

REPORT TO: Police, Fire And Community Safety Scrutiny Committee

MEETING DATE: 1 March 2017

BY: Depute Chief Executive - Partnerships and Community Services

SUBJECT: Ongoing Measures to tackle Antisocial Behaviour

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of ongoing actions currently being undertaken by local partner agencies in tackling antisocial behaviour.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the terms of the report.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council, Police Scotland and other partner agencies recognise that antisocial behaviour is most effectively addressed by *working together* in conjunction with other partner agencies and local communities.
- 3.2 The recent reported increase in the number of complaints made to Police Scotland necessitated further inquiries to be made in to the way in which both agencies were recording antisocial behaviour complaints, how “repeat victim” cases were being addressed and the way in which youth related antisocial behaviour was being responded to. Discussions took place within the context of a Short Life Working Group chaired by the Local Area Police Commander.
- 3.3 As previously reported, changes to the way in which Police Scotland records and collates its antisocial behaviour data has had an effect on the figures produced for the first three quarters of the current reporting period.
- 3.4 An interrogation of antisocial complaints made to the Council shows a decrease from a figure of 1129 received during 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015 to 1097 received during the first three quarters of the current reporting period.

- 3.5 The figure of 1129 (2015) includes 415 complaints received from the Musselburgh West / Musselburgh East and Carberry wards, 175 from Preston/Seton/Gosford, 193 from Fa'side, 110 from North Berwick Coastal, 126 from Haddington and Lammermuir and 110 from Dunbar and East Linton. Of the aggregate figure of 1129, 542 were noise complaints, 167 were neighbour disputes, 148 related to youth disorder, 24 to graffiti, 11 to the antisocial use of motor vehicles and 237 to other forms of antisocial behaviour; including, *amongst other things*, drug misuse, verbal abuse, threats, assault and vandalism.
- 3.6 The figure of 1097 (2016) includes 350 complaints received from the Musselburgh West / Musselburgh East and Carberry wards, 190 from Preston/Seton/Gosford, 185 from Fa'side, 89 from North Berwick Coastal, 132 from Haddington and Lammermuir and 151 from Dunbar and East Linton. Of the aggregate figure of 1097, 535 were noise complaints, 79 were neighbour disputes, 154 related to youth disorder, 19 related to graffiti, 19 to the antisocial use of motor vehicles and 291 to other forms of antisocial behaviour; including, *amongst other things*, drug misuse, verbal abuse, threats, assault and vandalism.
- 3.7 As previously reported, in October 2016, authority was given, following upon the completion of a Service Review of the Safer Communities Team, for the employment of one additional Council based Antisocial Behaviour Investigation Officer. This officer commenced employment on 6 February 2017. This brought the total number of such officers to four. Each officer is now allocated to an Area Partnership area. They are responsible for, working in conjunction with local police officers and other Council colleagues, in taking the lead in addressing all antisocial behaviour arising from their partnership area.
- 3.8 In September 2016, and in order to address an increase in youth related antisocial behaviour complaints being made to Police Scotland, the issuing of Parental Advisory Letters was re-introduced in East Lothian; 202 letters have been issued to date. Parents whose children are witnessed by police officers behaving in an antisocial fashion, or who are found at locations at which antisocial behaviour had been identified as being a prominent issue, are now written to by the Police's Antisocial Behaviour Police Liaison Officer and the Council's Safer Communities Team Manager. The purpose of these letters is, not only to alert parents to a situation that they may have been hitherto oblivious to, but also to offer support to them in addressing the behaviour of their children. This initiative, combined with an increase in weekend community warden and police joint patrols of "hotspots", the continued use of Problem Solving Partnerships in combating localised youth related antisocial behaviour, for example, at the Brunton Hall, in Neilson Park and the surrounding areas, and in Prestonpans, joint agency presentations being rolled out to all secondary school pupils following upon the successful delivery of talks to P6 and P7 school children, the formal training of the Council's eight community wardens in the proficient use of CCTV cameras and the ongoing work of Police Scotland's two Youth Community Officers is aimed at addressing the most visible aspect of antisocial behaviour.

- 3.9 Antisocial behaviour figures can be inflated by multiple complaints being received from the same individual. During 2014/2015 332 such individuals were identified; the figure rose to 350 during 2015/2016. A repeat victim of antisocial behaviour can be defined as someone who has made three or more complaints about the same alleged perpetrator(s) to either Police Scotland or the Council within a period of one year. From 1 December 2016, and drawing on information obtained from both police and Council systems, repeat victims are now visited by an officer from the Council's safer communities team and a police officer. A joint and tailored approach is now formulated in dealing with the problem in point. This exercise is repeated on a monthly basis.
- 3.10 Police Officers and Council colleagues continue to work alongside one another on a daily basis in addressing individual cases of antisocial behaviour. Issues are highlighted at an early stage with joint interventions being appropriately and timeously applied. An exemplar of such work can be found in a recent case in Tranent; the police approached the Council and requested that an application be made in relation to an individual to Edinburgh Sheriff Court for an Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO); this power is not available to the police. The behaviour complained of involved, *amongst other things*, the congregation of large groups of obstreperous individuals in a flatted property. The police requested that a cap be placed on the number of persons the tenant could have in his house at any one time. The court granted the order. The complaints received by the Council and the police from neighbours dramatically reduced. On the back of the granting of the ASBO, the tenant's landlord obtained an eviction order against him. The case was dealt with swiftly and effectively by partners whose sole objective was to lessen the impact the behaviour was having on members of the public.
- 3.11 Although the causes of both group related and individual antisocial behaviour cases can be complex, and the application of an effective solution cannot always delivered in the instant, the fact that Police Scotland, the Council and their partners in East Lothian have created a solid platform from which to tackle all forms of antisocial behaviour, maximises the chances of securing long term and sustainable solutions in the vast majority of cases.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and no negative impacts have been identified.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – None.
- 6.2 Personnel - None.
- 6.3 Other – None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

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