

Community Remedy - Summary

I fully appreciate the effects anti-social behaviour and low level crime have on individuals, businesses and communities and how the impact will vary from victim to victim, business to business, and community to community.

I recognise that there is not a 'one size fits all' way to tackle anti-social behaviour and low level crime. All of the Community Safety Partnerships in Cambridgeshire have identified anti-social behaviour as an issue within their communities. As such tackling anti-social behaviour continues to be a policing priority for Cambridgeshire Constabulary and remains one for myself.

The impact on the victim, whether this is an individual in their home, a small or large business or a community, will be the driving force behind how those who commit anti-social behaviour and low level crime are dealt with. The response to anti-social behaviour to protect individuals and communities can only be achieved through effective partnership working to ensure those responsible are held to account for their actions. In championing the needs of victims I want to reinforce the need to create safer, stronger and supportive communities for victims which recognises that some victims have multiple complex needs and where all agencies work together to support them.

The Government, through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (the "Act") has set out a new approach to crime, policing and community safety to ensure that those responsible for dealing with anti-social behaviour are putting the needs of victims first.

There is already a breadth of support services available to victims. Nonetheless, the Act brings in a Community Remedy which gives victims a say in the out-of-court punishment of offenders for low-level crime and anti-social behaviour.

Equally important is the need for those responsible for anti-social behaviour to understand the effects on their victim or the wider community and make the appropriate amends. Therefore, the Community Remedy actions aim to have a positive impact on offenders by taking responsibility for making good the harm caused, encouraging them to face up to the impact of their behaviour and can help to reduce reoffending.

Before the actions are listed in the Community Remedy document, as Police and Crime Commissioner I must consult with members of the public, community representatives and local authorities. Once the consultation responses have been received, the Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire Constabulary and myself must agree a list of actions for the Community Remedy.

A Community Remedy will enable Cambridgeshire Constabulary to deal more proportionately with lower level crime and anti-social behaviour in a timely and transparent manner that takes into account the needs of the victim, the offender and wider community, outside the formal criminal justice system. Importantly, the victim needs to know that they can choose not to be involved or that the action may not be legally enforceable if the perpetrator fails to complete the agreed action.

Therefore, I am conducting a questionnaire to seek the views of the general public, community representatives, businesses and local authorities on a list of options that will give victims a say in the out-of-court punishment. These options must reflect the effects on the victim (punitive element), achieve the appropriate amends, financial or otherwise, to the victim (restorative), address the causes of the perpetrator's behaviour (rehabilitative) or a combination of these.

The options must also be appropriate and proportionate to the types of offence, agreeable by both the victim and the offender. Equally, the Constabulary must ensure the action fits with the criteria laid out in the Act.

The Constabulary have already carried out work where officers have used sound professional judgement to come up with sensible, effective solutions that suit the victims and the offender. Some examples are given in the survey which will hopefully demonstrate how this works and may help you in completing the survey.

Once the Community Remedy document has been agreed by the Chief Constable and myself, the options listed on it may be chosen by the victim for the offender to undertake in consequence of their behaviour or offending. This is likely to be in place in October 2014 subject to guidance from the Home Office.

I hope that you feel assured that both the Constabulary and myself take the issue of anti-social behaviour and low level crime seriously. I welcome your views on how victims can be at the heart of the response to such actions that affects them.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G. Bright', written in a cursive style.

Sir Graham Bright

Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner