

**WEST AREA COMMITTEE – 17 SEPTEMBER 2008
COMMUNITY FORUM**

Question From	Response	Officer
<p>A Wilson, Rayleigh</p> <p>Is RDC aware of the increase in anti-social behaviour in the Grove Park area and has RDC taken any steps to remedy the various problems, and with what results?</p> <p>Examples of ASB: large threatening groups of youths gathering late evenings in the park and nearby streets, 'racing' of cars/scooters on public roads, excessive noise into the night, use of illegal off-road m/cycles, underage drinking of alcohol, criminal damage, litter. Possible drugs use.</p> <p>Areas particularly affected: Grove Road, Katherine Close, Grove Court, Bramfield Road East.</p>	<p>RDC, in partnership with Essex Police and others, closely monitors incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and endeavours to respond promptly and effectively. Open areas and public parks understandably and correctly attract large numbers of young people, especially during the warmer summer months and during school holidays. Unfortunately, a minority of young people behave in such a way as to cause local residents significant distress.</p> <p>A number of current policing operations specifically target identified areas of ASB, including Operation Sunfish and Operation Lark. In recent months a series of letters (over 150 to date) have been sent by the local District Commander (CI Andy Prophet) to the parents of young people, either found behaving inappropriately or in possession of alcohol.</p>	<p>S Garland, Rochford District Council Tel: 01702 318103</p>

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	<p>In addition to policing and enforcement options all partners are heavily involved in the engagement of young people, RDC Community Services Department in partnership with Virgin Active and Extended Schools provided a vast range of activities, some of which were free – across all age ranges, throughout the whole of the summer holidays to help address possible boredom issues arising amongst young people with activities running 5 days a week from 10.00 am until 4.00 pm. A vast number of those activities took place in the Rayleigh area and neighbouring Hockley Woods and included Rayleigh Leisure Centre and Love Lane School where a swimming programme also ran. This Holiday Leisure programme was very successful and attracted a high level of attendance, which we believe, alongside the police operations, has greatly assisted in reducing the levels of anti-social behaviour, both in Rayleigh and throughout the district. To continue this good work providing diversionary activities for young people, the Rochford Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) have made available £2,900 to RDC Community Services with the purpose of providing free out of hours activities specifically in the Rayleigh area, which they are currently looking into.</p>	

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	<p>Across the district levels of ASB were significantly lower this summer than last year. For example, in the Rayleigh area during July and August 118 incidents were recorded this year compared to 154 last year – a 23.3% reduction. That said, we are not complacent and will continue to work hard to reduce anti-social behaviour even further.</p> <p>The Community Safety team has not received regular or persistent reports of anti-social behaviour in the areas mentioned and therefore are unaware of these potential problems, unfortunately without members of the public reporting this as an issue RDC and its partners is limited in any remedial action that can be taken over and above what is already happening. However, now that this specific matter has come to our attention it has been referred to the local Neighbourhood Specialist Officer (PC Wyn Sharp) to liaise with local residents and put an appropriate policing response in place. As is always the case the Police and RDC rely on information from the community to respond to issues of anti-social behaviour and therefore we welcome any reports of incidents in your community.</p>	

Question From	Response	Officer
<p>R Warr, Rayleigh</p> <p>Why are the local authorities doing nothing to allay the fears and concerns of residents to the creeping intrusion of backland development whilst granting planning permission allowing it to proliferate? (with reference to a petition containing 225 signatures protesting to backland development and presented to Cllr Mrs Mavis Webster on Thursday, 24 July 2008 at the Civic Suite in Rayleigh)</p>	<p>Paragraph 2.54 of the Council's adopted Local Plan states that:</p> <p>"Backland development is not, in principle an unacceptable form of development, and certainly can make a valuable contribution to housing provision and fulfill one of the requirements of PPG3 by making best use of available land for development".</p> <p>In accepting the principle of backland development though, the Council recognizes the importance of ensuring schemes do not compromise the amenities of existing residents and policy HP14 in the Local Plan explains the items against which an assessment of acceptability of schemes will be carried out.</p> <p>Given the prevailing national policies that aim for at least 60% of new housing development to be provided on 'previously developed land', which includes garden land, there is little prospect that backland development will stop, but the requirements of policy HP14 means that all schemes must pass a series of tests and where there is an unacceptable impact on the amenity of residents, the appearance of the locality, etc. applications will be refused.</p>	<p>S Scrutton, Rochford District Council Tel: 01702 318100</p>

Please note: written responses have been provided to questions received up to seven working days prior to the meeting.