



To: The Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategy:
Councillor Tim Bick
Executive Councillor for Housing

Report by: The Director of Customer and Community Services

Relevant scrutiny committee: Strategy & Resources
14/10/2013
Scrutiny
Committee

Wards affected: All Wards

REVIEW OF STREET BASED ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Executive Councillor agreed that a biennial review of street life issues should be taken to Strategy and Resources Committee. Following the first review presented to the Committee in October 2012 a series of workshops took place in early 2013 with City Councillors, representatives from statutory organisations and support agencies, to consider the management of individuals and trends associated with street based anti-social behaviour (ASB).
- 1.2 The report attached as Appendix 1 details the priorities set by the workshops, as well as findings from further research suggested by those workshops. The research included a detailed look at the quantitative data available to estimate the level of street based anti-social behaviour across the City. Qualitative data was collected through surveys and fora with residents, professionals and service users. National best practice around street life issues was also examined.
- 1.3 The report (Appendix 1) shows that significant resources support people with a street based lifestyle and that there is evidence of duplication and gaps in provision of service (Sections 3-5).
- 1.4 The findings also suggest that street drinkers are not a homogenous group and there is a need to have a flexible individual person centred approach, street drinkers do however broadly fall into three categories; those with low needs who may be able to access private rented accommodation and be supported by the single homeless

service; a second group that may have higher needs related to alcohol, drug and mental health issues and who wish to be supported and find permanent accommodation; and a third small group of people who are responsible for a significant amount of anti-social behaviour and do not presently want to engage with support services (Section 10).

- 1.5 An examination of national best practice shows a lack of hard evidence to suggest that wet centres are an effective tool for addressing street life anti-social behaviour(Section 9).
- 1.6 Consultation with the public suggests there is a need to be more proactive in providing information on the level of street based anti-social behaviour and how to report incidents (Section 1).
- 1.7 The recommendations are based around a management approach that will endeavour to address duplication and gaps in service, develop a model that will better serve the identified groups, and have greater impact in reducing street based anti-social behaviour.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

To note the attached report at Appendix 1 and supporting documents.

To consider the recommendations summarised as follows:

1. Develop and provide a programme of intensive tenancy support, for individuals moving in to general housing stock following homelessness or living in temporary accommodation.
2. Incorporate the provision of tenancy starter packs within the support programme. Consider using donations to the Alternative Giving Campaign to fund these packs.
3. Refresh the Task and Target Group to develop an inter-agency approach that offers intensive support to those who choose to engage and takes prompt enforcement measures towards unacceptable behaviour.
4. Develop different management models for each of the 3 main identified groups, to best serve the needs of the individual, in line with the Integrated Offender Management and Together for Families initiatives.

5. Develop a communication programme for the public, to give information on: reporting street based ASB, the kind of behaviour that is unacceptable, and the actions that can realistically be taken against street based ASB.
6. Set up a multi-agency group to take a strategic overview of street life issues, monitor patterns and take forward the work on the recommendations from this report.
7. Maintain a watching brief with regard to wet centres and review the current approach if more compelling evidence of their success arises in the future.

3. Background

Three priority areas for further work were suggested by the workshop participants:

- The need for better analysis of street life issues, particularly in relation to the quantitative data available on anti-social behaviour in the City and its relationship to the community who have a street based lifestyle;
- Improved tenancy support; and
- To look at the public perception and consider the need for better public information to be made available.

The Community Safety Partnership funded a four month research post to look at these priority areas and make recommendations on the future work on street life issues. The results of the research are in the report entitled “Review of Street Based Anti-Social Behaviour” attached as Appendix 1.

Results from the detailed quantitative research undertaken are detailed in the report entitled ‘Estimating the Scale and Nature of Street Based Anti-social Behaviour in Cambridge City’ attached as Appendix A.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The financial implications are limited as the recommendations are based around reviewing current resources and potentially targeting them in a different way.

(b) **Staffing Implications**

There are no staffing implications at this point.

(c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**

Equal Opportunities implications have been considered throughout this research project. An EQIA has not been conducted at this stage and will be completed as part of any further development of the recommendations.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

- Nil

(e) **Procurement**

Not applicable

(f) **Consultation and communication**

Consultation was carried out with Cambridge residents and service users through surveys and fora.

Residents were encouraged to be involved in focus groups through advertising on the Councils website and various social media sites along with leaflet and letter drops around the city.

