

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE – 11 SEPTEMBER 2007

1 REVIEW OF ISSUES AROUND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- 1.1 At its meeting on 11 September 2007 the Review Committee approved the final report and recommendations of the Review of Issues around Anti-Social Behaviour for consideration by the Executive Board.
- 1.2 A copy of the final report, as approved by the Review Committee, is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.3 It is proposed that the Executive Board considers the final report which includes the following recommendations:-
 - (1) That Essex County Council be lobbied to look to focus their spending via the Youth Service on areas of prevention rather than cure.
 - (2) That Central Government be lobbied to look at ways that central funding could be focused on providing activities for young people as a preventative measure rather than trying to cure the problems once they have occurred.
 - (3) That the Council:-
 - Consolidate existing formal methods of communication with young people in the District.
 - Establish informal methods of communicating with young people in the District.
 - (4) That the Council lobby the various partnership organisations within the District that, like the Council, they continue to look at ways to engage with the young people to establish what affordable facilities could be provided to them that would better manage the large numbers of young people currently congregating at inappropriate landmarks within the district.
 - (5) That, where possible, the residents of the District are encouraged to report all incidents of Anti Social Behaviour to the Police and that issues of public confidence and perception that may be discouraging such reporting be addressed.
 - (6) That the Criminal Justice System (Ministry of Justice, the local Justices' Panel, the Courts, the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service) be lobbied to take a tougher stance, on individuals who persistently commit acts of Anti Social Behaviour.

Sarah Fowler

Head of Information and Customer Services

Background Papers:-

None

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Final Report of the Project Team as Approved by the Review Committee

Review of Issues Around Anti Social Behaviour



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Comments by the departing Chairman of the Review Committee

I have no intention of pre-empting the Review Committee's report with a great deal of detail let it suffice that I will give an overview of my assessment of where we are with our enquiries, my opinion of the root causes of antisocial behaviour relative to our district, what society appears to be trying to do about it, and what I, at this time consider to be the best way forward to ameliorate the problem in the short time.

Anti social behaviour, along with immigration is at the top of the tree as far as the concerns of our Residents go. It is imperative solutions are found in order to retain respect for authority otherwise the problems are bound to escalate, witness the recent black on black lawlessness with respect to gun and knife crime.

We have heard from so many people and organisations that all seem to be singing a similar tune:-

- There is nothing for the youth to do; no where for them to go; no facilities.
- It should be up to the parents to ensure proper control of their children.
- The Police should do more to ensure people behave better in public places.

I don't think anyone would disagree with these sentiments!

We have heard that certain organisations are of the opinion that their partner organisations are not doing their jobs as effectively as they feel they should be; and we have identified that some organisations don't really know what the others remit is. We are aware of a great deal of money being spent in a great many directions. We are also aware of money being made available but with an apparent lack of interest as to its take up.

Maybe the various cash streams should be diverted to ensure better effect.

We are aware that there is a new initiative from Essex County Council to deliver services for the youth via 29 delivery groups; it is also true that there maybe a reduction in funding.

Considerable sums of money are spent in trying to control and rehabilitate young offenders but precious little is spent in providing facilities in the hope of preventing offending in the first place.

It is clear to me that we have identified a lack of youth facilities and these will need to be provided. It is apparent that respect for the law, the Police and for each other needs to be re-established and reinforced. We are also aware that the police are often woefully lacking in resources to deal effectively with this

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low level crime (often more of a nuisance than crime) but very upsetting, never the less, to our people. It often makes life seem unbearable when it goes on day after day.

This committee has been fortunate with respect to the co-operation we have had from so many people and organisations not least of all the Police. I was particularly fortunate to have attended a two day seminar organised by the Police specifically dealing with anti social behaviour. From all of this we have determined that the Neighbourhood Policing initiative may well be understaffed, overstretched, under-funded, redirected to support other more important crime; all manner of reasons and concerns. To this end we requested a meeting with the Chief Constable of the Essex Constabulary in order to find out first hand his opinions.

We were fortunate to have met with Assistant Chief Constable Carmel Napier on 30th May and I am of the opinion that she responded to our enquiries in an open and straightforward manner. She advised us that she was battling to alter the mindset of her officers from response “fast car – blue and 2” policing to neighbourhood high profile on the beat type policing, “Dixon of dock green but with attitude”. She assures us that the present budgeting arrangements for this type of policing will not be lowered but it was apparent to me that there is no immediate intention to increase it.

