



Agenda item:

Summary

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	November 2017
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Anti Social Behaviour Team – overview of Team
Contact:	Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Resident and Regulatory Services Author/Responsible Officer, Nicola Lobendhan, ASB Team Leader – Julie Still, Group Manager Resident Services
Purpose of report:	1. To provide members with a greater understanding of the diverse and complex issues the ASB Team and officers deal with on a day to day basis
Recommendations	1. That members note the report and can identify any areas where they would like further information or reports of specific projects.
Corporate objectives:	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Delivery an efficient and modern council
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> Within existing budgets
'Value for money' implications	<u>Value for money</u>
Risk implications	
Community Impact Assessment	
Health and safety	

Implications	
Consultees:	ASB Team, Group Manager Resident Services
Background papers:	Service reports, Police Reports, Appendices
Historical background <i>(please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i>	Changes in legislation and a significant change in the type of cases the ASB team now deal with, which are very complex in nature.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	ASB - Anti Social Behaviour PSPO – Public Space Protection Order CPN – Community Protection Notice ABC – Acceptable Behaviour Contracts PPO – Persistent Priority Offender CT – Community Trigger

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of a corporate plan commitment to “*deliver a clean, safe and enjoyable environment*” Members are invited to learn more about how the ASB team work and the kind of cases and issues the ASB team deal with on a day to day basis. This report will also introduce the ASB team members and cover each of their specialist areas.

2. Background

- 2.1 Anti-social behaviour is a broad term used to describe the day-to-day incidents of crime, nuisance and disorder that make many people’s lives a misery – from litter and vandalism, to public drunkenness or aggressive dogs, to noisy or abusive neighbours. Such a wide range of behaviours means that responsibility for dealing with anti-social behaviour is shared between a number of agencies, particularly the police, councils and social landlords.
- 2.2 The ASB Team consists of one team leader, two ASB officers and two part time technical support officers.
Nicky Lobendhan ASB Team Leader – DV trainer/safeguarding officer

Morgan Steel	ASB Officer – lead on hate crime
Kim Ashworth	ASB Officer – lead on elderly/vulnerable victims
Pat Fox	Technical Support Officer
Helen Coates	Technical Support Officer

- 2.3 The team originated in housing, but it became apparent that a lot of the ASB that was being reported was more community based and not necessarily just tenants that were responsible. The ASB team then moved into public protection which enabled us to deal with ASB across the borough, regardless of who was responsible. The ASB team now sits within Resident Services.

3. Legislation

- 3.1 The ASB Crime and Police Act 2014 that was introduced in October 2014 saw a change in the way local authorities and police deal with ASB. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (2010) Stop the Rot report stated *“Anti Social Behaviour is a blight on the lives of millions who are directly affected by it; on the perceptions of millions more for whom it signals neglect in their neighbourhoods and the decline of whole towns and city areas; and on the reputation of the police who are often thought to be unconcerned or ineffectual. We need a new start.”*
- 3.2 Tools and powers were reviewed and updated putting more of an emphasis on a Victim Centred Approach. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Police Act 2014 includes two new measures which are designed to give victims and communities a say in the way anti-social behaviour is dealt with:
- The Community Trigger, gives victims the ability to demand action, starting with review of their case, where the locally defined threshold is met.
 - The Community Remedy, gives victims a say in the out-of-court punishment of perpetrators for low-level crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.3 In Dacorum the locally defined threshold to meet a Community Trigger Request is 3 complaints from the same individual within the last 6 months or 3 complaints from different individuals about the same issue, within the last 6 months. Anyone can request a Community Trigger (which is essentially a case review) and members can request it on behalf of their constituents.
- 3.4 The CT process in Dacorum is managed by the ASB Team Leader and since the legislation was brought in, Dacorum has had 6 community triggers, with only one of those being cases that were investigated by the ASB team. All other cases were housing association cases. One trigger in particular was particularly helpful in getting mental health professionals around a table to discuss a perpetrator's behaviour, which has always proved very difficult to do. (Please see Appendix 1 for process)
- 3.5 The ASB team in Dacorum were the first in the Country to obtain an ASB Injunction under the new act, securing an Injunction with a power of arrest on the morning the legislation came into force.
- 3.6 The team were also the first team in Hertfordshire to secure a premises closure order followed by absolute grounds for possession, on a tenant that

had been involved in the supply of class A drugs and been found guilty of a burglary in the local area. Amongst colleagues across the County the ASB team in Dacorum are seen as front runners when it comes to the use of the new legislation and practises and documentation we have used, has been adopted across the county as best practice.

