Green spaces . . . safer spaces

Anti-social behaviour in green spaces
CONTENTS

1 Introduction

2 What sorts of crime and anti-social behaviour happen in green spaces?
   Feeling unsafe
   Dogs and dog fouling
   Litter, rubbish and fly-tipping
   Vandalism and graffiti
   Threatening Youths

3 What is being done to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour?
   Northumbria Police
   Mobile Patrol
   NS security
   Newcastle Safety Strategy
   Graffiti Forum
   Envirocall
   Mobile patrol
   Police
   Neighbourhood Wardens
   Rapid Response Team
   Ranger Service
   Park keepers

4 Options for action: Good practice examples
   Ideas from other Local Authorities and Organisations

5 Options for action: suggestions from consultation
   Local People
   Staff Survey

6 Recommendations

Annexe B Discussion Paper on Dog Fouling
Annexe C Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy
Annexe D Brief for Research by Northumbria University
Annexe E Public Opinion: Surveys and research
Annexe F References and acknowledgements
1 Introduction

1.1 Crime, the fear of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in green spaces are some of the things that most worry people and put them off using and enjoying the spaces for relaxation and recreation. The activities of a few offenders affect almost everyone who uses or would like to use green space. Crimes and various types of anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, graffiti, under-age drinking, sex offences and assaults, do occur in parks and green spaces. People can see for themselves the effects of vandal damage, fly tipping, spray painting, discarded bottles, cans and glue containers, trampling and wheel ruts and they are put off using the areas most badly or most frequently abused. Some spaces have a worse reputation than others and they are often areas that are underused by the rest of the community. Tall, dense shrubbery and lack of lighting also attract undesirable activities.

1.2 The fear of crime is a very strong factor for many people and word travels fast when serious incidents happen. Crime, particularly serious crime, is extremely rare in parks and other public places. When it does happen it is usually very widely reported at the time, but most users of Newcastle’s green spaces will not experience crime.

1.3 During the Green Spaces Strategy preparation we carried out extensive consultation and the following came up as major concerns over and over again. (See Para 2.1) Details of the consultations are on the Parks and Green Space web page. In a 2002 survey the top bad points were as follows with crime and anti-social behaviour accounting for five out of the seven.

1. litter (32%)
2. dog fouling (26%)
3. not well maintained (19%)
4. unsafe (15%)
5. vandalism (11%)
6. insufficient green space (10%)
7. threatening youths (10%)

In specific consultations with young people and disabled people, personal safety was among their top concerns.

1.4 This is a strong wake up call for this Green Spaces Strategy. It would be very wrong to ignore this heartfelt plea from so many people across all parts of the city and all ages and abilities, to make green spaces safer. Indeed if we fail to tackle the very negative perceptions many people have about their personal safety, the strategy will not be effective as we will not succeed in achieving the vision developed with the Consultative Forum in February 2003.
‘Newcastle’s green spaces belong to local people. They should be cherished, accessible, safe and clean – managed for the future and there for everyone to enjoy.’

This vision statement was developed with the Consultative Forum, February 2003.

1.5 A crime is an action punishable by law, forbidden by statute or ‘injurious to public welfare’. In the English legal system a crime can be either summary or indictable. Summary offences are acts that Parliament has specifically decided can be tried before local magistrates. They are generally minor and defined by statute. Often forms of misconduct, dumping litter, fly tipping, driving too fast, drunkenness, petty theft and minor assaults are summary offences.

1.6 Indictable offences are generally more serious, causing or threatening to cause serious harm, loss or injury to another individual. Indictable offences include homicide, major theft, rape, and perjury and are recognised under Common Law as well as by statute.

1.7 The fear of crime
The fear of crime affects a great many more people than will ever be victims of crime. Our research shows that the younger and older age groups and disabled people, have most fear of crime. Those most at risk of crime are young adults, particularly young males. The Urban Green Spaces Task Force Report (Working Group 4) said this in 2002.

‘It is becoming clear that parks are not any more susceptible to crime than other areas accessible to the public. Research is now confirming this view and generally showing the opposite, that parks are safer than the streets. However, parks and green spaces are often criticised as unsafe places on the basis of prejudice not fact. There is a general acceptance that vandalism and petty damage is reduced in a well-maintained site.’

‘A recent survey by the Urban Parks Forum shows that 30% of people will not use our public parks at all, mainly through fear. Many of them are children and older people, who should have the time and opportunity to enjoy our public spaces.’
(Sir Stuart Lipton, foreword to Thinking Space – CABE Space Work Plan, 2003)

The government acknowledges that crime is driving people out of parks illustrated by this press release in 2002.

‘Crime, anti-social behaviour and litter are keeping the public away from parks and other urban space,’ says planning minister Lord Falconer. He is calling for a co-ordinated response from Whitehall, local councils and police in the battle to improve public confidence in their surroundings. He told the transport, local government and the
regions select committee inquiry:

‘Our streets and public spaces are something we all experience, every day on our way to work, school or the shops. If it is dirty and feels unsafe then people’s quality of life is severely affected. Better street lighting and more CCTV cameras will make people feel safe. In terms of public safety, one of the reasons why streets or parks are less used than they should be is because of people’s fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.’

1.8 Anti-social behaviour
Some behaviour is just unpleasant or mildly threatening, for example playing loud music, energetic skate-boarders, or a large group of people gathered together. Other anti-social activity is unlawful: for example leaving litter or fly-tipping, underage drinking or criminal damage to equipment and facilities. If the offence is described under a statute it is a summary offence and the police can take action against an offender. For example the 1972 Road Traffic Act prohibits the use of a road vehicle on paths and open space. The Dogs (Fouling of land) Act 1996 requires owners to clear up dog mess.

1.9 Action can also be taken against offenders who breach the local bye-laws. Bye-laws are made by the Local Authority and usually enforced by their own staff. Actions prohibited by bye-laws in particular places may include things like having a dog off the leash, drinking in public places, or driving a trail or quad bike. Acts such as trespass, vandalism and damage can also be addressed through the civil courts. These distressing but minor offences are often not reported to the Police.

1.10 How do people experience this in green spaces?
Popular, well-used green spaces have less crime and anti-social behaviour than certain quiet, neglected or out of the way spaces that few people go to. However even well used areas may be no-go areas for most law-abiding people at certain times, particularly at night. It is often the fact that they are quiet, neglected and out of the way that makes potential users wary of using them in the first place. If the area is difficult for police or other services to gain access, or difficult to place under surveillance of any sort, then people can easily be frightened away. The presence of quantities of rubbish, dog dirt, graffiti, broken fences and equipment, non-functioning lighting and other signs of bad behaviour shows us that no one is doing anything to address the damage and abuse. This in turn gives a message to the perpetrators that in this space the bad behaviour is going to be tolerated, or at the very least, no one is likely to do much to stop it. The very nature of the space can attract would-be miscreants for their various unlawful or anti-social purposes, since there is little chance of being disturbed or discovered. This is a vicious circle. The more the space is abused, the less anyone will want to use it.
‘Neglect is the parent of vandalism, and long term neglect can lead to persistent vandalism. Vandalism becomes intractable only where the effects of petty damage are permitted to accumulate. Anti-social behaviour can usually be linked directly to reduced levels of staffing. Un-staffed or inadequately staffed parks invite problems. Poorly maintained buildings and equipment are more susceptible to vandalism.’

(Local Authority Owned Parks Needs Assessment: 2000 ILAM/ DETR/English Heritage.)

‘Tangible damage leads to a sense of insecurity and permissiveness in the face of petty delinquency. A broken window pane that remains un-repaired sends out the signal that it is acceptable to commit other crimes and that the space in question is vulnerable’

(Safety & Public Spaces: the Role of Urban Planning – Institute for Urban Planning & Development of the Paris Ile-de-France Region)

1.11 What is being done?
Work is underway to find out more about anti-social or criminal behaviour occurring in Newcastle and this means looking at green spaces as well. We are actively locating the places most at risk and looking at ways to deter crime and make Newcastle a safer city. This action is being led and co-ordinated by Newcastle’s Community Safety Partnership. The partnership is currently preparing an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for the City. (See Paragraph 3.4)

1.12 Newcastle has security patrols for parks: details are given in section 3. Discussions are also underway with Newcastle City Council’s Community Safety Team and with Northumbria police to find ways to improve this service.

1.13 People have a role to play too. It is important that users of parks and spaces report criminal activity, vandalism, graffiti, youth disorder and other anti-social behaviour. The police will record all reported crimes and other damage can be reported to the Council via Envirocall. The message on crime and anti-social behaviour is a fairly simple one. Improved security in parks and spaces will encourage more people to use them and this in turn will deter the bad behaviour.

1.14 Conclusion
This background paper outlines the work that the Green Space Strategy Team have done to examine concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour and looks at what still needs to be done and by whom.
2 What sorts of crime and anti-social behaviour happen in green spaces?

2.1 Introduction
This section is an overview of the concerns people have about anti-social behaviour in parks and on green spaces: the main worries from the Green Spaces Strategy consultation are listed below.
- feeling unsafe
- dogs and dog fouling
- litter, rubbish and fly-tipping
- vandalism and graffiti
- threatening youths

2.2 Feeling unsafe

2.2.1 Certain sections of the community are likely to be at risk at particular times. Extra measures to increase their safety or at least provide reassurance, are needed, tailored to their patterns and places of activity, for example religious services, school finishing times, workplace shift changeovers. In the Green Space Strategy consultations, many people mentioned tall or overgrown shrubbery or hedges as offering cover for potential attackers. Fears vary a lot from person to person and at different times of day or season. It is a fact that in some places tall shrubs are tolerated and valued by the users: in other places they are not. Heaton Park for example, has lots of thick woodland and shrubbery, but also has a Park Keeper presence and we received the following comment.

‘I feel much safer at Heaton Park because there’s a park keeper there.’

Isolated or quiet places are likely to give rise to fears of personal safety, whether there is vegetation or not. Requests for pruning and low planting feature prominently on the wish lists of non-users of parks. One of the conclusions of the Walker Park study was that:

‘...serious consideration should be given to cutting back existing foliage around areas of the playground to allow better visibility, supervision and increase the feeling of safety.’

Where vegetation offers cover close to playgrounds and other places used by youngsters, this is a matter of serious concern.

2.2.2 Research has concluded that the level of concern for personal safety was comparatively high for children and young people aged between five and 15, and particularly so for males. Thus 42 per cent of boys and 17 per cent of girls in this age-range had concerns for their personal safety. 20% of children in the Cambridge study said that they would never go to their favourite play area within a park alone, whilst a
number of children in a study undertaken in Newcastle also expressed similar safety concerns.

2.2.3 In studies carried out elsewhere, summarised in *I never use them*, a research review for Newcastle’s Leisure Services, ethnic minority groups are particularly deterred by security concerns. These include a fear of racist attacks, unfamiliarity with green space landscapes and open space cultures, a lack of attractive facilities or activities, and an uncomfortable feeling of ‘otherness’. In one study, a number of Asian women perceived open spaces as ‘dangerous’, explaining this in relation to gender in addition to racially motivated attacks. Interestingly, at the same time, their expectations of parks were of social places - for extended family outings and social interaction, with spaces clearly failing to live up to the expectations of this group of potential users.

