Anti-Social Behaviour:
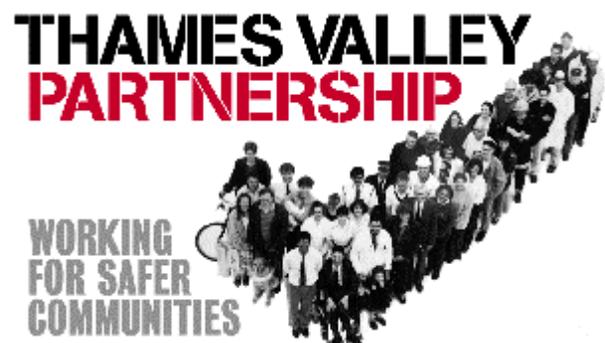
Tackling the problem together

A research report for Wycombe Community Safety Partnership prepared by John Hedge

October 2003

together we can
make a safer community

Wycombe Community Safety Partnership

THAMES VALLEY PARTNERSHIP

WORKING FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES

Contents

1) Introduction and Brief for the Research

Wycombe District has a population of just over 162,000. Though it has a number of rural communities the District has a major population centre in High Wycombe with its adjacent parishes, and overall the District has a higher population density than the rest of Buckinghamshire. Population projections suggest that an overall decline has been taking place since 1996, and a 4% decrease is anticipated by 2011, accompanied by a significant increase in the over - 65 population and a 17% decrease in the 16 to 29 age group. The demographic trends for the District's substantial African-Caribbean and Asian ethnic groups, mainly living in High Wycombe are different because of a younger age structure.

The area overall is a wealthy one, reflected in extremely high house prices. However, High Wycombe has 4 wards of significant measured deprivation. They are Marsh and Micklefield; Booker and Castlefield; Keep Hill and Hicks Farm. Within these areas unemployment rates, particularly for young men, tend to be much higher, and the rate for young men from ethnic minority groups is disproportionately higher. Other indicators include higher crime rates, poorer educational attainment and poorer health outcomes. The presence of significant areas of relative deprivation within a highly affluent area overall is an important factor to be taken into account in understanding both community development and anti-social behaviour challenges for the District. A thorough study of these issues was published by Stenson and others in 'Deprivation in High Wycombe' in 1996 (1).

As will be seen, however, it would be wrong to suggest that anti-social behaviour concerns are tied exclusively to areas of relative deprivation with high social housing levels. A number of agencies consulted for the research, and a reading of incident reports, indicated that specific public places in Marlow and Princes Risborough were also 'hot spots' for anti-social behaviour. Similarly there were 'hot spots' in some of the parish areas, including Wooburn Green and Downley. Since one of the main themes of this report is the need to ensure coherent and prompt inter-agency responses to patterns of problematic behaviour, ensuring that good quality information and mapping are available is an important priority.

Wycombe District has a long established reputation for effective inter-agency co-operation and early collaborative work on anti-social behaviour made Wycombe a pioneer in this field, with the establishment of effective information sharing arrangements and an infra-structure of meetings and inter-agency conferencing to deal with serious cases. The scheme was evaluated in 2001 by Allyson MacVean in a report commissioned by Thames Valley Police (2), and was generally assessed as working effectively. Since that time, however there has been the gradual implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 and the publication of further proposed changes in the white paper ' Respect and Responsibility'.(3) This is the basis for the Bill currently before Parliament. There have also been significant changes in the structure of the Police Area, and some other agencies. All these factors led to the Community Safety Partnership seeking a review of its local arrangements and structures, with the present research commissioned as an aid to that process.

The specific brief for the research was to examine the processes used by the Community Safety Partnership in tackling anti-social behaviour, with the overall objective of assisting the Partnership in improving its response. Specific issues to be examined were as follows:

- The working definition of anti-social behaviour.

- Processes for measurement and recording of anti-social behaviour, specifically in relation to Police, Community Safety, Housing, Environmental Services and Cleansing Services.

- The capacity of current staffing arrangements to deal with anti-social behaviour and whether new staffing and structures were needed.

- Links and structures with the range of other agencies, including housing providers.

- Best Practice options for the development of a range of responses to anti-social behaviour, including a more diverse use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

- Issues relating to the responses of parish and town councils within Wycombe District.

- Forward planning for the prevention and management of anti-social behaviour, taking into account the implications of new legislation.

The work was commissioned in March 2003. Fieldwork was undertaken between May and July 2003. A major issue to emerge was the consultation and planning for implementation of a new Police protocol and procedure for the Chiltern Vale Police Area, which applied not only to Wycombe District but the two smaller adjacent Districts of Chiltern and South Bucks. This not only defines police response but the basis for inter-agency co-operation, and therefore significantly affects the policy options for Wycombe. The arrangements are therefore referred to throughout this report and in more detail in section 5.

The main method used in the research has been to consult in interview with a wide range of managers and practitioners throughout the range of agencies involved, and a full list of those who contributed in this way is given in Appendix 1. In addition I was able to use source material from a recent overview of policies and procedures in the Thames Valley (4). I attended a consultation meeting on the new protocol, and read through the last two years records of incidents reported to the Community Safety Partnership, with details of the resulting action taken. I am grateful to all those who took part, and there was considerable commitment and interest from all sectors, though, as will be seen in the body of the report perspectives vary considerably.

Notes

1) Stenson K, Watt P, Kehoe P and Chappell A.: Deprivation in High Wycombe. The Social Policy Research Group: Buckinghamshire Chiltern University College. 1996

2) MacVean A, A Report on the High Wycombe Anti-Social Behaviour Partnership. A Report for Thames Valley Police. Buckinghamshire Chiltern University College. 2001.

3) Respect and Responsibility- taking a stand against Anti-Social Behaviour. White Paper, Home Office. 2003.

4) Hedge J. A Priority in Common. Workbook on Anti-Social Behaviour. Thames Valley Partnership. 2003.

2) The nature of Anti-Social Behaviour within the District.

The purpose of this section is to attempt a broad overview of the nature and location of anti-social behaviour within Wycombe District. This is difficult for a range of well-known reasons, notably the difficulty of definition and the limitations of local data collection. Both these issues are addressed in later sections. For the present overview the original Home Office definition within the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998 is assumed:

'Behaviour which causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the offender'

The criteria for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders incorporate this definition but the behaviour needs to be both persistent and serious.

This definition is well known but quite general, and indeed the Government view is that it is for local areas to define more exactly depending on local circumstances and priorities.

A further early assumption, that anti-social behaviour involved primarily sub-criminal or minor criminal activity, is also not sustainable as much of the serious and persistent behaviour reported and worked with by agencies involves criminal activity as a component.

If these reservations are borne in mind we can nonetheless say a good deal about the location and nature of anti-social behaviour in Wycombe District. The following is a summary of the main perspectives and studies, beginning with the findings of Allyson MacVean in 2001 (1).

1) A Report on the Chiltern Vale Anti-Social Behaviour Partnership.

This work included a detailed examination of 107 Police files between 1997 and 2000, and 72% of the incidents reported were classified as serious. The main findings may be summarised as follows:

- High levels of intimidation, threats of violence, damage to property and actual violence. These proportions seemed to have increased over time.

- Children were involved in 35% of cases.

- 80% of the victims lived in social housing and 70% of perpetrators lived in social housing. Given the significant proportions of cases where no record had been kept on accommodation the proportions may be seen as broadly similar.

- MacVean found that of the cases examined only 10% concerned behaviour committed by groups or gangs, against common perception, and that more common patterns concerned escalating local family and neighbour disputes.

- MacVean found 28% of perpetrators had been engaged in criminal activity, and there were lower but significant proportions of mental health problems, alcohol problems, domestic problems and drug misuse.

- High levels of anti-social behaviour concerned neighbours or near neighbours and 39% of cases involved more than one victim. In some cases whole communities, often in areas of relative deprivation, became affected by the behaviour, reflecting much of the previous national research.

2) Reading of case files held by Wycombe Community Safety Officer.

As part of the present study I read 37 case records relating to matters reported to Wycombe District Council between July 2002 and July 2003. It is not possible to relate the findings to the MacVean research exactly. Some of the incidents reported related to individual episodes. Nonetheless the vast majority were clearly serious matters, ranging from reports of children playing in dangerous conditions to high levels of intimidatory behaviour.

It is possible to make the following points from the analysis:

- Most of the behaviour had more than one component- over 70 mentions of different items for 37 cases- damage was frequently accompanied by abusive or threatening behaviour. Nuisance riding of motor-bikes also usually had these elements as well.

- The case descriptions, which included action taken, indicated that drink was an issue in 6/37 cases (16%) and drugs in 4/37 (10%). Mental health of the perpetrator seemed to be a factor in 4/37 cases (10%). Though the mental health proportion is less than the MacVean study it is still a significant issue. The drink and drugs figures are quite similar to the MacVean findings.

- Vandalism involving criminal damage was clearly a component or the main factor in 12/37 cases (32%) and this included three cases where setting things on fire was involved.

- Behaviour problems (including threats, violent conduct or intimidating behaviour) was a component in 15/37 cases (40%). Given that this group of cases included some obviously less serious cases the trend towards more aggressive, behaviour noted by MacVean, seems to hold good.

- Motor-bike nuisance (often biking on paths or in parks) occurred in six cases (16%) and noise nuisance in seven cases.

- Over half the cases in this analysis concerned young people as perpetrators.

In general, therefore, this limited survey suggests broadly similar findings to the earlier research, but with a higher proportion of young people. The reading also demonstrated the importance of first response and careful assessment, issues which are addressed in later sections.

