



Bournemouth Community Safety Partnership Report to the Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner

Report Subject	Rough Sleeping, Vagrancy & associated Anti-social Behaviour in Bournemouth
Meeting date	2 June 2014
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Background detail

1. Under Schedule 11, paragraph 5 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, a Police & Crime Commissioner is able to request reports from Community Safety Partnerships. Under this provision the Chair of the Bournemouth CSP has received a request for a report on the issue of street-drinking and vagrancy in Bournemouth. In particular Martyn Underhill has requested details on:
 - a. Planned multi-agency responses to the issues, including tackling the cause not the effect.
 - b. Whether the closure of the night shelter had an EIA completed, and if so, please attach it.
 - c. Whether the LA/partners sought legal advice over your rights to exclude persons with no roots in the town from key services, and if so, enclose it.

Scale of the problem

2. The problems we are seeing in Bournemouth Town Centre, Boscombe and surrounding areas in relation to anti-social behaviour are caused by distinct but related groups, some of whom, but not all, are rough sleeping, some street drinking and some begging. Not all of those individuals who are street drinking or begging are homeless, but they often have complex needs and the different client groups often interact in creating a nuisance.
3. Whilst this maybe a relatively small number of individuals with complex needs, it is clear that they have a significant impact on the wider community. Our rough sleeper count has seen an increase in the prevalence of rough sleepers over past few years, with 11 counted in 2012/13 compared to 17 in May 2014¹. This increase is in line with national comparisons.

¹ This is a "snapshot" count of the numbers found rough sleeping in any one night in the town and does not give the total numbers of individuals see over the year

Bournemouth's Housing Strategy

4. One of the main aims of the Housing Strategy is to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping". Preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place is central to the strategy and our activity includes
 - Providing support and information through housing options officers at the Town Hall.
 - Incorporating measures outlined in the Department of Communities and Local Government's 'No second night out' vision to help homeless people come off of the streets and into settled accommodation before they become entrenched rough sleepers.
 - Promoting public awareness and responsibility for homeless people who are sleeping rough by organising public awareness campaigns and advising members of the public to report people they see sleeping outside via the Streetlink website. This enables our outreach team to offer support as soon as possible.
 - Facilitating a homelessness Multi Agency Strategy Group and a Multi Agency Complex Needs group for homeless people. These groups allow various agencies to work together to promote awareness and address the most recent issues concerning local homeless people.
 - Providing a money management advisor to help people with housing related financial difficulties to make the most of the money they have, or that they are entitled to.
 - Working in partnership with the Bournemouth and Poole Rough Sleeper Outreach Team to help homeless people access the help and support they need to come indoors.
 - Providing emergency schemes for homeless people sleeping outside in severe weather conditions to make sure they are not left on the streets.
 - Working with organisations such as Shelter, The Big Issue, CRi ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to prevention
 - Working with the NHS to provide a dedicated Mental Health Nurse for rough sleepers
 - Working with Dorset Probation (and now the NPS & CRC) to provide resettlement support to those leaving prisons.

5. Bournemouth also has a relatively large housing related support sector, providing supported accommodation to various vulnerable client groups with the aim of helping people towards independent living. The expected value of the programme in 14/15 is around £8million, and whilst this is across a range of client groups, the amounts spent on ex-offenders, rough sleepers, single homeless, mental health and drug and alcohol support forms a significant proportion of this.

Changes to Rough Sleeper & Single Homeless Services

6. The changes to the provision of supported accommodation and single homeless services were carried out after a review of these services, which concluded that the St Pauls Shelter has in effect become a sub-regional resource. Very few other local authorities still provide direct access hostels, and with a transient client group, the shelter was effectively acting as a magnet for rough sleepers into the town.
7. The changes made, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, are intended to give much clearer pathways for those needing supported accommodation. Three new services, run by PAS Ltd, have been introduced for an initial 6 week assessment period, where clients receive a high level of support to address their issues. Subsequently people will aim to move into one of three other services run by BCHA, YMCA or PAS for a further 6 month period.
8. As such the night shelter has not been closed, we haven't taken any capacity out of the system we have just remodelled how the units operate to give a better pathway for homeless individuals to reconnect with the community and manage a tenancy which the night shelter couldn't deliver. The Equalities Impact Assessment on these changes is attached.

Reconnections Policy

9. In respect of the decision to tighten up on the local connection policy that is operated with regard to supported accommodation, no external legal advice was sought by the Borough Council. The duties of the local authority in respect of the provision of housing and the referral of cases onto another local authority are clearly set out by the The Housing Act 1996, Part VII, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.
10. The attached Reconnections Protocol has been developed to improve access to housing related support services (formerly Supporting People funded services) particularly for those with a local connection to Bournemouth who need those services.
11. The protocol also aims to actively support those without a local connection who are rough sleeping or are at risk of rough sleeping to return in a planned way to an area where they have accommodation, support networks or some other connection. The protocol hopes to avoid people travelling between areas to rough sleep and therefore avoid perpetuating street lifestyles.
12. It is important to note that the protocol provides safeguards for rough sleepers without a local connection who are particularly vulnerable and where reconnection is either unavailable or inappropriate.

Recent Work to address these issues

13. In response to the recent increase in visibility of rough sleepers, street drinkers and people begging the Council along with Police and voluntary sector partners are working hard to develop more co-ordinated approaches to tackling these issues
14. As you say, police enforcement is not the main solution, but it does have a part to play in disrupting a street lifestyle and encouraging individuals to engage with the support services which are in place. We have seen over the years that the use of enforcement, such as ASBO's, can lead to beneficial outcomes for some individuals when accompanied by appropriate support. In the last few weeks the Council has agreed to invest further resources in our Street Outreach service for rough sleepers.
15. Our Action plan (Attached) in respect of this work emphasises enforcement, prevention, intelligence and communication and partners are meeting regularly to progress this work. Issues such as the wet tent and licensing controls, that you have mentioned, are being reviewed as part of this planning
16. Alongside this operational work we will be reviewing all options for ensuring that there is a comprehensive and multi-agency strategy for addressing this complex issue.

Background papers

<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/Housing/Housing-Options/Homelessness/Helping-Homeless-People.aspx>