

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

YOUTH ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR



BACKGROUND

At the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 21 January 2019, Members proposed that a Scrutiny Sub-Committee be agreed, to scrutinise the balance of the provision for free and/or low cost youth activities in respect of current levels of anti-social behaviour, between the towns of Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City. The Scrutiny Sub-Committee would also consider possible actions to reduce levels of ASB.

Membership of the Sub-Committee was agreed as Councillors L.Chesterman (Chairman), J.Cragg, P.Hebden and A.Rohale.

SCOPING

The first meeting of the group was held on 6 March 2019. At this meeting the Sub-Committee agreed the scope of the report.

A copy of the scoping report is attached at Appendix A.

Members agreed the scoping process should clearly identify what the scrutiny exercise intended, distinguishing between what would be included and achievable and that which may be desirable but beyond the parameters of this particular scrutiny exercise.

Achievable Aims and Objectives:

1. To establish who is responsible for a given service and that it is being delivered.
2. To be involved with the work of the Community Safety Partnership.
3. To correlate between incidents of anti-social behavior and the current provision of youth activities.
4. To identify hotspots of anti-social behaviour.
5. To identify contributory factors to, and trends of, anti-social behaviour and social-economic groups.
6. To examine the provision of youth activities provided in Hatfield in comparison to those offered in Welwyn Garden City.

Desirable Aims and Objectives:

1. To obtain a detailed profile of the incidents of anti-social behaviour by type, perpetrators and location.
2. To increase the provision of free and cheaper activities in Welwyn Garden City.

Members agreed the definition of a youth as being a young person aged between 11-19 years of age.

METHODOLOGY

At the inaugural meeting, 16 October 2019, Members determined meetings to which Officers and the relevant Portfolio Holder would be invited to attend. The Safer Neighbourhood Team Inspector would be invited to a future meeting to provide information on perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. Members would consider the following reports and documents:

- Redacted example minutes of a Multi-Agency Group for the Prevention of Youth Exclusion (MAGPYE) meeting.
- Redacted example minutes of a Joint Advisory Group (JAG) meeting. JAG is the operational group of the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) – which in turn is the strategic body responsible for the Community Safety Partnership.
- Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment
- Welwyn Hatfield Youth Action Plan
- Positive Pathways Project

Other information and statistics would be obtained from relevant sources as the scrutiny progressed.

At the meeting held on 7 January 2020, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's (WHBC) Neighbourhood and Enforcement Manager, Kerry Clifford and Police Constable's Glen Cook and James Tassle, gave a presentation on ASB statistics. WHBC Community Partnership's Manager, Matt Rayner, gave Members an overview of statutory, local and county commissioned services for youths, the Youth Survey and the Youth Strategy. The Officers gave detailed answers to further concerns and questions from Members of the Sub-Committee.

On 11 February 2020, Members selected more documents to be considered and added to the Scoping Brief:

- The Welwyn Hatfield Young People's Strategy 2019-2020
- Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and Policy
- WHBC Sports Facilities Strategy
- County Strategic Assessment

Members agreed that local residents who had been the victim of ASB, would be invited to the next meeting to discuss their experiences. Unfortunately the meeting had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

On 27 February 2020, Councillors A.Rohale and P.Hebden attended a Youth Council Meeting held in the Sycamore Room of the Council offices. Members attending found the young people of the Youth Council to be enthusiastic with much to say about provision in the local area. The young people felt that activities delivered privately were expensive and difficult to afford, especially if there were more than one young person in the family. Dance and drama activities were particularly cost prohibitive and with limited availability locally.

The young people of the Youth Council felt that the uptake of activities provided at County level, was less than it should be. They believed that this was due to

communication issues whereby young people could not access information on what was available.

On 5 March 2020, Councillors L.Chesterman and P.Hebden attended a JAG meeting where they were given a 20 minute timeslot on the agenda. Members were impressed by the number of different services represented at the meeting and the excellent service WHBC provided for young people who were vulnerable or with problematic issues.

