

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Tenant Services Management Board – 23 January 2012

Housing Estates Team Anti-Social Behaviour Performance – Information Report

Report of the Housing Estates Manager – Paul Hadley

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Jean Adkins)

1.0 Executive Summary

This report provides the members of the Tenant Services Management Board (TSMB) with information on performance of the Housing Estates Team on tackling and dealing with Anti-social Behaviour. This is an information report only.

2.0 Background

Two estates officers were employed in December 2010 to focus on tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB), a direct result of the recommendations made in the Corporate Scrutiny Report of 29th July 2010.

Housing Services aims to ensure that tenants and other residents live peacefully within their own homes and communities. The service recognises that failure to tackle anti social behaviour effectively blights the quality of life of those people living with anti social behaviour and can damage communities.

3.0 Performance Data

A summary of the key performance activities conducted by the Housing Estates team for the 12 months between December 2010 and December 2011 can be found at Appendix 1 this will outline successes, service improvements and plans for future development.

4.0 Legal Comments

There are no legal issues arising from this report.

5.0 Links to Corporate Aims

The delivery of good anti social behaviour services can contribute positively to the following council aims: Tackling Deprivation and Sustainable Community Development; Regeneration; and Affordable Housing and Climate change.

6.0 Environmental and Community Safety Implications

All of the anti social behaviour cases/investigations received by the Housing Estates Team can have environmental or community safety implications, all cases are managed by completion of a risk assessment.

7.0 Equalities Impact

Any equalities impacts will be considered as part of the receipt of initial complaint.

8.0 Risk Management

Risk assessments will be completed for any significant operational changes that are implemented from a review of operational processes.

9.0 Partnership Implications

There are no specific implications for partners in relation to this report.

10.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Tenant Services Management Board:

- Note this information report.

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**Appendix 1 to
Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
Performance Information Report
23 January 2012**

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

A SUMMARY OF WORK ACTIVITY DECEMBER 2010 – DECEMBER 2011

The summary of work activity below is divided into specific subject areas for ease of reading. The items are not set in any chronology but provide a summary of work activity across the full spectrum of the service.

WORK ACTIVITY

In the last 12 months the officers have investigated in excess of 215 complaints of anti-social behaviour within our housing stock.

Verbal Abuse and Harassment This is the main reason for people reporting ASB. There has been an increase of 27% (comparison of reports between 2010 and 2011) in the reporting of verbal abuse and harassment. We believe that this increased reporting is due to victims having the confidence to report incidents knowing that they will be listened to and that action will be taken to resolve their complaints.

Noise Nuisance This is the 2nd most frequent reason for reporting ASB. The officers have improved liaison with our colleagues in the Environmental Health Team to improve the overall performance of both teams in tackling this type of nuisance.

Drug Activity Reporting The 3rd most frequent reason why people report ASB. We have seen a 111% (comparison of reports between 2010 and 2011) increase in the reporting of drug activity in the last year. In order to tackle this we work closely with the police to prevent and put a stop to drug activity on our housing estates. Actions taken in these cases have ranged from Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, the implementation of a Local Lettings Plan, Premises Closure Orders, initiating possession proceedings etc. Tackling this type of ASB remains a high priority for both Housing Services and the police.

Hate Incidents There has been no increase in the reporting of hate related incidents.

Garden Nuisance In the last 12 months there has been approximately a 50% reduction in the number of cases related to garden nuisance.

The Colour tables on the final page of this appendix show a breakdown of cases and month by month breakdown of satisfaction levels.

CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING CRITICAL FRIEND REVIEW

We have recently completed a “Critical Friend Review” of our service with the Chartered Institute of Housing ASB Team. The review took the form of a discussion with officers to identify areas where service improvements can be made. An action plan has been produced, which focuses on improving our service.

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Service Information Posters These have been produced and located in council offices to provide information on how to access the service.

Group Voicemail A messaging service has been set up to answer reports that service users were having difficulty reporting incidents to officers. When officers return to the office any calls that have not been answered are sent to them via email for action.

Service Email A service email account has been set up and is included on all publications to allow easier reporting. The account is accessed by both ASB officers and their line manager to ensure that casework is not missed whilst individuals are away from work.

ASB Module for Academy IT System An ASB module has been procured for the Academy Housing database. This will improve case management and reduce paperwork. When used with the work management tool it will allow improved workload management and scrutiny.

