

REPORT TO: Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee

MEETING DATE: 12 November 2020

BY: Head of Communities & Partnerships

SUBJECT: Tackling Antisocial Behaviour

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the number, type and geographical breakdown of antisocial behaviour complaints received by East Lothian Council during the reporting period (1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020) and to advise on actions taken in response to same.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council, Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and other partner agencies continue to address antisocial behaviour by formulating tailored responses to specific concerns using the established and widely accepted PEER model; Prevention, Early intervention, Enforcement and Rehabilitation.
- 3.2 The number of antisocial complaints received by the Council during the reporting period was 1295. This compares to a figure of 820 received during the same period in 2019. This represents a 57 % increase.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 provides a linear analysis of antisocial behaviour complaints made to East Lothian Council over the last eight financial years.
- 3.4 Of the 1295 complaints received, 484 related to domestic noise (mainly loud music), 223 to drug misuse, a substantial percentage of which related to complaints of the smell of cannabis permeating residential properties, 199 were youth related and 190 to behaviour traditionally associated with neighbour disputes. The remaining 199 consisted of, *amongst other things*, shouting, swearing, verbal abuse and aggressive behaviour as directed at staff.

- 3.5 In terms of *loci*, 30% of the 1295 complaints were from Musselburgh and the surrounding environs, 18% from Tranent, 12% from Dunbar, 17% from Prestonpans, 14% from Haddington and 9% from North Berwick. The diagram at appendix 2 offers a visual representation of the geographical breakdown.
- 3.6 It is suggested that the increase in complaints resulted from the restrictions and extraordinary pressures associated with COVID 19 with more people staying at home during “lockdown” and tolerance levels reducing.
- 3.7 During the reporting period, 145 referrals were made to the Resolution Service as compared to 84 during the equivalent period in 2019; the increase in referrals reflects the increase in the number of neighbour disputes brought to the attention of the Council post-“lockdown”.
- 3.8 At 30 September 2020 there were two *live* Problem Solving Partnerships (PSPs); one relating to antisocial behaviour in Haddington Town Centre, with the other resuscitated to address issues that arose within the Goosegreen area of Musselburgh; a PSP established to tackle the problem of youth related antisocial behaviour at the Brunton Hall “folded” during the relevant period due to a marked reduction in the number of reported incidents.
- 3.9 There are 32 live Antisocial Behaviour Orders in East Lothian. There are currently two live eviction cases before Edinburgh Sheriff Court. Because of COVID 19, the Council was unable to apply for Antisocial Behaviour Orders between March and July 2020. In addition, eviction cases were only permitted to progress again in September 2020. Throughout the pandemic, the Antisocial Behaviour Case Monitoring Group has continued to meet to ensure that more serious and persistent cases are assessed from a multi-agency perspective; there are currently 80 cases being so monitored.
- 3.10 During the reporting period, 63 joint Police / Council letters were sent to the parents of children whom the police had identified as being present in areas affected by antisocial behaviour.
- 3.11 On 27 March 2020, the Council’s reactive statutory Night Time Noise Service (previously operating between 2200 Hours and 0200 Hours on Friday and Saturday evenings) was suspended due to COVID 19; officers were unable to enter the home of complainers in order to measure noise levels emanating from the address of the perpetrator. Police Scotland is now dealing with calls that were previously diverted to the Council during those hours. The service remain suspended at the date of the Report; however, fully risk assessed and pro-active noise monitoring in a small number of cases re-commenced in September 2020.
- 3.12 In December 2019, the Antisocial Behaviour Overview Group identified the need to update and refresh the Antisocial Behaviour Strategy with a continued emphasis on prevention, early intervention, joint agency working and the ongoing involvement of communities in finding solutions

to problems that affect their neighbourhoods. The Strategy will go out for consultation in early 2021.

3.13 The vast majority of Community Housing and Antisocial Behaviour Investigation Officers have been working from home throughout COVID 19; it is only the Community Warden Team that have continued to operate without substantial disruption. Community Wardens have assisted with resilience efforts throughout the pandemic and were part of the corporate effort to contact “shielders” who had no responded to welfare checks. The Team also assisted in the management of coastal areas after travel restrictions associated with the initial “lockdown” were relaxed alongside managing groups of young people gathering at food outlets at school breaks.

