

Buckinghamshire Community Safety Partnership



together we can

tackle anti-social behaviour in Buckinghamshire

Anti Social Behaviour Strategy 2010-2013

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1. The National Context

Statutory Obligations

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 places a responsibility on statutory partners to consider crime and disorder reduction and community safety in the exercise of all their duties and activities. This duty was extended to explicitly include anti social behaviour (and environmental crime and substance misuse) through the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001.

In conjunction with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 provides a broad spectrum of powers available to practitioners to tackle anti social behaviour. This is supported by a range of legislation such as the Housing Act 2004 and The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

Action Plans

Nationally, the Together Action Plan (2003) and Respect Action Plan (2005) outlined the Government priorities for anti social behaviour. The Together campaign tackled anti social behaviour by prioritising the needs of the local community. The Respect campaign continued the focus and adopted a broader and deeper approach to intervene early and tackle underlying causes of anti-social behaviour.

“Not only is there a wide range of tools and powers available, but, to be at their most effective, it is essential that the right intervention, or combination of interventions, is used at the right time. Enforcement should be matched with support for the perpetrator, where necessary, to tackle the cause of their anti-social behaviour. Where applicable, these interventions should be used incrementally as independent reports have shown that this is what works...It is absolutely crucial that the needs of victims and witnesses are at the forefront of that approach.”

(A Guide to Anti-Social Behaviour Tools and Powers, Home Office, May 2008)

“The right power or approach will depend on the circumstances of the case and the needs of the victim, but a combination of approaches will usually be required. Enforcement action should not be a last resort, but a proportionate response to anti social behaviour where it will stop problems.....When taking action, the focus should be on reducing or stopping the anti social behaviour and action should continue until it has been stopped.”

(Tackling Not Tolerating Anti Social Behaviour, NCJG Factsheet, 2010)

The 2008 Youth Taskforce Action Plan has strengthened the government’s approach to tackling youth crime and anti social behaviour. The taskforce was set up to help meet the Children’s Plan commitment to improve outcomes for the most at risk and challenging young people. The response is a ‘triple track’ of

- tough enforcement where behaviour is unacceptable or illegal
- non-negotiable support to address underlying causes of poor behaviour or serious difficulties
- better prevention to tackle problems before they become serious and entrenched, and to prevent problems arising in the first place.

The Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods Strategy published in 2010 sets out a vision where local communities can be assured of a national standard of response by the police, criminal justice service and local agencies to crime and anti social behaviour in their area. It recognises local flexibility and autonomy within an overarching national agenda. It sets out specific actions for building on the success of neighbourhood policing teams, neighbourhood partnerships and engaging communities.

Anti social behaviour defines many unacceptable activities; to respond effectively to these requires a broad ranging approach. Numerous overarching government agendas link into anti social behaviour. Examples include young people, youth offending, education, mental health, social care, parenting, drugs and alcohol, housing, transportation and the environment. Agencies should be mindful of agendas and associated action plans when considering priorities for anti social behaviour.

Improving Public Confidence

Making people feel safe and confident in their local communities is a key priority for Government, and their focus is on strong local partnership working to achieve this. Tackling anti social behaviour is critical to the confidence agenda:

Tackling anti-social behaviour is a key reputational issue for local services. 63% of the public hold the police and 54% local authorities responsible for tackling problems such as noisy neighbours, vandalism, drunk and disorderly behaviour and graffiti
(Home Office polling, 2009 from Tackling Not Tolerating Anti Social Behaviour, NCJG Factsheet, 2010)

Residents who feel better informed about how anti-social behaviour is being tackled in their areas are more likely to express confidence than those who do not..... Affecting change in people’s perceptions of local activity is likely to need sustained communications, backed up by action
(ASB: People, Place and Perceptions, IPSOS MORI 2007)

Community Safety Partnerships have been challenged by government to set minimum standards of service on anti social behaviour, and further requirements have been set to improve public perceptions. The government has brought to the forefront work on anti social behaviour and improving public confidence via targets to increase community confidence and tackle local community concerns in Local Area Agreements, the National Indicators and National Public Service Agreements (PSA 23)

2. The Local Context

Local Priorities and the LAA

Thames Valley Police identified four key themed areas to prioritise their work on anti social behaviour in 2010:

