



Creating a safer
Cambridgeshire

Consideration of a New Section 30 Dispersal Order - Cambridge Historic City Centre

March 2010

1. Executive Summary

1. Introduction and Background

The aim of this report is to consider whether or not there is sufficient evidence to support a new Section 30 Dispersal Order in the historic centre of Cambridge (see map at Appendix 1).

The Neighbourhood Policing Team - based on personal observation and anecdotal evidence from members of the community - considers that anti-social behaviour in the historic centre, attributable to the streetlife community, has been prevalent during the last six months or so. The problem is such that street life anti-social behaviour in Market ward was adopted as a Neighbourhood Panel Priority on the 10th December 2009.

There has been a street drinking presence in the historic centre for many years, to varying degrees, and a Section 30 Dispersal Order was in place for approximately six months in 2007/08. It was withdrawn upon review, generally noting a significant and lasting reduction in intimidating association in that area based in part of the successful use of dispersal powers.

It should be noted that this document does not refer to *general* alcohol-related anti-social behaviour in the Market area, including that linked to the night-time economy. It relates to a specific problem occurring mainly during day light hours and/or the hours traditionally associated with retailing and suspected of being attributable to persons whose shared feature appears to be adopting a "streetlife" existence.

Previous analysis has shown that Cambridge is an attractive destination for people who lead, either through circumstance or choice, a street life existence, for a wide range of reasons. These include:

- The availability of support services
- Relative easy to obtain accommodation, due to the presence of hostels
- Members of the public, including tourists, giving money to beggars
- The attractiveness of the city, with many green areas to socialise in
- The large established streetlife community, which enables new arrivals to feel at home and have a sense of belonging.

It is considered that there has been an underreporting of incidents to the police, and as a result, the incident data is not fully reliable. However, the information collected from numerous other sources has shown that street life related anti-social behaviour is a problem in the historic area of the city. The main issues are street drinking, nuisance/intimidating behaviour and begging, with many businesses concerned about the adverse impact the behaviour is having on trade and staff.

Conclusion

Since the adoption of the problem in December 2009 as a neighbourhood priority the issues have been tackled using existing powers and agency interventions. There has been no reported increase in behaviours that suggest more robust measures are

required at this time. However, it will not have gone unnoticed that we have had one of the coldest periods for several years and bad weather has historically been a significant factor in moderating behaviour.

Whilst there is an expectation that complaints will increase when the weather improves, decisions to implement dispersal orders must be based on what is happening now and not on predicted statements.

Recommendation

Having taken all of the above into consideration and the evidence detailed in the remainder of this report, it is recommended not to implement a Section 30 Dispersal Order in the historic core of the city at this time. The current levels of anti-social behaviour exhibited by the street life community will be better addressed at this time by:

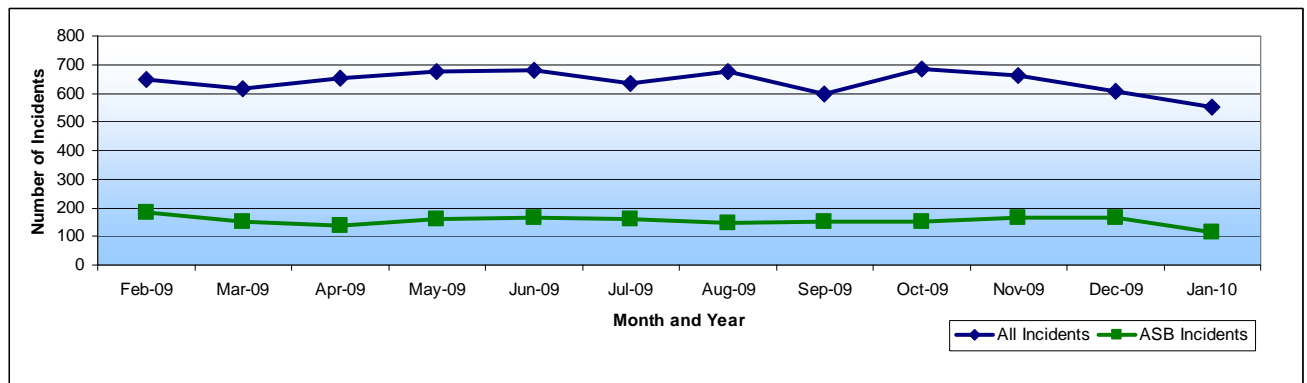
1. ASB related to streetlife activity remaining as a Neighbourhood Priority as the spring and the better weather approaches.
2. The police give the historic City Centre local priority status to ensure the area receives regular patrols and an increased police presence in the area.
3. That Streetscene are requested to carry out, on a trial bases, a greater level of litter picking/street cleansing in the areas most affected.
4. That residents and members of the retail trade are requested to report all incidents of ASB to the police on 0345 4564564 and request to be given an incident number.
5. That the police and City Council monitor the situation closely in readiness for 'fast tracking' the implementation of Section 30 Dispersal Order if the current situation deteriorates.

