

REPORT

To: NORTH LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIP		Subject: REMODEL OF THE ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SERVICE
From: HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES		
Date: 15 JANUARY 2014	Ref: EMCH / SL	

1. Purpose of Report / Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update members of the North Local Area Partnership on progress with the implementation arrangements for the introduction of the remodelled Anti Social Service. Housing and Social Work Services Committee on 16 August 2012 agreed that a Member/Officer Working Group (MOWG) would be set up to review how the council and its partners deal with anti social behaviour and for a report to be presented to that committee outlining any proposals to re shape and re design the anti social service taking account of the findings of the MOWG. The new service will formally launch on 1 April 2014.

2. Background

2.1 The overall objective of the MOWG was to ensure that the Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) process is efficient and effective meeting the needs of our service users and applied consistently across the council from beginning to end, from a resident's initial contact through to action, if necessary by Legal Services.

2.2 Anti-Social Behaviour is defined by the Anti Social Behaviour (Scotland) Act 2004 as;

“A person engages in anti-social behaviour if they act in a manner that causes or is likely to cause alarm and distress or pursues a course of conduct which causes or is likely to cause alarm and distress to at least one person who is not of the same household. (Course of conduct must involve conduct on at least two occasions).”

2.3 Prior to the establishment of the MOWG an internal Business Process Review (BPR) team was set up in 2012. The objectives set for the (BPR) team were:

- Define what is meant by ASB. For example, what should be dealt with as estate management issues, the difference between what is ASB and what is a neighbourhood dispute, and what should be reported as ASB, racial harassment, drugs complaints etc.
- Examine processes to determine if they are adding value to the community, the council and its partners and to make recommendations for change where appropriate.
- Review existing measures and identifying any additional measures that are required. This will include reviewing the information that is being provided to the Local Community Safety Sub Groups.
- Ensure that the results from the review are used to inform and, if necessary update, the existing actions needed in respect of the Scottish Social Housing Charter, Local Area Partnerships, Community Safety Sub Group, Local Youth Offenders Group, etc.
- Identify changes to the Anti-Social I.T. module.

2.4 The three stages of the Business Process review were:

1. Process mapping/evidence gathering
2. Redesign
3. Action/implementation

3. Findings

3.1 In line with the definition of ASB detailed in 2.2, the BPR team and the MOWG overall concluded that ***“there are conflicting views and a lack of understanding as to the remit of the current service delivered both by the Area Teams during normal working hours and also during Out of Hours”***.

3.2 The main findings reported to the MOWG on 28th January 2013 and to the main service Committee on 15th August 2013 related to:

- First Point of Contact
- Witnessing and Intervention Action to be taken within and without hours
- Legislative Issues
- Use of CCTV
- ICT Requirements
- Communication with complainers
- Youth Complaints
- Lack of Categorisation and prioritisation of complaints
- Drugs
- Sustainability
- Support for Victims and Offenders

4. Recommendations Approved

4.1 In designing the new service model, cognisance has also been taken to ensure the following strategic actions and objectives are met;

- Demonstrate impact of ASB actions within Community Plan/SOA 2013-18
- Promote continuous improvement through Community Safety Partnership group
- Review and develop progress through Community Safety Action Plan
- Ensure successes/initiatives are shared with residents and partners
- Work closely to promote new ASB service in conjunction with the rebranding/new identification of NL Community Safety

4.2 The Housing and Social Work Committee approved the recommendation from the BPR team to set six core principles to be adopted to tackle the findings as listed at 3.2, these six core principles are;

- Clarity of purpose.
- Improve first point of contact.
- Pro-active service with increased visibility.
- Improve communications and processes.
- Improve marketing of the new service.
- Improve sustainability to break the cycle of Anti Social Behaviour.

4.3 Clarity of Purpose

- A clear service delivery model should be implemented with clearly defined and published service standards advising all concerned of the purpose of the service being delivered, this should include response times and categorisation of complaints. The agreed model of service delivery must include not only witnessing but intervention during the incident, this model would also include targeting staffing resources during the peak timescales.

