



Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee Meeting, 28 November 2022

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| Report Summary           |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Report Title</b>      | Recommendations from the Review of Anti-Social Behaviour   |
| <b>Purpose of Report</b> | To present the findings of the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group to the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee.  |
| <b>Recommendations</b>   | That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee:<br><br>a) endorse the proposed recommendations, as summarised in paragraph 4.0, that aim to reduce ASB and ultimately help make residents feel safer in the district; and<br><br>b) forward the recommendations to Cabinet for consideration. |

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 13 June 2022 the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC) approved a Working Group to undertake a review of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) within Newark & Sherwood. The working group, chaired by Councillor Ronnie White, was set up with the aim of reducing ASB and ultimately helping make residents feel safer in the district.
- 1.2 There is no single definition of what is meant by ASB. The Council have adopted the definition applied by the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014:
- conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,
  - conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises,
  - conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person, or
  - conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of business premises
- 1.3 ASB can have a large detrimental effect on communities and individuals that experience it. Reducing crime and tackling ASB is an issue of high importance to the residents of Newark and Sherwood. The results of the 2022 Resident's Survey showed that it was rated the third most important service to residents. Furthermore, it was also rated as the service that was second most in need of improvement.

## **2.0 Summary of the Review**

- 2.1 The group met five times between July and October with input from the following working group members;
- Cllr Ronnie White (Chair)
  - Cllr Penny Rainbow
  - Cllr Lee Brazier
  - Cllr Betty Brooks
  - Cllr Scott Carlton
  - Cllr Jack Kellas
- 2.2 The working group was supported by colleagues from Public Protection who, considering the direction given by members, gathered information and data to inform the sessions supporting members to reach informed recommendations. The working group also met with the Police, Newark and Sherwood's Acting Inspector and Early Intervention Officer, as well as ASB officers from the Council's tenancy team to discuss ASB within the Council's social housing estate.
- 2.3 The Working Group understood that ASB is a complex issue that requires a proactive and collaborative approach in order to successfully reduce the number of incidents. The review into ASB was comprehensive and took the following approach:
- Meeting 1: A scene setting presentation on the role of the Council and Community Safety team in tackling ASB, the key issues and how ASB is currently tackled.
  - Meeting 2: A review of CCTV and its utilisation.
  - Meeting 3: Partnership working with the Police and how to maximise this relationship.
  - Meeting 4: How early intervention tackles ASB and the possible impact of the 'Community Safety Charter'.
  - Meeting 5: A review of ASB in the Council's social housing.

## **3.0 Proposals**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The recommendations in this report are designed to improve how the Council handles ASB in the district and therefore directly contributes to the community plan objective to 'reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and increase feelings of safety in our communities'. Members involved in the working group acknowledged and supported the approach of the anti-social behaviour team. Consultation with residents between 2018 and 2022 show that feelings of safety have increased in the district. With that said, the Council strive to continually improve performance and the recommendations within this report are made with that in mind. There were 5 themes identified with recommendations for each.

## Tackling ASB



### 3.2 Improve Communications

3.2.1 Reporting anti-social behaviour is key to the success of the Council, and its partners, in reducing/tackling incidents. The data received allows us to target key areas and provides the evidence to assign Council and Police resource. It is only with accurate identification and reporting that issues can be handled and addressed at a local level. The group identified some current barriers to reporting;

- Residents are not always able to identify instances of ASB,
- Residents do not always know who to report it to,
- Residents are not always sure how to report ASB, and
- Residents do not always feel their report is acted upon, we need to 'close the loop' and inform the public about what is done when a report of ASB is received.

3.2.2 Recognising these issues, the Community Safety team have been piloting a Community Safety Newsletter. The aim of the newsletter is to provide members and selected partners with information about the team, what services they provide, upcoming news and events as well as some select performance figures. Members are often the first point of contact for residents when raising issues in the community. Therefore, keeping members apprised of updates within the team would be a valuable exercise. The group reviewed the newsletter and felt that members and partners would benefit from circulating this newsletter on a quarterly basis. In a similar vein, the working group also believes it would be valuable for information on ASB to be included as part of the member induction process.

