

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Overview & Scrutiny Committee **DATE:** 15th September 2016

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PART I FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES – ENFORCEMENT OF LITTERING, FLY-TIPPING, ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND ENVIRO-CRIME

1 Purpose of Report

To provide the Panel with an update on Neighbourhood Services activities in relation to tackling littering, dog fouling, anti-social behaviour and other related enviro-crime and the use of legal powers and tools to tackle such issues.

This report covers the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 with associated background information, and in addition 1st April 2016 to 31st August 2016.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Panel is requested to note and endorse the contents of the report.

3 Contribution to the 5 Year Plan

3a. 5 Year Plan

The work of the team contributes to several of the Outcomes within the 5 Year Plan. These include:

- **Outcome 1:** Slough will be the premier location in the south east for businesses of all sizes to locate, start, grow and stay
 - **Key action** - Ensure that all gateways to the town, prominent places and green spaces are clean and well-maintained
- **Outcome 2:** There will be more homes in the borough, with quality improving across all tenures to support our ambition for Slough
 - **Key action** - Ensure that gateways to the town, prominent places and green spaces are clean and well-maintained
- **Outcome 3:** The centre of Slough will be vibrant, providing business, living and cultural opportunities

- **Key action** - Define and establish the centre of the town as a destination
 - **Key action** - Cultivate a vibrant town centre
 - **Key action** - Expand the evening economy
- **Outcome 4:** Slough will be one of the safest places in the Thames Valley
 - **Key action** - Build on success in tackling anti-social behaviour
 - **Outcome 7:** The councils income and the value of its assets will be maximised
 - **Key action** - Ensure a revolutionised approach to household waste collection is in place
 - **Key action** - Invest in technology to enable staff to work smartly wherever they are located.

4 Other Implications

This area of work is being resourced from within existing budgets.

Longer term we are considering service models that could income generate or support costings for further service delivery for Slough Borough Council, whilst providing an improved service for the community and a greater positive impact in line with our priorities and the 5 Year Plan.

(a) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	Adaption of working practices to incorporate changes in the new ASB legislation	Greater emphasis on enforcement activity. Additional tools to address issues
Property	Visual improvements to areas, so improving community confidence	Greater community involvement and longer term engagement
Human Rights	The new ASB Act supports human rights	Greater transparency. Allows a more proportionate response in certain areas
Health and Safety	Risk assessments will be carried out for all activities	None
Employment Issues	None	None
Equalities Issues	None	None
Community Support	The new ASB Act puts victims at the heart of the response	Greater community involvement and longer term engagement
Communications	A communications plan will be developed for this area of work	Raise awareness of how Neighbourhood Services operate and tackle this issue Promote community responsibility and engaged enforcement

Community Safety	Project activity will assist with designing out crime and impact positively on the 'broken windows' theory, and so reduce the fear of crime	Increase the speed of response and resolution of litter concerns, including fly-tipping, graffiti removal and other safety hazards. Greater enforcement activity against perpetrators
Financial	It is anticipated that implementation of this work will be resourced from within existing budgets	Longer term we are considering service offers that could income generate for Slough Borough Council, whilst providing an improved service for the community and a greater positive impact against our priorities
Timetable for delivery	Short term focused activity	Defining and promoting our longer term working practices, both internally and externally, in consultation with key community groups and partners, so not presuming to set priorities without consultation
Project Capacity	A Project Team has been pulled together from Neighbourhood Services, Waste & Environment and Communications	Develop and improve working relationships and increased co-ordination of activities
Other	None	None

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications - All of the legislation used gives due consideration to human rights in terms of reinforcing the councils duties and that of its partners to respect and support the rights of individuals to private and family life.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment - Assessments will be completed for all amended and new policies that may result from this project work.

(d) Workforce - Officers work flexible hours on an as needed basis working out-of-hours as and when required.

5 Neighbourhood Services – How we operate

5.1 Introduction

This report details how Neighbourhood Services tackles issues relating to Sloughs street scene and its associated low level crime and anti-social behaviour. It focuses on how we as a department problem solve issues; develop multi-agency responses

and long-term sustainable solutions, with a particular focus upon actions that improve the physical appearance and local environment of Slough.

5.2 Service Model

The team provides a **tenure blind** neighbourhood service, across 3 geographic areas co-terminus with the police. This approach allows staff to resolve issues without needing to be concerned whether the land is under public or private ownership. Staff carry out **educational and enforcement functions**. This approach gives us the opportunity for efficiencies and enhanced quality of services within neighbourhoods, be these private or council properties.

Neighbourhood Services provides a key central function tackling issues related to anti-social behaviour and enviro-crime, becoming a single point of contact within the council for its customers and partner agencies, and so taking the **operational lead** for all matters relating to ASB.

The Neighbourhood Services concept is about developing new **flexible approaches** to work. The Resilience & Enforcement Team was established to drive forward these changes focusing on tackling the most complex, difficult and long standing issues of crime, ASB and enviro-crime across the borough.

5.3 Partnership working

Within our model there is a strong partnership approach to tackle a wide range of issues within a neighbourhood. Poor environmental up keep takes many forms and can involve that within a dwelling, garden and street, so needing a multi-agency approach.

We have therefore developed close working relationships with the Police, Home Office, Waste & Environment, Street Cleansing, all of the council's external service provision contractors, Housing Associations, Private Service Providers etc, to ensure we can develop effective and sustainable solutions.

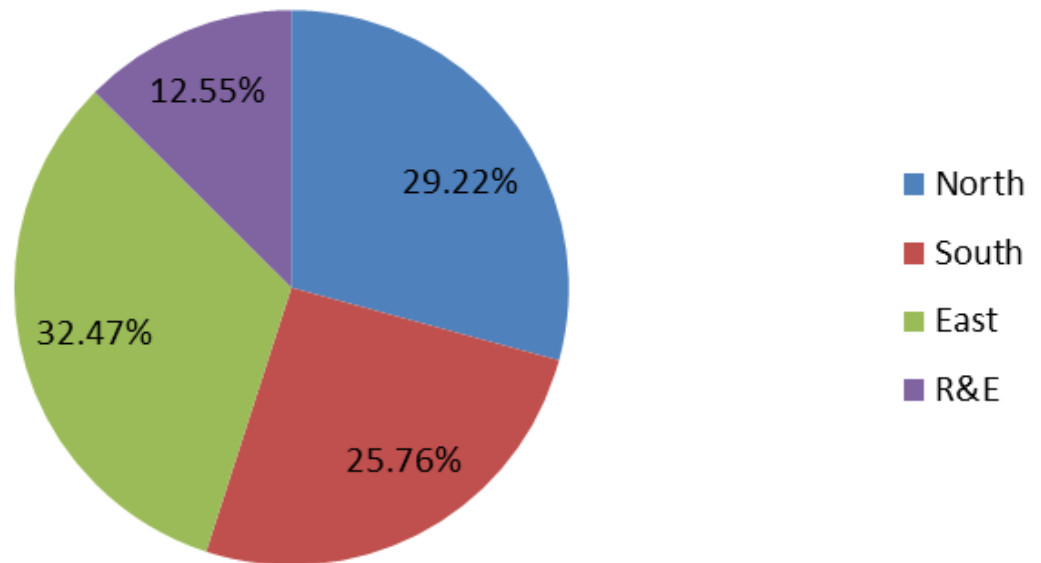
The Neighbourhoods' Team also leads on safeguarding issues, the protection of vulnerable people and the development and management of multi-agency tasking and co-ordination.

6. Neighbourhood Services – Service Requests to the Enforcement Team during the period - 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 –

This section of the report demonstrates the demand placed on the service during the above period. This section also provides a breakdown on the type of compliant in which part of the borough and the workload of the respective Neighbourhood Services teams.

TEAM	No of Service Requests	% of total
North	1232	29.22%
South	1086	25.76%
East	1369	32.47%
R&E	529	12.55%
Total	4216	

Proportion of total SRs allocated to each team 2015/16



Total Percentage of Service Requests by Category for all Officers of All Teams 2015/16

Enviro-crime – 2089 complaints consisting of 49.56% of service requests received. This would typically include littering, flytipping, abandoned vehicles, vehicle nuisance, unkempt derelict land, poor waste management, waste transport, land and grounds maintenance and management etc.

