

Item No. 15.	Classification: Open	Date: 28 January 2014	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Consistent Responses to Antisocial Behaviour	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Richard Livingstone, Finance, Resources and Community Safety	

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR RICHARD LIVINGSTONE, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Antisocial behaviour can have a significantly detrimental impact on our communities, particularly where that behaviour is sustained over a period. If it remains unchallenged, it can seriously blight the lives of people living, working or shopping in our borough. Victims of antisocial behaviour can feel isolated unless the council and other agencies intervene to support them.

Proposed changes to legislation on dealing with antisocial behaviour mean that it is now time for the council to update the policy set out in 2011. Following a review of all the work that the council's departments carry out in addressing antisocial behaviour, this report sets out the next steps we should take at this stage. Most importantly this includes implementing a Landlords Charter for Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), including the council itself, to help tackle this problem.

We anticipate that Parliament will have carried out much of the work to establish the new legislation by the summer. This report therefore recommends that a further report come to the Cabinet in the summer to consider how the council should implement these revised powers once these are more certain.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet note the findings of the systemic service review undertaken by officers from across the council of our antisocial behaviour (ASB) responses.
2. That the Cabinet agree to the implementation of a Southwark Landlords Charter (please see Appendix 1) for handling all reports of antisocial behaviour, including standards of service based on our current minimum standards for antisocial behaviour. This includes:
 - Every complainant having a named point of contact who will deal with their case.
 - Closer cross departmental working and a case management approach to noise complaints.
3. That the Cabinet note the progress made so far by officers to improve services for all victims of antisocial behaviour, as per the outcomes of the review.

4. That the Cabinet notes that this report is the first stage of a review of the council's and partners' approach to addressing anti social behaviour in light of the new legislation and changing needs of our communities. The Cabinet instructs officers to report back in summer 2014 in more detail, including operational opportunities and implications.
5. To note the proposed communications as part of the community reassurance strategy, to enhance the council's reputation for helping people to feel safe and will highlight the activity that the council is undertaking to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and their underlying causes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

6. Everybody has the right to feel safe and protected no matter where they are or who they are with. Intimidating and nuisance behaviour caused by individuals or groups has the power to blight the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. It has been recognised that such behaviours can significantly affect the peaceful enjoyment of people's environment and as such, need to be dealt with.
7. Southwark Council's commitment to tackling anti social behaviour is reflected in its fairer future promise to 'Work with residents and the police to make the borough safer for all by cracking down on anti social behaviour.'
8. In addition the Safer Southwark Partnership (SSP) has produced a four year (2011-2015) strategy setting out the multi agency approach to tackling this issue in our borough.
9. The council wants to ensure that the victims of ASB, whether individuals, families or communities, feel supported in addressing nuisance or intimidating behaviour. We want people to know where they can get help to deal with problems and ensure that they understand what support they can expect from us.
10. This is also in line with the council's new customer access strategy which commits us to providing excellent customer service, a right first time service. We want to ensure that all partners share information, problem-solve and work together, with our communities, to ensure that concerns are addressed in a timely manner.
11. In this context officers have undertaken a systematic review of the council's response to antisocial behaviour. This report outlines the findings of the review and the proposed recommendations.
12. In order to conduct the review we brought together managers from community safety and housing and community services. This enabled us to gather information from those involved in every stage of the antisocial behaviour reporting process.

Legislative and policy environment changes

13. In May 2013, the government detailed their proposed changes to antisocial behaviour legislation. These include changes to the tools used to tackle antisocial behaviour and the introduction of the community trigger. The draft bill

and proposed changes based on the pre-legislative scrutiny process are included in the appendices.