3.2.3 Given the importance that ASB incidents are reported, we need to ensure that the process of reporting is as easy as possible. Whilst it is currently possible to report incidents online through the Council's website, it can be challenging to navigate and it could be made more user friendly by moving the reporting button to the front page of the website.

3.2.4 Considering the other barriers identified, the group also recommended the Council run a wide-ranging communications campaign to increase understanding of what ASB is and how to report it. As well as creating an annual communications plan, developed in collaboration with colleagues from Communications, to help improve how the council engages with the public when discussing ASB, to ensure consistent messaging and inform the public about some of the successes the council have had in tackling ASB in the district.

#### 3.2.5 **Actions (No costs as can be delivered within existing resource)**

1. Launch an ASB communications campaign that aims to help residents define and identify cases of ASB and how they can be reported to the council and its partners.

2. An ASB communications plan to be developed annually as a business-as-usual task to keep residents informed with ongoing initiatives and updates from across the district.
3. Endorse a quarterly ASB newsletter created by the Community Safety team that provides updates to all members and selected partners.
4. Information on ASB and current initiatives to be included as part of the member induction process.
5. Review the ASB online reporting process and make it more user friendly.

### **3.3 Community Protection Officers**

There are four Community Protection Officers (CPOs) who work across the district, within communities to tackle ASB, amongst other things. They sit within the Public Protection team and are a valuable resource in tackling ASB. However, the group did identify three areas for improvement in the work of the CPOs.

#### **3.3.1 First Area of Improvement: Refocus the Role**

The CPO role was impacted by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the period of 'deep lockdown' during 2020 they fulfilled a wide range of roles outside of their normal duties including delivering food parcels and prescriptions. These were incredibly valuable services delivered under challenging circumstances. However, with the return to a more typical way of life and work, it is important that the CPO role reflects this. The working group recommends that there are certain changes made to how the CPOs operate. By splitting the district up into smaller areas and changing the working pattern of officers to be more in line with when incidents of ASB occur, officers will be better placed to effectively tackle ASB. Additionally, the role should be re-focussed based on the principle of increasing visibility and having more of a presence in the community in order to ensure the role is fit for purpose when tackling ASB.

#### **3.3.2 Second Area of Improvement: Efficiencies**

In line with the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy the CPOs are currently piloting two electric vehicles to carry out their duties. However, due to the reactive nature of the CPO role and the geographic size of the district, the limited range of these vehicles can cause operational issues. This can mean that different areas receive varying levels of service due to capacity. The working group suggested to explore whether there is scope in the future or not to exchange the two electric vehicles currently used by the CPOs with two other vehicles currently used elsewhere in the council's fleet. Additionally, four CPOs currently share two vehicles. Therefore, whilst being mindful of the costs involved the working group recommend that the purchase of one additional hybrid vehicle be considered. This vehicle would create greater resilience in the service and increase the capacity of the CPOs meaning that an increased presence in the district would be operationally possible. Additionally it is likely that three vehicles in total will be enough to service the four officers with CPOs being predominately based in town centres which are easily accessible on foot. In current market conditions a hybrid vehicle would cost approximately £30,000 in total. On any existing or new vehicles, it should also be considered whether an updated livery, which places an emphasis on reporting ASB would remind residents of the importance of informing the council about ASB incidents.

A further option is to upgrade to 'fast' charging infrastructure (50 miles of charge in 15 minutes) to allow the CPOs to continue to use the electric vehicles throughout the duration of their shift and give officers more capacity. This would mean that CPOs will not experience the same limitations from lengthy electric charging.