This does present me with a dilemma, as we are perfectly aware from talking to and observing so many officers on the sharp end that they lack the resources to do a thorough job. Mrs. Napier appeared very keen that we consider “buying” into our own supply of Police Community Support Officers. At first glance it does seem a strange concept that we should pay for a service at an agreed and acceptable rate only to be asked to pay more when the service we have paid for fails to deliver to the level of our expectations. I am of the opinion that we should make it perfectly plain at the outset what we expect from the Police service and then fund it in an appropriate manner that will ensure proper delivery. I do not believe that there is a family in our district that would not accept an appropriate increase in Police funding if they could be assured of a good night’s sleep, “every night”; and a safe and comfortable passage through the streets of our towns and villages. It is a price worth paying.

It is regrettable that this review could not be completed during the year of my tenure, it required much detailed analysis and stumbled, time wise, at the last hurdle due to the prior commitments of Assistant Chief Constable Carmel Napier. I say this as a statement of fact and with no implied criticism because all those members of the Review Committee that met this lady will agree with me that we met with a person, whose dynamism and dedication to her profession and position shone through, filling me with confidence. Let us hope that her obvious enthusiasm is matched by those who hold the purse strings.

Whilst I am on the theme of dynamism and dedication, I would like to comment that I am confident that my successor to the chair of this Committee will steer this review to a sound and satisfactory conclusion; thus demonstrating to the reader, the time and effort that has been devoted by

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members of the council, officers of the council and our many witnesses and contributors. To all I pay tribute and give you my thanks.

Yours sincerely

Keith H Hudson

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2 Glossary

ASB	Anti Social Behaviour
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CMLD	Centrally Managed and Locally Delivered
CYPSP	Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership
DARG	Drug & Alcohol Reference Group
ECC	Essex County Council
LGUSS	Local Government User Satisfaction Survey
NAPs	Neighbourhood Action Panels
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PPO	Prolific & Persistent Offender
RDC	Rochford District Council
YOT	Youth Offending Team

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3 Terms of reference

3.1 It was agreed that the Review would attempt to establish the nature and extent of anti-social behaviour in and around public spaces in the Rochford DC area. This would include assessing:-

- What is currently provided by the various interested agencies,
- What policies and initiatives have had a beneficial effect,
- What policies and initiatives have not added any value,
- Proposals for improving the current situation.

3.2 It was agreed that the review would not look at the following areas within the Council's Anti-social behaviour policy:-

- Fly tipping
- Littering
- Neighbour issues

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4 Methodology

- 4.1 At the start of the Review it was agreed that to be able to look at the subject of Anti Social Behaviour in any depth the Committee would require the assistance of some people who had knowledge of the subject already. To this end the following people were identified and asked to participate in an advisory role for the length of the Review:-
- Paul Warren (Chairman, Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership)
 - Chief Inspector John Walker (Rochford District Commander)
 - John Zammit (ECC Partnership Co-ordinator)
 - Cheryl Milton-White (Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator RDC)
- 4.2 Apart from inviting various representatives from the Authorities partner organisations to have input and provide their ideas to the Review, Members of the Review Committee also visited organisations and areas of concern to explain the purpose of the Review and obtain input from them.
- 4.3 In addition various Members of the Review Committee went out in the District to speak to Young People, individually and collectively and brought back their findings for discussion within the group.
- 4.4 The aim was that in this way the evidence gathered would come from the broadest possible area.
- 4.5 During the Review the following people visited the Review Committee to discuss their roles and provide information on their activities:-
- Daniel Carlin - Road Safety Officer, Essex County Council
 - Wendy Bailey – Locality Youth Work Manager, Essex County Council
 - Mark Hughes – Divisional Manager (South) Essex County Council
 - Alison Spalding – Team Manager, South Essex Youth Offending Team
 - Michael Armstrong – South Essex Youth Offending Team
 - County Councillor Mrs Tracey Chapman – Essex County Council

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5 Findings**5.1 Respect Indicators**

5.1.1 The Council has recently been advised by the Home Office of the Respect Indicator scores from the Local Government User Satisfaction Survey (LGUSS) for 2006 carried out in the District, which show a marked improvement from those of the previous survey in 2003.

5.1.2 Details of the figures and how they have been calculated are included for information purposes.

5.1.3 The High Level of perceived anti social behaviours is calculated based on a methodology used by the British Crime Survey, using a scale constructed of the seven individual strands of problems with:

- Noisy neighbours or loud parties;
- teenagers hanging around on the streets;
- rubbish and litter lying around;
- people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces;
- abandoned or burnt out cars;
- vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles;
- people using or dealing drugs

5.1.4 The scale scores answers to the questions as follows: 'very big problem' = 3, 'fairly big problem' = 2, 'not a very big problem' = 1 and 'not a problem at all' = 0. All other responses including 'don't know' and 'not stated' also score 0. The maximum score for the seven questions is 21 and the percentage reported (those with 'high' levels of perceive anti-social behaviour) is based on those who score 11 or more on this scale.