3) Wycombe Area Reconnaissance Report for Young People's Outreach Project

This one-year project under the auspices of Buckinghamshire Youth and Community Service has placed an outreach worker in each of the three District Council areas within Chiltern Vale Police Area. The first step in each project was to undertake reconnaissance work. The work was undertaken by Amjad Tauseeque, Outreach Worker (2) and the findings are of considerable importance for all agencies.

The work identifies ten significant 'hot-spots' within the District and the main issues identified from observation and consultation. A reading of the full report is recommended but the main areas and issues are as follows:

a) Totteridge (Bowerdean Road, Underwood Road and Walton Drive).

- Larger groups of youths were to be seen gathering and roaming the streets, with abuse and harassment to residents if they challenged this.

- Noise associated with cars and music by 'older' young people.

- Increases in street bike riding by 'younger' young people.

- Graffiti and rubbish problems.

- Damage to empty properties.

- Problems associated with alcohol and young people.

- Problems with misuse of a play area, which is to be renovated.

- No local youth provision.

- Local residents group has been formed to tackle local issues.

b) Hunt Rd, Terryfield Road, Quebec Road, Cairnside Road, Hilary Road.

- Motor-bike and moped riding off road and in alleyways.

- Larger groups of youths gathering and roaming the streets.

- Damage to cars.

- Graffiti and rubbish.

- Damage to property.

- Alcohol problems.

- Misuse of a play area, which is to be renovated.

- Youth facilities exist locally but some of the young people concerned will not use the facilities.

c) **Micklefield - Shopping parade, Library and Forrest Way.**

- Groups of youths roaming the streets.

- Graffiti and rubbish.

- Intimidation and damage.

- Drug and alcohol use and an increase in group fighting reported.

- Evidence of young people congregating in this area from surrounding areas.

- Serious damage to cars and car park at a local church, which is resulting in a special initiative.

- Local meeting of residents and the beginning of community action about the problems.

d) **Gomm Place and Wycombe Marsh.**

- Groups of young people roaming the streets.

- Graffiti and rubbish.

- Intimidation to local people and damage to property.

- A specific gathering point around Gomm Place with group fighting, alcohol and drug use.

- Public meeting recently held to consider further action.

- No local youth provision.

e) Princes Risborough.

- Damage to property and cars in Horn Lane car park with large groups coming from other towns.

- King George V Recreation Ground is also seen as a gathering point with alcohol, drugs and other problems.

- Local youth provision exists, but a number of participants are from outside the area.

f) Higginson Park, Marlow.

- Major issues of alcohol use within the park and large gatherings of young people create concern.

- Vandalism.

- Damage to cars and property.

- The nearest youth club is a mile away, and although detached work is going on in Marlow Bottom, nearby, this has not been linked to work with the Park.

g) Green Street and Leigh Street, High Wycombe.

- Large groups of Asian young people hang around and use the alleyway in Leigh Street as a cut through to Desborough Avenue. With some intimidation and anti-social behaviour.

- Concern about group fighting and drug use.

- Damage to cars and property.

- Well-used youth provision is in place and consultation is taking place over the building of a new youth and community centre.

h) Wooburn Green.

- Groups of young people gathering and roaming the streets on the Glory Mill estate.

- Intimidation and threats to local residents.

- Damage to property and cars.

- Graffiti and rubbish.

- Feuding families.

- Noise problems.

- Abandoned cars

- Alcohol problems.

- No local youth provision.

i) Gayhurst Road.

- Noise from young people playing football.

- Drug dealing.

- Alcohol.

- Damage.

j) The Rye.

- Groups of young people and threatening behaviour.

- Perceived risk of crime because of isolated areas and possibility of concealment.

The reconnaissance report is of course primarily focused on young people and their behaviour, and does not cover the whole range of anti-social behaviour. It also suggests that, whatever earlier findings might suggest, public concern is high about group behaviour. The report tends to confirm the high levels of concern about intimidating behaviour and damage, as well as the importance of alcohol. It is not suggested that other areas do not have a problem, simply that these are 'hot spots'. Such areas do call for a prompt and very joined up approach from all agencies, and there are already some good examples of how to do this in the District. How to improve responses is the subject of a later section. It is striking, though, how much public concern relates to activity in public places or thoroughfares. Issues of planning, policing, design and provision for young people all need to be considered together in such situations and call for a more complex range of responses than anti-social behaviour confined to neighbours, or individual episodes.

4) Responses from agency and local authority interviews.

A fourth source of perspectives on the nature of anti-social behaviour in the District came from the range of interviews conducted during the research. The comments provided included both information about the nature of the problems encountered, and related issues.

a) Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Housing.

Wycombe District is characterized by the unusually large number of Housing Associations working within it - 22 in all. Unlike many authorities Wycombe has had never had a policy of preferred providers. While this has yielded advantages in a wide range of developments at competitive cost it means that co-ordination and standardisation of response is very difficult. This is clearly a major issue in considering future structures for inter-agency working. So far as assessment of incidence is concerned, I was able to respond to views expressed at the consultation meeting on the Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale, and individual interviews with managers from three different providers. The main issues varied in emphasis depending on the size of stock and the nature of housing need, which the RSL was working with. In summary the main points are as follows:

- A tendency to under reporting from the Asian community in particular.

- An awareness that Associations were frequently taking on difficult people, known to other agencies. Support for preventive work and inter-agency support for the management of problematic tenants was often limited.

- The level of perceived problem with anti-social behaviour also varied considerably. There was a recognition that a substantial proportion of anti-social behaviour cases called for low level responses, including neighbour disputes and problems over ball games. One of the larger agencies estimated having 30 ongoing cases of which, around four to five were serious.

- There was a lack of common reporting and recording procedures, and it was recognised that this obscured a full understanding of the problem.

- Police responses were seen as particularly crucial, and experience varied from close liaison to a perceived slow level of response.

- RSLs would like to do more about anti-social behaviour, but lack the resources to do so.

- The problem of 'defending' RSL tenants from unfair accusations or draconian requests for action by neighbouring owner-occupiers was mentioned. Similarly tenants were disproportionately likely to be the victim of anti-social behaviour.

b) Local Authority Housing.

The impact of 'right to buy' has been considerable within the District, changing the profile of many estates considerably, and concentrating difficulties into a smaller number of areas. Other issues mentioned were:

- The need for transfer requests to take account of anti-social issues, and this is now in place between the department and Community Safety.

- The extreme pressure on front line Housing Officer time meant that anti-social behaviour logging had been limited. Problems might therefore be under represented.

- There were some difficulties in managing mixed tenure estates.

- The Micklefield area was regarded as a particularly significant problem at present, and this view coincides with the Youth Service reconnaissance outlined earlier.

- The impact of drug dealing and drug taking had increased considerably and was a substantial concern for many residents.

c) Environmental Health.

Environmental Health in Wycombe has played, with the Housing Department a major role in the promotion of inter-agency work within the District, and has from the early days of anti-social behaviour work committed itself to the use of problem solving approaches, notably by supporting Mediation.

- The Department received between 750 and 1,000 complaints about noise per year, of which less than 50 led to Abatement Notices.

- There was recognition that noise could often not be dealt with in isolation from other problems, making joint work necessary.

- There was also awareness that mental health was a significant issue, governing the individual's capacity to respond, and simple enforcement was unlikely to work well in such situations. Examples were given of collaborative work in this area, though shortage of resource within mental health services was seen as a limiting factor.

- The lack of co-ordination between the different RSLs was seen as a significant issue.

d) Waste Disposal and Contract Management.

Though not an agency involved in substantial amounts of inter-agency work the Council uses contractors to deal with a number of matters relevant to community safety and the alleviation of anti-social behaviour. Good data is available for recording and mapping of the problems. The main issues are:

- Large numbers of abandoned vehicles, and the council has a fast and strict approach to the problem. 2,000 calls last year led to the scrapping of 1100 vehicles.

- There have been 299 needle finds since the inception of SHARPS boxes at Public Toilets in 2001. There are issues about whether this scheme should be extended to other public locations.

- There were 863 fly tipping incidents last year.

- The council requires contractors to remove graffiti promptly, and has time targets for this.

e) Community Development and Youth Work.

The Council has two Community Development Workers, one working on the High Wycombe area and one on the rural part of the District. Their role is an important one in the response to anti-social behaviour, and they have much experience of the processes needed to build a community's ability to respond to anti-social behaviour. Several points relevant to understanding the current position come from this perspective:

- A community's resilience or lack of it will govern its ability to cope with and deal with anti-social behaviour.

- It is important to locate local leadership and empower it.

- Physical improvement, or the addition of such items as youth shelters, may well help but their chance of longer term sustainability is low if not accompanied by community development.

- In situations where small groups of notorious older teenagers are creating problems, and no capacity exists to manage the situation, enforcement measures are needed to demonstrate that the situation can be managed, and change is achievable.

Wycombe District has an effective youth and community provision, and those interviewed made many of the same points and a number of others.

- They stressed also that, particularly for young unemployed men from the ethnic communities the lack of skills, or a clear stake in the local, very affluent community had a major impact on attitudes and behaviour. Thus resources to tackle these problems were of great importance.

- A number of agencies were now undertaking work with young people. We needed to avoid seeing youth work as dealing primarily with problematic or criminal behaviour, and it was also important to work for the empowerment of young people.

f) Social Services and Mental Health.

As noted earlier vulnerable people including those with family difficulties and mental health problems may well be over-represented both as perpetrators and victims. The main implications are:

- Strategies need to take both sides of this equation into account, and the support needed by vulnerable victims may need considerable commitment and inter-agency planning.

- There is a tendency for other agencies to see both Social Services and Mental Health as slow to respond to anti-social behaviour because of resource problems. The proposed new model for inter-agency co-operation and conferencing will need to find ways of tackling this problem.