Incident Data and Analysis

Research and analysis of data and information show that Streetlife anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents in the Market ward for the last year equate to 4 per week (206/52, Feb 2009 to Jan 2010). Comparatively, this is significantly lower than baseline findings in areas where Section 30 legislation has been introduced before in Cambridge City.

There has been no increase in the number of incidents since the summer and this is predictable in view of the season and particularly harsh weather conditions of recent months.

Chart 1: All Incidents and ASB Incidents in Market Ward, February 2009 to January 2010

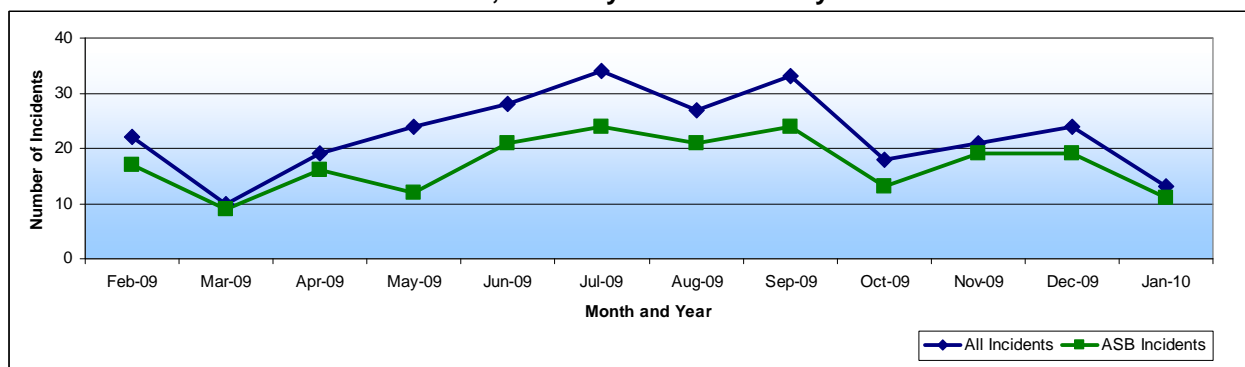


- Anti-social behaviour incidents in Market ward were fairly static between May and December 2009, ranging from 147 incidents to 166 incidents per month. January 2010 was the quietest month of the period, for ASB and other incidents. Total incidents have been decreasing since the peak seen in October 2009. This chart is included to give the reader some context of incident levels in Market ward, before moving onto the streetlife issues.

The following chart illustrates levels of streetlife incidents only, for both anti-social behaviour incidents and all incidents. All the incident notes were read by the analyst to determine which ones were ASB related¹ (this was carried out to ensure accuracy of data).

¹ In addition to incidents already classified as ASB, all other incidents were also read to ensure all ASB was captured. ASB typically consisted of all types of drunken/loutish behaviour where a member of the public was affected.

Chart 2: 'Street Life' Related Incidents, February 2009 to January 2010



- The streetlife related incidents in Market ward were highest during the summer months, with January recording very low numbers (13 incidents of which 11 were ASB related).
- An upward trend in streetlife incidents since the summer cannot be seen in the data, although this does not necessarily mean that a rise in street life anti-social behaviour did not occur. Under reporting of anti-social behaviour must be occurring in the city centre because of the low incident levels, for example, the average number of streetlife anti-social behaviour incidents for the last year was only 4 per week (206/52, Feb 2009 to Jan 2010). This figure is extremely low, considering the permanent presence of the street life community in the city centre. In support of this, many incidents mention ongoing problems with the street life community. Under reporting of anti-social behaviour is a well known problem and it is likely that only a small number of incidents are reported to the police.
- The following table compares levels of streetlife anti-social behaviour incidents by month, for the last two years:

	2008/09	2009/10
February	12	17
March	13	9
April	20	16
May	13	12
June	7	21
July	15	24
August	21	21
September	23	24
October	17	13
November	25	19
December	9	19
January	16	11
Total	191	206

- It can be seen that the annual totals are very similar, with a difference of only 15 incidents. Incident levels were erratic for both years, with the only correlation being a rise during the summer months.
- During the last six months (August 09 to January 10), a total of 107 incidents were recorded, which is four incidents fewer than in the same period of the previous year (August 08 to January 09). December 2009 recorded 19 incidents, compared with 9 in December 2008, however January 2010 recorded fewer incidents than in the previous year (11 and 16). (Peak months are highlighted in yellow.)