- (1) Drunkenness, violence and disorder,
- (2) Anti-social use of motor vehicles,
- (3) Residential community issues and
- (4) Environmental anti-social behaviour

Each of the four Community Safety Partnership areas within Buckinghamshire has a priority within its Partnership Plans (2008-2011) to address anti social behaviour issues. The 2010 Safer Bucks Plan (which is the countywide strategy group’s statutory annual community safety agreement) also highlighted anti social behaviour within its priority for Raising Public Confidence:

<p><i>Safer Bucks Priority - Raising Public Confidence</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing anti social behaviour • Reducing opportunities for criminals • Targeted target hardening • Increasing community resilience to crime • Increasing community involvement in crime reducing activities • Frequent crime reduction and public awareness campaigns • Protecting vulnerable people 	<p><i>Measure</i></p> <p>LAA Priority NI 21: local concerns about ASB and crime</p> <p>LAA Priority NI 111 Entrants into the YJS</p>
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Buckinghamshire's 2008-2011 Local Area Agreement focuses partnership activity on anti social behaviour through National Indicator 21 (Dealing with local concerns about anti social behaviour and crime by the local Council and Police.) Additionally anti social behaviour impacts upon a number of other local indicators, national indicators and overarching Public Service Agreement targets. The table below demonstrates these links (National Indicators that have been adopted as LAA targets and local indicators are highlighted in bold).

Outcome	National indicators
Stronger communities	NI 2 % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood PSA 21
Safer communities	NI 17 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour PSA 23 NI 21 Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police PSA 23 NI 22 Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area HO DSO NI 23 Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and dignity HO DSO NI 27 Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police HO DSO NI 41 Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem PSA 25 NI 42 Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem PSA 25
Children & Young People	<i>Make a positive contribution</i> NI 110 Young people's participation in positive activities PSA 14 NI 111 First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10 – 17 PSA 14 NI 114 Rate of permanent exclusions from school DCSF DSO NI 115 Substance misuse by young people PSA 14 <i>Stay safe</i> NI 69 Children who have experienced bullying DCSF DSO
Environmental sustainability	NI 195 Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting) Defra DSO NI 196 Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping Defra DSO

Partnership Structure

Whilst the direct response to incidents of anti social behaviour is managed locally through the four district community safety partnerships, there are clear benefits of providing a joint response to anti social behaviour across Buckinghamshire. In 2008, the strategic anti social behaviour partnership structure in Buckinghamshire was reviewed to ensure there was a clear and consistent approach to driving forward the anti social behaviour agenda. The new structure consists of an Anti social behaviour Strategy Group, Practitioners Group and Partnership Forums.

The Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board (SSBPB) provides leadership and co-ordination of community safety initiatives relating to Safer and Stronger Communities in Buckinghamshire. The Anti social behaviour Strategy Group reports to the SSBPB via the Safer Bucks Co-ordinating Group.

At an operational level, each Local Police Area has one or more officers responsible for anti social behaviour to work in tandem with the partnership/council Anti social behaviour Co-ordinator. In all areas of Buckinghamshire the Police and Council dedicated anti social behaviour staff work together; with co-located teams in Aylesbury, South Bucks and Wycombe.

Responding to Community Concerns

Incidents of anti social behaviour which require a partnership response are reviewed at regular case meetings with partner agencies. Cases are referred from partner agencies or services and will have been made by local residents to partner agencies or the team, or brought to their attention through other routes. Each district has a Joint Action Group (JAG) comprising of partner agencies, which looks at emerging crime and disorder patterns, highlighting hotspot areas and creating partnership solutions to these.

Community concerns are raised through Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) and Local Area Forums (LAFs) across the county. Where a wider partnership response is required to tackle issues raised by the Neighbourhood Action Group, it can be escalated to the Joint Action Group.

3. Defining Anti Social Behaviour

Anti social behaviour (ASB) is a definition for a wide range of issues from crime and serious nuisance to less severe but frequent and annoying behaviour. Most types of anti-social behaviour fit into one of three broad categories: street problems, nuisance neighbours or environmental crime (Home Office Website.)

The Home Office defines anti social behaviour as 'behaviour which is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not in the same household as the perpetrator.' It includes fear of crime or concern for public safety, public disorder or nuisance.