Meeting and interviews with representatives from a number of statutory and voluntary agencies took place, to discuss what is working well for them, what concerns they have and what they believe could be done to better address the issues around street based ASB.

(g) **Community Safety**

As discussed in the report.

5. **Background papers**

- Wet Centre Research
- Results from residents and service user surveys and fora
- <http://homeless.org.uk/costs-homelessness> for reports detailing information about cost benefit analysis and social returns on investments

6. **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Review of Street Based Anti-Social Behaviour

Appendix A: Estimating the scale and nature of street based anti-social behaviour in Cambridge City

7. **Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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Review of Street Based Anti-Social Behaviour

Marianne Crozier
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Background

The Executive Councillor agreed that a biennial review of streetlife issues should be taken to Cambridge City Council's Strategy and Resources Committee. Following the first review presented to the Committee in October 2012, a series of workshops took place in early 2013 attended by City Councillors, representatives of statutory agencies and support organisations, to consider the management of individuals and trends associated with street based anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Agreed priorities that emerged from the workshops were:

- The need for a better analysis of street life issues, particularly in relation to the quantitative data available on ASB in the City and its relationship to the community who have a street based lifestyle;
- Improved tenancy support; and
- To look at public perception around this issue and consider the need for better public information to be made available.

The Community Safety Partnership funded a research project with these workshop priorities forming the framework for the research. The scale and nature of street based ASB across the City was estimated through quantitative research and an examination of national best practice. Qualitative data was collected through surveys and fora with residents, professionals and service users. This report contains recommendations based on the outcomes from the workshops and the research carried out.

Recommendations:

1. Develop and provide a programme of intensive tenancy support for individuals moving in to general housing stock, following homelessness or after having lived in temporary accommodation.
2. Incorporate the provision of tenancy starter packs within the support programme. Consider using donations to the Alternative Giving Campaign to fund these packs.
3. Refresh the Task and Target Group to develop an inter-agency approach that offers intensive support to those who choose to engage and takes prompt enforcement measures towards unacceptable behaviour.

4. Develop different management models for each of the three main identified groups, to best serve the needs of the individual, in line with the Integrated Offender Management and Together for Families initiatives.
5. Develop a communication programme for the public giving information on: how to report street based ASB; the kind of behaviour that is unacceptable and the actions that can realistically be taken against street based ASB.
6. Set up a multi-agency group to take a strategic overview of street life issues, monitor patterns and take forward the work on the recommendations from this report.
7. Maintain a watching brief with regard to wet centres and review the current approach if more compelling evidence of their success arises in the future.

Review of Street Based Anti-Social Behaviour

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Following the review and workshops The Community Safety Partnership agreed to fund a four month research post to look at the priority areas and make recommendations around future work on street based ASB issues.
- 1.2 The intention was to establish a clear picture about the level of street based ASB across the city, using both quantitative and qualitative data. The research results provide baseline data from which to benchmark against in the future, allowing for quarterly update reports and monitoring of trends.

2 Better Analysis of the Issue

- 2.1 Appendix A provides a profile using quantitative data of street based ASB in Cambridge over a two year period (2011/12-2012/13), with particular focus on the central parts of the City as defined in appendix A.
- 2.2 An extended city centre map was drawn up to cover the wards where the highest volume of incidents of street based ASB have been recorded. A map of the area can be seen at page 15 of Appendix A.
- 2.3 Detailed analysis of ASB within Cambridgeshire City revealed the following key findings:
 - ASB associated with the keywords *begging*, *homeless*, *drunk*, *alcohol* and *abusive language* accounted for 47% of all ASB within the 'extended city centre area' in 2012/13;
 - ASB associated with just *begging* and *homeless* accounted for 16% of the total ASB within the extended city centre area' in 2012/13;
 - ASB associated with all the keywords recorded a reduction of 26% between 2011/12 and 2012/13. Whilst ASB associated with *begging* and *homeless* reduced by 12% over the same period;
 - It was notable that over a half of the 100 incidents in the sample were linked to alcohol. In particular, issues of street drinking and the night time economy;

- Some of the street drinking is clearly linked with individuals that have a street based lifestyle. Not all members of the street life community are homeless and not all members of the groups mentioned are causing disruption;
- Peaks for ASB across the day can be seen. Incidents associated with the night-time economy tend to be between 11pm and 4am, although there is likely to be some contribution to the early evening peak;
- Of the incidents reviewed in the sample, it was evident that a quarter related to begging or those thought to be homeless; and
- Certain individuals that are known to services appear to cause a substantial amount of work. Seven repeat offenders were linked with 7% of ASB with keywords within the 'extended city centre area'.

3 Provision of Engagement and Support Workers across the City

- 3.1 Across the City there are a large number of organisations whose focus is to provide engagement and outreach support for individuals who are homeless or who live a street based lifestyle. Specialist support workers are also available for those who have substance abuse or mental health issues, for people who have recently been given tenancies, those who are struggling to maintain their tenancies, and those who are living in various types of supported accommodation.
- 3.2 As well as having provided initial funding for many projects; the City Council's commitment to working with those who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness is substantial in terms of annual grant funding. The budget allocation for 2012/13 in terms of tackling rough sleeping and ASB, homelessness prevention and other services for the homeless was just under £600,000, not including £323,000 allocated for the sub-regional single homeless service. Further ongoing funding has also been made available for a pre-tenancy worker at Riverside English Churches Housing Group; funding for cold weather provision; for a specialist employment service for those who are homeless, at

risk of homelessness or in housing need; and emergency bed space for homeless young people, amongst others.

- 3.3 Cambridge is and has been for some time home to a sizable community who have a street based lifestyle. This is demonstrated by the number of individuals who have accessed the Cambridge Street and Mental Health Outreach Team (CRI), in a single year. For instance, during the year ending March 2013 the Street Outreach Team worked with 491 new clients, including people with no local connection, temporarily in the City, rough sleepers, those accessing cold weather provision, and people who do not have recourse to public funds. The Street Outreach Team are part funded by a contract from the City Council of £175,000 per annum and have developed close working relationships with many members of the street based community over the years.
- 3.4 Wintercomfort is a day centre that provides facilities to those people who are homeless or unsuitably housed. The team, including six project workers, provides meaningful activities and offers its clients access to important diversionary avenues including training and social enterprise work. Two workers from the Street Outreach Team also cover the welfare service at Wintercomfort. The City Council give funding of around £85,000 per annum to Wintercomfort.
- 3.5 Jimmy's Assessment Centre, after an extensive refurbishment in 2012, offers an accommodation resettlement service, workshops and learning opportunities, laundry facilities, sports and leisure activities, computers and IT information points, guest advocacy and support, move-on houses and a comprehensive range of visiting support organisations, all designed to give guests the best possible chance of moving on and breaking the cycle of homelessness. The City Council provide funding of £51,270 per annum to assist the assessment centre in Jimmy's.
- 3.6 Cambridge Link-up are a street community group whose membership comprises of homeless, ex-homeless and vulnerably housed individuals. The group is fully constituted and as such is able to effectively represent the views of the street life community to policy makers, local authorities and partner agencies. Link-up also raises funds for activities that help build the self esteem and confidence of this group.

- 3.7 Flack is a social enterprise whose members and peers are or have been homeless. It produces a local listings guide that is designed, written, edited and distributed by its members and as such offers a way for individuals to become involved with very meaningful daytime activities. Flack is also closely linked in with local homeless services and can direct individuals towards assistance where necessary.
- 3.8 Cyrenians provide a range of accommodation support and specialist services for homeless people. The organisation was set up with the aim of offering a real alternative to traditional homeless hostels. Cambridge Cyrenians oversee a number of small shared houses where residents are encouraged to take responsibility for their own lives and maintain a constructive influence over their surroundings. An important feature of the houses is the input that residents have in the decisions affecting their house. Cyrenians also provide support to those people in their tenancies as well as helping them move on to new tenancies. The Jubilee project is a 10 bed hostel that will house ex-offenders and support their move into independent living by giving them the support and skills needed.
- 3.9 The Cyrenians manage a residential hostel open to 40+ year olds where residents are able to use alcohol. It has six beds and operates a six person waiting list. The minimum stay is six months and there is no maximum. Residents are able to drink alcohol while at the hostel in a controlled way. There is an agreed amount of alcohol that each resident will have each day. Residents' money is looked after by the centre staff to enable it to be managed properly.
- 3.10 Riverside English Churches Housing Group runs temporary accommodation in Cambridge for homeless people with medium to high support needs. The service at one site has been remodelled alongside a major building refurbishment. The service will form two parts: a 24 bed adult foyer focussed on improving training and employment opportunities for its residents and an existing 30 bed main hostel. These tenants are supported by a dedicated team of eight support workers, one resettlement worker, two student social workers and one team leader who offer person-based support focussing on the needs and aspirations of the individual.
- 3.11 Chronically Excluded Adults (CEA) Service works with the most chaotic and excluded adults across the county and it targets clients who have fallen between services in the past. There is a small group

of clients each of whom have a coordinator. The service follows a person-centred approach to tailor a support package to improve outcomes for individuals.

