

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

**DATE:** 15<sup>th</sup> September 2011

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**WARD(S):** All.

### **PART I**

#### **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

##### **REDUCING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN SLOUGH**

1. **Purpose of Report**

To update Scrutiny on the work of the Community Safety Team and advise members of arrangements in relation to Council tenants following transfer of the local authority housing stock

2. **Recommendation**

That Members note the work of the Community Safety Team in tackling anti-social behaviour and advise members of arrangements in relation to Council tenants following transfer of the local authority housing stock

3. **Community Strategy Priorities**

- Being Safe, Feeling Safe
- A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play

4. **Other Implications**

**Financial**

- There are no financial implications associated with the report.

**Risk Management**

Recommendation	Risk/Threat/Opportunity	Mitigation(s)
That Members note the work of the Community Safety Team in tackling anti-social behaviour	No risks	n/a

(a) **Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

There are no Human Rights Act Implications.

### Equalities Impact Assessment

Those who are from minority ethnic groups, those with learning and physical disabilities and those with mental health problems are all at a disproportionately greater risk of becoming victims of anti-social behaviour.

#### (b) Workforce

This report describes changes that have been made to the work-force following the transfer of the local authority's housing stock.

## **5. Supporting Information**

5.1.1 Anti-social behaviour (ASB) enforcement action remains a priority in Slough. The monthly ASB Case Review meeting looks at all ongoing cases and flags up new ones. Multiagency case conferences are held for each new case where required. At these meetings, each case is carefully considered along with the recorded evidence and an action plan is put together. This may include home visits by a housing officer, police officer and/or ASB Victims Champion, and followed up with ongoing support along with the offer of mediation, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) or Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). There is also a Family Intervention Project (FIP) team based within Drugs and Community Safety which works with families where young people are offending or are at risk of offending or are on the Social Services register.

*Please see appendix A for two ASB case study examples*

5.1.2 Cases where a specific location is a problem may be passed to the Community Safety Team's project officers to coordinate resolution, for example, gating an alleyway, improving lighting, or relocating benches where groups have been gathering. The project officers also look at community projects to improve the appearance and 'feel' of an area and to help instil community confidence and reduce fear of crime, for example, installing football posts and enabling young people to play in a suitable area, or organising an art wall in an alleyway.

5.1.3 Officers from the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team also deal with cases of anti-social behaviour and will initiate enforcement action to deal with problems such as domestic noise, fly tipping and graffiti.

## **5.2 Examples of long term project work**

5.2.1 Slough Homeless Our Concern (SHOC) – there have been long running complaints of street drinkers congregating outside SHOC, Slough's homeless day hostel, and causing problems for local businesses and residents. This led to a multi-agency project being put in place resulting in regular monthly meetings and an action plan. Actions included implementing a 3-month dispersal order in the area, helping SHOC to introduce controls over their service use, and installing gates at the entrance. Complaints are down significantly on last year.

5.2.2 Prostitution – this is an ongoing issue in Slough which the police and council continue to work on. CCTV has been installed in the 'hotspot' area of Ledgers Road, and a Sex Workers Action Group (SWAG) has been set up to look at individual cases

where support is required to change lifestyle and there is a strategic meeting which also looks at best practice from around the country. The police carry out regular curb-crawling operations and patrol the area.

**5.2.3 Barka/rough sleepers** - Slough has a history of successfully resolving the housing and support needs of entrenched indigenous rough sleepers. Since 2004, rough sleeping numbers have increased as a result of A8/A10 Eastern European accessional workers (A10 since Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in January 2007, however the main issues so far concern A8 countries, predominantly Poland) who have come to the UK but not exercised their treaty rights, or who have lost their jobs and then their homes and have become homeless on the streets or are squatting. Communities and Local Government (CLG) gave Slough and Reading funding for a 6-month project with an organisation called Barka, a Polish charity which has developed in Poland over the last 18 years. Barka means 'lifeboat' in Polish. They work with those experiencing homelessness, alcoholism and other problems. The project started in June 2010 and was extended in Slough until the end of June 2011. There were 48 reconnections in this time. There are still around 30 A8s still sleeping rough in the borough that we know of, and most likely 50-60 in total once 'Slough sheds' and others elsewhere are taken into account. An outreach worker has recently been appointed and will be working closely with the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team, UK Border Agency and Police. Barka are submitting bids for funding and may be able to work in Slough if these are successful and if match funding can be identified.