- The specific issues of information sharing relating to mental health, and the procedures involved need to be better understood by other agencies.

g) Youth Offending Service and Probation.

The crossover between offending behaviour and anti-social behaviour is considerable. Both agencies will need to be fully involved in a comprehensive inter-agency response. The Youth Offending Service, in particular, is now developing a range of preventive initiatives, which have great relevance to the management of anti-social behaviour.

5) Summary and Conclusions.

Wycombe has a significant amount of anti-social behaviour, and in common with most areas this is concentrated in areas of social housing, public places in those locations or certain public spaces where large groups of young people and their behaviour can conflict with the needs of others. There are identifiable 'hot spots' particularly involving young people, and the proportion of perceived problematic group behaviour by young people is consistent with the British Crime Survey findings on the subject (3). However this strand of the problem is outweighed numerically by the range of disputes and tensions between individuals and groups of neighbours, even when the issues of seriousness and persistence are taken into account. Logging of both individual incidents and ongoing behaviour in a consistent fashion is necessary to understand the problem in more detail and this issue is addressed in the next section. A broad typology of incident might be as follows:

a) Nuisance behaviour involving neighbours only.

b) Nuisance behaviour involving more than two households.

c) Group behaviour affecting a single household in a housing setting.

d) Group behaviour affecting a neighbourhood.

e) Individual behaviour in a public setting - e.g. park, playground or shopping area.

f) Group behaviour in a public setting.

The different types can then be assessed for seriousness in terms of the persistence and impact of the behaviour - with intimidation, violent conduct and serious damage all accentuating seriousness. Impact would also take into account the issue of victim vulnerability - seriousness would be accentuated accordingly.

The risk and impact assessment of incidents in a more coherent way is necessary as work develops, not only to achieve a better picture than simply an aggregate of incidents, but also to ensure a proportionality of response. Such a framework may also help to communicate response to those involved.

Vulnerable people are over represented both as perpetrators and victims, meaning that all agencies need to work together on more robustly resourced packages of response - both in dealing with the perpetrator and the victim or victims.

Responses will need also to be related to a coherent framework of assessment and response - community development and youth work, involving capacity building of the local community will need to be used alongside enforcement measures in some situations. In others, such as neighbourhood dispute the responses will be more to do with better use of mediation, and if necessary enforcement.

Since government will clearly be providing more powers to deal with the problems there will definitely be a need for common standards and frameworks.

Notes.

1) A. MacVean op cit.

2) Amjad Tauseeque. Buckinghamshire Young People's Outreach Project: Wycombe Area Reconnaissance Report. Buckinghamshire County Council. 2003.

3) British Crime Survey findings for 2001/2, Home Office 2003.

3) The Recording of Anti-Social Behaviour and current responses to it.

1) Recording.

Variable and inconsistent reporting has been a key problem within the District. Key issues have been as follows:

- Variable performance within District Council departments. This is said to relate to time pressure, and perceptions that the use of reporting forms is primarily a bureaucratic exercise.

- Data collection has until recently been relatively limited and not in a standardised format, with the result that victim information and persistence have not consistently been available.

- Reporting by those complaining of anti-social behaviour is made to a very large number of agencies, including the large number of RSLs operating in Wycombe District.

The consequences of poor or inconsistent reporting practice are that the problem of anti-social behaviour tends to be understated, and this may be particularly significant among the Asian community. Similarly mapping and prioritising become very difficult. Evaluation of initiatives is problematic, and it is very difficult to be clear about revictimisation issues.

Both the Police Area and the District Community Safety Department have been working on these issues. The Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale, outlined recently, (1) is to acknowledge that initial reports come from a variety of sources. The agency receiving the initial complaint will take initial ownership of the case, but the complaint should be fed through to the nominated point of contact for that agency, which will record all relevant information onto a standard form. This is then to be passed to the designated Anti-Social Behaviour Officer for Chiltern Vale Police Area who will log all details onto a central system.

Under this system the designated route for many of the initial complaints will be from within the local authority to the Council's nominated officer, who will be liaising closely with the Police Anti-Social Behaviour Officer.

In a Police Area with three Partnerships this model provides consistency, and presumes the appointment of two planned Police roles within the Area Partnership Department, one working primarily in-house on data collection and one role more concerned with inter-agency liaison, referral responses, and the support of inter-agency work. In the local authority, at present, the co-ordination point is one worker, who has a range of other responsibilities. In my view for this model to work a number of issues will need to be addressed by the Wycombe Partnership:

- Reporting of all incidents will need to be seen as an important requirement for all staff taking responsibility for responding to incidents in the different departments. This potentially includes a very wide range of agencies - from the Ranger Service, through to Health providers and Social Services, though Housing providers, Environmental Health and Police may be the most frequent sources. Clear instructions, management support and context setting will therefore be important steps in improving performance. Managers will need to take a lead in supporting improved reporting, and a strong lead from the senior management of the authority is also required.

- Since Wycombe is the largest District in the Police Area in terms of anti-social behaviour volume, the level of Police time made available for liaison with the Community Safety staff involved will be critical. This is developed further as an issue in the later section on key roles and responsibilities.

- Compared with many other authorities, including a number of smaller ones, Wycombe has very limited resource in house for co-ordination and liaison. The work envisaged in organising, monitoring and responding to data is effectively a full time job for one individual. Later proposals in this report indicate the overall level of resourcing required.

- The Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale suggests that isolated complaints of noise, minor neighbour disputes between two households, and complaints regarding criminal activity where crime reporting procedures apply, should not be included in the processes. This is sensible, and as indicated later, this targeting should be included in a revised Wycombe definition of anti-social behaviour. However it should be made clear that there may well be exceptional circumstances, relating to vulnerability or other factors where reporting should be followed through in those categories.

- Enough resource needs to be available within the Police and Local Authority to analyse the data and produce useful management reporting from it. The data needs to be available to all partners for feedback and planning purposes, and should include an analysis of responses and the success or otherwise of interventions. The current white paper places much emphasis on a) the need for anti-social behaviour issues to be included as a priority matter in audit work, and b) that agencies should be more accountable to the public on anti-social behaviour matters. It follows, therefore, that a clear commitment to good quality reporting and good analysis from robust data are important priorities.

2) Current responses to anti-social behaviour.

The overall position at the moment does demonstrate some inconsistency, both in respect of use of the different options and inter-agency work. Some of the salient points are as follows:

a) Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

Use has been made of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders on several occasions, and in particular on two men who have presented all local agencies with major behaviour challenges over many years. In both cases there was an established pattern of intimidation and aggression, with drink and mental health problems involved, and a mixture of criminal and anti-social behaviour. Inter-agency co-operation and planning seem to have worked well, and the legal issues were effectively handled. Valuable experience has been gained. While proportionality is an important issue with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Wycombe has taken a careful and appropriate approach, the likely increase in ABC work, and improved reporting, together with the new proposed powers may increase the number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders cases. It may be helpful to consider forward planning with court staff, sentencers and court user agencies including solicitors.

b) Acceptable Behaviour Contracts.

ABCs have primarily been used within the District by Police, with little direct use by the local authority and some use by some of the RSLs, but by no means all. The ABCs issued by Police have followed the nationally advised format and processes. More use has been made in neighbouring Partnership areas, and there is considerable potential for further use. Consistent criteria are important in ensuring proportionality in respect of ABCs, which have, after all, serious potential consequences if they are breached. The Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale for concentrating anti-social behaviour intervention after the establishing of three incidents may offer the best guide to the targeting of ABCs.

Key components in successful ABCs are:

- Clear and specific requirements.
- Clarity about consequences.
- If the behaviour is linked to the individual's problems or need for support and training this needs to be addressed in the contract in terms of action to be taken by others. This needs to be realistic, timely and achievable.
- Action being taken after non-compliance to maintain credibility.

Information about all ABCs and outcomes needs to be held both by Police and the local authority. Inter-agency groups, and conferences need to be well informed about good ABC practice. Evaluative work on use of ABCs and their effectiveness needs to be built into the review process of the Partnership. It will be particularly important to promote consistent use of this option within RSLs, and overall there is considerable room for more use of ABCs in the District.

An important provision for work with young people has been the ability to refer failing ABCs to the Youth Offending Service. This provision is particularly valuable, and every effort should be made to maintain and extend it, but I note that it has been underused to date. With the developing role of YOS in preventive work this facility should be promoted, and indeed the overall level of YOS involvement in ABCs could helpfully increase.

b) Mediation and Restorative Justice options.

The MacVean report (op cit.) suggested that there was considerable potential for increased use of Mediation, and a number of referrals are certainly made by Police and other agencies. This was evident from my reading of files held by the Community Safety Department. However that reading and a number of individual consultations suggested that a number of matters need to be taken into account if Mediation is to contribute as effectively as possible in the District. These can be summarised as follows:

- There is scope for a considerable increase in referrals. Under-referral seems to relate partly to lack of knowledge of this option, and partly to individual agency or individual worker opinions and assessment.

- Earlier referral would be desirable in a number of cases, before problems become too entrenched.

- Those attempting to refer people for a mediation option tend to do so with quite limited explanation and quite tentatively. This is partly a lack of understanding of the range of situations where the processes may help, and partly ignorance about the robustness of these approaches.

- Concerns about feedback and timeliness.

Since the Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale envisages a more defined and structured approach to anti-social behaviour, it would be helpful if an assumption that referral will be considered at an early stage could be written into the core policy documents and protocols governing anti-social behaviour practice, as is the case in Oxford City and Milton Keynes. Since one of the key issues is the need to build individual and group resilience then this is an entirely appropriate response, and would alter the way in which it was presented as an option to complainants. Mediation also has the potential to do a good deal more in preventing escalation of behaviour in a wide range of case situations.