### 3.3.3 **Third Area of Improvement: Stray Dog Service**

The Council has a legal responsibility to collect stray dogs found in the district. Currently the Council uses a kennelling service in Worksop to house any stray dogs that are collected. Whilst this does not directly impact the Council's ASB service, as discussed above, there are issues with the range of the current vehicles used by officers. The long distances involved in travelling to and from the kennels impacts the capacity that the CPOs have and takes away from their other duties. With this in mind, the working group recommends that the service is reviewed at the conclusion of the current contract, in May 2024, to determine if more local kennels are suitable in an attempt to reduce the travel time for officers.

### 3.3.4 **Actions (Costs associated with 2 and 3)**

1. Implement changes to the way the CPOs operate to improve visibility in the community.
2. Consider the purchase of an additional hybrid vehicle, which would cost approximately £30,000 so that the Council can increase the capacity and presence of CPOs in the district. explore whether there is scope in the future or not to exchange the two electric vehicles currently used by the CPOs with two other vehicles currently used elsewhere in the council's fleet.
3. Consider upgrading the charging infrastructure at Castle House to increase the capacity of the electric vehicles.
4. Review the location of the stray dog kennel once the current contract expires.

## 3.4 **Partnership Working**

3.4.1 Throughout the working group process, it was clear that ASB is a highly complex issue with many causes and influencing factors. There is no singular way of working that will eradicate the problem entirely. Success in tackling ASB requires a collaborative approach that shares good working practices and intelligence. The working group recommends that the Community Safety team continue to work closely with partners, in particular colleagues in the Police's Beat and Early Intervention teams. The working group also ask that the Police look into the possibility of extending their early intervention initiatives into primary schools if possible and whether a focus on youth forums would be useful.

3.4.2 Understanding ASB, where and when it takes place, identifying and understanding any trends in behaviour and who potential perpetrators are, are all vital elements in helping to address and tackle the problem. Having up-to-date intelligence and data is therefore very important in order to successfully reduce ASB in the district. Currently ASB data is collated by the Newark and Sherwood and Bassetlaw Community Safety Partnership analyst. Data is taken from the police computer and is reported back on a monthly basis to the partnership. Funding for the analyst after 22/23 has not been secured. With the majority of ASB incidents being reported directly to the Police, the analyst and the data that they provide are important tools to inform the actions of the ASB team. The working group therefore recommends that Cabinet consider the ongoing funding of the partnership analyst.

3.4.3 The Partnership Analyst has been instrumental in supporting the bids for Safer Streets funding. Over the past three years the data provided to support the Safer Streets bids has allow the council to receive over £1,000,000 in additional funding.

3.4.4 The links between mental health and anti-social behaviour are complex and require careful investigation. Up to a third of ASB perpetrators experience challenges with their mental wellbeing. The working group were very keen to explore the possibility of having a designated mental health professional to work across the council's Community Safety and Housing teams. However after further exploration there are of variety of issues that might make this problematic. Employing an individual in this type of role would cost up to £50,000 per year. Furthermore they would have to have a clinical supervisor which would further add to the costs associated with this position and raises the question whether this role is best suited to sit within the National Health Service. NSDC currently has a number of mental health champions who have knowledge of how to refer individuals to the support that they need and the council have found this to be a very effective way of working. With this in mind, a more pragmatic approach to addressing the link between ASB and mental health at a local government level might be to ensure the ASB, housing and other related teams receive mental health first aid training and awareness training. This will give them the skills and understanding to effectively support individuals, as well as connect them to partners and charities that can provide further assistance.

3.4.5 **Actions (Costs associated with 2)**

1. Continue to work closely with partners and ensure the council retains a strong focus on a collaborative approach to tackling ASB, particularly with the Police. The working group also ask that they consider extending their early intervention initiatives into primary schools if possible and whether a focus on youth forums would be useful.
2. Consider the continued funding of the Police Partnership Analyst for 2023/24.
3. Explore the possibility of providing those that work within the ASB and other related teams with mental health first aid training.