The Thames Valley Police Anti social behaviour Policy also refers to the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition of anti social behaviour:

'Behaviour by an individual or group that results in: -

- Another party feeling personally threatened
- Creates a public nuisance, or
- Has a detrimental impact upon the environment, or
- Has a detrimental effect upon the quality of life of an individual or the community as a whole.'

Because anti social behaviour is so wide ranging, Buckinghamshire Community Safety Partnership has agreed to work to the broad definitions as set out by the Home Office and ACPO, with the intention of further clarifying these by refreshing local countywide anti social behaviour partnership protocols. Additionally, the Thames Valley Police Anti social behaviour Policy clearly defines vulnerability and repeat victims, and Buckinghamshire Community Safety Partnership fully supports these definitions.

The Partnership is also clear about what is not anti social behaviour (e.g. personal differences, family disputes and everyday living noise such as children playing or the opening and closing of doors). Rather, anti social behaviour is unacceptable behaviour that causes harassment, alarm or distress. Practitioners will always determine an appropriate response to anti social behaviour issues based on the type, frequency and severity of incidents reported to them.

4. Anti Social Behaviour in Buckinghamshire

Findings from the Strategic Assessment

Residents in Buckinghamshire rank anti social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime as key issues for them and their quality of life. The 2009 strategic assessment for Buckinghamshire provides a detailed picture of anti social behaviour incidents across the county and the local variances within district areas. Headline information shows:

- Anti social behaviour reported to the police has continued to rise over the last three years in Buckinghamshire. Between 06/07 and 07/08 incidents increased by 4% and between 07/08 and 08/09 incidents increased by 7%.
- The frequency of incidents increased between July and September
- The most common type of anti social behaviour reported were youths causing a general nuisance to residents and visitors to the area, by congregating in groups.
- Reports of anti social behaviour relating to mini motors, off-road bikes and quad bikes have increased.

(NB: the above only incorporates reports to the Police and not to other agencies)

The strategic assessment also noted that of the 55 Neighbourhood Action Groups across the county, 34 identified anti social behaviour as one of their three priorities. Through the strategic assessment analysis, anti social behaviour is confirmed as one of the top 12 crime and disorder priorities for Buckinghamshire.

The assessment noted local variances in reports of anti social behaviour across Buckinghamshire. These differences in local community issues must be taken into account when planning activity to address anti social behaviour.

Findings from the Place Survey

Analysis of the results of the 2008 Place Survey for Buckinghamshire provides a clearer understanding of local residents' perceptions of anti social behaviour, and their views of local services who tackle it.

The majority of residents feel that local public services are working to make their area safer (55%). However, less agree that the Police and other local public services are successfully dealing with crime and anti social behaviour in their local area, and many residents do not feel that their views are sought about these local issues. This is a concern which must be addressed in order to improve community satisfaction with the service the Partnership delivers. The analysis also identifies the following points:

"When it comes to dealing with these issues (crime and anti social behaviour in their local area) a further 55% don't have a strong opinion on what the police and public services are doing, and 22% definitely disagree that these issues are being tackled

The 22% of residents who 'disagree' that the Police and local public services are successfully tackling these issues tend to live in areas classified by Bucks ACORN as 'Hard Pressed' (28%) or as 'Urban Professionals' (26%) where crime levels are also higher than average. People living in areas that are either 'more deprived' (25%) or in areas with 'average levels of deprivation' (27%) are also more likely to disagree that these issues are being addressed."

(Research to Support NI 21 – Dealing with local concerns about Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime by Local Council and Police, Policy Performance and Communications, Buckinghamshire County Council)

The research undertaken identified the top three anti social behaviour issues for residents who *disagree* that local public services and the Police are dealing with crime and anti social behaviour. These are

- Teenagers hanging around the streets
- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles
- Rubbish or litter lying around

The analysis gives recommendations for each of the key findings. Suggestions include improved communication and activities with local communities (and specific demographic groups within communities) to ensure they feel informed of the work the Partnership is doing to meet their concerns. These recommendations, which are further detailed in the report, must be considered when agreeing activity to address anti social behaviour.

5. Strategy Development

In Buckinghamshire there is a history of good partnership working to tackle anti social behaviour. In 2004, community safety partners agreed a protocol that set out a joint approach to tackling anti social behaviour. The protocol set out working guidelines for responding to incidents, key objectives for defining anti social behaviour and guidelines for the use of appropriate tools and powers. In subsequent years, further working documents were published to improve the partnership response to anti social behaviour (for example protocols for acceptable behaviour contracts and the closure of crack houses.)

