APPENDIX

Anti-Social Behaviour in the Night-Time Economy

A Review by the Community Safety Select Committee
Community Safety Select Committee

Anti-Social Behaviour in the Night-time Economy

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Surrey County Council’s draft Community Safety Strategy 2005/08 describes anti-social behaviour (ASB) as “the single most important aspect of crime and disorder for the County Council to address over the next three years”. The Community Safety Select Committee, having itself identified ASB as a priority issue, wished to contribute to thinking on this important policy area.

1.2. The Task Group established by the Select Committee decided to focus on ASB in the night-time economy. Having compared Surrey’s current practices on this issue with those of ‘best practice’ authorities elsewhere, the Committee recommends to the Executive that:

(i) In order to establish widespread commitment to tackling alcohol issues (particularly alcohol-related) and to identify a way forward, the Executive Member for Community Safety should organise a conference with a wide cross section of representatives from both the statutory and non-statutory agencies, service users and from the drinks industry.

(ii) In order to encourage a shared approach to gathering vital information from the Health sector, the Executive should commission Surrey Community Safety Unit (SCSU) to work with the Hospital Trusts on the central collection of data about incidents of ASB in the night-time economy.

(iii) In order to speed progress on the central collection of data about incidents of ASB in the night time economy, the Executive Member for Community Safety (in collaboration with SCSU) should write to the Chief Executives of Surrey Hospital Trusts seeking their cooperation on this issue.

(iv) In order to ensure that Trading Standards is as effective as it can be on the issue of underage alcohol sales, the Executive should request that Trading Standards review their priorities to take account of the importance of this issue and consider if it can redirect resources to its underage alcohol test purchasing service.

(v) In order to enhance the personal safety of all Surrey pub and club-goers and to enhance wider community safety, the Executive should encourage Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPS) to invest in late-night bus schemes.

(vi) On the basis that Surrey Drug Action Team (SDAT) is a key partner in tackling the problems of ASB in the night time economy, the Executive should support (financially if necessary) SDAT in taking alcohol on as a focus for its work and in appointing a full-time alcohol co-ordinator.
2. **Introduction**

2.1. At its meeting of 13 July 2004, the Community Safety Select Committee agreed to undertake an investigation into anti-social behaviour (ASB). A Task Group was established to take the review forward, consisting of:

- Alan Peirce (Chairman)
- John Ades
- Bob McKinley

2.2. The Task Group was especially concerned with alcohol-related ASB and the nighttime economy. It decided to compare Surrey's current practices on this issue with those of 'best practice' authorities elsewhere, in order to propose a way forward.

2.3. The Task Group gathered evidence through an expert witness session, visits to 'best practice' authorities, attending a SCSU conference, accompanying police on patrol in Guildford town centre and receiving written briefings (see appendix 1). Mike Abbott (Lead Local Director for Community Safety) supported the Task Group in an expert capacity. Cheryl Hardman provided research support to the Task Group.

2.4. The Task Group’s findings are provided below. From these findings the Community Safety Select Committee has identified actions for the Executive.

3. **Defining ‘Anti-Social Behaviour in the Night-time Economy’**

3.1. There are various definitions of what constitutes ASB with even the definition used in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 open to interpretation. That legislation defines ASB as acting:

> "in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself".

This definition can incorporate many different behaviours, from low-level criminal behaviour such as vandalism and substance misuse to behaviour causing life-style clashes e.g. noise and littering. The focus is on the impact of a person’s behaviour on other people.

3.2. When discussing the problems of the night-time economy, the term ASB is often used interchangeably with the term disorder. Crimes including violence against the person also tend to be incorporated under the umbrella of ASB. During its research, the Task Group constantly heard of the need to deal with the problems of the night-time economy holistically. Therefore, it was not felt necessary to restrict its consideration to a few ‘example’ behaviours. The recently published

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1 'Best practice' authorities were identified through literature searches and discussions with practitioners.
Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England lists some of the crime, disorder and ASB impacts associated with the night-time economy:

- Through **violence, assault and disorder**
- Through the **impact on the urban infrastructure** (e.g. broken glass, litter from late-night fast-food outlets and, on occasion, human waste)
- Through **costs to the tax-payer** (e.g. from additional policing, pressure on the criminal justice system, the tidying up of city centres and extra work for Accident and Emergency departments. Resources may also be skewed to policing the night-time economy with knock-on effects for policing elsewhere).
- Through **making town and city centres no-go areas for the general public**. A recent Home Office report\(^2\) finds that the impact of ASB on behaviour, including use of public space, was widespread even for people who had not personally experienced problems.

