

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME



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Aspects of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) and Environmental crime often overlap. They are regarded as crimes, which have a major impact on the quality of life of all within Lambeth. Therefore they have been merged into one chapter that encompasses both.

Definitions:

Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

Anti Social Behaviour creates an environment in which more serious crime takes hold. It can occur anywhere – in people’s homes and gardens, on estates, in town centres or shopping parades and urban or rural areas. It blights people’s lives, undermines the fabric of society and holds back regeneration (Respect & Responsibility – Taking A Stand Against Anti Social Behaviour, Home Office White Paper 2003).

Environmental crime

Individuals or organisations that knowingly or unknowingly negatively impacting on their neighbours, communal facilities and open spaces.

There are different levels of environmental crime from a resident being unable to maintain their property to the organised fly tipping of waste for profit. This requires varying methods of approach to effectively tackle the issue. This could include investigation, education, access to services and/ or enforcement action taken.

Levels of Environmental Crime

The following table lists the key environmental issues

Poor property management

- Over grown hedges
- Unsecured land that attracts dumping
- Landowners allowing their property to deteriorate

Low level

- Littering
- Dog fouling
- Noise nuisance
- Low volume dumping of commercial waste

Higher Level

- Graffiti and Fly-posting
- Abandoned, untaxed and illegally sold vehicles
- Vandalism

Organised Crime

- Fly-tipping
- Illegal street trading
- High volume commercial dumping
- Vehicle fires

There are many things than come under the banner of ASB and Environmental Crime but these are the issues that can be identified that fall into either one or both categories.

- Other Criminal Damage – MPS
- Prostitution – Soliciting & Kerb-Crawling – MPS
- Noise Nuisance
- CADMIS - Calls to the Police for disturbances in a public place, fly-tipping, abandoned calls, noise and other nuisance, which would include street drinking and street begging
- Road furniture and outdoor fires and malicious calls – London Fire Service
- Graffiti and fly-posting
- Fly-tipping and dumping
- Illegal street trading
- Sex and drug paraphernalia
- Fixed penalty notices

NOTE: The figures used are ‘mappable ward totals’ unless otherwise stated. These figures will differ from borough totals.

What do our statistics tell us?

Metropolitan Police

- In FY2003-4 there were a total of 924 ward total offences recorded by the MPS that we considered as Anti Social Behaviour and Environmental Crime a decrease of 11% (112 less offences) from FY2002-3. Based on ward totals this equates to 3 offences for every 1,000 persons in the population
- Anti Social Behaviour offences have been comprised from only 2 MPS data sets (Other Criminal Damage, Prostitution and Kerb-Crawling)
- In FY2003-4, 59% (549) offences were Other Criminal Damage and 41% or 375 offences were Prostitution. When compared to FY2002-3, both Other Criminal Damage and Prostitution experienced decreases, 7.2% and 16% respectively. In FY2003-4 there were 63 kerb-crawling offences, which was a 5% increase from FY2002-3 (60 offences)
- 68% of FY2003-4 Kerb-Crawling offences were in Brixton Hill
- In FY2003-4 calls to the Police regarding disturbances in a public place reduced by 9% (9342 calls), compared to 10,246 in FY2002-3
- Abandoned calls are those incidents where the Police receive a request to attend to a particular location but upon arrival there is no sign of any incident taken place. In FY2003-4 abandoned calls reduced by 4% (4910 calls compared to 5115 calls in 2002-3)
- Whereas calls regarding 'noise nuisance' increased by 15% from 214 in FY2002-3 to 247 in FY2003-4 and calls to concerning 'other nuisance' increased by 61% from 318 in FY2002-3 to 511 in FY2003-4
- Fly-tipping reports to the Police has fallen to only 4 recorded complaints in 2003-04, which is a 91% decrease from the previous financial year
- The variance in reporting is due to a renegotiated waste contract in the borough which:
 - Adjusted cleansing regimes to be able to clear the highways of dumped items in a more timely manner
 - Provided better service delivery to residents by having a free bulky waste collection directly from their homes
 - There had also been an education drive with businesses informing them on how to appropriately dispose of their waste

