

REPORT TO: Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee

MEETING DATE: 13 May 2021

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: Tackling Antisocial Behaviour

1 PURPOSE

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 October 2020 to 31 March 2021) and to advise on actions taken in response to same.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Committee notes the terms of the report.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council, Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and other partners 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 individual antisocial complaints received by the Council during the reporting period was 887. This compares to a figure of 672 received during the same period in 2020. This represents a 32 % increase.

3.3 Of the 887 complaints received, 333 were made by 127 repeat complainers.

3.4 The figure of 887 compares to that of 1295 recorded during the first half of 2020/2021; this represents a 31% *decrease* in the number of complaints received.

3.5 A year-on-year analysis shows a 46% increase in the number of antisocial behaviour complaints recorded during 2020/2021 as compared to 2019/2020.

- 3.6 Appendix 1 provides a linear analysis of antisocial behaviour complaints made to East Lothian Council over the last nine financial years. This shows a downward trend in antisocial behaviour complaints received between 2012/2013 and 2019/2020, with the immediately preceding Financial Year representing an *extraordinary exception*.
- 3.7 Of the 887 complaints received, 290 related to domestic noise (mainly loud music), 134 to drug misuse, a substantial percentage of which related to complaints of the smell of cannabis permeating residential properties, 279 were youth related with the remaining 184 consisting of, *amongst other things*, shouting, swearing, verbal abuse and neighbour disputes. It should be noted that a marked proportion of the youth calls related to the act of gathering itself (and the inevitable noise created as a result thereof) as opposed to those present engaging in serious acts of antisocial behaviour.
- 3.8 In terms of *loci*, 35% of the 887 complaints were from Musselburgh and the surrounding environs, 19% from Tranent, 14% from Dunbar, 13% from Prestonpans, 12% from Haddington and 7% from North Berwick. The diagram at Appendix 2 offers a visual representation of the geographical breakdown.
- 3.9 It is suggested that the year-on-year increase in complaints resulted from *the restrictions and unprecedented pressures associated with COVID 19*. With regard to noise complaints in particular, the fact that more people were at home during the reporting period gave rise to the generation of more noise, with a corresponding increase in the number of complaints made. It is further suggested that pressures associated with imposed confinement have led to a reduction in tolerance levels; thereby, increasing the likelihood of complaints being registered.
- 3.10 During the reporting period, 121 referrals were made to the Resolution Service as compared to 96 during the equivalent period in 2020. A year-on-year comparison shows an increase of 47% in referrals made during 2019/2020 as compared to those made during 2020/2021.
- 3.11 Three Problem Solving Partnerships (PSPs) were active during the period; the first two related to antisocial behaviour in Haddington Town Centre and Lochend Woods, Dunbar, the other was created to collectively address estate management issues in the “the Wimpey’s” estate in Musselburgh
- 3.12 There are 18 live Antisocial Behaviour Orders in East Lothian. There are currently two live eviction cases before Edinburgh Sheriff Court. The moratorium on the raising of ASBO proceedings has been lifted; however, only eviction actions in which the antisocial behaviour is deemed “serious” by the Court are being allowed to proceed. Throughout the pandemic, the Antisocial Behaviour Case Monitoring Groups have continued to meet to ensure that more serious and persistent cases are addressed from a multi-agency perspective; there are currently 82 cases being so monitored.
- 3.13 The Antisocial Behaviour Overview and Officer Groups, along with the weekly Tasking and Co-ordinating Group, have continued to meet; the latter of these multi-agency groups informs the deployment of Police

Officers, Community Wardens and Neighbourhood Outreach Workers to antisocial behaviour “hotspots”, with said deployments being made on an analysis of complaint levels and received intelligence.

- 3.14 During the reporting period, 74 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, an increase of 80% from the same period during the immediately preceding Financial Year.
- 3.15 Street-based Outreach Work re-commenced during the reporting period in the county’s major towns with other forms of traditional face-face youth diversionary work reverting to virtual platforms. Immediately before the second lockdown in late December 2020, SFA coaches provided successful evening coaching sessions in Haddington over a four-week period. With the easing of restrictions, the intention is to re-institute traditional forms of engagement with young people. This will include the provision of similar football coaching sessions across the County.
- 3.16 On 27 March 2020, the Council’s 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 dealt with calls previously diverted to the Council during those hours. The service remained suspended during the reporting period; however, fully risk assessed and pro-active noise monitoring in a small number of cases is due to re-commence in April 2021.
- 3.17 The majority of Community Housing and Antisocial Behaviour Officers have been conducting their inquiries from home during COVID19 providing support in the community as necessary to tenants, complainers, engaging with partner agencies and taking the appropriate action against perpetrators from their home-based workstations, with minimal services being provided from Area Housing Offices.
- 3.18 The Community Warden Team have maintained a high-visibility street presence throughout the reporting period. Apart from their routine duties of attending to fly-tipping, littering, graffiti, dog fouling and lower level antisocial behaviour complaints, they have taken part in the multi-agency effort in managing the coastal areas and in carrying out deliveries to the local foodbank. Wardens continue to engage with the local community and their representatives on a daily basis.

