

COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

POLICY REVIEW INTO ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - GENTOO'S APPROACH TO NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY

REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR GENTOO SUNDERLAND

10 NOVEMBER 2009

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline Gentoo Sunderland's approach to Neighbourhood Safety, highlighting key performance outputs over the last full year (2008-9), active partnership working and current and future developments. This report is submitted as part the Committee's evidence gathering process in relation to its study into Anti – Social Behaviour.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Group's new Neighbourhood Safety Strategy was approved in November 2008. The Strategy operates within the Group's Vision "To improve the Art of Living Beyond Imagination". The ultimate aim of the strategy is to ensure that "everyone within our neighbourhoods feel safe and secure". This is consistent with the City's overarching Community Safety objective

2.2 The Strategy has four strategic objectives, which are mutually- reinforcing and interlink to achieve our overall aim:

Objective 1	Prevent and minimise anti-social behaviour (ASB) and perceptions of it by taking a long-term approach which combines prevention and early intervention, support and swift enforcement where necessary.
Objective 2	Empower our neighbourhoods to feel safe and secure, particularly where there are more vulnerable groups.
Objective 3	Provide tailored support to victims as well as offenders.
Objective 4	Engage fully with others to deliver coherent, long-term solutions and communicate our actions to our partners, others organisations and our communities.

3. Scope of the Service

3.1 Neighbourhood Safety covers the following elements of service delivery:-

- Tenancy enforcement

- Anti-Social Behaviour Prevention
- Early intervention
- Victim Support
- Perpetrator Support

A summary of each is shown below:-

- 3.1.1 Tenancy Enforcement - Taking tenancy enforcement action where appropriate using a range of tools and powers available.
- 3.1.2 Prevention - Taking action to prevent ASB occurring in the first place. This includes diversionary work with young people and addressing the causes of ASB.
- 3.1.3 Early Intervention - Taking early intervention action to prevent the ASB escalating further and “nip it in the bud”.
- 3.1.4 Victim Support - Supporting victims of ASB through tailor made, customer-led support plans.
- 3.1.5 Perpetrator Support - Supporting perpetrators to tackle to causes of ASB behaviour for example, misuse of drugs and alcohol, mental health issues and poor parenting skills.

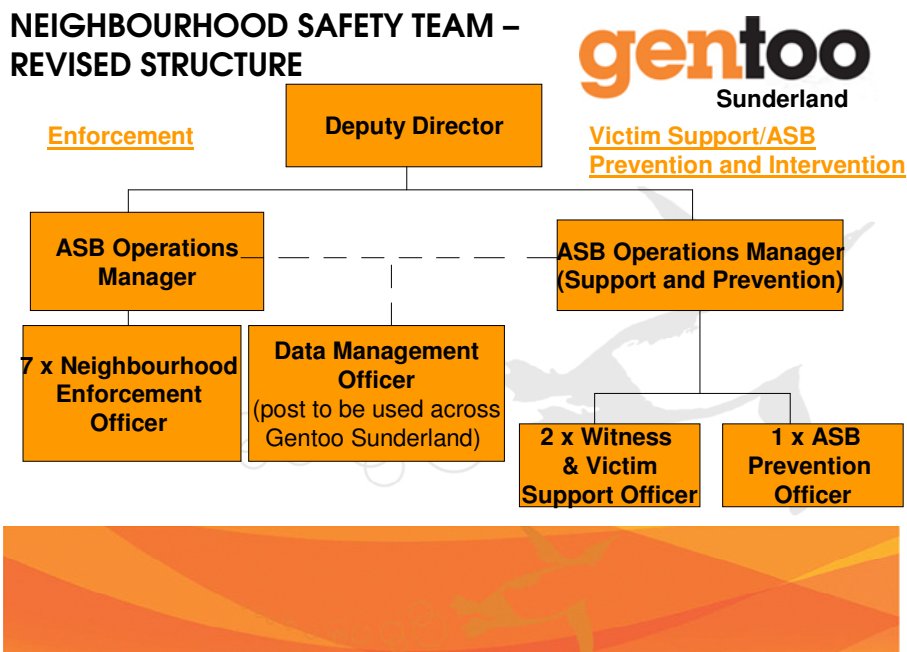
4. Neighbourhood Safety Team Structure

- 4.1 The Neighbourhood Safety Team has recently been restructured to ensure it is fit for purpose to deliver the objectives within the strategy. The previous structure is shown below:-

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY TEAM – PREVIOUS STRUCTURE



4.2 Roles and responsibilities have been re-shaped to create the current structure shown below:-



4.3 The 7 x Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers are based locally within the Neighbourhood Teams and report to the local Neighbourhood Operations Manager whilst the other Officers named on the structure are centrally based.