In reality the feasibility of developing the Mediation contribution will depend on provision of a more secure funding base for Buckinghamshire Mediation with sufficient capacity to cope with increased workloads, and a sustained programme of work with Police, Housing and Local Authority staff to improve early assessment and referral.

Similarly there is considerable scope for further development of Restorative Justice and reparative approaches to anti-social behaviour problems. Such approaches could well be applied from warning stages on through to being an integral component of ABCs. The involvement of Police Restorative Justice input, and preventive work from the YOS would form part of such an initiative, and would build on some existing good practice. There does need to be greater clarity about the respective roles and capacities of Restorative Justice initiatives and Mediation.

d) Early responses.

The way an incident was first responded to seems to be an important issue. Often this was by phone, and willingness to listen and advise appropriately were clearly important elements. Sometimes this seemed to resolve issues as an activity in its own right, but in any event a sound first response is one of the ways in which an effective risk assessment can be in initiated. This should be regarded as an inter-agency training issue, encouraging the promotion of good practice.

Often, though, and especially for Police the contact will be on site, and quite often in the wake of an incident. Until quite recently much of the early contact work, and a great deal of the subsequent 'sorting out' of responses to anti-social behaviour, was done by an individual Police Officer with specific responsibility. This was widely seen as very helpful in terms of personal authority, knowledge and consistency of input, but some concerns were expressed both about the recent lack of a specific police role and the implications of the new Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale, which will use specialist time in other ways, requiring a good deal of direct contact work to be undertaken by Beat Officers. In the absence of a Warden scheme this has significant implications for the Beat Officer role. I would suggest that specific briefing and appropriate inter-agency training is put in place to avoid problems of inconsistency.

e) 'Joined - up' community responses and preventive work.

In a number of the case files it was evident that a number of people were involved in causing anti-social behaviour - sometimes they were known by name but often not. Often the problem had been addressed by the co-ordination of a 'problem-solving inter-agency meeting involving different specialisms and workers who had different things to bring. There was evidence of some really effective work, and clearly the youth service, and community development approaches have a good deal to contribute to tackling the problems and building community resilience. This approach should be further developed and targeted especially at significant long - standing situations and locations. Clearly it is helpful if those attending such meetings have some authority over resource, as one of the key issues is prompt action, once a plan has been agreed. In the typology suggested in section 1 of this report such meetings would be advisable in most of the group behaviour contexts, even if action is taken on named perpetrators. Context, opportunity and ease of access are so relevant to understanding repeating situations that an approach relying on action against the behaviour of individuals exclusively is not likely to succeed. Mapping and good recording are of course necessary to see the complete picture.

f) Conferencing in respect of individuals.

As the previous research, and the consultations undertaken confirm, inter-agency conferencing was an established approach in Wycombe well ahead of most local authorities. In recent times few have been held and it is important that conferencing is 'relaunched' as soon as possible. The Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale should help considerably in providing a clear focus for this work (the third established incident, and the involvement of other agencies), and conferences should follow an established format, including chairing, recording, and review arrangements. Consistency should be provided by the involvement of the key Police and/or Community Safety staff.

Some areas have a panel, consisting of the main agencies and others invited for specific cases, which can meet on a regular basis and make inter-agency decisions about the management of anti-social behaviour cases. The number of stake-holding agencies may make this difficult to achieve in Wycombe, but there remains a strong case for agencies to have some 'lead' staff. However this is to be managed, those involved from the different agencies will need clear instruction about the role they will be playing. Moreover the management of agencies should understand clearly the importance of attendance at conferences. Coherent planning is only going to be achievable if all the right people are there. Co-ordination of significant numbers of conferences will again make considerable resource demands not only on Police staff but the Community safety staff concerned. This is another aspect of the case for increased resource specifically for anti-social behaviour work.

g) Warnings, verbal and written.

As the Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale makes clear, warnings both written and verbal will continue to be an important and normal element of most early responses to anti-social behaviour. There is evidence from Teeside and other areas that a formal final warning process with Police involvement as a last step before use of ABC can be an effective option, and this may be worth further investigation.

Generally the criteria for use of warnings should be clear, and the proposed strategy group for Chiltern Vale should consider introducing consistent format and wording.

4) Protocols and Procedures

1) Background.

This section describes the new partnership approach for the Chiltern Vale Police Area, described throughout the present report as 'the Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale', and examines the particular implications for the Wycombe District Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Chiltern Vale is the only Police Area to have three CDRPs within it, though some of the South Bucks District is within the Slough Police Area. This means that three of the four Buckinghamshire Districts have one Police structure to deal with, and quite appropriately, during the consultation for this report it became clear that for information sharing and other main protocol purposes the Aylesbury Vale District Council and Police Area would also come into these arrangements, so that consistent arrangements would apply across the county. This clearly has great merit as a means of achieving consistency and reducing duplication. The arrangements, with a proposed single strategy group are also attractive, within Chiltern Vale, for those county wide statutory and non-statutory agencies who have had with long-standing difficulty attempted to respond to three separate structures and sets of meetings. On the other hand, for a large and busy district like Wycombe there are areas of management and operation quite different in volume and range to the neighbouring Districts. How therefore can the need for more local consultation and Wycombe structures be reconciled with these overall objectives? The purpose of this section is to suggest some of the options.

2) Definition of Anti-Social Behaviour.

Definition is important, not only because it ensures that all concerned, including the public, can be pointed to a form of words, which not only delineate the main parameters, but also say something about local ownership and process.

The Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale starts by pointing out the wide definition of anti-social behaviour in the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act:

'Behaviour which causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more people who are not in the same household as the perpetrator.'

It has often been pointed out that this is helpful in general terms but is capable of extremely wide interpretation. Indeed the Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale points out that for Chiltern Vale the legal definition is extended to include:

'Fear of crime or concern for public safety, public disorder or public nuisance.'

If the definition of Public Disorder is that adopted by the Association of Chief Police Officers -

' A breach of the peace of which the Police are aware which may require police intervention or action in partnership with others', then this and the other the references to fear of crime, public safety and public nuisance are all helpful additional components.

It may be helpful additionally to consider some more explicit reference to harm and impact, perhaps making use of an earlier (1996) Shelter reference to anti-social behaviour as it relates to housing.

' Anti-social behaviour occurs where behaviour by one household or individual in an area threatens the physical or mental health, safety or security of other households or individuals'.

Some reference to impact may be helpful for a local definition as the Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale in its subsequent guidelines suggests that anti-social behaviour procedures should not be needed for minor neighbour disputes between two households, isolated noise complaints, or criminal activity where reporting procedures will apply.

An overall working definition, which takes these variations into account might read as follows:

'Behaviour which causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more people who are not in the same household as the perpetrator, and is sufficiently serious as to threaten the physical health, mental health, safety, security or well being of other households, individuals or communities'

I would propose this definition as suitable for further consideration.

Related to the definition is the need for accompanying guidelines, and in this the CDRP has the opportunity to define clearly its particular concerns relating to local conditions and priorities. This is an important issue, given the current White Paper's statements about better communication with the public and clear statements about the priorities adopted locally. It seems to me that accompanying guidelines should give further clarification as to local anti-social behaviour issues, as well as key messages about local process.

It may be useful to begin by including the main examples of activity. These are helpfully listed in the White Paper. The guidelines should also include a statement about the commitment of the Partnership to make anti-social behaviour a priority, and to use the full range of options in dealing with the behaviour concerned. It would also be appropriate within guidelines to refer to the exclusions and level of seriousness indicated in the Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale. An example for further discussion might be as follows:

'The Wycombe CDRP is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour as a priority. The partnership will work to ensure effective collaboration involving the Police, District Council and other agencies so that these problems can be tackled effectively.

While Anti-social behaviour means different things to different people it reflects a range of activities. These include

- Harassment and intimidating behaviour.
- Behaviour, which causes alarm or fear.
- Noisy neighbours.
- Drunken or abusive behaviour.
- Vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage to property.
- Dumping rubbish or litter.

We believe that a whole range of actions should be used to help resolve these and other problems. They will include mediation and advice, but if problems persist or the behaviour is serious a range of sanctions from fines through to court action will follow.

In Wycombe, to ensure that resources are used most effectively, the Police will prosecute criminal activity where it is clear that a crime has been committed. Minor disputes between two households, and isolated complaints of noise will not normally involve further action.

In the initial stages the department or organisation to which the complaint is reported will take responsibility for dealing with the problem. However, as a general rule, three or more complaints about a household, individual or locality, supported by more than one member of the public within a three month period, will lead to a case conference among the agencies concerned and a programme of action and enforcement agreed to tackle the problem as soon as possible.'

3) Key objectives.

The key objectives outlined in the Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale are helpful and clear, including the necessity of monitoring all referrals and interventions, including outcomes, and as indicated in the previous section this is a major issue for Wycombe.

4) Involvement and Representation.

The Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale envisages co-ordination across the Chiltern Vale Police Area through two levels of activity - a Steering Group and an Operational Group. Structures for the co-ordination of both policy and operational work differ considerably across the Thames Valley. Some arrangements involve use of a regular inter-agency panel to which serious cases come, as mentioned above, and in other places much of the work is undertaken by a team with special responsibility for anti-social behaviour. There was no consensus, and a significant level of doubt about both these approaches expressed within the consultation interviews for this research. However there was a recognition that arrangements for inter-agency work had worked less well in recent times. It was felt that this reflected both a gap in availability of key co-ordinating staff, and less capacity or willingness for individuals to attend meetings to represent agencies. It is certainly important to examine how the proposed structures may affect work in Wycombe.

