to this report.

I do hope we can act on the recommendations, and make a difference to the people in our district, whose lives are being made a misery by a minority who seem to have no regard for decent people. Every one has a right to walk down the street in safety and not to have their home or possessions vandalized.

Councillor Joyce Pritchard
Chairman of the Anti-social Behaviour Task Group
Lancaster City Council

3. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 1

That consideration be given to establishing funding to enable the creation of a part-time post in the MAPs Office to deal with co-ordination between Council Services and with partner agencies of reported incidents of anti-social behaviour, as an item of growth. This could link closely to the part-time Domestic Violence Co-ordinator post.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That, as part of the agreement for the Council's part funding of 4 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) (out of a total of 20) totalling £44,000 per year, the Council be provided with evidence that they are working to enforce the Council's byelaws and issuing fixed penalty notices to ensure the authority receives value for money.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the City Council endorses the 'Restorative Justice' Programme and explores future involvement in the initiative in conjunction with Lancashire Constabulary where resources permit, applying this process to cases falling under the Council's jurisdiction.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That a single form for reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) be developed as part of the re-design of the City Council's website, using Wyre Borough Council's form as an example of best practice.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That all PCSOs be issued with the City Council's Customer Service Centre telephone numbers, and possibly other useful numbers such as Lancashire County Council Customer Services, to inform residents who raise queries with them.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That the City Council seeks additional and significant funding from the LDLSP via the Children and Young People Thematic Group to provide sufficient 'diversionary activities' to enable young people who are vulnerable, at risk or disadvantaged, to have the opportunity to participate in positive activities designed to prevent a range of negative outcomes. Furthermore that a report be brought back to Members and budgets be updated accordingly.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That Council Housing Services incorporate the findings of the Anti-social Behaviour Task Group when they review their published statutory "Anti-social Behaviour Policy Statement" and "Summary of Policies and Procedures" in 2009.

RECOMMENDATION 8

That the Council investigates the possibility of providing PCSOs with the powers to issue parking tickets in particular with regard to areas outside schools.

RECOMMENDATION 9

That in the development of the Local Development Framework the City Council encourages development of a policy aimed at locating areas for young people (over 14 yrs) to frequent in agreeable locations, in light of their exclusion from local playing areas.

RECOMMENDATION 10

That Cabinet formally note the comments of those who attended Task Group meetings and provided comments to the Council website and request responses from the relevant Services to the issues raised, and these be reported back to Cabinet for further consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 11

That Services responsible for responding to Anti-social Behaviour investigate developing a joint approach with regard to prevention and enforcement policies in combating Anti-social Behaviour, and a Corporate Policy be adopted in order to ensure clarity of the Council's prevention and enforcement policy. This should include all types of anti-social behaviour including dog fouling, littering and infringement of alcohol free zones.

RECOMMENDATION 12

That at manager discretion, all reports with probable impact on Community Safety be forwarded to the Community Safety Officer for comments prior to consideration of draft reports by Corporate Management Team and publication of Agenda.

RECOMMENDATION 13

That Cabinet notify Overview and Scrutiny of any further work on specific items they wish to be carried out as a result of the findings contained within this report.

4. ROLE OF TASK GROUP

4.1 Terms of Reference

- (1) To establish and highlight the main themes surrounding antisocial behaviour from the evidence gathered in public meetings and from officers.
- (2) To highlight the areas that the Council can improve in its approach to combating anti-social behaviour.
- (3) To establish how the Council Services work in partnership in establishing, enforcing and monitoring measures taken to combat anti-social behaviour.
- (4) To evaluate measures taken within localities to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- (5) To investigate how incidents of anti-social behaviour are reported by members of the public and/or Ward Councillors, how that information is shared and the action that is taken as a result.
- (6) To produce a report with recommendations to improve the Council's internal approach to anti-social behaviour. This may include the isolation of particular areas that may require further investigation.

4.2 Membership of the Task Group

Councillors Joyce Pritchard (Chairman), Mike Greenall, Janice Hanson, Val Histed, Roger Plumb, Robert Redfern, Catriona Stamp, Morgwn Trolinger, Peter Williamson with administrative support from Liz Bateson (Democratic Services).

The public meetings were also chaired by Reverend Tim Horobin of Blackburn Diocese and the Task Group would like to extend their extreme gratitude for his involvement.