Case Information for Housing Briefing Officers provide a report to the members of Housing Briefing – councillors, tenants and officers - on all high priority cases on a monthly basis.

Annual Work Review Deane Housing News (DHN) The first of the annual reviews of the teams work has been included in the next edition of DHN which is published at the end of January. It is intended that this will remain a feature to allow us to inform our tenants what is happening with the service.

Case Reporting Recording Reviewed and re-written by officers to streamline the reporting process for complainants. A Risk Assessment has been introduced to allow the receiving officer to make a clearer judgement on the severity of the case to ensure that support and advice are tailored to the specific situation and the complainants needs.

Human Rights Justification Exercise This is an area of work that was completed to ensure that the team considers human rights issues before any decisions to take legal action are considered particularly where vulnerable perpetrators or victims are involved. It serves as a record of the questions/justification asked by the team prior to the decision to take action is made. This exercise will prevent/reduce the occasions when Human Rights Legislation can be used as a defence against possession claims or even prescriptive action being taken by the council.

Community Harm Statement This is used to collate information prior to taking action against a perpetrator to ensure that all relevant information regarding a particular case is available. It contains details of actions/comments made by partner/involved agencies such as the police, mental health team, school, family, elected members and community. This information can then used to show the impact the ASB is having on not just the victim but the community as a whole. It also allows evidence from partner agencies to be introduced to proceedings.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

ASB Strategy This is currently under review, work is being completed to update the strategy.

ASB Policy This was reviewed and amended to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

Domestic Violence Policy A draft policy covering this area of work will be presented to the Tenant Services Management Board for initial approval on 23rd January 2012.

Respect Charter In the summer of 2011 in order to show our commitment to provide a high quality ASB service we signed up to the Respect Charter. Its purpose is to improve ASB services, and consists of seven core commitments these are:

1. Demonstrating leadership and strategic commitment
2. Providing an accessible and accountable service
3. Taking swift action to protect communities
4. Adopting a supportive approach to working with victims and witnesses
5. Encouraging individual and community responsibility
6. Having a clear focus on prevention and early intervention
7. Ensuring a value for money approach is embedded in the service

These commitments are supported by a series of building blocks based on sector good practice.

SERVICE STANDARDS

ASB and Hate Crime Service Standard This has been produced in conjunction with the tenants groups to ensure that all service users know what to expect from the team when they report an incident of ASB. A copy of the standard is provided to every complainant when they first report ASB.

Victim & Witness Support Standard The standard has been produced in partnership with Victim Support and tenant groups. A copy is provided for all victims of ASB/Crime that is reported to the housing service. It provides information on support and assistance available to victims of ASB or crime.

Domestic Violence Standard The draft standard has been produced for Tenant Services Management Board initial approval on 23rd January 2012.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The team has and are continuing to develop strong links with our partner agencies. (Police, Social Services, other housing providers).

Avon & Somerset Constabulary Officers have recently accompanied police officers when they have executed search warrants at our properties. These activities have resulted in the recovery of drugs and stolen property. In addition to these searches our officers have worked closely with the police in obtaining "closure orders" at two of our properties where strong evidence has shown that drug activity was present.

Mental Health Team When investigating cases where the victim or the perpetrator may have mental health issues both officers have called or attended multi agency meetings to discuss with partners how best to proceed with an investigation. This is particularly important where mental health issues are present.

Social Services Close liaison with Social Services is particularly important. This is especially the case where young children or persons at risk may be affected by the ASB.

PERSONAL/TEAM DEVELOPMENT

Personal and team development is critical if service provision is to be maintained to an acceptable standard. Since joining the council both new officers have completed a course of professional development with the Chartered Institute of Housing. Additionally the manager and officers have attended training workshops and seminars to improve knowledge and provide networking opportunities with other providers.