5) Steering Group.

It is quite clear that this is not to be a Strategy Group but one which supports the processes and protocols, with the CDRP Partnerships continuing to deal with strategic matters, presumably on the basis of better quality information and feedback from improved data collection. Consultation about the Plan has already clarified the need for non-statutory representation from Mediation, and presumably the key County Council stakeholders will also be represented, including the Youth Offending Service, Social Services and Youth and Community. A key issue, which emerged in consultation, was the need for RSL representation and how best to achieve this in a situation with so many providers. It may be necessary to ensure that there is either a representative from a leading RSL in each District or a single representative who can liase with the field as a whole. Some direct Wycombe RSL representation seems necessary, and this should be taken up directly at the next available Housing Forum. It can also be argued that a community development representation is important.

In consultation there was some discussion about the role of Steering Group members in chairing case conferences and consultation meetings. The Plan indicates that this should take place when necessary. The role of Chair, and who can chair is an issue for clarification. Presumably some degree of formal authority is necessary for this role. Perhaps the most appropriate arrangement would be for a manager from the referring agency to take this role normally, and a Steering Group member in exceptional circumstances. Steering Group members from the District will need to feed back on their work to the CDRP and Community Safety staff.

6) Operational Group.

The Plan envisages this group involving a range of Officers from the different referring Departments and agencies. This is potentially a large number of people for Wycombe given the number of District Council interests, the County agencies, non - statutory bodies and the large number of RSLs. The key principles are that nominated individuals would form working groups on specific cases. They would only need to be involved as required and not routinely in all cases. These are all people whose agencies had signed up to the Information Sharing Protocol, and presumably will have some form of lead role operationally for the agency concerned.

Proposals are made in the next section about key roles and responsibilities. Important issues for Wycombe will be that there is a full list of representatives, and that they have a clear sense of their role and the issues involved, including the range of options to be considered. Written guidance, access to advice and support, and regular information updates are all clearly appropriate. In my discussions a number of individuals expressed concern about keeping in touch with the issues. Two things stood out as 'wishes' - named individuals in Police and Community Safety who could support this role, and secondly a Newsletter or regular written update. I think there is a strong case in addition for some standard initial briefing for operational group members, and perhaps an annual meeting to consider experience and inform strategic thinking.

It will clearly not be helpful to establish additional groupings and structures, which would add to workload and potentially confuse participants. However the proposed structures do not fully address the issue of exchanging agency perspectives and contributing within the District to strategic thinking. There do need to be opportunities to review and contribute to thinking on anti-social behaviour issues. A number of options exist.

- Specific interest groups. These could concentrate on key topics, which routinely require inter-agency co-operation, such as neighbour nuisance, or problems in recreation space.

- Sector groups. The sectors could be based on key staff groupings (Wycombe District departmental co-ordination, for example, or Housing agencies).

- Groups addressing on an inter-agency basis the needs of particular localities - a kind of Task Force model.

- Specific working parties on key strategic questions - a great deal more data is likely to be available, and some structures will be needed to make sense of it in terms of direction and options. A good example is the need to devise some responses on mental health questions. There is also the need to build some joined up thinking into forward planning for some of the proposed action emerging from the White Paper. In some of those a mainstream Education input seems to be needed, as well as perspectives from Health and Social Services.

- Whichever structures are used efforts need to be made to include the Racial Incidents Group in consideration both of practice and strategy.

Clearly a central question is the need to ensure that agencies are not only signed up for working together within the protocols but that other perspectives, such as business and community organisations are involved. A mix of these methods may be appropriate. The responsibility for co-ordination is likely to fall on the Community Safety Department, which already works to sustain links and provide agencies with information and contacts. This role will need to expand as indicated more fully in the next section. The main challenge for Wycombe is the need for significantly improved guidance to RSLs, and the adoption of more consistent approaches. This should be regarded as a main priority.

7) Initial Reports and Responses.

The Plan presumes that referring agencies will have taken initial action and that this will usually involve written communication or warnings. Direct contact is envisaged though if behaviour persists. If a visit is made it is assumed that a number of actions will be considered. These include Mediation, Restorative Justice, Joint verbal warnings and written warnings, intervention by any of the key agencies and ABCs.

All staff concerned will need good information about the options and how they might fit into solutions. Early intervention, for example, is extremely helpful in making use of mediation, and Mediation as a process is capable of being used in a much wider set of situations and groupings than is often recognised. Similarly agencies will need up to date information about RJ capacity and focus.

There is potential for considerably increased use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts in Wycombe. Some helpful guidelines are included in the Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale document, as well as some important guidance about the options for action in respect of breached ABCs. Better use of referral to the Youth Offending Service is one important option. All concerned need to bear in mind that the measures to be taken will include help for individuals, diversionary activity, and support. The commitment of agencies to delivering on those aspects of ABCs, which should be incorporated in the contract alongside requirements on behaviour, is extremely important. Prompt delivery on such commitments is an important credibility issue in ABC work.

8) Case Conference.

Clarity needs to be achieved in respect of the chairing role as suggested above. It is assumed that the servicing of Conferences will normally be by a Police Anti-Social Behaviour worker or a Community Safety Officer, and that after information sharing and discussion an agreed Action Plan will be drawn up and included in the Minutes. Normally cases will have a review date within three months. These proposals describe good practice and it will be important that they are implemented effectively. The statement that all options should be considered appropriate to the severity of the case is helpful as a working statement on proportionality, and the commitment to problem solving approaches is also helpful.

9) Anti-Social Behaviour Orders applications and the management of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

This section effectively summarises the tasks and requirements at each stage. In due course revision will be necessary because of impending legislation.

10) Information sharing protocol and agreement.

This is an effective and County-wide document and should present no difficulties to participating agencies. There is a degree of confusion though among some agencies about the nature of health service procedures and the process of obtaining information, and this should be explained to staff in more detail.

11) Other issues.

A central theme of this section has been the need to build a Wycombe response to the Chiltern Vale level initiative, at the same time as trying to ensure that some structures are available for consultation, strategic thinking, as well as good practice development.

This is partly about empowering agency representatives, but also the need for good communication about practice and inter-agency work. One of the key issues may be to set some specific targets about anti-social behaviour responses. Better base line data and greater use of Mapping would help, but targets for use of Mediation referral, ABCs and their successful completion, and reductions in reported problems in targeted areas are all possibilities to consider.

5) Key roles, Resources and the Development of Responses

The purpose of this section is to describe the key roles in different agencies, and consider how best these roles might be linked together to achieve a more coherent response to the prevention and management of anti-social behaviour. A model for this is suggested, together with comments about resource implications. Some issues are identified in respect of the development of the range of responses to anti-social behaviour.

1) Police

The posts concerned apply to Chiltern Vale as a whole.

- **Community Partnership Co-ordinator.** Responsible to the Chief Inspector and with other important responsibilities, including domestic violence. Responsible for supervision of the two anti-social behaviour officer posts.

- **Anti-Social Behaviour Officers.** Responsible to the Partnership Co-ordinator. One post will be responsible for data co-ordination and ensuring the operation of systems. The other more senior post will be 'outward facing' and will include responsibility for liaison with other departments, maintenance of the working arrangements with the Partnership, and some responsibility for managing the work of beat officers. These posts have administrative time attached to them.

- **Beat Officers.** A key component of the mainstreaming thinking behind Police response is that Beat Officers will undertake most police first response work on anti-social behaviour, replacing the specialist officer who left some time ago.

Main implications

- Need to ensure that sufficient time is available for Wycombe issues and structures, and that the co-ordinating Police staff are able to participate. The key links are between these staff and the Wycombe Community Safety staff.

- The role of Beat Officers and their contribution will need to be well understood by other agencies and indeed other Police colleagues. Concerns were expressed in consultation about turnover, availability, and possible lack of consistency with a significant number of officers involved.

- Beat Officers will need support, good information and an awareness of the range of options, including mediation. It will be helpful if induction training and ongoing support stresses the contribution and roles of other agencies.

2) Partnership

- **Community Safety Manager.** Responsible for the range of community safety responsibilities within the council, including anti-social behaviour work. Responsibility for the supervision of the Community Safety Officer who has operational and co-ordinating responsibility for anti-social behaviour.

- **Community Safety Officer.** This post as currently operating has additional responsibilities, including mapping. At present has the main co-ordinating role and would be the main day-to-day link with Police co-ordinating staff and other agencies.

Main implications

- Sufficient time is needed to ensure good co-ordination, support and communication to the wide range of other agencies. This is likely to include regular meetings, preparation of reports, newsletters and forward planning.

- Similarly time will need to be available to play a full part in operational management including attendance at case conferences.

- Monitoring work is needed on outcome of cases and the development of new initiatives and robust packages. ABC work is a good example of unmet need.

- There is a need for organisation of briefing and training of a range of staff on an inter-agency basis.

- Looking ahead to implementation of the White Paper agenda there will be a number of issues about audit and dialogue with communities, which will need extra time. Similarly, the introduction and embedding of new options will require negotiation and monitoring.

Apart from these central roles a number of other key roles and responsibilities exist in other departments and agencies. The following need to be considered as relevant to any comprehensive model of inter-agency ownership and management of anti-social behaviour.

3) Housing

A number of Housing Officers work to the Principal Housing Officer and have direct operational dealings with anti-social behaviour. Their input is on a generic basis as part of a much wider role, and serious concerns were expressed about workload. Liaison with other council departments and agencies, including the Police is a regular day to day issue, and the Housing Department is central to achieving timely and effective response, including the issues of tenant's rights, transfers, and allocation.

