



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 23 February 2006

Question under Council Procedure Rule 14(2)(b)

QUESTION 4

From: Councillor Pearce

To: The Portfolio Holder for Healthy and Inclusive Communities

“Would the Portfolio Holder please give the Council an update on how the new regulations for Anti-social behaviour have been working in our town centre.

Would he agree that there has been a knock-on effect in that the problems are now being felt in some of the surrounding City wards. Are there any plans to police areas such as St Paul’s Ward?”

Reply

“There are a number of ways in which agencies including the Council are tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB). These include dispersal orders and penalty notices for disorder. Winchester City Council leads and co-ordinates a multi-agency ASB Panel for the city. This group comprises of various statutory agencies, and is the vehicle wherein individuals engaged in ASB are discussed and responses agreed. The group allows for an holistic approach to tackling the problem of ASB.

One option available to the group is Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, which are voluntary contracts made between the individual and the local agency (often the police, local authority, youth offending team or housing officer) to stop the problems and keep them out of court. This is achieved by the individual 'signing up' and agreeing to refrain from their ASB. In conjunction with this approach they are offered advice and support as appropriate. If breached it can be used to underpin an application for an ASBO, which empowers the courts to prevent an individual from engaging in specific forms of ASB. If an ASBO is granted by the Magistrates Court or the County Court (in Housing cases) a subsequent breach of the order is a criminal offence. An ASBO can also be applied for at the time of a person being convicted of a criminal offence. It is important to re-iterate that ASB is irrespective of age - nationally over 6,500 ASBO's have been issued so far, over half of those have been for adults.

The Council's Neighborhoods Warden Team is also doing significant work in tackling ASB in designated geographical areas. With the proposal to extend the Team to five in number, it is possible that once the new recruits are established, there may be capacity for the Warden Team to engage in short-term projects in areas outside of their priority neighbourhoods. However, it must be noted that when establishing the Warden Team the Council took a clear decision not to hand them powers to take enforcement action.

As part of the budget debate, the Councillor will hear about proposals to add town centre wardens to the proposals for a Business Improvement District. A full report on this will be submitted through Cabinet to Council in due course.

In view of a similar question about the Alcohol Exclusion Zone from Councillor Tait, I would refer Cllr Pearce to that answer for further information about displacement and other issues.

A project will be starting in the next 6 weeks to review the City Council's provision of CCTV and I anticipate that all members will have the opportunity to propose further uses of CCTV in appropriate crime monitoring areas.

In short, the Council is making very full use of existing powers where appropriate with the aim of reducing crime and the fear of crime and of reducing anti-social behaviour in our District and in our City Centre in particular."