

# MINUTES

**MEETING:** Anti Social Behaviour Study Group

**DATE:** Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2005

**TIME:** 10.30 am

**VENUE:** Middlesbrough TLC

**CHAIR:** Greg Johnston South Tyneside Council

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## Apologies:

Mark Barrow – Harvest Housing  
Ian Johnson – Blyth Valley  
Phill Tweddle – Richmondshire BC  
Kelly Taylor – Nomad  
Stuart Brown – Castle Morpeth  
Kevin McGready – Newcastle CC  
Clare Peaden – Durham CC

Rod Baker – Sedgfield BC  
Dianne Hedley – Sedgfield BC  
Tim Winter – SLCNG  
Garry Scurfield – Castle Morpeth  
Neil Mc Farlane – City of York  
Alan Russell – South Tyneside BC  
Sharon Dalton – Coast and Country

## Present:

Simon Page – NHC  
David Jones – Chester-le- street  
Kath Hierons – Home Office  
Gilly Marshall – Erimus Housing  
Libby Griffiths – Housing Hartlepool  
Jane Hill – Middlesbrough BC  
Richard Mitchell – Three Rivers Housing  
Malcolm Woodhall – Tynedale DC  
Suzanne Harker – Blyth Valley Housing  
Carolyn Crean – Stockton Council  
Michael Cowie – Sunderland Housing Group

Greg Johnson – South Tyneside  
Paul Noddings – Tristar  
Alex Rhind – Home Office  
Monica Marron – Middlesbrough Council  
Jocelyn Sirs – Housing Hartlepool  
Clive Ledner – Accent Group  
Simon Riley – Doncaster MBC  
Clare Tierney – Gateshead BC  
Clare Hart – Blyth Valley Housing  
Mandy Walker – Middlesbrough BC

### 1.0 Minutes of last meeting

1.1 The minutes of the meeting of the 09<sup>th</sup> September 2005 were agreed as an accurate record.

### 2.0 Matters Arising

- 2.1 Greg Johnson raised the issue of the Nuisance Neighbourhood Panel to find out if there had been any progress. Alex Rhind added that most action areas and trailblazer areas have been through this process. There is still a neighbourhood expert panel. One of the main drives is their multi-disciplinary nature.
- 2.2 Clare Tierney who raised this issue felt that we needed to find out what was going to be in the Respect agenda before developing this further.
- 2.3 Alex added that the themes of this were engagement with education and families at risk. Alex said that she would look further into the future of the panel. Jane Hill suggested that these panels were very useful and added that they have developed local problem solving groups at Middlesbrough.
- 2.4 Clare made the point that there is little steer from other sectors such as education, social services etc. Michael Cowie described how his team have regular ELMAPS meetings at a low level on a 6 monthly basis and things not sorted would be passed up. Michael said that he could distribute this further.
- 2.5 Clive Ledner suggested that as a lot of areas have these groups a directory may be useful.

### **3.0 NHC Update**

- 3.1 Greg distributed a briefing paper by email on the latest ODPM consultation paper on contracting out ASBO's. Greg asked the group whether there should be any conditions set. Paul Noddings suggested that there be a distinction made on ALMO's differing in size and expertise.
- 3.2 Alex added that the concept behind this was that large ALMO's lobbied government on this as their expertise was in house, not at the council.
- 3.3 Greg suggested that because of the differing sizes of ALMO's that it would be useful for the group to welcome the proposals by the ODPM but to make the point that they need to be flexible to needs.
- 3.4 Richard Mitchell suggested that there could be a danger of a two tier system emerging. Richard suggested that there perhaps needs to be some clear conditions to make function of the ASBO in the ALMO process.

