



**HILLINGDON**  
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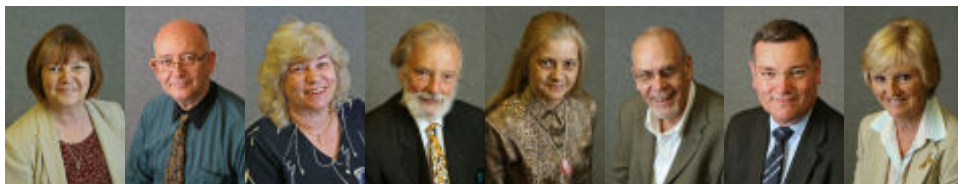
**RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES  
POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**2006/07**

***STRONGER FAMILIES: RESPECT FOR ALL – A  
REVIEW OF OUR ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR  
STRATEGY***

**Members of the Committee**

**Cllr Shirley Harper-O'Neill (Chairman)**  
**Cllr Kenneth Bartram (from Feb 2007)**  
**Cllr Janet Duncan**  
**Cllr Graham Horn**  
**Cllr Elizabeth Kemp (May 2006 - Jan 2007)**  
**Cllr John Oswell**  
**Cllr Andrew Retter**  
**Cllr Kay Willmott-Denbeigh**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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## Chairman's Foreword



Anti-social behaviour (ASB) touches all our lives in one way or another, and we know from Council surveys and our contacts with residents as Councillors it is a worry for many residents. That is why, as a Committee, we wanted to tackle this as our first policy overview review.

To give a focus to our review, the Committee compared progress in Hillingdon with the aims of the RESPECT action plan. A lot of attention has focused on penalties, especially ASBOs, and while they have a place, the Committee aimed to look deeper and wider at what could be done to help parents, children, schools, businesses and the community to work to tackle ASB. This fits with the broad scope of action recommended by the RESPECT action plan.

I recently talked to a group of young mothers with children at risk of committing ASB who were being helped by a parenting course. For these Mums the course came as a relief – they found out they were no longer isolated; others were in the same boat. They found out there were skills they could learn to help them take control of their own and their children's lives. All of us who have had, or who have worked with, children have at times needed those skills.

Too often young people are blamed for ASB. We have all been young once and we know that children are not aliens, though we sometimes seem to treat them as though they are. We need to take tough action with the troublemakers but we also need more understanding and mutual respect between adults and children.

Cllr Shirley Harper-O'Neill



## 1. Recommendations

The evidence and conclusions on which these recommendations are based can be found in chapter 3 and the appendices.

### **The Committee recommend that Cabinet:**

#### ***Recommendation 1***

Continue to give high priority to tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), matching the high priority that residents give to this policy in Council surveys, and noting that our good progress has been recognised by the Audit Commission and the Home Office. The Committee recommend that Cabinet approve the updated ASB strategy 2004-2008 for publication.

#### ***Recommendation 2***

Support our view that it is not helpful to see young people as a group as the problem. A minority of young people cause problems while others are victims of ASB or unfairly stigmatised. The Committee suggest that Cabinet ask the Education and Children's Services Group to report back to Cabinet with further policies that ensure children and young people are consulted, involved and given opportunities to engage in positive activities. The Committee note Cabinet's intention to provide additional youth centres but seek confirmation of timing and funding.

#### ***Recommendation 3***

Welcome the expansion of early intervention and family work through the increase in Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and parenting training in the borough. The Committee suggest Cabinet ask officers to ensure we learn from these experiences in order to develop a long-term plan for preventative work with children and families that reaches out to families lacking parental control.

#### ***Recommendation 4***

Ask officers in Education and Children's Services Group to encourage schools to review behaviour issues, including through the citizenship curriculum, so that young people develop an appreciation of good behaviour as an integral part of good citizenship.

#### ***Recommendation 5***

Ask officers to bring to Cabinet a strategy for develop consistent standards across housing providers in tackling housing-related ASB in the borough. This should include:

- a. Asking all housing providers to sign up to the RESPECT Standards for Housing Management, launched in August 2006 by the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- b. Ensuring that Registered Social Landlords have the same status as Hillingdon Homes in terms of service from the Council on ASB, including direct access to help and advice from the ASB Co-ordinator.