2.2.4 Comments from staff and the public include the following.

‘there have been some dodgy blokes in the bushes, my friend was flashed at.’
‘park keepers feel vulnerable working alone in evenings’
‘one park has managed to get a problem drinker banned - enforced by all staff and the police’
‘residents want dark overgrown areas thinned to stop youths congregating’
‘there are unsavoury people wandering around, there are drunks here every day’
‘there are some odd people hanging around, I was once threatened by someone late at night’
‘there are loads of murderers and paedophiles and that kicking around’
‘there are some very bad people in the area’

2.3 Dogs and dog fouling

2.3.1 One of the main barriers to the use and enjoyment of public green space is dog fouling. Research says 95% of people find it unacceptable to allow a dog to foul and not clear up after it. Dog fouling is perceived as a key environmental problem by the highest percentages of respondents in a variety of surveys – from city wide research to site-specific studies. In a government study, 68% of non-users of parks and open spaces listed dog fouling as a major barrier preventing their use - the highest percentage of respondents giving any one reason. However it is important that dogs are welcomed as 80% of regular users of parks and green spaces are dog walkers and their presence leads to a greater sense of security for many other park users. National research has shown that ‘walking the dog’ is one of the top three main reasons people give for visiting a green space while concerns about dogs and dog fouling are third in the top five barriers that prevent or limit people from using them. Newcastle's own research reinforces this, see *I never use them* Leisure Services’ Evaluation of the Rationale Behind The Non Use of Parks and Open Spaces
preparation February 2004. Dog dirt was the top dislike at Heaton Park (7%), Jesmond Dene and Paddy Freeman’s Park (33%) but did not make the top five at Elswick Park.

2.3.2 The quality audit of parks and green spaces 2002-4 rated each green space over 0.1 hectare for dog fouling. The larger parks and spaces generally scored well and the audit has proved useful in pinpointing some of the worst areas for dog mess. Two of the larger sites (over 0.4 hectare) scored poorly for levels of dog fouling; Iris Brickfields and St Lawrence Park. Some smaller amenity green spaces at Kingston Park were rated among the worst in the city. There are certain roadside verges where dog owners park the vehicle and let their pet out for exercise. Weather conditions can result in more than usual fouling: snowfall for example. Sports pitches are often affected by pets whose owners walk the perimeter, allowing the animal to foul the playing surface some 10 to 15 metres away. On the other hand many spaces rated very well in the audits and there were a significant number where no dog fouling was seen. Efforts to clean up may be becoming more effective and dog owners are behaving more responsibly in some places. There is no place for complacency but equally Newcastle’s parks and green spaces are not full of dog dirt. Some of our respondents may be exaggerating the problem because it is so very offensive to them. One comment made was that ‘Jesmond Dene is covered in dog dirt.’ - Clearly it is not.

2.3.3 Newcastle City Council has been actively trying to improve its performance on enforcing bye-laws on dog fouling but catching offenders and their dogs is not easy. Many dog walkers exercise their pets in the early morning or at night. After dark even a responsible owner might have difficulty locating and scooping the mess if the dog is off the leash.

2.3.4 Legislation is listed below. The dates show this is not a new problem.

- **Public Health Act 1875 Section 164**
- **Open Spaces Act 1906 Sections 12 & 15**
- **Housing Act 1985 Section 23 applies to amenity greens.**
- **Public Health Amendment Act 1907 (Section 82 seashores, Section 83 promenades.)**
- **Local Government Act 1972 (Section 235)**
- **Environmental Protection Act 1990 Part IV**
- **Countryside Act 1968 (Section 41)**
- **Dogs (Fouling of land) Act 1996**
Local Authorities have powers to introduce bye-laws making it an offence to allow a dog to foul a footway, verge or other public area, to require removal of dog faeces from public areas and to ban dogs completely from specified areas. The Home Office publication *Model Bye-laws for the Regulation of Dogs* was issued in 1987.

The requirement to clean up dog mess in the 1996 Act does not extend to moorland, heath, common land (except urban commons) or agricultural land. The grazed parts of the Town Moor are therefore exempt.

2.3.5 Measures to tackle dog fouling still need to be more rigorous and more effective. Enforcement must be planned carefully so that we can get the most out of our resources. The Council is training more staff who work on green spaces to be able to take action. However the enforcement operation also needs to target particular locations and times of day and night. Successful and well-publicised prosecutions are essential to get the message across.

2.3.6 In some spaces a total ban on dogs may be justified. Play areas and sports pitches are places where dog fouling really cannot be tolerated and prevention as well as enforcement should be a priority. In other places dogs should be kept on a leash. This is not just a precaution to prevent fouling but it would also address the concerns many people express about dogs running free. Uncontrolled dogs can be very intimidating particularly to youngsters. There is legislation as follows to restrict dangerous dogs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Town Police Clauses Act 1847 Section 28</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animals Act 1971</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Road Traffic Act 1988 Section 27</strong> (under which a Local Authorities can make orders for dogs to be kept on a lead on highways, including Public Rights of Way.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dog training classes are an option and the local park is a reasonable place to organise these events and promote responsible dog ownership as well as offering a community activity.

2.3.7 More bins for dog mess are probably needed. In some areas the number of responsible dog owners has reached a level where they are in the majority and this fact in itself tends to influence the rest to follow suit. However the bins in these areas can often be full to overflowing. The practice among dog walkers of discarding the plastic bag and its contents in undergrowth or hanging the bag on fences or railings, is on
the increase. There is no excuse for these practices and no reason why any dog owner should not take the rubbish home for disposal.

2.3.8 The Green Space Strategy team prepared a paper in 2002 outlining the problems of dog fouling. This is included in Annexe B.

2.3.9 Comments made in questionnaire responses about dog fouling included the following.
- ‘dog owners not cleaning up their pet’s toilet’
- ‘callous and irresponsible dog owners.’
- ‘a patrol dog warden, on the spot fines to dog owners who let their animals run loose’
- ‘dogs foul on the grass and pavements’

2.4 Litter, rubbish and fly-tipping

2.4.1 Littering and fly tipping are becoming increasing problems and the Council has a responsibility not just to collect the refuse from the bins and containers but to tidy up generally. This is all done at public expense. It is an increasingly heavy burden, particularly given the popularity of “fast food”, most now supplied in non-biodegradable plastic containers, wrappers, cartons and bottles, thrown aside after the contents have been consumed. Of particular concern because of the hazard posed for the public and for council employees who have to deal with them are discarded syringes and condoms. The council spends valuable resources clearing up discarded rubbish that should not be there in the first place. This means that correspondingly less resource is available for normal maintenance, improvement and repairs. The increasing demands from the public and Government for Local Authorities to achieve better cleansing, may be adding to the problem in that the Council becomes a victim of its own success. If people know that the streets and parks are going to be cleansed regularly by the Council, there is little incentive to stop leaving rubbish. Efforts are being made to educate and persuade the public not to leave litter but these will probably not change established behaviour. The end result of all the litter collection is yet more non-biodegradable waste going to incinerators and landfill at huge long term cost to everyone. In the long run this approach is unsustainable for local authorities and it is the government that must act to restrict packaging options for manufacturers.

2.4.2 In the audit results for cleanliness, litter and fly tipping, larger parks and gardens scored well. Litter was the worst element of the cleanliness survey in 3 large sites and many smaller ones. They scored poorly with overflowing litter bins and litter strewn around. In some of the larger parks volunteers help with litter picks and this makes a big difference. There is scope to involve more people in reducing litter but there has to be a pay back in return for helping or just being more careful about leaving litter. A private grounds maintenance contractor for example,
offers things like a free firework display if litter is kept to an acceptable level. The saving on litter collection funds the reward.

2.4.3 Comments from staff and the public, about litter and rubbish (and again there were many to choose from) included the following.

‘the level of vandalism and amount of litter lying about’
‘rubbish, muddy paths in winter’
‘litter, litter and more litter’
‘we need the sand in the sand pit renewed each month. It’s disgusting - you find lumps of glass, dog poo and cans in it’
‘sometimes you see used needles and condoms lying around’
‘there are rats in the sand pit that’s in Walker Park’
‘kids leave their broken wine bottles all over’
‘glass and litter lie till late in the morning’
‘after the litter picking is done, there is little time for anything else’
‘with litter, prevention is better than cure’

2.5 Vandalism and graffiti

2.5.1 Damage to public parks and green spaces by vandals is extensive and has almost become a fact of life. Certain features are regularly targeted: newly planted young trees, play equipment, fences and barriers (- especially if constructed of timber), lighting and signs. School grounds are also very vulnerable to attack. Some acts of vandalism can be deliberately malicious: for example razor blades embedded in children’s play features, theft of safety equipment and arson attacks.

2.5.2 In the audit categories for vandalism and graffiti on the larger sites, there was a link between poor safety, unacceptable levels of graffiti and signs of vandalism. The better scoring sites were often more open, had a lot of people using them, or had a visible staff presence.

2.5.3 There are many consultation responses on vandalism, graffiti and *wilful damage*:

‘look at the vandalism on the swings’
‘the fences have been damaged’
‘there seems to be a continual threat of graffiti and vandalism in the park’
‘there is a lot of vandalism in the places where we go, the vandalism is done by teenagers, but sometimes it is adults’
‘there are very poor levels and quality of environmental maintenance (the incidence of broken glass, litter, bottles and cans, fly tipping, lack of litter bins, leaf collection, patchy tree care)’
‘the graffiti on the benches and walls looks terrible, action should be taken before it gets worse’
2.6 Threatening Youths

2.6.1 Young adults and teenagers come in for a lot of criticism but it would be wrong to assume that they are all up to no good. For some more vulnerable or fearful members of the community, just the presence of a group of youngsters can seem threatening. The larger the group and the more lively or noisy, the greater the sense of insecurity for others. Yet the group may be doing nothing wrong at all.

2.6.2 The following are examples of the sort of comments made in consultation.

- you find more youngsters hanging round in the park at night time - about 40 of them on a nightly basis
- there are older lads in gangs hanging about the park
- there are other kids throwing fireworks at people
- there’s too many charvers knocking around in the parks
- Park keepers are harassed by young people - wheelbarrows tipped etc
- when you go to parks and see groups of charvers and drunks it puts you off
- youths come on the fields on their motorbikes

2.7 Conclusions

Whilst the comments we have received show very clearly the level of concern, much of the information available is anecdotal or subjective, passed around by word of mouth and generally making people’s fears worse, not better. There is no denying that crime and anti-social behaviour happens on green spaces and some of the results are clearly to be seen by any user. However to be able to tackle these very real concerns properly, the Council needs clear information about what is happening, where, in what pattern, how frequently and whether there are identifiable risk factors. We also need better feedback on how effective our current measures are and whether they could be improved. There is a danger of introducing more and more operations to deter crime and anti-social behaviour and to tackle the mess left behind. All this effort is costly and does nothing to address the cause or source of the problem. We need to be sure the response is appropriate and offers good value for money. There are choices to be made and they need to be based on good information.
3 What is being done to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour?