The meeting held on 8 July 2020 was attended by Councillor B. Sarson, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Economic Development and Partnerships who was invited along to answer questions from the Youth Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Mark Hughes, the YC Herts Broxbourne, East Herts, Welwyn Hatfield Area Team Manager attended the meeting held on 8 July 2020 and gave a detailed presentation on the number of projects and services offered by YC Herts and the key projects that they delivered across the Welwyn Hatfield Borough. Members were impressed with the passion and dedication demonstrated by Mark and the range of activities available to support young people locally.

Members enquired about the budget provision of £50,000, agreed in principle by Cabinet. This budget is currently in an earmarked reserve, to support the work delivered by the Community Partnership Team in respect of youth services. Members enquired whether it was possible for any underspend to be ring-fenced and used in the next municipal year as the Covid-19 pandemic had caused delays to the work of the Youth ASB Sub-Committee.

Councillor Sarson discussed with Members the decision to allocate some of the budget provision towards the King George V Wheel Park Project. This proposal was supported by the group.

BACKGROUND

Statutory Responsibilities

Community Safety

Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are in place to help tackle crime and reduce reoffending and were set up under Sections 5-7 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. There are about 300 CSPs in England and 22 in Wales usually at district or unitary authority level and are made up of representatives from Police, Probation Service, Local Authority, Health, Fire and Rescue authorities.

The CSP is overseen by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG). In Welwyn Hatfield the RAG membership is as follows:

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
Herts County Council

National Probation Service
Clinical Commissioning Groups
University of Hertfordshire
Hertfordshire Constabulary
Herts Fire and Rescue

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner attend by invitation.
The CSP has a Community Safety Plan and three-year Action. One of the key priorities is to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Youth Services

The legislation that supports youth work is described in detail in the Statutory Guidance on Section 507B Education Act 1996 published in March 2008. This statutory guidance sets out the requirements for local authorities (in this Borough upper tier, Herts County Council) to provide youth work in three areas: positive activities, decision making by young people and 14-19 learning.

Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, introduced through Section 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, ensures that the local authority working in the context of the Children's Trust holds the lead responsibility for securing young people's access to positive activities

This duty applies to the 13-19 age range extending to 24 for young people with learning difficulties. The duty is qualified by the term "reasonably practicable"

The duty sets out two forms of activity (not mutually exclusive) to improve well-being. The first activity is "educational leisure-time activities". The legislation also includes sufficient educational leisure time activity and associated facilities that are for the improvement of young people's personal and social development. This sub-set relates to activities that are delivered using youth work methods and approaches.

The second activity is "recreational leisure-time activities" which includes sports and informal physical activities as well as a wide range of cultural activities including music, performing and visual arts.

Within Hertfordshire these services are primarily delivered by Youth Connections, which is a service provided by Hertfordshire County Council.

FINDINGS

The presentation from members of the CSP set out for members of the sub committee the level of anti-social behaviour across the borough and the geographical location.

In brief, the level of anti-social behaviour by young people is very low in, but there is a higher prevalence in Welwyn Garden City.

The perpetrators, albeit low in numbers, come from locations across the borough and a small number reside outside the borough.

The Sub Committee were presented with a detailed list of activities which are provided via the partnership, including a range of youth diversionary activities. These are located throughout the borough, so activities are provided in both Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City.

The CSP also presented information about targeted youth diversionary projects, including Positive Pathways, which is unique to Welwyn Hatfield and the SOS project (countywide). These projects focus on the most vulnerable young people who are involved or at risk of being involved in criminal activity.

The CSP consider that the reason that there is a concentration of anti-social behaviour in Welwyn Garden City is due to the connectivity and facilities in the town centre (McDonalds and other fast food outlets, free Wi-Fi, well-lit public realm)

Partnership Working

The sub committee were presented with the partnership framework, which includes the RAG and JAG, but also the 11-19 Group, which is a non-statutory body made up of up to 40 organisations (statutory, voluntary, charitable); this group oversees the borough's Youth Strategy and the delivery of the associated Action Plan.

