

Customers and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Task and Finish Group Anti Social Behaviour in Compton Ward

Monday 28 November 2011

PRESENT:

Councillor Thompson, in the Chair.
Councillors Casey, Churchill and Penberthy.

Also in attendance: Pete Aley (Assistant Director for Safer Communities, Sue Warren (Partnership Crime Reduction Officer) and Helen Wright (Democratic Support Officer).

The meeting started at 11.00 am and finished at 3.35 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the code of conduct, Councillor Thompson declared a personal interest as he was a Director of Plymouth Community Homes.

49. INTRODUCTION

Pete Aley, the Director for Safer Communities provided an overview of the aims and objectives of the work programme request (PID).

50. THE PANEL

Membership of the Task and Finish Group comprised the following councillors –

- Councillor Thompson (Chair)
- Councillor Casey
- Councillor Churchill
- Councillor Penberthy

Members of the Task and Finish Group aimed to examine and make recommendations on -

- identifying outstanding issues with regard to anti social behaviour in Carlton Close and Channel Park Avenue;
- potential solutions and their viability;

- the progress and any barriers previously encountered;
- solutions and any lessons learnt.

The work programme request (PID) is attached as appendix I.

WITNESSES

51. Fiona Scapens - Neighbourhood Liaison Officer for Efford and Lipson

Fiona Scapens, Neighbourhood Liaison Officer for Efford and Lipson, advised that –

- (a) she had been in the role of Neighbourhood Liaison Officer for Efford and Lipson for 12 months;
- (b) she had been made aware of the anti social behaviour issues at Carlton Close through the neighbouring locality;
- (c) a number of meetings had taken place with the Director of Services for Children and Young People, the Neighbourhood Liaison Officer for Compton and the anti social behaviour unit to try to design out the issues of stones/missiles being thrown; fly tipping in the area was also a problem;
- (d) a site visit had been undertaken with Street Services, who had undertaken the cleaning of the surface of the lane but not the bank areas (the clearance of the fly tipping from the banks was not the responsibility of Street Services);
- (e) an estimate for the clearance of the fly tipping from the banks either side of the lane was £6,000 (although this was considered to be a reserved figure due to the topography of the area which made it difficult to access the rubbish safely);
- (f) a proposal to erect fencing along the derelict garage site had been considered, although it was thought that this would restrict stones/objects from being thrown but would not resolve the issue.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by the task and finish group –

- (g) neighbourhood meetings were held on a quarterly basis; anti social behaviour issues were raised at the meetings but not related to specific issues in Carlton Close and Channel Park Avenue;
- (h) the surface of the lane was in a bad state of repair and it was anticipated that a mechanical cleaner would not be able to clean it in the future without the surface being repaired;

- (i) it would be difficult to identify those individuals carrying out the fly tipping in the area (if material found identified individuals then enforcement could taken);
- (j) capital investment would be required to enhance the derelict garage site; there had been a number of areas within Efford where facilities had been reinstated to encourage young people to use them;
- (k) investigations could be undertaken to look at possible schemes for the derelict garage site, such as the 'Grow Efford Scheme'.

52. **John Drury, Anna Hunkin and Andy Dunlop - Anti Social Behaviour Unit**

John Drury, Anna Hunkin and Andy Dunlop, Anti Social Behaviour Unit, advised that

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- (a) John Drury, Anti Social Behaviour Manager had been involved with the anti social behaviour issues in this area since 2008 and had initially been requested by Councillor Ball to investigate these issues with a view to resolving them;
- (b) the police had identified and visited those individuals who had been responsible for throwing stones/objects on to the house roofs and conservatory roofs of properties in Carlton Close; (there had been a low number of reported stone/object throwing incidents);
- (c) stones/objects were also being thrown from the derelict garage site; it would be difficult to prevent this from occurring due to the topography of the area (if a person was intent on doing so);
- (d) fly tipping was a problem in the area with rubbish being thrown in to the rear gardens of the properties of Carlton Close; the rubbish could be cleared by using the probation community pay back scheme;
- (e) currently there were no specific anti social behaviour issues but this situation could change in the future; the way forward would to redesign the area which could include the following –
 - the planting of prickly shrubs at top of Channel Park Avenue (by the green area) which would act as a barrier and move people away from the area;
 - erecting a fence along the length of the lane, to prevent fly tipping and trespassing however, this would be the responsibility of the property owners;
 - the development of the derelict garage site would be difficult due to the substation and mobile telephone mast;