The Task Group gratefully acknowledges the contribution and evidence freely provided by:-

- Yakub Patel, Marsh Community Centre
- Paul Ireland, Ridge Community Centre
- Jim Edmonds, Local Authority Liaison Officer, Lancashire Constabulary
- Rebecca O'Beirne, Community Safety Partnership Analyst

Officers of the City Council:-

- Allan Cooke, System Administrator, Environmental Health

- Michelle Emery, Community Safety Officer
- Vince Ravetta, Environmental Enforcement Officer
- Nick Howard, Environmental Protection Manager
- Mark Woodhead, Technical Assistant
- Sue Clowes, Senior Environmental Health Officer
- John Deacon, Project Director (Community Engagement)
- Steve Wearing, Principal Licensing Officer
- Chris Hanna, Principal Housing Management Officer
- Lynda Duff, Children and Young People's Manager
- Richard Hammond, Cultural Development Manager

The Task Group would also like to thank Heysham High School, Halton Community Centre and Carnforth Railway Station for the hospitality extended to the Task Group during the meetings held at their premises, and staff and pupils at Morecambe High School for providing such welcoming hospitality to the Task Group and Council Officers.

4.3 Meetings

Date of Meeting	Who gave evidence?	Issues scrutinised
13.03.08	Formal meeting with Task Group Members and Officers of the City Council with involvement in anti-social behaviour issues.	Agreement of Terms of Reference and methodology of working.
27.03.08	Public meeting at Lancaster Town Hall.	Seeking views of stakeholders on issues within the terms of reference.
09.04.08	Public meeting at Carnforth Railway Station.	Seeking views of stakeholders on issues within the terms of reference.
22.04.08	Public meeting at Heysham High	Seeking views of stakeholders

	School.	on issues within the terms of reference.
30.04.08	Public meeting at Halton Community Centre attended by Councillor Paul Woodruff.	Seeking views of stakeholders on issues within the terms of reference.
20.05.08	Formal meeting with the Children and Young People's Manager, Environmental Protection Manager, Community Safety Officer, Principal Housing Manager and the Community Engagement Project Director.	Meeting with Officers and evidence collating – draft report
15.09.08	Meeting at Lancaster Town Hall attended by Community Safety Officer and Councillor Eileen Blamire, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Safety	Agreement of Final Report

4.4 Site Visits

Task Group Members took part in a Year 7 (aged 11-12yrs) Citizenship lesson with pupils from Morecambe High School. The lesson included the children's perceptions of anti-social behaviour and asked their views on how it may be combated.

A further visit was made to Morecambe High School to discuss the same issues with Year 10 pupils (aged 14-15yrs).

4.5 Documentary Evidence Considered

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, Chapter 38, Office of Public Sector Information

The RESPECT Action Plan, Home Office

Taking Action: Tackling Anti-social Behaviour – A Toolkit for Environmental Health Practitioners, The Home Office

Innovative Practice in Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour – Guidance for members of Crime Reduction Partnerships, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Neighbour Nuisance and Anti-social Behaviour, The Local Government Ombudsman

RESPECT - Standard for Housing Management, Council Housing Services,
Department for Communities and Local Government

Local Authorities and their Community Safety Role, APSE Membership
Resources

Crime Reduction and Community Safety: The crucial role of the new local
performance framework

Lancaster City Council Documents:-

Lancaster District Community Safety Partnership Anti-Social Behaviour
Strategy

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Statement, Council Housing Services

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, Council Housing Services

Corporate Plan 2007/2008, Lancaster City Council

Corporate Plan 2008/2009, Lancaster City Council

Local newspapers including:-

The Visitor, *'Give us CCTV to save us from 8 year-old yobs'*, published 14th
May 2008

Lancaster Guardian, *'Police still on hunt for train yobs'*, published 2nd May
2008

Lancaster Guardian, *'Arrests follow pub bother'*, published 2nd May 2008

Websites

<http://www.communities.gov.uk>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/education>

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/anti-social-behaviour>

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/ukpga_20030038_en_1

5. STATUS OF THE REPORT

This report is the work of the Anti-social Behaviour Task Group, on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and contains opinions gathered in the course of the investigation and therefore where opinions are expressed it should be pointed out that they are not necessarily those of Lancaster City Council.

While we have sought to draw on this review to make recommendations and suggestions that are positive in improving the Council's community role, our work has been designed solely for the purpose of discharging our terms of reference agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Accordingly, our work cannot be relied upon to identify every area of strength, weakness or opportunity for improvement.

This report is addressed to Lancaster City Council's **Cabinet/Council although the Task Group recognises that some of the recommendations are of an operational matter and would request that these be considered by the appropriate officers.**

The Task Group take no responsibility for any Member acting in their individual capacities or to other third parties acting on it.

6. Background and Context

6.1 The Task Group was established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at Lancaster City Council on 5th September 2007 following a referral from Full Council.

At its meeting on 17th July 2007 Full Council considered a report regarding byelaws for the District's play areas. It was subsequently resolved to adopt a number of byelaws which included the prohibition of over 14 yr olds from play areas unless they were supervising a child. However, some Members expressed concern over regulating the new byelaws and so it was also resolved, "That Overview & Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider the issue of byelaw enforcement."

