

# THE ASSEMBLY

1 MARCH 2006

## REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

*This report is submitted under Agenda Item 3(d). The Chair will be asked to determine whether this report can be considered at the meeting under the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 as a matter of urgency.*

<b>Title: Petition Regarding Anti Social Behaviour at the Tolworth Parade Shops</b>	<b>For Information</b>
<p><b>Summary:</b></p> <p>A petition was received with over 100 signatures asking for the council to combat anti-social behaviour relating to youth nuisance, intimidating behaviour from youths, harassment and vandalism within and around the Tolworth Parade of shops in Chadwell Heath.</p> <p>The ASB Co-ordinator has written to the Lead Petitioner, had discussions with business owners in the area, discussions with officers in the Chadwell Heath Safer Neighbourhood Team, and residents of the area. A package of improvements including enforcement action has been put together and in many instances already been delivered.</p> <p>The report details the background, the work that has already been undertaken by various teams working in partnership with one another, and work that is planned for the imminent future for Members' information and in response to the petition.</p> <p><b>Wards Affected:</b> Chadwell Heath Ward</p>	
<p><b>Implications:</b></p> <p><b>Financial:</b> None</p> <p><b>Legal:</b> None</p> <p><b>Risk Management:</b></p> <p>Residents and business operators in the area are vulnerable to crime and anti-social behaviour thus affecting their quality of life and business.</p> <p><b>Social Inclusion and Diversity:</b></p> <p>As this report does not concern a new or revised anti-social behaviour policy there are no specific adverse impacts in so far as this report is concerned.</p>	

**Crime and Disorder:**

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a responsibility on local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications of any proposals. In relation to this report there is a direct link with crime and youth disorder. Local residents and business operators currently feel the antics and disorderly behaviour of a group of youths in the area is making the area unsafe and business unprofitable.

**Recommendation / Reason**

The Assembly is asked to note details of the petition and the current position with regard to the actions already taken and the actions proposed in order that the issues raised by the residents living in and businesses operating from Tolworth parade of shops in Chadwell Heath ward are dealt with satisfactorily.

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**1. Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 The Council has received a petition requesting the council to take tough action to stop anti-social behaviour impacting on the lives of residents and businesses within and around the Tolworth Parade Shops.
- 1.2 The petition states that residents living within Tolworth Parade Shops have:
  - Gangs of youths causing “mindless vandalism”, shouting abuse at residents
  - Intimidating and harassing business operators through obstructing the doors of entry to business premises
  - Causing criminal damage to private property
- 1.3 Prior to this petition being received the Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) team has had the Tolworth Parade shops and surrounding area under its investigative radar screen since October 2004. This resulted in the ASB team conducting intensive overt and covert operations in the area. As a result of our operation a number of positive outcomes have been achieved. Firstly the identification of the main ringleaders known to persistently cause anti-social behaviour in the area. The Police who we have been closely working with also knew these individuals.
- 1.4 Upon receipt of the petition an initial letter acknowledging receipt and concerns raised in letter was sent to Mrs R Watson (Lead Petitioner) dated 29 April 2005. The petition was discussed with the Chadwell Heath Safer Neighbourhood Team and a Police Sergeant conducted a home visit to the home of the lead petitioner to reassure her of how serious the concerns raised in the petition are taken. Various outcomes were agreed and actioned as detailed below:

- The ASB Team was to conduct operations in the area with the full co-operation and assistance of the Police as well as support covert operations to catch perpetrators.
- The ASB Unit co-ordinated and arranged the provision of a private security firm to disrupt youths congregating, identify perpetrators of ASB in the area from December 2004 through to the first week in January 2005.
- The Police Disorder Bus to continually patrol the area with a view to identifying more perpetrators.
- The Council's Parks Police were actioned to monitor the area during the period when young people leave school at 3.30pm through to 5.00pm to ensure that young people in the area were deterred from causing ASB on seeing high enforcement visibility.
- Covert operations were conducted in the area in February 2005. The results of this operation led to prosecutions and Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's).

1.5 A walkabout with Councillor McKenzie took place in October 2004 during which we toured and spoke to all the business operators in the area. Further discussions took place between officers and residents on a confidential basis about the problems they had endured from this group of youths.

## **2 Current Position**

2.1 A great deal of work has already been carried out within the Tolworth Parade shops to tackle the issues highlighted in the petition. The work has been undertaken by a number of partners working together to address the issues.

2.2 Following the actions highlighted in 1.4 & 1.5 the main perpetrators have been served with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). Some of the prohibitions include prohibiting the individuals identified from entering the area. Operations have identified a group known as the Marks Gate Thugs. This group is responsible for years of causing ASB. Various members of this group have been dealt various enforcement sanctions by the Councils ASB team.

2.3 Despite the Council's high profile success in the area our ASB Investigator continues to monitor the area to ensure that any potential cases are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The Chadwell Heath Safer Neighbourhood Team has also been proactive in working with us to ensure we continue to bear down on any further incidents of ASB in the area.

2.4 A further request has been placed for the Police Disorder Bus to mount regular evening patrols in the area to increase coverage and improve visibility within the area.

2.5 The Council in collaboration with the Police continue to monitor the area with a view to ensuring that perpetrators of anti-social behaviour are dealt with. This is carried out through joint working initiatives including the sharing of intelligence.

2.6 All of the individuals who have been identified as ring leaders causing ASB in the area have been served with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. Others have been served with Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, whilst others have been referred to the Youth Offending Team who will devise programmes to engage those at risk of behaving anti-socially.

### **3 Report Detail**

- 3.1 The petition calls for action to be taken to address the disruption to their lives and businesses. As 1.4 – 2.5 details various works has already been undertaken in this area, with additional work planned for the imminent future.
- 3.2 Regular meetings are held to discuss the problems currently being experienced in the area, improvements to the situation, and areas needing further attention. All partners realise that despite the achievements already made, there is no quick answer to this problem. It will only be solved with a combination of time, commitment, resources and effort, with the continuation of partnership working proven to be far more successful than attempting to solve the problem in isolation.
- 3.3 A meeting is to be arranged at the beginning of March to feedback to residents and Councillors on the overall issue.

### **4. Consultees**

Geeta Subramaniam – Interim Head of Service Community Safety & Preventative Services  
Harvey Cohen – Parks Police Inspector  
Sergeant Fred Angove - The Metropolitan Police  
Councillor Milton McKenzie – Lead Member  
Councillor Miss N Smith – Chadwell Heath Ward  
Councillor R Curtis – Chadwell Heath Ward  
Councillor T Justice – Chadwell Heath Ward

### **Background papers**

- Petition from Tolworth Parade Shops
- ASB Co-ordinator letter to Lead Petitioner