- the garden of the new build at the Channel Park Avenue end of the lane would need to be fenced off due to the significant incline;
 - restricting access to the lane may assist in preventing fly tipping;
- (h) there was currently no lighting in the lane but installation of lighting would be cost prohibitive and may lead to young people gathering in the area.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by the task and finish group –

- (i) it was difficult to establish whether the fencing that some property owners had erected prevented fly tipping (the rubbish could have been there prior to the erection of the fence);
- (j) the lane was regularly used to access Blandford Road from Channel Park Avenue;
- (k) the number of reported incidents were as follows –
- 2000 – 13
 - 2001 – 10
 - 2002 – 2
 - 2003 – 15
 - 2004 – 12
 - 2005 – 4
 - 2006 – 4
 - 2007 – 7
 - 2008 – 11
 - 2009 – 6
 - 2010 – 4

53. Councillor Ball - Ward Councillor for Compton

Councillor Ball, Ward Councillor for Compton, advised that –

- (a) he had become involved with this matter about four years ago, following his attendance at a well-attended residents' meeting to discuss anti social behaviour issues in Compton Vale;
- (b) he had visited the residents of Channel Park Avenue but they had been reluctant to speak to him about any incidents of anti social behaviour;

- (c) residents in Carlton Close had experienced sustained anti social behaviour, such as stones/objects being thrown into back gardens and on to conservatory roofs, abusive language and fly tipping; there had been one incident where a wheel had been thrown into a garden which had caused significant damage to the back door (this incident had left a blind resident shocked and worried about going into the back of the house);
- (d) a number of residents in Carlton Close had been unaware of the boundary of their properties; in a number of gardens fencing had been erected part way down the steep incline which had resulted in residents assuming that was the edge of their boundary;
- (e) the derelict garage site was used for general anti social behaviour, such as building fires and throwing stones/objects; the resident who lived in the house adjacent to the entrance of this site had experienced incidents of vandalism to the property;
- (f) he considered that the model of cross agency working with the engagement of the police and the anti social behaviour unit was a good model to use city wide.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by the task and finish group –

- (g) cross agency working had achieved a reduction in the number of anti social behaviour incidents (individuals identified as carrying out these incidents had been visited by the police and the fly tipping in the area had been removed);
- (h) a barrier or lockable pole could be installed at one end of the lane which would resolve the problem of fly tipping;
- (i) the proposal to erect a steel fence along the length of the lane would be cost prohibitive;
- (j) it would be difficult to develop the derelict garage area for housing due to the substation and mobile telephone mast located on the site.

54. **Kerry McCabe - Youth Services**

Kerry McCabe, Youth Service, advised that –

- (a) she was based in the Efford Youth Centre and worked with young people between the ages of 11 and 19; the ‘detached working’ approach enabled her to engage with young people on the streets and provide advice on alcohol use and sexual health issues;

- (b) there were several initiatives that had been introduced to encourage the engagement of young people in the area; these included. the library project 'Head Space' which was well attended, sexual health sessions and positive activities such as rock climbing;
- (c) since starting work in Efford in 2008, she had noticed that there had been a significant reduction in reported incidents of anti social behaviour and attributed this to the multi agency approach and working together with the community groups; this had resulted in a positive impact on the behaviour of the young people.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by the task and finish group –

- (d) the derelict garage site could be used for positive activities, such as rock climbing;
- (e) multi agency working had a positive impact on the number of reported and anti social incidents and had helped to build relationships with the police and young people in the area.