- 3.5 Further to this Richard suggested that we need to ask what is in it for the ALMO and whether poor councils would use this to offload their functions.
- 3.6 It was agreed that all comments and suggestions would be fed back to Greg and Simon so that a response be made. The overall feel to it was agreed to welcome the proposals but highlight areas and issues that may need work.
- 3.7 Simon then went on to mention the IDEA round 8 beacon scheme that has a specific theme relating to anti-social behaviour. Simon stated that should anyone be interested in submitting evidence for beacon status that the NHC would be happy to help.
- 3.8 In particular Simon highlighted that the next round will take place in Spring 2006 and for interested parties to look out for this as guidance on how to submit evidence will be public at this time. Simon suggested that those interested will have to start thinking about this very soon and how best to put a bid together. Simon stated that if successful a beacon co-ordinator is likely to be needed to help disseminate good practice around the country. Simon described how this is the point at which the NHC could be of most use in assisting the co-ordinator to achieve this. Further to this it could help provide a platform for the next ASB conference.
- 3.9 Sticking with the ASB conference Simon asked what people felt about the 2005 conference. There was a consensus that the second day worked much better than the first and that the group could become more involved for the next event.
- 3.10 It was agreed that in March a sub-group should form to help in next year's event. This year's event was considered to have worked well apart from the workshop by Paul Thompson and the over-emphasis on enforcement. Next year it was suggested there be more emphasis on diversity and the nitty gritty of practice on the ground.
- 3.11 The next item referred to the implementation dates for the current housing act. Simon particularly highlighted the need to appreciate the implementation of selective licensing as this has a direct link to ASB.
- 3.12 It was agreed that there were problems in working with the private sector with ASBO's etc, and it was hoped that the legislation would go further. Alex stated that Salford is well ahead of the game with dedicated officers for this. It was suggested that Alex may be able to get someone to talk about this for the next meeting in March.

#### **4.0 Safer Estates update**

- 4.1 Greg gave the group an overview of the work that the safer estates sub-group had been busy with. Greg confirmed that Sally Forth, Kevin Reid, Michael Cowie, Simon Page and Greg himself had already arranged two meetings to discuss the wider implications of the document and how things may be updated.
- 4.2 Greg confirmed that the intention was to reorder the document so that the meat on the bones was at the front. There is no proposal to change any of the process, just to make it clearer.
- 4.3 Greg described how there had been talk about more worthy out of the region. Michael suggested that everyone take time to read the current agreement and pass any comments on to the sub-group via Simon. Making this more applicable outside of the region also made sense in light of what was happening with changes to the police forces.
- 4.4 Alex indicated that the police need to be included from the beginning on this. Greg confirmed that the police will be at the next meeting and that the group would be constantly updated on the progress.

#### **5.0 National Community Safety Plan**

- 5.1 Greg put this on the agenda although would like to pick up on it within the next agenda. This plan is a new power to enable local communities to secure a response to the police. The implications for this are to tighten up on procedures. This plan will be explored in further detail in the next meeting

#### **6.0 Acceptable Behaviour Zones**

- 6.1 Again this is something that there may be more emphasis on in the coming months. They are basically like dispersal order areas but with softer implications. The discussion paper on this is still to come out so this means that there is little the group can do until this is published.

#### **7.0 Alex Rhind Home Office Update**

- 7.1 To begin with is press release on the 10 trailblazers and 50 action areas. The work they are doing has significantly reduced offences. The perception of ASB has also reduced in these areas and has changed the way work.

- 7.2 The Respect agenda will set out how we will work in the future. Clare Tierney added that one of the main problems in the past has been the press releases on ASBO's. This action area has helped achieve better practice. Mandy Walker stated that perceptions of people living in these action areas were that there had been a significant difference.
- 7.3 Malcolm Woodhall added that it was crucial for government to understand that rural areas often have the same problems as the inner cities.
- 7.4 Alex then stated that on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January the Respect Action plan is coming out. In this there is likely to be some common themes. These are: helping communities take action and parenting. A main point in all of this is lowering the level of intervention and scope of agencies. The Home office is widening its expertise in this and Gill Strachan is looking at the big projects.
- 7.5 Another initiative in the action plan is likely to be information on partnerships with the DEFS to work with schools that have high truancy rates. Respect for public servants will also be mentioned, where the public should also expect respect.
- 7.6 A big project in the respect agenda will be revitalising regeneration where the Home office will be joining up with the ODPM and speaking to communities on how they want ASB sorting out. The issue in all of this is how we raise the game.
- 7.7 Alcohol and binge drinking is also likely to continue our focus in the respect agenda, and will be helped by Xmas marketing. There are a lot of things in the action plan that will shape the conference.
- 7.8 With regards to the Action areas and Trailblazers they will be funded until 2008. In addition the Taking a stand awards need a real push to get nominations. The group needs to do this as the 13<sup>th</sup> January is the closing date.
- 7.9 Michael asked whether there were subsidies for winners to come down. Alex added that there is some funding, although if there it shouldn't put you off if this is not available.
- 7.10 As a final point It's your call will soon be subsidised by SNEN as the number that will take over from all calls bar 999. Wave 1 will be Northumbria and the West Midlands.