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

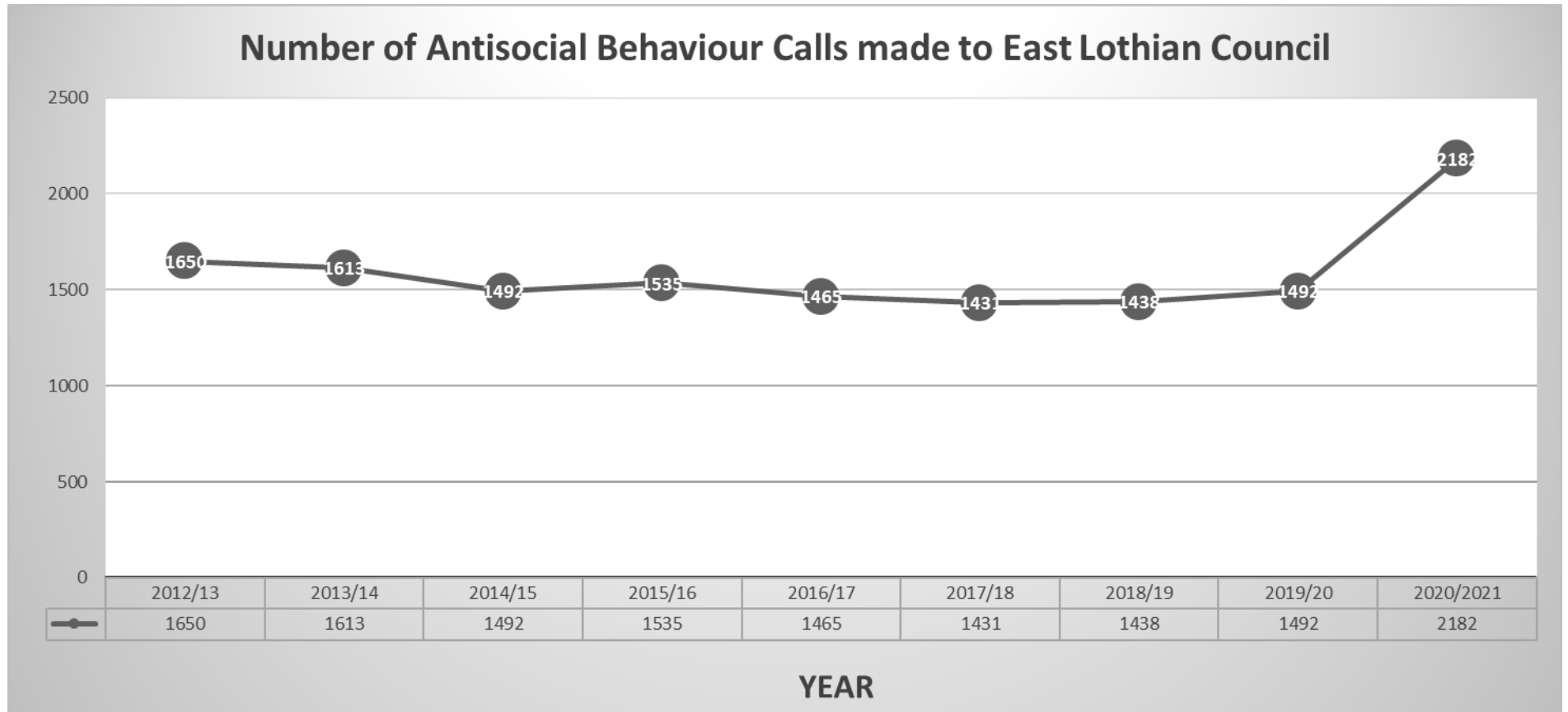
- 6.1 Financial – None.
- 6.2 Personnel - None.
- 6.3 Other – None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Graph – Antisocial Behaviour Complaints made to East Lothian Council 2012-2021.
- 7.2 Chart showing geographical breakdown of antisocial behaviour cases (October-March 2021).

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NUMBER OF ASB CALLS MADE TO EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL



Appendix 2

Geographical Breakdown of Antisocial Behaviour Cases % 1st October 2020 - 31st March 2021