5. Performance Summary 2008-9

5.1 ASB Caseload - Gentoo categorise the most serious cases of ASB as category 1 and 2 cases and these are dealt with by the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers.

5.2 New Cases Added - Over the 2008-9 financial year, 519 new category 1 and 2 cases were added. This is relatively consistent with the previous year and represents a decrease of 38 (7%) across the City.

5.3 This caseload was spread across the 5 management areas as shown in Table 1 below:-

Table 1

Management Area	% of Caseload	No. of NEO's
Central	14.3%	1
H & H	16.2%	1
North	28.1	2

South	12.1%	1
Washington	29.3%	2

- 5.4 The statistics demonstrate a relatively consistent workload for each Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer.
- 5.5 Of these 519 complainants, 509 (98%) were responded to within 24 hours. This represents an improvement on the previous year when 95% of all complainants were responded to within 24 hours.
- 5.6 New cases added as a result of information obtained from Northumbria Police increased by 18% when compared to the previous year. This reinforces the excellent partnership working that exists between Gentoo's Neighbourhood Safety Team and the local Police teams.
- 5.7 Cases Resolved and Closed - Over the year, 504 cases were resolved compared to 603 the previous year. Cases are usually resolved by using either early intervention or enforcement measures. Table 2 shows this breakdown. Comparative data from the previous year is also shown.

Table 2

Measures Used	2007-8	2008-9
Allegations Unfounded	1%	2%
Enforcement	15%	27%
Early Intervention	84%	71%

- 5.8 The number of cases resolved by enforcement measures has increased due to the number of police led cases also increasing as referred to earlier in the report.
- 5.9 Live Cases (April 2009) - In terms of live cases, as at April 2009, 157 category 1 and 2 were registered on the breach system.

6. Victim Support Caseload

- 6.1 New Cases Added - Over the 2008-9 year, 99 new customers were supported as part of the victim support service. This represents an increase of 58 on the previous year, however, this is due to increased resource in this area of service.
- 6.2 Two dedicated Victim Support Officers are now appointed therefore, it is anticipated the number of customer accessing support will increase during the 2009-10 year.

6.3 Victim Support Cases Closed - 59 Victim Support cases were closed during the 2008-9 year which represents an increase of 24 on the previous year.

7. Enforcement, Prevention & Early Intervention Activity

7.1 A range of enforcement, early intervention and prevention activity has taken place over 2008-9 as outlined in Tables 3 and 4 below. Comparative data from the previous 2 financial years is also shown where available:-

Table 3 Enforcement Action

Measure Used	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9
Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP)	185	188	171
ASB Injunction (ASBI)	21	10	7
ASB Order (ASBO)	0	0	0
Suspended Possession Order	10	7	11
Absolute Possession Order	2	4	4

Table 4 Early Intervention and Preventative Action

Measure Used	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9
Interview	Not available	453	438
Letter	N/A	367	370
Visit	N/A	472	503
Appropriate Behaviour Agreements (ABA's)	58	49	60
Demotion Order	2	0	1
Diversions Activities	20	30	29
Referrals to Mediation	30	47	53

7.2 The statistics demonstrate that generally, the team are utilising more early intervention tools and less enforcement tools. This approach is in line with Home Office and Audit Commission recommendations as early intervention measures, if successful, are proven to be more sustainable.

8. Out Of Hours Working

8.1 During the 2008-9 year, the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers worked out of normal office hours on 425 occasions. The reasons for the out of hours working are varied for example:-

- Reactive work in response to a live case
- Home visits to reassure victims and/or witnesses
- High visibility walkabouts
- To attend a customer involvement forum
- Targeted surveillance work

8.2 On 104 occasions, the Officers witnessed events which helped to strengthen evidence in relation to ongoing cases.

9. Customer Feedback

9.1 Customer feedback in relation to Neighbourhood Safety issues is gathered via the following methods:-

- Customer Complaints
- Customer Satisfaction
- Customer Involvement Methods

10. Customer Complaints

10.1 Over the 2008-9 year, 17 complaints were received through Gentoo's complaints procedure in relation to ASB. The trends associated with the feedback received from the complaints were in relation to the customer actually reporting ASB and the customer's perception that either no action had been taken or action wasn't being taken quick enough.

11. Customer Satisfaction

11.1 Customer satisfaction data is currently collected in relation to the Victim Support Service and in relation to the handling and outcome of ASB cases.

