

Public Document Pack

Town Centre Crime-Disorder Meeting

Agenda

Friday, 9 August 2019 at 1100hrs

Council Chamber, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, TN34 3UY

If you are attending Muriel Matters House for this meeting, please enter the building via the Tourist Information Centre entrance. Members of public are advised that they will need to sign in to comply with health and safety legislation and will be escorted up to the Committee Room. For further information, please contact Cherry Longley 01424 451430

		Page No.
1.	Apologies John Bownas & Peter Rolfe, Love Hastings Ltd.	
2.	Notes of Last Meeting (25th July 2019)	1 - 8
3.	Identified Hotspots - Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Joint Patrolling of Hotspots by Police/HBC Wardens (Aidan Cornwall/Paul Cosson)b) The Roundel areac) Wellington Squared) Bus Stops/Lower Queens Road areae) Robertson Terrace/Carlisle Paradef) Relocation of free food hand-outs, Debenhams plc	
4.	Enforcement / Legal Action - Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) HBC Enforcement Policy & Constitution (Chris Barkshire Jones)b) Legal paperwork	
5.	Information/Data Sharing (Chris Barkshire Jones/Paul Cosson)	
6.	Community Facility for Street Drinkers	
7.	Blue Light Project - Update (John Whittington)	
8.	Breach of Licensing Conditions - Update (Aidan Cornwall)	
9.	Any Other Business	
10.	Date of Next Meeting Thursday, 29 th August 0930hrs, Council Chamber, Upper Ground Floor, Muriel Matters House.	

Remaining schedule of meetings:

Thursday, 12th September 1200-1300hrs, Tressell Room (3rd Floor)

Tuesday, 24th September 1400-1500hrs, ditto

Monday, 7th October 1130-1230hrs, Committee Room 1, Upper Ground Floor

Agenda Item 2

Public Document Pack

TOWN CENTRE CRIME-DISORDER MEETING

25 JULY 2019

Present: Mike Hepworth (Chair), Cherry Longley (notes), Paul Cosson, Enforcement Manager, John Whittington, Community Safety Manager, Christine Barkshire-Jones, Chief Legal Officer, Rob Cowan, Solicitor-Enforcement & Litigation, John Bownas, Love Hastings Ltd., Aidan Cornwall, Sussex Police, Rob Shaw, Sussex Police.

1. PURPOSE AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS/CORE MEMBERSHIP

The series of meetings will cover matters of anti-social behaviour in the town centre, mainly linked to street drinking. The group will discuss and develop an action plan for town centre and identify the top five to ten key persons associated with ASB and how they may be dealt with, together with hotspot locations in the town where this occurs.

These meetings will run fortnightly with the first 3 of 2 hours duration, and then the last 3 of 1 hour duration, through until the beginning of October (if this proves necessary). Electronic invitations have been forwarded.

The meeting will be attended by council officers (enforcement, legal, and community safety), Manager of Love Hastings Ltd., and Police representatives. The first meeting will be strategic; the others more tactical.

2. KEY ISSUES OF CONCERN

The key issues are regarding street drinking and the problems associated with that together with town centre criminality, and how we may support the Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP)/Love Hastings Ltd..

John Bownas advised that between £20-£25k per week is lost through shop theft and this impacts heavily on businesses. He mentioned particular problems being experienced at Morrisons Supermarket. The stolen goods are felt to be used for buying drink and drugs which in turn causes other problems of anti-social behaviour in the town. He mentioned that it is believed that some smaller shops are actually buying the stolen goods from the thieves. John Bownas continued to advise that there are persistent offenders who also try to disguise their appearance to avoid recognition added to this are 'new faces' on the scene. Another problem is the disregard for the PSPOs in place and how to tackle the problem of persistent street drinkers, for example at the Roundel area and the open space in Wellington Square. Members of the public are wary of being near groups of street drinkers as there is a high perception that they might quarrel or fight. There are also reports of open drug taking too.

There are issues at the lower end of Queens Road too and John Bownas commented that the businesses are not covered by CCTV until 10am. Paul advised that Wardens

TOWN CENTRE CRIME-DISORDER MEETING

25 JULY 2019

visit earlier than that and the will team respond via Shopwatch if problems escalate later in the day. Paul felt that rather than responding ad hoc it will be better for the team to work in regular timed visits if they know there is a problem. Agreed that John Bownas will send any comments to the Wardens generic email
streetwardens@hastings.gov.uk **Action John Bownas/Paul Cosson**

Noted that it is thought that the recent problem of street drinkers at Robertson Terrace / Carlisle Parade has now been resolved largely by regular visits/monitoring by the Wardens.

3. OVERVIEW OF UPDATED ASB PSPO - APPROACH TO ENFORCEMENT

The ASB PSPO has been updated and is now in force and simpler than before. The alcohol ban area has been expanded to deal with displacement issues and the general ASB is now borough-wide. The aggressive begging clause has been clarified (i.e. begging must not be intimidating and / or menacing).

The Wardens team has recently been re-briefed regarding the new ASB PSPO powers. It was agreed that Paul and Aidan organise a meeting to ensure all enforcement teams understand the clauses. Mike commented that the “bar is lower than people think”.