Types of Street Life Incidents

- Of the 273 incidents relating to the streetlife community, 206 (75%) were for anti-social behaviour. The table below shows all the different types of incident involving the streetlife community. The categories give a useful indication, however incidents can often be placed in more than one category, and therefore there is a large degree of overlap.

Final Call Type	Total	%
Rowdy/Nuisance	113	41%
Begging	57	20%
Concern	27	9%
Violence	16	6%
Street Drinking	13	5%
Suspicious Circs	10	4%
Collapsed/III	8	3%
Animals	4	<2%
Shoplifting	3	<2%
Theft	3	<2%
Drugs	2	<2%
Others	17	6%
Total	273	

- The “Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour” category recorded the highest number of incidents, which covers a wide range of anti-social behaviour. There were 24 incidents (average of 2 a month) for “Concern” or “Collapsed/III”, most of which involved members of the streetlife community in a drunken state.
- A fifth of streetlife incidents were recorded as ‘Begging’. The common theme throughout them all was the aggressive demeanour of the beggar, who often swore and shouted abuse at the member of the public when they were not given money.
- Although only 13 incidents were classed as ‘Street Drinking’, many of the incidents in the other categories mention alcohol.
- Most of the violent incidents related to members of the streetlife community assaulting each other, but in some cases it was not clear who they had been assaulted by.

- Out of the four 'Animal' incidents, three involved dog bites to members of the public. Out of control dogs are mentioned in many other incidents too.

Other types of common behaviour that the Streetlife Officers regularly deal with are:

- Public order offences;
- Public urination and defecation;
- Drug use and discarded needles;
- Littering and rubbish linked to rough sleeping and drinking alcohol;
- Theft;
- Assault (often amongst the streetlife community).

Partner Intelligence

- CCTV operators at Cambridge City Council have not noticed an increase in anti-social behaviour over the last six months or so, and their perception is that levels of street life ASB have not changed. Their statistics show a slight decrease in ASB incidents, however it is not possible to differentiate between streetlife related ASB and other types².
- The Street Outreach Team³ has not noticed an increase in anti-social behaviour, and if anything, feel that the situation may have improved due to several problematic individuals no longer being around. The number of rough sleepers in the city has remained constant over the last 12 months, with an average of 4 or 5 rough sleepers per night (maximum of 10).

