

London Borough of Hillingdon

**RESIDENTS' AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

2009/10

DRAFT SCOPING REPORT

Proposed review title:

**ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR:
HILLINGDON'S ROLE**

Aim of review

To review and improve the Council's arrangements for dealing with anti-social behaviour in the Borough.

Draft Terms of Reference

- 1. To define ASB and what a zero tolerance approach means;**
- 2. To consider existing and emerging legislation surrounding ASB;**
- 3. To assess peoples' perceptions of ASB and whether it is really as big a problem as the mainstream media makes out;**
- 4. To assess the ways of measuring ASB, their accuracy and determine whether the level of ASB is getting better or worse in Hillingdon (in comparison to the national average / other areas);**
- 5. To review whether the ways we enable people to report ASB are accessible and effective – can we do more?;**
- 6. To review whether the Council's own processes and response rate in tackling ASB are timely, effective and cost-efficient;**
- 7. To seek out views on this subject from residents, particularly young people, using a variety of existing and also contemporary consultation mechanisms;**
- 8. To examine best practice elsewhere through case studies, policy ideas, witness sessions and visits;**
- 9. After due consideration of the above, to bring forward strategic, innovative and also practical policy recommendations to the Cabinet in relation to adopting a zero tolerance approach to ASB in Hillingdon;**

Background and importance

Measurement of changes in the volume of anti-social behaviour is difficult, so performance analysis tends to prefer surveys of public experience and perception. Nationally and for London this is achieved in the British Crime Survey; locally for Hillingdon this is achieved by the Local

Government User Satisfaction Survey, now replaced by the Place Survey, Police Public Attitude Surveys and the Hillingdon Crime and Disorder Survey.

The general trend is a gradual reduction in the perception of high levels of disorder or anti-social behaviour being a big problem, but this reduction is not as fast as the reduction in levels of concern about crime. Public and stakeholder surveys continue to put tackling anti-social behaviour at or near the top of the list of priorities.

Younger people and those living in hard pressed areas are more likely to experience (and therefore perceive) high levels of anti-social behaviour than older or affluent people.

Reasons for the review

1. A new, updated ASB Strategy is needed to provide clear long-term objectives for ASB interventions in the borough.

There are considerable resources devoted to tackling anti-social behaviour in Hillingdon. The issues which public and stakeholder surveys tell us are causing greatest concern are:

- Issues connected to drugs and alcohol
- General nuisance behaviour
- Vandalism and criminal damage, including graffiti
- Inappropriate vehicle use
- Fly tipping

2. The impact of legislation and national guidance.

The Safer Hillingdon Partnership Annual Plan includes Local Area Agreement designated target NI 21 (confidence in police and local authority to deal effectively with anti-social behaviour and crime).

The SHP is obliged to have a strategy to deal with Anti-Social Behaviour under the Police and Justice Act 2006 and Statutory Instrument 2007 (3076) Crime and Disorder: Formulation of Strategy.

3. A continuing need to ensure value for money.

Anti-Social Behaviour has always been difficult to measure, for the following reasons:

- Although the term has been in common usage for ten years (since the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act) it covers a wide range of behaviours and when used as a generic term it does not specify the nature of the problem
- Volume of reports can vary according to:
 - What is recorded as ASB as opposed to a service request – for example a report about an abandoned or untaxed vehicle could be treated as simply a request for a service rather than a suggestion that someone had been deliberately anti-social

- It is prone to subjectivity – one person’s ASB is another person’s normality (such as loud music or “youths hanging around”)
- The willingness of people to report it, which may be influenced by how confident they are in the likely service response – greater confidence = increased reports
- The tolerance threshold of the person reporting it – if there are more serious issues such as the economy, climate change or a crime wave there may be fewer reports of low level disturbance. MORI have assessed that tolerance of ASB is higher in high crime areas compared to low crime areas

The British Crime Survey has asked questions to find out the percentage of people who perceive a high level of ASB since 2001/2. There is a gradual downward trend (ie improvement), with the London figure improving faster than the national figure so that the figure for London is getting closer to the national average. This is positive as higher perception is to be expected in the metropolis compared to rural areas.

Safer Neighbourhood Team Public Attitude surveys

All SNT areas are included in these surveys under the Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhoods scheme. The trend suggests gradual improvement in the percentage of people who said that anti-social behaviour had got worse, but not as great as the improvement in people who said that the crime rate had got worse.

The reduction in perception of anti-social behaviour, therefore, is not as fast as the reduction in worry about crime.

Hillingdon’s Annual Crime and Disorder survey

This is conducted locally by the Council’s Community Safety Team – 5,000 postal surveys are sent to randomly selected households, and about 1,200 are returned.