- Figures taken from the MPS website show that those categories of Anti Social Behaviour and Environmental Crime account for 1% of the TNOs that occurred in Lambeth during FY2003- 4. This was a 5% decrease from FY2002-3 (It must be noted that this only compromised of one crime type)
- British Transport Police (BTP) figures show a 34% increase of all offences for the four offence categories related to ASB and Environmental Crime. 903 offences were reported (20% of total offences recorded) compared to 672 (15%) in FY2002-3

Fire service

- In FY2003-4 ASB and Environmental Crime related fires increased by 4% (47 fires) amounting to a total of 1318 fires. However, 25% (548) of the Crime and Disorder fires in FY2003-4 were deliberate outdoor fires
- Malicious calls are those occasions of threatening or intimidating telephone calls between two parties. In FY2002-3 there were 430 reported incidents to the fire service regarding malicious calls, by FY2003-4 this had dropped to 402, a 6.5% decrease

Environment Data

Noise nuisance

- In FY2003-4 there were 6932 noise complaints, which is a 5% decrease in comparison to FY2002-3 that had 7327. There has also been a decrease of 15% on Noise Abatement Orders from FY2002-3 to FY2003-4. Calls to Housing regarding noise nuisance has also shown a decrease of 6% in FY2003-4 compared to FY2002-3

Fly-tipping & dumping of refuse

- In FY2003-4 fly-tips or dumped items either on the public highway or private land, attended to by Street Care, increased by 12% (770 compared to 686 in FY2002-3)
- Fixed Penalty Notices issued to commercial premises for unauthorised placement of their trade waste onto the highway reduced by 68.2% from FY2002-3 to FY2003-4

Graffiti & Fly-posting

- The amount of graffiti removed on a square metre basis increased by 31.7% from FY2002-3 to FY2003-4
- From FY2002-3 to FY2003-4 there was an increase of 6.8% square metres attended to deal with fly-posting due to improvements and resourcing of environmental teams such as Grimebusters

Illegal Street Trading

This is defined as anybody who is unauthorised to sell goods from the public highway or within a seven metre distance from it. The offence types we deal with are: Food Vendors, Trading On Pavement, Vehicles For Sale and Unauthorised Shop Fronts

- In FY2003-4 there was a 32% decrease in all types of street trading offences when compared to FY2002-3
- In FY2002-3 food vendors made up 70% of offenders but by FY2003-4 they accounted for only 49%
- In FY2002-3 trading on the pavement accounted for 21% of all street-trading offences and by FY2003-4 this had increased to 47%
- Males carried out 90% of Illegal Street trading in the last two years
- In FY2003-4 85% of offences occurred in either the South Bank area or Brixton town centre with 26 enforcement actions taken out in each area

Sex & drug paraphernalia

- Borough wide in 2003-4 the total weight of sex & drug paraphernalia collected was 474 kg, this equated to approximately 9480 needles.

Priority wards

Anti Social Behaviour and Environmental Crime were analysed separately to identify three priority wards for each section with all the datasets combined. However both sections had the same three priority wards that are:

- Bishops
- Coldharbour
- Princes

After further analysis of the three priority wards, it appears that transport hubs and public places such as hospitals have been identified.

Profiles of victims and suspects

The following information is based just on the three priority wards together as noted above for FY2003-4.

Victims – Priority wards

- The age was unknown for 33% of the victims. Of the known victims, 18% were aged between 40-44 years and 16% were aged between 25-29 years
- Almost 32% of the sex of the victims was unknown. Of those known victims, 62% were male
- The ethnicity of the victims was unknown in 33% of cases. Where the ethnicity was known 53% were white-skinned European