- 3.12 Other organisations specialise in supporting these individuals once in tenancies, and offer them support so that they can successfully maintain their tenancies.
- 3.13 Cambridgeshire's Floating Support Service, Circle Support is comprised of a team of 12 frontline floating support workers who work with individuals across the City to maintain their tenancies. They work with homeless people who are about to get a tenancy and individuals whose tenancies are at risk.
- 3.14 The Single Homelessness Service is a new project funded (£323,000) by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Based at the City Council it covers the local sub-region. It aims to offer accommodation for single homeless people who meet specific criteria, including having low support needs, and who do not have a tenancy elsewhere.
- 3.15 This service will have two rapid response support workers to offer support to individuals with low needs moving into private shared accommodation. They will work with them for up to 12 weeks, assisting them with the practicalities of moving into a new property, such as help with setting up bill payments. They will also provide them with other support and ensure that they have access to specialist support teams if necessary.
- 3.16 There is also a dedicated police team that works with individuals with a street based lifestyle who are responsible for crime and ASB on the streets of the City. The City Council fund a Street Life Officer post for £30,550. This Police team works closely with the City Council as part of the Task and Target group, liaises with council officers about ASB and works with some of the outreach teams. This specialist team has a focus on enforcement and has developed close working relationships with colleagues in both statutory and voluntary services. They have been able to work effectively together to tackle issues of street based ASB across the city using both support and enforcement tools.
- 3.17 Cambridgeshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team provide drug and alcohol treatment services for Cambridgeshire residents. Inclusion

offers services to those affected by their own or someone else's drug misuse. Addaction offers confidential and free counselling, support and advice to individuals, principally for alcohol problems, but also for a combination of alcohol and drug problems.

4 Outcomes for the client

- 4.1 A perusal of the significant number of support agencies (as shown above) and interviews with professionals in a number of these agencies demonstrates both gaps and duplication in the services provided. Many professionals emphasised the lack of adequate and appropriate support for their clients when they eventually succeed in getting a tenancy. This can lead to problems maintaining these tenancies; sometimes clients then move back to a street based lifestyle.
- 4.2 Although many clients who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation look forward to getting their own home, often the start of the tenancy presents its own problems. A comment from one professional demonstrates this: "Clients think that as soon as they get out of the hostel and into a flat all of their problems will be solved, but this just isn't the case. This will be the most difficult time for them and is when the feelings of isolation and loneliness kick in".
- 4.3 Professionals emphasise that this is why it is so important that adequate and appropriate support is there during this time. Despite the best intentions of the support agencies, there isn't always enough of the more intensive support and guidance required in the first few weeks and months of these new tenancies. This is the time when tenancies can break down quite quickly. Individuals may feel a sense of isolation in their new home. They may invite friends with a street based chaotic lifestyle to their new home creating ASB issues. Eventually they could be drawn back into excessive drinking and ASB, which can result in the loss of the tenancy. Professionals have also said that the loneliness people experience can be so severe when a person has been used to communal living within a hostel setting, that they may prefer to be with their friends on the street and rough sleep rather than stay alone in a property.
- 4.4 If the focus on support packages was shifted slightly to provide as a matter of course a more intensive support programme at the beginning of a tenancy, along with some of the other new approaches listed below, it may help to ensure from the outset that new tenancies

for previously homeless people have more chance of being successful in the long term.

- 4.5 A formalised programme for new tenants who have previously been homeless is essential to help them to gain realistic expectations and to give them practical and specialist support and knowledge about what is expected of them as a new tenant. It should be realistic about the potential difficulties those moving into permanent accommodation are likely to face, in terms of social and lifestyle changes. There is also a need for such a programme to give new tenants practical skills around shopping, cooking, and managing bills, how to register with utility companies and how to budget.
- 4.6 A tenancy starter pack could be linked to the completion of or signing up for the programme. The packs could include linen, towels, crockery, cutlery and small electrical items. Looking nationally, many organisations that support the resettlement of people who have been homeless offer tenancy starter packs in order to give new tenants as much of a sense of ownership of their new property as possible.
- 4.7 There may not be sufficient time for people moving on to new accommodation to complete the programme before they move into the property, but the programme could be extended into their initial settling in support package.
- 4.8 Funding additional support is obviously a challenge in the current climate and there is a need to look at how we use existing resources, as well as the availability of new funding when considering the development of any new models.
- 4.9 Money donated through the Alternative Giving Campaign could be used to buy equipment for tenancy starter packs. The Alternative Giving Campaign encourages people who live in or who visit Cambridge to donate money to one of the charities in Cambridge working with those who have a street-based lifestyle rather than giving money directly to people begging. The scheme could be expanded so that money donated could be put directly into buying equipment for the starter packs. Donors could be made aware of what their money will be going towards and that they are donating to a specific practical solution that could make a positive difference.