The proposed meeting should also discuss patrol hotspots and when/how this might work across the teams. **Action Paul Cosson/Aidan Cornwall**

Noted that if persons are not drinking, if they are considered to be behaving in an anti-social manner this is covered under the PSPO.

4. FOCUS AND IDENTIFICATION OF HOTSPOTS

The group agreed that the primary areas of concern are:

The roundel area (opposite JD Sports)
Wellington Square
Bus stops in the lower end of Queens Road
Robertson Terrace/Carlisle Parade (although this site is thought to have been resolved for the time being).

John Bownas commented that there are also free food handouts which occur outside Debenhams, therefore persons tend to congregate at that location which is detrimental to that high density area. The group suggested that perhaps moving the handouts to a church hall or hall might assist. **Action John Bownas to make enquiries and report back**

It was agreed that Paul would brief the CCTV team regarding hotspots to ensure that they focus on those where possible. **Action Paul Cosson**

TOWN CENTRE CRIME-DISORDER MEETING

25 JULY 2019

John Whittington mentioned that the area near to Ocean House in London Road, St. Leonards is also becoming an issue.

5. EVIDENCE GATHERING (WARDENS/POLICE)

The group discussed the merits of intelligence sharing and gathering of evidence in order to bring subjects to prosecution if necessary.

John Bownas is of the view that the teams should capture and share more evidence with each other (council CCTV, DISC and Police intelligence). He would appreciate perhaps some formal reports from the CCTV control room if possible. John offered to give any of this group access to the Love Hastings DISC system and offered a member of his staff as a volunteer for the Police or as a CCTV checker. Paul advised that council CCTV won't always give a panoramic view, they are moveable cameras and won't always capture "the moment". Paul suggested shop staff could use body cameras similar to those used by the Wardens team. Paul went on to advise that although there is occasional decent detailed footage available (generally in car parks) the Wardens do not always witness ASB on their routine patrols; he understands that most of this adverse activity occurs at night when the patrols are performing locking up duties (e.g. at Multi Storey Car Park or Carlisle Parade Underground Car Park).

It was considered that the shops suffering repeated theft should install/employ their own CCTV and security measures. John Bownas went on to explain that more often than not, if persons are caught and the goods recovered, they were allowed to leave. This is due to the time taken for Police response, and subsequent paperwork etc. Noted that only Marks & Spencer plc prosecute shoplifters.

Regarding regular shop-lifting offenders (see point 2) shops display images of these persons but it would be helpful if council CCTV could also share the most up to date image. Paul and Chris will look into this as they are currently undertaking a review of information/data sharing. **Action Paul Cosson/Christine Barkshire Jones.**

Surveillance was discussed but any operation would be subject of agreement by a magistrate's court and careful thought would need to be given to RIPA. Paul advised that although his team produce discs from CCTV footage this is in effect Police software and they have primacy over the system. The council is part of the Sussex CCTV Partnership.

It was generally thought that local reconnaissance would be preferable and more effective in providing an intel package of evidence. Mike considered that it would be preferable to look at individual cases and deal with those.

Aidan commented that if for example a person smoked a 'spliff' in public or injected heroin in public, once that substance has been ingested no evidence remains. Therefore is the Wardens witnessed that, a formal witness statement for the Police would help.

Again the need to co-ordinate Police/Wardens activities for maximum impact was acknowledged. Mike asked if more information and joint actions could be gained from

TOWN CENTRE CRIME-DISORDER MEETING

25 JULY 2019

the Police briefings that the Wardens attend i.e. which team will tackle which person/area. Aidan confirmed yes that would be a way forward. Chris enquired about a Police spreadsheet which contains ASB information on individuals. Paul replied that he maintains this and share it with the Police.

It was agreed that CCTV/other evidence where possible, would be forwarded to the Police and our Wardens would be instructed to that end. **Action Paul Cosson**

6. POLICE SUPPORT FOR WARDENS

The Wardens are accredited but do not have the exact same powers as police e.g. power of arrest and do not get treated in the same way by offenders e.g. street drinkers refusing to give name and address/running away. Mike commented that the council is not happy to put Wardens in dangerous situations and they require support from the Police. Aidan advised that Wardens do not need to challenge anyone, just make a statement and submit for evidence.

7. ENFORCEMENT ACTION / LEGAL SUPPORT

Council wardens need ongoing Police support to help combat problems and enforcement of the PSPOs. Evidence gathering should focus on ongoing offending and be used for subsequent legal action. Paul commented that the Wardens need clarification on offences and what they can issue.

The group discussed the use of various notices and warnings (FPNs, CPNs, CPWs, verbal warnings) and their appropriateness in differing situations of taking drugs or drinking etc.. It was agreed that there is an overall need to streamline processes and ensure all frontline enforcement officers understand them.

Agreed that Rob Cowan would re-send Aidan the template community protection notice (CPN) and template written warning which is required to be served on a defendant before the CPN can be served. **Action Rob Cowan**

If we are to go down the CBO route/injunction then this will put an obligation on the authority to ensure it is the correct process. Chris commented that it must be positive (i.e. suggest mental health treatment or other treatment/help etc.) and it must be done on the facts of each case.