4. **Anti-Social Behaviour and Surrey’s Night-time Economy**

4.1. ASB is a key concern for Surrey residents. A recent MORI poll, commissioned by Surrey County Council, asked about perceptions of ASB in Surrey. The data suggests that half of Surrey residents perceive that people using or dealing drugs (52%) and people being drunk or rowdy in public places (46%) are big problems in Surrey.

4.2. On Wednesday 10 September 2003, the Government’s Anti-Social Behaviour Unit undertook a national day-count of reports of ASB in England and Wales. The returns from the Surrey CDRP areas and Surrey County Council gave a total of 539 reported incidents of anti-social behaviour in Surrey on that day. Alcohol-related ASB was not counted as a separate category although alcohol could have been a contributory factor to a number of the reported incidents.

4.3. Data from the Surrey Crime and Disorder Information System project (SCaDIS) between 1 April 2003 and 31 July 2004 indicates that the particular problem of alcohol-related and public place disorder tends to be located in town centres. The ten wards with the highest level of this type of disorder are all town centres. The ward of Friary and St Nicholas in Guildford comes a runaway first place with 650 reported incidents (82.21 per 1000 population) – Staines at second position had 446 reported incidents (61.08 per 1000 population). Dave Johnson, Local Director for Guildford, confirmed that Guildford faces particular problems along Bridge Street (which falls within Friary and St Nicholas) due to long ‘happy hours’ and ‘vertical drinking only’ bars. These types of issues with licensed premises will soon become a matter for the Borough Councils to contend with, when alcohol licensing is transferred to licensing authorities.

4.4. Crime and disorder audits are currently being undertaken at district level and will focus on ASB and alcohol-related ASB in more detail than in

previous audits. The findings of the audits should be available by the end of 2004 but early indications suggest that alcohol-related ASB is emphasised as a key problem in all CDRP areas. However, the Task Group was concerned that there is not a common working definition of ‘ASB’ in Surrey. In particular, it felt that clarity on which behaviours are included when collecting, analysing and disseminating data on the problems associated with the night-time economy would assist agencies in developing an effective and targeted response.

5. Prioritising ASB in the Night-Time Economy

5.1. Alcohol-related ASB is now a priority issue for many of Surrey’s public agencies:

- **District/Borough Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies:** Alcohol-related disorder, ASB and town centres/hot spots featured in all eleven 2002/05 strategies. Alcohol-related disorder was often subsumed within ASB, while alcohol is a contributory factor to many town centre/hot spot problems.

- **Surrey Police Authority:** The Authority’s Local Policing Plan 2004/5 emphasises Surrey Police’s intention to have an increased impact on anti-social behaviour.

- **Surrey County Council:**
  - The top community safety priority in the Executive’s new commissioning framework for the **Policy and Productivity Review** is:
    
    “Reducing anti-social behaviour in a sustainable way, in and between town centres and residential areas through joint investment in police community service officers, and other interventions with the police and partners”.

  - The Council’s draft **Community Safety Strategy 2005/08** is currently out for consultation and describes ASB as “the single most important aspect of crime and disorder for the County Council to address over the next three years”.

6. Principles of Good Practice

6.1. In gathering its evidence, the Task Group identified some key areas of good practice in tackling alcohol and drug-related ASB. Much of the evidence for this was gleaned from the visit to and related reports about Cardiff’s ‘Tackling Alcohol-Related Street Crime’ (TASC) project. It is particularly notable that, on a Friday and Saturday night while Cardiff is filled with 70,000 drinkers, it is policed by only 15-16 on-duty police officers. The good practice principles identified by the Task Group are summarised below with accompanying recommendations to the Executive.