Main implications

- There appears to be a strong case for specialism within the Housing Department, and this needs to be supported by extra resourcing. Housing is so central to performance issues on anti-social behaviour that this needs to be seen as a high priority.

- A key theme of this research has been the unmet need for co-ordination within the RSL network. If there is to be any chance of consistent processes and procedures in Wycombe then more work and resource is needed to address this problem. It may be that specific responsibility needs to be ascribed, whether within the proposed specialist Housing post or as part of another brief. The recent extension of RSL powers and the new powers envisaged by the White Paper mean that urgent action should be taken. Similarly links need to be made with private landlords.

4) Environmental Health

Environmental health has contributed well to the anti-social behaviour agenda, and a senior officer has had a lead role. Environmental Health has also been an early and consistent supporter of the use of Mediation techniques.

Main implications

- The volume of noise nuisance complaints is considerable, and the workload and expectations are likely to increase considerably with the powers likely to be included in legislation.

- As the Council's work towards its Licensing Plan continues there is a further workload implication, which will require extra resource. Deployment of resource should if possible link anti-social behaviour and licensing work so far as the Department is concerned.

- Proposed powers will also increase the need for close co-operation between Police, Environmental Health and Housing.

5) Community Development

An impressive area of current work on anti-social behaviour in Wycombe is the capacity within the District Council to call on in-house community development expertise, in a department, which also includes a specific children's services role. It is important that these operational links are strengthened and further developed.

Main implications

- Better use of mapping and generally better data should enable improved targeting, and preventive work. Community Development should contribute to this and anti-social behaviour views should inform action and responses to identified concerns.

- The Community Development Workers provide a very effective bridge to the County Youth and Community Service, and can therefore assist in the integration of responses.

- As Government simplifies the funding streams for diversionary and summer work there is an important co-ordinating role for the department's role in children's services.

6) Refuse, abandoned vehicles, cleansing and graffiti

Good data and clear contractual arrangements are in place in Wycombe, and the Contracts Manager is well placed to contribute further to the planning and delivery of anti-social behaviour responses from a mainstream perspective.

Main implications

- There is scope for more use of the available data.

- There will be a need for forward planning in respect of new powers and expectations.

7) Park and Ranger Services

The development of contracted servicing and changes of role have tended to reduce the time available for staff presence and supervision in public spaces. The available data and case records described in section 2 of this report suggest that facilities are well used and that there is a good deal of common sense judgement and experience being brought to bear - particularly so far as young people are concerned. However a number of anti-social behaviour concerns do relate to use of public space.

Main implications

- Staffing cover for public open space should be reviewed.

- Participation of the departments in consideration of the developing anti-social behaviour agenda and plan is very important.

8) Youth Offending Service

The new overall structure should help with the problem of representation across three Partnership Areas, and the YOS will have important work to do on anti-social behaviour issues as its preventive role develops, and new responsibilities are added to the agenda as outlined in section 6.

Main implications

- Need to ensure an adequate capacity and level of cover for Wycombe.

- Need to ensure that there is good liaison through a named representative.

- Good use of the YOS in the implementation of ABCs.

- Improved linkage between Restorative Justice, Mediation, and the YOS.

- Work to improve use of Final warnings.

- Consideration and support to the new Victim Liaison post.

9) Youth and Community

It was pointed out to me on a number of occasions that the service is not a crime prevention or management agency, nor is it by any means the only provider of services to young people. Nonetheless, Youth and Community is clearly an important agency in helping to see and analyse problems in their full context; in the capacity of the department and its workers to empower young people, and in the high level of available expertise.

Main implications

- It would be appropriate to have a lead representative, probably the Area Youth and Community Manager.

- The White Paper notes the place of truancy, exclusion and areas with high levels of youth unemployment, and the service has a lead role to play in the co-ordination of local responses.

10) Social Services

Clearly the various components of Social Services have important information and a range of service provision, which have great importance for inter-agency work both with perpetrators and vulnerable victims. It would be helpful if especially in areas such as Children and Families there were a somewhat more formalised link role. There is also a need for the wider anti-social behaviour agenda to be more clearly understood by Social Services Personnel.

Main implications

- There is a need to develop confidence in this area, as a number of contributors expressed concern about what they saw as the limited engagement of Social Services. In some Thames Valley CDRPs the formal involvement is certainly much higher, and it can be argued that a pro-active Social Services involvement is vital in a field of work where capacity and resilience building are emerging as important priorities.

- Early intervention issues and support for improved parenting are clearly important development issues in preventing anti-social behaviour.

11) Mental Health services

A range of issues are relevant here, and again it would be helpful to have a lead representative identified from the statutory Mental Health Service. On the wider issue of multiple problem work and mental disorder Revolving Doors have an excellent track record in harm reduction and inter-agency negotiation, and they, too should certainly be regarded as an important local provider. In due course across the Thames Valley a specific service for mentally disordered offenders will be introduced, and Revolving Doors as an agency have contributed extensively to this plan which has been evolved through work between the Health Service and Probation.

Main implications

- Improved representation and involvement will clearly be important.

- It will be particularly important to follow up issues raised by the current research being conducted by Allyson MacVean.

- There is a need to improve other agencies understanding of confidentiality policies and procedures as they impact on mental health and other health provision.

12) Primary Health care

Similar considerations apply, and a specific representative link from the NHS Primary Care Trust would provide access to the structures and personnel involved.

Main implications

- Health issues are relevant not only in mapping terms but understanding patterns of risk and behaviour.

- Health providers are regularly in touch with both perpetrators and victims.

13) Education

The emphasis in managing anti-social behaviour has often been on youth and community rather than schools issues. However there are clearly important crossovers.

Main implications

- A specific Divisional level representative and communication role is required.

- Schools themselves are developing initiatives relevant to wider anti-social behaviour work, including peer support, peer mediation and so on. Links need to be made to these initiatives.

- Sometimes a joined up response across school and community is required as issues cross the fences between schools and their neighbouring communities.

- Empowerment of younger children may be most easily achieved by links with education. A good deal of linkage can be made with citizenship issues, and Thames Valley Partnership already has positive healthy experience of the range of work which can be undertaken.

14) Probation

Staffing shortage and massive re-organisation have worked against regular Probation involvement in the previous Wycombe structures, but Probation has been involved in the management of local cases which led to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and will also frequently have knowledge of cases. In terms of a local structure Probation should clearly have a named link, preferably at Senior Probation officer level.

Main implications

- Probation staff are likely to have information about, or involvement in a number of anti-social behaviour cases, as well as having information about risk especially in more serious adult cases.

- Probation are often taking cases on from YOS, and provide a degree of continuity which is important to the management of identified risk cases.

- Should the number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders increase and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders be used more frequently as part of criminal proceedings, Probation staff will write Pre-Sentence reports when breaches occur, and need therefore to be regarded as a mainstream agency in this work.

15) Mediation

The Buckinghamshire Community Mediation scheme is clearly a key service provider in the development of anti-social behaviour responses. Wycombe already provides good financial support and there is a general recognition of the scheme's value and relevance. Earlier audit work, and consultation during this research suggest that involvement and use could be further extended.

Main implication.

- Co-ordination of referral across departments would be helpful.

- There is a need for earlier referral, and this includes referrals from RSL's.

- Staff across departments and agencies need an improved understanding of the capability and working methods. This would enable mediation to be regarded with more confidence and assertiveness as a preferred option.

- It may be helpful to set targets for growth, and monitor progress, in conjunction with the scheme.

16) Victim Support

There does appear to be potential for greater use of Victim Support in cases where the position is sufficiently clear. This would not be appropriate in a number of situations where there are disputing parties rather than perpetrators and victims. It will be important to ensure that this option is not used where mediation is more appropriate.

Main implications

- Exploration of the possibilities with Victim Support would be an initial step followed by development of clear guidelines and instructions for all agencies and departments.

17) Fire Service

Fire setting and the burning out of vehicles constitute a significant component of anti-social behaviour. The Service will have of course the primary role of dealing with the presenting risk, but it should also be possible to have a contribution to risk assessment and a analysis of data for mapping and planning purposes.

Main implications

- Clear arrangements are needed for liaison including an identified lead contact.

18) Drug and Alcohol services

Local agencies will be working with a number of those involved in anti-social behaviour, and a range of behaviours causing concern, ranging from drug dealer premises through to alcohol related behaviour, which is itself a factor in understanding a great deal of anti-social behaviour.

Main implications

- It will be important to consider proposals which may emerge from the forthcoming research by Allyson MacVean.

- There needs to be a cross-reference with the Young people's Substance Misuse Plan, and good quality education and early intervention work needs to be a component in a number of ABCs.

- Where drug or alcohol use is more established there need to be clear arrangements for referral and monitoring.

- Where appropriate the agencies concerned need to be involved in case conferences.

- Local anti-social behaviour data and experience needs to inform Licensing Plan work in Wycombe

Other issues

a)   **Wardens.** Wycombe has no Street Wardens or their equivalent at present, and I am not aware of any current planning for this. The area certainly has wards and estates which would potentially benefit from this approach, which has now been tried in a variety of settings, including some Estates in Slough and a specific ward (South Abingdon) in the Vale of White Horse for example. Evaluations have clarified the key components but a number of schemes have had considerable success. The current situation is that most such schemes are central government funded. Concern over longer term funding and pressure from the areas concerned has now secured a further year's money, but mainstreaming is clearly expected after that. At the least Wycombe should be aware of the potential and consider whether there is some targeted potential.   An overview of the role of Neighbourhood and Street Wardens in community safety was produced by Thames Valley Partnership in December 2002 (1).

b)   **Involvement of private landlords and business.** It will be important to find ways of maintaining dialogue and involvement from both private landlords and business both large and small. Newsletters and presswork would be necessary.

c)   **Handbook and flow charts.** The consultation indicated a need to have a handbook on procedures and resources. This could be developed in an electronic format, incorporating flow charts.

