



ARTICLE NO: 2A

**CORPORATE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**

MEMBERS UPDATE: 2010/11

Article of: Executive Manager Community Services

Issue: 3 November 2010

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Greenall

**Contact for further information: Mr A Hill (Extn. 5243)
(E-mail: a.hill@westlancs.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN WEST LANCASHIRE

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF ARTICLE

1.1 To advise Members of the performance of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU) and the results of the continued good partnership working with Lancashire Constabulary (the constabulary).

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Home Office describes anti-social behaviour (ASB) as "any aggressive, intimidating or destructive activity that damages another person's quality of life". The Tenants Standards Authority stated that ASB "from graffiti and litter to noisy neighbours and racial abuse – can be annoying and stressful for tenants and at worst ruin people's lives.

2.2 West Lancashire Borough Council originally set up the ASBU in 2000 and incorporated it into the Multi Agency Problem Solving (MAPS) team in 2003. The team consists of two full time equivalent posts and an externally funded MAPS assistant supports them.

2.3 The team predominantly deals with ASB issues involving Council tenants, but, as part of the MAPS team, are ideally placed to involve or be involved with other partner agencies with ASB issues.

3.0 ASB IN WEST LANCASHIRE 2009/10

3.1 The Estate Management Team (EMT) tend to deal with the initial element of the complaint and pass on the issue if a further, more involved response is needed. During the year April 2009 to March 2010, the Council's EMT responded to 396 cases of "low level" nuisance and ASB. If, after following their procedures, the EMT have not resolved the matter, it is passed on to the ASBU. Almost ten per cent of the complaints the EMT dealt with (396) were passed to the ASBU (35). A further 10 cases were referred by other sections of Housing Services.

3.2 In addition to this, 519 complaints concerning neighbour noise (including barking dogs), were responded to by the Environmental Protection Team. Some of these will be referred via the EMT, as they are tackled jointly.

3.3 Lancashire Constabulary received 7827 complaints about anti-social behaviour in West Lancashire during this time. Once again, some of these will be duplicated with other agencies and as such it is difficult to put an exact figure on the scale of the problem within West Lancashire.

3.4 During this period, the ASBU took both formal and informal action to deal with ASB. The achievements include:

- *14 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts signed*
- *3 Notices of Demotion issued*
- *20 Notices to Terminate Introductory Tenancies issued*
- *1 Notice of Intention to Seek Possession of a secure tenancy issued*
- *4 Evictions carried out for anti-social or criminal behaviour*
- *3 Anti Social Behaviour Injunctions (ASBIs) obtained*
- *1 formal Undertaking secured*
- *1 ASBO amended to include wider prohibitions*
- *Carried out 125 'warning visits' and delivered 59 warning letters.*

3.5 Not all our successes can be shared with the wider community in the Borough, either through reporting restrictions or in the interests of the safety of certain individuals. However, where possible, we do seek to publicise the outcome of our cases, not to 'name and shame' but to encourage other people to come forward and work with us to tackle anti-social behaviour and to let our residents know what is being done on their behalf. Major successes this last 12 months have been:

- *In October 2009 The Skelmersdale Advertiser ran a front-page story concerning then 17-year-old Nicole Isik from Upholland. For the first time a court extended the prohibitions of one of our ASBOs to cover an area outside of the Borough. Isik was banned from entering areas of Pemberton and Wigan. She was already subject to a curfew and barred from areas of West Lancashire.*
- *In February 2010 the local press were able to report that 31 year-old Steven Simm of Cornbrook Skelmersdale was made the subject of an ASBI after he had threatened to burn down his neighbour's home. The Council then began eviction proceedings but Simm returned the keys before the possession case reached court.*

- *In June 2010 the case of a drug cultivator from Digmaor, Skelmersdale was made public. 36 year-old Paul Carroll was evicted from his council home after police discovered drug-making equipment and 68 cannabis plants during a raid on his home.*
- *In August 2010 Local press reported how another Skelmersdale man was evicted by the council after council officers accompanied the police during a raid on his council home. 21 year-old Anthony Nixon had converted his bedroom into a hydroponic cultivation unit and also had a quantity of cocaine and digital weighing scales at his address. He had also dangerously bypassed the electricity meter in his home.*