14. The changes being introduced by the government focus on a more citizen-led approach which favours simpler and more flexible tools and powers, which will enable professionals to get to the root of neighbourhood problems, more quickly and cost effectively.
15. The proposed legislative changes provide an opportunity for the council and its partner agencies to review its overall approach in tackling anti social behaviour.
16. This report represents the findings and actions from the first stage of review which will establish more responsive multi agency interventions to support victims and assess and address the underlying vulnerabilities that are often at the heart of nuisance behaviour.
17. The next stage of the review will commence as the legislative framework comes into being. The council will use the opportunity provided by these new powers to review our service delivery, tools and approaches to tackle anti social behaviour. This will include the council's response to noise nuisance issues which remains a particular concern to local residents.
18. A particular driver for change will be the implementation of the community trigger. The community trigger was defined by the Home Office as a mechanism that will give victims and communities the right to demand agencies deal with persistent anti-social behaviour.
19. The community trigger is a process which allows members of the community to ask the Community Safety Partnership in the Southwark, the Safer Southwark Partnership (SSP), to review their responses to complaints of anti-social behaviour.
20. The community trigger is designed to ensure the SSP work together to try and resolve any complaints about anti-social behaviour. We will do this by talking about the problem, sharing information and using our resources to try and reach an agreeable outcome. The community trigger cannot be used to report general acts of crime or as a service request.
21. Officers have assessed the community trigger and this can be delivered within our current partnership processes to minimise duplication and maximise efficiency. This will allow us provide a multiagency platform to tackle repeat victims, plan any actions necessary and create a positive resolution for the victim.
22. When the community trigger process is finalised, following enactment of the legislation in April 2014, it will require approval by the SSP and the local Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).
23. The London arrangements for the implementing the community trigger will be peculiar due the powers of the PCC being twinned with those of the Mayor of London. For this reason we will be consulting The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) for their input.

24. As part of our review officers have considered the above changes in order to future proof our plans.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Review findings

25. The review process identified the core issues in relation to how the council responds to incidents and how they manage their relationships with our customers. These are dealt with in detail in the next sections.

Service usage

26. According to information collected by the council in the financial year 2012-2013 there were 2,119 incidents of antisocial behaviour recorded. This is an increase from 1,230 in 2011 – 2012.
27. Noise nuisance cases can take up a significant amount of resources by the complex nature of some cases. There were 314 reports in 2012 - 13 of 'noisy neighbours' which is the highest reported single category with domestic noise being the main issue.
28. All noise complaints account for more than a quarter of all cases in 2012 - 13, rising to more than a third when expanded to cases where noise is one element of a wider complaint.

Increased clarity and consistency

29. Reports of antisocial behaviour from council tenants or leaseholders are managed by either housing operations or in the most serious cases SASBU. Other teams may investigate specific aspects of a case if that case is particularly complex.
30. The managers whom were spoken to from housing, SASBU and the noise team all stated that clients often stated their confusion about where to report their problem and their frustration associated with this.
31. Greater clarity is required in relation to the teams, the services and who manages the different types of incident. This will make it easier for a customer to know in which way it is best to report an incident of antisocial behaviour. When budgets and services are being reduced, we need to minimise duplication and make sure that we target our responses appropriately.
32. In terms of noise, officers across departments will adopt a case management approach to ensure we work seamlessly behind the access points. It will not matter where a customer approaches, their case will be managed by the right officers.

Customer satisfaction

33. To date measuring customer satisfaction has been difficult due to the low rate of return of customer satisfaction surveys. Phone surveys on closed cases and the small number of postal forms returned have indicated high levels of customer

satisfaction with the council's response to ASB issues. Officers were able to feed in anecdotal information as well as conduct an analysis of complaints received about ASB.

34. Moving forward, a wider sample is required to ensure we measure the success or otherwise of the outcomes of the review, including the borough wide Landlord Charter. Officers are therefore working with the resident involvement team to commission a full satisfaction evaluation. Officers have also worked with the call centre now it has returned in house to ensure a regular satisfaction sample survey is undertaken, to continue to inform service development and improvement.

Partnership working and social landlords

35. The council currently works with social landlords formally via Southwark Housing Action Group (SOUHAG). In the last year a great deal of work has been done to consolidate relationships between the council and RSLs around the ASB agenda. This includes RSLs being represented at strategic and operational SSP meetings to discuss ASB, giving them access to partnership support and services. These meetings include the ASB Strategy Group and the Partnership Tasking Group.
36. Community safety and enforcement currently has a robust framework for managing partnership working with localised Information Sharing Groups (ISG) and case conferences. These are managed by SASBU and bring together partners to manage cases where complex problem solving is required or enforcement is necessary. In addition fortnightly Partnership Tasking Group meetings take place bringing together a range of partners to discuss operational issues across the borough.

