DRAFT
Anti-social behaviour Strategy for Wiltshire
2009 - 2011

Version 4.0

Title:	Draft Anti-social behaviour Strategy for Wiltshire 2009 - 2011	
Synopsis:	This document is a high-level strategy common to organisations delivering crime and disorder; prevention, support and rehabilitation; youth justice; and anti-social behaviour services in Wiltshire. The document focuses on the specific purposes underlying the preventing and reducing of anti-social behaviour within the safer and stronger community.	
Version no.:	4.0	
Status:	Draft	
1st Date of issue:	16 January 2009	
Next review:		
Owned by:	Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership	
Originator:	Lynn Gaskin	
Change History:	V1.0 January 2009	Initial thoughts and outline (draft)
	V2.0 March 2009	2nd Draft following review meeting
	V3.0 April 2009	3rd Draft following Consultation meeting
	V4.0 June 2009	4th Draft following 121 meetings

The Wiltshire Community Partnership is made up of the following partners:

- Wiltshire Council
- Wiltshire Police
- Wiltshire Fire & Rescue
- Wiltshire Probation Service
- Wiltshire Youth Offending Service
- Wiltshire Primary Care Trust

Introduction

This strategy has been produced by Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership and the family of wider partner organisations that have shared responsibilities at a local level for preventing and reducing anti-social behaviour - either directly or indirectly.

All organisations within this strategy are committed to building on existing successful work on anti-social behaviour and to developing new actions where necessary.

At the heart of this strategy is a multi-agency problem-solving approach to tackling all forms of anti-social behaviour as partners in Wiltshire are committed to preventing and reducing anti-social behaviour in a balanced, coordinated and effective way.

The development of this strategy is evidence that partners share a concern to ensure that efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour are properly tailored to the unique needs of individual communities throughout Wiltshire.

This strategy provides a countywide framework for anti-social behaviour work. As such, it will bridge the gap between the Government's National Strategy on anti-social behaviour and the local programmes of action being developed and implemented by all organizations and local partnerships that exist across Wiltshire.

Most front-line work on anti-social behaviour in Wiltshire is carried out by these partnerships, as it should be. Each partner has helped develop this anti-social behaviour strategy to ensure it forms part of its general crime and disorder strategy.

Why have a strategy for anti-social behaviour?

The strategy aims to clarify how anti-social behaviour will be prevented and reduced in Wiltshire. In so doing, it will also help to ensure that gaps in provision are filled, available resources are maximised and that duplication of effort in anti-social behaviour work is avoided. It will also support countywide level action against anti-social behaviour where this is deemed appropriate. It will ensure that effective practice is passed on and replicated. Perhaps most importantly, the strategy will facilitate a coordinated approach to anti-social behaviour both within and between all Wiltshire organizations and local partnerships.

The goal of maintaining standards of civil behaviour runs like a thread through the work of all Wiltshire public services. Education, social services, leisure services, youth services, transport, housing, the police, probation and fire services all play a part in minimising anti-social behaviour. The range of local and countywide programmes in Wiltshire that impact on anti-social behaviour in some way – or promote socially acceptable behaviour – is vast.

The Wiltshire Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy is not intended to review or even chart the totality of local and countywide action that has a bearing on Anti-Social Behaviour. Nor does it intend to 'performance manage' work being carried out by Wiltshire's crime and disorder partners that specifically focuses on anti-social behaviour. The strategy recognises that these local partnerships are best placed to identify local problems and concerns, and to design and implement responses.

The overwhelming need to develop a Wiltshire Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy is to promote effective, coordinated action against anti-social behaviour at both local and countywide levels. This entails providing various forms of practical assistance and support to local partnerships, and building capacity for communication and co-operation within and between agencies. The strategy will help to identify gaps in existing provision, and help to ensure the filling of these gaps with countywide work where this may bring benefits in terms of efficiency or general effectiveness.

A coordinated strategy will assist in the pursuing of Wiltshire's overarching aim of promoting effective, coordinated action against anti-social behaviour, the strategy will also support the work of the Home Office within Public Service and Local Area Agreement targets for the reassurance of the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, and building confidence in the criminal justice system without compromising fairness.

What is anti-social behaviour?

The statutory definition of anti-social behaviour, as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, is behaviour...**that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as (the perpetrator).**

The Wiltshire Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy adopts an approach that focuses on behaviour in the middle range between minor incivilities and serious crime. Thus, for the purposes of the strategy, anti-social behaviour is deemed as minor incivilities that are serious in behaviour that is serious enough to merit intervention from the relevant authorities, but not so serious as to a crime that would demand criminal prosecution and punishment.

Individual acts are not necessarily criminal; or, if they are criminal, they may in isolation constitute relatively minor offences. Very often the harm caused by anti-social behaviour is a consequence of the *cumulative* impact of repeated incidents.

Most people living in Wiltshire encounter anti-social behaviour from time to time. It can take many forms – boisterous behaviour on public transport, rowdy drunks on the streets, litter and graffiti, abandoned cars, noisy neighbours and speeding vehicles.

For some of us, it is an occasional irritant. For others it is more intrusive, and relentless, as anti-social behaviour can blight some people's lives. In some cases individuals are singled out as targets, and this is particularly unsettling. The corrosive and debilitating effect of persistent exposure to anti-social behaviour – including the potential effect on the mental and physical health of victims – cannot be underestimated.

Anti-social behaviour can affect whole communities, not just individuals. Where it is frequent, it can amplify people's worries about crime, and lead to a sense that crime and disorder are spiraling out of control. If this sense becomes widespread in a neighbourhood, it has tangible consequences.