Possible organisational model

Wycombe has not so far pursued the notion of an Anti-Social Behaviour Team. This approach has some strengths and in mainstreaming terms, some weaknesses as well. Some form of structure does seem necessary in delineating lead responsibility and accountability for the District.

One possibility, predicated on the availability of Police time and the additional resourcing proposed for the Community Safety Department is the creation of a 'virtual' Team, that is to say a group of people from different departments or settings who function in an interlocking way and meet regularly.

In Wycombe this could be led by the Partnerships Co-ordinator for the Police and the Community Safety Manager. Other members could be as follows.

- Police 'outward facing' worker.
- Wycombe District Partnership anti-social behaviour worker with special responsibility.
- Housing Department worker with specific responsibility as proposed.
- Lead on anti-social behaviour from Environmental Health.
- Lead worker on anti-social behaviour from Community Development.
- Lead worker on anti-social behaviour issues from Youth Offending Service.

Mainstreaming and consistency do require considerable inter-agency co-ordination and there does need to be an identified core group who can provide professional leadership. Given the complexity and quantity of work in Wycombe a structure of this kind does seem to be a necessary ingredient. The exact working model can be developed by the participants, and the model does not necessarily call for large numbers of meetings, or increase in bureaucracy. Clear delegation, thinking space, and a well-informed core group may in fact reduce both these needs.

Beyond the virtual team would be a range of lead workers in each agency identified in this report. This role might have the following components:

- Anti-social behaviour liaison responsibility.
- Reference point for new information and inter-agency events.
- Support and briefing for mainstream staff involved in casework or conferencing.

This group would cover a nominated person from each RSL, Non-statutory agencies, and all other organisations potentially involved. Again there does not need to be a regular meeting for this group, though sub-groups or working parties from it might be got together for specific purposes. Nor need the role be a particularly onerous one. This model has the potential to improve agency awareness and save time wasted on repeated explanation and confusion. It builds on current informal arrangements and fits well with the Operational Group model proposed in the Chiltern Vale Plan. There is still likely to be the need in Wycombe, for reasons given earlier, to have some specific grouping or liaison arrangement for RSLs. However this too could be simplified, if resource was provided for this work by the Housing Department. The wider group might be known as the anti-social behaviour Reference Group.

Note

1)   Neighbourhood and Street Wardens – their role in community safety – Thames Valley Partnership, December 2002.

6) New Powers and Forward Planning Issues

This section provides a summary of the main new powers likely to emerge in legislation from the white paper, 'Respect and Responsibility - taking a stand against anti-social behaviour', with an assessment of the main implications for work in Wycombe. Some related policy issues are linked to these proposals. The resulting Bill is currently making parliamentary progress.

White Paper issues.

i) Financial provision.

Expenditure of £75 million over the next three years channelled through the Anti-Social Behaviour Home Office Unit.

The snapshot census of anti-social behaviour taken nationally on 10th September, is likely to inform a Government Action Plan. The local findings should be well shared with agencies and the implications discussed.

ii) Powers on Noise.

Local authority powers to impose fixed penalties for noisy neighbours, and remove equipment such as stereos if necessary. This can involve ten minutes notice, and can also involve the immediate closure of noisy licensed premises.

All this presumes the availability of an appropriately trained officer with appropriate testing equipment available at the time of complaint. This has considerable implications for the Environmental Health Department in terms of resource and working practice, which will need to be considered, as this power is likely to become well known quite easily to the public. A pro-active preventive approach with warning arrangements may be helpful for licensed premises.

iii) Powers relating to Housing.

A number of powers will be provided. Social Housing providers will have more power to take action with 'probationary tenancies'; ending a tenant's right to buy; inclusion of anti-social behaviour issues as a consideration in housing possession cases; sanctions through withdrawal of Housing Benefit, and local authorities to have new powers requiring private sector landlords to take action in respect of anti-social behaviour.

This adds up to a considerable set of changes and new powers. Several of the key issues for Wycombe are as follows:

- With a sizeable local authority housing department, and 22 RSLs, the co-ordinating structures and liaison work outlined in the earlier sections are going to be very important to ensure reasonable levels of consistency.

- New responsibilities in respect of private landlords should be led from within the Housing Department. The need for consistent input, technical knowledge and a specialist approach all support the need for more resource which is connected to the overall proposed initiative of having a team or 'virtual' team.

iv) Power for Police on crack houses.

Police will have the power to close crack houses within 48 hours and for up to three months.

While crack use may not be as intense as in some areas, Wycombe's proximity to London means that there is local crack use, and anti-social behaviour relating to this has been known to the Housing Department and some RSLs. The new power will be welcomed, and its effective implementation will depend on good information exchange with Police, and a clear understanding of the criteria involved.

v) Designation of areas of concern.

These powers will give the Police to designate areas, in conjunction with the local authority, where ' intimidating gangs of youths' can be dispersed and unaccompanied children out late at night taken home.

This is potentially a difficult area in terms of consistency and fairness. Close working out of criteria will need working out on an inter-agency basis, and with the involvement of parish and town councils. It will be important to ensure that preventive and problem solving options are not marginalised by these powers, and that they are used proportionately on the basis of good quality assessment.

The White Paper also addresses issues about activity work, diversion and employment. These include summaries of effective schemes in problem areas, including Operation Garden City, in Wythenshawe, Greater Manchester, which enabled Police Officers to deliver young people at risk to available youth provision immediately. The Government also intends to introduce a single 'pot' for summer diversionary activities. The White Paper does challenge Partnerships to link up provision and for Wycombe forward planning on an inter-agency basis will become more important. Strong consideration should be given to the Youth Service proposals for Youth Employment training in Wycombe.

vi) Control of children by parents.

This section of the White Paper describes the need to ensure that firstly appropriate support and training are available, but that compulsion should be used if necessary through parenting orders, fixed penalty notices, residential parenting classes and ultimately intensive fostering. The analysis suggests that since absence from school, exclusion, low attainment and poor employment prospects are linked with both anti-social behaviour and youth offending, these are central causation problems. The White Paper links these proposals with issues identified in the Green Paper on Children at Risk, and

outlines the need to roll out the Referral and Tracking pilot which would provide data systems across agencies.

These powers and responsibilities assume close collaboration between the District based Partnership and the County Council's services including Education, Social Services and the Youth Offending Service. There are issues of referral process, capacity and co-ordination, which will apply to the neighbouring Partnerships as well. It may be that a specific working party of the proposed Chiltern Vale Strategy Group should take on the forward planning for this area of work.

vii) Aggressive Beggars.

Begging to become a recordable offence, presumably attracting a wider range of penalty.

While not a major issue in Wycombe this proposed power will need to be understood by the different agencies. Coupled with the Town Centre bye-law on alcohol and offensive behaviour there will be a range of enforceable options.

viii) Powers in respect of disorderly public behaviour.

A number of proposals relate to public behaviour and provide more enforcement options. These include extension of fixed penalties for disorderly 16 and 17 year olds; banning air weapons and replica guns in public places and increasing the age limit for owning air guns from 14 to 17, as well as banning the sale of spray paints to under-18s. Local Authorities will have more robust powers to deal with graffiti, litter, fly-tipping and fly-posting. There are to be new powers to deal with off road motorcycling in public places. Government intends to support a Private Members Bill on restricting sale and misuse of fireworks.

While there has been some controversy about the use of fixed penalty fines for younger people, pilot schemes are said to have worked well, and there is clearly room for this direct and straight - forward remedy. The main issue for Police will need to be consistency and the use of a warning system. The Partnership will need to work closely with Trading Standards on the issues of airguns and spray paints. As noted in Section 2 use of motorcycles in public places has been a significant issue in Wycombe. It should be noted that under the proposed Local Government Bill local authorities will be able to keep proceeds from fines on littering and fouling. Wycombe already has effective contractual arrangements in place on abandoned vehicles, and graffiti. The contracts will need to have specifications reviewed in the light of new proposed powers. Trading Standards and the Fire Service will no doubt welcome any further powers in respect of firework control.

ix) ABCs and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

The White Paper commends good use of ABCs, and also makes reference to Restorative Justice. On Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, automatic reporting restrictions will be removed in respect of young people subject to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. The White Paper notes that powers on Anti-Social Behaviour Orders are given to RSLs and Transport Police by the

Police Reform Act of 2002. Local Authorities are to be able to prosecute breaches, and availability will be extended to the County Court. A significant innovation will be the Individual Support Order, which will require a programme of activities tailored to the individual for those on Anti-Social Behaviour Orders between the ages of 10 and 17. The Witness Support Scheme operated by Victim Support is to be extended to witnesses involved in Anti-Social Behaviour Order cases, as there have been difficulties in this area.

The White Paper does lean heavily on enforcement. An important issues will be to ensure that there continues in Wycombe to be a proportionality of response and that there is effective use of problem solving approaches, including good Restorative Justice initiatives and good use of Mediation. The need for improved co-ordination with RSLs, and good practice on Case Conferencing have been noted in earlier sections. A planned extension of ABCs on the basis of agreed good practice guidelines is a closely related issue.

The development of Individual Support Orders should probably be tackled at a Chiltern Vale level, and Police with the Youth Offending Service will need to take a lead. Similarly discussions about an expanded role for Victim Support will need to be conducted at a County level. The White paper notes that The Judicial Studies Board has developed a training package for magistrates to develop their understanding of anti-social behaviour and the sentencing options available to them. I would urge that this is taken forward as a priority in Buckinghamshire in conjunction with the Thames Valley Courts Service. Similarly it will be important to ensure that the Probation Service is kept informed of the new powers and structures, since the overlap with adult offenders is considerable, and Pre-Sentence Reports may well be called for in Anti-Social Behaviour Order breach cases.

x) Overall issues from the White Paper.