5.1.5 E.g. 35% of respondents perceive a high level of anti social behaviour (i.e. score 11 or more on the scale).

BVPI GENERAL SURVEY 2003-2004 / 2006-2007

	2003/04	2006/07
Base	1521	1308
1 High level of perceived anti social behaviours (derived from responses to the 7 individual asb strands)	33%	17%
1a noisy neighbours or loud parties	15%	11%

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1b teenagers hanging around on the streets	66%	74%
1c rubbish and litter lying around	38%	32%
1d people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces	42%	24%
1e abandoned or burnt out cars	34%	4%
1f vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles	63%	42%
1g people using or dealing drugs	58%	33%
2 Percentage of people in the local area who perceive parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children as a very or fairly big problem	-	65%
3 Percentage of people in the local area who perceive people not treating one another with respect and consideration as a very or fairly big problem	-	45%
4 Percentage of people in the local area who feel very or fairly well informed about what the council is doing to tackle anti social behaviour	-	22%

5.1.6 Questions 2 to 4 were not asked in the 2003 survey and so there are no equivalent figures for comparison purposes.

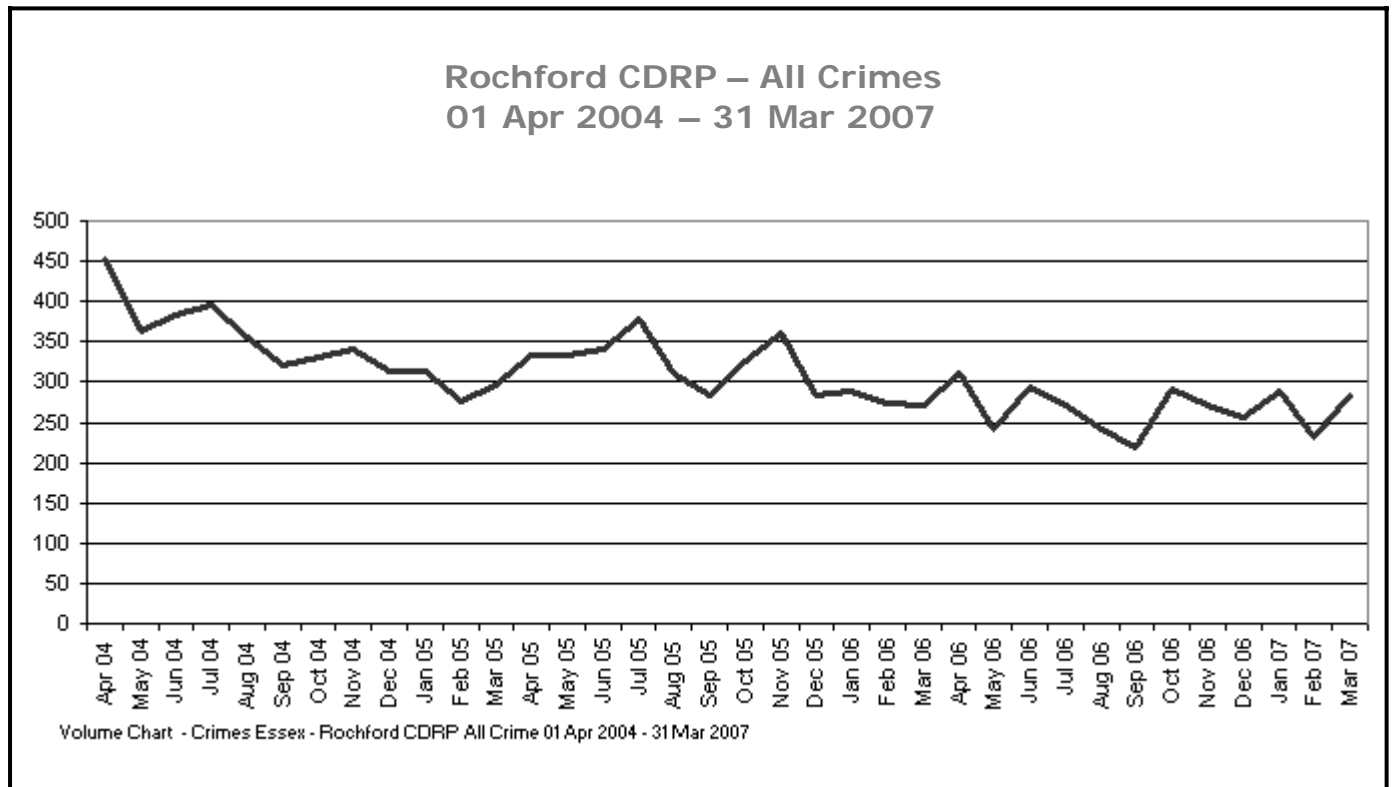
5.1.7 It is interesting to note that question 1b is the only area that has seen a percentage increase reflecting public concern. All other areas connected with Anti Social Behaviour have seen a drop in the public perception. Hence, the issue to be tackled within the District focuses very much on the youth agenda and the perception of “hanging around on streets.”