**5.2.4 Repeat victims** – as a result of the Pilkington case in Leicestershire in which a mother committed suicide with her disabled daughter as a result of years of ASB, the council and police have looked carefully at its procedures when dealing with victims of ASB. The council employed an ASB Victims Champion with a grant from the Home Office and the police introduced a risk assessment matrix to assess the level of vulnerability and risk in each case. The ASB hotline is also closely monitored and ASB Service Standards have been put in place (see appendix B)).

**5.2.5 Project work with Communities and Businesses** – Crime Reduction and Environment Days (CREDs) take place across the borough. Project officers work with partners to raise awareness of personal safety and crime prevention. Residents and partners can suggest ideas for issues and locations to tackle and are encouraged to take part, for example in clean-ups.

### **5.3 Other crime reduction project work includes:**

**5.3.1** Project officers piloted a project with 6 MOT centres to offer tamper proof screws to customers to prevent number plates being stolen as they can fit them at the same time as an MOT, and they can also advise on not leaving valuables in vehicles. Regular articles also appear in Slough Borough Council's Citizen newspaper offering tamper proof screws to residents. Around 250 sets of tamper proof screws have been sent out to individuals who want to fit them themselves as a result.

**5.3.2** Gating projects have taken place across the borough including Mildenhall Road, Victoria Road, Coleridge Crescent and Serena Hall. Surveys revealed that 93% of respondents felt that the gates had reduced ASB in their alleyways by a great deal and 86% said that their fear of crime had reduced a great deal after the installation of the gates. 60% of residents who also received crime reduction equipment (digital timers, sat nav wipes) were using them. The majority felt safer as a result.

5.3.3 Pre-Christmas crime prevention stalls took place at Asda, Sainsbury's and Tesco last year. Approximately 50 residents were engaged with at each event. Personal safety alarms and timer switches were given out along with crime prevention literature and reporting contact details.

5.3.4 Engagement with Young People - ASB awareness sessions took place at Wexham School and crime prevention talks were held at East Berkshire College. 4 youth bus events took place and around 30 young people attended on each occasion.

5.3.5 Working with Trading Standards – the Community Safety team supported the 'Skin Deep' anti-knife crime schools project, led by Trading Standards, and Trading Standards also carry out test purchasing as part of the CRED initiatives and other multiagency operations.

5.3.6 A 'dogwatch' scheme has been set up to encourage dog walkers to report crime and ASB and publicising how to do so.

#### 5.4 ASB enforcement - in 2009 and 2010 there were:

##### 2010

- 11 full Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs)
- 5 Anti-social behaviour injunctions (ASBIs)
- 14 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) offered – 12 signed & 2 refused
- 5 Parenting Contracts – 5 offered & 5 signed
- 1 dispersal area in Chalvey covering Burlington Avenue and Salt Hill Park
- 1 premises closure for ASB

##### 2009

- 5 full Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs)
- 4 Anti-social behaviour injunctions (ASBIs) (2 with power of arrest)
- 14 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) – 5 signed & 9 refused
- 10 Parenting Contracts – 4 signed & 6 refused
- 1 dispersal order in Slough Town Centre
- 1 Drug House Closure

#### And as of August 31<sup>st</sup> 2011 there are currently active:

- 15 full Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs)
- 2 Anti-social behaviour injunctions (ASBIs)
- 8 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)
- 4 Parenting Contracts
- 1 dispersal order covering Burlington Avenue

#### 5.5 How Slough Borough Council has dealt with ASB since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011

The recent transfer of the local authority's housing stock has resulted in the creation of an ASB Escalation Officer post within the Community Safety Team with specific responsibility for dealing with Council tenants who cause ongoing ASB.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 all low-level ASB caused by Council tenants has been dealt with by newly created Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHOs) and passed to the ASB Escalation Officer as appropriate if, for example, court action needs to be taken.

The NHOs and ASB Escalation Officer are responsible for Slough Borough Council housing tenants and properties (rather than multi-tenure) because they are funded from the Housing Revenue Account. ASB involving private homeowners and those who rent from private landlords or registered social landlords continues to be dealt with by the Community Safety Team as at present.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

*Nil*

7. **Conclusion**

Slough Borough Council, by working in partnership with Thames Valley Police and other agencies, has been successful in reducing the level of anti-social behaviour in Slough.

Examples have been given of how interventions have been successfully escalated against offenders.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 the responsibilities of the Housing Service ASB team have been covered by Neighbourhood Housing Officers within Housing Service and by the Drugs and Community Safety team within Public Protection. To compensate for the loss of the Housing ASB team the Drugs and Community Safety Team has employed one additional case worker (the ASB Escalation Officer as mentioned above in 5.5)

8. **Appendices attached**

- 'A' - Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases
- 'B' - ASB Service Standards