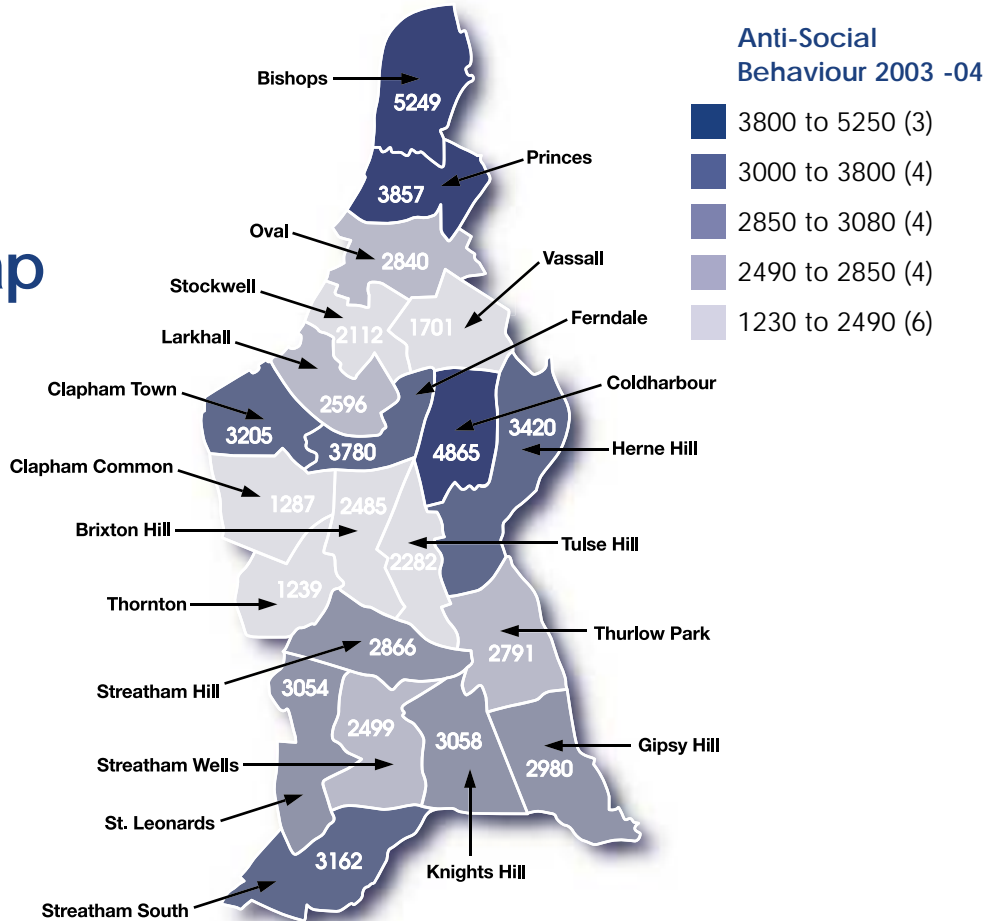
Suspects – Priority wards

- The age of 39% of the suspects was unknown. Of those suspects where the age is known 50% were aged between of 15-29 years
- In 36% of cases the sex of the suspect was unknown. Where the sex was known, 71% of the suspects were males
- The ethnicity of the suspects was unknown in 36% cases. In cases where ethnicity was known, 50% were white-skinned European and 47% were African-Caribbean

When does this occur?

- When combined together, all the MPS offence types for Anti Social Behaviour and Environmental Crime show signs of fluctuation throughout the year. There are peaks in offending during the winter months, especially December and February
- With reference to the days of the week, there are noticeably less offences on Saturday and Sundays when compared to the rest of the week. From Monday to Thursday there is very little fluctuation in offending
- Time analysis shows that there are fluctuating levels of offending throughout the day, increasing as it moves into early evening. The peaks in offending occur between 21.00 hours and 01.00 hours, with the biggest peak between 21.00 hours – 22.00 hours

Map 10
Anti-Social Behaviour
Thematic Map
for 2003-04
Ward Totals
for all
categories



Map 11
Environmental
Crime Thematic
Map for
2003-04
Ward Totals
for all
categories