3.1 Northumbria Police

3.1.1 The Northumbria Police liaison officer working with the Community Safety Partnership has been a member of the Green Space Consultative Forum and has provided the following description of the Police role on green spaces.

3.1.2 Patrol
Northumbria Police in Newcastle Area Command carry out patrols in parks and green spaces as part of their patrol functions. Given the nature of the parks and green spaces, patrols are generally carried out on foot but can also be done by officers on pedal cycles or in vehicles. Other resources can be called upon to patrol such as motor cycle officers and those from the mounted section. In the event of an incident that requires an area to be searched or observed then there is additional support available from the helicopter and aeroplane from the North East Air Support Unit. Most areas of the parks and green spaces are accessible to the police, but health and safety may have to be considered, for example in dense undergrowth or on steep cliffs. In such cases officers who are properly trained and equipped can be utilised and support can also be obtained if necessary from others such as the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

3.1.3 Incidents and crimes
Any incident or crime in a park or green space should be reported to the police in the case of an emergency through the 999 system or by dialling 0191 214 6555 in the same manner as if an incident was occurring in any street or premises. The police have a grading system in relation to their response to incidents reported to them with an emergency call being given a higher priority and a quicker response to those that are not. In the majority of incidents callers will receive a physical response but certain minor types of incident and crimes can be dealt with by means of telephone.

3.1.4 The police have a computerised incident recording system and any incident that is reported including those in or around a green space or park is recorded. From the system it is possible for historic incidents to be researched, along with current intelligence to be analysed for targeted operations. This is quite often carried out in partnership with others.

3.1.5 Problem solving
Across Newcastle there are eight geographical policing areas, each of which has an Inspector who is responsible for it. The Inspectors have
Community Beat Manager teams directly at their disposal and these officers will generally patrol on foot and be visible in uniform to local communities. Meetings are held by the Inspectors with representatives from the City Council such as Housing Managers, Play and Youth staff, Tenancy Enforcement officers, Neighbourhood Services staff and other partners on a regular basis to identify, examine and address local problems. These problems are varied but mainly relate to youth disorder. There are several examples of good partnership working involving the rangers and park managers working together with the police to address problems.

3.1.6 Security
Consultation takes place between partners in relation to security in green spaces and parks. Designing out crime and disorder and improving security has to be taken into consideration when planning new or regeneration schemes and the Local Authority has a duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider crime and disorder in all its decision making processes. The police have officers trained in relation to Crime Prevention who are able to give expert advice.

3.1.7 Events
The police can be called upon to attend events in green spaces and parks such as music, festivals, fetes, charity events etc and in every case the key consideration is given to the safety of the public. The police and the local authority work together upon notification of such events with other partners through a ‘Safer Events Policy’ and decide whether the event requires to be licensed before it can take place. Police resources are not infinite and although it may be possible to provide officers to an event, the overall responsibility to respond to calls from the public and carry out patrols still needs to be met. The number of police resources attending an event will depend on its nature and in some cases private stewards may also be required. If police officers are utilised then it may be necessary for the organiser to pay for all or part of the costs incurred for policing.

3.1.8 To conclude, any incident or a crime no matter what it may be that occurs in a green space or park can and should be reported to the police. Green spaces and parks are important and should be as safe as it is possible to make them for use of the public at large. The website www.northumbria.police.uk contains a great deal of information about Northumbria Police.

3.2 Mobile Patrol
In the summer of 2002 Newcastle City Council introduced the ‘roboparkie’, a security officer riding a motorcycle equipped with an internal radio, intercom system and a mini video camera. The patrol routes and times vary but the period from lunchtime to nightfall is usually covered. The patrol officer can respond to calls for help from
individual park keepers and the public and report problems seen on the patrol to the police or the City Council.

3.3 Neighbourhood Services
City Security provide a 24 hour, rapid response service and employ some of the highest trained security staff in the country, City Security operates a unique system to ensure the uppermost level of safety for the residents of Newcastle. Using state of the art technology and strict codes of practice the security team ensure confidentiality and speedy action. Over 600 properties are now alarmed against fire and burglaries and are constantly monitored via Security Control, whereby the sounding of an alarm is immediately detected. If an alarm is activated, control immediately dispatch the nearest mobile unit to the site. City Security has established close links with Northumbria Police and for instances when a particular building has the need for extra surveillance, this partnership has proved invaluable. Out of hours they carry out spot checks by mobile security staff on sites, which helps deter any unwanted visitors.

City security will respond to any alarm calls for buildings in parks and green spaces and aim to get to a call out within eight minutes. When the motorcycle patrol is not available they also provide cover with vehicle patrols. They receive numerous calls for assistance from staff, particularly during the summer months. The greatest number of these are drink related.

3.4 Newcastle Community Safety Partnership

3.4.1 Since 1998, the following organisations have been working together to tackle crime and disorder across Newcastle.

- Newcastle City Council
- Northumbria Police
- Tyne & Wear Fire Service
- Primary Care Trust (Health)
- Voluntary, private and community agencies

Together, they form the Newcastle Community Safety Partnership. The law says these organisations have to work together to make Newcastle a safer place. Sharing the work and making sure that resources are used in a joined-up way means the agencies are more effective in reducing crime. Newcastle published a Community Safety Strategy in 2002: Newcastle - a Safer City, containing actions to increase community safety and reduce crime and disorder.

3.4.2 Compared with other big UK cities, Newcastle has lower levels of recorded crime. Local consultation (2001-2) has shown that the main concerns are drugs and alcohol, quality of life issues (youth crime, graffiti and criminal damage), theft of or from vehicles, robbery, public disorder, violent crime and house burglary. Many of the types of crime
that are of concern can take place on green spaces. The subject of public disorder was most often mentioned in relation to alcohol intake and public drunkenness. In green spaces the drinking can often involve under-18s. Youth crime is perceived to be a problem especially in the city centre. Main concerns in neighbourhoods were youngsters ‘hanging around in gangs’, making a noise and drinking alcohol. The young people were not necessarily misbehaving but their presence was felt to be intimidating making some people frightened to go out. Other concerns were damage to property including gardens and allotments, defacing places with graffiti, playing football near cars and causing damage, verbal or physical abuse and leaving broken bottles and rubbish after drinking sessions. In North Newcastle, the consultation mentions youths riding motorbikes on public spaces and poaching with guns and lurchers.

The consultation identified five categories of crime hotspots:
- areas with poor street lighting
- places without CCTV coverage
- risk areas such as underpasses and isolated places
- green spaces with overgrown bushes, which were seen as potential hiding places for attackers
- derelict buildings used by gangs of young people as dens

3.4.3 The Community Safety Partnership is currently preparing an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy which will have five key themes.
- building on firm foundations
- families children and young people
- safer and cleaner public places
- local problems local actions
- effective enforcement

The types of behaviour to be tackled include those listed below. The approach will be partnership-based, using many agencies and organisations sharing information and resources and working together.
- harassment of residents or passers-by
- verbal abuse
- criminal damage
- vandalism
- noise nuisance
- writing graffiti
- engaging in threatening behaviour in large groups
- racial abuse
- smoking or drinking while under-age
- substance misuse
- joyriding
- begging
- prostitution
- kerb-crawling
- throwing or firing missiles
- assault
vehicle crime

3.5 Newcastle Graffiti Forum

3.5.1 This group was established in 2000 after a big increase in various forms of graffiti. Membership now includes representatives from the Council, Northumbria Police, Nexus and other major transport operators such as Stagecoach, Telewest, Network Rail, Northumbria Probation Service and Northumbria University. Taking a wide view of issues behind the problems and evolving a range of solutions has always been behind the thinking of the group. In the first 18 months, there was a focus on the traditional practices of enforcement, removal, education and prevention.

3.5.2 Neighbourhood Services will remove graffiti of a racist, sexist or obscene nature but there is a charge for owners of private property who want this service. Requests for dealing with graffiti can be made through the Council’s Envirocall hotline. Tackling graffiti costs Newcastle City Council about a quarter of a million pounds each year. It quickly became clear to the Forum that this action against graffiti was not enough and an understanding of the root causes was required.

3.5.3 Forum members commissioned Northumbria University to prepare a research report, Exploring solutions to graffiti in Newcastle upon Tyne published in April 2003 and the result of seven months of research across the UK and Europe. Their findings are summarised briefly as follows with more details of the research method and findings provided in Annexe A. The researchers contacted members of the public, forum members and those involved in the local graffiti scene, using participatory methods to establish a dialogue.

3.5.4 The term “graffiti” is often misused and adopted as a label. Many active graffiti writers see themselves as artists, as do some members of the public. They describe what they do as aerosol, freestyle, spray-can or street-influenced art to distinguish themselves from those they call ‘taggers’, ‘bombers’ or ‘vandals’. “Taggers” are the graffiti writers who mainly write their names plus other words. (The need for the graffiti to be seen is an essential part of the activity.) Whilst some people agree that graffiti can be artistic, most felt it had a bad effect on local areas and on themselves as individuals. Forum members have serious concerns about the economic cost of graffiti and its removal. They also feel that the presence of graffiti heightens the fear of crime.

3.5.5 Graffiti varies from place to place. Older graffiti writers in Newcastle blamed newcomers who are principally taggers, for the problems in Newcastle. They were said to ignore the culture and etiquette and lacked knowledge about the activity. Yet it is clear that most graffiti artists started as taggers. Enforcement and crime prevention was generally acknowledged as unlikely to ever be fully effective. Some felt initiatives actually made the problem worse.
There was support for tackling graffiti through the following solutions:
- diversion
- enforcement
- situational crime prevention
- education.

Local graffiti activists were enthusiastic about ideas to provide facilities for graffiti art. However they also agree that such a site or sites would never lead to a 100% reduction of graffiti in the city and that this should not be a goal of the sites.

3.6 ‘Envirocall’
The City Council’s Envirocall telephone hotline can be used by anyone who wishes to report a problem on council land, from a pot-hole in the road to pests, fly-tipping, dog fouling and overgrown vegetation. Envirocall reports are all logged and the Council holds a detailed database about problems where the issue has been reported. The Envirocall team allocate remedial work to the cleansing team and the work is tackled on a prioritised basis, the most serious and offensive first.

3.7 Neighbourhood Wardens
The City Council has established neighbourhood wardens for Byker, Cowgate and Montagu (Kenton), Blakelaw, West Denton, Outer East (including Walker, Walkergate and Monkchester), Lemington and Newbiggin Hall, Scotswood, Benwell and New Deal areas including Elswick, Cruddas Park, Arthurs Hill & Rye Hill. The wardens patrol their patch and will respond to reports of tipping, litter, vandalism, and other problems. They will deal with certain problems immediately and call out the police or maintenance staff if necessary. The wardens are equipped with hand-held, computers and the wardens can log every incident or problem accurately. Using a Geographical Positioning System which is satellite-controlled, their records are highly specific for green spaces, unlike police records that use an adjacent street address. The wardens' reports are all stored and provide useful information when analysed, allowing for action to address regular trouble spots.

