



ARTICLE NO: 2A

**CORPORATE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:**

MEMBERS UPDATE 2011/12

ISSUE: 3 NOVEMBER 2011

Article of: Assistant Director Community Services

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director People and Places

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mrs Hopley

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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.

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. Non Council tenant issues are generally investigated by the police.

3.0 ASB IN WEST LANCASHIRE 2010/11

- 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 2010 to March 2011, the Council's EMT responded to 186 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 fifty per cent of the complaints the EMT dealt with (186) were passed to the ASBU (90). A further 10 cases were referred by other sections of Housing Services. However, due to reduced staffing and increasing administrative work, the ASBU do prioritise this work in accordance with agreed priorities.
- 3.2 In addition to this, 483 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 6854 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:
- *10 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts signed*
 - *2 Notices of Demotion issued*
 - *13 Notices to Terminate Introductory Tenancies issued*
 - *16 Notice of Intention to Seek Possession of a secure tenancy issued*
 - *7 Evictions carried out for anti-social or criminal behaviour (the highest since the unit was established)*
 - *4 Tenancies relinquished after proceedings were commenced*
 - *3 Anti Social Behaviour Injunctions (ASBIs) obtained*
 - *1 formal Undertaking secured*
 - *1 ASBO amended to include wider prohibitions*
 - *Carried out 145 'warning visits' and delivered 73 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 November 2010 the Skelmersdale Advertiser ran a story concerning a tenant of Beechtrees, Digmoor. He had been evicted from his council flat after council staff and police discovered dogs being kept in appalling conditions in the tenant's first floor council flat. One of the animals was a pit bull type dog, a banned breed. A clear message was sent out that the rules about not keeping unsuitable animals in council flats will be enforced.
 - In January 2011 the Skelmersdale Advertiser was able to publish details of a two-year ASBI (anti-social behaviour injunction) the ASBU had secured against 30 year old male, formerly of Beechtrees, Digmoor. A Judge at Wigan County

Court made the order, which banned the male from a large area of Skelmersdale after he had assaulted a female council tenant.

- In April 2011 two council tenants accused of racial abuse gave an undertaking in County Court not to engage in or threatening to engage in, threatening behaviour and specifically not to use racist language.
- The ASBU, Police colleagues in the MAPS team and MENCAP West Lancs developed and delivered a training course around tackling Hate Crime directed at learning disabled people. Some 80 Carers, social workers and other professionals working with these vulnerable members of the community attended the training courses in Skelmersdale and Ormskirk. The aim of the training was to give an understanding of how seriously the Council and Police take this subject and to explain to professionals how these offences can and should be reported and what will happen as a result. The feedback from those attending the training was extremely positive with 100% of attendees saying they were satisfied or very satisfied with the course. The initiative culminated in an event at the Concourse Shopping Centre in Skelmersdale in June which was covered in the Advertiser newspaper in July 2011.

4.0 OTHER WORK

- 4.1 During the year the ASBU worked with Housing Services to ask our tenants and service users what they thought of the way the Council dealt with ASB. Officers attended Housing Services' first Tenants Conference in October 2010. This was part of a year of wide ranging consultation about how we work that saw us introduce a satisfaction survey and agree what type of anti-social behaviour our residents want us to prioritise. Our officers attended the Service Improvement Groups along with tenants and Housing Services staff to discuss how better to meet the needs of service users.
- 4.2 In 2010 – 2011 ASBU staff worked closely with their colleagues in Housing Services to plan the shape of ASB elements of the new IT system for housing management. Officers contributed to the design of the software and were trained on how to use it to maximise our efficiency. The system was introduced in April 2011 so next year's report will cover the first year of operation but early indications are positive. For example we are now able to share with our partners at Lancashire Constabulary daily information on reports of ASB. It is intended that this will lead to an early identification of vulnerable victims of ASB and the delivery of appropriate responses.
- 4.3 The ASBU works very closely with Lancashire Police and has built up a model of partnership working which is effective and delivers results for our tenants. They also work with other partners such as the Probation Trust, Fire and Rescue and Youth Offending Team. This maximises the value of the resources the Council commits to the Unit and it is planned to continue this partnership approach over the next 12 months. It is understandable that people are concerned about anti-social behaviour and we acknowledge this. The hard facts though indicate that last year was another year when the number of reported cases in West Lancashire actually fell. The figures for 2010 to 2011 show a reduction in the number of reports, down by an impressive 14.5% (Figures from the Community Safety Partnership, Local Priorities Group report April 2011). Of even more

significance is that this follows on from a reduction in the number of reports the previous year too.