- c. Clarifying the respective roles of the police, private sector housing team, Hillingdon Homes and the community safety team in relation to tackling housing ASB.

***Recommendation 6***

Recognise that the Mediation Service has an important role in dealing with disputes between neighbours.

***Recommendation 7***

Raise with TfL the problems created by giving free travel to all young people at all hours. Consider suggesting that free travel is not available late in the evening (e.g. after 9pm). Ask TfL to step up action to tackle ASB on public transport and to give increased publicity to action taken in order to have a deterrent effect. Welcome the appointment of 18 new Police Community Support Officers in the borough to work on safety on the buses.

***Recommendation 8***

Ask officers to report to an early Cabinet meeting with proposals for encouraging businesses across the borough to take greater responsibility for removing graffiti from their premises. The Committee recommend that this include publicity on the ways to remove graffiti and evidence showing that not dealing with graffiti encourages a build up of graffiti and encourages other crimes. Ask officers to take a tough line with intractable cases and use enforcement powers. Welcome the appointment of a Police Anti-Graffiti Officer, funded by the Council, who will increase the intelligence about, and detection of, graffiti vandals.

***Recommendation 9***

Ask the Community Safety Team to produce a handy guide for Councillors on the appropriate people to contact and best steps to take when dealing with ASB problems. Encourage all Councillors to engage with Safer Neighbourhood Panels in their wards.

## **2. Background, Terms of Reference and Methodology**

### **Aim of the review**

1. To identify recommendations for the next stage of development of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour strategy.

### **Terms of Reference**

2. These were to:

- i. Review the extent to which the Council's current policy and practice on anti-social behaviour (ASB) meets the needs of residents, the Council and its partners.
- ii. Consider the implications of new responsibilities on councils and their partners set out in the Government's 'RESPECT Action Plan'.
- iii. Identify recommendations for change in the Council's ASB Strategy.

### **Background and importance**

3. The Council has had an anti-social behaviour strategy since 2004, available on the Council's website at [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/cpa/strategies/asb\\_strat\\_0408.pdf](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/cpa/strategies/asb_strat_0408.pdf).

4. Aspects of Hillingdon's work to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) have already been subjects of an overview and scrutiny review in 2004/5, which made recommendations on CCTV and education and youth provision.

5. Members and officers are aware from personal, phone and mail contacts, as well as from regular council surveys, of the continued high priority that residents of the Borough give to tackling anti-social behaviour. A 2005 residents' survey on crime and disorder found 90% were concerned about crime in general, with 84% concerned about gangs of youths.

6. Hillingdon's high priority for tackling crime is captured in the Council Plan for 2006/7 and beyond, where a key aim is to ensure crime and the fear of crime is falling, policing is visible and our community is safer. Priorities within this are:

- reducing anti-social behaviour
- reducing hate crime
- creating a safe environment – making Hillingdon amongst the safest boroughs in London.

7. For residents, some of the most obvious and irritating signs of anti-social behaviour are graffiti and fly-tipping. Under a commitment to a clean and attractive borough, the Council also has as a priority:

- reducing levels of graffiti by continuing its education programme and removing graffiti, fly-posting and fly-tips within two days (one day for racist and offensive graffiti).

8. A Council motion passed in 2005/6 called for Overview and Scrutiny to prepare an action plan and make recommendations to Cabinet on tackling graffiti.

### **Reasons for the review**

9. The publication in January 2006 of the Government's "RESPECT Action Plan" placed new expectations on local authorities and additional responsibilities on local partnerships - particularly on Councils' social, youth and education services, local parenting providers and others involved in youth, family and education activities. This and the continued high priority given by residents and Councillors to tackling ASB (as described in 5. to 8. above) were the reasons for this review.