Community involvement

37. Community involvement in addressing antisocial behaviour is currently focused on community ward panels, which are managed by the local safer neighbourhood teams (SNT) and the Southwark Police Community Consultative Group (SPCCG). The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) is combining these two functions into a new safer neighbourhood board (SNB). Whilst the details are to be confirmed, this will aim to hand more powers to community ward panels to hold local policing to account and provide a clearer structure. The implementation will offer us as a challenge and an opportunity to successfully integrate resident participation, and the role of the 'community trigger' into our ways of working.
38. The new antisocial behaviour legislation will provide the opportunity to instigate local community solutions empowering local residents to tackle local antisocial behaviour problems.

Communications

39. An area that officers have identified for improvement is our communications messages around antisocial behaviour. Our fairer future promises set out our offer on antisocial behaviour and this should be clear on our written and online materials.

40. Robust communication of our offer to the council's customers in tackling antisocial behaviour will be instrumental to making it a success, highlighting what services are available, to who and when. Moving forward this will incorporate the new tools for tackling antisocial behaviour such as the community trigger.

Best practice

41. As part of this review, officers have examined other local authorities' processes and procedures for dealing with ASB complaints and have found two examples of best practice, which they believe would benefit the residents of the borough:
 - Waltham Forest Council has agreed an antisocial behaviour charter which sets out minimum standards of what residents should expect when they report antisocial behaviour across all housing providers.
 - Merton Council has produced some clear and concise publicity which highlights what their offer is for residents who report antisocial behaviour and when it is and is not appropriate to contact the council to report an incident.

REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS

42. The below actions from the findings of the review have been, will be or are waiting to be enacted subject to approval at cabinet. A related action plan is performance managed by the ASB strategic group, a sub group of the Safer Southwark Partnership to ensure officers complete objectives according to timescales.
43. The second stage of this review will be managed by a cross council group of senior officers. The group will make recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet on the reconfiguration of our service delivery with regards to anti social behaviour in light of the new powers.

A one council and victim-centred approach

44. There needs to be a consistent approach to how officers deal with reports of ASB.
45. Customers should be given a named point of contact when they first report an incident of antisocial behaviour. The named contact will be a resident officer in respect of council tenants and leaseholders and a Southwark anti social behaviour unit (SASBU) officer for the most serious cases, as well as for private landlord and owner occupiers. For Registered Social Landlord (RSL) tenants and leaseholders the relevant RSL will provide the named point of contact.
46. Once adopted this approach needs to be clear to all of our customers and embedded in to our minimum standards .Officers propose this is supported with training for staff and publicity for customers. The named point of contact will be responsible for coordinating all the agencies involved in any case. Agencies will adopt a victim centred approach ensuring that the victim or witness is kept fully informed of the progress of cases and any action to be taken. This approach will also ensure a case management approach for noise cases.
47. Internally high risk cases or where legal action is appropriate the case will be passed to SASBU.

48. As part of the council's fairer future promise to 'improve our customer services' all customer service functions will now be delivered in house including by the new customer contact centre. Training to call centre staff provided by SASBU and the noise team will identify what constitutes noise nuisance and further aspects of case management as appropriate. Officers will be conducting consultation with front line staff to specify the training to their requirements and fill any skills gaps identified.
49. Housing operations has reviewed their antisocial behaviour procedure, building on the lessons learned from the systemic review. This new procedure will be rolled out and any associated training provided to officers.

Right first time service delivery

50. In order to quantify how the changes are working, officers recommend a revised customer feedback system conducted via telephone interview. This will review 10 percent of cases per year and will enable us to build continual improvement into our systems, adapting our services to the needs of our customers. This will be conducted by the customer experience team, with information provided by SASBU. This will help ensure that services are easily accessible, simple to use, streamlined, convenient, and minimise avoidable contact.
51. In depth focus groups in partnership with resident involvement will be used to inform our baseline for satisfaction and to ensure the council focus their offer on the needs of victims and the findings will be used to frame our work.
52. Community safety and enforcement has agreed to provide training around handling antisocial behaviour reports and noise nuisance complaints to all relevant staff. This will focus on those working in the customer service centre initially to ensure a right first time service when contacting the council. Training will be ongoing.