4.0 ASB IN FOCUS

- 4.1 The tragic case of Fiona Pilkington in the autumn of 2009 has helped to put ASB in context. Miss Pilkington killed herself and her 18-year-old daughter after over 10 years of abuse from a gang of teenagers who lived in the same street. The stress and anxiety of her position is said to have substantially contributed to the decision she made.
- 4.2 Following this case, the Home Office instructed Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to adopt minimum standards for dealing with ASB. Work was undertaken to standardise these across Lancashire and ours were published on the 31st March 2010. The standards are included as Appendix 1.
- 4.3 In addition to these minimum standards, several other elements of work have been undertaken to ensure ASB victims do not slip through the net. These include:
- ASB is now a standing item of the agenda of the CSP Local Priorities Group (LPG)
 - ASB Police data is published each month for the LPG, including repeat callers and problem locations
 - ASB data for the Council is now collated and sent to the constabulary.
 - An ASB officer attends the team meetings of the Environmental Protection Team. In addition the Environmental Protection and Community Safety Manager covers both these teams which aids consistency.
 - The LPG has encouraged LCC Youth involvement staff to undertake activities for young people at ASB problem times
 - The constabulary have re-trained their call handlers to try to identify vulnerable victims
 - There is now a pan Lancashire ASB officer working group
 - Multi-agency risk assessment conferences for ASB have now commenced to discuss high priority ASB cases
 - Council and Police Officers in the MAPS team worked with representatives from the voluntary sector to develop and deliver training for people working with the Learning Disabled. This focuses on how carers and professionals working in this field can help recognise and report crime and ASB suffered by these vulnerable members of society
 - The Council's policy on ASB has been reviewed

4.4 As a result it can be easily demonstrated that far more partnership working takes place around ASB within the LPG than previously.

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 In addition to the knowledge that we now have a far more robust approach to ASB on paper, there are also some pretty impressive Police statistics to demonstrate the improvements that have been made. From April to the end of August there has been an 18.7% reduction in ASB calls to the Police, compared to the previous year. Notably July and August showed reductions of 25.8% and 26.2% respectively. Whilst the figures are good for all of the Southern Division (WLBC, Chorley and South Ribble), the figures for the West Lancs. CSP show the greatest improvement. Appendix 2 details the actual breakdown.

6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

6.1 Reducing ASB can lead to a reduction in the stress levels and an improvement in the living conditions of residents

7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are none

8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 Work to reduce ASB is essential for residents

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - ASB minimum Standards (Draft)

Appendix 2 – ASB figures

Appendix 1

West Lancashire Community Safety Partnership (Draft)

Anti-Social Behaviour Minimum Standards

Introduction

Anti-social behaviour is virtually any intimidating or threatening activity that scares you or damages your quality of life.

Examples include:

- rowdy, noisy behaviour
- 'yobbish' behaviour
- vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
- dealing or buying drugs on the street
- fly-tipping rubbish
- aggressive begging
- street drinking
- setting off fireworks late at night

Anti-social behaviour doesn't just make life unpleasant. It holds back the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and creates an environment where more serious crime can take hold. It has a negative effect on many people's lives and we are committed to tackling it.

Responsible authorities have a statutory duty to work with other local agencies and organisations to develop and implement strategies to tackle crime and disorder including anti-social behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting people's quality of life and the local environment. This also includes the misuse of drugs in their area.

These statutory partnerships, which are known as Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were developed in response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The responsible authorities included on the West Lancashire CSP include: -

- West Lancashire Borough Council
- Lancashire Constabulary
- Lancashire County Council
- Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service
- NHS Central Lancashire
- Lancashire Probation Trust

In 2006, the Police and Justice Act made several amendments to the Crime and Justice Act and this included a new duty on CSP's to produce an Annual Strategic Assessment and to prepare and implement an annual Partnership Plan. Responsible authorities are under a statutory duty to ensure that the key agencies work in partnership in a CSP to deliver their Community Safety Partnership Plans.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 also placed a requirement for Responsible Authorities to convene a Strategy Group in two-tier areas and in Lancashire this requirement is being fulfilled by the Safer Lancashire Board.

Community Safety Partnerships were asked by the Home Secretary to commit to a set of minimum standards in tackling anti-social behaviour by 31 March 2010. The Safer Lancashire Board agreed that this should take place at a pan-Lancashire level in order to ensure that the public could access the same minimum level of service regardless of where they live. In support of the requirement to produce a set of minimum standards, Safer Lancashire on behalf of the Safer Lancashire Board has produced an Anti-Social Behaviour Pledge.