### **Key questions**

10. The key questions identified for this review were:

- Parenting and problem families – are we doing all we can to tackle poor parenting skills, weak parent/child relationships and problem families?
- School exclusions – are we effectively tackling school exclusions and bad behaviour? Are we educating pupils about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse?
- Graffiti - are we preventing graffiti through education? Can residents report graffiti easily and are we taking effective action to remove it and meeting our specific targets?
- Drug and Alcohol nuisance – are we tackling this effectively? How well is the borough-wide 'controlled drinking zone' working?
- Housing ASB – are landlords in the borough taking responsibility for tackling ASB?
- Racial Harassment – how well are our policies working?
- Communication – are communications with partners effective? Are we communicating what we are doing on ASB?
- Reporting ASB and feeding back action: how easy is it to report incidents of ASB and receive feedback on the action taken?

### **Methodology**

11. *Documents:* the Committee consider the Council's Community Safety and Drugs strategy (2005-2008), the Hillingdon Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2004-2008, Government's 'RESPECT Action Plan', the Hillingdon Overview and Scrutiny report on Anti-Social Behaviour as well as results from surveys of crime and disorder in the borough.



12. *Witnesses:* The Committee held two witness sessions: the first themed around children, schools and parents; and the second around neighbourhoods, housing, transport and graffiti. At both sessions, the Committee invited one or more community representatives to attend and hear the evidence from officers and agencies, and then give us their perspective. The witnesses that the Committee heard from were:

Theme: children, schools and parents

- Isobel Callaby, Parent Partnership Service Co-ordinator
- Fiona Clough, Police ASBO officer
- Doug Dewey, Police Safer Schools Officer
- Sylvia Smith, NCH/Hillingdon Youth Inclusion Panel
- Sue Woodrow, Pupil Support Manager

Theme: neighbourhoods, housing, transport and graffiti

- Jeff Bannister, Inspector, Hillingdon Police
- Nigel Evans, Police Sergeant, Townfield Safer Neighbour Team.
- Mick Dunckley, Hillingdon ASB Co-ordinator
- David Askwith, Team Leader, Hillingdon Homes ASB Team, Hayes
- Neil Stubbings, Acting Head of Housing, and Kaks Chahal, Acting Manager Housing Advice
- Preston Brooker, Service Delivery Manager, Uxbridge Bus Garage, TfL
- Kathy Sparks, Deputy Director, Environment and Consumer Protection, and Colin Russell, Manager Waste Division.

The community representatives who attended one of the sessions and commented on the evidence from their perspective were:

- Brian Robson (Chairman of South Ruislip Community Association)
- Alison Beasley (Advice Services Co-ordinator, Project 2041 – a local project providing advice, training and learning for young people)
- Peter Smallwood (youth representative)

13. The Chairman of the Committee visited the Youth Bus and talked to the officers and young people using the bus. On 8 March 2007, most Members of the Committee met young people and a youth worker at Brookside Community Centre, Yeading. These young people had been part of a diversion project related to graffiti. The Committee found the discussion of their lives, safety issues and pressures, as well as their confirmation of the value of the project in giving them a new direction, was very helpful.

14. *Safer Neighbourhoods Ward panels:* With the agreement and assistance of Chief Inspector Maurice Hartnett, the Committee consulted the seven longer-established safer neighbourhood ward panels (the other panels only started last year) and invited them to give us their views on the problems, successes and priorities for action in their areas. The Committee sent out 80 letters via the Borough police and received 21 replies.



### 3. Summary and Conclusions

#### Priorities and the Council's ASB strategy

1. The Council has had a strategy to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) since 2004. During this review, the published strategy has been updated to reflect the latest residents' survey information and to reflect action being taken to meet the RESPECT action plan.

2. As described on pages 3 and 4 (paragraphs 5-7) both residents and the council give high priority to tackling anti-social behaviour problems. Anti-social behaviour problems can include unruly gatherings in public places, noise, nuisance neighbours, fly-tipping, graffiti, vandalism, intimidation and harassment<sup>1</sup>. These are activities that can bring misery to the lives of law-abiding residents so it is not surprising that residents' surveys show anti-social behaviour is the number one worry. Our consultation with seven safer neighbourhood panels echoes the results of the much larger council survey of residents last year, ranking the top ASB problems, in order, as:

- Gangs of youths
- ASB on public transport
- Graffiti
- Harassment
- Litter/fly-tipping.