The White Paper makes a number of points about overall direction and strategy. These are of considerable importance in understanding the overall thrust of government policy, and the expectations to be laid on CDRPs. They can be summarised as follows.

- Specific points about activities to be covered in assumptions and definitions about the scope of Anti-Social Behaviour.

- The range of activities mentioned is included in the proposed Wycombe definition proposed in section 4 of this report.

- The CDRP is seen as providing clear local leadership in identifying local problems and ensuring agencies work together promptly, making good use of the powers given. There should be clear local standards on each type of anti-social behaviour, which should be shared with local people and communities, enforced by agencies, especially the police and upheld by the Criminal Justice system.

- These are considerable challenges, and good structures and collaboration will be important. On the other hand there are dangers in reliance exclusively on enforcement and the Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale envisaging three episodes of

behaviour as an appropriate trigger for inter-agency work and conferencing is very appropriate in achieving consistency and proportionality. However a clear principle of the White Paper is that 'Once the strategy is in place it is vital that the culture is one where enforcement is at the centre.' This does mean that all options will need to be used and that if problem solving techniques, support and encouragement do not work then enforcement is required.

- The White Paper does indicate that anti-social behaviour will be a required priority for CDRPs and must be given due weight in audit - essentially it will become main-stream activity.

- Clearly there will need to be good dialogue with communities and their local councils through press strategies, a consistent process of review and assessment which can be clearly understood, and publicity about effective action. It also follows from an assumption of main-streaming that other policy initiatives and plans will need to be linked with the anti-social behaviour plan - not only by way of good data exchange but the range of plans themselves should cross-cut more effectively on anti-social behaviour issues. The case for greatly improved and consistent data collection is obvious. Some of the main cross-cutting areas are as follows:

  - Links between Community Safety planning, Anti-Social Behaviour and the new Licencing Plan. Since Police will have powers on avoiding excessive build up of licencing capacity in an area this is an important connection. It may be that given the source of much under-age drinking off licence provisions, small and large should be considered closely within the plans.

  - Alcohol and Drug use are clearly connected closely with anti-social behaviour, and there need to be good cross-over links with the Drug Action Team. In due course the National Alcohol Plan will necessitate the Buckinghamshire DAT including alcohol work in its brief, as is presently the case in most areas. The Partnership should encourage this change to be made a soon as possible.

  - Health Improvement and Mental Health Plans. Given the evidence of connections with the Anti-Social Behaviour agenda, and the vulnerability of those concerned both as perpetrators and victims then linkage needs to be made with the plans and planning processes. The research being conducted by Allyson MacVean should provide helpful advice and guidance. The Revolving Doors Agency also has valuable experience.

  - Children's Plans and Education Plans. The crossover between relative deprivation in childhood and anti-social behaviour is noted throughout the White Paper, and again plans need to be crosscutting. Similar considerations apply to plans for the Youth Service.

Appendix 1

List of individuals consulted (in alphabetical order)

Martha Allsop - Community Safety Officer, Wycombe District Council.

Alison Campbell - Buckinghamshire Mediation.

Claire Childs - Community Partnership Co-ordinator, Chiltern Vale Police Area.

David Colchester - Chief Inspector, Community and Partnership, Chiltern Vale Police Area.

Sue Cooke - National Probation Service Thames Valley.

Saquib Desmukh - Youth Worker, Buckinghamshire Youth and Community Service.

Keith Dobson - Principal Housing Officer, Wycombe District Council.

Andrew Duffy - Guinness Housing Trust.

Jane Fleming - Buckinghamshire Housing Association.

Mary Fountain - Buckinghamshire Social Services.

David Furze - Community Development Worker, Wycombe District Council.

David Hazeldine - Community Development Worker, Wycombe District Council.

Terry Hill - Contract Services Manager, Wycombe District Council.

Andy Hitchcock - Area Manager, Buckinghamshire Youth and Community Service.

Allyson MacVean - Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College.

Philmore Miller - Youth Worker, Buckinghamshire Youth and Community Service.

Robert Paice - Ealing Family Housing Association.

Culdip Pedan - Ealing Family Housing Association.

Geoff Phillips - Operational Manager, Buckinghamshire Youth Offending Service.

Julian Smith - Assistant Divisional Environmental Health Officer, Wycombe District Council.

Gillian Stimpson - Community Safety Manager, Wycombe District Council.

Steve Swindells - Parks Management, Wycombe District Council.

Stephanie Tebbutt - Children's Services Officer, Wycombe District Council.

Barbara Ward - Victim Support Scheme, Wycombe.

Geraldine White - Community Safety Manager, Buckinghamshire County Council.

Graham Wood - Principal Solicitor, Wycombe District Council.

Appendix 2

Summary

The main issues and findings in the report are summarised as follows:

- The District has four wards of significant measured deprivation which show significant levels of anti-social behaviour, but there are high levels of incidence reported from some other wards and parishes.

- Data was collected from a range of sources including the Partnership, records, agencies and Youth Service reconnaissance work.

- Wycombe has a strong history of inter-agency co-operation but there is a general concern that practice has been less effective in recent times, and that there is a need for change within the structures provided by the Chiltern Vale Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale.

- The District has a wide range of anti-social behaviour, but particular concerns were expressed about damage, problems with young people, graffiti and anti-social riding of motor-bikes. Alcohol is mentioned as a major factor with many aspects of behaviour.

- Important research on mental health and substance misuse will need to be taken account of when published.

- Improved liaison with RSLs should be seen as a major priority.

- Data collection has been inconsistent and will need to improve considerably, with better reference particularly to re-victimisation and mapping.

- There is considerable scope for greater use of Mediation, based on more robust referral and incorporation of this approach into the core strategy. Funding implications need to be taken into account.

- Similarly there is potential for increased use of RJ approaches and the involvement in some cases of Victim Support.

- There is potential for greater use, especially by RSLs and the Local Authority of ABCs, but consistency, and effective packages should be sought. ABC work should be evaluated.

- Police roles and other key roles are described. There need to be significant improvements in co-ordination. The role of Beat Officers will be particularly important and this role needs to be well understood in other agencies.

- The contribution of Youth and Community and District based Community Development is a very good feature of the work in Wycombe and these approaches need to be more fully incorporated rather than enforcement options being used in isolation.

- The consistent use of inter-agency conferencing is an important priority and if a panel approach is not to be used then contributors need to be trained and supported in this approach. There may be advantages in each agency having lead workers.

- Consistency over the use of Warnings will be important and this will be best tackled in the context of the proposed Strategy Group.

- The Anti-social Behaviour Protocol for Chiltern Vale offers a clear way forward but Wycombe will need to have its own structure and approaches in order to relate to it effectively.

- The definition of anti-social behaviour, and ways to ensure that a proportionate approach to different levels of concern, are discussed.

- The resourcing of anti-social behaviour work is reviewed and proposals are made for increasing staffing in Community safety and Housing.

- The County-wide protocol on information sharing is a good one and all agencies need to support it, though staff in different agencies may need to understand more clearly confidentiality procedures relating to health settings.

- The case for a 'virtual team' of key staff and lead representatives is made, together with suggested processes for improving awareness and communication across all agencies.

- The main elements of the White Paper and proposed legislation are outlined and the local implications discussed.

Appendix 3

Main Recommendations

The main recommendations are as follows:

- Improved reporting systems and assessment procedures need the full support of all staff. This needs to be supported as a priority by managers.

- Use of Mediation should be incorporated into core policies and offered on the basis of better staff knowledge and in a more assertive way.

- Community Development contributions should be sought as a standard component of problem solving packages, and enforcement in isolation should normally be avoided. The need for resilience and capacity building in some communities should be recognised in the anti-social behaviour strategy.

- Use of ASBOs will increase with criminal proceedings. Court and Probation staff will need to be more fully engaged with local procedures than they are at present, and a plan should be devised to tackle this.

- ABC use needs to be developed and evaluative work should be undertaken to assess impact. The use of YOS Preventative resources should be increased generally, including intervention in problematic ABCs.

- The respective operational roles of Restorative Justice and Mediation should be clarified.

- Inter-agency training, both on the Police Beat Officer role, and individual agency response should be developed.

- The Chiltern Vale Strategy Group should ensure consistent practice on the use of warnings. The use of warnings prior to use of ABCs should be considered.

- Inter-agency conferencing should be re-launched with consistent practice about servicing attendance and review.

- A developed working definition to accompany the new protocol should be considered by the Partnership.

- Operational Group members need a range of information. A Newsletter, written guidance, and flow charts are all needed. Operational groupings and occasional meetings should be considered.

- Better co-ordination of RSL responses should be regarded as a high priority.

- The Racial Incidents Group should be fully involved in the new structures.

- Increased resources are needed for anti-social behaviour work in Wycombe given the nature of the problems and the demography of the District. At the least this needs to involve posts in Housing and Community Safety.

- More detailed targets should be set in respect of anti-social behaviour.

- There should be no duplication of infrastructure with Chiltern Vale, but a 'virtual team' should be established under the joint leadership of Police and Community Safety to ensure that there is ownership of the strategy and coherent implementation. Other agencies should provide lead officers, and the involvement of Social Services and the Primary Care Trust are important priorities in this.

- The Team should have responsibility for ensuring the forward planning for new legislation.

- Strong consideration needs to be given to the Youth and Community Service proposals for Youth Employment training in Wycombe.