

<b>2 April 2014</b>		<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Review of Housing Antisocial Behaviour</b>		
<b>Report of:</b> Cllr Val Morris-Cook, Portfolio Holder for Housing		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Richard Parkin, Head of Housing		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Barbara Brownlee, Director of Housing		
<b>This report is Public</b>		
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> to give the committee an update on work regarding Antisocial Behaviour within the Thurrock Housing Department.		

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This review is offered to increase understanding of the arrangements in place to tackle anti-social behaviour within the Housing Directorate.

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1.1 That the committee gives feedback, comments upon and supports the new draft ASB Housing Strategy**
- 1.2 That the committee gives feedback and comments upon and supports the new ASB Action Plan**

### **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 2.1** The Thurrock Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Team (ASBT) was established in 2013 following agreement from the Directorate to take over the management of the service from Thurrock's Public Protection Team. The Public Protection Team offered savings as part of the 2013/14 budget review. The team consists of a Manager, a Coordinator and two ASB Officers.

The team offer expertise in casework management to tackle anti-social behaviour in and around Council tenancies. The casework includes prevention, intervention and support and enforcement action as a last resort.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) is a priority for local residents, neighbourhoods and communities. The team aspire to a responsive and customer focused service delivered through close local partnerships.

Support for victims and witnesses are central to the work of the team, successful court action relies upon the trust and confidence our residents have in the work we do. We also support perpetrators who want to change and those who ask for help to change their behaviour.

### **3. ISSUES, OPTIONS AND ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS:**

- 3.1 As part of the two year balanced budget for 2013/14 and 2014/15 the Public Protection Team (PPT) offered up savings for the General Fund. As part of these savings the PPT were no longer able to offer a service for Antisocial Behaviour to residents of Thurrock as this was not a statutory obligation for the Council. As part of this however the Housing Department were paying into the PPT for investigatory and enforcement work around ASB in Council Tenancies. During this change the Housing Department decided that ASB was still a priority for tenants so a service would need to be provided.
- 3.2 In October 2013 a new Housing Antisocial Behaviour Team was created in the Housing Department consisting of a new post of Operations and Strategy Manager and assimilating an existing ASB Coordinator (senior) and two ASB Officers into the team.
- 3.3 The aim of the ASBT is to work as part of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership to help improve community cohesion and safety and reduce fear and antisocial behaviour. The team is paid for through the HRA so it is only able to tackle ASB caused by Housing Tenants or on Housing Land. It will not deal with ASB from "general" residents unless they are affecting a Council Tenancy, this will be handled by the Police.
- 3.4 The first task of the new ASB Manger was to carry out consultation with tenants. Although we were aware from anecdote that ASB was a problem, the department were not aware of the type of ASB or the depth of the problem.
- 3.5 The consultation highlighted the below issues:
  - Access arrangements are not fully customer focussed. ASB is reported initially either by phone, online or in person to Estate/Sheltered Housing Officers.
  - Information (when it is provided) is often verbal with no confirmation in writing to the complainant. Some can face difficulties in follow up enquiries.
  - Mediation services are not used.
  - No systematic satisfaction surveys of tenants on ASB.
  - There is no monitoring of ASB by diversity types
  - The Housing ASB service is not widely promoted despite ASB being of primary concern to residents.
  - Tenants do not feel that incidents of nuisance, ASB and harassment are responded to rapidly.

- There are concerns that ASB procedures and referral arrangements are not being consistently and efficiently applied within all housing areas.
- ASB is under recorded and or under reported. Victims and witnesses do not have trust in the Council.
- There is no extensive use of legal remedies such as ASB Orders, injunctions and possession orders.

3.6 From the consultation with residents the Thurrock Council – Housing Safer Communities Strategy (Appendix 1) with the associated ASB Action Plan (Appendix 2) was written with the roadmap of how the ASBT were to address the issues raised and start to provide a more comprehensive service.

3.7 Some of the key items from the Strategy and Action Plan are highlighted below:

- 1) A new Priority System giving a response time and responsible owner depending on the “level” of ASB reported.
- 2) A more comprehensive approach and training regarding Domestic Abuse.
- 3) A comprehensive approach to Victim and Witness Support to ensure that we help victims and not just tackle perpetrators.
- 4) A “three-pronged” approach to tackling ASB of Prevention, Intervention and Enforcement with remedies explained within the Strategy.
- 5) Customer Satisfaction Surveys to be created and started for those who report ASB.

