



Creating a safer
Cambridgeshire

CAMBRIDGE CITY LOCAL POLICING AREA

Consultation Paper

**Application of Section 30 Anti Social Behaviour Act
2003 (dispersal order) to the Historic City Centre and
Grafton areas**

February 2012

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Cambridge City Policing Area Commander and partners at Cambridge City Council with sufficient information in order to consider the application of a Dispersal Order (DO) under S30 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 within the Historic City Centre and Grafton areas.

A DO is sought to enhance the operational capacity of the police to respond more effectively to issues of anti social behaviour (ASB) associated with street drinking and the 'streetlife' culture which flourishes within the environment of Cambridge City. A range of data is presented in this report which indicates there is a significant problem of streetlife ASB within Cambridge City. A mix of statistics and more subjective information seeks to present this picture of life on the Cambridge streets.

The evidence from operational police on the ground is that streetlife ASB is increasing at a time of year when it is usually less prevalent. The opinion of other professionals who work in the fields of Street Outreach and Homelessness is that the numbers of rough sleepers in Cambridge is increasing and that this has had an aggravating impact on ASB. This situation is likely to deteriorate as the Spring and Summer approaches. These views are reinforced by comments from cross-sections of the community.

Whilst the police currently make good use of powers to deal with ASB, these powers are not available to all resources. For example, powers to disperse under Section 27 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2007 are only available to police officers and not Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). At the moment PCSOs can only request groups to disperse – no offence is committed if they do not. However, the power to disperse under S30 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 is available to PCSOs and those who do not comply commit an offence which could lead to their arrest.

A DO would maximise the ability of the police to deploy all available resources in response to a problem which has a significant impact on the quality of life of all those affected by it. A DO would be used in a proportionate and time-bound way to focus activity which would seek to make the streets of Cambridge ones in which anti-social groups cannot become established. It would help create an environment in which streetlife culture does not thrive.

The information contained herein has been captured from a variety of sources covering the six month period ending 31 January 2012. These sources include -

- Police Command and Control system
- Police CORA (performance data)system
- PIC (Policing in Cambridgeshire) survey data – Appendix A
- Local resident and business survey data (Grafton area) – Appendix B
- Local Business survey data (Historic City Centre) – Appendix C
- Willow Walk advisory group meeting - Appendix D
- Consultative meetings/action summary - Appendix E

2. ASB over time (Source - CORA)

In the six months ending 31/01/12 742 non-crime ASB related incidents were recorded within the City West area. Of this total 86.66%, or 643 incidents, were attributable to the Market Ward. In turn the Market Ward accounted for 24.66% of the total non-crime ASB for Cambridge City as a whole.

Figure 1 – City West ASB by Ward over time

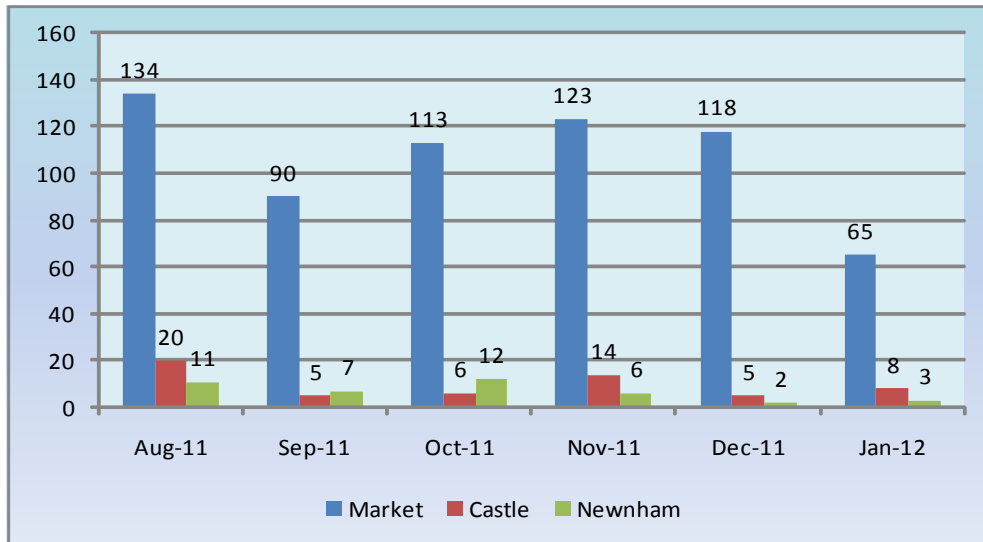


Figure 2- City West ASB % by Ward (01/08/11 – 31/01/12)