6.2. **Partnership Working**
6.2.1. There are many agencies with responsibility for the crime and disorder agenda (and indeed the ASB agenda). It is therefore important to work together to address the issue effectively. In Cardiff, the TASC project emerged from the Cardiff Violence Prevention Group (CVPG), a multi-agency partnership established in 1997. The partners in the TASC project were South Wales Police, Cardiff County Council, the University Hospital of Wales and the private sector (via the Cardiff Licensees Forum). The project team sought to further engage major players in both the public and private sectors in broader dialogue about the strategic management of the ‘late night economy’.

6.2.2. Similarly, in 1999 a number of individuals concerned about the lack of attention to alcohol issues in Leeds combined to form an Alcohol Reference Group. In order to establish a complete picture and engage relevant parties, the Group organised a conference in July 2000 with a wide cross section of representatives from both statutory and non-statutory agencies, service users and from the drinks industry. The key messages to emerge from the conference included that there was a lack of strategic planning in relation to alcohol and a lack of co-ordination and communication particularly around alcohol-related crime and disorder. Outcomes of the conference included the appointment of an Alcohol Strategy Lead in 2003 and the establishment of widespread commitment to tackling alcohol issues, including alcohol-related ASB.

6.2.3. Surrey faces the challenge of having a two-tier local government structure. Therefore, during its investigation into ‘best practice’ outside Surrey, the Task Group also sought out the experience of a County Council that had addressed this challenge. It found very strong partnership working in Wiltshire, where the County Council has interpreted its responsibility to do all it can to prevent crime and disorder within Wiltshire (Crime and Disorder Act 1998) as giving it a role in developing a common strategy and protocol on ASB across the county. This allows for:

- a consistency in the approach of all agencies to tackling and recording incidents of ASB;
- the avoidance of duplication; and
- joint funding of initiatives.

6.2.4. The Safer Wiltshire Executive (SWE) is a key body in terms of bringing partners together. It is the integrated crime and drugs strategic partnership body with a membership that includes the Chief Executives of the four Wiltshire District Councils, the County Council, the Police and the Fire Authority. The SWE has almost the same membership as the Wiltshire Strategic Board (Wiltshire’s Local Strategic Partnership), which develops the Community Strategy. This helps ensure that the Community Strategy uses the same terminology as the SWE, includes the SWE’s priorities and raises the profile of the community safety function. There are 19 “community areas” which develop their own localised community plans in which they outline their community safety priorities. It is intended that the terminology and priorities of the SWE and
Wiltshire Strategic Board will cascade down into the local community plans.

6.2.5. An example of partnership working in action is how one crime and disorder audit has been undertaken for the whole of Wiltshire (excluding Swindon). CDRPs then extract the information they need for their own audit. This has the advantage of reducing duplication and cost and avoids some agencies being asked the same questions four times over e.g. the probation service.

6.2.6. The Task Group has been gratified to learn that alcohol-related ASB has been identified as a top priority for the responsible public agencies in Surrey. However, the Task Group was concerned by the challenges of tackling alcohol-related ASB both because of Surrey’s two-tier local government structure and because of the sheer number of non-governmental interested parties. It would support any efforts to bring the parties together to jointly identify the problems that need to be addressed in Surrey as well as any potential solutions. The Task Group considers that the conference organised in Leeds is a good practice approach to engaging all interested parties.

Recommendations

(i) In order to establish widespread commitment to tackling alcohol issues (particularly alcohol-related) and to identify a way forward, the Executive Member for Community Safety should organise a conference with a wide cross section of representatives from both the statutory and non-statutory agencies, service users and from the drinks industry.

6.3. Understand the Nature of the Problem

6.3.1. The central collection of information about ASB and the night-time economy was seen as essential by both ‘best practice’ local authorities visited. This provides agencies with the evidence they require to enable them to tackle the right problems in the right places. The work undertaken in Cardiff was particularly impressive in this respect. A database had been developed that brought together high quality data enabling officers to identify ‘hot spots’. A nurse based in A&E at the University Hospital of Wales supplemented the information in the database with more details of the circumstances of incidents, including location and the details of both offender and victim. This information can be used as evidence in challenges to licences.