3.5 **The Community Safety Charter**

3.5.1 The Community Safety Charter (CSC) is an initiative set up by the Neighbourhood Watch Network with the aim to involve a wide range of local organisations in crime prevention and work towards the goal of eliminating harassment, ASB and intimidation. The CSC is a free scheme that will allow the Council to deliver clear and consistent messaging through their promotional material, have access to interactive training modules and share ideas and good practices with other groups and organisations. Signing up to the CSC will also demonstrate the council's commitment to help create a more positive, safer environment for those that live in the district.

3.5.2 Neighbourhood Watch groups are valuable crime prevention initiatives and members also noted the ongoing partnership building work between the Council local neighbourhood watch schemes.

3.5.3 **Actions (No costs as delivered within current resource)**

1. The council sign the Community Safety Charter and advocate for partners to do the same.

## 3.6 CCTV

3.6.1 CCTV is a valuable tool that the council takes advantage of to both help prevent ASB as well as identify perpetrators. Logically the success of CCTV cameras is dependent on having a clear field of view. The working group did identify some instances in which cameras have been blocked through the construction of new buildings and overgrown trees for example. Currently the locations of cameras are not changed unless a problem has been identified with the field of vision. Therefore, the working group recommends that the location of CCTV cameras is reviewed on an annual basis and action is taken to remove obstructions where necessary.

3.6.2 It is possible for some of the CCTV cameras used by the council to utilise a facial recognition facility, however this is currently switched off. There was consideration given to whether this facility could be utilised more however there are a number of issues that mean implementation would be challenging. Firstly, the software used in the CCTV control room would need to be upgraded to allow for facial recognition to be used. Secondly it could be considered a violation of privacy. Facial recognition cameras scan the identities of all those that come within range of the cameras and stores this data for future use. A recent court case brought against the South Wales police has raised a question over the legality of facial recognition. It is because of these issues that the use a facial recognition facility should not to be implemented by the council at this time. Instead the working group recommends that further research is carried out into the use of facial recognition and explore whether its use might be viable in the future or not.

3.6.3 When a call is made to the CCTV control room, an operator must be on site to answer the call and view the relevant cameras regardless of the time of day. There are approximately 70 screens and hundreds of cameras that must be monitored so it is unrealistic to expect all of them to be viewed at once. There is currently a CCTV partnership agreement in place between Newark and Sherwood District Council, Ashfield District Council and Broxtowe Borough Council. The costs of maintaining and running the CCTV control room are shared amongst the partners. The services provided by the control room are varied. The main function is to provide CCTV monitoring but the control room is also used by all three authorities for out of hours calls (out-of-hours housing repair calls for example). The working group therefore recommends that the ASB team discuss with those in the CCTV partnership about how to make the control room more effective including making efforts to reduce the number of third party events that take place, to ensure a tight focus on crime and ASB prevention. The working group would also like consideration being given to the possibility of bringing the CCTV operation back in house.

### 3.6.4 **Actions**

1. The location of CCTV cameras is reviewed on an annual basis and action is taken to remove obstructions where necessary.
2. Further research is carried out into the use of facial recognition.
3. ASB team discuss with those in the CCTV partnership about how to make the control room more effective including making efforts to reduce the number of third party events that take place, to ensure a tight focus on crime and ASB prevention.
4. The working group would also like consideration being given to the possibility of bringing the CCTV operation back in house.

## **4.0 Summary of Recommendations**

### **Improve Communications**

- a. Launch an ASB communications campaign that aims to help residents define and identify cases of ASB and how they can be reported to the council and its partners.
- b. An ASB communications plan to be developed annually as a business-as-usual task to keep residents informed with ongoing initiatives and updates from across the district.
- c. Endorse a quarterly ASB newsletter created by the Community Safety team that provides updates to all members and selected partners.
- d. Information on ASB and current initiatives to be included as part of the member induction process.
- e. Review the ASB online reporting process and make it more user friendly.