11.2 The Victim Support satisfaction regime has been in place throughout the whole financial year, however, the ASB satisfaction system started mid-way through the year. A summary of customer satisfaction data recorded over the 2008-9 financial year is show below:-

Victim Support Service

How safe did you feel in their homes at	No. of	%
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first contact?	Respondents	
Very safe	0	0
Fairly safe	15	15
Neither	8	8
Fairly unsafe	31	32
Very unsafe	45	45

How safe did you feel in their homes at closure of the case?	No. of respondents	%
Very safe	22	37
Fairly safe	20	34
Neither	9	15
Fairly unsafe	4	7
Very unsafe	4	7

Were you satisfied with level of support?	No. of respondents	%
Too much	0	0
Just right	58	98
Not enough	1	2

- 11.3 It is pleasing to note that one of the positive impacts of the Victim Support Service is that customers feel much safer in their homes i.e. only 15% of customers felt very or fairly safe prior to receiving the service and this increases to 71% after receiving the service. It is also positive to note that 98% of customers felt the level of support they received was just right.

12. ASB Satisfaction

Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the outcome of your ASB complaint?	No. of Respondents	%
Very satisfied	20	45%
Fairly satisfied	14	32%
Neither	2	5%
Fairly dissatisfied	3	7%
Very dissatisfied	5	11%
TOTAL	44	100%

- 12.1 Again, it is pleasing to note the relatively high levels of satisfaction in relation to the ASB service with 77% of complaints being very or fairly satisfied with the outcome of their complaint. ASB cases can be difficult to manage, often being related to sensitive and/or complex situations. At times, the complainants expect more swift legal action (i.e. eviction) when this is usually not the most appropriate course of action.

13. Partnerships

13.1 Gentoo Sunderland work in partnership with a range of agencies in relation to the Neighbourhood Safety agenda, in particular the Council's Neighbourhood Relations Team and Northumbria Police. Three of the police teams are based within Gentoo facilities at Havelock, Concord and Hendon. Gentoo are represented on all of the City's main partnership forums in relation to this agenda including the Business Support Group (BSG) and the ASB Delivery Group.

13.2 Other key City-wide partnerships where Gentoo play an active role include:-

- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)
- Family Intervention Project (FIP)

A summary of each is described below:-

MAPPA exists to ensure that the responsible authorities and social care agencies who have a duty to co-operate (as identified in the Criminal Justice Act 2000) work together to assess and manage the risk posed by sexual and violent offenders who reside in Wearside. Gentoo Sunderland's Deputy Director is the Group's lead officer. Responsibilities include attending the MAPPA strategic forum, making decisions in relation to re-housing and risk management and managing the implications of any decisions. In addition, the Heads of Service attend local MAPPA meetings where the individual resides or is associated with certain estates. Last year, 70 referrals were made to the MAPPA Unit.

MARAC is a multi-agency forum to discuss the highest risk Domestic Violence Cases within the City. Other partners include the Police, Childrens Services, Housing Options Team, Probation, Health, Drug and Alcohol Support, Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), Education Department and Wearside Women In Need (WWIN). Gentoo's ASB Operations Manager (Support and Prevention) or a Victim Support Officer attend fortnightly MARAC meetings where the 8 most high risk cases are discussed and risk management plans developed. Case numbers for the period 21.07.08-09.06.09 are as follows:-

Total Number of Cases	Gentoo Tenants	No. of Cases Where Information Provided by Gentoo Team
116	73	105

The statistics show that Gentoo have contributed to 91% of all cases.

Family Intervention Programme (FIP) is a City wide scheme available to all landlords. DISC is the support provider. Gentoo Sunderland's Deputy Director is a member of the multi-agency FIP Strategic Group and the ASB Operations Manager (Support and Prevention) coordinates all referrals within Gentoo. Over the 2008-9 year, 26 referrals were made to the FIP project, 16

(62%) of which were referred by Gentoo staff and 21 (81%) of which were Gentoo tenants. The programme provides support for tenants who need to change their behaviour otherwise they would be evicted. There are three models of support – Residential, Dispersed and Floating. Currently, all FIP referrals receive floating support, however, we are aiming to have the dispersed model available during the 2009-10 year.

14. Objectives Over 2009-10

14.1 Gentoo's Neighbourhood Safety Team are working towards the following objectives over the 2009-10 year:-

- Implement Diversionary Framework to assist with identifying priorities.
- Use GIS Mapping system to maximise use of data.
- Further develop ASB Prevention programme including:-
 - Diversionary work
 - Durham Prison Visits
 - Attitude Changing DVD
 - Out of School Clubs in hot-spot areas
- Refresh fear of crime data at a neighbourhood level.
- Clarify costs and value for money of each enforcement and early intervention tool.
- Implement Family Intervention Tenancies to offer FIP dispersed model as well as floating support model.
- Develop customer literature in relation to new aspects of service delivery.
- Complete review of Gentoo's Domestic Violence Strategy.
- Work in partnership with other agencies to promote awareness of support networks in relation to Domestic Violence.
- Increase high visibility patrols.
- Improve customer information on how to report ASB.
- Target vulnerable groups in relation to Neighbourhood Safety information.

15. Recommendation

15.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

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