6.3.2. The Task Group heard that SCSU - which provides support to the CDRPs - has developed SCaDIS for the collection, analysis and dissemination of crime and disorder-related information in Surrey. SCSU is currently working on a more accurate recording of data on ASB in response to its prioritisation as a policy issue.
6.3.3. The Task Group is aware that SCSU is also working with the Police and the ambulance service to gather further information from the health sector. However, it is concerned that there isn't a duplication of effort by SCSU and the eleven CDRPs on this issue and so would encourage more effective partnership working in gathering data.

Recommendations

(ii) In order to encourage a shared approach to gathering vital information from the Health sector, the Executive should commission SCSU to work with the Hospital Trusts on the central collection of data about incidents of ASB in the night-time economy.

(iii) In order to speed progress on the central collection of data about incidents of ASB in the night-time economy, the Executive Member for Community Safety (in collaboration with SCSU) should write to the Chief Executives of Surrey Hospital Trusts seeking their cooperation on this issue.

6.4. Taking a Holistic Approach

6.4.1. Home Office studies have explored the relationship between alcohol consumption and offending among 18-24 year-olds. These studies suggested a positive link between ‘binge drinking’ and criminal and/or disorderly behaviour. In one study, young adults identified an array of factors that they felt contributed to the relationship. There were four broad groups:

- the effects of binge drinking;
- the drinking environment (e.g. lack of late-night transport, poor town centre layouts and licensing laws);
- attitudes and motivations (e.g. feeling it is fun to lose control); and
- social/peer group norms (e.g. drunkenness perceived to be an acceptable excuse for ASB).

These findings point to the need for a holistic approach to tackling ASB.

6.4.2. The evidence gathered by the Task Group indicated that a holistic approach is being taken to tackle alcohol-related ASB in Surrey as it was in other ‘good practice’ areas. The Task Group did not intend to, or attempt to, review all the initiatives being taken forward in Surrey in detail. It did, however, feel inclined to highlight a few key initiatives.

6.4.3. The Task Group heard about a proposal to set up multi-agency teams to tackle alcohol-fuelled ASB. The teams would consist of a police sergeant, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), a detached youth worker, a youth offending team worker and a part-time Trading Standards officer. They would divide their time between targeted and visible enforcement to keep the peace and securing the future by enhancing the future safety of the environment in town centres, and by working directly with the young people and young adults responsible for
the ASB to prevent their future involvement. The Task Group welcomes and strongly supports this proposal as an example of partnership working to achieve common goals. It is anxious to see a decision on this initiative.

6.4.4. The Task Group sees the transfer of alcohol licensing to licensing authorities as an opportunity to address problems in the drinking environment. At a meeting with the Local Director for Guildford and a representative of Surrey Police, the Task Group heard of additional licensing preconditions that had been suggested for adoption in Guildford. The Task Group feels that these preconditions would be useful tools in tackling alcohol-related ASB – in particular the use of plastic glasses would help prevent glass-related injuries.

6.4.5. The Task Group was pleased to hear that the underage alcohol test purchases service was perceived as excellent but were concerned that a lack of resources was preventing Trading Standards from being as effective as they could be in this area. The Task Group understands the pressures upon the Executive to reduce costs but feels that the underage alcohol test purchasing service is invaluable in the fight against ASB in the night-time economy.

**Recommendations**

(iv) In order to ensure that Trading Standards is as effective as it can be on the issue of underage alcohol sales, the Executive should request that Trading Standards review their priorities to take account of the importance of this issue and consider if it can redirect resources to its underage alcohol test purchasing service.

6.4.6. The Task Group was interested in the late-night bus schemes that are being established in some parts of Surrey (as well as in other parts of the country). It feels that this is a practical approach to quickly dispersing pub and club-goers at closing time, both for their personal safety and for community safety reasons.

**Recommendations**

(v) In order to enhance the personal safety of all Surrey pub and club-goers and to enhance wider community safety, the Executive should encourage CDRPS to invest in late-night bus schemes.