5 Duplication of support

- 5.1 As seen there are a large number of different organisations who offer support to those who are, or who are at risk of becoming, homeless in Cambridge. This can lead to a duplication of the services offered; there are opportunities for better targeting of existing resources.
- 5.2 A current individual known to the council is someone who has had a street-based lifestyle for a number of years. This case is notable because in the past year the client has been involved with at least 11 different agencies. Despite this amount of contact; the person's name was still recently put forward by the police as one of the most problematic individuals with a street-based lifestyle. This suggests that there could be a duplication of services involved with these individuals, and that despite intensive, long term resources going into working with some individuals; it has not affected a change of behaviour or move towards a positive solution for them.
- 5.3 This is an extreme example, however support workers I spoke to advised that there are regularly four or five different agencies working with one individual who has previously been homeless and moved into accommodation. Each agency has specialisms which cannot be performed by others; however it would help the client if they had one co-ordinating support worker to minimise the number of separate visits service users receive, thus reducing the risk of duplication of work and improving the experience for the service users.
- 5.4 The County Council have acknowledged this as an issue and advised that all new contracts with support services and those bidding for new tenders will have it written into their contracts that there must be cross service working. This will compel agencies to have a more joined up approach to working with each other and service users, developing new ways of working, and reducing duplication of work.
- 5.5 The wider use of E-CINS, a new multi-agency data sharing tool, could help to reduce the duplication of work. It would allow more efficient information sharing between agencies, with information on which agencies are working with a client and what they are doing for the client. This would allow professionals to tailor their own input in a targeted way to ensure minimal duplication. The County Council will be putting the use of E-CINS as a requirement for new support contracts. The police also consider that E-CINS is a good tool for immediate information exchange between parties and could speed up the process in terms of action being taken. Data protection issues

would have to be taken into account to ensure the privacy of the client is protected.

- 5.6 It is widely acknowledged by the majority of professionals that there is willingness across all agencies to work together and do all they reasonably can within the constraints of legislation and funding, to deal with an ultimately extremely complex issue. There are models being used presently, with both vulnerable families and prolific offenders, that could be adopted to address the problems faced by some of those with a street based lifestyle such as Together for Families and Integrated Offender Management.

6 Task and Target Group

- 6.1 The Task and Target Group is a multiagency group that meets monthly to discuss problematic individuals who have a street based lifestyle, as well as hotspot areas for issues such as ASB, rough sleeping and begging. It looks at solutions in terms of both enforcement and support.
- 6.2 There is a small group of individuals who are regularly discussed at meetings but where no permanent resolution has been found. This suggests that there is a small core group across the city who are continually responsible for nuisance behaviour, but who do not wish to engage with support offered, and for whom enforcement action may be appropriate if they choose not to engage. This is borne out by the research on incidents of ASB committed by a core group of seven individuals referred to in the data analysis and in case study A below.
- 6.3 Looking at records of 18 Task and Target meetings held during 2010/11, one individual was discussed at every meeting and five individuals were spoken about at over half of the meetings. 24 individuals were discussed at less than five of the meetings. This suggests that most people who come to the attention of the group need focussed quick intervention that delivers a solution, leaving a small number of clients who are more problematic to deal with.
- 6.4 A similar picture emerges when looking at records of the September 2012 to July 2013 meetings. 37 people were spoken about at one or more of the Task and Target meetings; six of these individuals had actions agreed about them at every meeting. Despite this no solutions were found that addressed the problematic behaviour of these six

people and they continued to represent concerns for the Task and Target group.