55. **Steven Didymus - Plymouth Community Homes**

Steven Didymus, a representative from Plymouth Community Homes, reported that –

- (a) he had been in his current post since April 2011; the area of his responsibility included Channel Park Avenue; a significant improvements programme was being undertaken in Channel Park Avenue with the installation of new kitchens and bathrooms, cladding and parking;
- (b) no complaints had been received from residents of Channel Park Avenue regarding anti social behaviour issues; the house at the entrance to the derelict garage site had extended the height of the garden wall to stop youths from stealing clothes from the washing line;
- (c) there were procedures in place to tackle anti social behaviour (as Plymouth Community Homes' tenants were bound by their tenancy agreements not to cause a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours); if young people were identified as being involved in anti social behaviour incidents then action could be taken against their parents.

The following response were provided to questions raised by the task and finish group –

- (d) Plymouth Community Homes tenants had the right to buy the property they were living in;

- (e) Plymouth Community Homes used the bulky waste service provided by the council; rubbish could be removed from tenants' properties but the cost would be recharged to the tenant;
- (f) following the completion of the improvement works, Plymouth Community Homes may consider undertaking a 'clean up' of the area using monies from their environment fund;
- (g) a suggestion to extend the gardens backing on to the derelict garage site and install a footpath to the substation and mobile telephone mast, could be investigated;
- (h) since April 2011, no complaints had been received regarding anti social behaviour occurring in the derelict garage area; (it was noted that several houses in this area were privately owned);
- (i) officers from Plymouth Community Homes visited residents and provided a more visible presence in the area.

56. **Councillor Vincent - Ward Councillor for Efford and Lipson**

Councillor Vincent, Ward Councillor for Efford and Lipson, advised that –

- (a) following a meeting with the young people and the youth workers, a litter clearance of the area had been undertaken, which he had participated in;
- (b) facilities for young people had been removed from the area (the play area on the green in front of the houses in Channel Park Avenue);
- (c) he considered that the suggestion to erect fencing along the length of the lane to prevent fly tipping would create a 'challenge' rather than solving the issue;
- (d) redevelopment of the derelict garage site could be investigated, with the possibility of building a bungalow on the site, or create an area for young people to use;
- (e) ward councillors were working closely with PCSOs, in order to solve issues that had been identified;
- (f) he would support a proposal to install bollards at either end of the lane to restrict vehicular access.

The following responses were provided to questions raised by the task and finish group –

- (g) the engagement and support of community groups and residents would be key in resolving these issues;

- (h) it was considered that to provide allotments on the derelict garage site would be cost prohibitive;
- (i) there had been an initiative in the area where young people had been engaged with artists in painting murals on walls; this had proved successful as the area had not sustained any vandalism;
- (j) it was considered that lighting in the lane would solve the issues of anti social behaviour in this area.

57. **Sergeant Tim Hine and PCSO Ross Kirton - Devon and Cornwall Police**

Sergeant Tim Hine and PCSO Ross Kirton, Devon and Cornwall Police, advised that –

- (a) since 2000 there had been 74 reported incidents of anti social behaviour in Carlton Close; (in 2010 there had been ten reported incidents, five of which related to anti social behaviour issues); the last reported incident of anti social behaviour was 1 January 2011;
- (b) in 2010 there had been 54 reported incidents in Channel Park Avenue and 11 reported incidents in 2011 (one incident related to anti social behaviour);

The following responses were provided to questions raised by the task and finish group –

- (c) the police would encourage residents to report any incidents of anti social behaviour, in order to assist with future policing strategies;
- (d) the police would not encourage residents to engage in verbal dialogue with the people participating in anti social behaviour, or take photographs of them;
- (e) residents of Carlton Close had not attended any of the Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings;
- (f) it was considered that unless the height of the fence along the length of the lane was of an extreme height then it would not solve the problem of fly tipping.

58. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

Agreed that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

59. **WITNESSES (E1)**

The task and finish group heard representations from two residents of Carlton Close.

