

REPORT TO: Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee

MEETING DATE: 2 December 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 April 2021 to 30 September 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 number of individual antisocial complaints received by the Council during the reporting period was 973. This compares to a figure of 1295 received during the equivalent period in 2020 representing a 24 % *decrease* in the number of complaints received. Comparisons with the 2019 figure however show an 18% increase in the number of complaints received thereby suggesting that the corollary effects of the pandemic (e.g. working from home, a diminution in tolerance levels and the display of exaggerated behaviours immediately following upon the lifting of “lockdown”) continue to play a part in the relatively high numbers of complaints being made.

3.2 Of the 973 complaints received, 320 were made by 109 individuals who had cause to complain on more than one occasion regarding the same issue.

3.3 Appendix 1 provides a linear analysis of antisocial behaviour complaints made to East Lothian Council from 2012 to date. This shows a downward trend in antisocial behaviour complaints received between 2012/2013 and

the current reporting period, with 2020/2021 representing an *extraordinarily exceptional* year associated with the pressures experienced across communities attendant to COVID 19.

- 3.4 Of the 973 complaints received, 407 related to antisocial noise (primarily loud music), 204 were youth related, 125 related to drug misuse, with the remaining 237 consisting of, *amongst other things*, shouting, swearing, neighbour disputes and verbal abuse. The diagram at Appendix 2 offers a visual representation of the breakdown in terms of case type.
- 3.5 In terms of *loci*, 28% of the 973 complaints were from Musselburgh and the surrounding environs, 21% from Tranent, 10% from Dunbar, 17% from Prestonpans, 15% from Haddington and 9% from North Berwick. The diagram at Appendix 3 offers a visual representation of geographical breakdown.
- 3.6 During the reporting period, 171 referrals were made to the Resolution Service as compared to 145 during the equivalent period in 2020, marking an increase of 18% in the number of referrals made. During the reporting period, the two resolution officers, previously employed by Midlothian Council, transferred over to the employment of East Lothian Council. The bringing “in-house” of the service affords an opportunity to re-promote and re-brand the service in early 2022.
- 3.7 Two Problem Solving Partnerships (PSPs) were active during the period; the first related to the antisocial use of off-road motorcycles in the Musselburgh / Whitecraig area, the other to a variety of estate management issues attendant to “the Wimpey’s” estate in Musselburgh.
- 3.8 There are 10 live Antisocial Behaviour Orders in East Lothian. There is currently one live eviction case before Edinburgh Sheriff Court. The Antisocial Behaviour Case Monitoring Group continues to meet to ensure that the more *serious and persistent* cases are addressed from a multi-agency perspective; there are currently 63 cases being so monitored.
- 3.9 In May 2021, East Lothian Council reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator that it had met 84% of its locally agreed targets for processing antisocial behaviour cases during 2020/2021. Those targets are: to close 20% of all complaints within 1 month of the date of receipt, 20% within 2 months, 40% within 4 months, 10% within 12 months and 10% after 12 months (mainly Court cases). The council’s performance compares favourably with other local authorities of a similar size.
- 3.10 The Antisocial Behaviour Overview and Officer Groups, along with the weekly Tasking and Co-ordinating Group, met throughout the reporting period; the latter of these multi-agency groups informs the deployment of Police Officers, Community Wardens, Neighbourhood Outreach Youth Workers and mobile CCTV cameras to antisocial behaviour “hotspots”, with said deployments being made on an analysis of complaint levels and received intelligence. The Overview Group is currently overseeing a refreshing of the Antisocial Behaviour Strategy; development work will progress through 2022 with the intention of reaching a consultation phase

in late 2022. The Strategy will maintain an emphasis on prevention, support and early intervention.

- 3.11 During the reporting period, 77 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 22% from the same period during the immediately preceding Financial Year. All Parental Advisory Letters are copied to Education, Children's Wellbeing and Police Scotland's Youth Justice Officer.
- 3.12 Street-based Outreach Youth Work continued throughout the reporting period in the county's major towns with other forms of traditional generic and targeted face-face youth diversionary work reverting to pre-pandemic models.
- 3.13 The Council's responsive Night Time Noise Service (previously operating between 2200 Hours and 0200 Hours on Friday and Saturday evenings) remained suspended during the reporting period; however, pro-active noise monitoring re-commenced. A review of the service in 2022 will determine the future level and model of night-time noise response necessary, informed by data analysis and sectoral benchmarking.
- 3.14 Consideration is also currently being given to the use of a Noise App that would allow complainers to contemporaneously record instances of noise and to send those to the safer communities team. An assessment would then take place in order to determine whether the levels recorded were of an antisocial nature; it is anticipated that a number of cases will be diverted away from the launching of a full investigation following upon the assessment of said recordings.
- 3.15 In accordance with the Council's ongoing COVID-19 business continuity arrangements, the majority of antisocial behaviour complaints continue to be investigated by officers working from home, providing support to complainers, engaging with partner agencies and taking the appropriate action against perpetrators from their home-based workstations. Where necessary, face-to-face engagement with complainers or perpetrators takes place, often in collaboration with Police Officers or Housing Officers, if the circumstances merit this.
- 3.16 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 took part in the peak summer season 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 None.