Anti social behaviour has been a priority within District Community Safety Partnership Plans and the Safer Bucks Plan for a number of years. Buckinghamshire County Council has also maintained an anti social behaviour strategy since 2006. However, there has previously not been an overarching strategy to focus joint activity across Buckinghamshire. With the increased national and local attention on anti social behaviour in recent years, there is now the impetus to create a strategy to address those issues where it is sensible and appropriate to work together.

In Spring 2010 a workshop was held with partners to gain their views on anti social behaviour. Delegates were asked to identify activity that already works well in Buckinghamshire (and so should be continued) and what existing gaps must be addressed. Delegates were then asked to propose a partnership vision, and suggest priorities for the next three years. In conclusion, they were asked to consider what objectives and actions would address the gaps in service delivery and continue our good work in line with our agreed priorities.

The draft strategy was consulted upon before being presented to the Safer Bucks Co-ordinating Group and Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board for ratification.

6. Vision Statement

We will work together in partnership with communities to reduce anti social behaviour, create a safe environment and improve quality of life for those who live, work and visit in Buckinghamshire.

7. Priorities

We are committed to working in partnership to tackle anti social behaviour by:

1. Taking preventative action
2. Ensuring people feel confident that problems are dealt with effectively
3. Supporting and empowering those who are affected
4. Working with communities to address their greatest concerns
5. Dealing effectively with perpetrators

8. Partners Involved

The following partners were involvement in the development of the strategy and action plan, or consulted upon the draft document:

Aylesbury Vale District Council
Buckinghamshire County Council
Buckinghamshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
Buckinghamshire Primary Care Trust
Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service
Chiltern District Council
Government Office for the South East
Mediation Buckinghamshire
Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust
Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Victim Support
South Bucks District Council
Thames Valley Police
Thames Valley Probation
Wycombe District Council

Additionally, all partners listed above were asked to provide details of any further agencies that should be consulted. This request ensured that relevant local partners (such as housing associations or local voluntary agencies) were also informed of the development of the strategy and action plan.

9. Strategy Governance

The means by which these priorities will be achieved is set out in the action plan. The Anti social behaviour Strategy Group will manage the delivery of the strategy, overseen by the Safer Bucks Co-ordinating Group and Safer & Stronger Bucks Partnership Board. The Anti social behaviour Strategy Group will be responsible for reviewing and updating the action plan.