Working with landlords

53. Officers have worked with partners at SOUHAG to sign up key RSLs who have significant stock in Southwark to a shared Charter in relation to antisocial behaviour. In consulting with our RSL partners were clear a Charter was an extremely positive move and were keen to sign up. They wanted a Charter which was clear, concise and targeted to ensure it would be effective within their organisations and working practices.
54. A Charter will enable social landlords in Southwark to provide a uniform service to all of their tenants and leaseholders. This will also enable us to embed our safeguarding processes and help Southwark's Family Focus Plus to identify families who may require further in depth support.
55. Officers have worked with SOUHAG at the strategic and management groups to develop a charter. This charter can be found at Appendix I.
 - A common understanding of ASB for all signatories of the charter based on the two currently recognised definitions as set out in the charter.
 - A commitment to adopt a victim centred approach
 - How we will support the most vulnerable victims and witnesses

- How we will deal with reported cases and the minimum standards people can expect from us
 - How we will share our intelligence and work together to reduce the level and fear of ASB in Southwark
56. Our own tenancy agreement and conditions of tenancy have been reworded to explain the potential consequences of causing serious antisocial behaviour, including the loss of tenancy.
57. The minimum standards contained within the Charter have been revised to recognise the findings of other cross council reviews. The domestic abuse review clearly agreed a definition of domestic abuse and the council notes that domestic abuse is not antisocial behaviour, but is a crime type. To reflect this domestic abuse has been removed this from the categories of antisocial behaviour. Domestic abuse will be tackled through the system designed as part of the domestic abuse review.
58. The Landlords Charter will be reviewed in line with the changing legislative framework and the councils approach to tackling anti social behaviour.

Partnership working

59. The 'community trigger' should be embedded via the biweekly PTG meetings. These are the operational meetings where members of the SSP complete problem solving and complement the biweekly police tasking meetings. Repeat callers/victims and repeat locations where ASB is a feature are identified and discussed at this forum.
60. This will be a formal mechanism for escalating high risk or repeat cases, so that the Safer Southwark Partnership can prioritise or close cases accordingly. This will enable them to focus our resources on those who need it most and minimise wasted resources on low risk repeats callers and vexatious complainants.
61. RSLs will be involved in this process and the Landlords Charter will include a commitment to adopting strict safeguarding protocols and an adoption of the Council and Police Risk Assessment Matrix.

Community Involvement

62. Officers from housing operations and SASBU have been working together to identify future partners to deliver new mechanisms for community involvement, in line with the legislative changes.
63. Tackling antisocial behaviour is a priority for residents and forms part of the council's community reassurance strategy that is being supported by the council's communications team. The scope of this involvement will be expanded in the new financial year.

Policy implications

64. The implementation of a new antisocial behaviour framework and accompanying agreement with social landlords in the borough will play an important role in achieving the above mentioned council's fairer future promises.

65. The proposed approach supports the aims and objectives detailed within the above mentioned antisocial behaviour strategy 2011 – 2015 as follows:
- **Placing victims and witnesses at the centre of our work** by improving internal processes, improving cross agency work and providing training.
 - **Strengthen communities** by promoting the minimum standards, and encouraging residents to take an active role through neighbourhood watch and community panels.
 - **Increase reporting** by integrating a robust performance framework, helping to solve problems on estates and ensure that breaches of tenancy are acted upon.
 - **Increase capacity to take appropriate and proportionate action** by building the new antisocial behaviour powers into our framework.
66. In February 2012 the council launched its antisocial behaviour minimum standards document which was agreed by the SSP. This provides a framework of minimum standards to be adhered to across the partnership organisations of the SSP. This will form the basis for our charter and will be updated to reflect any changes that we implement.
67. Housing and community engagement have a low level antisocial behaviour procedure which is in the process of being reviewed and will reflect the changes in local practice and national legislation.
68. There will be a clear division between service requests and complaints. Officers are working with corporate complaints to ensure the relationship between the community trigger, corporate complaints, and local government ombudsman complaints is regularly monitored. We will ensure that coordination between partners is systematic and effective and this will minimise duplication of cases.
69. Our ASB review is aligned to existing policy frameworks including
- The Safer Southwark Partnership's statutory rolling action plan,
 - The Southwark hate crime strategy 2011 - 2015
 - Southwark corporate complaints policy 2013
 - Customer access strategy 2012
70. This has been developed taking into consideration similar strategies from other London boroughs.