3.8 Rapid Response Teams
There are Rapid Response Teams in every ward throughout the city. Their role is to respond to minor environmental issues quickly. Typical examples of work undertaken by the Rapid Response Teams are removal of fly-tipping, removal of graffiti, litter picking, street furniture repairs, pruning of shrubs and minor pavement repairs. The teams work closely with enforcement departments like Public Health, to tackle issues such as fly-tipping. As with the wardens, the Rapid Response Teams are all equipped with the hand held computer to record all work and this information is down loaded to a database where reports can be generated. The services are extended to cover green spaces as and when required.
3.9 Ranger Service
The Parks and Countryside Ranger Service operates in the ‘countryside’ spaces that the Council owns and manages, for example Walker and Newburn Riversides, local nature reserves, Hadrian’s Way National Trail and the woodland denes. The rangers are not a policing force but they patrol their areas regularly. They aim to help people understand, value and get the most enjoyment from our countryside spaces and part of this role is to educate and persuade wrongdoers to behave differently. They have a deterrent role thus providing a ‘friendly site presence.’

The Newcastle research report ‘I never use them’, concludes that ‘One of the most universal findings in research studies seems to be a perception for the need for a park ranger - someone who is responsible for managing the area, involving planning and prioritising aspects of park upkeep and development. Disabled people in particular, focus on a need to increase park staffing levels.’

3.10 Park Keepers
To address the desire for a localised and visible hands-on presence in larger parks, the council introduced the Park Keepers Scheme in 2001. The keepers work a four-week rota system allowing for a weekend presence and extended summer-time hours. This is to ensure that the park-keeper is more accessible to a greater number of park users. Intended as the point of first contact between user and service provider, each park-keeper is equipped with a mobile phone should advice or support be required. Park keepers are expected to contribute to long-term maintenance and management plans for each park, together with the relevant ‘friends’ or user group. The initiative to re-introduce park-keepers continues to have very positive feedback from the public, ‘friends’ groups and councillors, as illustrated by the following comments.

‘we need more of the old time parkies’
‘we should have security guards and cameras …but not so it looks like a jail’
‘we could do with old fashioned park keepers, people do not feel safe walking alone in parks’
‘I feel much safer at Heaton Park because there's a park keeper there’

3.11 Lighting
Lighting is an important and controversial issue for many users of all types of open space. Parks and green spaces are not normally used for recreation during the hours of darkness. However some are short cuts to other facilities and public transport routes and dog walkers will often walk their pets late at night. Lighting can make green spaces appear safer. Lighting can also have the effect of attracting more potential offenders into the space and may create a false sense of security. One
option to consider is whether a specific network of well lit routes is required in spaces and parks that do receive night time use, for example in the city centre, adjacent to bus and metro stations, shops, places of entertainment and sports or leisure centres.

In the Green Space Strategy Citylife questionnaire in October 2003, we asked people to tell us what facilities they wanted in the various different types of green spaces. Lighting was in the top seven for each category of green space: city park, local park and space on the doorstep. For our respondents therefore, better lighting is a clear priority. Comments on lighting included the following.

‘not very good lighting’
‘some feel dangerous after dark, there was a flasher on the Town Moor’
‘after dark, ill lit, unmanned and not to be walked through at night’

3.12 Conclusions
This section is merely a brief over-view but it indicates that there are now a wide range of efforts being made to improve safety in green spaces and that in many areas these are successful. It is important to get the balance right and to use the appropriate combination of methods. There may be a case for prioritising certain spaces particularly if these have round the clock use or an essential or popular through route. There is a close similarity between the measures adopted for green spaces and those for streets. There is no need to duplicate our efforts if one type of patrol, surveillance, method of lighting etc will suit both situations. The familiar call for more police on the streets should also extend to more police in the parks and spaces. Neighbourhood Watch Schemes should include the local parks and spaces. The essential message is that crime on streets is not so very different from green spaces and we need to continue to target both in a joined-up manner. The Community Safety Partnership and the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy together offer the best resource for conducting a fuller review of current successes and failures and for reallocating, adjusting or realigning security and enforcement measures as necessary.
4 Options for action: Good practice examples
Ideas from other Local Authorities and Organisations

4.1 Graffiti
The report of Urban Green Spaces Taskforce (Working Group 4) says

‘It is generally accepted that graffiti needs to be removed immediately to prevent further re-occurrence.’

Working Group 3 describes the 48-hour response to new graffiti adopted by Central Park, New York as being fundamental to reclaiming the park. Accepting that a purely responsive strategy to graffiti would be a never ending drain on local authority resources, they recommend a policy of removal in conjunction with designing out hot spots as well as education and raising awareness in the local community.

The London Borough of Bexley promotes positive and proactive policy that involves local community groups, residents’ associations and neighbourhood watch schemes.

4.2 Designing to reduce crime
Safety & Public Spaces: the Role of Urban Planning published by the Institute for Urban Planning & Development of the Paris Île-de-France Region, lists some ‘basic rules’ designed to deter anti-social behaviour and promote safety in the public realm.

Visibility Spaces should be planned to foster visibility and enable people to be seen, by designing clear views and avoiding concealed spaces and traps. As well as allowing more effective policing, clear views encourage surveillance by the various users of the open space. Naturally, the greater number of users, the more effective this surveillance can be.

Social interaction arising from increased usage deters delinquency and reassures users. Isolated or remote locations convey a sense of insecurity and provide ideal conditions for crime.

Spatial hierarchy Clear definition of spaces fosters a positive perception of the space, reduces zones of conflict and minimises abuse. (E.g. establishment of boundaries based on uses: ball games, age defined play areas, etc). The definition of specific areas helps foster a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Landscaping This includes lighting, fixtures, planting and signage. Such elements can either provide ideal conditions for crime or in contrast, can enhance the safety and welcoming nature of public spaces. Adding a note of caution, the paper warns against trying to make a space attractive and welcoming if it is fundamentally unsafe.
Lighting obviously contributes to visibility. Fixtures and planting can be used to direct and channel users as opposed to hampering visibility. Signage enables people to find their way, and reduces their sense of insecurity.

Natural surveillance is a mechanism where behaviour is controlled by the users themselves. It works by deterring delinquents and reassuring users, developing more usage and human activity. It encourages use of spaces at different times of the day and concentrating usage in the same location. Parks, green spaces and play areas should be designed with children in mind. Unsupervised play areas should be visible, not hidden behind walls, high bushes or hedges and located where people pass by regularly.

4.3 Security and patrols
Many Local Authorities have developed special patrols and security organisations to operate in parks and green spaces. Some examples are described below and the more successful link the different agencies and organisations and achieve truly joined up thinking.

The London Borough of Newham has a Park Constabulary who deal principally with environmental issues. A West Ham Community Forum report (21/10/03) lists the activities of the parks constabulary over the previous 2 weeks. The 4 officers addressed 71 issues, escorted 6 truants back to school, retrieved 1 stolen car, identified 4 graffiti sites and made 2 arrests. The Park Constabulary is managed by the Head of Newham’s Emergency Services. The introduction of this scheme has resulted in 88% of users saying the park felt safer. (Source: Evidence to Inquiry into Town & Country Parks conducted by Select Committee on Environment, Transport & Regional Affairs – July 1999.)

Portsmouth City Council operate their Ranger Service in a similar fashion. They patrol and enforce bye-laws in Portsmouth’s parks, gardens, open spaces, play areas and cemeteries. Rangers also undertake research, feedback information from users and organise the ‘Summer Fun in the Parks’ programme. Rangers work 7 days a week from 10am to 11pm in the summer, 11am to 9pm in winter. ‘Park Watch’ is a joint initiative between the rangers and the police to encourage responsible behaviour by all park users. The Ranger Service web page gives a telephone number for reporting vandalism or nuisance incidents. Ward-based statements produced by Portsmouth Police describe the Park Watch initiative as a “Zero Tolerance” approach to juvenile nuisance, disorder and underage drinking.
In 2003 Thurrock District Council recruited 4 uniformed park wardens in response to demands of residents and councillors. Wardens contribute to the *Thumbs Down* campaign which targets fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood nuisance, graffiti, fly-tipping and vandalism. Wardens enforce civil penalties in parks and play areas (e.g. littering), respond to problems and make minor repairs.

From June 2003 the London Borough of Hillingdon's parks patrol officers were officially sworn in as constables. This gave them legal authority (under the Greater London Parks & Open Spaces Act 1967) to enforce public bye laws in borough parks, recreation spaces, playgrounds and cemeteries, particularly with regard to rowdy behaviour and drunkenness. An agreement signed between Hillingdon LBC and the Metropolitan Police establishes clear procedures between the two organisations for responding to incidents in parks and exchanging information on disturbances and criminal behaviour, enabling the parks patrol to confirm suspect details directly with the police helpdesk.

Cardiff City Council operates a joint initiative with South Wales Police in response to anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and alcohol/substance abuse in parks. There are currently 12 bicycle patrols covering parks, car parks, playing fields, university halls of residence, cycle tracks and pedestrian areas. Patrol officers wear high visibility uniform and have police bikes sponsored by local businesses. Cardiff's park rangers are usually shadowed by police cyclists. The rangers have assisted and acted as witnesses during formal arrests. The police cycle team can tune in to park rangers’ radio, which is also linked to the National Car Parks system. The scheme was established on a permanent basis following a 2-month trial period. Cardiff now hopes to extend the scheme city-wide.

Stockport MBC runs a Park Watch scheme that encourages the community to report incidents of anti-social behaviour (dog fouling, graffiti, vandalism, etc) to the council, and criminal activities to Stockport Police. Participating parks (e.g. Maple Avenue Park in Cheadle Hulme) display a sign with details of who to contact.

The ‘Friends of Bloxwich Parks’ (Walsall) tackle vandals, drug users, drinkers and litter louts through an initiative called ‘*Be a Nosy Parker*’. Park users who witness anti-social behaviour are encouraged to contact Crime Stoppers, Bloxwich Police, the Friends of Bloxwich Parks or the Park Rangers.

The suggestion was made in the House of Commons (Hansard, 12/3/01) that the law allowing Greater London Councils to establish parks police forces (Wandsworth and Greenwich examples) be extended to all local authorities and that their remit extend beyond municipally owned sites. The minister responded as follows.
‘There is a range of different approaches, including park wardens. Local authorities can pay for police officers, which they do in some circumstances, to help to encourage the policing of their parks. We encourage that in certain regards. However, I am slightly wary of encouraging the growth of a parks police force that is separate from the official office of constable...It is important that there is co-ordination and organisation. Our crime and disorder partnership...attempts to establish the relationships that will encourage such a development.’

4.4 Lighting
Working with a local charity, Westminster Council commissioned a local architect to design a boundary fence for St. Anne's Gardens, Soho. The resulting fibre-optic lighting fence not only keeps out unwanted visitors at night, but provides extra street lighting and is transparent enough to allow views of the church during the day. *(New Start magazine, 16/1/04)*

4.5 Community engagement
In conjunction with the Countryside Agency and local Health Authority, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council promotes access to urban green space for people with special physical and mental needs. The Council creates and signs accessible paths through attractive green space close to areas of deprivation and ill health. GP's and community nurses refer patients onto the project for exercise and well being. Local volunteers and community groups also work with the authority to create and maintain the pathways.

