

Cabinet 27 June 2017	
Report of: Denise Radley, Corporate Director – Health, Adults & Community	Classification: Unrestricted
Tower Hamlets Anti-Social Behaviour – A Blueprint for Action	

Lead Member	Councillor Asma Begum, Cabinet Member for Community Safety
Originating Officer(s)	Denise Radley, Corporate Director- Health, Adults & Community
Wards affected	All
Key Decision?	Yes
Community Plan Theme	A safe and cohesive community

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Tackling anti-social behaviour is a priority for local people and this is reflected in the Council's Strategic Plan and in the priorities set out by the Mayor. Getting the right approach has the potential to make a big impact on people's lives and to the continued growth and economic development of the borough. Tower Hamlets is vibrant and diverse with an ever-changing population and people want to live, work and visit the borough and take advantage of all it has to offer. Residents, businesses and visitors have the right to be and feel safe and should not be harmed by the behaviour of others.
- 1.2 Our Community Safety Partnership takes a robust approach to preventing and reducing crime and this must dovetail with effective methods to prevent and deal with anti-social behaviour. This requires a sophisticated, multi-agency approach which combines community engagement and prevention with an appropriate and clear stance on enforcement.
- 1.3 Building on a review of our current arrangements, "Anti-social behaviour – a Blueprint for Local Action in Tower Hamlets" captures the enormous energy and determination among staff, partners and residents to address local issues and combines this with the evidence of what works in tackling anti-social behaviour locally and nationally. The approach requires change by the Council, partners and local residents and is intended to provide clearer routes to report and resolve issues, increased prevention which addresses issues early and avoids escalation, improved resident satisfaction and stronger enforcement for those who commit crime and/or perpetrate harm through anti-social behaviour.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the new approach to tackling anti-social behaviour set out in the attached document “Anti-Social Behaviour – A Blueprint for Local Action in Tower Hamlets”

2. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 2.1. Anti-social behaviour and crime are the top priority concern for local people in Tower Hamlets. Tackling anti-social behaviour through a new approach is a key priority for the Mayor and is reflected in the Council’s Strategic Plan.
- 2.2. Anti-social behaviour can have a devastating impact on residents, communities and businesses. The definition of anti-social behaviour includes a wider variety of behaviours and activities and individuals differ greatly in their views on what constitutes anti-social behaviour and what is acceptable and can be tolerated. Our new approach grapples with the definition and dilemmas this raises, some of which are particular to our diverse, vibrant urban context. Residents, businesses and visitors should not have to tolerate anti-social behaviour and should be and feel safe within the borough. The new approach sets out how we will tackle both prevention and enforcement around anti-social behaviour which causes harm and distress.
- 2.3. Following a review of anti-social behaviour (Moar and Dunn, 2017), the document “Anti-social behaviour – A Blueprint for Local Action in Tower Hamlets” sets out what the Council and the Community Safety Partnership intends to do to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour. The document provides a clear commitment to action with timescales and metrics which will be used to demonstrate our progress. Considerable change within Council services and ways of working across the Council and its partners will be required to achieve the outcomes..

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Council could continue with its current arrangements for tackling anti-social behaviour however it is widely accepted that these are not sufficiently effective in preventing or addressing the range of anti-social behaviour issues that residents face. There is a clear need to improve the experience of residents and improve satisfaction rates. The review of anti-social behaviour confirms the case for significant change.

- 3.2. The Council could introduce a new approach without publishing a blueprint document however there is a need for a clear position statement and a commitment to action which is available to all residents and businesses and agreed across all partners. A short, focused blueprint document has been identified as the best way to address this.

4. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 4.1 Through the new approach set out in the attached document, we aim to:

- Improve understanding and our response to incidents of anti-social behaviour
- Reduce instances of anti-social behaviour through preventative approaches
- Reduce the number of people involved in perpetrating anti-social behaviour as victims and offenders
- Take robust action against perpetrators using the full suite of powers.
- Where anti-social behaviour does occur, put the victim first particularly those who are vulnerable or repeat victims
- Improve resident satisfaction and the service offer.