The percentage of people identifying anti-social behaviour as a major concern has reduced from 89% in 2004 to 79% in 2007. The 2008/9 survey asked a slightly different question, the result being that less than half (48%) the respondents said that ASB is a big or very big problem locally.

4. A review of current arrangements for policy development and overall direction for the service area.

Current measures in place

- 12 strong Police ASB Team / Partnership Tasking Team in partnership with the Council and Hillingdon Homes
- Police Safer Transport Team; Hayes Town Centre Transport Hub Team; British Transport Police “Safer Neighbourhood” Team

- Enlarged LBH community safety team
- Hillingdon Homes ASB Team
- Most RSLs are signed up to the Respect Standard for Housing Management
- Hillingdon Community Mediation take referrals of neighbour disputes and seek resolution of the problem through agreement
- Street Scene Enforcement Team located in Environment and Consumer Protection
- Fire fighters on cycles scheme runs from April to October (eliminating flammable rubbish)
- Community Payback – over 40% of unpaid work by offenders under supervision is done in conjunction with the Council on environmental improvements
- Funding provided for youth entrants to the LIFE Education project run by the Fire Service for young people engaged in anti-social behaviour
- Positive Activities for Young People programme – Fiesta – is one of the biggest in London; Targeted Youth Support Service has been rolled out borough wide; Early Intervention Programme deals with about 100 young people per year of whom about 80% do not come to further police notice in the following 12 months
- Onyx categories changed to match Home Office typology
- On-line, phone, e-mail or letter referrals through LBH Contact Centre
- Service standards for ECP and CS revised and prepared for publication

6. Resources available

Cases dealt with by LBH Community Safety Team:

- Issues which are multi-faceted or do not fall into the following categories are referred to the Community Safety Team, which has 6 staff dealing with “tasking” issues

Typical cases dealt with by LBH Environment and Consumer Protection:

- Noise nuisance – **Noise Team** (subject to what type of noise it is)
- Litter – **Street Cleaning**
- Car repairs and vehicles for sale on the highway – **Street Scene Enforcement**
- Refuse disposal disputes and fly tipping – **Street Scene Enforcement**
- Parking disputes and abandoned vehicles – **Parking Services**
- Anti-social Behaviour in Parks and Open Spaces – **Green Spaces / Ranger Patrol**
- Under age sales of alcohol and unlawful trading – **Trading Standards**
- Alleged breaches of conditions by licensed premises – **Licensing Service**

Typical cases dealt with by LBH Education and Children’s Service:

- Young people going through the Youth Court – **Youth Offending Service**
- Young people at risk of offending behaviour – **Targeted Youth Support Service and Positive Activities for Young People**

Cases dealt with by Hillingdon Homes:

- Reports of anti-social behaviour committed by the Council’s 10,000 tenants and 2,000 Leaseholders. The Team has six specialist Anti Social Behaviour Officers

Equalities

The Council needs to ensure that the ASB strategy is applied equitably to all community groups, races and ethnicities, enhances community cohesion and adequately meets the needs of a diverse borough.

Who is this review covering?

1. All people living or working in Hillingdon and visitors to the borough.
2. Council services, Community Safety Team, Environmental Enforcement.
3. External partners e.g. Metropolitan Police, and Residents' Groups.

Key issues

1. Are residents' expectations and concerns about ASB reflected in the Council's service standards?
2. What is the total extent of existing ASB provision across the Council?
3. Effectiveness of ASB strategy:
 - a. What is the evidence on the pattern of incidents? Has there been displacement?
 - b. How many convictions or detections result from the ASB strategy?
5. How have other Councils dealt with ASB successfully?

Methodology

1. The Policy Overview Committee will examine background documents and receive evidence at its public meetings from officers and external witnesses.
2. The Committee may also make visits to sites and/or to other Councils with best practice examples.

Relevant Documents

To be provided as the review progresses.

Witnesses/evidence providers

Exemplar Local Authorities; Older Persons Forum; Youth Council; local Shopping Centres' managers; Street Champions; Metropolitan Police Council Services; Connecting Communities Forum; Community and Police Consultative Group.

There may need to be some further prioritisation within this list in order to make the review manageable and complete it to deadline.

Stakeholders and consultation plan

1. Partner agencies will be invited to make submissions to the Review.
2. The stakeholders are: (to be added)
3. Consultation plan: representatives of stakeholders will be invited as witnesses. The review could be publicised in Hillingdon People and on the Council website and written contributions invited.

Connected work (recently completed, planned or ongoing)

Outcome

The Committee's recommendations will go to the Cabinet and the Council's partners for approval.

Proposed timeframe & milestones

To complete Review by the end of December 2009

Risk assessment

The review needs to be resourced and to stay focused on its terms of reference in order to meet this deadline.