Urban Green Spaces Taskforce (Working Group 4) felt that in order to solve a range of problems the local community needs to be directly involved. This is not just restricted to those that live around the green space but to all those that have a role to play in its management. This may include a range of user groups such as sports groups and friends groups.

4.6 Working with children and young people

4.6.1 Ken Worpole in *No particular place to go – children, young people & public space* Groundwork 2003, says

‘key stakeholders in a secure public realm are the public themselves, including children and young people, and their involvement at all levels is essential.’

‘Today children are increasingly represented in public policy terms as either victims in need of protection or as potential trouble-makers... It is impossible to design a public realm that is based on the view that all users are in need of protection from each other: children from adults, and adults from children.’
Worpole refers to the consultation method adopted by Devon Play Association in the design of new play areas. Playing for Real workshops involve looking at the proposed site with the children who are asked questions about the space using environmental/consultation games. The children are asked to create models of play items and arrange them on a 3D map of the play area. A general discussion aims to reach a consensus on what is realistically achievable.

‘We have found ‘Playing for Real’ consultations to provide a clear, realistic steer for providing for play areas. It enables children and young people to have a sense of ownership, leads to greater usage of the play area and lessens problems of vandalism…’ (Devon Play Association Fact Sheet)

Worpole also examines the phenomenon of skateparks and their capacity for involving teenagers in design and organisation, including contributing to the decision-making process.

Youth shelters are spaces “where young people can congregate, sit and talk, ‘hang out’ and shelter in bad weather. These are usually round seating areas with a covered roof but open to all sides. Worpole claims that the police are prominent advocates of youth shelters. He concludes that siting and consultation are the key elements leading to success or failure. Architectural students at London Metropolitan University have been working with young people who use Spa Fields Park, Clerkenwell, to design two shelters. Young park users have been involved in the details of the design and construction. The project was commissioned and funded by the London Borough of Islington and New Deal for Communities

4.6.2 The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce (Working Group 3) quote a study by G Valentine Stranger Danger: Parental Restrictions on Children’s Use of Space: Sheffield University.

‘Parental fear plays a large part in the reduced mobility and independence of children...These fears are to some extent unfounded, with fear of dangerous strangers increasing whereas statistics for abduction and harm from strangers remain virtually the same. In a 1996 study, 60% of parents viewed the public park as the most likely site for their child to be abducted.’

4.6.3 An NSPCC survey of local parks says:

‘the majority of parents see some sort of park ranger, park keeper or warden as the most important factor in increasing safety.’
NSPCC recommendations state:

‘the focus should remain on prevention rather than enforcement, with supervisors getting to know children and young people and asking their views, rather than ‘moving them on’ or ‘policing’ all their activities.’

NSPCC suggest that park keepers, wardens, park constables and play supervisors should all be police checked and trained in child protection. Hackney London Borough is praised by NSPCC for its training of parks service managers in the provision of child protection guidance. They also say play areas for younger children should display a prominent sign excluding adults not accompanied by a child. Children are more generally used to being excluded than to being offered their own safe place to go. Coram’s Fields playground in central London is given as a notable example of positive discrimination. The NSPCC survey found only 5% of parks displayed such a sign.

4.6.4 Good practice examples

Since 1999, South Somerset District Council has helped communities plan, fund and construct a range of facilities: BMX tracks, skateboard ramps, goal units, multi-use games areas, youth shelters etc. These are aimed at engaging young people and reducing crime. Facilities are provided on a parish-by-parish basis following local consultations with young people. Within the programme an emphasis has been placed on communities taking ownership of their specific project with each parish appointing a ‘project manager.’ Annual running costs range from 5 to10% of the capital cost, depending on the type of facility. The district council provided £90,000 and parishes had to match fund with an additional 10% of the total capital cost. Sixteen facilities have been provided to date, with a further 11 planned. (Getting Serious about Play, Jan 2004)

Working in partnership with Hyndburn Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, the police, and the Youth & Community Service, the ‘Friends of Mercer Park’ want to encourage the positive use of their local park. As part of the borough wide Safe Place/Safe Space initiative, Hyndburn’s first youth shelter was in Mercer Park. The Friends were also involved in refurbishing a previous skate ramp project and arranging workshops with professional skaters. Vandalism related incidents in and around the Mercer Park area of Clayton Le Moors cost Hyndburn £17,000 in 1999-2000. The following year the park area was targeted by a detached youth work team, engaging young people to tackle crime and disorder and find out what young people wanted. The costs fell dramatically to £257.
Wyre Borough Council’s *Playing the Game* project targeted young men, identified by police or youth and community workers, using football coaching to develop communication skills, co-operation, teamwork, social skills and an understanding of the need for ‘rules’. Unfortunately this example shows the lessons learnt in the coaching sessions were not applied to the wider situation. Such was the level of disruptive behaviour amongst the particular groups of young men that conflicts continued between the two local groups throughout the project.

Fylde Borough Council will start work in 2004 on a state of the art skateboard and wheeled sports facility. The Fairhaven Skateboard Park project is the result of joint working between The Lytham St. Annes Young People’s Action Group, the Youth and Community Service, Fylde Council and Lancashire County Council. Lancashire has contributed £6,000 from its crime & disorder budget.

On youth shelters, Lancashire report teething problems, particularly with the location of a ball wall:

*‘the ball wall was a good hiding place for young people from outside the area to launch missiles at the youth shelter.’*


4.6.5 The dilemma of enforcement versus trust is illustrated in an example of good practice cited by the ODPM select committee report in response to *Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener*. The sub-committee visited Arnot Hill Park, Gedling Borough Council. The park gates are locked from dusk to dawn with a tough enforcement approach to littering plus an education programme at local schools. People who are caught allowing their dogs to foul are prosecuted. The Council is also trying to secure increased penalties for dropping cigarette ends. A kick-about/skateboarding facility is proposed for local teenagers to be supervised by wardens during the day, but unsupervised in the evenings. The Council felt it was important to place some trust in young people: no surveillance measures would be installed unless evidence of drug abuse was found.

4.6.6 Urban Green Space Taskforce (Working Group 2) recognises Alexandra Recreation Ground run by Epsom and Ewell Council as providing an innovative and creative solution to park safety.

*‘Working with the Police and the Park Rangers, the project has clearly demonstrated that a combination of facilities including a basketball court and informal ‘kick-about’ area, and the on-site presence of the martial arts centre, have reduced anti-social behaviour within the park. This presence was supported by the Council’s Parks for All policy which clearly identifies that busy active parks are safe parks.’*
With the exception of the playground (open 8 am to 9 pm or dusk), this recreation ground has adopted a policy of no locked gates. ‘Friends’ of the park hosted meetings with young people using the park to try and tackle problems of anti-social behaviour. As a consequence, they lobbied for the introduction of the martial arts centre. Levels of anti-social behaviour are monitored and ‘Friends’ submit regular reports on any incidents that occur in the park.

4.6.7 Local authorities should consult with children and young people in relation to access to and use of green space. Children need to be consulted on new equipment and developments in green spaces and to be able to participate in these developments. Graffiti and vandalism decrease if children and young people feel some ownership for their spaces. Stockport’s Crime and Disorder partnership carried out consultation with young people, which led to them designing and helping to build their own designated area within a local park, complete with benches and water fountain.

4.6.8 CABE Space has recently published an illustrated paper entitled What would you do with this space? which gives guidance on involving young people in the design and care of urban spaces. The paper outlines more good practice examples in the UK and abroad. They say:

‘The best way to get young people involved is to include the project in a wider programme of events so it becomes a regular part of their social life’

‘Giving young people the chance to learn new skills develops their sense of pride in the local area.’

‘Children will play everywhere and therefore their “buy-in” to any public space project is vital.’

‘Only by being involved and feeling that they can affect what happens will young people feel a sense of ownership and responsibility in using the public realm. And only by being involved as children will they as adults feel the same sense of responsibility and pride in their environment.’

4.6.9 The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce made a series of suggestions designed to increase young people’s use of urban green spaces, many of these have safety implications that impinge on all user groups. They say green spaces and play areas should be:

- clean, well maintained, free of litter and dog mess, with any instances of graffiti and vandalism dealt with immediately
- well lit with telephones and safe toilets (Baby changing facilities for parents of younger children)
- not too over-grown or wooded
have regular safety audits, including toilets, lighting, visibility and access
easily accessible from residential areas by means of safe routes

They also urge better traffic calming measures. *Getting Serious About Play* (Jan 2004) cites traffic as one of the main reasons why parents are reluctant to let children out of the house – an average of 112 child pedestrians were killed and 3,390 seriously injured in each of the last 5 years.

4.6.10 The working group’s report includes the reminder that within policies to address safety for children in green spaces, there needs to be a recognition of specific issues for girls and for children from ethnic minority groups, who may have increased anxieties and risk. The taskforce reflects much of what Newcastle’s research with young people has found. However our research also found boys were more fearful than girls.

‘Young people are often represented as the perpetrators of crime and yet it is clear that in terms of parks and green spaces they see themselves as the victims. They suffer anti-social behaviour in the form of bullying from other age groups, but also on the part of adults – ranging from the possibility of attack in unlit areas to adults allowing their dogs to roam loose in children’s areas. Contrary to expectations, young people are also very concerned about issues of maintenance in parks and green spaces.’


4.7.1 This report describes the attributes of safe, sustainable places based on research into crime prevention and urban design.

**THE ATTRIBUTES OF SAFE, SUSTAINABLE PLACES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Access and Movement:</th>
<th>places with well-defined routes, spaces and entrances that provide for convenient movement and security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Activity:</td>
<td>places where an appropriate level of human activity creates a reduced risk of crime and a sense of safety at all times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Adaptability:</td>
<td>places and buildings that can adapt to changing requirements and security concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Management and Maintenance:</td>
<td>places that are designed with management and maintenance in mind, to discourage crime in the present and the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ownership:</td>
<td>places that promote a sense of ownership, respect, territorial responsibility and community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Physical Protection: *places that include necessary, well-designed security features*

7. Structure: *places that are structured so that different uses do not cause conflict*

8. Surveillance: *places where all publicly accessible spaces are safely overlooked*

4.7.2 Sunderland’s Mowbray Park is a case study in the *Safer Places* report. It is a Victorian, municipal park in the city centre, recently sensitively restored with Heritage Lottery funding, and made much safer. Visibility has been improved, wardens are employed to patrol the park and CCTV cameras have been installed. The nature of crime has changed from serious incidents to juvenile disorder. New Winter Gardens and removal of perimeter hedges has improved natural surveillance from outside the park. There are numerous valued historic features in the park including the War Memorial, a prominent column on the west side, a Victorian bandstand and various statues and memorials, one of which is protected by a toughened glass enclosure. The park provides a diagonal route to housing on the east side and is used extensively for this purpose.