4.4 First Point of Contact

- Ensure consistency of service provision by establishing a central point for dealing with all initial calls.
- Set clear service standards for timescales for responding to witness ongoing anti social complaints both during daytime and out of hours.
- Adopt the principle of categorisation of anti-social complaints at the initial point of contact along with proposed timescale.
- Prioritise resources to take account of demand peaks at predictable times.

4.5 Pro active service with increased visibility

- Use all powers available including noise monitoring equipment.
- Fully utilise range of legislative powers available in full partnership with other services/agencies including Police.
- Utilise CCTV evidence including use of mobile CCTV unit and individual body mounted CCTV camera's.
- Ensure Investigators are highly visible and seen within communities.
- In pro active drug cases implement earlier intervention.

4.6 Communications and processes

- Investigate use of Looking Local – Application.
- Ensure complainers are kept up to date on case progression and service should be more pro active.
- Publicise the Legislative powers available to ensure there is clarity of range of actions available.
- Publicise the need for complainers to contact the service earlier, delays in reporting incidents are leading to 65% of incidents being over by the time officers attend.
- Improve communications with Private Landlords / Private Landlord Forum.
- Upgrade the current ASB IT module in HSMS.

4.7 Marketing of the reviewed service

- Re-launch the service clearly detailing on all published literature and council web site the referral process and service standards to be delivered.
- Produce and implement Communication Strategy.
- Publicise clearly what we can and importantly what we can't do.

4.8 Sustainability/Break Cycle of ASB

- Review and consider mediation to work more with offenders to break the cycle of anti social behaviour.
- Consider education pack targeted at 4th year pupils.
- Consider support provision for offenders and perpetrators.

4.9 Taking account of the six core principles as listed from 4.3 to 4.8 Committee agreed the following proposals;

- To ensure consistency of service provision calls will be handled centrally at all times.
- Six local teams comprising a total of 12 Anti Social Investigators Monday to Friday during normal daytime hours, the teams will be located in the 6 housing localities and these localities mirror the Local Area Partnership Areas.
- A key finding was that we required to prioritise resources to take account of demand peaks at predictable times. Research and analysis of incidents of anti social behaviour has clearly shown that 85% of anti social incidents occur from Thursday to Sunday and between 7.00pm and 3.00am. The majority of these complaints are also domestic noise complaints that occur within properties. It is therefore proposed that a dedicated team of 5 ASI's and 1 Senior ASI's should be deployed during these peak hours. This team will attend incidents and will take the necessary intervention and enforcement action as well as liaising closely with Police Scotland to target the perpetrators of anti social behaviour. Police Scotland have identified that a growing trend is for incidents to occur indoors and a commitment has been given that the out of hours team will receive the appropriate support from Police Scotland.
- In line with our partnership working the new out of hours night team will be located at Town Centre Activities (TCA) where closer working practices will be developed with the CCTV operators as well as Police Scotland.
- Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday an enhanced advice service is delivered.
- It was also proposed that a post of Assistant Operations Manager (Community Safety) required to be established to oversee the operational and strategic development of our approach to tackling anti social activities and Audrey Johnstone has been appointed to this post.
- That the existing role of Mediation Officer is expanded to take on a more proactive role to deal with and tackle the causes of anti social behaviour to attempt to break the cycle to assist offenders modify and change their behaviour leading to greater sustainability and a positive outcome.
- Recruitment and mobilisation is now fully underway.

4.10 The strategy moving forward as agreed by the Committee include:-

- Re-launch the service and make referral process and service standards to be delivered clear including all published literature and council web site.
- Produce and implement Communication Strategy and publicity to provide a clear message to all residents and partners in order to manage the expectations of the service user
- Publicise clearly what we can and importantly what we can't do adopting the principle of categorisation of anti-social complaints at the initial point of contact along with proposed timescales
- Re-brand the new service.

5. Corporate Considerations

5.1 The new remodelled service reflects the strategic and corporate priorities of the North Lanarkshire Partnership.

6. Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the Local Area Partnership note the content of this report.



Elaine McHugh
Head of Housing Services
13 December 2013

For further information about this report please contact Stephen Llewellyn, Operations Manager on 01698 274192