



Subject:	Anti-Social Behaviour (Citywide and Holylands)
Date:	8 November 2016
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Director City & Neighbourhood Services Department
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Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>Further to the Notice of Motion referred to Committee in October 2016 (as detailed below) and increasing Member concern around antisocial behaviour in a range of parks and open spaces across the city, the purpose of this report is to update Members on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The anti-social behaviour context in the Holy Land and around parks and open spaces across the city;- The ongoing work in response to these issues;- The planned work to improve the response to these issues;
1.2	<p><u>Notice of Motion</u></p> <p>“This Council recognises the substantial social and economic contribution which students and universities make to our City. We also condemn, without reservation, the disorder seen on the streets of Belfast and express our support for the affected residents. The Council resolves to consider a report in the relevant Committee specifically addressing the return of wardens, the installation of CCTV, the impact of private landlords and options for more rigorously enforcing bye-laws. The Council also agrees that Chief Officers will attend the Inter-Agency Group in recognition of the seriousness of the problem”.</p>

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the contents of the report. • Note the progress to date and endorse the future work planned to address these issues more effectively.
3.0	Main report
	<p><u>The Anti-Social Behaviour Context</u></p> <p><u>The Holyland</u></p> <p>3.1 Members will be aware that for a number of years, the Holyland area of South Belfast has experienced significant issues with ongoing anti-social and nuisance behaviour, particularly at key dates e.g. St. Patrick’s Day, Halloween and the Fresher’s Period. The main issues being on street drinking and noise. There have also been occasions when street disorder has taken place due to the large numbers of people in the area and the influence of large quantities of alcohol.</p> <p>3.2 Groups in the area representing the interests of long term residents and newly settled families continue to report that these behaviours have significant impacts on their quality of life, particularly as the issues have been ongoing for a number of years.</p> <p>3.3 The issues are associated in the main (although not exclusively) with the large student population in the area. There is also recognition that not all students are involved in the negative behaviours.</p> <p>3.4 At a recent public meeting of the Wider University Area PACT (Partners and Communities Together) to review the Fresher’s period 2016, significant concern was articulated from long term residents and newly settled families that agencies and the Higher Education Institutions (HEI’s) were not effective in their efforts to minimise the impact of these issues on the community in the area.</p> <p>3.5 For Members’ information a summary of the resources provided and actions taken by Council, PSNI and the HEI’s during Fresher’s 2016 is included at Appendix 1.</p> <p><u>Parks and Open Spaces</u></p> <p>3.6 For several years there has also been an Elected Member and public concern regarding anti social behaviour in local neighbourhoods. In recent months, Elected Member concern and the</p>

number of customer complaints has grown, in respect of crime and anti-social behaviour in a number of parks and open spaces across the city.

3.7 An additional concern in respect of parks and open spaces is the growth of a large group of young people who are transient in nature (anything from 50 – 150 young people at a time), who move across parks and open spaces in the city. This group can be under the influence of alcohol and drugs and are often determined to remain detached from existing structured youth provision in their own communities.

3.8 Currently the main parks and open spaces most affected at present are:

Park/Open Space	Main Issues At Present	Frequency
Girdwood	Criminal damage, inappropriate use of scramblers, abuse of staff/residents, rowdy and nuisance behaviour.	Unpredictable, can happen any night of the week.
Marrowbone	Criminal damage/vandalism, trespass, drinking, lighting fires, drug use, rowdy and nuisance behaviour.	Weekends mainly and school holidays
Falls Park/City Cemetery	Criminal damage/vandalism, lighting fires, burnt out vehicles, inappropriate vehicle use, drinking, drug use, rowdy and nuisance behaviour.	
Lagan Walkway	Vulnerability of young people under influence of alcohol and possibly drugs and proximity to water.	
Cavehill Country Park	Criminal damage, graffiti, drinking, inappropriate use of scramblers, rowdy and nuisance behaviour.	
Dunville	Drinking, rowdy and nuisance behaviour, inappropriate use of scramblers.	
Whiterock	Possible damage to new playground facility and proximity to Falls Park/City Cemetery.	