**MOWBRAY PARK, SUNDERLAND**

**Key Success Factors**

- A complete re-design with reducing crime as the top priority
- Much improved natural surveillance
- Management measures, including Park Rangers, CCTV and night-time closure

4.7 General Conclusions

There are many good practice and not-so-successful examples here to learn from. Some examples may work well for us and we would do well to contact the good practice authorities to find out more and gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches. The research also poses some difficult questions. Local Authorities have limited funds. Is it appropriate to start offering a virtual police force in the form of a park patrol or “Park Constabulary” as some have chosen to do? Perhaps our green spaces could be patrolled just as well with the existing security and Neighbourhood Wardens that Newcastle is introducing now. The last example suggests locking up the park at night has helped. Yet in Newcastle all our parks and green spaces are open at night with the exception of most of the cemeteries, certain play areas and allotments.
5 Options for action: suggestions from consultation

Local people and staff survey

5.1 Suggestions from the public

In the Green Spaces Strategy consultations people have made a number of suggestions for tackling crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. Overwhelmingly, the most frequent suggestion is for more park keepers.

The following list summarises the various requests made.

**General security measures:**
- More lighting
- Gates and railings
- Lock parks at night
- Cameras (CCTV) plus security to make sure the cameras don’t get smashed.
- Telephone boxes in parks
- Security guards
- Supervisors at playgrounds
- More police patrols
- Wardens, Community Beat Officers, outreach workers and supervisors should be young adults closer to the age of youngsters using the play facilities, who remember what it is like to be that age.
- Pay to use certain facilities
- More patrols
- Emergency aid points

**Dogs**
- Dog-free areas
- Dog bins
- Dogs on leads
- No dogs in play areas
- Remove dog mess
- Fenced area for dog exercising
- Keep dogs off grass
- Prosecute for dog fouling etc

**Cars, bikes etc**
- Ban on motor vehicles
- Restrict cycles, roller skates and skate boards
- Zebra crossings and other traffic controls on access routes to parks
Skateboard facilities
Ban motorcycles
Separate paths for cyclists
Ban cars and car parking
Areas for motorbikes to ride

Trees and planting
Pruning and use of lower growing shrubbery species, especially around play areas and beside paths.
Prune trees back from street lights
Remove hideaways and dens

Children and young people
Segregated play areas for the different age groups
Places for parents to sit near to play areas to supervise youngsters
Child-free areas
More facilities/activities for older children
Smoking ban in children’s areas

Vandalism
Graffiti wall
Regular inspections to identify vandal damage and repairs needed
Metal seats to resist vandals

Litter
Refuse bins secured to the ground and with fixed covers
Near food shops/takeaways collect litter daily
Keep generally tidy
Remove litter in trees and bushes
Regular bin emptying
Litter wardens
Pick up broken glass
Pick up cans

Drink and drugs
Ban alcohol
Police action on drinkers and drug users

Noise and disturbance
Control radios and loudspeakers
More No Ball Games signs

5.2 It is interesting to note that when asked about provision of the various features and facilities in the 2003 Citylife questionnaire, lighting was in the top seven for each type of green space. Facilities related to crime
and safety issues were voted for by the percentages shown below. (There were 219 detailed questionnaire responses.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City park</th>
<th>Local park</th>
<th>Door step spaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Litter bins</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security patrol</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railings/gates</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 hour park keeper</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park keeper/warden</td>
<td></td>
<td>72%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervised adventure play</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen facilities</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Suggestions from staff consultation

Strategy team staff consultations during 2002-3 produced a range of useful suggestions for tackling crime in parks and green spaces.

Staff made 61 separate comments about security issues. (About 4% of the total comments). Topics raised were as follows.

A need for more mobile security in the form of ‘robo-parkies’ and a more formal security presence, particularly in the evenings and at night time when much of the vandalism occurs.

Security should not be left to the park keepers who may work alone and can feel vulnerable.

Police are said to encourage young people to congregate in parks as they are then off the streets.

Concern about high levels of drink and drug problems, seen as an issue in all of our parks, strongly linked to broken glass and litter.

Staff suggest that the police response varies across the City. They report that park users feel parks are no-go areas in the evenings and at night and there is a problem with misuse by young people.

Site based staff had fifty different comments. Staff suggested that dedicated site maintenance staff were better and felt that some sites need a manager. If this was not possible there should be, as a minimum, a responsible officer for each site.

Fly-tipping, rubbish, dog bins and graffiti were raised in eleven separate comments. These were about operational problems and ‘grey areas’ around responsibility for removal of tipped materials and litter in various sites throughout the City.
6 Recommendations

Carry out research to ascertain the nature, locations, pattern and frequency of the various different forms of crime including environmental crime, in parks and green spaces. A potential research project was discussed with staff from Northumbria University in December 2003. The research was agreed as being timely with regard to the Anti-Social Behaviour legislation, necessary and feasible and the outline brief is included at Annexe C.

Using the results of the research as a firm evidence base, develop and implement a ‘bespoke’ range of security measures to target and reduce the incidence of crime in Newcastle’s parks and green spaces. This review should include a careful assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of all the current action to tackle crime. Measures for consideration should include:

- Increased patrols by motorcycle, vehicle, cycle and on foot
- A park watch scheme
- Supervision at main playgrounds
- Lighting and CCTV at selected locations and through routes
- Perimeter fencing and gates locked at night for selected spaces

Establish a method of recording and monitoring all crime committed in parks and green spaces working with internal and external partners, law enforcement agencies and the Community Safety Champions

Link the green space security improvements with measures being developed for streets at a neighbourhood level. (The crimes that occur in streets and spaces are very similar and can be jointly targeted)

Adopt a zero tolerance stance toward prosecution and enforcement in parks and green spaces and publicise successful action and prosecutions.

Review vegetation cover and growth close to playgrounds and other spaces used by youngsters and ensure that proper pruning and control is included within management plans.

Plan dog fouling enforcement activity with care to target particular problem areas at times when there is more chance of success. (For example many dog owners exercise pets before and after work, in the early mornings and late evenings)

Consider areas where a total ban on dogs would be appropriate and take the necessary action to designate, inform and enforce. (For example sports pitches and playgrounds.)

Offer locally based training and advice for dog owners on pet control and disposal of dog mess.
Lobby government to tackle the causes of litter. (Action to promote more responsible and sustainable manufacturing, sales and packaging.)

Involve more people in the process of reducing litter, including exploring innovatory methods of rewarding volunteers and good behaviour.

Make use of information gathered by Street Wardens to plan action at regular trouble spots.

Contact authorities and agencies who have established ‘good practice’ approaches and learn from their experience.
Annexe A

The Newcastle Graffiti Forum Research Report 2003

Forum members commissioned Northumbria University to produce a research report, *Exploring solutions to graffiti in Newcastle upon Tyne* published in April 2003 and the result of seven months of research across the UK and Europe.

Locally, the research team consulted over 40 local writers, 24 local Graffiti Forum members and local workers, and around 200 members of the public. There were an additional 6 replies by writers to the email questions. Further, 5 local writers and 16 local workers / project leaders were interviewed during the project research.

It became clear at an early stage of the project planning process that success would be dependent upon the research team gaining access to the (predominantly) young people involved in this activity. The team subsequently utilised the expertise of existing project workers who have engaged, or are currently engaging with young people involved in the local graffiti culture. In addition, members of the research team have drawn on their own experiences and contacts with young people involved in graffiti. Most importantly, in striving to gain access to this 'hard to reach' group, the research approach has been strongly based within the philosophy, principles and methods of participatory appraisal.

Participatory Appraisal (PA) is a community-based approach to consultation that prioritises the views of local people as ‘experts’ and their direct or indirect involvement and action in deciding what happens in their community. PA uses visual and flexible tools such as maps, spider diagrams and charts to enable people to start at their own level and to ensure that everyone can participate, regardless of their background.

Among a wide range of recommended solutions to unwanted graffiti, young local writers responded enthusiastically to the notion of a legal site. Many said that they had no option but to do illegal work as legitimate outdoor sites did not exist. Some added that legal sites would not necessarily lead to a rise in ‘tagging’ around the area as an element of self policing would take place. Indeed this would form a crucial part of any site evaluation.

Research provided the supporting evidence for a case to be taken to the Council. The cabinet agreed to a limited trial of an outdoor site in conjunction with the development of a city skate park. Work continues to identify and establish more permanent sites with the right profile for the writers, local residents and the authorities to agree upon and further interest has developed in intergenerational projects. One parks user group is particularly keen to develop painted areas within the park as a way of brightening the place up and demonstrating an inclusive approach to managing the site.
Among a number of surprising messages was one which stated:

‘as many people liked graffiti as disliked it’.

This point needs careful consideration in the debate over the fear of crime and anti social behaviour. The difference between art and crime seems to boil down to issues of permission and taste which can be hard to confirm or account for. For many people though ‘tagging’ is not viewed as artistic nor a positive thing.
Annexe B

PARKS AND GREEN SPACES STRATEGY
Discussion Paper on Dog Fouling

One of the main barriers to the use of public green space is dog fouling. 95% of people find it unacceptable to allow a dog to foul and not clear up after it. The majority of any dog fouling takes place on public open space. However it is important that dogs are welcomed onto public open space as 80% of regular users of parks and open spaces are dog walkers and their presence leads to a greater sense of security for other park users.

Newcastle City Council needs a different approach. It is not simply enforcement, a cleansing or an educational issue. If we are to improve the parks and green spaces within the city we need to tackle the problem of irresponsible dog owners jointly.

Research across the country, (Improving Parks, Play areas and Green Spaces, May 2002), has shown that dogs and dog fouling are the main barrier to using green space in the following groups:
- Women
- 12-15 years
- Non Europeans
- 75 years +
- People with disabilities
(Only 56-65 year olds rated dogs and dog fouling as second barrier to use of green space after vandalism and graffiti). In Newcastle dog fouling on pavements and open spaces featured as the most important environmental issue in the Newcastle Residents Survey 1998.

Current situation:

The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act was adopted by Newcastle City Council in December 1998 and became effective in January 1999. The Act makes it an offence for the person in control of a dog to fail to clear up immediately after the dog has defecated on open land to which the public has access. A fixed penalty notice may be issued for the offence. The amount of the penalty is set by Government at £50. The maximum penalty that can be imposed by a Magistrates’ Court is £1000. The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 applies to any land which is open to the air and to which the public are entitled or permitted to have access (with or without payment). It does not apply to land beside a highway or forming a carriageway.
unless the speed limit on that road is less than 40mph, nor to farmland, woodland, marshland, moor, heath or common land.
The enforcement of Dog Fouling Law lies with the Public Health and Environmental Protection division of the EEC directorate.
Currently there are 2 full time dog wardens covering the City. They are split east and west and work a standard day. They carry out overtime surveillance.
They are responsible for all dog issues. The team have had success with controlling the stray dog population. Stray dog collections have dropped to 500 dogs a year.
The wardens do not cover parks, countryside sites or schools.
Cityworks Security had the power to enforce the Act in parks but they have been withdrawn.
In addition 50 parking enforcement staff are authorised under the 1966 Act to issue fixed penalties. They are mainly city centre based where there is little dog fouling.
All officers within the PHEP division are authorised under the 1996 Act although not all carry the fixed penalty book.
Police officers can also enforce the Act.