- 3.7 Community Protection Notices are something the team has used very successfully, in particular, to deal with a noise case which does not meet the statutory noise guidelines that Environmental Health would need to secure a prosecution. The ASB team worked with victims to gather evidence of nuisance noise caused by a drunken pensioner, who was a home owner. The perpetrator was offered support to deal with their alcohol issues, and was also given a community protection warning in respect of their behaviour. The noise continued so a CPN was issued, which was subsequently breached. DBC secured a successful prosecution off the back of this breach and the perpetrator was fined £550. This was a very new way of dealing with those difficult noise cases and this has now been recognised as good practice. The ASB team leader gave a presentation to the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health at a recent conference at St Albans Council, which was very well received and prompted a lot of discussion. See appendix 2

4. Victim Centred Approach

- 4.1 With the emphasis on victim care, ASB team officers have to become very involved with the cases that they are working on. Some of these cases can take over 2 years to resolve, due to legal arguments and huge caseloads having to be listed at Court. These cases can be very demanding on officers, especially when dealing with victims who are at risk. The officer investigating the case still needs to remain impartial, until the case is completed, so this can be a real conflict for officers that are trying to provide a victim centred service, but also trying to ensure a legal resolution that runs as smoothly as possible. There is no victim support service available for victims of ASB in the way there is for victims of crime.

5. The problem solving triangle

- 5.1 The problem solving triangle involves looking at ASB as a triangle, with the following elements making up each side of the triangle: victim, location and offender. By disrupting or changing one of these sides, you can effectively break the triangle and solve the Anti Social Behaviour. Police in Hertfordshire, are now relaunching this approach, as it proved so successful in the past. Close partnership working with our colleagues in the police is key to effectively dealing with Anti Social Behaviour, making Dacorum an attractive place to live and work.
- 5.2 Historically, Dacorum's ASB team have been extremely successful in dealing with ASB by using the problem solving triangle. The ASB team won Hertfordshire Constabulary's Problem Solving Award in 2004 and were finalists in 2005.

6. Case Studies

Please see Appendices 3 and 4 for case studies from officers.

7. The Toxic Trio

- 7.1 Mental Health issues, Drug and Alcohol Misuse and Domestic Abuse form what has become known as the Toxic Trio. The Toxic Trio can be found in almost all ASB cases. This could be to do with the victim, the perpetrator or the extended family of either. The types of cases the ASB team are now dealing with are extremely complex, and usually involve other professionals and support agencies.

8. Additional Responsibilities

Please see Appendix 5 for a list of the other areas the team has involvement in or responsibility for.

9. Observations

- 9.1 As an ASB team we have seen a drastic change in the type of cases that we are now dealing with. Moving away from issuing ABC's to nuisance youths and target hardening communal areas to dealing with a huge Class A drug problem and very complex cases involving the Toxic Trio. We aim to deliver a professional and value for money service to all residents of Dacorum, as well as, providing an information and advice service to colleagues and other professionals.
- 9.2 Due to the heavy caseloads, the long and protracted court process and demands from victims on officers, it is becoming very difficult to continue to do this. We welcome the opportunity to meet with members and discuss concerns they may have in their respective areas, as it's always good to know what local people are concerned about.
- 9.3 Out of the 10 districts across Hertfordshire, Dacorum currently sit in 5th position in respect of Countywide ASB figures. This is especially significant given the lack of drug and alcohol provision, the high number of Class A users, the population, the number of PPO's we have and the large amount of social housing we have in the Borough in comparison to other districts.