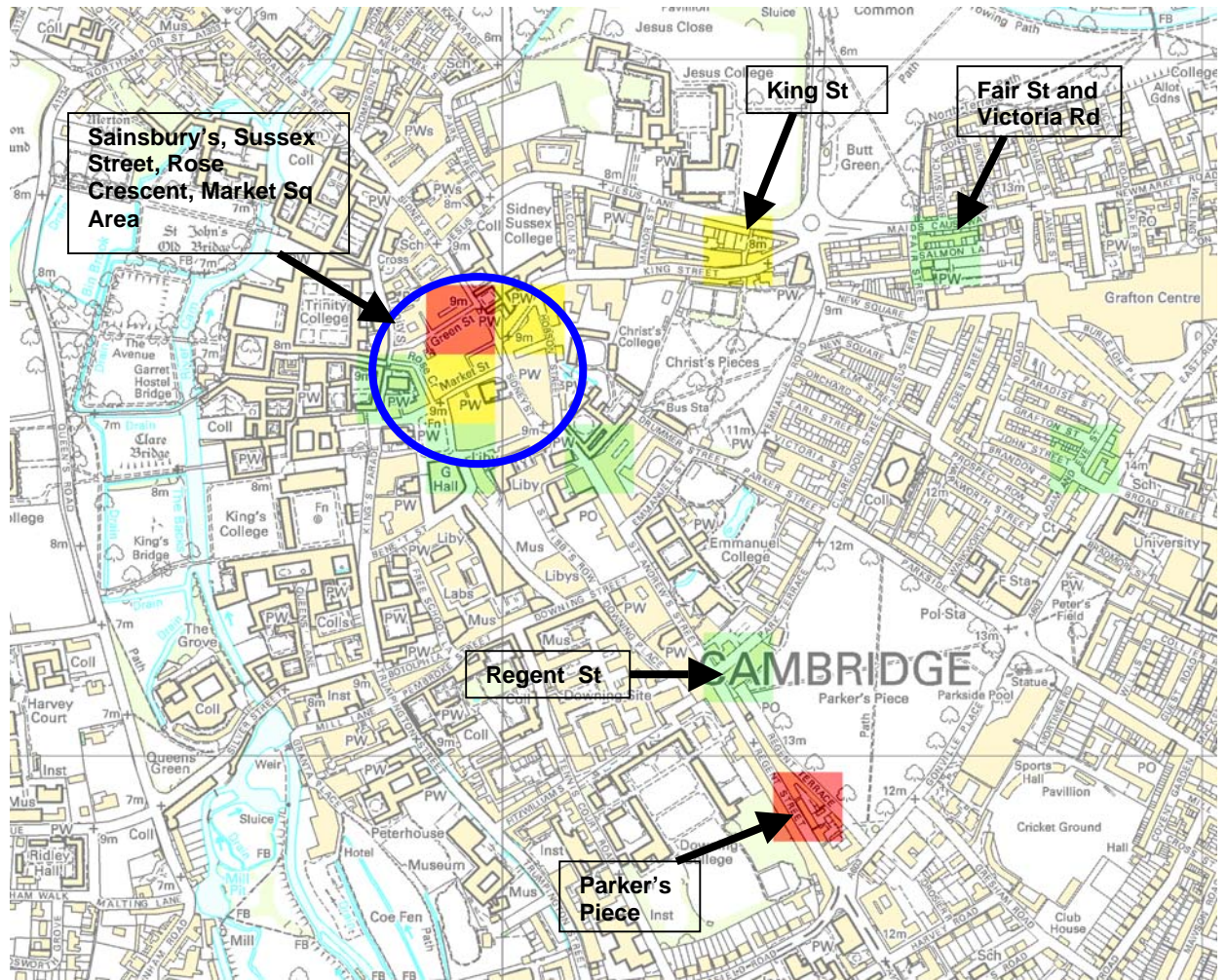
² CCTV Service, Cambridge City Council.

³ Cambridge Street Outreach Team.

Location of Incidents

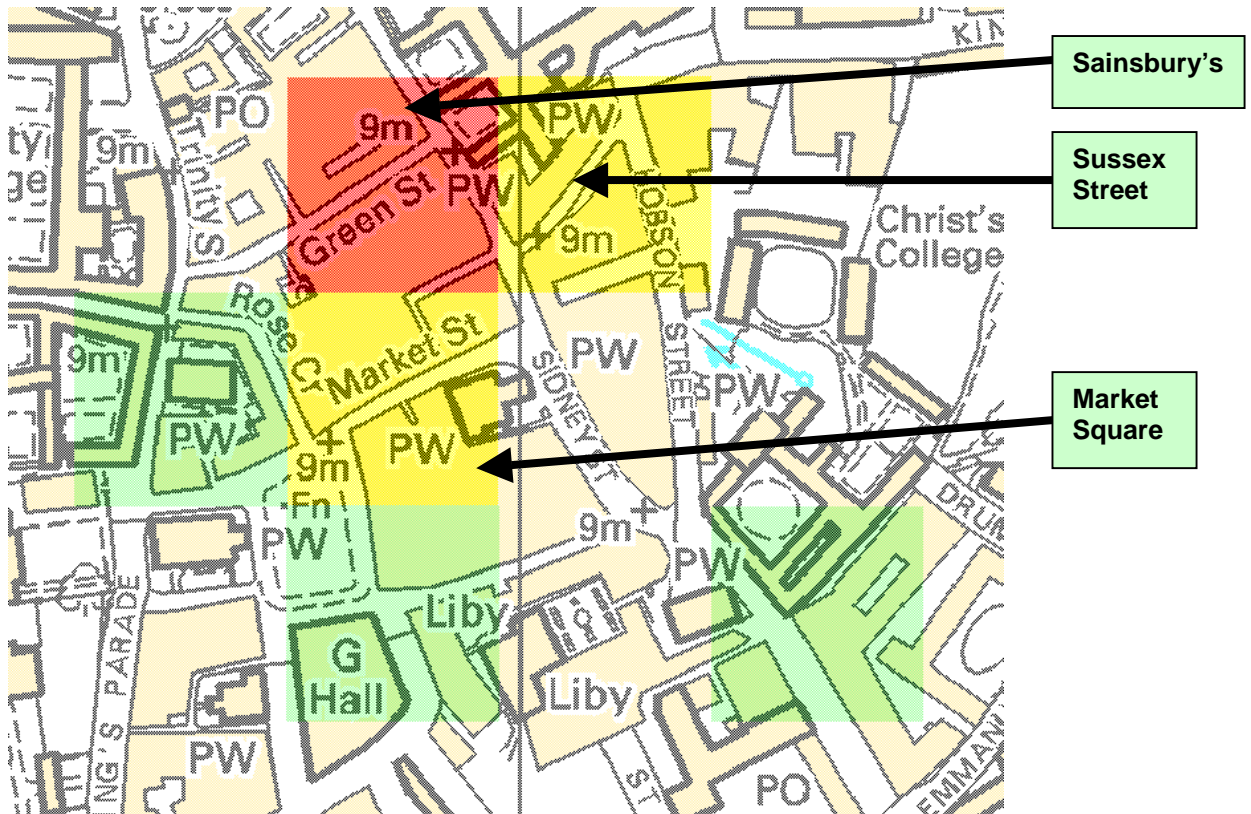
The locations of the streetlife anti-social behaviour incidents were mapped and the following grid analysis shows the hotspots:

Map 1 : Grid Analysis of Street Life ASB Incidents in Market Ward



Key: Red ≥ 15 incidents (2), Yellow 10-14 incidents (3), Green 5-9 incidents (6) and the remaining area < 5 incidents (297)

Map 2: Grid Analysis of Street Life ASB Incidents in Market Ward (Historic Centre)



- The map shows that the main hotspot is in the heart of the historic centre, covering Sidney Street, Sussex Street, and part of the Market Square. These areas have been highlighted by the Streetlife Officers and the Neighbourhood Policing Team for the recent increases in street life ASB.
- Rose Crescent is also included in the main hotspot area of the map, which continues to be a popular place for beggars to frequent.

Incident Hotspots

Location	Number of Incidents	Behaviour
Sidney Street	25	
Sainsbury's	5 (included in above)	Aggressive begging, out of control dogs
Lloyds TSB	5 (included in Sidney St)	Rough sleeping in lobby
Regent Street	21	

University Arms Hotel	5 (included in Regent St)	Refusing to move on
Christ's Pieces	14	Fighting and noisy/rowdy behaviour
Rose Crescent	11	
McDonald's	6 (included in Rose Cr)	Fighting, refusing to leave, out of control dogs and rough sleepers
Fair Street	9	Drinking, shouting, being generally abusive
Sussex Street	8	Begging, drinking, shouting, frightening customers and staff.

- Only two street life ASB incidents were recorded on Round Church Street, both in September. A wider search for all ASB incidents revealed a further 16 incidents; mostly involving youths and drunken people, although it is not clear whether streetlife individuals were to blame. The Cambridge City Council CCTV operators have a partial view of the area, and do not think the street life community are causing problems there. They have noticed that the benches and gardens are often used by students from the local college, local employees on smoke breaks, and also youths. The ASB questionnaire supports this view, with only 6 respondents (out of 88) highlighting it as a problem.
- The recent questionnaire distributed to businesses in the historical centre of Cambridge cited Sidney Street, the Market Square and Sussex Street as the worst affected areas, which is supported by the CCTV operators. The operators believe the areas most affected by street life anti-social behaviour are outside Sainsbury's, Sidney Street (by the benches and food stalls) and Sussex Street.
- Christ's Pieces has been a favourite meeting and socialising location for the streetlife community for many years, particularly during the summer months. The Piece is already included in the existing Section 30 Dispersal Order, and will therefore not be considered in this document.

Community Intelligence and Impact

Newspaper Poll

The Cambridge Evening News conducted an online poll on their website last month and found that:

- 96% thought anti-social behaviour is getting worse;
- 59% were put off visiting Cambridge city centre because of the ASB;
- 87% thought street drinking was an issue;
- 93% said there should be a dispersal order in Cambridge city centre.

