

COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SCENE SETTING REPORT

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

15 SEPTEMBER 2009

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview to the Scrutiny Committee on key current partnership responses to anti social behaviour.
- 1.2 The Committee can then consider an investigation of services as part of their review.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 15 June 2009, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to pursue a review of anti social behaviour in the city, and at its meeting on 7 July 2009, it agreed a terms of reference for the study, together with a schedule of meetings. It was agreed that the September meeting would be used to set the scene in relation to current responses to anti-social behaviour.
- 2.2 This report contributes principally to the following areas within the terms of reference for the study:
 - To gain an understanding of approaches of Council and its partners in tackling anti social behaviour and ensure that strategic approach is being taken;

3. Definition

- 3.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defines anti-social behaviour as:

"Behaviour that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm and distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator."

- 3.2 This description of anti-social behaviour is useful as a starting point for defining nuisance activities. Such activities can include:
 - Harassment, threatening language and behaviour
 - Nuisance caused by people drinking alcohol, or being under the influence of alcohol in public places
 - Rowdy behaviour
 - Violent behaviour
 - Hoax calls to emergency services

- Vehicle nuisance, through use of untaxed, uninsured and unlicensed vehicles on highways and in public places (including 'mini moto' motorcycle nuisance)
- Noise nuisance
- The dumping of rubbish and littering
- Uncontrolled pets and fouling of public areas
- Nuisance caused by misuse of drugs and other substances
- Nuisance neighbours
- Arson and secondary fires
- Criminal damage and vandalism (including graffiti)

3.3 This list is not comprehensive but gives examples of behaviour impacting upon quality of life.

4. Policy Background

4.1 The policy background to this review is provided by the Safer Sunderland Strategy. Key documents include:-

- Safer Sunderland Strategy 2008 -2023
- Anti Social Behaviour Strategy (currently being finalised)

4.2 The Safer Sunderland Partnership supports the delivery of the Safe City priority via the Safer Sunderland Strategy. This identifies a number of high level outcomes to be achieved by 2023. It also identifies a number of key shorter term strategic priorities to focus on for 2008-2011, one of which is to 'Reduce anti-social behaviour and people's perceptions of it'. The outcomes of particular relevance to ASB are:

- Outcome C - Creating a Safe Environment. Sunderland will have an environment that promotes safety and feelings of safety. By 2023 no one will feel very unsafe in their neighbourhood.
- Outcome D - Being Free from Crime, Disorder and Substance Misuse. People in Sunderland will be free from crime, disorder, and substance misuse. By 2023 residents will enjoy a city with its lowest ever recorded crime rate and perceptions of anti-social behaviour will be at their lowest level and be better than the national average
- Outcome F – Creating a Supportive Family Environment. People in Sunderland will have the supportive family environment they need to help them stay free from harm and crime and disorder. By 2023, more people than ever will perceive that parents take responsibility for the behaviour of their children.

5. Strategic Overview

- 5.1 In order to support the Safer Sunderland Strategy and to respond to the Youth Taskforce Action Plan, the ASB Delivery Group structure has been reviewed and amended to ensure it is fit for purpose. The new structure directly links the strategic management of ASB with the foundation of activity to combat the problems of ASB, namely the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving Groups, (LMAPS) which address those issues that members of the public see, feel and hear. Structures bring together representatives from agencies across the Safer Sunderland Partnership involved in addressing anti-social behaviour in order to develop and implement multi-agency solutions. Time limited Task and Finish Groups are formed as and when required from the membership of the group (and beyond, depending upon the expertise required), to address issues that require more detailed consideration to obtain a resolution.
- 5.2 The ASB Delivery Group has responsibility for the strategic development and implementation of the ASB Strategy and Delivery Action Plan and the anti-social behaviour LAA priority. It considers all ASB issues (young people, adults, families, environmental etc) and acts as an information sharing and consultation forum to maintain partners awareness of current policy and initiatives. It also provides a clear link to the eight LMAPS delivery groups and considers LMAPS trends across the City. Problem issues that cannot be resolved at the LMAPS level are escalated to the appropriate Safer Sunderland Delivery Group for action. It in turn reports to the Safer Sunderland Partnership's Business Support Group (BSG) or Safer Sunderland Partnership Board as appropriate. The Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP) structure including the ASB structure is shown as Annex 1.
- 5.3 A draft Anti Social Behaviour Strategy has been produced and a delivery plan is in the process of being developed. Documents will be shared with relevant groups within the Safer Sunderland Partnership (SSP), and presented to the SSP Board at it's October 2009 meeting.
- 5.4 Details of the roles of the Council and key partners in tackling anti-social behaviour are included within the final draft strategy. A summary of roles is included as Annex 2. This includes details both of partner agencies such as the Police and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Services, and also of the wide range of Council sections that are spread across Directorates and which together form the partnership response to addressing issues of ASB.

6. Current ASB Indicators

- 6.1 ASB is measured by the Local Area Agreement Indicator NI17 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour. Perceptions of ASB as a problem reduced from 51% in 2003/04 to 30% in 2006/07 (a 21% reduction). The partnership forecast an overall reduction from 30% to 25% over the 3 years of the local area agreement. However the most recent (2008) Place Survey results have recently become available and this now places the perceptions of ASB at 23.5%. It is recognised that it will become increasingly difficult to keep making significant reductions against this measure. The SSP has therefore

agreed upon a 2 percentage point reduction against the 23.5% place survey baseline for the remaining term of the LAA agreement. This means that since 2003, there has been a 27.5% improvement in perceptions of ASB as a problem and a 6.5% reduction since 2006.

- 6.2 A range of partnership responses and activities to ASB, as detailed in Annex 2, have impacted upon perceptions of ASB and have led to this reduction. Reports of ASB have reduced significantly, and there have also been a number of successful diversionary activities, perhaps the most notable of which is the XL Youth Village events.
- 6.3 The duty of the Safer Sunderland Partnership to carry out an annual Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment (PSIA), which gathers and examines data from a wide range of sources on crime, disorder and substance misuse problems in Sunderland, shows that the key 'headline' issues from the latest PSIA relating to anti-social behaviour issues include:
- Youth related ASB (including groups of young people 'hanging around'), is highlighted at the top priority, and in particular there is specific concern around underage drinking.
 - Alcohol Related ASB, (including underage drinking), is consistently highlighted as a local issue in all parts of the City.
- 6.4 Other ASB issues highlighted within the PSIA include:
- Speeding vehicles and damage to vehicles;
 - Drug related litter
 - Motorbikes/quad bikes.
 - Bus shelters continue to be a target for criminal damage and further work is recommended on understanding crime and perceptions of crime on public transport

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 Members are recommended to accept this report and to consider which elements of the current partnership response to anti-social behaviour that they wish to scrutinise at future scheduled meetings.

8. Background Papers

Safer Sunderland Strategy

Anti Social Behaviour Strategy (draft 2009)