In consideration of this Overview and Scrutiny requested that the issue be broadened to include all anti-social behaviour across the district and at its meeting on 5th September 2007 it was agreed:-

"That an evidence gathering task group be established to consider the issue of anti-social behaviour in the district."

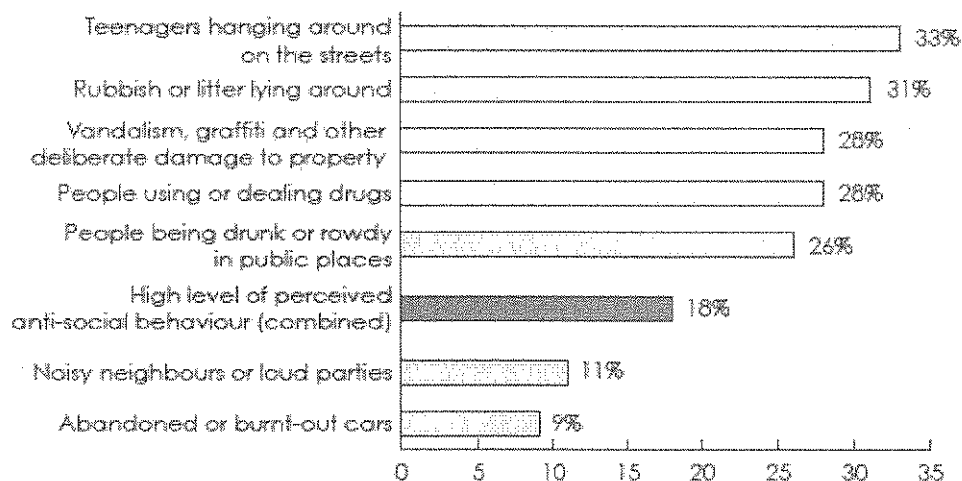
The first meeting of the Anti-social Behaviour Task Group took place on 13th March 2008 following a number of pre-meetings and research exercises.

6.2 Summary of the topic

The British Crime Survey demonstrated an improvement in anti-social behaviour between 2002/03 and 2005/06 (and this figure remained stable in 2006/07). Of the 7 strands of anti-social behaviour, the most common perceived types of anti-social behaviour were teenagers hanging around on the streets, rubbish and litter flying around and vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property. This is shown in the diagram below:-

Perceptions of anti-social behaviour

Proportion of people perceiving anti-social behaviour to be a problem in their area, 2006/07 BCS



Source: Crime in England and Wales 2006/07, Home Office



Examples of Graffiti were among the examples of anti social behaviour noted by members of the Canals Task Group during their evidence gathering site visits.

A survey conducted in 2004 has shown speeding traffic, rubbish, litter and dog and teenagers hanging around on the streets to be the issues which have the largest effect on residents' quality of life. This is shown in the table below:-

Perceptions of anti-social behaviour: percentage of households saying each has 'some effect' or a 'big effect' on their quality of life:

Speeding traffic	55%
Rubbish, litter or dog mess lying around	54%
Teenagers hanging around on the streets	47%
People being drunk or rowdy in public places	46%
Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	40%
People using or dealing drugs	34%
People being insulted, pestered or intimidated in the street	29%
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	25%
Conflicts or disputes between neighbours	22%
Abandoned or burnt out cars	16%
People being attacked or harassed because of their skin colour, ethnic origin, or religion	13%

Source: Scottish Crime and Victimisation Survey 2004

The importance of local authority front line services, such as street scene services, in dealing with community safety issues is clearly evidenced in the above surveys, and was affirmed by the Task Group's public consultations. Councils are at the heart of developing and delivering on community safety.

The emphasis on managing community safety at a local level will enable local government to build on existing arrangements, such as the use of PCSOs and Street Wardens in tackling the community safety agenda. Encouraging neighbourhood management teams to develop links with neighbourhood policing, so that neighbourhood wardens, street wardens, PCSOs and local police work as part of an integrated team will improve responsiveness to

communities, and this has already been demonstrated with great success by the City Council in the neighbourhood management pilots in Poulton and the West End of Morecambe. The Task Group heavily endorses the work carried out by both of those teams.

6.3 Commendations of work carried out in the Lancaster District

The Anti-social Behaviour Task Group would like to record its recognition of the many positive initiatives taking place across the Lancaster District to reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and promote stronger communities.

Langridge Estate in Westgate, Morecambe and Ryelands Estate in Lancaster won a £1000 grant each to reinvest back into their communities in 2006. They won the awards for "Taking a Stand" against anti-social behaviour in their community. "Taking a Stand" is part of the government's Respect agenda.

