

**REPORT TO:** Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 28 November 2018

**BY:** Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)

**SUBJECT:** Dealing with Antisocial Behaviour

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the number of antisocial behaviour complaints made to East Lothian Council during the reporting period and to advise on ongoing actions 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 continue to recognise that antisocial behaviour is most effectively addressed by *working together* in conjunction with local communities.
- 3.2 The spirit of partnership working is reflected in the apparatus currently in place to address the behaviour of those individuals and groups whose actions cause alarm and distress to others.
- 3.3 East Lothian's Antisocial Behaviour Partnership's Antisocial Behaviour Policy provides a suite of measures designed to deal holistically with *individual cases* of antisocial behaviour as well as creating an infrastructure within which performance is monitored. The emphasis is on *prevention and early intervention*, with enforcement action only being used as a last resort. Substantive decisions in individual cases are made collegiately via multi-agency Case Monitoring Groups. The application of the policy is overseen by the Antisocial Behaviour Overview Group, chaired by the council's Head of Service for Communities and Partnerships, and made up of senior officers drawn from a broad spectrum of different council teams, Police Scotland and East Lothian Housing

Association. Representatives from East Lothian's Tenants and Residents Panel are also permanent members. The Antisocial Behaviour Officers Group is a cross-party group of practitioners charged with maintaining the validity and currency of the policy and developing and maintaining relevant procedures. The Officers Group, with links to the National Antisocial Behaviour Officers Forum, reports to the Overview Group on a quarterly basis.

- 3.4 *Group related antisocial behaviour* requires a cross-agency co-ordinated response and this is achieved via the weekly evidence and intelligence led Tasking and Co-ordinating Group made up of representatives drawn from Police Scotland, East Lothian Council and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. This group directs the deployment of resources to identified antisocial behaviour "hotspots". Those resources include, amongst other things, Police Officers, Fire Service personnel, Community Wardens, Neighbourhood Outreach workers and the council's CCTV van. Pro-active monitoring of the council's permanent CCTV network by Community Wardens takes place when required.
- 3.5 Acute problems unique to specific geographical areas are addressed via temporary multi-agency Problem Solving Partnerships (PSPs). There are currently three PSPs in existence; one recently established to combat the youth related antisocial behaviour manifesting itself at Lochend Woods / Ashfield Park, Dunbar, the second formed to tackle the property-based antisocial behaviour affecting residents of Goose Green Avenue, Musselburgh and the third initiated to address the mainly daytime antisocial behaviour being exhibited on Haddington High Street. In the first of these PSPs, officers from the Council's Safer Communities Team, the Community and Learning Development Service, Amenity Services, Road Services, local Elected Members and Education have been working alongside parents, within the context of an Action Plan, to reduce the incidences of antisocial behaviour occurring at this locus. The PSP has adopted a blend of measures; including, heightened hi-visibility Police and Community Warden weekend patrols, enhancement of street lighting, the facilitation of changes to the physical environment, engagement with those parents whose children are identified as being present during times when antisocial behaviour is witnessed via Police Scotland's / East Lothian Council's Parental Advisory Scheme, and the sharing of information with staff from Dunbar Grammar as to pupils identified as being present when antisocial behaviour is occurring. In the last of the referred to PSPs, representatives from the local business community have been instrumental in contributing to the efforts to reduce day-time antisocial behaviour occurring on the High Street.
- 3.6 The Council continues to fund four additional Police Constables to the value of £119 000 per annum. Three of the Officers constitute part of East Lothian's Community Action Team, with the remaining Officer imbedded within the Council's Safer Communities Team.
- 3.7 An interrogation of antisocial complaints made to the Council during the reporting period shows a mild increase from a figure of 823 received

between 1 April 2017 and 30 September 2017 to 832 received during the first six months of the current financial year. Complaints are received from a variety of different sources, including the widely publicised Antisocial Behaviour Helpline, social media, the “My East Lothian” mobile phone App and via a website based reporting form.

- 3.8 Of the 832 cases progressed, 337 related principally to noise with 105 being youth related. The remaining complaints consisted of, amongst other things, shouting, swearing, the issuing of threats, vandalism, fire-raising, aggression towards staff and drug and alcohol misuse. Many of the complaints received were multi-faceted. Around 17.5% of the complaints registered were made within the context of ongoing neighbour disputes. 272 of the 832 complaints were received from Musselburgh and the surrounding environs, 179 from Tranent, 69 from Dunbar, 118 from Prestonpans, 111 from Haddington and 83 from North Berwick.

Of the aggregate figure, 109 of the complaints were received from anonymous sources with 57 identifiable complainers making three or more calls during the reporting period. Repeat complainers are highlighted on a weekly basis with the Council funded Antisocial Behaviour Police Liaison Officer meeting with the Team Leader of the Antisocial Behaviour Team to ensure that all facets of the case are being addressed timeously and effectively.

The Council continues to raise legal proceedings against those engaged in the most serious and persistent forms of antisocial behaviour. Instructions to litigate emanate from the four weekly and multi-agency Adult Case Monitoring Group. There are currently 40 live Antisocial Behaviour Orders in East Lothian. There are currently eight antisocial behaviour related eviction cases before Edinburgh Sheriff Court.

- 3.9 The vast majority of antisocial behaviour cases are addressed without the need to raise judicial proceedings. The aforesaid policy provides for a suite of interventions; including, amongst other things, the issuing of joint warnings, the signing of Acceptable Behaviour Agreements, the provision of support measures for those accused of behaving antisocially, the deployment of noise recording equipment and the making of referrals to East and Midlothian’s Resolution Service. All interventions have the objective of *preventing further acts of antisocial behaviour*. Great emphasis is also placed on supporting those affected by antisocial behaviour with referrals being made to statutory agencies and Victim Support (Scotland). Since 1 August 2017, 249 referrals have been made to the Resolution Service within the context of neighbour disputes.
- 3.10 In early 2019 Police Scotland and East Lothian Council will put out to public consultation their new three year Antisocial Behaviour Strategy. The emphasis will be on prevention, early intervention, joint agency working and the continued involvement of communities in finding solutions to problems that affect their neighbourhoods.
- 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 be delivered in the instant, the fact that Police Scotland, the Council and their partners in East Lothian are working together in tackling *all forms of antisocial behaviour*, maximises the chances of securing long term and sustainable solutions in the vast majority of reported 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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