The results clearly indicate that the respondents considered ASB to be a serious problem and were in support of a Section 30 Dispersal Order, however the sample size was very small, with only 46 people taking part⁴. It should also be noted that this was a general ASB survey and not aimed at the streetlife community.

Survey of Businesses

An anti-social behaviour questionnaire that was widely distributed to businesses in the historic part of the city centre in September last year also agreed that ASB had worsened and that respondents were in support of a Section 30 Dispersal Order:

- 73% (64/88) had noticed an increase in ASB over the last six months or so, with over half (58%) indicating it was due to the street life community.
 - The most common types of problem experienced were: drinking alcohol, urinating, begging and intimidating behaviour.
 - 85% (75/88) said drinking alcohol in the street was a problem.
 - 74% (65/88) said begging in the street was a problem.
 - Evening and afternoon were when the worst times of day for anti-social behaviour.
 - Nearly half of respondents (42/88) said that the ASB was impacting on their business (11 said the impact was unknown).
 - 85% (75/88) of respondents were in support of a Section 30 Dispersal Order.
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- The “Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour” category recorded the highest number of incidents, which covers a wide range of anti-social behaviour. There were 24 incidents (average of 2 a month) for “Concern” or “Collapsed/ill”, most of which involved members of the streetlife community in a drunken state.
 - A fifth of streetlife incidents were recorded as ‘Begging’. The common theme throughout them all was the aggressive demeanour of the beggar, who often swore and shouted abuse at the member of the public when they were not given money.
 - Although only 13 incidents were classed as ‘Street Drinking’, many of the incidents in the other categories mention alcohol.
 - Most of the violent incidents related to members of the streetlife community assaulting each other, but in some cases it was not clear who they had been assaulted by.
 - Out of the four ‘Animals’ incidents, three involved dog bites to members of the public. Out of control dogs are mentioned in many other incidents too.

⁴ Source: Cambridge Evening News, 03/02/2010.

Questionnaire Comments

1. A number of respondents asked for a street drinking ban.
2. The Chairman of the Rose Crescent Association said that shops were losing staff as a direct result.
3. Customers and staff feel intimidated.
4. CCTV was asked for quite a few times for the side streets.
5. More police patrols were requested.
6. Many respondents used the words “fed up”, “frustrated” and “scared”.
7. Shops have to wash their frontages down regularly, due to the streetlife urinating on them.
8. A street pastor witnessed “a group” snorting drugs on the bonnet of his car.

Considerations and Application

Considerations:

The power to require people to leave a public place under a Section 30 Dispersal Order is a significant one which has the potential to challenge deeply-held beliefs about individual liberties and the rights of the citizen. In order to observe these rights certain tests need to be applied.

There are three parts to the test:

1. Is it necessary? (This is a test based on evidence both factual and anecdotal)
2. Is it proportionate? (This is a test as to whether the imposition of an Order is proportionate to the problem being experienced).

These tests are important because the Order can impose restrictions on the rights of individuals under the European Convention on Human Rights. Such rights include the right to liberty and security, the right to respect for private and family life, the right to freedom of association and the right of children to play.

3. Is it appropriate? (This is a test of whether an Order will actually contribute to reducing anti-social behaviour, that is, are there alternative, effective measures that could be taken which would have a lesser impact on personal liberty?)

Application of the above tests:

1. Is a Section 30 Order Necessary? There is clear evidence both factual and anecdotal that there is an issue of anti-social behaviour caused by members of the streetlife community in the defined area of the historic core of the City centre. However, an upward trend in streetlife incidents since the summer cannot be seen in the data. The number of streetlife anti-social behaviour incidents for the last year was only 4 per week (206/52, Feb 2009 to Jan 2010).

2. Is a Section 30 Order Proportionate? CCTV operators at Cambridge City Council have not noticed an increase in antisocial behaviour over the last six months or so, and their perception is that levels of street life ASB have not changed. Their statistics show a slight decrease in ASB incidents, however, it is not possible to differentiate between streetlife related ASB and other types. The Street Outreach Team has also not noticed an increase in anti-social behaviour, and if anything, feel that the situation may have improved due to several problematic individuals no longer being around. Nonetheless, public perception is that the situation is getting worse.

3. Is a Section 30 Order Appropriate? There has been a street drinking presence in the historic centre for many years, to varying degrees, and a Section 30 Dispersal Order was in place for approximately six months in 2007/08. It was withdrawn upon review, generally noting a significant and lasting reduction in intimidating association in that area based in part of the successful use of dispersal powers. Other powers are now available to the police.