4. The Council and its partners, especially the Metropolitan Police Service, have put in place policies and services to reduce ASB. An ASB strategy has been developed and an ASB Co-ordinator appointed to co-ordinate activities. The Council funds the whole of the Police ASB team, one of whose members is based in the Council's Community Safety office and has been responsible for revising the process for using Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. A Council-funded police officer dedicated solely to tackling graffiti vandals has recently been appointed. CCTV has increased across the borough and the Council now has two CCTV vehicles. Nineteen environmental visual audits have been carried out up to February 2007 in wards across the borough to identify work that needs doing to improve the look of an area. Police Safer Neighbourhood teams have been rolled out across the borough.

5. The Audit Commission's 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment praised the Council's Community Safety work, scoring it a 'strong 3'. The Government's current 'RESPECT' literature features Hillingdon as an example of good practice in its use of Dispersal powers. There have been other tangible successes evident in the regular survey of residents. With the help of 'Operation Scrapit', concern about abandoned vehicles has fallen from 78% in 2001 to 48% in 2006. The fear of crime (all crime and not just ASB) has dropped from 90% in 2005 to 65% in the 2006 survey of 5000 Hillingdon residents.

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<sup>1</sup> The legislation defines anti-social behaviour as 'behaviour which causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more people (as the perpetrator(s))'.

6. Concern about ASB has also dropped but not to the same extent (from 91% in 2005 to 80% in 2006). Four out of five residents are still worried about ASB. The Council has made progress but needs to continue to give high priority to tackling ASB, building on successes and meeting residents' priorities.

### ***Recommendation 1***

**The Committee recommend that the Cabinet continue to give high priority to tackling ASB, matching the high priority that residents give to this policy in Council surveys, and noting that our good progress has been recognised by the Audit Commission and the Home Office. The Committee recommend that Cabinet approve the updated ASB strategy 2004-2008 for publication.**

### Respect for young people

6. Whilst acts of ASB are real and painful, there is also a fear of ASB that can sometimes be more imagined than real. Young people, especially young men, have often had a bad press in recent years - for their style of dress (hoodies), for hanging around and for generally being seen as threatening. There are a minority involved in ASB and firm, early action needs to be taken to deal with them, but this should not lead to all young people being seen as a problem.

7. A recent Unicef report put UK children at the bottom of a league table of child well-being among rich nations. Children's subjective well-being, involvement with family and trust in their peers were all in the lower rankings, while involvement in risky behaviours such as smoking, using drugs or drink, fighting or bullying, or underage sex was higher than other rich countries. In a sense they may be living up to adults' low expectations of young people.

8. The youth representative who attended one of our evidence sessions described how bus drivers had treated him as a potential hooligan, without provocation; how little seems to be done at school to tackle bullying and intimidation; and how there are few good adult role models. There are Council activities that treat young people with respect and involve them, e.g. the Hillingdon Youth Parliament and the regular democracy conferences for young people, but these rarely reach the group that most need them. Services that do, such as park activities and the Youth Bus, sometimes have to battle against the hostility of local residents. Adults across the borough need to take a responsible and caring attitude to young people.

9. The Cabinet have already made a commitment to providing three more centres for youth activities in the borough, as part of their aim of making the borough one where children and young people are healthy, safe and supported. Providing alternative, diversionary activities helps to prevent young people getting involved in ASB. The Committee would like to see this commitment fulfilled.

### ***Recommendation 2***

**The Committee urge the Cabinet to support our view that it is not helpful to see young people as a group as the problem. A minority of young people cause problems while others are victims of ASB or unfairly stigmatised. The Committee suggest that Cabinet ask the Education and Children's Services Group to report back to Cabinet with further policies that ensure children and**

**young people are consulted, involved and given opportunities to engage in positive activities. The Committee note Cabinet's intention to provide additional youth centres but seek confirmation of timing and funding.**

Early intervention, parenting and work with schools

10. The Government's RESPECT Action Plan, published in January 2006, marked a shift away from a focus largely on penalties and restrictions, to a more balanced policy that recognises the need to tackle problems early on, and to tackle the family context. Parents have a crucial role to play in shaping a child's behaviour. Lack of parental control and involvement with a child can translate into bad behaviour, truancy and anti-social activities. Conversely parents can do much to reinforce good patterns of behaviour. Attitudes to parenting skills are changing – they are now seen as something that all parents should have and may need help with – but there is still a need to reach out to families that lack parental control and those where there may be a resistance to becoming involved with projects.