CONSIDERATIONS OF SUB COMMITTEE

1. The Youth Scrutiny Review had taken much longer than anticipated due to the restraints caused by Purdah and the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. There was a very small percentage of young people causing ASB. Out of approximately 15,000 young people (aged 10-19) across the district, there were a group of approximately 40 young people where extensive intervention had been required. Not all ASB was committed by young people.
3. ASB perpetrators may not be resident in the area. There were good travel links to Welwyn Garden City and many young people travelled to the town centre from London, Hatfield, Stevenage and other areas. The town centre was a hotspot for young people with MacDonal'd's and the Howard Centre.
4. WHBC was not the statutory provider of youth provision. The Head of Community and Housing Strategy would provide the legal framework for this.
5. A table should be provided summarising the nature of activities in the district.
6. Was there a gap in the provision on offer if a young person was not interested in sport?
7. Was there a gap in provision for an activity that was not structured, such as a youth centre drop in?
8. The Youth ASB Scrutiny findings were that the WHBC teams and the Partnership were doing an excellent job with the resources available.

9. Members are interested in how communication about activities can be maximized and that this should be done safely. Young people should be encouraged not to share personal information on the social media platform Tik Tok due to safety issues and the scope for misuse. Personal information could easily be accessed on this platform.
10. At Full Council it was agreed that £50k be added to a new earmarked reserve for youth service, and the expenditure of which will be delegated to Corporate Management Team, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Member for Resources.
11. KGV Wheel Park – the Members were in support that some of the additional budget provision would be put towards this project.
12. The group recognised that statutory services need to focus on provision for the most vulnerable, but this can lead to gaps for those who are less so, but who may not be able to afford paid activities.
13. The members were keen to help support the charitable and voluntary sector who provide services to a wider group, often at a lower cost. They felt that perhaps some of the additional funding could be made available to support these groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To review the current method of communicating with young people so that they are able to access the information they require regarding youth provision and activities available to them and to consider if there are any additional methods that could improve the reach. This should include providing a table of the available activities.
2. That the budget provision of £50,000 for more youth services to reduce anti-social behaviour, agreed by Cabinet for the 2020/21 budget, be ring-fenced and carried over to the next municipal year if not used. This is because of delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and Purdah, which may lead to an underspend.
3. That the group support the use of some of this additional budget to be used to modernize the Wheels Park at King George V.
4. That this budget could be used in part to provide a small grant fund for one year, in addition to the current community grant fund and to be applied for in the same way, to be made available for youth provision (11-19 year olds). The provision would have to be sustainable and would have to be in addition to what is currently available.
5. Subject to agreement of Recommendation 4, that a report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 12 months' time to look at the impact of the grants.

THE NEXT STEPS

A copy of this report would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting on 28 July 2020.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Sub-Committee expressed its thanks to the Officers and the Executive Member who took the time to attend meetings of the Sub-Committee, to respond to questions and contribute to the scrutiny exercise.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Minutes of the meetings of the Sub-Committee
- Presentation from the Community Safety Partnership
- Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment
- WHBC Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy
- WHBC Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Welwyn Hatfield Youth Action Plan for 2019-2020
- Positive Pathways Project early Stage Review – Second Draft
- PCC Funding Feedback Report – Positive Pathways Project 18/19
- Welwyn Hatfield Young People’s Strategy 2019-2020
- Hertfordshire Continuum of Need Thresholds Document
- Welwyn Hatfield Youth Referral Pathways
- Redacted Welwyn Hatfield MAGPYE minutes
- Redacted Welwyn Hatfield Youth Action Panel minutes
- Redacted JAG minutes
- WHBC Sports Facilities Strategy
- County Strategic Assessment
- Youth Survey
- Presentation from the Youth Connections Service Manager

APPENDIX A

Scrutiny Scoping Meeting 6 March 2019

Scrutiny Title	Anti-Social Behaviour	
Type of Scrutiny	The Sub-Committee was appointed by Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2019.	
Scrutiny Sub Committee Members	Lynn Chesterman (C) (Proposed by Councillor P.Hebden and seconded by Councillor J.Cragg) Julie Cragg Peter Hebden Ayesha Rohale	
Officer Support Marie Lowe Governance Services Officer	Portfolio Holder: Councillor Bernard Sarson	
Key Stakeholders	Residents and businesses of Welwyn Hatfield. Local Partnerships	
Summary of Enquiry	<p>Each scrutiny needs to have a clear rationale behind it, which explains why the scrutiny is important. A clear rationale will also help clarify the indicators of success.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny of the balance of provision of free and/or cheaper youth activities available for residents between the towns of Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City and different areas of the towns in relation to current levels of anti-social behaviour and actions to reduce these. • A more detailed scope of the scrutiny exercise would be agreed at a first informal meeting of the Scrutiny Sub-Committee. 	
Scrutiny Aims and Objectives:	It is essential that the scoping process clearly identifies exactly what the scrutiny hopes to achieve. Distinguish between what will be included and achievable and that which may be desirable but will not be covered by this project.	