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

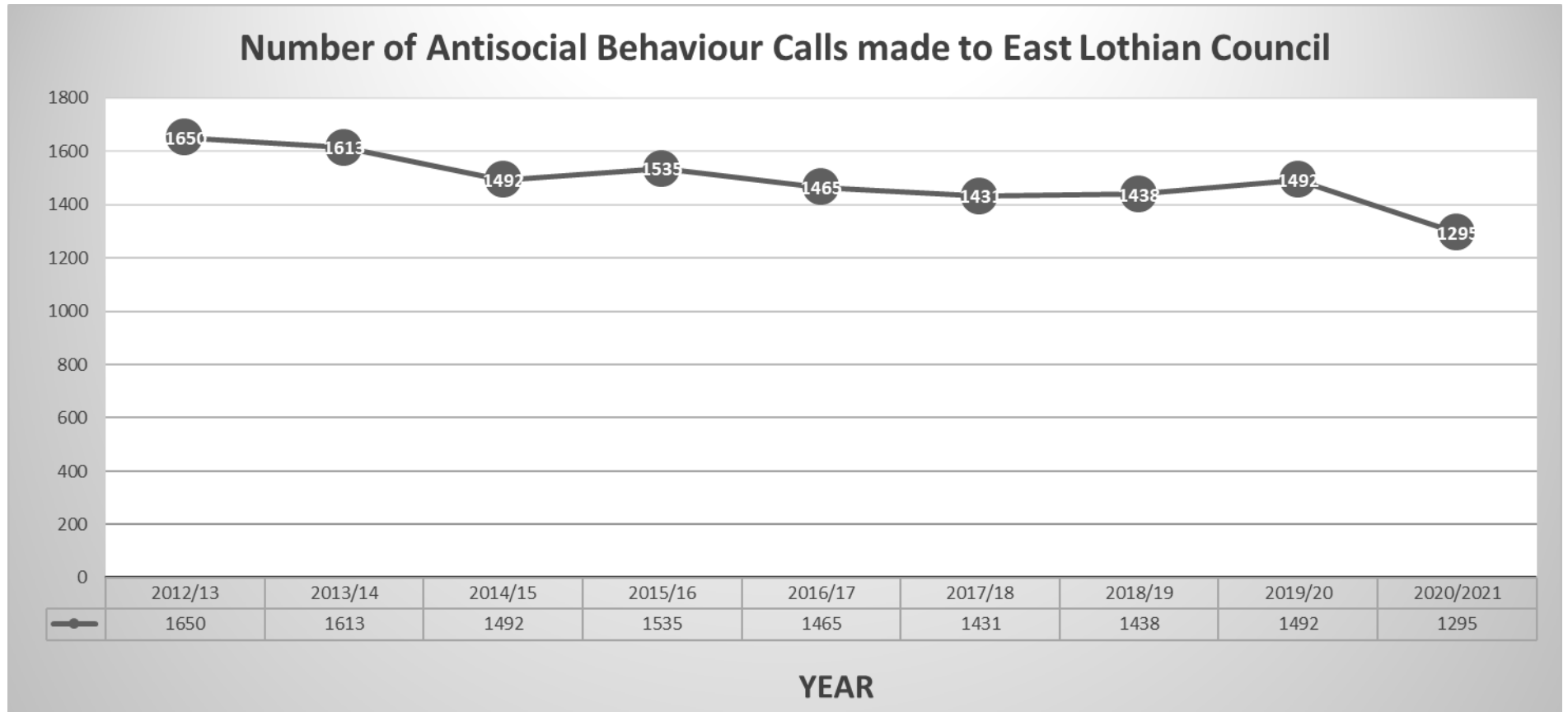
7.1 None.

Appendix 1: Graph – Antisocial Behaviour Complaints made to East Lothian Council 2012-2020.

Appendix 2: Chart showing geographical breakdown of antisocial behaviour cases (April – September 2020).

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Appendix 1



Appendix 2

Geographical Breakdown of Antisocial Behaviour Cases % 1st April 2020 - 30th September 2020