3.8 The ASBT are already progressing the items in the action plan and have had some early successes enforcing some long standing nuisance cases. A comparator of performance is below pending the new performance figures due to start in April 2014:

	<b>November 2013</b>	<b>January 2014</b>
ASB Cases reported	12	10
Domestic Abuse (DA) reported	1	10
Hate Crime (HC) reported	0	3
Non-legal Interventions	0	10
Court outcomes	0	7

3.9 As can be seen the number of cases reported has doubled including Hate Crime and Domestic Abuse. Also as can be seen the team are now starting to take forward legal and non-legal interventions.

- 3.10 As ASB is a priority for Tenants the HRA have budgeted for the team going forward and added it to the base budget for the coming year. The budget break down is below:

Cost Centre Code	Subjective Code3	14-15 BASE BUDGET
HR581 - Anti Social Behaviour Team	0001 - Salary	156,006
	0016 – Patrols	5,000
	0060 - National Insurance	6,879
	0065 - Superannuation	12,042
	1300 - Car Allowances	3,447
	2104 - Project Work	20,000
<b>HR581 - Anti Social Behaviour Team Total</b>		<b>203,374</b>

- 3.11 The salary costs include the post of ASB Operations and Strategy Manager which is currently a fixed term post. The post was fixed term for 1 year to embed the team within to the Housing Department, write the strategy and design the operational processes. A decision will be made mid-year whether to continue with this post or not.
- 3.12 The Patrols budget will pay for new Out of Hour Patrols that will be completed by the team, in conjunction with the police and caretaking services, plus any evening work that may be needed, most ASB happens out of office hours. Finally the Project Work will cover legal fees, court costs and any other additional costs which are associated with a reduction in ASB, such as mediations services.
- 3.13 The budget is taken from the service level agreement charge that was paid to the PPT (£95k) and cancelling/renegotiating some of the agreements that are still in force between the PPT and Housing, for example Noise Nuisance (£65K). The additional will be funded through the HRA.

#### **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

- 4.1 The report is to update Overview and Scrutiny on the current ASBT but also to receive any comment or recommendations with regards to ASB within Thurrock Housing.

#### **5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with tenants and Customer Satisfaction Surveys will continue to give feedback with regards to the service and how it is shaped.
- 5.2 This report allows Overview and Scrutiny to give feedback into the service going forward.

## 6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 6.1 The draft Housing Safer Communities Strategy works within the Community Safety Partnership and Thurrock's Priority to "Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities"

## 7. IMPLICATIONS

### 7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jo Beard**  
Telephone and email: **01375 652598**  
[jbead@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:jbead@thurrock.gov.uk)

There are no financial implications following this review, any budget adjustments have been made as part of the 14-15 budget setting process and within the confines of the HRA.

### 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Maria Oshunrinade**  
Telephone and email: **0208724 8461**  
[Maria.oshunrinade@BDTLegal.org.uk](mailto:Maria.oshunrinade@BDTLegal.org.uk)

The introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime and Policing Act 2014 on 13 March 2014 provides more powers to Local Authorities to tackle anti-social behaviour and strengthens the ability of the community to the process and become more involved in reducing anti-social behaviour in their area. There is the:

- community trigger, where victims and family members can demand action starting with a review,
- emphasis on developing more early and informal interventions more powers in respect of seeking possession for anti-social behaviour
- New absolute ground for possession- ground for possession where anti-social behaviour or criminality has already been proven by another Court
- criminal behaviour orders- available for any criminal offence in any criminal court
- community protection notice- to stop a person, business or organisation committing anti-social behaviour which spoils the community's quality of life
- public spaces protection notice- to stop individuals or groups committing social behaviour in a public space

A comprehensive approach to tackling anti-social behaviour is a key council initiative and it is crucial that legal advice is sought on the formation of any ASB strategy.

### 7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**  
Telephone and email: **01375 652 186**  
[Nwarren@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Nwarren@thurrock.gov.uk)

Currently there is no data on diversity and equality with regards to antisocial behaviour. As part of the surveys to be carried out and the reporting of antisocial behaviour Housing will start to capture this data for analysis.

### 7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

None

**BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):**

- None

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

- None

**Report Author Contact Details:**

**Name:** Richard Parkin  
**Telephone:** 01375 652625  
**E-mail:** [rparkin@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:rparkin@thurrock.gov.uk)