5.0 ASB IN FOCUS

5.1 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.

5.2 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 have previously been reported to Members and are available on the Council's website.

5.3 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

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

6.0 RESULTS

6.1 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. During the last year there

was a 16.4% reduction in ASB calls to the Police in from Skelmersdale. The corresponding figure for Ormskirk and Burscough was an 11.6% reduction. Across the Southern division as a whole, the figure was a 10.3% reduction. From April to the end of July there has been a 25% reduction for West Lancashire compared to last year. Since April this year there has been a fall of 10% across the County and this equates to 14,087 less victims. Appendix 1 details the actual breakdowns.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

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

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no significant financial resource implications arising from this article.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. It therefore does not require a formal risk assessment and no changes have been made to risk registers as a result of this report.

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

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – ASB figures

Appendix 2 – E quality Impact Assessment

Corporate Analysis

MONTHLY RESULTS

Select Area:

Select Class:

MONTH	This Year	Last Year
April	2,146	2,146
May	1,969	1,969

Corporate Analysis Department - Daily ASB File (V2) - Updated to:

MONTHLY RESULTS BY AREA

Select Display →

Monthly

Select Area:

Current Display: Police Area's

Click button to view Po

Select Class:

MONTH	Southern Division			Chorley CSP			West L	
	All Anti-Social Behaviour	All Anti-Social Behaviour	% of All ASB	All Anti-Social Behaviour	All Anti-Social Behaviour	% of All ASB	All Anti-Social Behaviour	All Anti-Social Behaviour
April	1,786	1,786	100.0%	558	558	100.0%	549	549
May	1,356	1,356	100.0%	405	405	100.0%	428	428
June	1,473	1,473	100.0%	469	469	100.0%	487	487
July	1,500	1,500	100.0%	495	495	100.0%	477	477
August								
September								
October								
November								
December								
January								
February								
March								
YTD	6,115	6,115	100.0%	1,927	1,927	100.0%	1,941	1,941
MONTH	South Ribble CSP			0				
	All Anti-Social Behaviour	All Anti-Social Behaviour	% of All ASB					
April	679	679	100.0%					
May	523	523	100.0%					
June	517	517	100.0%					
July	528	528	100.0%					
August								
September								
October								
November								
December								
January								
February								
March								
YTD	2,247	2,247	100.0%					

<p>1.</p>	<p>Using information that you have gathered from service monitoring, surveys, consultation, and other sources such as anecdotal information fed back by members of staff, in your opinion, could your service/policy/strategy/decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy) disadvantage, or have a potentially disproportionately negative effect on, any of the following groups of people: <i>People of different ages – including young and older people</i> <i>People with a disability;</i> <i>People of different races/ethnicities/ nationalities;</i> <i>Men; Women;</i> <i>People of different religions/beliefs;</i> <i>People of different sexual orientations;</i> <i>People who are or have identified as transgender;</i> <i>People who are married or in a civil partnership;</i> <i>Women who are pregnant or on maternity leave or men whose partners are pregnant or on maternity leave;</i> People living in areas of deprivation or who are financially disadvantaged.</p>	<p>There is not considered to be any disadvantageous effects on these groups - the aim of the service is to attempt to resolve serious anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues. Residents who are suffering from ASB, would therefore benefit from any improvements made.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>What sources of information have you used to come to this decision?</p>	<p>Officers have some knowledge of the people in the area and are aware of persons who fit into the groups quoted in Question 1.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><i>How have you tried to involve people/groups in developing your service/policy/strategy or in making your decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy)?</i></p>	<p>The ASB team works with tenants and has undertaken work to encourage reporting in specific e.t.g's.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><i>Could your service/policy/strategy or decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy) help or hamper our ability to meet our duties under the Equality Act 2010? Duties are to:-</i> Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; Advance equality of opportunity (removing or minimising disadvantage, meeting the needs of people); Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.</p>	<p>It will help.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><i>What actions will you take to address any issues raised in your answers above</i></p>	<p>Continue as before.</p>