The ongoing work in response to these issues

The Holyland

3.9 Members will be aware that agencies (including the HEI's) have been working in partnership with

the community to address issues in the Holyland area for a number of years. This work has included:

- Holylands Strategic Study to better understand the challenge and make recommendations on proposed ways forward;
- Learning City Inter-Agency Group (previously Holyland Inter-Agency Group) to ensure strategic focus was given to issues in the area (including delivery of Learning City Action Plan);
- Student Housing Strategy to support the City to meet the demand for Purpose Built Managed Student Accommodation;
- Joint PSNI, Council and University operations every St. Patricks, Halloween and Fresher's period;
- Wider University Area PACT (including delivery of the Wider University Area PACT Action Plan);
- Financial support for community led family friendly, community safety and environmental improvement projects;
- HEI development of student disciplinary policy to better manage student behaviours
- City Wide Community Safety Warden Service 2009 – 2013;
- Pilot Holy Land redeployable CCTV Provision 2010 – 2016, partner funded.

Parks and Open Spaces

3.10 Further to reports considered by Committee in May/June 2015 collaborative work between Parks, Community Safety and (D)(PCSP (Policing and Community Safety Partnership) teams has been ongoing. Additionally, with those teams now being within the City and Neighbourhood Services Department the effectiveness of a 'One Council' response to crime and anti-social behaviour is improving. Ongoing work includes:

- Joint planning and ongoing 'one Council' front line responses to community safety issues in all parks and open spaces detailed above;
- Fortnightly operational planning meetings to monitor ongoing concerns and develop responses;
- Joint visible reassurance patrols of Council Officers and when required PSNI;
- Proactive visits to off licenses around parks and open spaces to give advice and guidance on consequences of selling alcohol to minors;
- Ongoing delivery of programming to support positive and legitimate use of the parks and open spaces;
- Delivery of positive diversionary activities in partnership with (D)PCSP's;

- Partnerships developed with local youth providers and (D)PCSP supported detached youth work to address anti-social behaviour in priority parks and open spaces;
- Council and (D)PCSP investment in community infrastructure around parks and open spaces to encourage participation and sustainability;
- Ongoing delivery of proactive work on social media and through schools to promote parental responsibility as well as reinforcing the expectation that young people using the parks will do so in a positive manner;
- Joint procurement and deployment of mobile/redeployable CCTV solutions;
- Single point of reporting crime and anti-social behaviour issues on a daily basis to improve our understanding of the issues.

The planned work to improve the response to these issues

3.11 It is recognised that significant effort has gone in to developing the ‘one Council’ and partnership approach to addressing crime and anti-social behaviour across the city (including the Holy Land and parks/open spaces across), however, challenges remain in improving the effectiveness of our efforts to address these issues. The remaining challenges have informed the focus of our work going forward. They are:

Operational Demand v Availability of Resource

3.12 It is recognised there is significant demand from across the city for Council to provide a front line and operational response to address anti-social behaviour. Members will be aware however, that the available citywide Council front line resource currently stands at:

- 8 Safer Neighbourhood Officers (SNO’s) whose main focus is working at community level to address community safety issues. The working patterns of SNO’s is Mon – Thurs 2pm – 10pm (8 SNO’s), Fri/Sat 4.30pm – Midnight (4 SNO’s)
- 24 Park Wardens with part focus of job on addressing community safety issues within parks. Park Wardens work a shift pattern providing cover throughout the day from morning to park closing. For the autumn/winter period this means that Park Wardens are not available from within their normal shift pattern for evening work.
- Up to 10 casual Alcohol Enforcement Officers (AEO’s) who can be deployed to support SNO’s and Park Wardens at key dates and events, but this carries an additional financial cost.

3.13 Operational demand for front line Council resource exceeds the core available resource at present (Park Wardens and SNO’s). Evidence of need (both recorded incidents and anecdotal input from Elected Members and communities) has informed the areas of focus at present but this may

change in the future.

Future Work Planned

- 3.14
- Explore the short term opportunities for flexible working between SNO's and Park Wardens to meet the citywide demand at evenings and weekends.
 - In the context of the City and Neighbourhood Services Department change programme, explore the possible benefits of a more integrated 'one Council' approach to warden type services to maximise availability and effectiveness of the resource

CCTV

3.15 CCTV can be a useful tool; however, as a standalone resource it is not effective in dealing with and addressing crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.16 Members will recall the decision of Belfast City Council in February 2016 to close the pilot redeployable CCTV system operating in the Holylands and to support the impact with mobile/redeployable CCTV when required.