ASB – 1957 complaints consisting of 46.44% of service requests received. This would typically include noise, smoke, odour, unkept properties in poor internal/external condition, neighbour disputes, vehicular use, animals, drug and alcohol related litter, rough sleepers / squatting, street drinking, property damage, drug use, traveller incursions etc.

Other – 166 complaints consisting of 4.00% of service requests received. This typically includes licensing and planning applications, pest control, highways issues such as obstruction and parking, advice given to businesses etc.

Break Down of Service Request Workload by Teams

Resilience and Enforcement

Enviro-crime – 43.05%

ASB – 41.86%

Other – 14.06%

North

Enviro-crime – 43.10%

ASB – 44.24%

Other – 12.66%

South

Enviro-crime – 52.76%

ASB – 35.64%

Other – 11.60%

East

Enviro-crime – 48.49%

ASB – 42.51%

Other – 8.55%

Neighbourhood Services – A Summary of work achieved between 1st April 2016 to 31st August 2016:

Neighbourhood Services Resilience and Enforcement Team (RET) ASB Report : April – August 2016

Work has been carried out with the Highways Agency to deal with two traveller incursions on their land that also involved an extensive investigation into a large number of related fly tipping incidents in the locality. This involved working with neighbouring local authorities to share intelligence and in an attempt to identify offenders. Although a number of offenders and related vehicles were identified via evidence and some CCTV footage investigations failed to locate individuals concerned due to their transient nature. However other incidents that were investigated that were found unrelated to these incidents have led to 3 pending prosecution applications for fly-tipping.

Three night operations have been carried out with the Police and the Home Office Immigration Enforcement Team. These led to three arrests, one deportation, 12 notices for interview and the arrangement with the landowner for the demolition of a derelict building. In addition two parks were cleared of rough sleepers prior to their Green Flag inspection and a new encampment on private land being discovered. During the operations the number of rough sleepers found was between 15 to 18 and all were known to services.

Two waste carriers operations were carried out with Police, Home Office Immigration Enforcement and Parking Services Bailiffs. In both operations the total of vehicles stopped and checked were 200, Parking Bailiffs recovered around £6000 in unpaid fines, Home Office Immigration Enforcement arrested 5 individuals, 6 vehicles were seized by Police for no insurance and 6 notices and 3 Fixed Penalty Notices were served for waste transport related matters.

Five entry warrants were executed for ASB related to animals that were causing issues to neighbours. The ASB nuisance related to noise, odours, breeding, physical dog on human attack and cruelty. From these warrants 17 animals were seized and there are now 7 pending prosecutions. In all cases, with the exception of 1 due to an adjournment by the court, all 6 applications by the RET to the courts for possession of these animals to be transferred has been successful.

One person was convicted and sentenced to 20 weeks in prison for animal cruelty where he had set his dogs upon each other to fight in a communal garden in front of all his neighbours including children. Both dogs sustained serious life threatening injuries and the witnesses provided statements to officers of the RET allowing a strong case to be presented at court.

One entry warrant was executed to inspect for compliance of a Abatement Notice in relation to accumulations of waste within a council owner property. The inspection discovered a failure in compliance of the notice and an application to prosecuted is being submitted.

Evidence gathered by the RET was used to assist the Police in their successful application for a Criminal Behaviour Order against a persistent and threatening beggar who harassed and demanded money from people on Slough High Street and other areas close by.

The RET worked as part of a multi-agency working group taking the lead to deal with a well known notorious family on an estate in Colnbrook. Local residents, schools and businesses had been terrorised by the family despite the input of numerous support agencies. The list of activities including, bullying, harassment, criminal damage, assault, killing wild animals and the use of weapons. What made this case particularly difficult was that the Housing Association concerned refused to work with the multi-agency partnership group stating that in its view any legal action would be unsuccessful. Regardless an application by the RET for 3 Interim Youth Injunctions was successful and when one was breached the court amended the Interim Injunction to make the terms stricter.