- 4.2 We have adopted a refreshed definition of anti-social behaviour, as set out in the current anti-social behaviour legislation. This is as follows:

- Behaviour that has caused, or is likely to cause, alarm, harassment or distress
- Behaviour capable of causing nuisance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises
- Behaviour capable of causing housing related nuisance or annoyance to any person

- 4.3 One of our significant challenges will be to grapple with the underlying complexity within the definition of anti-social behaviour particularly in our diverse, vibrant urban environment. Expectations, definitions and tolerance levels vary greatly within our communities and there is a need to achieve sufficient clarity of what constitutes anti-social behaviour, have clear routes to tackle the different forms anti-social behaviour takes and manage expectations within communities as we develop ways in which individuals and communities can work with the public, private and voluntary sectors to co-produce local, sustainable solutions.

- 4.4 The Anti-Social Behaviour Blueprint document sets out a programme of partnership activity for the future.. The plan will be updated regularly in order that progress can be monitored by the Tower Hamlets multi-agency Community Safety Partnership and the Council.

- 4.5 The purpose of the document is to set out our commitments to action in order to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour and how we intend to deliver better outcomes for residents.

4.6 The review of our approach to anti-social behaviour in Tower Hamlets (Moar and Dunn, 2017), focused on six areas of activity:

- Communications
- Tools and powers
- Operational activity
- Prevention & early intervention
- Community engagement
- Resources

4.6.1 The Review focused on making 'quick win' improvements to current arrangements and engaging people across the partnership in identify a new approach moving forwards. Key findings and priorities were as follows:

- **Neighbourhood Management** – we will move to a best practice model which focuses resources from across the partnership to tackle the different, local issues in different places in the borough. This model can largely be achieved through redesigning existing ASB services.
- **Better co-ordination of complex cases and safeguarding vulnerable people** – we can be much more efficient and effective if we introduce clearer arrangements for sharing information and agreeing support for vulnerable people/complex cases. We will do this through the introduction of a Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (Community MARAC) and the introduction of a shared case management system with independent advocacy support for those most vulnerable..
- **Clearer reporting arrangements which are simple for local people to use** – once we have put in place the neighbourhood management model and redesigned services as above, we will look to re-introduce a single hotline for ASB rather than the current arrangements through 101. This will require partnership collaboration to make it simple for people to use and remove any confusion around who to call for what.
- **Increase community engagement and enable local communities to take a much more active role in designing solutions to ASB** – we will introduce neighbourhood management agreements in areas of the Borough focused on the particular local needs

4.7 It is intended to develop the neighbourhood management model primarily through reconfiguration of existing resources and this will require a detailed service design with the cost quantified and the full workforce implications identified. A formal consultation process with staff is likely to be required. If there is a need to consider additional resources going forward, a business case will be brought forward in the usual way.

4.8 The Housing Revenue Account medium term financial plan has made provision for some new investments in ASB including enforcement initiatives on Tower Hamlets Homes housing estates – this work is progressing well.

- 4.9 There could be additional costs involved in implementing other aspects of the new approach e.g. purchasing a case management system and co-ordinating the Community MARAC. Business cases will be produced to progress these and consideration is being given to use of additional adult social care monies to support the work on complex cases and mental health.

5. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 5.1. The “Anti-social behaviour – A Blueprint for Local Action” sets out the programme for the borough’s new approach to tackling anti-social behaviour through the Community Safety Partnership. In order for the Council and key partners within the Partnership to take advantage of the document and deliver the key priority for the Mayor,, future resources will need to be combined and realigned within the Partnership in developing the programme to deliver a problem solving approach to enforcement that will meet with the priorities of the Council and communities.
- 5.2. The budget process for 2016/17 identified a number of service priorities, growth of £1.0m was allocated for investment to both tackle anti-social behaviour £480k and a total of £520k to improve the street cleanliness around the borough. For the current Medium Term Financial Strategy as part of the Council’s robust approach to tackling ASB additional Mayoral priority growth allocation of £150k has been made. This is for the re-deployment of enforcement officers to where they are most needed within the borough and to ensure compliance with the landlord licencing scheme. In addition to the growth, there is a 2017/18 savings of £400k delivered through a reduction in the Street Enforcement and Response Service as part of the service review. Whilst this is likely to have an impact on the ASB resources, there is the expectation that the impact can be mitigated by the effective use and deployment of staff resources.
- 5.3. Further investment has been made in addition to the Council general fund budget through the Housing Revenue Account. As part of the medium term Financial Plan provision for the HRA a total of £2.458 million has been included to be spent over the next three years in order to fund initiatives that reduce ASB on Council estates.
- 5.4. The Tower Hamlets ASB plan sets out key actions that will be required to be progressed.. In the event that financial implications arise outside of the current budget provision, the appropriate financial approval will need to be sought before further financial commitments are made. Given the financial constraints faced by the Council and other partners, it is imperative that resource funding levels to support the strategy and delivery plan are considered fully as part of the Council’s Outcomes Based Budgeting approach for 2017 -2020. This will need to include the identification of complementary funding and consideration of the most effective way to respond to this area of work alongside the Council’s wider priorities.

6. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 6.1 The Council, together with its partners, has various statutory duties and powers in relation to crime and disorder and the misuse of drugs as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. In particular –
- Under sections 6 and 7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the Council and its statutory partners have a duty to formulate and implement strategies for the reduction of crime and disorder, the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and for reducing re offending in the area. The Council has adopted the Community Safety Plan in accordance with this obligation.
 - Under section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 it is the duty of the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the effect on and the need to do all it can reasonably do to prevent crime and disorder, misuse of drugs and other substances, and re offending in its area.
 - Section 218A of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 requires housing authorities, housing trusts and Registered Social Landlords to prepare and publish anti- social behaviour policies and procedures for dealing with instances of anti-social behaviour. Landlords are also under a duty to keep their policies and procedures under review.

The Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 ('2014 Act') introduces new powers for managing anti-social behaviour, including housing related powers, criminal behaviour orders and premises closure orders. The 2014 Act defines anti-social behaviour as:

- conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any 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

and this should guide, or be reflected, in any definition set out any in any policies, statements or promotions prepared by the Council and other agencies.

- 6.2 The blueprint for action plan is capable of being carried out within the Council's statutory functions. The report indicates that regard has been had to the Council's Strategic Plan in the preparation of the action plan and that the actions will be consistent with that plan. The action plan also links to a number of existing and new strategies that already contribute to the reduction of anti-social behaviour.
- 6.3 Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has a duty, when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a protected characteristic and those who do not (the public sector equality duty).

7. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1. An equality analysis is being drawn up as part of the strategy development. Different communities and cohorts of the population experience anti-social behaviour differently and there can be tensions between different groups which exacerbate distress and harm from anti-social behaviour. For example:
- Older people may report nuisance behaviour by young people playing football or “hanging around” locally – in this scenario, anti-social behaviour is not always actually taking place and young people can feel unfairly treated if assumptions are made
 - Women may feel less safe than men when walking around the borough including at night
 - Different ethnic groups may have different views/levels of tolerance around drinking alcohol, smoking etc.
 - Disabled and other vulnerable people may experience verbal abuse which could constitute hate crime

8. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Anti-social behaviour levels are high compared with similar and neighbouring boroughs. Through this new approach the Council is reviewing where it invests its resources and how it delivers services within the multi-agency context that it works within.

9. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 9.1 There are no direct actions from this report resulting in a greener environment however actions to tackle anti-social behaviour sometimes overlap with environmental considerations and priorities. For example clearing up small areas of land which have fallen into disarray and are attracting anti-social behaviour or horticultural actions within parks which aim to design out and reduce anti-social behaviour and crime.

10. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are risks associated with the harm caused by anti-social behaviour in terms of the quality of life, health and wellbeing of residents. This includes mental health and wellbeing. These risks are increased for vulnerable victims. There is a significant financial risk if Council resources are not invested in the best way to achieve improved outcomes and it is essential to consider resources across the partnership to avoid waste and duplication. There are reputational risks to the Council if anti-social behaviour is not reduced and this extends to indirect risks associated with investment and economic growth.

11. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 This approach has been developed in response to the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 and has been driven through the Community Safety Partnership. Implementation of this approach will secure beneficial consequences for crime and disorder in the Borough.

12. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Tackling anti-social behaviour has a significant link to safeguarding both vulnerable adults and children. Vulnerable adults and young people can be both victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and there can be complex issues regarding vulnerability, mental health, stigma, hate crime and anti-social behaviour. The new approach includes proposals for a community MARAC (multi-agency risk assessment conference) which will focus on complex issues which cut across community safety, anti-social behaviour, vulnerability and safeguarding.
- 12.2 Children and young people can be affected by anti-social behaviour and may be both victims and perpetrators. Effective prevention can reduce the likelihood of young people becoming involved in gangs, carrying knives and otherwise becoming involved in the criminal justice system. This approach has been developed with colleagues in Children's Services and will contribute to improving and delivering effective safeguarding practice in line with the children's improvement plan.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Appendices

- **Anti-Social Behaviour – A Blueprint for Local Action**

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- Review of Anti-Social Behaviour in Tower Hamlets – Maxine Moar & Paul Dunn, 2017

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