## **8.0 Round the Table**

- 8.1 Paul Noddings (Tristar) – Our focus has been on outsourcing high level ASB work to Stockton. We will still be dealing with low and medium level ASB which fits resources. We are going to employ 3 ASB reduction officers. Currently we are preparing for inspection next July so everything has to be reviewed, and the prevention of ASB was seen as very important
- 8.2 Monica Marron (Middlesbrough) – Our main project is called Sheild. This involves working closely with the Private rented sector. There is a gap for a tenancy implementation officer. We have assisted with 12 evictions although we are now getting in early and have had no recent evictions. This was suggested as a good idea for the next ASB conference. Alley-gating has also been very successful. We are based in with the ASB team.
- 8.3 Libby Griffiths (Housing Hartlepool) – We are looking at life skills for young people at present with regards to helping them live in their property. In addition an RSL forum has been set up
- 8.4 Jane Hill (Middlesbrough) – We recently had an individual up for an ASBO for threatening a street warden but interim ASBO was refused so we had to wait a week to get ASBO. We managed to get ASBO but the individual was not banned from the area. We were advised legally not to go down the Injunction route. (the rest of the group said that this would have been better) Alex suggested that the Bowness case be looked at in this instance. Jane also told the group how there had been a lot of work done in Middlesbrough in schools and in particular on ABC's.
- 8.5 Clive Ledner (Accent Group) – Clive advised the group that there was to be a full review of ASB provision in January.
- 8.6 Three rivers – Following inspection we have looked at ASB provision. Richard Mitchell will be reviewing officer training as co-ordinator. An update will be given in March.
- 8.7 Simon Riley (Doncaster) – The council is being massively restructured. We are linking up with safer neighbourhood's scheme with the police. There are 2 additional ASB officers. There will also be more work on Youth Inclusion Service. Simon asked the group if people could help with costing a typical ASBO as the press were keen to find this out. Alex advised Simon to ring the Action line to find out standard figures although it was perfectly reasonable to refuse this information.

- 8.8 Steve Stokoe (GONE) – Steve explained how he had been seconded from the fire service to GONE. Steve felt that the fire service was a resource that should be used more for diversionary work as they have the capacity and already do a lot of good work already. There is a huge link in with the Health and Fire agenda. Greg Johnson added that this is something South Tyneside is very involved with.
- 8.9 (Blyth) – It was explained how Blyth had been very much involved in diversionary work since they purchased a DVD from Bolton which is a phenomenal success. This is used in schools where children have to pick paths and outcomes. Other work has been around witnesses where they can now pay for expenses through funding for witnesses.
- 8.10 David Jones (Chester-le-street Council) – David explained how he was new to the post and felt that it was important that jargon was not used , and using less of it would help.
- 8.11 Michael Cowie (Sunderland Housing Group) – Michael stated how what people do not see is what is done behind the scenes. For example a lot of work is done getting enforcement officers in schools and knowing children. We need to be more vocal on behind the scenes information. Michael advised the group to look on the together website to see how much work had gone into the successful demotion order.
- 8.12 Greg Johnson (South Tyneside) – Greg stated how South Tyneside had completed the team who were preparing for ALMO, although the ASB team is now staying with the Council. Greg also felt that in the North East we need to shout about what we do more.

## **9.0 Suggested Future Topics**

- 9.1 Steve Stokoe agreed that it could be useful to do a presentation on what can be done with the Fire service. In addition it was suggested that it would be useful to get Gill strachan to speak to the group along with Salford.

## **10.0 Next meeting**

28<sup>th</sup> March 2006

Location TBC (either South Tyneside or Washington)