	<p>Achievable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Who is responsible for which services and are these being provided. ➤ To be involved with the work of the Community Safety Partnership. ➤ To identify the correlation between incidents of ASB and current provision of youth activities. ➤ To identify the hotspots for incidents of ASB. ➤ To identify contributory factors and trends to incidents of ASB and the social-economic groups. ➤ An analysis of the provision provided in Hatfield in comparison to those offered in Welwyn Garden City. <p>Desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To obtain a detailed profile of the incidents of ASB, by type, perpetrators and location. ➤ Increase in the provision of free and cheaper activities in Welwyn Garden City.
<p>Link with Corporate Priorities:</p>	<p>To work together to keep Welwyn Hatfield a great place to live, work and study in a vibrant and growing economy</p> <p>Our priorities and objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Community - Safe Communities Public Health Sport & Leisure Art and Culture • Our Housing - Quality Landlord Housing Need Affordable Homes Housing Quality • Our Environment - Clean Streets Waste & Recycling Green Spaces Parking • Our Economy - Sustainable Growth Neighbourhood & Town Centres Business Friendly • Our Council – Equality and Fairness Value for Money Customer First <p>Our Values - Integrity Fairness Respect Transparent Responsive Innovative</p>
<p>Indicators of Success:</p>	<p>For each scrutiny identify two or three key indicators which will be used to tell you if the review is achieving its purpose. It can also help to avoid the potential danger of straying off the topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of ASB incidents reduced. • Number of youth activities increased. • Successful outcomes of young people.
<p>Methodology / Approach</p>	<p>This requires consideration as to the kind of enquiry which will be most suitable for this review. Some ways of working are listed below:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain a broader picture across the County and nationally to provide a comparison and perspective • By obtaining relevant information and evidence from the Police and other members of the Community Partnership what is currently being done, what could be done and if not why not • By asking questions of Officers/ Executive Members • Receiving a briefing note • Requesting one or more Members to carry out visits / investigations on their behalf and report back • Holding one or more public hearings which are specially designed to enable members of the public, interest groups etc. to give their views. • Potential site visits
Witnesses / Experts	<p>An important part of the scoping process includes deciding what people should be asked for interview. Cabinet Members and officers are required by the Constitution to attend to explain decisions, the extent which actions taken complement council policy and their performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Members of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, and the local Criminal Justice Board ➤ Hertfordshire Constabulary ➤ Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service ➤ Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council ➤ Hertfordshire County Council ➤ East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group ➤ National Probation Service ➤ BENCH Community Rehabilitation Company ➤ University of Hertfordshire ➤ YMCA ➤ Local community and voluntary groups who participate ➤ YC Herts ➤ Residents-victims of ASB ❖ Relevant Members of the Executive and senior Officers of the Council. ❖ PCSO ❖ Streetwardens
Evidence Sources for Documents	<p>Part of the scoping process is to determine which sort of documents may need to be considered before writing any report and can take a variety of forms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ YMCA recent report ▪ Community Partnership Strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy ▪ Youth Strategy ▪ ASB Strategy ▪ Sports Facilities Strategy ▪ County Strategic Strategy
<p>Review implications / impacts / risks</p> <p><i>Consider financial, social, economic, legal, equality.</i></p>	<p>Identify the implications if matters do not change, covering: budget overspend / high level of budget commitment, government guidance legislation etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incidents of ASB increases ➤ Residents continue to feel unsafe in their communities. ➤ Young people do not fulfil their full potential. ➤ The Borough and its town centres become unattractive to visitors businesses and visitors
<p>Timescales</p>	<p>Set the timescale for:</p> <p>Projected start date: _____</p> <p>Meeting frequency: _____</p> <p>Draft report deadline: _____</p> <p>Projected completion date: _____</p>