Community impact statement

71. Southwark Council recognises that improving the quality of life for Southwark's people, through better access to services and creating sustainable mixed communities with opportunities for local people is part of our core business.
72. Antisocial behaviour affects all members of the community, although the elderly those with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and those in the LGBT community tend to be disproportionately affected. Some of these issues are also linked to 'hate crimes' which are those directed at people due to their real or perceived gender identity, disability, race or ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation.

73. The proposed coordinated response to managing reports of antisocial behaviour will have a positive affect on all residents of the borough regardless of their age, faith, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or if they have a disability.

Financial implications

74. There are no additional resource implications arising from this report as the proposed recommendations can be implemented within existing financial and staffing resources.

Consultation

75. As part of the review of ASB, officers analysed a number of data sources in relation to service use and satisfaction levels, to ensure the views of those accessing the service were taken into consideration. These sources included:

- Stage 1 and 2 complaints related to anti social behaviours.
- Data collected from satisfaction surveys from housing operations and SASBU sent to those who have accessed ASB services.
- The housing and community services STAR survey results
- The corporate tracker survey
- Data from the Safer Southwark Partnership, including data collated as part of the statutory strategic assessment process.

76. The 2012 antisocial behaviour satisfaction surveys indicated a high level of satisfaction with 93% of respondents satisfied with the support from resident officers and 75% satisfied with the final outcome. SASBU surveys indicated 90% satisfied with the support received from officers and 90% satisfied with the final outcome. The number of surveys returned has historically been a low proportion.

77. In contrast, tenant and leaseholder general satisfaction surveys conducted by the Housing and Community Services department have historically shown a lower satisfaction rate, with 47% satisfaction with the support received and 46% satisfied with the final outcome in 2012.

78. The reputation tracker asks residents if specific types of anti social behaviour are a problem in their area. The latest results from 2013 show a positive trajectory with an increasing majority of residents stating that ASB related issues were not a problem in their area.

79. All findings were considered in the development of the proposals to ensure continuous service improvement.

80. As detailed above we are committed to meaningful consultation to deliver continuous improvement in our provision of antisocial behaviour services. Officers have therefore developed a new approach to gauge ongoing satisfaction rates and to inform continuous service improvement. This includes:

- A proactive quarterly telephone survey to a ten per cent sample of service users. This will be delivered through the new in house call centre
- An annual in depth focus groups with 50 representatives of service users to enable a more detailed assessment and analysis of service delivery

81. Officers will ensure community input and opinion continues to shape service delivery and improvement plans.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal Services

82. This report seeking the approval of the Cabinet to approve the Southwark Landlords Charter.
83. Pursuant to Part 3 B of the Constitution the Cabinet has responsibility to formulate the council's overall policy objectives and priorities.
84. The council has and is working with other bodies to formulate and deliver the Charter.

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services (FC13/080)

85. The strategic director of finance and corporate services notes that there are no immediate resource implications arising from this report. Any additional resources required in the future will need to be financially appraised and their approval will be subject to the council's policies and procedures.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Antisocial behaviour strategy 2011-2015	Community Safety Partnership Services	George Roscoe 020 7525 3552
Link http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/2868/antisocial_behaviour_strategy_2011-2015		
Corporate complaints policy(s)	Corporate complaints	Zoe Bulmer 020 7525 3128
Link http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/3401/corporate_complaints_policy		
Draft antisocial behaviour, policing and crime bill 2012	Home Office ASB team	Catherine Frayne 020 7035 6035
Link http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm84/8495/8495.pdf		
Antisocial behaviour minimum standards	Community Safety Partnership Services	George Roscoe 020 7525 3552
Link http://www.southwark.gov.uk/downloads/download/2452/minimum_standards		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Landlord Charter

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Richard Livingstone, Finance, Resources and Community Safety	
Lead Officer	Deborah Collins, Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure	
Report Author	Jonathan Toy, Head of Community Safety and Enforcement	
Version	Final	
Dated	17 January 2014	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	17 January 2014	