- 6.5 It is worth noting also that three individuals discussed at the 2011 meetings were still being discussed when the Task and Target group reconvened after a break of six months in 2012. There is a case for refreshing the Task and Target Group along the lines of best practice elsewhere. Ensuring that the individuals discussed at the group have relevant and achievable action plans in place, implemented by a multi agency group that can be robust in its approach against continued unacceptable behaviour.
- 6.6 Camden and Lambeth Street Outreach Teams favour a model that works around the Task and Target meeting. New referrals to their group are offered the opportunity to sign up to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC). A typical ABC is very support focussed but also makes it clear what is expected in terms of behaviour, and what action could be taken if the client is responsible for ASB.
- 6.7 The Lambeth and Camden model relies heavily on close working relationships with front line workers from other organisations including rangers, refuse collectors and street cleaners. The information that they have regarding the whereabouts of rough sleepers and other hotspot areas is often current, and they may go to areas not ordinarily looked at by outreach workers, so their input is invaluable in terms of keeping on top of new hotspots.
- 6.7 Looking at what happens elsewhere and as part of a review of the Task and Target Group, consideration should be given to a new approach to the running of the group in terms of its professional make up, who can be adopted on to the group, and what its terms of reference are. Consideration should be given to whether or not the small group of particularly problematic and chaotic individuals with a street based lifestyle could be added to and discussed under the existing Integrated Offender Management system or a similar model, which uses both support and enforcement tools and intensive monitoring as an effective way of achieving changes in behaviour.

7 Case Study

- 7.1 Client A has displayed problematic behaviour within the City for a number of years and was being discussed on the 2010 minutes that

were examined, and was also discussed at all of the 2012/13 Task and Target meetings.

- 7.2 Client A was mentioned as displaying problematic and aggressive behaviour particularly, when intoxicated. This person was begging and had been made the subject of an ASBO which was breached on a number of occasions. This individual has also had a number of stays in prison. Very recently Client A received a longer prison sentence; when examining police data it would seem that this person had been responsible for 1% of the total number of incidents of ASB within the extended City Centre over a two year period and 2% of all incidents found using the keyword search (*begging, homeless, drunk, alcohol and abusive language*).
- 7.3 Several of the incidents referred to begging. There is evidence that Client A was stopping people and begging rather than just sitting with a cap or a sign. There were also several incidents of aggressive behaviour, including shouting at members of the public and street cleaners, and throwing rubbish at houses. There are also incidents of Client A being verbally abusive and accosting female students. Most of the incidents were in 2012, and most occurred in daylight hours.
- 7.4 Looking at this case study, it seems that Client A, despite having had access to a huge amount of support and officer involvement over the years, and also being subject to enforcement, continually displayed problematic and anti-social behaviour with brief periods of respite in between.

8 Core group of Street drinkers

- 8.1 The evidence indicates that Cambridge has a small group of people, who have tenancies but who lead a street-based lifestyle and who do not engage with available support services. Significant resources over a long period have gone into efforts to engage this group, who are apparently, currently, resistant to a change in lifestyle. It is not best use of resources to continue to support these individuals as we presently do with no apparent impact on either their street life behaviour or their welfare or safety. Best practice elsewhere suggests that a management approach which allows individuals who so choose, to decline support or interventions and to drink as they please (some programmes provide a place for the drinking as discussed later) is a more realistic approach. The option for them to engage remains.

- 8.2 If there is evidence that individuals indulge in unacceptable behaviours then it should be understood that enforcement action will be taken by the police or council promptly. It helps if individuals understand what kind of behaviour is expected of them and the kinds of behaviour that the general public do not have to tolerate. In some places Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC) are used to encourage street drinkers to be clear on these points and to understand that breach of the ABC may result in an ASB injunction or an Anti-Social Behaviour Order against them.
- 8.3 This approach should free up resources for those who wish to engage with support services and find assistance in moving on to a more productive lifestyle.

9 Wet Centre

- 9.1 Research was undertaken to consider the merits of existing day wet centres in other cities and the impact this approach might have on street drinking in Cambridge. The research looked at models that have worked as pilots, including a short pilot run in Colchester as well as permanent day wet centres in Manchester, Camden and Leicester and a significant piece of work that considered the establishment of a wet centre in Cambridge in the past.
- 9.2 The last in-depth evaluation of wet centres was in 2003¹. Other more recent evaluations are limited to a number of local authorities who have run either permanent or temporary centres and who have measured the local impact.
- 9.3 The rejection of the proposed Cambridge City Council wet centre in 2006 was based on the high cost of setting up and running the centre, the difficulty of finding a suitable venue in Cambridge and the anticipated adverse impact on successful policies such as the reconnections and engagement policies.
- 9.4 Nottingham recently closed their wet centre because of funding cuts. The local media reported an increase in street drinking, associated crime and anti-social behaviour. This increase has not been verified.
- 9.5 There is little hard evidence available to demonstrate positive outcomes from Wet Day Centres and much of the success that is attributed to them comes from case studies and anecdotal evidence.