Aidan commented that he would go down the CBO route every time but Rob Cowan commented that he would not be keen, first as a duty to the court and secondly as there would be conditions to be met and each case should be assessed on its merits.

Chris went on to suggest that perhaps we should select five of the top offending persons on the Police list and concentrate on dealing with those.

The new Hastings Police custody unit will be opened again soon.

TOWN CENTRE CRIME-DISORDER MEETING

25 JULY 2019

Mike felt from the public's point of view it will be preferable to get as many persons through the courts as possible, but agreed a focussed approach on the most persistent offenders was best.

Chris advised that she would look at the council's Enforcement Policy and Constitution and report back. **Action Christine Barkshire Jones**

8. ASB WEEK ACTIVITIES

Society is split in its perception of the issues i.e. some persons want rid of all the problems but some feel that they should be dealt with more sympathetically and that their needs and problems should be properly addressed.

Aidan and Rob advised that a recent survey of street drinkers revealed (amongst other things) that they drink in town because there is nowhere else to go i.e. they consider it a community space. Ideally they would like a dedicated space. They had mentioned having a container close to Pelham Beach. The merits of this were discussed (cost/management/prominent tourist location etc.). John Bownas suggested locating such a container on waste land by the Subway Shop behind the Station Plaza or an empty shop with reduced council rates perhaps. Mike advised that any suggestions/proposals by partners would be considered by the council.

Regarding the ASB week, HBC communications team should be involved together with our Wardens and perhaps joint patrols with the Police.

9. LIAISON WITH HOUSING/SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

The council has a good working relationship with social/care/health agencies that provide support for alcohol and drug issues, such as Seaview, ESRA, CGL/STAR but for some agencies, persons need to actually cross those thresholds to seek help in the first instance. When council officers/wardens engage with persons they 'signpost' at the same time. Many street drinkers are not homeless and are known to the agencies but express no interest in overcoming their addiction.

Whilst the issues need some assertive outreach, it is not within the contract of CGL/STAR. Mike advised that he had met with Susan Vaughan of CGL and gave her information relating to the problems in Hastings. Unfortunately she is leaving that agency but it is hoped that she will pass the information on to her successor. The council will however, continue to try and press CGL to engage more with the street drinkers.

10. OUTREACH SERVICES / BLUE LIGHT APPROACH

The Blue Light project is an initiative to develop alternative approaches and care pathways for drinkers who are not in contact with treatment services, but who have complex needs. The Blue Light approach has now been adopted by several local authorities across England and Wales. Local staff and service users in each area

TOWN CENTRE CRIME-DISORDER MEETING

25 JULY 2019

contributed expertise to the development. John Whittington will undertake some research into this and bring it to the Safer Hastings & Safer Rother Community Partnership. It is thought that there is access to funding streams in locations where it has been successful. **Action John Whittington**

11. THRIFT HOUSE RELOCATION

One of the contributing factors to the problems is Hastings is thought to be the central location of Thrift House. CGL has written to the council with a specification for their needs and offered to move if the council can locate a similar premises. Aidan commented that Thrift House is open Monday-Friday, but the same problems in the town exist at the weekends.

12. CCTV / RIPA / DATA SHARING ETC

See point 5.

13. WORKING WITH BID AND BCRP

Covered in various points above.

14. COMMUNICATIONS WITH KEY RESIDENTS / BUSINESSES IN HOTSPOTS

Of the key residents/businesses who contact the council it is generally felt that we have a good relationship and they are beginning to understand the problems of enforcement.

Mike felt that it is prudent to keep these residents/businesses in hotspot areas up to date with issues in order that they 'spread the word'.

15. AMBER RUDD MP - PROPOSED SUMMIT

Aidan accompanied Amber Rudd MP on her recent visit to Hastings. Her overall comments were of a very positive picture for Hastings.

She has proposed an ASB summit in the autumn but it was generally felt by the group that there is no need.

16. COMMUNITY FACILITY OPTION

As discussed at point 8.

TOWN CENTRE CRIME-DISORDER MEETING

25 JULY 2019

17. ACTION PLANNING

See short-term actions within the notes of this meeting. **Action All**

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There are also issues with licensing of small convenience stores contribution to the street drinking problems. Mike stated that the council licensing team need information about any breach of licensing conditions in order to tackle the managers of the premises. Agreed that Bob Brown, Licensing Manager, will discuss further with the Police. **Action Mike Hepworth/Bob Brown/Aidan Cornwall**

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 9th August @ 1100-1300hrs, Council Chamber.

Thereafter scheduled as follows:

Thursday, 29th August @ 0930-1130, Council Chamber

Thursday, 12th September @ 1200-1300hrs, Tressell (3rd floor)

Tuesday, 24th September @ 1400-1500hrs, Tressell (3rd floor)

Monday, 7th October @ 1130-1230hrs, Committee Room 1 (UG floor)

Meeting closed: 1608hrs.

This page is intentionally left blank