One Noise operation was carried out with regards to the council's statutory duty to inspect its area for noise nuisance. Using intelligence based on repeat complaints and complaints about incidents out of hours a number of visits were made to areas to inspect for noise and any other ASB. During the operation only one incident was witnessed which is now being followed up in conjunction with other matters relating to HMO management.

Additional projects being undertaken by the officers in the RET during this period include –

- The Curve and associated areas with regards to ASB, waste and pest control.
- High Street and associated areas with regards to ASB, fly tipping and pest control.
- Crime Reduction Environment Day carried out in the Town Centre and separate event in Chalvey
- Two litter pick events with the YMCA and Roma children in Chalvey Park and surrounding areas.

Lynch Hill Valley, involving the use of off road motorbikes. Work has included communication with complainants, procuring of CCTV for installation, communications informing the public about the problem, explaining the law and clarifying what can and cannot be done and inviting the public to give intel on who the individuals are.

Pippin Close, in response to residents complaining about ASB. Work has included a site meeting held with residents and police, follow up site meeting were held with Catalyst Housing who manage the site and Upton Court Girls School's (who own the land where ASB is happening), temporary CCTV installed to monitor fly-tipping and ASB in the area and a meeting with school arranged in the new term to explore the possibility of joint CCTV installation.

As Housing falls into the remit of the RET ASB related to privately rented property has also been included within the scope of this report. During this period one private landlord has been successfully prosecuted for breach of HMO Management Regulations. This ended the use of the property for a number of tenants involved in ASB and criminal behaviour which had previously affected the entire street.

Currently one HMO has been investigated and the Housing Regulation Team will be applying to prosecute that landlord for breach of HMO Management Regulations. This investigation led to the discovery of an unsafe gas and electricity supply, a rear garden full of rubbish and infested with rats, tenant immigration issues, allegations involving arranged shame marriage and possible undeclared earnings and tax evasion.

One of the complex cases the Housing Regulation Team are currently dealing with is a block of flats with extensive issues around its integrity but also with associated tenancy related ASB issues. This case will be ongoing and will require the input from the RET to assist.

Neighbourhood Services East Team ASB Report : April – August 2016

Enforcement Team

Service of an abatement notice on a water supply company treating sewage to reduce and ensure that the numbers of flies remains low.

Currently experiencing a large increase in reports of abandoned vehicles. These are a combination of vehicles that are untaxed, abandoned and have been declared off the road (SORN). Cars are also being sold on highways land have also been an issue. Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued on a vehicle vendor for selling cars in a residential street.

Housing Management Team

Investigations continue into a serious safeguarding issue of alleged bullying and harassment by residents at block of flats due to complaints made eleven residents. It is anticipated that mediation and enforcement action will be required to resolve this sensitive issue..

A property in Wexham where the tenants had caused serious issues of ASB to the neighbours and local community were served with Community Protection Notices. In addition following the breach of a Noise Abatement Notice served against them, noise equipment was also seized and ex parte interim - injunctions served on the tenants. A permanent solution will be sought by recovering the property using the mandatory ground for possession due to ASB which was introduced by the ASB, Crime and Policing Act in 2014.

A major source of ASB in Langley was resolved, following a concerted effort to investigate and pursue many reports of ASB in the area. This resulted in an address and tenant being identified that was the focus of ASB activity. Action was taken to successfully remove the tenant so recovering the property.

Neighbourhood Services North Team ASB Report : April – August 2016

Enforcement Team

A major ASB issue over this period has been an increase in street drinkers at Baylis Park and around the Farnham Road area. Joint working with the police is ongoing to identify individuals and generally tackle the issues.

Over the summer period there has been significant increase in the Haymill area, of the use of motor bikes and mini bikes on grassed community areas and surrounding roads causing noise, creating nuisance and a danger to local residents. Work with the police to tackle this issue and, identify individuals is ongoing.

Housing Management Team

Work with the police identified a number of properties linked through drug dealing and anti social behaviour. A Closure Order and subsequent extension was obtained on one tenancy, where the tenant was able to continue to live in the property but only have specified visitors.

Due to a breach of the order the police arrested a number of visitors which acted as a deterrent. A multi agency approach was taken including Safeguarding, Social Care etc. Outright Possession of two properties was granted where there was a combination of drug dealing, ASB and rent arrear issues. A further four properties have been issued Notice of Seeking Possession on ASB grounds. Currently these tenants behaviour has improved. In all cases, appropriate partner agencies and colleagues have been involved where necessary.