¹ **Wet Day Centres in the United Kingdom: A Research Report and Manual.** Maureen Crane and Anthony Warnes, October 2003.
Report Page No: 21

Many of the professionals interviewed felt that there was less chance of people engaging if they had a place to drink, and that a centre may also attract people to the City that would not otherwise come. In Cambridge this could undo the work done since 2007 with the advent of reconnections aimed at reducing inward migration.

- 9.6 However, as it is a tool used to manage street drinking in many places it was thought worthwhile to look at the possible approaches and potential impact.

Findings from Wet Day Centres in other areas

- 9.7 Colchester ran a 3 month pilot costing £15,000. The centre was open one day a week from 9.30-3.30 and was offered as a first point of contact to street drinkers not engaging with other services. Service users were allowed to bring in a limited amount of alcohol and were given the opportunity to engage with project workers. Some of the targeted group did not attend. The project was thought to be a success with the police reporting anecdotally that petty crime, anti-social behaviour and street drinking were down.
- 9.8 Manchester has a permanent 'Wet Garden' where people can drink in a supervised and supported environment. The facility is typically used by 10-20 street drinkers who are encouraged to develop and maintain the garden. The scheme claims an increase in the number of referrals made to alcohol detox, more control by the people involved over their drinking, better maintenance of tenancies.
- 9.9 Leicester provides a centre with access to food, drinks and support services. Service users must be assessed as alcohol dependent, homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The number of units of alcohol permitted at the centre is limited.

Considerations for opening a wet day centre in Cambridge City

- 9.10 There is little hard evidence available, from existing permanent or pilot projects, to suggest that wet centres have a direct impact on the levels of ASB in an area. Establishing a wet centre can be costly but this could be mitigated by taking the Colchester approach to running the centre in an existing facility for a limited period each week.
- 9.11 There may be merit in running a limited wet centre pilot in Cambridge to test if a reduction in street based ASB could be achieved and if reducing the visibility of the core group of street drinkers in the city

would change public perception. However, it should be noted that even a limited pilot would be costly in Cambridge and would still encounter the problems discussed in 9.3.

- 9.12 It has been found elsewhere that the core group that cause the majority of the problems and who do not engage at present can be hard to convince to attend a wet centre, particularly if the amount of alcohol allowed is limited. If as in the case of Manchester the group were given meaningful activities they may be convinced. It should also be noted it could serve to attract more people to the city possibly undoing the work that has been done with reconnections to reduce inward migration.

10 A Different Approach

- 10.1 The term street drinkers is a term that is being used to homogenise a diverse range of individuals all with their own complex set of needs.
- 10.2 There will always be a need to have a flexible person centred approach. Evidence from best practice suggests that the street life community can be broadly divided into three groups with considerably different service needs. Resources could be differently targeted at these groups.
- 10.3 The first group of people is a group with low needs who may be able to access accommodation through the private rented sector and the single homeless service relatively quickly. This group will be supported and monitored by the single homeless service and their support workers where appropriate.
- 10.4 The middle group would likely be the largest group who may have some individuals who have higher needs in terms of alcohol, substance misuse or mental health issues. They may be living in temporary accommodation or have a street based lifestyle, but typically show a willingness to engage with support services. They may wish to enter treatment programmes and get a permanent tenancy. Individuals who fall into this category would be eligible for the tenancy sustainment programme when they are offered a property, and would be assigned a named key worker from the most appropriate support agency. If they do not engage or their behaviour becomes unacceptable, action will be agreed by the Task and Target Group who will be responsible for monitoring this group both in terms

of referring them to support and agreeing enforcement action where appropriate.

- 10.5 The final group, likely to be smallest group, consists of the most problematic individuals who are responsible for a significant amount of anti-social behaviour and do not presently want to engage with support services offered to them. They may have tenancies but still have a street based lifestyle. Consideration could be given to developing the role of the Chronically Excluded Adults Team in terms of supporting this group: keeping them safe and achieving the best solution for them in the most flexible way working closely with the Integrated Offenders Management programme or a similar model.
- 10.6 The essence of everything said above is to have differentiated methods to tackling different types of street based ASB whilst focussing on the development of a strong inter-agency approach to it.