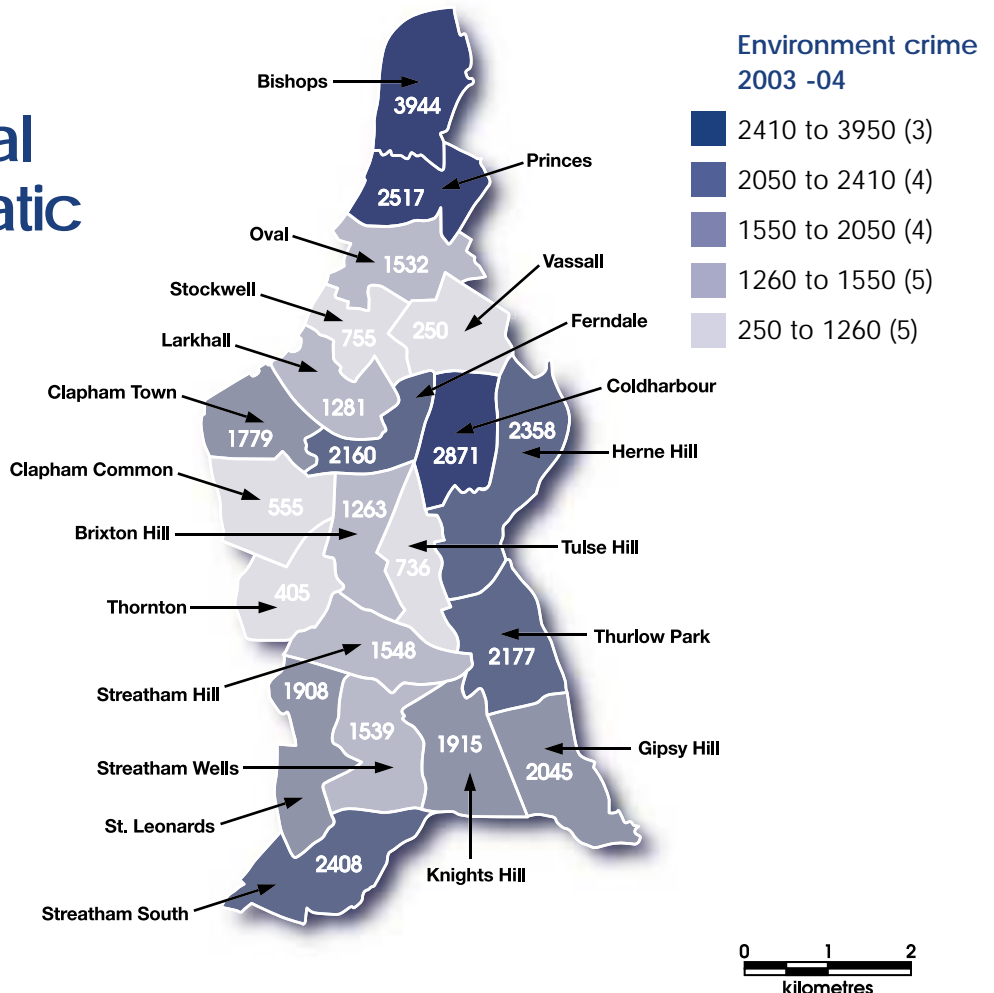


Table 28
Chart showing seasonal trends in ASB & Environmental Crime, FY2003-2004

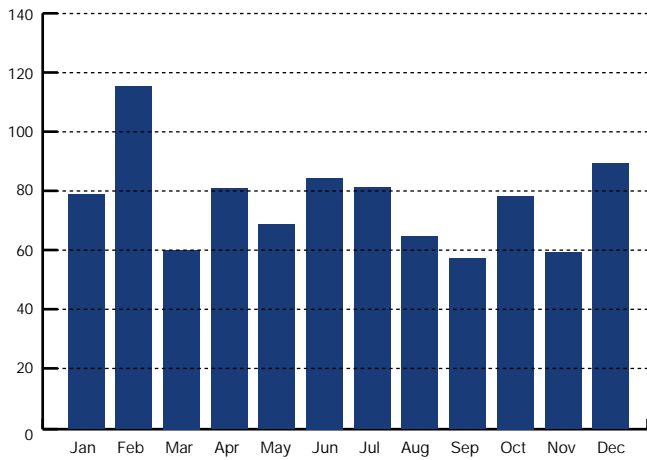


Table 29
Chart showing days of the week ASB & Environmental Offences, FY2003-2004