The main forms of Anti-Social Behaviour

Interpersonal/malicious Anti-Social Behaviour is behaviour directed against specific individuals or groups that causes harassment, alarm or distress.

Examples include:

• Intimidation / threats by neighbours

• Minor violence

• Hoax calls

• Vandalism directed at individuals or groups

• Serious verbal abuse (e.g. directed at public sector workers)

Environmental Anti-Social Behaviour is behaviour that – deliberately or through carelessness – degrades the local environment, such as:

• Dog-fouling

• Allowing animals to roam

• Noise nuisance

• Setting fire to rubbish

• Graffiti (e.g. on the transport network)

• Abandoned vehicles

• Littering

• Fly-tipping

Anti-Social Behaviour restricting access to public space refers to threatening or physically obstructive behaviours that stop people using public spaces, such as:

• Speeding vehicles

• Intimidating behaviour by groups of individuals

• Drug abuse in public places

• Under-age drinking and rowdy behaviour

• Street drinking/drunkenness

• Nighttime alcohol-related disorder

• Aggressive begging

• Soliciting and kerb-crawling

• Obstructive use of vehicles

• Use of motorbikes on pavements/in parks

How anti-social behaviour affects local communities

Anti-social behaviour often involves clashes of values and standards. Young people look for excitement and action; the elder community may prefer peace and quiet. People have different levels of tolerance for noise, for untidiness, for rowdiness.

Some anti-social behaviour is so grossly thoughtless, or so obviously malicious, that most people would want and expect the authorities to take firm action against it. But sometimes matters are less clear-cut. How intimidating do groups of young people have to be before action is needed? How loud can a neighbour play music before it becomes an unacceptable intrusion? What level of rowdiness at pub-closing time can just be put down to harmless high spirits?

Work to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour should involve partnership working to consider what is order; and what levels of tolerance could be expected of those exposed to disorder.

Definitions of order, and levels of tolerance, differ widely within and between the various communities that make up Wiltshire's population. Negotiating levels of acceptable behaviour has to be done in an even-handed and open way whilst dealing firmly with those whose behaviour is unacceptable.

The strategy will help to enable local communities take local action to strengthen community safety within their local area thus improving the quality of life for people living in those communities.

The Local Picture

Wiltshire has one of the lowest rates of recorded crime in England – even so, concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour are widespread across Wiltshire as in other parts of the country. Public surveys in the county show that residents consistently rate 'a low level of crime' in first or second position when asked what makes somewhere a good place to live. The misuse of alcohol and drugs is also a cause of disquiet – local people recognise the harm that this can cause to individuals, families and communities.

Anti-Social Behaviour in Wiltshire

Still waiting up to date crime and disorder figures

Priorities of the Strategy

This strategy for preventing and reducing anti-social behaviour needs to be clear about what it is trying to do. Whilst accepting that whether or not behaviours are anti-social depends to some extent on the vulnerability of the victim and the degree of upset they experience.

As the definition of anti-social behaviour is broad we need to set partnership priorities so that all organisations are clear and the different agencies involved know that they are using the same language and have the same objectives.

The strategy will broadly focus all Wiltshire organisations and local partnerships to coordinate service delivery around the following priorities and give the following commitments:

1. We will energise and support local action by the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership with our partners.

Commitment - Anti-social behaviour must be prevented and reduced effectively.

Most work to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour is carried out at a local level, as it should be. The strategy supports this work in a wide variety of ways: through the provision of funding, training the use of tools and powers at the disposal of a range of organisations and agencies i.e. Housing Injunctions, technical legal support etc.

2. We will improve co-ordination and co-operation between local agencies and between partnerships. Effective action against anti-social behaviour depends on co-operation between local agencies and between partnerships. The strategy focuses on the encouragement of partnership working at a local level and promotes and facilitates co-ordination across all boundaries.

Commitment 2 - Effective action on anti-social behaviour demands a balance between rigorous enforcement, prevention, support and rehabilitation.

3. All organisations will supplement local community area action with cross-Wiltshire work, where needed.

Commitment 3 - Remedies for anti-social behaviour must promote long-term social inclusion.

The strategy supports, encourages and initiates a range of initiatives that will directly address anti-social behaviour by using the problem-solving approach. The delivery of some programmes on a countywide rather than a local basis can bring benefits in terms of efficiency or effectiveness.

The countywide initiatives are being undertaken in the areas of:

Neighbourhood Policing	Children & Young People Services
Community & Voluntary Organisations	Community Involvement
Fire & Public Safety	Prolific & Priority Offenders (PPO)
Housing and Planning	Alcohol & Drug Services
Environment & Transport	Education & Support Services

4. We will ensure that local solutions to local problems are at the heart of our policies on tackling anti-social behaviour. We will also ensure we build in flexibility, consistency and sustainability in policy responses to Anti-Social Behaviour across Wiltshire.

Commitment 4 - Measures to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour must be consistent with human rights legislation.

Different strands of social policy can pull against each other, as can different approaches to preventing and reducing anti-social behaviour.

We aim to ensure that: a) the Wiltshire Anti-Social behaviour Strategy is internally consistent; b) other work and strategic initiatives undertaken by the cross-Wiltshire agencies are in harmony with this strategy and c) All actions are communicated to local people to increase public confidence and reduce concerns about anti-social behaviour.

5. We will identify countywide structures for preventing and reducing anti-social behaviour.

Commitment 5 - To aim for sustained anti social behavioural change whilst recognising some interim respite for communities and individuals may be required.