Between 1st January 2012 and 31st December 2012, 6957 incidents of ASB were reported to the police for the whole of North Somerset. Weston-super-Mare central ward accounts for 20% of all ASB reported to the police, with over 300 calls per 1000 population. By comparison, south ward, which has the second highest volume, accounts for less than half that rate. High levels of public order and criminal damage offences are recorded within central ward with a significant proportion of the ASB being serious and verging on criminal behaviour. The 2012 North Somerset residents survey asked how safe local residents felt visiting town centres after dark, with 38% of respondents stating that they felt very/fairly unsafe visiting Weston-super-Mare. This compares to 12% visiting Clevedon, 15% Nailsea and 7% Portishead.

The North Somerset Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has developed a multi agency approach to tackling ASB across the district. Central to the approach is partnership working with a range of activities including the monthly ASB MARAC and Multi Agency Problem Solving (MAPS) meetings providing mechanisms for agencies to come together to tackle cases linked with particular individuals or locations. These approaches involve a range of agencies including the police, local authority, registered social landlords and health as well as representatives from the private and voluntary sectors. The local focus in on positive intervention and preventative activity backed by enforcement activity where appropriate.

In relation to central ward specifically, the CSP administer the areas PACT meeting which brings together residents, businesses and partner agencies, offering the opportunity to raise issues of concern and to work together to find solutions. The area is also subject to a dedicated night time economy action plan, which whilst focusing on alcohol related crime and disorder, also picks up issues around environmental ASB which are of concern to central ward residents.

Further information can be found on our website by following this link https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Community/Partnerships/JSNA/safer+and+stronger/crimeandantisocialbehaviour.htm.

Litter Rubbish and Waste

The licensing conditions and undertaking included in the consultation documents are steps to increase awareness and provide information about waste and recycling collections and how to present these for collection.

The council are aware of the related enforcement powers under Part 2 and Part 4 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990, Public Health Act 1936 and the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005. We regularly serve notices under section 46 of the EPA 1990 which specifies issues around presenting waste for collection. The Council’s Area Officers are the warranted officers who serve notices and issue any subsequent fixed penalty notices on offenders.
The main problem encountered in securing successful prosecutions is the high turnover of occupants and difficulties in raising awareness of collection days and recycling requirements. It is therefore felt that if the relevant information is given out at tenancy sign up this would ensure that all occupants are aware of their responsibilities as soon as possible.

We hope that this educational approach will better tackle the broader problems of rubbish in the area rather than focusing on individuals who have littered in a public place, issuing fixed penalty notices and undertaking prosecutions, although this approach would of course remain an option if deemed most suitable.