11. Hillingdon's Parenting Partnership Co-ordinator described to us the steps taken to increase good parenting. The borough Parenting Partnership offers targeted support on a one-to-one basis, group support for parents and carers of children up to 11yrs and teen group support for parents/carers of children over 11yrs. Referrals can come from schools, support groups, health bodies, parents or other agencies. The Partnership facilitates parent support groups and access to "Triple P" programmes. "Triple P" positive parenting programmes promote good communication and strong relationships between parents and children and are recommended by government departments and widely used. As reported to the Committee in September 2006, there are 170 trained "Triple P" practitioners in Hillingdon.

12. Hillingdon's Youth Inclusion Support Project works with young people aged 8-17 who are at high risk of anti-social and offending behaviour to prevent them getting into more serious trouble. Assessments cover the family, school and activities of young people. Support strategies employed aim to tackle anti-social and offending behaviour, e.g. through anger management, constructive leisure activities, building self-esteem and workshops on drug and alcohol awareness.

13. Young people playing truant or excluded from school for bad behaviour are at risk of becoming engaged in ASB. Hillingdon's Pupil Support Manager told us that 65 pupils were excluded in 2005/6, with the trend fluctuating over past years. In tables published by DfES of unauthorised absences in 2005/6 (calculated using sessions absent – a session is a half day – divided by total sessions) by borough, Hillingdon was 9<sup>th</sup> highest out of 19 outer London Boroughs for primary schools and 3<sup>rd</sup> highest out of 19 outer London Borough for secondary schools. In 2005, 4,936 primary pupils and 5,748 secondary pupils took unauthorised absence. These figures, however, include all reasons for unauthorised absence, not just truancy. Based on school reports, the Pupil Support Manager advised us that "persistent truants" in 2005 were 1274 primary pupils and 338 secondary school pupils.

14. The Educational Welfare Service (EWS) plays a key role in tackling truancy and attendance problems. Between 2004/5 and 2006 both referrals to and action taken on unauthorised absences by the EWS increased:

	<u>2004/5</u>	<u>2005/6</u>
Unauthorised absence cases referred	773	1435
No. of fast track attendance panels in schools	362	381
No. of Fixed Penalty Notices issued	108	165
No. of Cases taken to court	38	61
Intensive Connexions Personal Advisor support for pupils at Hillingdon Schools	33	134

15. The Police also have a key role in early intervention and preventative work. Through the Safer Schools Partnership, police work with and in schools to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and victimisation amongst young people and the wider community. Acceptable Behaviour Contracts – ABCs – are used to engage with both parents and children, in the early stages of a child getting into trouble. A key part of setting up an ABC is a visit by the specialist police officer and ASB co-ordinator to discuss reasons for the child’s actions and what needs to be done. Help and support can be offered and links can now be made to housing status so that non-compliance can carry the risk of eviction. In February 2007, 52 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts were in place. Several hundred have been used to tackle problems early over the last few years. Although less well known, they are used much more frequently than Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), of which there have been 63 locally since the power was introduced in 2004. ABCs are used as an effective way of preventing young people from going on to receive ASBOs.

16. The expansion of early intervention and preventative work is welcomed and in the direction encouraged by the government’s RESPECT Action Plan. Action needs to continue to reduce our relatively high levels of unauthorised absences in schools. The Committee suggest that the citizenship curriculum could be reviewed to identify ways it might help young people to develop respect for each other and wider society. Overall, the Committee feel that the next steps should be to evaluate and learn from the different strands of work described above in order to develop a long-term strategy for early intervention and preventative work with the borough’s children and families. In particular, this strategy needs to reach out to families lacking parental control, and to those who need to change for their children’s sake but may be resistant to help.

***Recommendation 3***

**The Committee ask Cabinet to welcome the expansion of early intervention and family work through the increase in Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and parenting training in the borough. The Committee suggest Cabinet ask officers to ensure The Committee learn from these experiences in order to develop a long-term plan for preventative work with children and families that reaches out to families lacking parental control.**

***Recommendation 4***

**The Committee suggest Cabinet asks officers in Education and Children’s Services Group to encourage schools to review behaviour issues, including**

**through the citizenship curriculum, so that young people develop an appreciation of good behaviour as an integral part of good citizenship.**

### Housing and harassment

17. Hillingdon Homes (c. 10,000 properties) have a team of 6 staff dealing with ASB. They take strong enforcement action such as eviction where there is evidence of drug problems; spend around £300,000 a year on graffiti removal and £70,000 on fly-tipping removal on the worst estates. They deal with a large number of neighbour disputes and encourage the use of mediation. The Council's Private Sector Housing ASB and Racial Harassment team (6 staff) is combined with the Private Sector Noise team (5 staff) and covers around 11,000 private rented homes and 75,000 privately owned homes in the borough. In 2005/6, the Private Sector ASB and Racial Harassment team investigated 634 cases of ASB and 69 of racial harassment. The Committee welcome the fact that there is also a requirement to consult the police at the planning stage about the safety aspects of new housing developments.

18. Members and officers confirmed that Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) have a mixed record on dealing with ASB. Suggestions of ways to improve standards where RSLs are not adequately tackling ASB included having protocols with RSLs, some form of buy-in arrangement to the Hillingdon Homes ASB service or more work with RSLs that are thought not to be dealing with problems. It was recognised that smaller RSLs may not have the resources to provide a service. The ASB Co-ordinator already works with RSLs and said there are successful examples of work that can provide examples for other providers. A stronger link with the ASB Co-ordinator and proactive action to raise standards of housing management were agreed as the way forward.

19. A single freephone telephone number for racial harassment reports offers connections to either Hillingdon Homes or the Council. The Housing Advice Officer suggested there could be more information sharing between agencies; greater action across all council services; and expanded training on how to deal with racial harassment.

20. Our concern on housing and harassment is with uneven standards in tackling problems across housing providers and lack of direct access for RSLs to the ASB Co-ordinator. The Committee welcomed in comments to Cabinet this month the proposals in the Cabinet budget report for 2007/8 –2010/11 for a reconfiguration of the Council's Housing ASB and noise service that would relocate the noise team in the Environment and Consumer Protection Group and the ASB/RH team to the Community Safety team in the Planning and Community Safety Group. This provides an improved structure and connections that should be the basis for consistent high standards in dealing with housing ASB.

21. As a further impetus to consistent high standards, The Committee recommend that all the housing providers operating within the borough are asked to sign up to, the RESPECT Standard for Housing Management and helped towards achieve this. Further details on the Standard can be found in the appendices.

22. Several of our housing witnesses spoke of the neighbour relationship problems that can lead to complaints of ASB. In many cases these can be resolved without resort to police or housing action, if mediation is used.

***Recommendation 5***

**The Committee suggest that Cabinet ask officers to bring to Cabinet a strategy for develop consistent standards across housing providers in tackling housing-related ASB in the borough. This should include:**

- a. Asking all housing providers to sign up to the RESPECT Standards for Housing Management, launched in August 2006 by the Department for Communities and Local Government.**
- b. Ensuring that Registered Social Landlords have the same status as Hillingdon Homes in terms of service from the Council on ASB, including direct access to help and advice from the ASB Co-ordinator.**
- c. Clarifying the respective roles of the police, private sector housing team, Hillingdon Homes and the community safety team in relation to tackling housing ASB.**

***Recommendation 6***

**The Committee propose that Cabinet recognise that the Mediation Service has an important role in dealing with disputes between neighbours.**

Transport ASB

23. Broken bus shelters were a worry for 68% of residents surveyed in the Council's 2006 residents' survey. In our consultation with safer neighbourhood panels, ASB on public transport emerged as a very high concern for four out of five of those who responded. The Committee therefore welcome the appointment of 18 new Police Community Safety Officers in the borough to work on safety on the buses.