West Lancashire CSP has adopted the pledge and the pledge is supported by a locally agreed set of minimum standards: -

Working together to take anti-social behaviour seriously ... our pledge to you

We know that if anti-social behaviour happens to you, it can have a big impact on your quality of life which is why here in Lancashire, we are committed to tackling it by working together.

We will take your reports of anti-social behaviour seriously and will:

- Work quickly to understand the problem.
- Acknowledge your complaint, make a record of it and check whether there are any other reports of the same problem.
- Look at all the information about your complaint and work out the best response according to the nature of it.
- Assess your case to make sure we offer you the right support and involve you where appropriate in our plans for tackling the problem.
- Treat all the information you give us in confidence and work with other partners to make sure we get the right solution.
- Give you just one person to deal with who will keep you regularly informed of what's happening and let you know as soon as possible if this changes.
- Aim to deal with your problem before it gets worse by making the best use of the tools and powers available. This often doesn't need legal action.
- Offer you support if your case goes to court and you are asked to attend as a witness.
- Work with the courts and Crown Prosecution Service on enforcing ASBOs and other orders and publish the outcomes of court cases where appropriate.
- Make it easy for you to tell us about local issues and get involved in solving local problems.
- Ensure better links between neighbourhood policing teams and other organisations to deal with problems quickly.
- Give you and your community clear, consistent, and relevant information about what action is being taken and what effect it is having.
- Let you know how to complain if you aren't happy with the service we have given you.

You should report anti-social behaviour to your local council, the police, or your registered social landlords. You can do this in person, by telephone or in writing. They can also provide you with further details.

Brought to you by Safer Lancashire in partnership with West Lancashire Community Safety Partnership

Summary of Delivery

We are fully aware that Anti-Social Behaviour needs actions from various agencies to tackle it. The important issue is how we as a partnership deal with it and how we demonstrate how we deliver against the policies and pledges that we have in place.

We are committed to recognising and tackling all anti-social behaviour with priority being given to vulnerable people, repeat offenders and problem areas. As such we are committed to logging each complaint about anti-social behaviour and collating this information on a regular basis. This information will then be analysed to enable community safety partners to prioritise complaints and action them accordingly. The partnership has a number of thematic delivery groups which work together and we will ensure that ASB is a priority for all those groups.

By recognising vulnerable people, repeat offenders and problem areas we will look to target interventions where they are most needed.

We aim to ensure that all cases receive an appropriate response and that all agencies share anti-social behaviour complaint information and assist any other partner, where possible.

The relevant contact details for reporting anti-social behaviour and examples of the types of anti-social behaviour that agencies deal with can be found in appendix A.

Should a resident be unhappy about the response they receive in relation to a particular request for service, they can complain to the relevant agency through their complaints procedures and if still dissatisfied, to the Community Safety Partnership. Details of how this can be achieved can be found on the West Lancashire Borough Council Website www.westlanecs.gov.uk

Appendix A

How do I ask for help?

Anti-Social Behaviour is tackled by numerous agencies dependant on the type of complaint and the relevant contact details are enclosed below:-

Lancashire Constabulary

For issues concerning

- rowdy, noisy behaviour in the street
- 'yobbish' behaviour
- vandalism
- dealing or buying drugs on the street
- aggressive begging
- street drinking
- setting off fireworks late at night

Please telephone 0845 125 35 45 or visit www.lancashire.police.uk

Alternatively if you are under threat of harm or you witness a crime being committed and require an immediate response you should keep calm and dial 999.

If you have information about crime, or criminals, then telephone Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.

You can remain anonymous and may even be able to claim an award.

RESPONSE TIMES -

West Lancashire Borough Council

For noise related to a premises (not in the street), fly tipping, graffiti and anti social behaviour from a Council tenant

Phone 01695 577177 or visit www.westlancs.gov.uk

You can report anti-social behaviour online at ******* *Bespoke format to be developed*

RESPONSE TIMES -

Lancashire Fire and Rescue

For issues relating to fires or fire prevention that may affect your property or community contact **Lancashire Fire and Rescue** via *******

Details to be included

RESPONSE TIMES -

Victim Support

Details to be included