Positive:

There is public support for a solution.
The law is enforceable on the majority of the city’s green space.
There is now a presence of park keepers in the major parks.
Keep Britain Tidy have just launched a national campaign to raise public awareness to the problems of allowing a dog to foul the land and not pick it up. The campaign was launched on 17th June after research showed that only a hard-hitting campaign would change the behaviour of irresponsible dog owners. They are expecting a significant drop in dog fouling during and after the campaign which ran until the 30th June.
Newcastle City Council has 250 of the posters to distribute.
Ward stewardship programme enables Newcastle City Council to have direct contact with residents who want to change their environment. Some links are already created.
There have been 9 prosecutions since the law was adopted and two formal cautions have been issued.
Many more people are picking up after their dogs.
National Canine Defence League run campaigns throughout the year.

Shortcomings:

Not enough enforcement staff covering the green spaces.
No enforcement cover when irresponsible dog owners are ‘walking’ their dogs. Authorised enforcers need to start earlier and finish later to cover the times when the majority of dogs are exercised.

The people who are picking up after their dogs often throw the bags in the shrubs or tie them onto branches as they are unwilling to take the bag to the nearest bin or home.

No cross directorate link up. EEC is the lead directorate for enforcement and Cityworks is the lead directorate for the environment. The two directorates should liaise on dog fouling issues.
**Recommendations:**

1. More staff should be trained so they are authorised to issue fixed penalty notice. An obvious starting point is:
   - Byker Street Wardens
   - Park keepers
   - Rangers
   - Cityworks enforcement team

2. Set up a cross-directorate working group comprising the following directorates:
   - Enterprise, Environment and Culture,
   - Public Health & Environmental Protection- Stephen Savage
     - Ralph Watson
   - Cityworks
   - Environmental Services - Rob Nichols-Cleansing
     - Eddie Wardrobe-Grounds
     - Maintenance
   - Parks and Countryside Tony McKenna
   - Housing
   - Tenancy enforcement team - tenants that regularly allow their dogs to foul public open space may be at risk from action.
   - Education
     - Barbara Moorhead
   - Other City Council officers.

   External partners
   - National Canine Defence League
   - Keep Britain Tidy
   - Health Authority
   - Police
   - Other external interested parties?

This group would then form the City’s approach to the problems of dog fouling and provide a lead. There are many examples of best practice that need to be more thoroughly investigated to see if the same methods would work here. For example:

- **Bradford City Council**
  - Bradford City Council has implemented a successful and co-ordinated campaign on dogs. ‘The Urban Spaces Taskforce, working group 4’, recommends other councils emulate the scheme carried out in Bradford, (copy of leaflet attached). They have enlisted the support of the residents and have a dog registration scheme, school visits etc.

- **Manchester City Council**
  - Manchester City Council has developed a system of dog zoning areas within the parks.

  **- Red - no dogs allowed**
- Amber - dogs allowed on leads
- Green - dogs allowed off the lead.
The areas where dogs are allowed have litterbins so dog owners are not walking far with a poop scoop.
Annexe C

Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy

The draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy sets out Newcastle Community Safety Partnership's (NCSP) draft response to the issues of anti-social behaviour (ASB) aimed at ensuring a peaceful environment for people living in or visiting Newcastle.

NCSP believes that everyone is entitled to live without harassment or fear. It is the aim of this strategy to reduce nuisance, anti-social behaviour and disorder, giving all members of our communities the right to the quiet enjoyment of their homes, to live peaceably within their community and to be able to participate in facilities and activities in the City Centre. This aim will be pursued in the context of continuing to provide protection to the most vulnerable members of our communities.

The strategy stresses the importance of balancing and combining enforcement action against those responsible for anti-social behaviour with investment in prevention and rehabilitation.

This strategy is aimed at the following city-wide and neighbourhood objectives:

- Reduce anti-social behaviour incidents on an annual basis.
- Develop a multi-agency understanding of anti-social behaviour.
- Develop an effective, consistent response to anti-social behaviour incidents across all partner agencies.
- Improve reporting procedures for incidents of anti-social behaviour by supporting victims and witnesses to come forward.
- Increase support to victims and affected communities whilst enforcement action is undertaken.
- Identify policy and procedure to enable appropriate action against perpetrators.
- Improve the quality of life throughout all communities in Newcastle.

A draft strategy has been prepared for consultation. The following text is taken from the introduction. The full draft document can be obtained from the Community Safety Unit. (Tel 0191 277 7833)
Newcastle Community Safety Partnership (NCSP)

Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy

1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out Newcastle Community Safety Partnership’s (NCSP) draft response to the issues of anti-social behaviour (ASB) aimed at ensuring a peaceful environment for people living in or visiting Newcastle.

1.2 The draft strategy aligns to and will be refined through reference to the:
   - Crime and Disorder Act (1998)
   - Data Protection Act (1998)
   - Police Reform Act (2002)
   - Green Space Strategy, Newcastle City Council (2004)
   - Community Safety Audit (2004/05)
   - Community Safety Consultation (2004/05)
   - Good Practice from other authorities
   - Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS)
   - The Newcastle Plan

1.3 How people feel about the local area in which they live and the City as a whole is affected by how safe they feel and how confident they are that they can go about their daily lives without being harassed or threatened. This may be because of the environment or because of the perceived or actual responsiveness of service to any problems they might experience.

1.4 Anti-social behaviour can range from dropping litter to serious harassment. Most people are therefore affected by anti-social behaviour to some degree or other. People’s expectations that anti-social behaviour will be dealt with has generally increased but there are very different tolerance levels and expectations. Those with the lowest tolerance levels can have the highest expectations: those with the highest tolerance levels can have the lowest expectations. The balance needs to be right – for some people anti-social behaviour is infrequent and mildly irritating, for others it has a serious adverse effect on their health, peace of mind and quality of life.

1.5 NCSP acknowledges that there is no simple solution to the problem of anti-social behaviour. This strategy should be seen as part of an ongoing development by NCSP to promote a community-based, multi-agency approach to jointly tackle problems.
1.6 This document does not currently address the forthcoming legislation on Children at Risk and the Victims and Witnesses Bill. However once guidance is issued this draft strategy will be reviewed.

2. **Statement of Intent**

2.1 NCSP believes that everyone is entitled to live without harassment or fear. It is the aim of this strategy to reduce nuisance, anti-social behaviour and disorder, giving all members of our communities the right to the quiet enjoyment of their homes, to live peaceably within their community and to be able to participate in facilities and activities in the City Centre. This aim will be pursued in the context of continuing to provide protection to the most vulnerable members of our communities. In securing this goal, the NCSP will continue to work with constituent partners and partnerships, including:-

- ARCH
- Arson Task Force
- Connexions
- Drug Action Team
- Mediation Newcastle
- National Probation Service
- Newcastle City Council
- Education Service
- Neighbourhood Services
- Neighbourhood Services
- Public Health and Environmental Protection
- Newcastle New Deal for Communities
- Newcastle Primary Care Trust
- Nexus
- Northumbria Police
- Northumbria Police Authority
- National Probation Service
- Neighbourhood Services
- Newcastle Partnership
- Newcastle Domestic Violence Forum
- Newcastle University
- Northumbria University
- Sure Start
- Tenant and residents associations
- Tyne and Wear Anti-Fascist Association (TWAFAC)
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- Victim Support
- Your Homes Newcastle
- Youth Offending Teams
- Youth Justice
Annexe D

Brief for Research by Community Safety Research Unit, Northumbria University

Note based on record of meeting held on 16/12/03

The meeting was to see whether the university would be interested in helping with some research on anti-social behaviour (ASB) in green spaces and whether they felt it was feasible. The answer was definitely yes to both questions.

Problems are experienced identifying just who holds reliable information about actual incidents on green spaces and there is a need to try and pull it together and get a clearer, evidential picture of what is really happening. We need the what, where, when, why and by who so we can build up a picture of where the risk is greatest, what the factors are and how best to tackle the problems. This is as distinct from the mass of anecdotal information and peoples' individual perceptions that we have received through our consultation and which - though truly felt and often a serious concern - is just not hard fact.

In every green space consultation ASB issues were the top of people's lists of concerns - dog fouling, litter, graffiti and fear of crime, usually but not always in that order. Also that despite these big worries green space was truly and deeply valued by people, even though it is not something the council has a statutory duty to either provide or maintain, unlike schools, highways etc. The feeling was that if we did not address these concerns we would not be listening to people and we need to address the concerns not by knee-jerk reactions but by getting a grasp of the problems and devising value for money ways to tackle them.

There was a wish for any research to be a joint exercise with the Community Safety Partnership. (There is a key role for the new ASB officer and the research post). There was also a feeling that the community should be involved but most of all young people, if possible through some research related to "Citizenship" studies. Our consultation with young people in schools and from socially excluded backgrounds tells us that some of them experience some awful things in green spaces that we suspect are never reported and most feel as strongly about ASB as everyone else. They are as concerned about their personal safety if not more so.

A non-user survey had just been completed for Leisure Services that contains useful information about people who are too fearful to use green spaces.

The University researchers agreed to try and map out an outline research project brief and some ideas of likely costs.
Annexe E

Public Opinion: Surveys and Research.

Citylife Questionnaire November 2002

This questionnaire asked specifically what people thought were the good and bad points about green spaces, hence there were a great many individual comments about crime and safety issues. The top bad points were seen as:

1. Litter (32%)
2. Dog Fouling (26%)
3. Not well maintained (19%)
4. Unsafe (15%)
5. Vandalism (11%)
6. Insufficient green space (10%)
7. Threatening Youths (10%)

Comments made included the following.

‘more lights’
‘see things like the youth of today spoiling things’
‘kids hanging around…rubbish area for people’
‘sometimes lonely for people out alone’
‘dog crap areas - wet weather swamps….not tidy used by fly-tippers’
‘would like dog dirt cleaned up more’
‘the level of vandalism and the amount of litter left lying about’
‘not maintained, dog fouling, rubbish is left’
‘the more bins you put up the more people will clean up after their dogs. Paddy Freeman’s is a good example. Dog owners are the major users of green spaces and we pay a lot of council tax between us’
‘youngsters noise - not always consideration for elderly’
‘not enough safe warden patrolled areas for women and young folk who need somewhere to just hang out and not disturb householders’
‘graffiti, kids fighting and swearing’
‘too much broken glass and litter and it seems rarely to get picked up’
‘vandals spoiling facilities’
‘rubbish, rowdy groups, vandalism, safety concerns’
‘dog mess, graffiti and motor cycles in the park’
‘teenagers drinking and causing trouble’
‘Fear of crime, loose dogs, dog faeces, litter’
‘we need more of the old time parkies’
‘not enough security’
‘dog poo, litter’
‘a lot of places get vandalised’
‘irregular and poor maintenance’
‘some parks are not safe’
‘sometimes lonely for people out alone’
‘not enough litter bins’
‘gathering area for junkies, alcoholics and youth crime/vandalism’
‘they need to be kept tidy and safe and publicised more’
‘some areas have dodgy people and aren’t very welcoming’
‘cyclists going too fast on footpaths in parks’
‘we could do with old fashioned park keepers, people do not feel safe walking alone in parks’

Citylife Questionnaire October 2003

This questionnaire was more geared to peoples’ expectations of the different types of green spaces and testing the proposed standards in the draft strategy. There were questions about any concerns that generated a number of individual comments about crime and anti-social behaviour but not as many as in the first questionnaire.