Ryelands Tenants Action Group worked with Lancaster City Council throughout the regeneration of their estate which started in 2000. Part of the regeneration involved providing exciting and vibrant play facilities for the young people of the estate. Young people were consulted from the start and have continued to participate in making the facilities their own.

Langridge Estate Tenants and Residents Association have been working in partnership with the council's housing service and the police to tackle a problem with young people causing nuisance and serious anti-social behaviour on their estate.

As a result of the partnership working the perpetrators of the anti-social behaviour were served with anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) which prevented the perpetrators from continuing to cause a nuisance.

7. FINDINGS

7.1 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)

Anti-Social Behaviour Orders or ASBOs were introduced in 1999 to combat serious and persistent anti-social behaviour. The Order is designed to prevent the defendant from doing anything specified within it, such as be present in certain areas or be outdoors after a certain time, and a breach can attract a penalty of up to five years imprisonment.

Section 1E (amended) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides that before making an application for an ASBO, a chief officer of police or any other relevant authority (for example the British Transport Police or a registered social landlord) shall consult the council for the local government area in which the person in relation to whom the application is to be made resides or appears to reside. As a result the Council has a direct role in the issuing of ASBOs across the district.

The BBC website reported on 8th May 2008 that the level of breached ASBOs had increased between 2005 and 2006 from 47% to 49%. However, the overall number of the orders issued for anti-social behaviour issues had fallen from 4,123 in 2005 to 2,706 in 2006, which the Home Office claims is down to the wider use of "early intervention" procedures. Early intervention techniques are carried out by local authorities, police and magistrates and include acceptable behaviour contracts, parenting orders and individual support orders.

There is some difficulty in duly enforcing the contents of specific ASBOs as simply being in the wrong street may be considered a breach but this evidently does not warrant sending someone into the prison system. The guidance to magistrates about people breaching ASBOs, emanating from the Judicial Studies Board, says quite clearly, "A court should be wary of treating the breach of an ASBO as just another minor offence. It should be remembered that the order itself would normally have been a culmination of persistent anti-social behaviour."

At the same time, Magistrates' sentencing guidelines say, "Where breaches do not involve harassment, alarm or distress, community penalties should be considered to help the offender learn to live within the terms of the ASBO." The pressure on the courts, however, is that due to the persistent problem of over-crowding in our prisons it simply is not viable to impose prison sentences on those who persistently cause minor offences.

The Task Group found, at the public meetings, that the perception amongst members of the public that the police and the judicial system were not doing enough to enforce ASBOs and yet if they were they could be a more powerful tool in the combat against anti-social behaviour.

7.2 "The Perception Gap"

The Task Group found that there are clear inconsistencies in the perception of the level of anti-social behaviour occurring on our streets and the actual

number of incidents being reported. Many attendees of public meetings cited both fear of recriminations if offences were reported and also a lack of faith in responsible authorities to adequately deal with the matter, as a reason for the low level of reported crime and anti-social behaviour.

It was noted, however, that on a number of occasions when attendees were asked whether the intimidating element of groups of youths gathering at shops etc had actually resulted in any verbal or physical abuse, the most frequent response was 'no'. It has been suggested that the media is responsible for exaggerating the number of offences actually taking place and many young people that have been engaged with are often disappointed that they are so mistrusted and pre-judged.

- 7.3 In consideration of all the information collated by the Task Group and following discussions with key Officers involved in the City Council's response to anti-social behaviour it became clear that the Council needed to improve its co-ordination of responses to incidents of ASB between its Services.

The Task Group were advised that a temporary post had existed for a Para Legal Officer who reported to Legal Services and had responsibility for expediting Anti-social behaviour issues through the legal process. The Officer had a positive impact but only operated on a one year temporary contract but it was agreed that a revised post could potentially lead on the case management of Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), parenting orders, closure orders and other tools to reduce anti-social behaviour.

The Task Group were informed that Members of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) had agreed an additional post would be advantageous to the district but were unable to fund the position due to ongoing funding constraints. It was agreed, however, that such a post should not be the sole responsibility of the City Council and assistance with funding should be sought from the Council's partners.

A vital factor of such a role would be as a linking mechanism between Officers in Environmental Health, Council Housing Services, Corporate Strategies and the Environment Enforcement Officers in CC(D)S.

The Task Group would like to clarify that they would not endorse the adoption of such a post if this had any bearing on the renewal of the temporary Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator post that had proved such a success to date. It was agreed by the Task Group that both posts would provide valued services directly to the Community and the importance of both could not be over-emphasised.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That consideration be given to establishing funding to enable the creation of a part-time post in the MAPs Office to deal with co-ordination between Council Services and with partner agencies of reported incidents of anti-social behaviour, as an item of growth. This could link closely to the part-time Domestic Violence Co-ordinator post.

