



Report for:	Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	3rd July 2018
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Anti-social Behaviour Policy
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing Layna Warden – Group Manager Tenants and Leaseholders
Purpose of report:	For members to be informed about the revisions to the Councils Corporate and Housing Anti-social Behaviour Policy
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For members to review the proposed policy and the commitments set out to effectively deal with Anti-social Behaviour 2. To offer feedback on the proposed approach to Anti-social Behaviour across the service
Corporate objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership to create a borough that enables Dacorum’s communities to thrive and prosper • A clean, safe and enjoyable environment • Building strong and vibrant communities
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u> There are no direct financial implications arising from this policy but it is expected that court and legal costs should be reduced</p>
‘Value for money’ implications	<p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>By Environmental and Community Protection and Housing departments working closely through one joint policy a more consistent and proactive service can be provided ensuring that appropriate action is taken to reduce high court costs, build communities and reduce complaints</p>
Risk implications	There are no direct risk implications arising from this policy
Health and safety Implications	There are no direct Health and Safety implications arising from this policy.
Consultees:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing Fiona Williamson – Assistant Director Housing Emma Walker – Group Manager, Environmental and Community Protection Lindsey Walsh – Team Leader Tenancy and Leasehold

	Nicola Lobendhan – Team Leader Anti-social Behaviour Amy Dalton – Community Safety Lead Officer Usman Mohammed – Litigation Barrister CMT – Corporate Management Team RAOG- Responsible Authorities Officers Group
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	ASB – Anti-social Behaviour CSP – Community Safety Partnership DBC – Dacorum Borough Council

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Dacorum Borough Council recognises that the problems created by ASB need to be dealt with in a robust but proportionate manner. Residents are entitled to live in a quiet and peaceful environment, so when appropriate the Council will aim to work quickly and efficiently to tackle incidents of ASB.
- 1.2. This report introduces a single council wide ASB policy that will apply to tenants and residents (regardless of tenure), their family members and other occupants and visitors. This report outlines the key elements of the policy and gives members an overview of the approach taken by all team when managing residents or tenants who are victims or perpetrators of ASB.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Housing Team are responsible for all low and medium level ASB cases that involve council tenants. Where cases involve a significant risk to the community or involve violence these are escalated to the Corporate ASB Team to work on behalf of housing to resolve or take enforcement action. The Corporate ASB Team also manage any high level cases where the perpetrator is not a DBC Council tenant.
- 2.2. There is a responsibility on the Local Authority to effectively deal with ASB from residents and tenants and to protect the community. A number of tools and powers are in place to enable relevant officers to achieve this.
- 2.3. In the past 18 months there has been a change to the reporting structure from the previous Resident Services Team and new Group Managers in the posts that manage the teams who deal with ASB. The SLA between the two services has now been reviewed. Group Managers have been involved in cases which have been escalated to the MP, formal complaints and investigated by the Ombudsman.
- 2.4. These changes prompted a review to gain better understanding of the processes and experiences of residents in ASB cases. The Councils Performance and Innovation team carried out an analysis of cases and spoke to a number of members of officers who are involved in some way in dealing with ASB or supporting residents who are victims.

2.5. A key recommendation from this review was to align the working practices across all teams that have involvement with managing ASB. Bringing the separate policies into one working document aims to improve consistency and prevent legal challenge where cases pass between teams and ensure it is clear which document applies. The two ASB policies – one for Housing covering the landlord function and the other for the Corporate ASB team have been reviewed into one new ASB policy to improve service delivery for our customers.

3. The Local Context

- 3.1. The Tenants and Leaseholders service manage the 10,400 council homes owned by DBC. The average number of live ASB cases per 1000 properties in 2018/19 was 7.04%. This varies from 57-80 cases open to the Housing team at any time.
- 3.2. Currently the corporate ASB team have 25 cases which have been considered High Level and escalated from the Housing Team. An SLA between the Housing and Environmental and Community Protection team covers the financial arrangement for the ASB Team to provide a specialist service on behalf of the Housing Service.
- 3.3. An additional 11 cases are currently open to the ASB team involving private residents. Other cases involving Housing Association Premises are taken on if Housing Association have exhausted all avenues available to them as landlords.
- 3.4. In the past 12 months there have been a number of outcomes from these cases which include Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Formal warnings, Closure orders, Injunctions and Possession Orders.

4. The National Context

- 4.1. There have been a number of legislation changes introduced by the Anti-Social, Police and Crime Act 2014. The act introduced simpler, more effective powers to tackle anti-social behavior that provide better protection for victims and communities.
- 4.2. The powers introduced by the 2014 Act are deliberately local in nature. Those who work within and for local communities are best placed to understand what is driving the behaviour in question, the impact that it is having, and to determine the most appropriate response.
- 4.3. The powers introduced by the act are designed to be flexible to ensure that local agencies have the tools they need to respond to different forms of anti-social behaviour. The guidance sets out the legal tests that must be met before each of the powers can be used.

5. Draft Policy

- 5.1. In partnership with a number of departments a key focus has been to finalise the attached draft ASB policy. This policy replaces the previous separate policy documents to ensure a joined up approach between the departments. The policy clearly sets out our commitments.
 - No one should have to tolerate ASB
 - Reports of ASB will be treated seriously and dealt with professionally
 - ASB will be dealt with firmly, fairly and proportionately
 - We will work with partners in order to deliver an effective, value for money ASB service across the community
 - We will provide a high quality service that meets people's identified needs

3.2 The policy has been developed with input from both Housing and Environmental and Community Protection Department with significant input from both Legal Services and Community Safety Officers.

3.3 This policy was approved at CMT on Tuesday 11th June 2019 and has been sent to RAOG for comments from our partner organisations prior to this and may be set as an agenda item at Spatial Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. Conclusion

6.1. If approved this ASB Policy will replace any existing relevant policies in Housing and Environmental and Community Protection. It will be due for review in 2 years and all procedures will follow from this document to ensure front line officers uphold the commitments and detail set out in this document.

7. Recommendations

7.1. For members to review the proposed policy and the commitments set out to effectively deal with Anti-social Behaviour.

7.2. To offer feedback on the proposed approach to Anti-social Behaviour across the service