- 3.17 This decision was based on the following:
- None of the funders or partners of the original scheme currently have any financial resource to contribute toward the urgent upgrade needed to ensure the Holylands CCTV system operates at an acceptable level.
 - PSNI who had taken responsibility for recording and monitoring of cameras are no longer able to do so at the original level and are only prepared to commit to recording capacity for five strategically placed cameras. Live monitoring of these cameras would only take place over key dates throughout the year e.g. St. Patrick's Day, Fresher's and Halloween.
 - CCTV is not considered a current priority for them
 - There is a reluctance from partners to consider re-investment in a system which has not provided tangible evidence of impact over the years.
 - CCTV as a standalone resource is considered not effective in dealing with anti-social behaviour in the Holylands area.
 - There is a view that a shared multi-agency responsibility and partnership working is the most effective way of addressing issues in the Holylands area.
 - Future investment would need to show strong evidence of impact.

3.18 The current position remains that no partner funding is available at present to contribute to fixed CCTV systems either in the Holy Land or elsewhere in the city for the purposes of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and that PSNI are not in a position to monitor any additional CCTV cameras.

3.19	<p>Mobile/Redeployable CCTV and Body Worn Cameras are now available for use by Council, and PSNI can deploy Evidence Gathering Teams (EGT) when the evidence of need is established.</p>
3.20	<p><u>Future Work Planned</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continued provision of Council procured mobile/redeployable CCTV solutions and where appropriate and available the PSNI Evidence Gathering Teams (EGT) in hot spot areas and at high risk times - Continued use of Body Worn Cameras for Council Officers in hot spot areas at high risk times
3.21	<p><u>Council Role v PSNI Role</u></p> <p>Partnership working between Council and PSNI in providing front line services to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour is intrinsic to how both organisations work. Joint Council and PSNI operations have taken place in the Holy Land, at large events and at hot spots in communities for a number of years.</p>
3.22	<p>However, core to this joint working is clarity on the individual roles and responsibilities of each organisation. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council Officers will work to address low level noise, nuisance or anti-social behaviour where it is safe to do so and within their existing working patterns. Additionally, Council Officers do not have any supplementary powers should an individual be obstructive. - PSNI Officers will work to address more serious nuisance or anti-social behaviour, criminality and street disorder and are a 24/7 resource.
3.23	<p>Core to the clarity of roles and responsibilities is that Council Officers have a very specific remit to deal with low level and minor issues. Council Officers are not recruited for or trained to deal with more serious nuisance, anti-social behaviour, criminality or street disorder.</p>
3.24	<p><u>The Way Forward</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidance to be provided to Elected Members and Communities on roles and responsibilities of Council and PSNI - More joint operational planning between Council and PSNI to reduce duplication of and maximise efforts - Further exploration of how to maximise the Council roles in supporting this work as part of the City and Neighbourhoods Department Change Programme

Role of Education Authority and other Youth Providers

3.25 Crime and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces can often be driven by alcohol and drug use among young people. The young people in question are often transient in nature and move in large groups between parks and open spaces and are largely detached from more structured youth provision.

3.26 Most youth providers (including the Education Authority) will not work directly with a young person under the influence of alcohol or drugs and this presents a challenge in respect of meaningful engagement with this group with a view to meeting their needs and changing their negative behaviours.

Future Work Planned

- 3.27
- A review of the specific needs of this group of young people (detached, transient and sometimes under the influence of alcohol/drugs) is being undertaken by Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP).
 - The Education Authority is in the process of establishing Local Advisory Groups (LAG's) to inform the future of youth provision in the city. Council Officers will participate in these groups with a view to influencing the Education Authority to improve how they meet the needs of this specific group of young people as well as the needs of young people generally.

Legislative Review

3.28 Further to Council's consideration of a Notice of Motion expressing concern about the effectiveness of legislation and bye-laws designed to tackle on street drinking, Council requested that the Department of Justice and Department for Communities commence a review of the effectiveness of the existing legal framework. This review should also consider additional powers which could complement or enhance those currently available in Northern Ireland. That review is underway with the proactive support of Council Officers.

Future Work Planned

- 3.29
- Ongoing delivery of the review of the effectiveness of existing legislation and bye-laws and report back to Committee on recommendations
 - Meantime exploration of how far the parameters of existing legislation and bye-laws can be used to alleviate the issue

4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
4.1	<p data-bbox="229 185 608 219"><u>Previous Relevant Decisions</u></p> <p data-bbox="229 253 1342 286">Review of Community Safety Wardens –http://gsintmin01:9077/mgAi.aspx?ID=14516</p> <p data-bbox="229 331 1166 365">Holy Land CCTV System –http://gsintmin01:9077/mgAi.aspx?ID=27963</p> <p data-bbox="229 409 1086 443">On Street Drinking - http://gsintmin01:9077/mgAi.aspx?ID=30453</p>