- 7.4 The Task Group were made aware at an early stage that the City Council provides £44,000 per year in funding towards Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in the district and in response the Council hoped to see enforcement work in line with the Authority's responsibilities. Officers from Environmental Health, in particular, stressed their desire to see more evidence of enforcement work being carried out by PCSOs in meeting the Council's aims.

It is important to note that from the public consultations the work being carried out by PCSOs received a great deal of praise from members of the public and Council Officers alike and it was clear that their work in the community was greatly valued. However, the City Council was keen to see that its own priorities were being met in response to the funding it provided and of particular importance is the evidence of enforcement against littering and dog fouling.

In particular the Task Group heard from Officers in City Council (Direct) Services that there had been a lack of results from the PCSOs in issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) and difficulty in tasking them with environmental enforcement. It was suggested to the Task Group that the four PCSOs funded by the Council should be based in Council Offices, however this view was not shared by all Members.

RECOMMENDATION 2

That, as part of the agreement for the Council's part funding of 4 PCSOs (out of a total of 20) totalling £44,000 per year, the Council be provided with evidence that they are working to enforce the Council's byelaws and issuing fixed penalty notices to ensure the authority receives value for money.

- 7.5 Following consultation with local PCSOs and lengthy discussions with a PCSO based at Morecambe High School the Task Group were made aware of a Restorative Justice programme being led by the Lancashire Constabulary with the involvement of PCSOs. A house building with the boundaries of Morecambe High School had been used as a pilot centre for holding Restorative Justice mediatory sessions at the school and had been such a success that Lancashire Constabulary had injected funds to upgrade the premises and use it for a restorative justice centre for the whole of Morecambe.

What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative Justice is a set of principles that offers an alternative way of dealing with crime. It is based on the belief that crime is not just an act perpetrated against the state but an act that damages relationships amongst people within a community. It uses healing as a real alternative to retribution and punishment by balancing the concerns of the community with the need to reintegrate the offender into society. It seeks to aid the recovery of the victim and enable all parties with a stake in the justice process to effectively and fully participate.

The way Restorative Justice works

- Consulting with victims and offenders about what happened and what might happen in the future
- Involving relevant community members in helping the victim to recover and offenders to take responsibility for their actions
- Assessing the reasons for particular offences and taking steps to help reduce the risk of them being repeated
- Being flexible so the steps taken can be adjusted to individual circumstances avoiding 'assembly line justice'
- All agencies working together to the common aims of restoring victims and offenders to a supportive community

How?

Healing the harm can be made directly to the victim in the form of dialogue, an apology, compensation or the carrying out of an activity that benefits the victim or the wider community. For example, a victim might ask the offender to repair the damage to their property or recommend the offender undertake some work for a local community centre. The principle of healing the harm can be applied across a wide range of offences and as part of specific Court Orders.

The benefits of Restorative Justice

- It is close to the people involved, giving them a voice and a clear insight into what is happening
- It helps victims find a satisfactory resolution
- It involves the community in an inclusive and supportive framework for crime prevention and rehabilitation
- It is demanding for offenders having to face up to the consequences of their inappropriate behaviour

City Council Officers have been approached by Lancashire Constabulary who offered to provide training courses on Restorative Justice techniques in view of many noise grievances and other incidents of anti-social tension between local residents. The Task Group agreed this may be an important technique to develop and one that may contribute to the Council's Medium Term Objective of 'contributing to a safer society.

RECOMMENDATION 3

That the City Council endorses the 'Restorative Justice' Programme and explores future involvement in the initiative in conjunction with Lancashire Constabulary where resources permit, applying this process to cases falling under the Council's jurisdiction.

- 7.6 For demonstration purposes the Task Group navigated the City Council's website to try and report incidents of anti-social behaviour. Lancaster City Council's website has won awards for its layout and detailed content although when a search was made for anti-social behaviour there is no form to be completed or telephone number offered through which a complaint can be lodged.

There are separate links for reporting differing types of anti-social behaviour such as reporting incidents of noise or dog fouling, however the system is difficult to navigate and gives no guarantee of receipt. Fundamentally, when a search is made under the term 'anti-social behaviour' all that can be found are press releases and other documentation.

As an example of best practice it was pointed out to the Task Group that Wyre Borough Council's website had a good and very user friendly reporting mechanism on its website, clearly visible on the front page, and that includes an entire section purely for reporting anti-social behaviour. This page very briefly details what ASB is and provides a direct link to a form for logging a complaint which includes a guarantee that receipt of the enquiry will be acknowledged within 2 working days.