### **CPOs**

- f. Implement changes to the way the CPOs operate to improve visibility in the community.
- g. Consider the purchase of an additional hybrid vehicle so that the Council can increase the capacity and presence of CPOs in the district at an approximate cost of £30,000. and explore whether there is scope in the future or not to exchange the two electric vehicles currently used by the CPOs with two other vehicles currently used elsewhere in the council's fleet.
- h. Consider upgrading the charging infrastructure at Castle House to increase the capacity of the electric vehicles.
- i. Review the location of the stray dog kennel once the current contract expires.

### **Partnership Working**

- j. Continue to work closely with partners and ensure the council retains a strong focus on a collaborative approach to tackling ASB, particularly with the Police. The working group also ask that they consider extending their early intervention initiatives into primary schools if possible and whether a focus on youth forums would be useful.
- k. Consider the continued funding of the Police Partnership Analyst for 2023/24.
- l. Explore the possibility of providing those that work within the ASB and other related teams with mental health first aid training.

### **The Community Safety Charter**

- m. The council sign the Community Safety Charter and advocate for partners to do the same.

### **CCTV**

- n. The location of CCTV cameras is reviewed on an annual basis and action is taken to remove obstructions where necessary.
- o. Further research is carried out into the use of facial recognition.
- p. ASB team discuss with those in the CCTV partnership about how to make the control room more effective including making efforts to reduce the number of third party events that take place, to ensure a tight focus on crime and ASB prevention.
- q. Consideration being given to the possibility of bringing the CCTV operation back in house.



## 5.0 **Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability and, where appropriate, they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### 5.1 **Financial Implications (FIN22-23/9715)**

5.2 Not all of the proposed actions have financial implications, those that do, are summarised below.

| <b>Recommendation</b> | <b>Description</b>                   | <b>Capital<br/>£</b> | <b>Revenue<br/>£</b> | <b>Notes</b>                                     |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--|
| g.                    | x2 New Diesel Vans                   | £30,000              | £3,000               | Running costs                                    |
| h.                    | Upgrade Charging infrastructure      | £50,000              | Unknown              | £25,000 DNO + up to £25k for ultra fast charging |
| k.                    | Continue funding Partnership Analyst | £0                   | £17,500              | 2023/24 onwards                                  |

5.3 Should the above recommendations be endorsed:

g. the Capital Programme budget should be increased by £30,000 to purchase one additional hybrid van. This should be financed from the change management reserve, to minimise the impact on the revenue budget.

An additional £3,000 will need added to the Environmental Services budget as a growth item, which would be recharged to Public Protection.

h. Quotes have been requested from Metric and BP regarding the charge points, but at the moment, an indicative cost would be £25k with a further cost of £18,000 - £25,000 for the ultra fast charge point. Other charge points have attracted government funding, so some investigation into whether this would be applicable here will be required. There will be additional revenue costs if the ultra fast charge points are installed as this will result in additional electricity costs.

k. the additional budget required to pay for the Council's share of the Partnership Analyst post in 2023/24 and future years would need to be included as a growth item as part of the 2023/24 budget setting process.

5.4 Regarding recommendation k., the Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood Community Safety Partnership (CSP) consists of the two district councils, Nottinghamshire County Council and the Nottinghamshire Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). For 2023/24, it is currently proposed that the Partnership Analyst spends their time working equally for the two district councils. It is currently proposed that the estimated cost of the analyst, currently £35,000, be split equally between the two district councils. The Council would therefore need to add £17,500 to its budget in 2023/24 and future years to pay for its share of the post.

5.5 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed new duties on English local authorities. As a result of this legislation, the Council has received £31,000 annually in 2021/22 and 2022/23 to fund the costs of its new duties. The Council currently expects to receive similar amounts in future years. If the Council does receive this grant funding, it may use some of the monies received towards the costs of the Partnership Analyst, subject to agreement between the relevant officers.

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

None