Two other cases of serious ASB arising from alcohol abuse have been taken forward for action. Both cases have involved significant partnership working including Police, Public Health, Safeguarding, CMHT, Social Care and the Fire Service. One of these cases has resulted in cooperation by the offender resulting in a support package being provided, whilst in the other case, a lack of cooperation has resulted in a possession order being granted and a warrant for eviction being given.

An eviction was carried out that concerned an individual where the council had obtained an injunction relating to their ASB in the locality of their home. The outcome of this case is the neighbours including a school, children and parents, teachers and staff, and other residents no longer have to put up with drunken behaviour leading to swearing, homophobic language, threatening behaviour, and loud music. This was a significant achievement with a positive outcome for the community.

Neighbourhood Services South Team ASB Report : April – August 2016

Enforcement Team

A particular feature of this period has been an increase in reports from residents about vehicles. Some of this increase can be attributed to an increasing pressure on parking resulting in residents complaining that vehicles have been abandoned when in fact they have been parked inconsiderately or parked for a long period of time.

Complaints about anti-social behaviour linked to privately owned properties and land have been received. In some cases where landowners refused to take action we have taken action directly to remove the source of the problem.

These “works in default” have included work to clear and repair a private house that was deemed to be filthy and verminous but the owner occupier is very vulnerable and unable to do the works himself. In addition to clearing the property we also made a referral to Adult Safeguarding to ensure the resident was receiving appropriate support. We have also carried out “works in default” at a block of privately owned flats where the owners and managing agents were unable to clear and prevent fly-tipping around the bin store area. Legal action against the freeholder of this block is now being taken for breaching the terms of the Community Protection Notice that was served on them to keep the bin area clean and secure the garages for the flats.

Action was taken against a large supermarket in Cippenham for failing to prevent fly tipping in their car park, failing to take action to stop their fire alarm sounding continuously due to a fault on the fire system and failing to prevent light nuisance from their car park affecting

neighbouring residential properties. Through a combination of negotiation and enforcement action these various nuisances were stopped.

Each summer parts of the southern neighbourhood (particularly around Upton Park) are subject to traveller incursions; so far there have been four incursions in the south of the borough. These were dealt with swiftly by the team and the travellers have usually moved on within 2 or 3 days.

In the early part of the summer the team carried out a number of Waste Carrier checks on Farnham Road to ensure that vehicles carrying waste to a site based in the locality had appropriate documentation. The nearby privately owned waste recycling centre was subject to a range of enforcement action that meant waste could not be accepted onto the site.

Housing Management Team

We the first team to evict a tenant on an Introductory Tenancy due to anti-social behaviour. Neighbours had reported concerns about drug dealing at the property and working with the Police and colleagues in the Rent Recovery Team we were able to successfully seek a warrant for eviction from the court.

7. Neighbourhood Services – Areas for Development

Currently the service is maintaining its existing workload. Further service development will be subject to budgetary constraints. Review of reporting systems and collation of performance information.

8 Challenges

The biggest challenge the Neighbourhoods Team faces is the potential reduction to budget resources, as the council makes year on year savings.

This team works on the most challenging and complex cases that have a significant negative impact on the residents of Slough, in the form of real fear and detriment to well-being. Often those targeted are the most vulnerable in our communities; the team therefore needs to safeguard their well-being.

The Neighbourhoods Team often has an opportunity to make a real difference by acting quickly to resolve the issues in the short term and then move to take legal action for a sustainable outcome and sustainable resolution.

Any further reduction to budgetary resource will seriously diminish the effectiveness and ability of this team to respond to serious issues that ultimately blight the life's of the people of Slough.

9 Conclusion

The Neighbourhoods Team will continue its focus on the delivery of this work as detailed above. The team has been successful in resolving matters in a long-term sustainable manner and will continue with this approach. However, if the work of the Neighbourhoods Team is subject to budget cuts, elements of this work will not be delivered due to the necessary requirement of prioritising work based on risk and harm.

10 Appendices Attached

None.