Recommendation

Having taken all of the above into consideration it is recommended not to implement a Section 30 Dispersal Order in the historic core of the city at this time. The current levels of anti-social behaviour exhibited by the street life community will be better addressed at this time by:

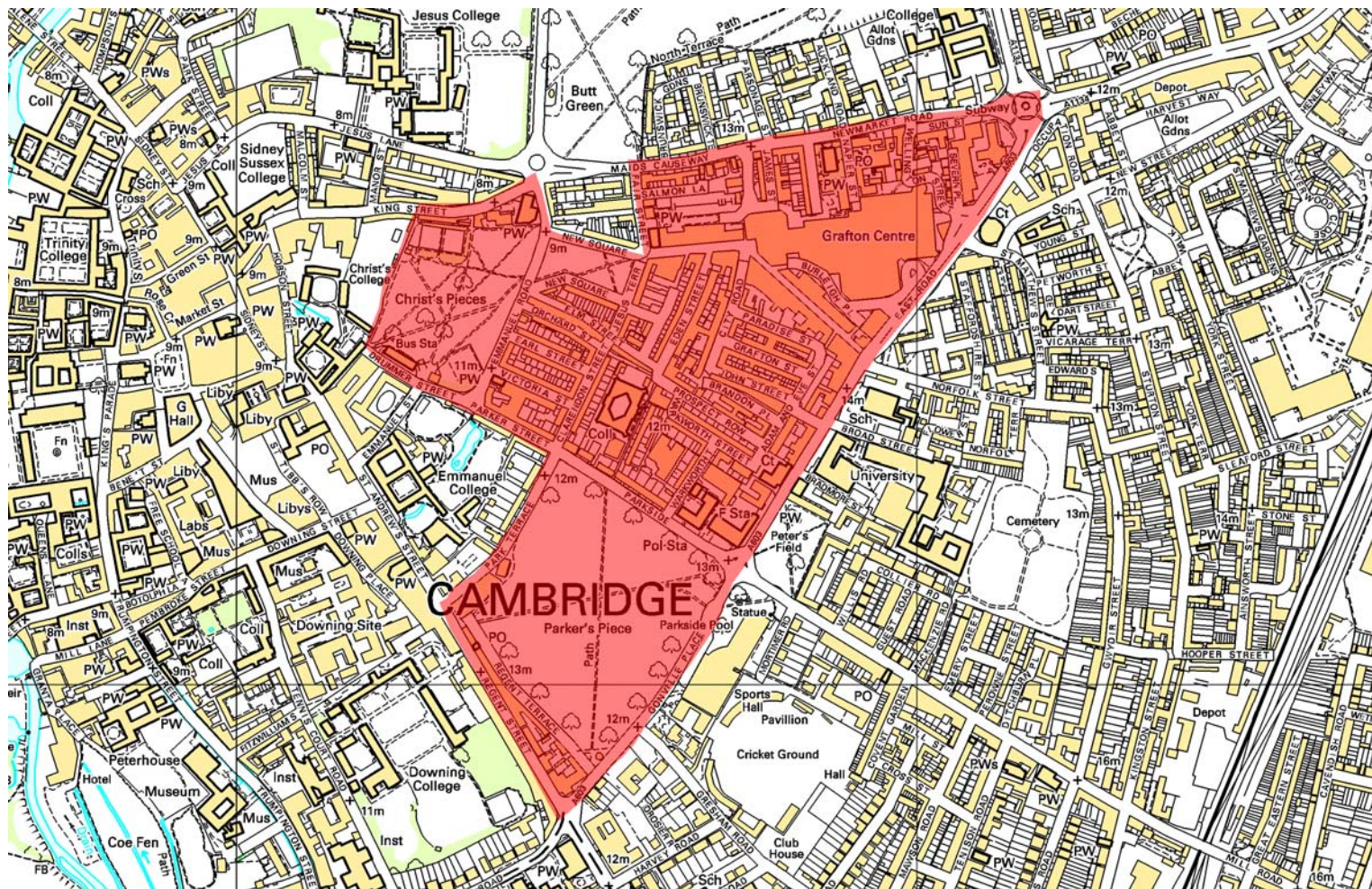
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NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

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Area Covered by the current s.30 Dispersal Order (3rd January – 2nd July 2010)



NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

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