

# RESIDENTS' SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE - SAFER HILLINGDON PARTNERSHIP REPORT

<b>Committee name</b>	Residents' Services Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Richard Webb, Director of Community Safety and Enforcement
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A – Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
<b>Ward</b>	All

## HEADLINES

The Council has statutory responsibility to investigate reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and environmental crime and has a range of enforcement powers available to it when seeking to prevent and reduce ASB and environmental crime. This report provides information on the nature and volume of ASB and environmental crime reports received by the Council from residents, Elected Members and businesses and the way the Council responds to those reports.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the Residents' Services Select Committee notes the contents of the report and asks questions in order to clarify matters of concern or interest in the Borough; and**
- 2. That the Residents' Services Select Committee provides comment on the draft anti-social behaviour policy for consideration when the policy is finalised for adoption by the Council.**

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is defined in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 as:
  - behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to persons not of the same household as the person,
  - conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or
  - conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.
2. A wide range of behaviours could be considered antisocial and are reported to the Council for investigation. These include:
  - Abandoning a vehicle in a public space (e.g. normally abandoning old cars that are no longer useable).
  - Inconsiderate behaviour in public spaces which causes distress or alarm to others or stops them using those public areas (for example, drinking in groups outside shops blocking footpaths, access to benches and leaving litter).
  - Using a vehicle in a way which causes a nuisance to others (e.g. loud engine revving during the night, using e-bikes on footpaths or in busy pedestrian areas).

- Behaviour which has a negative impact on neighbours' ability to enjoy their property (e.g. regular fires or noise which prevents them using their garden).
  - Dropping litter.
  - Out of control dogs or persistent dog barking in residential areas.
  - Trespassing on private property or limiting someone's access to their own property.
  - Not controlling a dog in a public place so that others feel unsafe or unable to use that same public space.
  - Fly-tipping.
  - Aggressive begging.
  - Making loud noises at night (e.g. playing music loudly).
  - Allowing waste to accumulate on private property.
3. In 2023 the Council reviewed the Borough wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) that was introduced in 2020. PSPOs are used to tackle public nuisance issues or problems that have a negative impact on quality of life in public spaces, by imposing conditions on the use of the area. Following a public consultation, a new PSPO was introduced for 2023-26, which retained the prohibitions in the previous PSPO and added new prohibitions covering:
- a. Smoking/vaping within children's play areas.
  - b. Exercising dogs within children's play areas.
  - c. Driving e-vehicles or motor vehicles over footways.
  - d. Use of amplification equipment in town centres (Uxbridge, Hayes and Ruislip).
  - e. Placing of tables/stands/signage in town centres (Uxbridge, Hayes and Ruislip).
  - f. Street selling financial agreements in the street in town centres (Uxbridge, Hayes and Ruislip).
  - g. Street trading and leaflet distribution without proper consent.
  - h. Holding car meets or street racing events.
  - i. The use of amplification equipment at Ruislip Lido and other green spaces.

### **Data on Reported Incidents of ASB and Environmental Crime**

4. The Council receives many reports each month of different types of anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime incidents from residents. The following table provides a summary of the total number of reports received by the Council's Street Scene and Anti-Social Behaviour Teams since July 2023. Due to recording system changes it is not possible to provide a comparison with report numbers prior to this date.

	<b>July 23- Sept 23</b>	<b>Oct 23- Dec 23</b>	<b>Jan 24- March 24</b>
Total No. of Reports Received	1713	1841	2407
Actionable Reports	820	1218	1202
Trend (all reports)	-	+7%	+31%
Trend (actionable reports)	-	+48%	-1%

The most prevalent categories of ASB and enviro-crime reported between January and March 2024 are shown in the table below:

<b>Category</b>	<b>No. of reports (Jan 24- March 24)</b>
Noise	185
of which loud music	81
construction	39
Rubbish accumulation	172
Abandoned vehicles	140
Fly tipping	106
Highway obstruction	77
Breach of Public Spaces Protection Order	63
Vehicle driving over pavement causing obstruction	53
Infestation of rats or mice	47

5. In addition, Council tenants will contact the Housing Service to report problems related to ASB in common areas of Council properties or on Council estates. These reports are recorded separately and are not included in the data above due to limitations with the ability to distinguish between ASB and non-ASB related reports and those subsequently referred to the Community Safety and Enforcement teams.