The Task Group agreed that the Council's website should be updated to include a single reporting form and make the reporting of such incidents more user friendly and such a mechanism could be monitored directly by the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer detailed in Recommendation 1 within this report. It was envisaged that an ASB Officer should be appointed to deal with the 'hands-on' complaints made to the Council and then co-ordinate the necessary services and partnership agencies in resolving the matters raised.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That a single form for reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) be developed as part of the re-design of the City Council's website, using Wyre Borough Council's form as an example of best practice.

- 7.7 Following consultation with a Police Community Support Officer on their views on how the Council may seek to improve its services in combating ASB in the district, and in aiding the work of PCSOs, it came to light that many PCSOs do not have contact details for the Council to hand and yet they are regularly faced with queries that need to be dealt with by the Council.

It was suggested by one PCSO that they be given a contact card detailing a variety of useful Council numbers for various services, but following discussion between the Task Group and Officers, it was agreed that all queries should be directed to the Customer Service Centres and so confirmation of the relevant telephone numbers should be distributed to all PCSOs. This could, possibly, be on a business card and it may also include useful Lancashire County Council numbers for issues that fall within their area of responsibility.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That all PCSOs be issued with the City Council's Customer Service Centre telephone numbers, and possibly other useful numbers such as Lancashire County Council Customer Services, to inform residents who raise queries with them.

- 7.8** Lancaster City Council co-ordinated the development of a diversionary activities project that was delivered between January and March 2007 (approx. 12-weeks).

The Community Safety Partnership allocated £20,000 towards this project with the aim of reducing juvenile nuisance and youth related crime. A substantial amount of match funding was supplied through Lancaster City Council, the Police and Lancashire County Council's Youth & Community Service.

Three target areas were selected across the district, namely, the West End of Morecambe, Ridge and Scale Hall. A delivery group was established for each area consisting of the Police, local sports and arts providers, Youth Services and Cultural Services.

The following services were used to provide the activities:-

West End: Community Beat Manager, PCSO's, Signposts, Regent Park Studios, More Music and Cultural Services (lead agency)

Ridge: Community Beat Manager, PCSO's, YMCA, Central Lancaster High School (extended school and specialist arts college), Ludus Dance, Dukes Theatre and Cultural Services (lead agency)

Scale Hall: Community Beat Manager, PCSO's, Marsh Community Centre and Cultural Services (lead agency)

Lancashire Constabulary suggested that the activities take place on Friday and Saturday nights from 6.30pm or 7pm onwards, as this was the time that they recorded the most incidents relating to young people. The Police, referral agencies and youth services identified and engaged with the young people who they thought would bring benefit from being involved in this type of a project.

The project proved to be a great success, very popular with the young people who took part and also had the effect of reducing comparable incidents of crime for the corresponding time of other years. Incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour have also risen since the project came to an end.

In the West End there had been a large amount of criminal activity within the 300m radius surrounding the venues subsequently used to host activities. However, these types of offences reduced by 41.62%, compared to the same time period the previous year (dates between January and March 2006 recorded 22 offences and dates throughout January to March 2007 whilst the project was running, recorded 15 offences).

Offences/incidents committed outside of the 300m boundary area also saw a reduction of 9 offences, compared to the previous year. There has been the same number of offences/incidents reported, within the specific parameters, nine weeks prior to the launch of the project (19th January 2007) and whilst the project was running.

Venues	Between 20 th January and 17 th March 2006	Between 19 th January and 16 th March 2007
The Hot House / More Music in Morecambe, (West End), Morecambe	13	10
Regent Park Studios, (West End), Morecambe	9	5

Chart 1: Criminal damage offences and anti-social behaviour incidents recorded on a Friday, during the stated time periods and between the hours of 1830 and 2100. The number of incidents/offences has been captured within the 300m radius surrounding the projects.

Young people who attended Salt Ayre were from Scale Hall and also from the surrounding areas of Ryelands, Marsh and Skerton also saw massive benefit in the provisions.

Offences within a 300m radius of the project had reduced in comparison to the previous year's figures. During the dates between January and March 2006 there were two locations consisting of 'hotspot' areas, which altogether included seven offences, whereas in 2007 during the project, there haven't been any incidents/offences reported. Even though in 2007 there were more offences recorded outside of the 300m radius than there was the previous year, there has still been a reduction on the whole.

Venues	Between 20 th January and 17 th March 2006	Between 24 th November 2006 and 12 th January 2007	Between 19 th January and 16 th March 2007
Salt Ayre Sports Centre, (Scale Hall)	7	1	0

Chart 2: Criminal damage offences and anti-social behaviour incidents recorded on a Friday, during the stated time periods and between the hours of 1830 and 2100. The number of incidents/offences has been captured within the 300m radius surrounding the projects.