5.2 Rochford Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership Figures

5.2.1 The following figures and graph show the end of year results for the Rochford Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and the success it has achieved with the initiatives it has introduced in reducing crime in the area.

5.2.2 The Rochford CDRP is grouped with 14 other Authorities nationally with similar populations and crime figures and at the end of the year Rochford CDRP has achieved the second largest reduction in crime within this nationwide group.

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Total Number of Offences to date (Apr – Mar 07)

3200

Total Number of Offences – March only

283

Current Placing amongst Similar Family Group (Jan – Mar)

2nd out of 15

Number of Offences for last 12 Months

3200

Change between current quarter and same quarter last year

Down 29

Change between current year ending select month and previous year

Down 580

5.3 Rochford District Police Anti Social Behaviour Figures

5.3.1 The following figures cover the period April 2006 to March 2007 and are broken down into the 6 neighbourhood Policing teams (NPT) in the district. Of note is the reduction in the number of incidents in the second half of the year for the Hockley and Rayleigh areas when the CDRP supported initiatives on these two areas.

Great Wakering NPT (including Barling, Sutton, Foulness and Great Wakering)

2006									2007		
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
26	16	27	30	20	24	15	12	25	16	13	25

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Rochford NPT (including Rochford, Hawkwell North and Hawkwell South)

2006									2007		
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
72	70	58	93	61	85	109	79	83	95	56	89

Canewdon & Ashingdon NPT

2006									2007		
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
11	13	9	26	15	21	20	11	9	10	8	15

Hockley NPT (including Hawkwell West, Hockley North, Hockley Central and Hockley West)

2006									2007		
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
101	91	86	76	57	76	103	63	62	56	68	51

Hullbridge

2006									2007		
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
16	30	22	26	41	35	35	28	18	22	13	27

Rayleigh (including Whitehouse, Lodge, Wheatley, Grange, Sweyne park, Trinity, Rayleigh Central, Downhall and Rawreth)

2006									2007		
Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
119	102	126	119	106	143	107	88	82	87	83	102

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6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The various statistics that have been accumulated and the opinions heard from various sources show that the Rochford District, compared to other parts of Essex, is a relatively safe place to live and does not really have a high recorded problem with Anti Social Behaviour. To many people in the District, however, Anti Social Behaviour is a major cause for concern, associated largely with teenagers hanging around on streets. Perception therefore seems to be weightier than the actual statistical evidence.
- 6.2 People fear groups of youths hanging around in public areas as they feel intimidated and whilst in the majority of cases these groups of young people do not actually cause any harm, it is the general public's perception that they are up to no good and are going to do something. It is a view that leads to the danger of "demonising" all young people.
- 6.3 Young people on the other hand feel threatened themselves and congregate in groups because they feel safer and want the comfort of being with their friends. At the current time they do not have many areas that they can congregate in and be together apart from public areas such as parks and open spaces, street corners or car parks. There are a limited number of facilities within the District to provide activities and occupy their free time, which means that congregating in large groups is their only form of entertainment when they cannot drive and there is no late night public transport.
- 6.4 There are a number of Agencies working with the young people in the District either as organisations or in partnership with each other. However difficulties have been identified in the cases where the organisations are currently going through structural changes. This has led to confusion as to where responsibilities will lie during and after the restructure.
- 6.5 It was identified that, whilst resources might be an issue in particular areas, it was felt that overall resources were available and it was more a question of prioritising and allocating these resources in a more coordinated way.
- 6.6 On the evidence available (see the graph and figures in section 5.2) the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) appears to be working effectively as the top performing CDRP in the region. This performance appears to be down to the effectiveness of the individual partners, their contributions, and the relationships built up over time.
- 6.7 From assessing the evidence and submissions from the various interested parties, it is felt that there may be too much focus of resources being directed at the "acute" end in terms of young people i.e. mainly those young people who have already come to the attention of the authorities benefiting more from the funding being supplied by Central and Local Government. It is felt that more focus of resources

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needs to be given before the “acute” stage and to avoid young people being drawn into causing problems due to boredom or peer pressure.

