



CREATING SAFER COMMUNITIES IN THE HARROGATE DISTRICT

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MEDIA RELEASE

DEALING WITH ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

ANTI-SOCIAL behaviour was the single agenda item at a major seminar held last week in Harrogate. Representatives from a wide range of organisations were putting their heads together to finalise an anti-social behaviour strategy for the Harrogate district.

Organised by the Harrogate District Safer Communities Partnership, delegates came from the Youth Offending Team, Social Services, Community Education, North Yorkshire Police and Fire and Rescue Service, Harrogate Borough Council and local Housing Associations.

While only a small percentage of residents and visitors to the district will ever experience crime, we often see examples of what could be called anti-social behaviour. This is defined as :

“Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator”.

The Harrogate District Safer Communities Partnership (HDSCP) is committed to reducing anti-social behaviour by promoting closer working between a variety of responsible groups as well as the local community.

Councillor Mike Gardner, Chairman of the HDSCP, said: “Tackling anti-social behaviour isn’t just the responsibility of the police. When the government asked us to do a ‘one day count’ of reported incidents as part of a national fact-finding exercise last year, only 23 of the 70 cases reported needed police action. The remaining 47 were issues for other bodies – like the council or the education authority.

“This clearly demonstrated to us that people have to move away from the idea that loutish behaviour is something for the police to deal with. We all have to deal with it, which is why we have decided to take this cross-cutting approach to develop the strategy and to get the community more involved in taking a stance against anti-social behaviour.”

Chief Inspector Chris Chelton said: "The seminar was very well attended and we were grateful for the enthusiastic involvement of those who came along. Although the Government may be changing things on a national level, there is a lot we can do at a local level. I think everyone who attended would agree that two very clear messages came out. Partnership is first and foremost and, secondly, there is a need for a central collection of information of incidents of anti-social behaviour. We have to have the bigger picture to help us develop new ways of dealing with the problem. The HDSCP has accepted the major role in co-ordinating this work.

"There is already evidence of good partnership working but it needs to be co-ordinated. And the strategy must be translated into action. We must all remain focused and motivated and determined to make sure that the momentum from the seminar is sustained for the benefit of our individual and collective communities."

Leading from the seminar, an action plan will be developed in the coming months but one of the first actions follows the discussion on acceptable behaviour contracts. A template contract is being circulated this week for all groups to use, which is a start of the central collection of information.

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS: The Harrogate District Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2004 is being produced in response to the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. All responsible groups in the Harrogate District have signed up to the strategy, which will focus on a three-point approach to tackling anti-social behaviour:

- **Prevention** – to include use of CCTV, care of the physical environment, housing management, parenting classes, mediation and promotion of alcohol and drug awareness and treatment programmes.
- **Enforcement** – to include development of acceptable behaviour contracts and enforcement procedures across all responsible groups, pursuing other enforcement measures such as evictions, injunctions etc alongside criminal law proceedings, more use of noise control measures.
- **Support for the community** – develop schemes to bridge the gap between young and older members of society, facilities for young people to meet and play, support, reassurance and protection for witnesses of anti-social behaviour and victims, support for agencies, organisations and voluntary groups that provide services that divert people away from anti-social behaviour.

ENDS

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