Consultation with young people at Morecambe High School (year 7 and year 10) clearly showed that young people want to have things to do with their free time, and particularly activities that aren't cost intensive. The City Council's Children and Young Peoples Manager has developed proposals to roll out Diversionary Activities to a wider range of young people, and not merely 'targeted' individuals so that the programme can be used as a preventative measure against anti-social behaviour and offer a range of activities for young people to undertake on a more regular and sustained basis.

Some funding has already been secured to extend the programme, however, it is hoped that the initiative can receive a sustainable funding stream so that it can continue for many years and provide young people with a range of activities to keep them occupied in the evenings and particularly at weekends.

Of particular success have been initiatives such as the Kickz football sessions run by the Police but more essentially the role played by More Music in Morecambe and Regent Park Studios, who have also recently opened a film studio, that offers non-sporting alternatives that allow individuals to develop their creative flair.

The range of activities have not only contributed to keeping some young people out of trouble but also given them the opportunity to develop relationships, integrate a range of communities and also develop themselves as young maturing people. The Task Group feels that such work is of great importance and should be supported by the Council as far as possible.

City Council's Cultural services have been leading on the Sports and Physical Activity Programme (SPAP) working with a range of local partners including organisations detailed above, proving sporting and other associated activities to a variety of groups by removing the main barrier i.e. cost. Evidence has shown that by providing subsidised activities it can lead to increases in club membership, gym membership etc. This could lead to a change in the way that some partners provide services/opportunities in the future.

The SPAP has been identified as the key delivery mechanism for supporting the Community Safety Partnership's priority aim of tackling juvenile nuisance and anti-social behaviour. In this aspect activities are offered at times when juvenile nuisance is at its highest and also around 'hot spots' in predominantly Lancaster and Morecambe.

Further activities are widely promoted and targeted towards pre-specified priority groups such as young people, people from black and ethnic minority groups, disabled people, over 50s and people with learning disabilities and also linked to local referral schemes such as the Condition Management Programme run in partnership with the PCT. The key to the success of this strand of the project will be sustained participation in one or more of the activities that people have selected to have a go at.

The Task Group endorses the work being carried out in projects such as these and agreed that the City Council should extend its support for such initiatives to strengthen its commitment to its Core Values, including 'Leading our Communities', bringing communities together to deal with the major issues facing us by working with our partners to deliver real improvements to quality of life for those in our district.

The SPAP project is due to be implemented in October 2008 and Officers in Cultural Services are working closely with the MAPS Team to develop the targeting of priority areas for the diversionary activities.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That the City Council seeks additional and significant funding from the LDLSP via the Children and Young People Thematic Group to provide sufficient 'diversionary activities' to enable young people who are vulnerable, at risk or disadvantaged, to have the opportunity to participate in positive activities designed to prevent a range of negative outcomes. Furthermore that a report be brought back to Members and budgets be updated accordingly.

- 7.9 During the public consultation the Task Group heard allegations relating to anti-social behaviour from tenants of Council owned properties. It became apparent that a lot of stigma is attached to Council tenants and this was demonstrated more clearly when many such allegations actually related to owner occupiers.

Council Housing Services were informed of the allegations made and met with some of the individuals making them to establish improved communication lines between the Council and concerned local residents. Furthermore Council Housing Services agreed to incorporate the findings of the Anti-social Behaviour Task Group in reviewing their policies in response to incidents of ASB.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That Council Housing Services incorporate the findings of the Anti-social Behaviour Task Group when they review their published statutory "Anti-social Behaviour Policy Statement" and Summary of Policies and Procedures" in 2009.

- 7.10 Following consultation with Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) the Task Group heard that many PCSOs would like to have an extension of their powers. In particular the High School based PCSOs, now present at Heysham High, Morecambe High and Skerton High Schools, expressed a desire to be able to issue parking tickets with illegal parking outside of schools a particular problem, which also posed a health risk to the many children in and around the schools.

Discussions took place with City Council Officers who agreed that the situation should be investigated further and at least some system of co-ordination between the City Council's parking Officers and PCSOs in order to stem the problem. It was reported that PCSOs regularly discover illegally parked vehicles but once parking attendants are contacted and can arrive at the scene the offenders have already moved away and so some powers of enforcement would be very useful to them.

RECOMMENDATION 8

That the Council investigates the possibility of providing PCSOs with the powers to issue parking tickets in particular with regard to areas outside schools.

- 7.11 A factor of prime importance to the Task Group during their investigation was the impact of City Council policy on young people, who were often singled out as protagonists of anti-social behaviour. Full Council resolved on 18th July 2007:-

- (1) No person aged 14 years or over shall enter or remain in a designated area which is a children's play area unless in charge of a child under the age of 14 years.
- (2) That Overview & Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider the issue of byelaw enforcement.