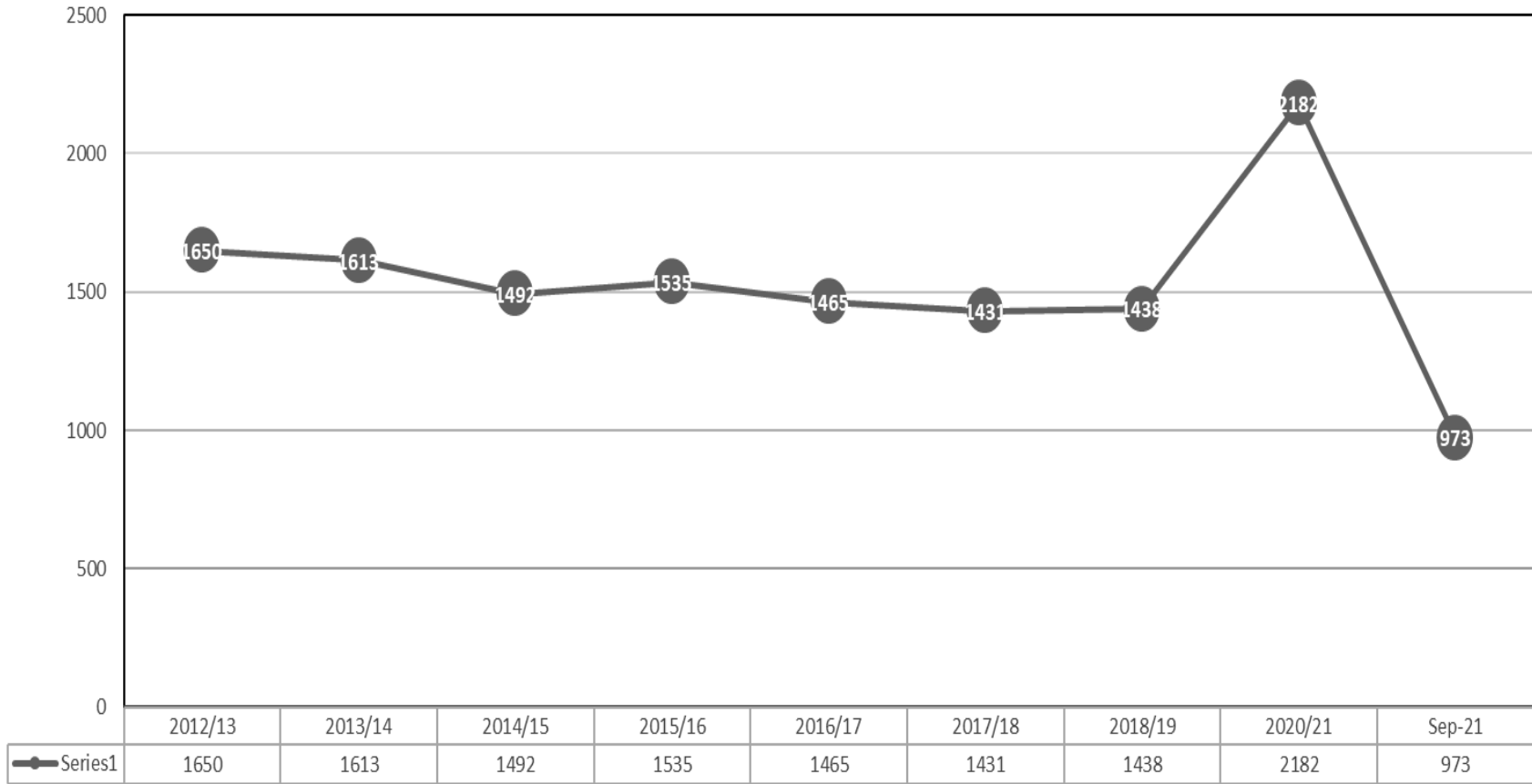
Appendix 1 Graph – Antisocial Behaviour Complaints made to East Lothian Council 2012-2021.

Appendix 2 Chart showing breakdown of case type (April to September 2021).

Appendix 3 Chart showing geographical breakdown (April to September 2021).

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Number of Antisocial Behaviour Calls made to East Lothian Council



YEAR