- 6.8 Each area within the District has its own issues and therefore local solutions to individual problems need to be considered. It is not possible to have a one size fits all solution. It needs careful study and consultation with the local community in each area before solutions can be found and implemented.
- 6.9 The Review identified that some areas of the District have suffered from low level nuisance by groups of people. During the Review the Police have introduced neighbourhood policing in the Rochford District and the number of Officers involved in this change of emphasis has increased as the role out has progressed. At a meeting with Assistant Chief Constable Carmel Napier the Committee was advised of additional Police Community Support Officers that were being recruited for the Canewdon and Rochford areas. As part of the initiative the Police have introduced Neighbourhood Action Panels (NAPs) where they meet with representatives from the local area and agree the priorities for that area. It is hoped that in this way information about local issues, including Anti Social Behaviour related issues, can be collected by the locally based Police team and dealt with by them and other members of the CDRP as part of a multi-agency response.
- 6.10 The Committee welcomes this and it is seen as a positive step towards reducing Anti Social Behaviour in the District and providing local residents with a named contact to deal with their problems.

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7 Recommendations

Recommendation No 1

- 7.1 At the current time considerable sums of money are being spent in trying to control and rehabilitate young offenders or those that have been identified as likely to offend. This method of allocation perhaps places less emphasis on trying to prevent poor behaviour by offering an alternative. It is felt that the young people in the District need activities and places to go to prevent them from being tempted to cause problems through boredom or peer pressure.

It is recommended to the Executive Board that Essex County Council be lobbied to look to focus their spending via the Youth Service on areas of prevention rather than cure.

Recommendation No 2

- 7.2 One of the things to come out of the review was that grant monies from Central Government is allocated on the basis that it is to be used for set things. This meant that although a worthwhile project might be identified it was not always possible to provide it with the necessary funds due to the restrictions attached to the original grant.

It is recommended to the Executive Board that Central Government be lobbied to look at ways that central funding could be focused on providing activities for young people as a preventative measure rather than trying to cure the problems once they have occurred.

Recommendation No 3

- 7.3 It was mentioned at a number of the meetings that it was necessary to engage with young people to ensure that what is offered to them is actually what they want. The Council has established formal methods of communicating with local young people but it needs to ensure that it is reaching the widest possible audience.

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It is recommended to the Executive Board that the Council:-

- 1) Consolidate existing formal methods of communication with young people in the district.
- 2) Establish informal methods of communicating with young people in the district.

Recommendation No 4

- 7.4 It is clear from the conversations that Committee Members have had with young people and from input from various organisations that facilities need to be supplied to young people. These facilities need to be supplied in consultation with the young people as without their input they will not feel any degree of ownership and use it. There is also the added problem that as the local young people change so their aspirations change and what has been put in place for one age group will not be adopted by the next. Therefore, any facilities need to be tailored with this in mind. It must be clearly understood that when financially viable suggestions are received from the youth council it is imperative that they be swiftly acted upon in order to foster respect and to build a rapport. It would be counterproductive just to listen and to do nothing.

It is recommended to the Executive Board that the Council lobby the various partnership organisations within the District that, like the Council, they continue to look at ways to engage with the young people to establish what affordable facilities could be provided to them that would better manage the large numbers of young people currently congregating at inappropriate landmarks within the district.

Recommendation No 5

- 7.5 It was identified during the course of the various meetings that the Police can only take action when they witness an incident taking place or when they have a witness to an incident. The Police are only able to take a positive stance when they have an evidence trail that they can rely upon. People need to be prepared to report incidents when they happen rather than ignore what is happening or report them at a later time when the perpetrators have left the scene.

It is recommended to the Executive Board that, where possible, the residents of the District are encouraged to report all incidents of Anti Social Behaviour to the Police and that issues of public confidence and perception that may be discouraging such reporting be addressed.

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Recommendation No 6

- 7.6 In the case of those people who become known to the law enforcement agencies when they are involved in committing acts of Anti Social Behaviour, the Committee feel that it is appropriate for the Criminal Justice System, particularly the Courts System, to consider using the full powers open to them when appropriate.

It is recommended to the Executive Board that the Criminal Justice System (Ministry of Justice, the local Justices' Panel, the Courts, the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service) be lobbied to take a tougher stance, on individuals who persistently commit acts of Anti Social Behaviour.