‘in Leazes and Heaton Parks...feeling unsafe walking through in early evening.’
‘fouling by dogs’ (repeated many times)
‘debris in Ouseburn’
‘litter, broken glass and graffiti, youths hanging around at night drinking’
‘not enough patrols’ (repeated many times)
‘screaming kids and noisy teenagers’
‘dumping ground for bottles, cans and fast food packaging’
‘litter should be cleared up quickly and efficiently’
‘Council workers less careful than they should be using vehicles’
‘Saturday night food and drink litter...Civic centre lawns often look disgusting’
‘more patrols to stop vandals and litter louts’
‘not well lit at night’
‘my local park – Fawdon – is a danger to kids. I will not let my children use it’
‘litter, dog fouling, too much lighting’
‘lock up at night, all dogs on a lead’
‘loud pop music all day and night’
‘graffiti’
‘vandalism and groups of youngsters intimidating pedestrians and cyclists’
‘vandalism, school kids use it to wag school’
‘teenagers playing all around’
‘motor bikes etc riding over the grass’
‘dogs, cars, rubbish, gangs of teenagers, security – bikes being stolen and danger of someone stealing/harming children’
‘cyclists on pedestrian path’
‘stream ...dirty, rubbish tip, overgrown and bridge over it is collapsing’
‘overgrown bushes’
‘used needles, broken bottles, teenagers in large groups on toddler’s swings can be off-putting for new/young mothers, skateboarding on paths and being general nuisance to family users’
‘a lot of older children gangs spoil the parks with writing on the swings etc’
‘scrambling motor bikes’ (repeated many times)
‘evening wardening/supervising and security are essential’
‘teenagers with nothing to do, drinking and smoking’ (repeated many times)
‘gates to shut park at night’
‘drug addicts use them’
‘no police availability’
‘illegal parking on match days’
‘abused by alcoholics and drug users, lighting does not work’
‘just wish they were safe for me to feel safe walking in on my own’
‘ranger/park keeper especially weekends’
‘we need vigilante patrols to exterminate anti-social, deviant etc elements’
‘no railings – access to roads’
‘surveillance cameras’
‘some people dump garden waste’
‘it’s a disgrace’
‘the dene is covered in dog dirt – why isn’t this area patrolled’
‘need more “sleeping policemen” to reduce speeding, not enough lighting’
‘wet leaves hazardous on paths’
‘more notices about dog fouling on bridle ways’
‘Walker Riverside has little or no lighting, very dangerous at night’
‘logs blocking path, graffiti, litter and generally un-kept foliage’
‘a meeting area for drinkers, sniffers and other undesirable pastimes’
‘teenagers seem to rule when it gets dark’
‘the Walkerville children’s play area is isolated at the bottom of a field – can feel trapped. Would feel safer near main road’
‘they are full of threatening youths, dog mess and fires’
‘they should not be overgrown by large bushes, females and children feel vulnerable’
‘broken glass on paths which are never swept’
‘prowlers’
‘there are strong 6 ft railings around but are forever being vandalised, as are the flower beds in spring and tennis courts’
‘dogs roaming’
Social exclusion study

This exercise was researched by and with young people from socially excluded backgrounds. The following are some extracts from the 2003 report.

“The way in which the young people use open spaces can be a problem for local people for example sexual activity, drink and drug abuse

‘Used to go to the top field and sniff tippex and get high’.

However this is not the case all the time. A lot of young people that do not hang around in large groups have fear going to open spaces such as parks or playing fields. The fear of being attacked is becoming more of a problem for young people. They are choosing to sit in their homes for safety rather than using open spaces.

‘I keep myself to myself instead of getting into bother. I just stay in’

This is the time when young people do graffiti as the problem of boredom sets in. Antisocial behaviour is one of the main reasons young people become involved with the police. It all stems from boredom. A lot of young people said they wouldn’t use playing fields because they get stopped and searched or person checked by the police. This was one of the main themes that came out in my research apart from the safety issues.

‘Grannies would complain if me and my mates were playing football and then would call the police’

The East End and the West End of the city had some different views on their open spaces. The main issues were the same about feeling there was nowhere to go and the police would stop them and ask them what they were up to and person check them

‘More things for young people to do so that the police cant harass young people’.

Safety in numbers was one of the issues stressed by young people. Also not feeling safe in open spaces because of the large numbers of young people that hang around in these areas. Intimidation was one of the key facts on this subject. Large groups of young people are intimidating for any age group. Peer pressure by young people encourages them to commit crime or drink as much alcohol as they can. Attacks on young people and taking their valuables off them is becoming more of a problem. This is what is known as "taxing" (street robbery). This can be one of the main fears of young people that go anywhere young people congregate. It is a problem that needs to be addressed.

Drug use in open spaces is another key factor we need to consider about young peoples’ safety. Drugs are becoming a major activity in young peoples’ lives and becoming a bigger problem for them in later life. A lot of the young people express issues about needles being left on fields or in parks. They
were worried about falling on them and caching HIV or Aids from heroin users.

'smack heads leaving there needles all over dirty b*** I hate them all'
'smack heads walking around the estate all them off there faces'
'dirty smack heads leaving their needles in parks where kids play'
'they used to smoke in the park and then walk around the streets causing trouble'

Unfortunately heroin is one of the drugs young people in run down estates are taking to escape their life. Boredom from unemployment seems to be one of the key factors to drug taking.

Different areas have boundaries to other young people that use it. Young people are only allowed to go to a few places in other areas or will be attacked by the locals. It is almost turf war. Parks and open spaces are the main points young people will have turf wars with young people from neighbouring areas that come into their areas using their facilities. This was demonstrated by the young people in the East End commenting on people in the West End and vice versa.

Report of Focus Groups with Schoolchildren

Green Places, Open Spaces
The Views of Children and young People in Newcastle upon Tyne

‘could you stop the stupid people going there, smoking and drinking and being a nuisance? You always see used needles and broken bottles on the ground’
‘I would improve the parks by making them more secure, I would have gates where you can only get in with a fee or with a pass and you know that other people who go there are going to treat it with respect’
‘there are bottles smashed all over the place’ (Granny's Park -Ballast Hills Byker)
‘you need cameras to stop people marking walls and things’
‘if you had cameras you would know who had done the damage…but you have to pay a lot for cameras and they get smashed’
‘I would be scared going there at night time because there are loads of bushes where people could hide behind and jump on you’
‘there are people using drugs in the parks…and drinking’
‘on my estate this girl got raped by five men there ‘(-Hawthorn Primary School pupil.)
‘dirty old men’
‘litter’
‘somethone got murdered in one of the parks round here’ (Pupil referring to Elswick area)
‘take the bushes out of the parks - people hide behind them’
‘in the park here you are surrounded by bushes. I think they should all be chopped down’
‘there should be lots of lights - the ones that are there are broken’
‘there should be security cameras in the park’
‘there are always teenagers fighting - they just want attention’
‘there should be guards in the park’
‘we need the sand in the sand pit renewed each month. It is disgusting - you find lumps of glass, dog poo and cans in it’
‘there are normally plenty of adults at the park so I feel safe’ (Pupil at Moorside.)
‘there are loads of other kids to play with so you always feel safe ‘
‘loads of bigger kids push us around and swear at us’
‘there’s loads of murderers and paedophiles and that kicking around’
‘there are some bad people in the area’
‘there should be a phone box in the park in case of emergency’
‘we saw a man sitting on a fence having a poo with his pants down’
‘there’s a man watches us playing rounders in the street and when the ball goes in his garden he puts a knife through it in front of us’
‘we were playing once and this man asked us to come into his house and we were scared’
‘since what’s been happening on the news my Mam doesn’t let me play on the field any more’
‘older kids make fires on the fields which is bad’ (Pupil at West Walker)
‘sometimes you see used needles and condoms lying around’
‘there are rats in the sand pit that’s in Walker Park’
‘we should have security guards and cameras ...but not so it looks like a jail’
‘I was in the park once and I saw a man running through the bushes dressed all in black and he looked strange’
‘sometimes people nick your ball off you and bully you’
‘sometimes people make fun of you and your religion’
‘I don’t feel safe in Nuns Moor Park and Elswick because there is no security’
‘someone might come and grab you and take you away’
‘there is lots of rubbish and litter and broken glass all over the place’
‘the dog poo is horrible - you shouldn’t be allowed to take dogs in the park’
‘there is under-age drinking and smoking and needles and syringes there are perverts - I was chased on the lines and they are there every night’ Pupil, Walker Technology College
‘people just shout at the park keeper and insult him which I think is unfair’
‘my Mam has warned me about perverts in the bushes’
‘stray dogs spoil our ball games’
‘its frightening when lads are drinking and taking drugs in the park’
‘people are setting fires on the field’
‘theres always loads of druggies’ (Gosforth High School pupil)
‘I always get chased off charvas shouting come here you little radgy’
‘when you go to the parks and see groups of charvas and drunks it puts you off’
‘I used to feel safe at Jesmond Dene but I hear lots of stories about druggies and devil worshippers being there’
‘I wouldn’t walk through Walker Park by myself or with anyone when it is dark. Girls have been raped at 6pm at night’
‘I’ve had fireworks thrown at me’
‘I feel quite safe in Exhibition Park - there are normally lots of people there’
‘I was in Central Park once when a drunken man said he was going to rape me’ (Gosforth pupil.)
‘lots of people get beaten up and attacked in Central Park’ (Gosforth)
References


Newcastle Community Safety Partnership

*Public Consultation for the Newcastle Community Safety Audit 2001-2.*  
Newcastle Crime Reduction Partnership. (Gill Davidson, Gillian Denny and Faye Dolman. Community Safety Research Unit, March 2002)


*Report on Consultation carried out at the Mela, August 2002*  
Parks and Green Spaces Strategy Team


*Staff Consultation* Parks and Green Spaces Strategy Team, January 2004


*What would you do with this space?* Cabe Space, 2004
Acknowledgements

Doug Wilkinson  Rapid Response Team Manager. Street Services  
Dave Roberts  Project Manager Street Wardens  
Jo Humphries  Community Safety Unit  
Mark Lamb  Service Development Officer Street Services  
Morris Winning  Northumbria Police Liaison Officer  
Lindsey Holland  Researcher. Social Exclusion Unit  
Lisa Grabham  Senior Policy Officer (Research) Leisure Services  
Jan Garrill  Senior Policy Officer (Strategic Intelligence) Neighbourhood Services