11 Public Perception of Street Based ASB across the City

- 11.1 Two questionnaires were developed with the intention of understanding more about residents' and service users' experiences of the city centre and to ascertain whether street life problems were a prominent issue for people.
- 11.2 We asked open questions that allowed respondents to give a broad view of their experience in the City. Looking at the information gathered it would seem that service users across the board are more acutely aware of issues around drunken behaviour in the city centre at night, particularly around Regent Street. Quite a number of respondents reported that they tend to avoid this area for fear of being a victim of crime or ASB. Sample quotes included "I dislike the city centre late in the evening, lots of young intoxicated people around in big groups". "Regent Street late at night: too many people drinking and likely to get into fights". "Generally I avoid town (Regent Street) on weekends". "I don't see why I should meet my friends to go out and have some drunk person start on me for no reason".
- 11.3 There was a fairly poor response in terms of numbers of residents who wanted to be part of a focus group, which suggests that the issues we are asking about are perhaps not of great concern to the majority of residents. However, they are of concern to a small group of people, who either live or work in areas where the street based community tend to gather. Concerns about ASB associated with

those with a street based lifestyle were regularly raised at area committees and some residents' meetings and street surgeries.

- 11.4 Alcohol related ASB was raised as a priority at seven out of nine of the most recent West Central Area Committee meetings. It was discharged as a priority for only one meeting and brought back as a priority at the next meeting. On-going work could be undertaken to better inform the public about how to report a problem or an incident of ASB. It would help the public if they had clear indications about the nature of the information that is useful to enable referrals to the right agencies. There is a need for clear information for residents who are reporting complaints about those with a street based lifestyle in terms of what is ASB and what isn't.

12 Other Considerations

- 12.1 Police colleagues advise that although Cambridge has traditionally been seen as an attractive destination for street drinkers, there have been some successes in terms of licencing issues. This was backed up anecdotally during focus groups where two residents advised that since the review of a licence of a shop on Norfolk Street there has been a marked reduction in the incidents of street based ASB.
- 12.2 New ASB legislation will become law in April 2014 and this may be useful in offering new tools and powers for tackling this kind of ASB.
- 12.3 The number of individuals verified as sleeping rough in the City has increased from 183 in 2011/12 to 229 in 2012/13. The Street Outreach team annual report shows that 27 of these individuals were verified in more than one quarter, as people remain on the streets for longer due to lack of available bed spaces. Over the year the service saw 15 individuals verified as rough sleeping who had tenancies but chose to sleep rough.
- 12.4 2012/13 has been acknowledged as an exceptionally challenging year in terms of a reduction in bed spaces across the city as well as nationally. For instance, one of the bigger hostel accommodations in the City has been partially closed over much of 2013 whilst undergoing a major refurbishment; making over 30 bed spaces unavailable. The hostel is set to reopen in September 2013. As the demand for bed spaces increases nationally, accommodation providers are changing their criteria for access which in turn means

that the number of people excluded from hostels has increased, resulting in more rough sleepers on the street for longer.

- 12.5 Rough sleeping is often quite hidden with individuals finding out of the way places to sleep. Some frequently used areas include commercial properties, garages behind shops and car parks. Residents do report finding people sleeping rough in residential doorways or parking areas and some residents report feeling scared or intimidated. Given the low number of reports to the police for rough sleeping it would appear to remain “below the radar” in a large proportion of cases. Outreach work continues to be the key method of engaging with these individuals.

13 Conclusions

- 13.1 Although significant resources are going into supporting people with a street based lifestyle, there is evidence of duplication of services and also of gaps in provision. The research suggests the need for the development of a management model along the lines of Together for Families in order to deliver a more outcome focused service, particularly at the point when a previously homeless person gets a new tenancy.
- 13.2 There are a small number of street based individuals who cause a significant amount of anti-social behaviour and who because they do not currently engage with support services, require a tailored approach, such as that delivered by the Chronically Excluded Adults Scheme and the Integrated Offender Management model.
- 13.3 There is a lack of hard evidence to suggest that a wet centre would be an effective tool for addressing street based anti-social behaviour in Cambridge and could instead have a counter productive effect on existing policies around reconnections and engagement.
- 13.4 There is a need for a group of representatives from the statutory agencies such as the Police, City Council, County Council and support agencies to take a strategic overview of street life issues, monitor emerging patterns and take forward the future work.
- 13.5 Finally there is evidence to suggest that there is a need to be more pro-active in providing information for the public on both the levels of street based anti-social behaviour and how and who to report incidents to.