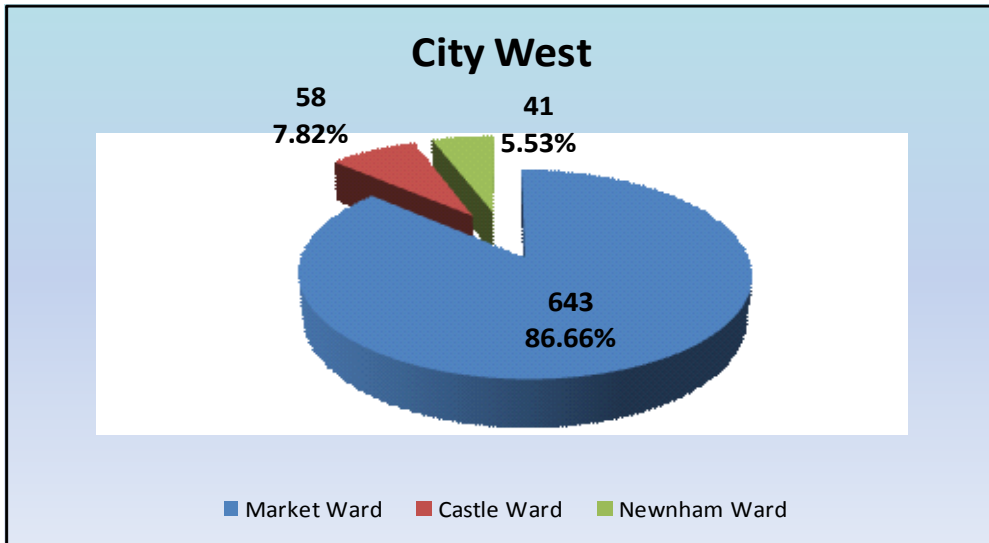
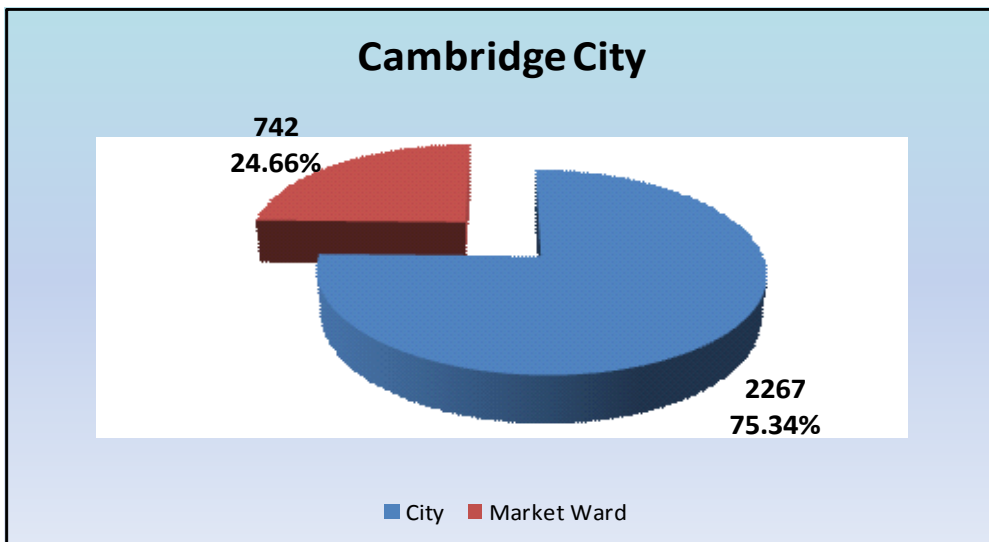


Figure 3 - City ASB % (01/08/11 – 31/01/12)



3. ASB over time (Source - Command &Control)

Interrogation of Command and Control shows that of the 643 reported incidents finalised as being attributable to non-crime ASB, 48.37% (311 incidents) demanded an emergency response.

During this same period, 264 incidents were finalised with a disposal code indicating that the matter was attributable to a crime of violence against the person. Of these 62.88% (166 incidents) demanded an emergency response.

With violence against the person as an extreme example of ASB, when taken together, ASB (non-crime) and Violence against the person (crime) disposal codes account for 906 incidents. Of these 52.66% or 477 matters demanded an emergency response.

(A further review of other call types classified as ASB but finalised with a crime disposal code, such as begging, collapse/illness, street drinking and rowdy/inconsiderate behaviour, identified a minimum of 61 further incidents)

4. ASB – Time of Day

Serving to evidence that ASB/crime related ASB is not exclusive to either the day or night time economy of note is that –

- 51.48% (331 incidents) of non-crime ASB were reported between the hours of 7am and 8pm.
- 32.2% (85 incidents) of violence against the person crime were reported between the hours of 7am and 8pm.

5. Exposure to ASB

The City centre has a significant well established residential community and also one of a more transient nature by way of the student population. It also has a thriving daytime economy in terms of local business, shops, tourism, visitors and education.

With the sheer volume of people attracted to the City during the daytime the figures at point 3 and 4 above represent a significant exposure to ASB. In addition to the numerical data, first hand and anecdotal evidence of this exposure is highlighted by way of the seven data sources identified at the beginning of this document and contained in appendices A – E.

Although difficult to quantify the potential for the under reporting of ASB is also a matter for consideration. It may not be unreasonable to assume someone visiting as a tourist or day tripper exposed to a one off incident of ASB, such street drinking or begging, as being far less likely to report it than a resident, worker or regular visitor who witnesses it on a frequent basis.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

There is a clearly identifiable issue of ASB within the area described as evidenced within this report and the application of a S30 order has the potential to have a significant effect in terms of reduction and not least public perception of the problem.

The feedback from residents and businesses in both the Historic City Centre and Grafton area are that extra powers are needed in order to impact on the Anti Social behaviour being caused by “Street Drinkers.”

Consideration has been given to the current powers available to officers including the use of powers under Section 27 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 (directing a person to leave a locality when that person is in a public place and presents a risk of crime or disorder)

The S27 power is widely employed by Police officers in the City but as the legislation does not extend to include its' use by Police Community Support Officers the potential for it to have a more significant impact on the defined ASB issue is limited in scope.

A Section 30 Dispersal Order under the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 which would extend powers to both Police Officers and PCSO's alike giving them the power to disperse groups of 2 or more within a defined locality if they had grounds for believing that their presence would cause harassment, alarm or distress by their presence or behaviour.