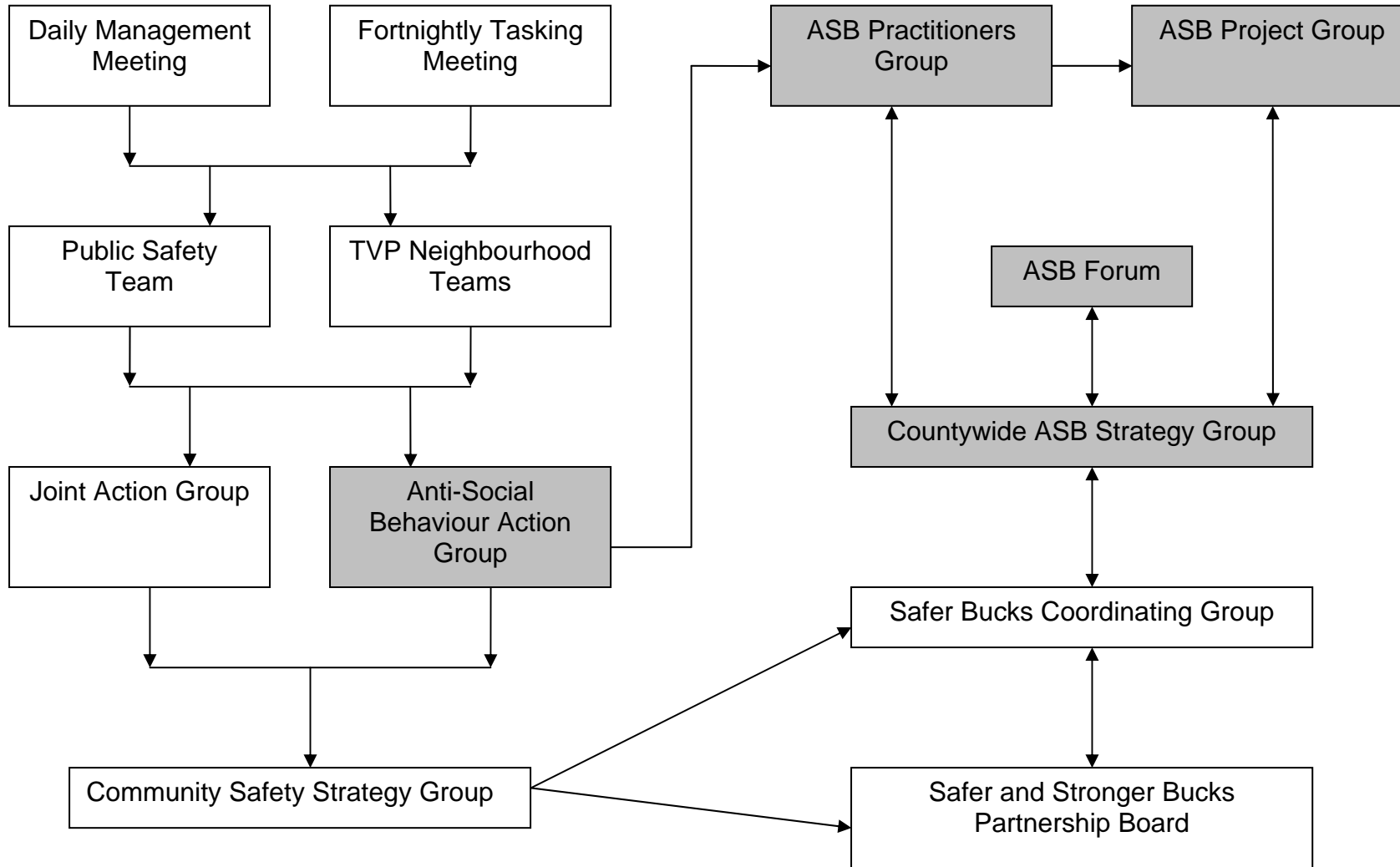
The Anti social behaviour Strategy Group will produce a quarterly report which will be shared with the Safer Bucks Co-ordinating Group and other relevant bodies. The report will include an update on activities detailed in the action plan, and a risk assessment for delivery.

10. Equality & Diversity

(To be completed with EIA in early 2011, following ratification of the strategy)

Appendix: Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Partnership Structure in Buckinghamshire

The shaded boxes indicate meetings held specifically for anti social behaviour. The structure chart below demonstrates how these meetings fit within the wider community safety structure



Group	Membership & Frequency	Remit
Anti Social Behaviour Action Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership includes all local partners involved in anti social behaviour (ASB) Meets regularly (weekly or monthly) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review incidents of anti social behaviour which require a partnership response. A meeting is held in each of the District/Local Policing areas
Countywide ASB Strategy Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership includes representatives from statutory and non-statutory agencies that are critical to delivering the ASB agenda. Meets 6 weekly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage delivery of the strategy, review and update the action plan. Produce a quarterly report to include an update on activities detailed in the action plan, and a risk assessment for delivery. Consider ASB work that is best placed to be addressed in a co-ordinated and joined up approach across the partnership. Ensure the protocol and related policies are adhered to by partners and seek to address any barriers to delivery. Ensure new legislation is implemented, and innovative projects or national recommendations are considered Make recommendations on new practice/ ASB policies, and report concerns Direct the work of the ASB Practitioners Group and pass on relevant information to the ASB Practitioners Group
ASB Practitioners Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Membership includes ASB Officers or Co-ordinators in partnership posts, employed by the District or County Council or employed by the Local Police Area Meets 6 weekly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider partnership ASB activity and make recommendations to the ASB Strategy Group Share good practice and learn from recent case studies Update officers on national/ local changes to ASB policy or legislation Organise or provide ASB training to local partners and Councillors Assist with organisation of the ASB Partnership Forums
ASB Partnership Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All agencies who may be involved in anti social behaviour in Bucks are invited to attend Meets 6 monthly/annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share good practice and update the wider ASB partnership on any matters relating to ASB.
ASB Project Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New projects may require the formation of a group Meets as required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake one or more projects (e.g. communications activity, support to victims) as directed by the ASB Strategy Group As soon as the project is completed the group will disband.