The inclusion of an addendum for Overview and Scrutiny to monitor the impact of this resolution illustrates the reservations some Councillors had in taking this decision and those reservations have formed some of the remit of the ASB Task Group's work. The issue at hand is that in prohibiting over 14s from children's play areas they are often left with nowhere to go at an age when many teenagers like to be out of their homes and with friends.

Consultation with young people confirmed this trend with many saying they just wanted to 'hang out' or 'chill out' with friends, away from adult supervision. Engaging with young people at Morecambe High School it became clear that the old setup of youth clubs simply does not appeal to the majority of today's youth. As a result young people often are driven onto the streets as they are prohibited from using many open spaces such as school grounds and children's play areas during the evening.

The Task Group agreed that the provision of areas for young people to frequent was an area that required investigation due to the byelaw decision by Council, which effectively gave them far fewer places to go. The ASB Task Group concluded that this age group warranted provision of places to go and some examples of best practice such as youth cafes, skate parks and youth shelters should be given more consideration.

RECOMMENDATION 9

That in the development of the Local Development Framework the City Council encourages development of a policy aimed at locating areas for young people (over 14 yrs) to frequent in agreeable locations, in light of their exclusion from local playing areas.

7.12 Quotes from Members of the public

"The only serious antisocial behaviour where I live is car drivers speeding through quiet streets where children play and past my child's primary school. If that isn't antisocial I don't know what is but it just seems not to get as much attention as relatively trivial stuff."

"There are several gangs which hang around the streets and town centre, they do not commit as much crime as people say they do. I believe young people are a scapegoat for crime and are blamed for far more things than they really commit."

"You never see police on the beat. It is not safe to go out after dark. The gangs of kids have the upper hand. If you confront them over their behaviour,

they just laugh at you. You are powerless to do anything and the police are too busy to bother with low level disturbances, especially on a weekend."

"Every night there are youths hanging around outside shops, in bus stops and in alleyways where I live. It is a worrying sight but in all honesty, they don't commit any crimes or behave anti-socially, in their defence I think they're just bored as there is nothing to do and no where to go out there. I've experienced more anti-social behaviour from my next door neighbour than I have with the local kids."

"As long as offenders get away with just a "slap on the wrist" the attitude will only get worse. These kids are just a mirror of our society with a lack of morals, virtues and respect. They all know their rights, but are more than happy to ignore any responsibility."

"We expect our police, courts and lawmakers to contain, punish and deter antisocial behaviour. We also know that parental influence is crucial to whether a child will have a "Respect Agenda" when they step out onto our streets."

"The majority of young people want to be good citizens and are on the path to achieving this. The more we portray "youth" as something to cure the less likely we are to try and understand young people, their needs and aspirations."

RECOMMENDATION 10

That Cabinet formally note the comments of those who attended Task Group meetings and provided comments to the Council website and request responses from the relevant Services to the issues raised, and these be reported back to Cabinet for further consideration.

- 7.13** During an initial meeting with Officers of the City Council who were involved in the Council's response to anti-social behaviour it was evident that Services varied in their approach to employing education or enforcement policies. The Task Group agreed that Services should work more closely together in order to develop unified approaches in combating anti-social behaviour.

RECOMMENDATION 11

That Services responsible for responding to Anti-social Behaviour investigate developing a joint approach with regard to prevention and enforcement policies in combating anti-social behaviour, and a Corporate Policy be adopted in order to ensure clarity of the Council's prevention and enforcement policy, and this should include all types of anti-social behaviour including dog fouling, littering and infringement of alcohol free zones.

- 7.14** As a result of further discussions with Officers of the Council it came to light that the Community Safety Officer had previously proof-read Cabinet reports that may have had an impact on Community Safety and invited to add comments to the report if it was deemed necessary. It was evident that this practice had ceased to take place and as a result some resolutions had been made that had a detrimental impact on initiatives across the district to improve community safety.

It was agreed that the comments of the Community Safety Officer be sought for all Cabinet reports that have a potential impact on community safety and that those comments be accounted for by Cabinet Members in consideration of those reports.

RECOMMENDATION 12

That at manager discretion, all reports with potential impact on Community Safety be forwarded to the Community Safety Officer for comments prior to consideration of draft reports by Corporate Management Team and publication of Agenda.

- 7.15** Following the investigation by the Anti-social Behaviour Task Group a number of factors of anti-social behaviour have come to the attention of the Task Group and have been documented in this report. The Task Group requests Cabinet, where necessary, to notify Overview and Scrutiny of any further work on specific items that warrants additional investigation based on the findings within this report.

RECOMMENDATION 13

That Cabinet notify Overview and Scrutiny of any further work on specific items they wish to be carried out as a result of the findings contained within this report.