THE MEETING CONTINUED IN PART I (PUBLIC MEETING)

60. **SUMMARY AND REVIEW**

The Task and Finish Group concluded that –

- (a) to prevent fly tipping in the lane but to allow it to be regularly cleaned with a mechanical cleaner, access to the lane should be restricted at both ends;
- (b) residents needed to be encouraged to report incidents of anti social behaviour to the police; private home owners in Channel Park Road should also be encouraged to report incidents to Plymouth Community Homes as well;
- (c) the installation of lighting and steel fencing along the length of the lane would be cost prohibitive;
- (d) proposals for the future use of the derelict garage site needed to be identified with the involvement of Plymouth Community Homes and community groups;
- (e) multi agency working needed to continue with the support and involvement of the community;
- (f) the boundaries of the properties in Carlton Close needed to be identified and residents notified;
- (g) fly tipping in the area needed to be cleared;
- (h) residents of Carlton Close should be offered the opportunity to speak to the vulnerable victims champion (the council was currently running a project with Victim Support which liaised with the victims of sustained anti social behaviour).

61. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Task and Finish Group agreed to recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that the following matters are recommended to Cabinet –

- (1) the installation of lockable bollards at either end of the lane, to prevent general vehicle access;
- (2) a general clean up of the area is undertaken, working in partnership with Plymouth Community Homes and residents;

- (3) that Plymouth Community Homes are asked to work together with Plymouth City Council and community groups to identify a way forward for the use of the derelict garage site in Channel Park Avenue;
- (4) to establish the boundaries of the properties in Carlton Close and to notify the land owners and outline their legal duties.

APPENDIX I

The work programme request (PID) is attached as appendix I.

REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME ITEM



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

	Title of Work Programme Item	Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) in Compton Vale
2	Responsible Director (s)	Carole Burgoyne, Director for Community Services
3	Responsible Officer Tel No.	Pete Aley, Assistant Director for Safer Communities 304321
4	Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cabinet Member for Community Services (Safer and Stronger Communities and Leisure, Culture and Sport)
5	Objectives	<p>To make recommendations to minimise ASB (including object throwing, fly tipping and vandalism) in Compton Vale.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify outstanding issues with regard to ASB in Compton Vale • Explore potential solutions and their viability • Examine progress and any barriers previously encountered • Make recommendations for solutions and any lessons earned <p>Scrutiny will allow examination of the problems together with barriers encountered and help identify the viability of potential solutions.</p>
6	Who will benefit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residents of and visitors to Compton Vale • Ward Councillors • Cabinet • Council officers responsible for ASB • relevant Neighbourhood Liaison Officers and Locality Managers • Police • PCH
7	Criteria for Choosing Topics (see table at end of document)	The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has identified this issue as outstanding and suitable for a Task and Finish Group.

8	What will happen if we don't do this review?	This issue has been outstanding for sometime and not raising its profile could mean further delays in resolutions.
9	What are we going to do?	see 5 above.
10	How are we going to do it? (witnesses, site visits, background information etc.)	Site visit, witnesses including residents and Ward Councillors.
11	What we won't do.	ASB in general and at other sites in Plymouth and potential solutions which are likely to be unviable eg due to cost.
12	Timetable & Key Dates	November 2011/January 2012
13	Links to other projects or initiatives / plans	n/a
14	Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel / Membership if Task and Finish Group (to be decided by OSP before submission to OMB)	Customers and Communities OSP Councillors Churchill, Penberthy, John Smith and Thompson.
15	Where will the report go? Who will make the final decision	To the scheduled meeting dates of the panel, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Cabinet.
16	Resources (staffing, research, experts, sites visits and so on)	Plymouth City Council staff resources
17	Is this part of a statutory responsibility on the panel?	No.
18	Should any other panel be involved in this review? If so who and why?	n/a.
19	Will the task and finish group benefit from co-opting any person(s) onto the panel.	No.
20	How does this link to corporate priorities?	Value for Communities.