### **Restructure of the Community Safety and Enforcement Teams**

6. A number of Council teams have a role in preventing and reducing community ASB. Prior to 2023 all reports of anti-social behaviour and environmental crime were investigated by the Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team (ASBET). This approach of having a single team with responsibility for the breadth of issues reported to the Council concerning anti-social behaviour and environmental crime was felt to be limiting the ability to manage caseloads and achieve sustained outcomes, as well as knowledge of the local issues that should be prioritised. Therefore, the ASBET team was restructured in 2023 to create a new ASB and Localities team under the Head of Safer Communities and Vulnerabilities.
7. The ASB and Localities team leads the response to complex issues of ASB affecting the wider community. These include long-standing issues as well as emerging trends and hot spot areas. Positioning this team within the Community Safety and Vulnerabilities Team aligns the work of this team to the wider community safety activity that the Council undertakes with the Police and other partners. The officers in the team each have a locality responsibility, which supports the team to connect with community organisations and local Police Neighbourhood Teams to develop an understanding of local priorities and build stronger relationships to help facilitate resolution of those problems.
8. Following this restructure the main Council teams with a role in investigating and preventing ASB and environmental crime are as follows:
- a. Street Scene and Environmental Enforcement – Responsible for investigation of fly tipping, abandoned vehicles, fly posting, waste accumulations, pest infestations, etc.
  - b. Environmental Protection – Responsible for investigations of statutory nuisance (e.g. noise, smoke, dust or light adversely impacting on people within their properties) including the out of hours noise service.
  - c. ASB and Localities – Responsible for coordinating multiagency action on persistent or complex ASB and environmental problems.
  - d. Tenancy Management – Within the Housing Service and responsible for investigating ASB where the behaviour concerns an identified Council tenant and is a breach of their tenancy agreement.

9. The average first response time for enquires to the Community Safety and Enforcement teams varies by team. The table below provides a summary of the average response times across teams for enquiries received between January and March 2024.

Team	Average Response-Service Requests	Average Response-Member Enquiries
Street Scene Enforcement Team	8 days	9 days
ASB and Localities	4 days	4 days
Environmental Protection	4 days	12 days

10. As an indication of the activity that is generated following these enquiries, between January and March 2024 the teams -

- Made 1023 contacts with residents or Elected Members during investigations into their reports.
- Carried out 297 site visits.
- Undertook 48 joint operations with the Police.

11. Most matters are resolved through the provision of advice or warnings. For example, over the same time period, the Street Scene Enforcement Team issued 289 advisory warnings under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 alone as a consequence of investigations into reports of ASB.

12. One of the priorities of the ASB and Localities Team is to provide a Council presence at local community forums. This typically involves attending Police Ward Panel meetings where ASB and other matters which the Council has a role in resolving are often raised. The team may also attend residents' associations or other community-based meetings where there is on-going work in that locality that the team are involved in.

13. The team leads casework relating to harassment and community and neighbourhood nuisance. In order to deal with these cases effectively they need to understand and identify any potential risk which may or may not be obvious in the initial case information. Therefore, their work involves: risk assessment, referrals and signposting, action planning, robust investigation, project management of multi-agency responses, and enforcement (if necessary and appropriate).

14. Two examples of cases dealt with by the ASB and Localities team follow.

Harefield Bikes/Cranford Park/Geen Spaces:

Hillingdon is known for its beautiful open green spaces. However, as well as being enjoyed by our residents and visitors, some of our green spaces also attract some unwanted behaviours such as rough sleeping, drug and alcohol misuse, quad/motorbike riding, sexual activity, persistent dog fouling, fly tipping and littering.

The difficulty in addressing ASB in green spaces is that it is rarely witnessed, making it difficult to catch the perpetrators and it is the resulting damage or detritus left behind which is reported. The rural locations are often not suitable for CCTV and are too vast for regular patrols, making proactive tasking extremely difficult. It is most likely that there will never be a definitive answer to eradicate these problems; however, by taking a multi-agency approach,

the ASB and Localities team are able to pull together the most appropriate stakeholders to provide a quick response to tackle the problem as soon as it starts to prevent it becoming entrenched. By building up a 'history' of how, when and where the problems occur, as well as what action has been taken before (successful or otherwise) and logging key decisions and rationale, the team have started to seek out new or alternative approaches to address the issues and contain the problem as much as possible.