24. The Service Delivery Manager at Uxbridge Bus Garage described to us some of the action being taken to combat ASB on the buses. The Garage was running a special campaign at that time. Two buses are equipped with extra CCTV and are used in hotspots to catch troublemakers. A special operation with police travelling on buses for a week has been used in the past, but ties up police manpower. Evidence, e.g. from the CCTV cameras, is always collected and stored in packs ready for prosecution if the perpetrator is traced. The cost of graffiti is high, with a bus window costing £300 to replace. The solutions to repairing scratched windows are window replacement or using film on top to hide scratches.

25. The Committee are concerned about the impact of free buses for young people on ASB on public transport. The police told us that known troublemakers now travel to nearby areas, where they are less likely to be recognised, and cause trouble. Anecdotal evidence is that young people with passes are used as a shield



for older members of gangs to sneak on board for free. When groups board buses it is often difficult for the driver to challenge all the members. The Committee suggest that a solution to lessen these problems may be to restrict the hours that free passes apply to, so that they end mid-evening. The Committee also feel the public would be more reassured if they knew of the action TfL was taking to combat ASB on public transport.

### ***Recommendation 7***

**The Committee suggest that Cabinet raise with TfL the problems created by giving free travel to all young people at all hours. Consider suggesting that free travel is not available late in the evening (e.g. after 9pm) and ask TfL to step up action to tackle ASB on public transport and to give increased publicity to action taken in order to have a deterrent effect. The Committee suggest that Cabinet welcome the appointment of 18 new Police Community Support Officers in the borough to work on safety on the buses.**

### Graffiti

26. Graffiti, as our Police witness described to us, is not art but criminal damage. The police aim to take strong action against perpetrators, with schools being encouraged to help identify culprits through their hand-writing. The police and Hillingdon Homes seek compensation from perpetrators when possible through the courts. The Committee heard concern that some shopkeepers are failing to clean off graffiti, also that the costs to the Council of cleaning graffiti are rising. Businesses failing to take action may be unaware that evidence indicates this will attract more graffiti. Currently the Council will clean off the graffiti free, though this is being reconsidered as demands and costs rise. Enforcement Orders can be used but are generally reserved for larger companies and particular circumstances such as tall buildings.

27. Graffiti is a concern to the public – the numbers in the Council's residents' survey saying it is of high concern rose from 58% in 2004/5 to 67% in 2005/6. It remains important to take effective action to tackle the problem.

### ***Recommendation 8***

**The Committee suggest Cabinet ask officers to come forward with proposals for encouraging businesses across the borough to take greater responsibility for removing graffiti from their premises. The Committee recommend that this include publicity on the ways to remove graffiti and evidence showing that not dealing with graffiti encourages a build up and other crimes. The Committee recommend that Cabinet ask officers to take a tough line with intractable cases and use enforcement powers and welcome the appointment of a Police Anti-Graffiti Officer, funded by the Council, who will increase intelligence about and detection of graffiti vandals.**

### Helping Councillors to deal with residents' complaints about ASB

29. The high priority that residents give to tackling ASB and the levels of worry about it, mean ASB is one of the issues frequently raised with Councils. There is advice available in a variety of forms about aspects of ASB but The Committee feel

it would aid Members and benefit the public if the Community Safety Team were to produce a handy guide for Councillors on how to deal with ASB questions.

30. Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the panels of residents that they liaise with have been a welcomed development in the last couple of years. The Committee urge all Councillors to engage with their local Safer Neighbourhood Panel in order to help focus Police and Council activities on where they are most needed.

***Recommendation 9***

**The Committee suggest Cabinet ask the Community Safety Team to produce a handy guide for Councillors on the appropriate people to contact and best steps to take when dealing with ASB problems. Cabinet should also encourage all Councillors to engage with Safer Neighbourhood Panels in their wards.**