FUTURE PLANS

Without a forward plan the service will very quickly become outdated and potentially not fit for purpose. The team are currently working on a number of projects, which will ensure the service remains effective now and in the future, these are:

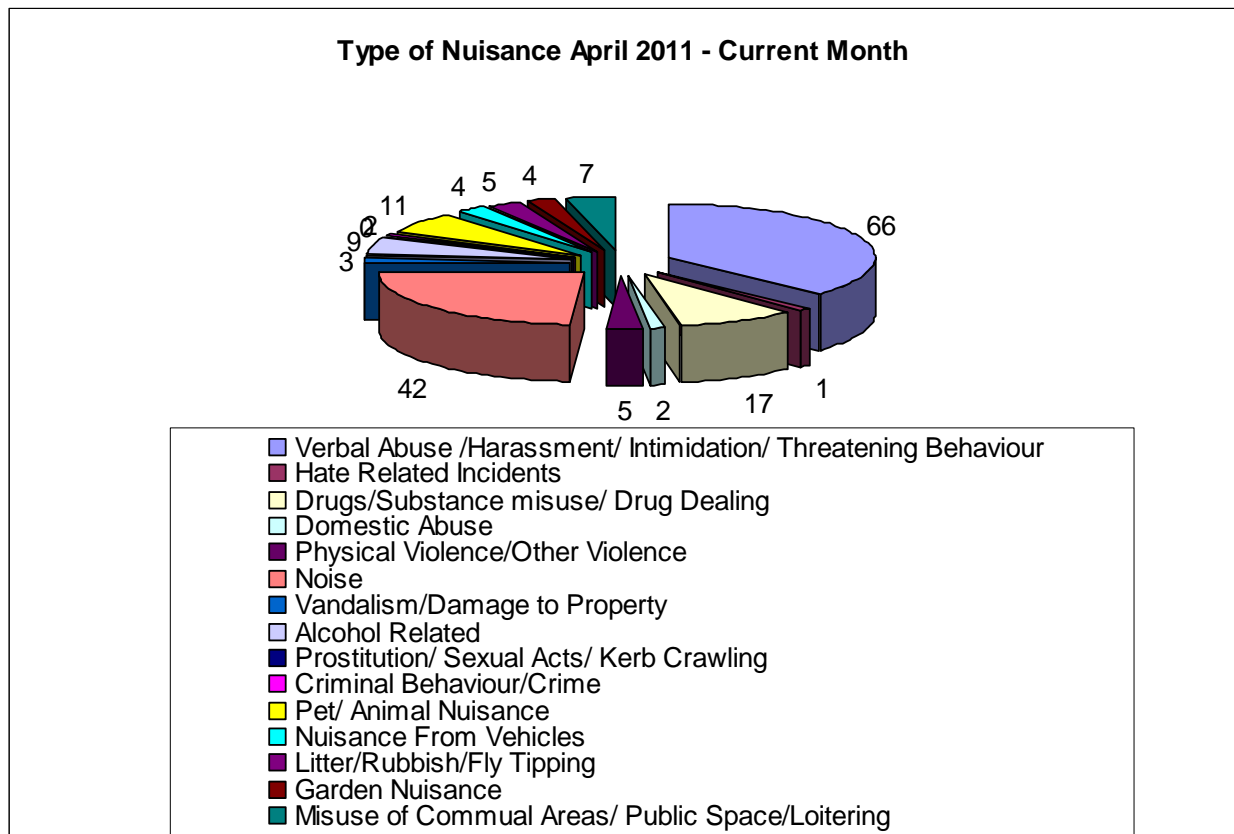
Webstorm This is a police database that records all contacts with the Avon and Somerset Constabulary. Controlled access to this database has been requested and is being considered by the police.

Information Sharing We recognise that we cannot provide an effective service on our own, we have good information sharing protocols in place with the police but we are seeking to improve these and wish to establish a broader protocol with other housing providers in the area. As a catalyst for this improved information sharing we intend to hold a "Get to know you" event and to invite other partner agencies from the area to attend.

Local Lettings Plan (LLP) We are currently working on an LLP for areas within the Halcon estate to tackle problems in certain locations.

This has been a very busy year for all those involved in providing the ASB service. Without the commitment of all involved the service would not be in the healthy position we find it in today. Both officers are proactively investigating new cases on a daily basis. They both have a full work load but continue to seek "win-win" resolutions to their cases getting the best result possible for Housing Services and those affected by ASB.

The table below provides a breakdown of cases by type and number received in the period April 2011 to January 2012.



The table below provides a month by month breakdown of satisfaction of those complainants who have had their case closed, the performance target for ASB satisfaction for the year 2011/12 is 66.6%. The team has achieved an average satisfaction result of 68.00% up the end of November 2011 (figures for December were not available at the time of this report):