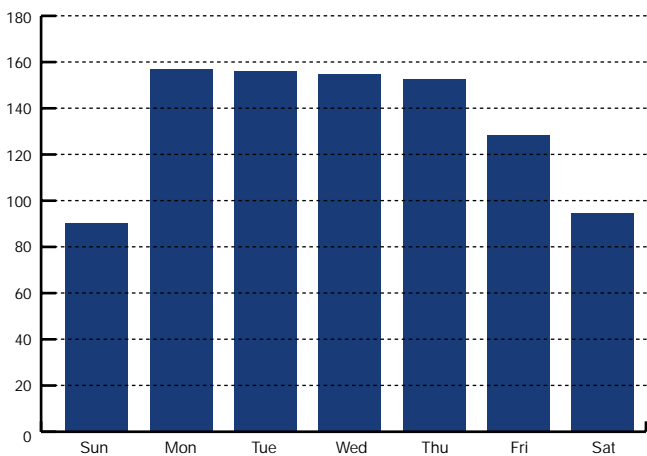
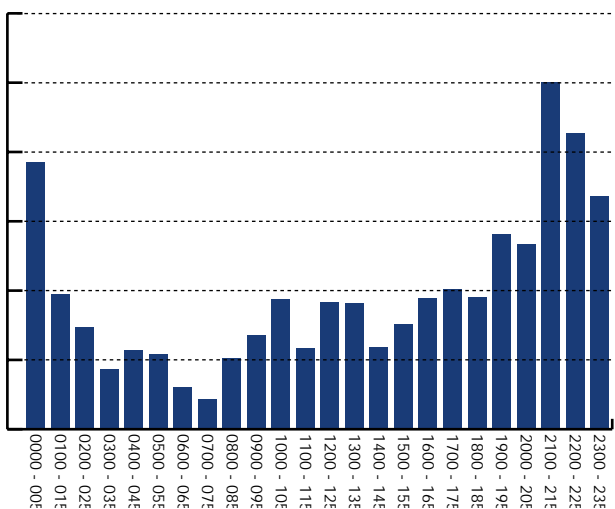


Table 30
Peak Times for ASB & Environmental Crimes, FY2003-2004



What you told us?

Residents Survey

Issues that made people feel unsafe were:

- Street drinking
- Appearance of the area
- Begging
- Graffiti

Concerns about ASB were lower in council property than any other tenure category (21% compared to 31% homeowners, 32% rented from housing association). It did however show significant differences by ethnicity.

Respondents from our ethnic groups are more likely to have experienced ASB, in particular for Asian or Asian British respondents (24% experienced ASB). These experiences also seemed more frequent for black or black British (16% & 4% respectively). Physical assaults were also more prevalent amongst these two groups (both 7% compared to 4% overall).

More people have been victims of ASB than any other crime, 17%. This is also the same over the last 12 months, 11.8%.

- 37% said Fly-tipping was a fairly or very serious problem however 38% don't know or don't regard it as a problem
- 37% said Abandoned Vehicles were 'a fairly or very serious problem' however 31% don't know or don't regard it as a problem. In terms of what made residents feel safer, 25% said improved lighting, 16% wardens, 15% cleaner environment, 7% trimming shrubbery along pathways
- Particular concerns within our borough were as follows:
 - Reduce Street Begging in Brixton Hill, Stockwell and Tulse Hill wards
 - Better street lighting in Coldharbour ward
 - Measures to stop cycling on pavements in Bishops and Larkhall wards

What did the Public tell us in the Public Survey?

- 17% of people had been a victim of Anti Social Behaviour in the last 5 years. This is the highest response to a variety of crime incidents suffered, the next being Car Break-In/ Vandalism & Mugging which both sat at 14.8%
- When asked how much of a concern ASB was in their area, people's response was:
 - 60% claimed that Vandalism or Damage to Property including Graffiti was a problem
 - 36% said Fly-tipping was a problem
 - 45% said that Verbal Abuse and Harassment was a problem in their area

The response to how serious they regarded anti-social behaviour was:

- 19.6% of people thought that it was very serious
- 25.1% thought it fairly serious
- 28.1% slightly serious
- 22.5% thought it not serious
- 3.5% didn't know
- 47% of respondents stated that Begging was a concern. This was also borne out in the staff survey within Lambeth council that showed 45.9% thought that begging was a concern. 47% of people thought that the appearance of their area caused them to feel unsafe
- When asked why you feel unsafe, 47% said the appearance of the area (Graffiti, Abandoned Vehicles etc.)
- A further 39% said quality of street lighting
- When asked what made you feel safer than you did 12 months ago, 29% said a cleaner environment and 21% said neighbourhood wardens

Focus Groups

There was a clear indication from our focus groups that ASB in its various forms significantly impacted on their quality of life and fear of crime. There was a view that authorities were not consistent in their approach to tackling anti-social activities including environmental crime.

For example, the issues of aggressive beggars and cyclists on the pavement feature highly in the groups but remain difficult crimes to deal with effectively on the street. There is a general acceptance of a link between environmental quality and levels of crime and Anti Social Behaviour, but participants of the focus groups did not see a direct link between Anti Social Behaviour/ Environmental Crime and more serious criminal activity.

'What we need is a multi-agency approach between park officers, the Council and the Police.'

