

**To: THE STRATEGY & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Meeting to be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010**

**From: LIZ BISSET – DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES.**

**BRIEFING ON RENEWAL OF THE SECTION 30 DISPERSAL ORDER  
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003**

As you may be aware there has been a 'Section 30 Dispersal Order' in place in parts of the city since April 2004. This order, agreed by the police and the city council, allows the police to deal, where appropriate, with anti-social behaviour by requiring persons to leave the area covered by the order. Orders last for a maximum of 6 months and each subsequent 'renewal' becomes a new order.

When deciding whether to implement a new order it is necessary to consider that any use of powers that may restrict liberty are both necessary and proportionate to the problem being experienced. Furthermore, consideration has to be given to the fact that a Dispersal Order may only cover an area where there is demonstrable evidence that a problem already exists. The sustained and incremental improvements in the Mill Road area throughout the duration of the orders now demonstrate that the above requirements are no longer met. This can/should be viewed as a success story but with a caveat.

The last order expired on 2nd January 2010 and ahead of that date it was necessary to consider whether there was a need to implement a new order and if so, what evidence was available to justify the area proposed in the order. An application for a new order was made by the police and agreed by the leader of the city council and this came into effect on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January. Previous orders have amended the dispersal area and have largely expanded the size of the area to cater for displacement activity. On this occasion the area has been reduced and now does not include Mill Road and the immediate vicinity. Whilst it is recognised and understood that this decision may be viewed with concern, this letter seeks to explain the rationale for the change and seeks to reassure elected members and residents that should they experience anti-social behaviour in the future, swift and decisive action will be taken to address such behaviour.

**What has changed?**

There has been a marked and significant reduction in the number of complaints of anti-social behaviour during the last 6 months of the type that were addressed by Section 30 powers. Analysis of crimes and incidents for the period shows a 49% reduction in reports of anti-social behaviour and an 88% reduction in reports of drink-related "Streetlife" incidents. These quantitative findings are also

supported in feedback from staff, partners and community members detailing a clear reduction in unacceptable behaviour. It is clear that a better quality of life is now enjoyed by those living, working and visiting the area.

### **Why has it changed?**

It is considered that these improvements have come about as a result of a strict enforcement policy coupled with a number of strategic initiatives. For example, the reconnections policy and the tendering of services from Mill House enabling, amongst other things, the dispensing of medication to the streetlife community from a number of pharmacies across the City has had a major positive impact. It is as a direct result of the work conducted by officers and agencies that both the police and the city council have been the recent recipients of a national award for work in connection with reducing homelessness and street-based anti-social behaviour related to it.

### **What happens if displacement occurs and anti-social behaviour returns to the area?**

If this were to happen you have the assurance that the police and city council will act swiftly and decisively. Powers now exist under Section 27 of the Violent Crimes Reduction Act 2006<sup>1</sup> to disperse individuals from any location in the city for alcohol related anti-social behaviour. The use of this power, which was not available when the original order was introduced, is an effective addition to the toolkit of options available to deal with this type of behaviour. The police also have powers to act where there is evidence of public disorder. If these options prove to be ineffective then consideration will be given to re-introduce a dispersal order. If this is necessary it can be implemented in a matter of days.

It is hoped that this information goes some way to explain the reasoning behind this latest revision and to assert the determination of the police and the city council to ensure that the quality of life continues to improve in the area whilst maintaining a proportionate and lawful response to all.

Currently under consideration is a Dispersal Order to cover the historic centre of the City.

### **For Information**

N.B. Information on the s.30 Dispersal Order has been made public via the Police E-cops electronic communication service and details will also be placed on the Council's website.

## **Attachments**

Attached is the police problem analysis entitled 'Review of Section 30 Dispersal Order in Cambridge City' dated December 2009. This includes a map showing the former and current area covered by the Section 30 Dispersal Order.

Also attached is the text of a letter sent by Inspector Steve Kerridge to residents in the Mill Road area in response to their concerns.

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<sup>1</sup> Section. 27 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 provides a constable in uniform with the power to issue a direction to leave a locality to an individual aged at least 16 who is in a public place. The direction will prohibit their return to the locality for up to 48 hours. A direction can only be given if the presence of an individual in the relevant locality is likely, in all circumstances, to cause or contribute to the occurrence of alcohol related crime and disorder in that locality, or to a repetition or continuance there of such crime and disorder.

The constable also has to be satisfied that such a direction is necessary for the purpose of removing or reducing the likelihood of there being such crime or disorder in that locality during the period for which the direction has effect, or of there being a repetition or continuance in that locality during that period of such crime or disorder. An individual who fails to comply with a direction will be guilty of an offence and would be liable on summary conviction to a fine.

Liz Bisset  
Director of Community Services.