Unneighbourly use of housing communal areas:

Communal areas of some of the Council's residential housing blocks have suffered from misuse through unknown people sleeping within those areas, urinating or defecating in public spaces, smoking drugs and drinking and using threats towards residents in the block when challenged. Staff working in those buildings have also been threatened when attempting to challenge these behaviours.

The ASB and Localities team coordinates actions across relevant teams and organisations to address the different complexities of these issues. Actions include making unauthorised access to the buildings more difficult, ensuring CCTV evidence is utilised for identification purposes, liaising with residents and organising residents' meetings, arranging targeted multi-agency patrols and coordinating enforcement action against known perpetrators, with referrals made to other agencies for support with any vulnerable persons identified.

## Environmental Enforcement

15. The Council contracts with APCOA Parking Limited for the provision of on-street Environmental Enforcement Officers (EEOs). These EEOs are authorised to issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) for contraventions of environmental legislation that the Council can enforce, including the Hillingdon PSPO. The table below shows the number of FPNs issued per month for the last 6 months.

FPNs per month	Total Issued	% compared to previous
Oct-23	758	4.70%
Nov-23	742	-2.11%
Dec-23	838	12.94%
Jan-24	906	8.11%
Feb-24	776	-14.35%
Mar-24	932	20.10%

16. The total number of FPNs issued in 2023/24 exceeded the number issued in 2022/23. This is mainly due to improved deployment of EEOs, with EEOs predominantly working singly rather than in pairs as was the case in previous years and their tasking being improved to ensure they are present in the areas with higher rates of contravention of the prohibitions.

17. The wards with the highest levels of FPNs issued are Heathrow Villages, Uxbridge and Hayes Town. Deployment in these areas is active 7 days per week.

Ward	FPNs	Percentage
Belmore	13	1%
Botwell	7	1%
Colham and Cowley	8	1%
Eastcote	2	0%
Eastcote Ruislip	5	1%
Hayes Town	133	14%
Heathrow Villages	353	38%
Hillingdon East	4	0%
Ickenham and South Harefield	12	1%
New Road, Hillingdon	1	0%
Pinkwell Ward	10	1%
Ruislip	1	0%
Ruislip Manor	11	1%
South Ruislip	43	5%
Uxbridge	256	27%
West Drayton	49	5%
West Ruislip	6	1%
Woodend Ward	1	0%
Yiewsley	17	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>932</b>	<b>100%</b>

18. The majority of FPNs being issued are for PSPO breaches, followed by litter and obstructing officers. FPNs for obstruction are issued mainly when a driver of a vehicle drives away from the Enforcement Officer. The team carry out vehicle registration checks to identify the offender and the FPN is issued through the post.

FPN issued for	Grand Total
01-Depositing Litter	171
05-Failing to comply with PSPO	501
07-Failure to produce waste documents	20
10-Failure to produce trading licence on demand	1
12-Smoking in a smoke-free place	35
21-Wilful obstruction of a highway	2
15-Displaying advertisement in contravention	24
20-Painting/inscribing/affixing on tree/structure	44
16-Resisting or obstructing an authorised Officer	126
29-Depositing on highway cause injury/danger	2
27-Depositing anything on highway	2
31A-Contravention or failure to comply with	1
31B- Contravention/failure to comply with	1
19-Abandonment of a vehicle or part of a vehicle	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>932</b>

19. In 2023 the Government, as part of its Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan, permitted local authorities to increase fine levels for certain environmental offences. As a result, the decision was made to increase a number of the penalty charge notice levels for environmental offences from April as follows:

<b>Offence</b>	<b>PCN Amount 2023-24</b>	<b>PCN Amount from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024</b>
Littering	£100	£400
Graffiti	£100	£500
Failure of duty of care when disposing of waste	£90	£450
Fly posting	£100	£400
Fly tipping	£400	£1000

### **Policy Development**

20. To support the Council in its work to investigate and prevent ASB, a draft Anti-Social Behaviour Policy is being prepared. This policy is intended to provide residents with information explaining what behaviours may constitute ASB and to explain when the Council may take action on reports of ASB and how it may use its powers. The policy is in draft form and the views of the Committee on potential improvements to this draft would be welcome.

### **Financial Implications**

None at this stage.

### **Legal Implications**

None at this stage.