6.5. **Work Through the Drug Action Team (DAT)**

6.5.1. The Task Group found that in other local authority areas, the DAT had been significant partners in tackling alcohol-related ASB. In Leeds the DAT was identified as the appropriate platform from which to lead on the development and implementation of an alcohol strategy, to include tackling alcohol-related crime and disorder. The Leeds DAT was clear that it was not allowed to spend any money on alcohol issues.
Therefore, when a health promotion post on drugs and alcohol became vacant in public health, it was transferred to DAT responsibility, freeing up some NHS money to spend on the post of Alcohol Strategy Lead.

6.5.2. In Wiltshire, the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) was taken into the County Council and now sits with the Community Safety function, giving WCC a mechanism by which to take forward work on alcohol and drug-related ASB. Two officer posts bring together both the Community Safety function and activity around substance misuse. Co-location of the Community Safety team with the DAAT, and the Youth Offending Team (YOT), has allowed for joined-up working and pooled expertise on ASB issues and has proven particularly effective in developing plans to tackle ASB. The Chief Executive of WCC chairs the DAAT (SWE).

6.5.3. As the work on alcohol misuse and associated ASB cannot be funded by the DAAT, initiatives in Wiltshire are led by and funded through the CDRPs. CDRP representatives sit on the alcohol sub-group of the DAAT that is developing the Alcohol strategy within the County Crime Reduction Strategy (which all CDRPS will be signed up to). The CDRPs will have sections within the Strategy highlighting the more localised strategies. These may also have priorities around alcohol- and drug-related ASB.

6.5.4. SDAT is currently trying to take alcohol misuse and its subsequent problems on board as an additional focus for its work. It already tackles alcohol misuse by young people as part of its work on substance misuse but it cannot do the same in the adult field due to funding streams focusing on the use of illegal drugs. Four CDRPs have so far agreed to contribute towards funding of an alcohol co-ordinator post. A decision on recruiting to an alcohol co-ordinator post will be made once all the CDRPs have agreed spending plans for 2005/08. The co-ordinator would concentrate on the crime and disorder implications of weekend binge drinking, directing strategy across Surrey and supporting the CDRPs.

**Recommendations**

(vi) **On the basis that SDAT is a key partner in tackling the problems of ASB in the night-time economy, the Executive should support (financially if necessary) SDAT in taking alcohol on as a focus for its work and in appointing a full-time alcohol co-ordinator.**

7. **Conclusion**

7.1. In conclusion, the Task Group was pleased to find that ASB in the night-time economy was being prioritised by many of Surrey’s public agencies given that it is a key concern for residents. However, it was concerned by the disparateness of activity and potential for duplication of effort.
7.2. The Community Safety Select Committee has developed its recommendations according to the ‘best practice’ principles identified by the Task Group during its investigation:

- Work in partnership;
- Understand the nature of the problem;
- Take an holistic approach; and
- Work through the DAT.

7.3. The Select Committee submits this paper’s findings and recommendations in a spirit of good will for the Executive’s consideration.
Appendix 1

Background Evidence

Witness Session (1 October 2004) – facilitated by Neil Corbett:

- Ian Dewar (Surrey Community Safety Unit)
- Lesley Gallagher (Surrey Drug Action Team)
- Kevin Gill (Head of Community Support and Community Safety)
- David Hollingsworth (Surrey Police)
- Dave Johnson (Local Director for Guildford)
- Toby Wells (Youth Offending Team)

Visit to Cardiff Council (22 October 2004) by Mike Abbott (Lead Local Director on Crime and Disorder) substituting for Alan Peirce

Visit to Wiltshire County Council (20 October 2004) by John Ades and Cheryl Hardman (Research Support Officer)

John Ades and Bob McKinley accompanied the Police on patrol in Guildford on the evening of 8 October 2004.

Attendance at the Community Safety Best Practice Conference held by Surrey Community Safety Unit on 15 September 2004.

Briefing Papers on:

- Legislation and Guidance
- Alcohol and Drug-Related ASB in Surrey
- Case Studies (Local Authority Practices)
- Alcohol Blitz – Results
- Perceptions and Experience of ASB (Home Office Report)