'If you see that people care about their environment maybe you then start caring about it yourself.'

'Appearance does make a difference you feel safer in cleaner areas.'

'Dirty areas attracts criminals and drug users, they feel safer in these areas. Drug users do not tend to go well kept areas.'

'I already do feel safer. The area where I am concerned is Railton Road, the area around the Town Hall. Compared with what that was like a couple of years ago it's actually visibly cleaner and an easier place to walk around. It's not hugely neater with tarted up buildings but it looks better. I don't worry so much when I turn the corners.'

'I think that if somebody is caught at making graffiti they should be made to clean it.'

'People who have bad minds will not come to the area, which is clean and nice. They gravitate towards more dirty places.'

'Let's clean up Lambeth. Just look how Vauxhall Road changed over the years. If you clean up the area people will start caring. And I don't think that crimes go with poverty because there are poor but decent people. And in my estate bad people drive BMWs and they are the ones who are the worst – their children break windows, steal and so on, not the poor.'

'Graffiti is a disgrace and just shows that people don't care. It brings an area down. It's a barometer. Last year we had a problem with kids stealing scooters and riding them about the estate. Through the alleyways and setting them on fire.'

'Graffiti degrades every thing. It says that people don't care.'

'Clapham has got a lot of bars and pubs, but no public toilets, which creates a general disorderly environment. Environmental crime generally contributes to feelings of insecurity.'

'Noise is a major issue but we are afraid of taking it up with the neighbours and the Police don't do much – they don't challenge them! – we need more direct and immediate response.'

When asked what makes you feel safe you said:

- The Wardens have improved the standard of living and quality of life in the Clapham Park area
- Surroundings, the street lighting, cleanliness of the streets and also the kind of housing and communities that live in the area e.g. the absence of crack houses and squats
- Good lighting at night
- 36% of respondents said CCTV made them feel safer

What have we done so far?

- Created and developed the following
 - Anti Social Behaviour strategy
 - A draft form of the Street Population Strategy is currently under consultation
- Appointment of specialist officers to deal with ASB
- Community Safety Officer for each town centre
- Safer Communities Co-ordinator
- Community Safety Manager
- Eight Nuisance and ASB officers over the five area housing offices
- A pilot of Street Crime Wardens in St. Leonard's ward
- Housing Wardens for Streatham Hill and Clapham Park
- Park Rangers launched in 2004
- PCSOs provided to compliment current Police activity in required areas
- Dedicated Rough Sleeping team to work with the street population
- Launched initiatives such as
 - Operation Refresh in Brixton town centre
 - The Red Card Zone in the Brixton triangle
 - Safer Estates Task Force
 - Pilot Drinking Control Area in Waterloo area
 - Anti-begging campaigns to educate the public and identify the link between the drugs market and begging
 - Invested £1.6 million to fund projects to eliminate rough sleeping and also to address other street population issues
 - 95% of all lights in parks are now fully functional
 - Pedestrianisation of Brixton Market to provide safer shopping areas and to establish a more cohesive enforcement of the markets
- Refurbishing parks properties including toilets
- Evicting squatters from poorly managed property

- £1million investment to improve street cleansing
- Increased staff & plant for Grimebusters, e.g. van and bubble gum removal machine
- Warden schemes in Parks, Estates, Streatham, Waterloo and Brixton
- Signed up Operation Scrap-It in partnership with the Home Office, Association of London Government & the DVLA to deal with the widespread problem of untaxed vehicles
- Working with Environment Agency to stop & search potential enviro-criminals
- Nuisance vehicle operations in Coldharbour in partnership with Community Safety and the Police
- Noise nuisance team increased
- Free bulk refuse service, including Sunday pick ups
- Rapid response unit to deal with drug & sex paraphernalia
- Number of proactive operations targeting kerb-crawlers
- Injunction sought through courts against a prolific drug dealer/ pimp

Emerging Priorities

- Better and more consistent data
- Better support for victims and witnesses of ASB
- Further investment in the Reassurance Programme including wardens and PCSOs
- More joined up legislation and a clearer definition for Anti Social Behaviour which is consistent with tackling the problems
- Increased awareness with residents and businesses, neighbourhoods and communities about their responsibility to take pride in their area
- Closer involvement with young people to tackle anti social activity
- Continued partnership working to target kerb-crawlers/ pimps