

Policy & Resources Committee

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy (ADCCC)

1 Summary

- 1.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy expired in August 2024 and has therefore been updated and reviewed. The new draft policy is attached at Appendix A.
- 1.2 The policy has been consulted on internally and with our key partners agencies working on ASB including the Police, Fire and Rescue, Hertfordshire County Council, Watford Community Housing Trust and Thrive Homes.
- 1.3 We have reviewed and researched work across our council departments to assess what the policy should include and to ensure better outcomes for our community and residents.

2 Details

- 2.1 The ASB Policy has been updated in line with the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- 2.2 There are no legislative changes to add to the ASB Policy, however we do expect a White Paper over the coming year, on Community Safety, and this may include ASB. If this happens, relevant officers and Members will be informed, and the Policy updated to reflect any change or amendments.
 - 2.2.1 Our approach to ASB remains and comprises of four key areas; Prevent, Early Intervention, Support and Enforcement.
 - 2.2.2 These themes apply across all anti-social behaviour. However, our approaches differ slightly for dealing with hotspots, serious crime or high-risk cases.
- 2.3 Safeguarding is an important factor when dealing with Anti-social behaviour. This has been added to the policy and adheres to the Three Rivers Safeguarding children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy.
- 2.4 We have included in the policy how we address issues from low risk ASB to high, and what engagement and enforcement options we use, and are available to us.
- 2.5 The list of what we consider as ASB has been redefined, for example vehicles idling on the road has been removed from the list. This is because the list does not need to be as specific to what we consider as ASB as there are a wealth of incidents, concerns or complaints received that may in the first instance is not deemed ASB but can develop into ASB depending on the issues. All reports will be dealt with or referred to the correct organisation or department if not ASB. Preventative work can also be used in these cases where it is not yet ASB by wider teams to avoid issues worsening.
 - 2.5.1 There are issues noted within the policy that do not constitute ASB, including personal CCTV, social media posts, vaping and smoking, parking, children playing

and neighbours doing DIY at reasonable hours, but any reports of ASB as described above will be signposted to the relevant responsible agencies.

- 2.6 The only addition to the policy is animal nuisance, however it is not a change of process as animal nuisance has always formed part of our responsibilities under ASB and continues to be managed by the Environmental Protection Team, under the Animal Welfare and Licensing Inspector. However, in the last year we have seen a rise in complaints, regarding dogs. There is no clear rationale as to why this is. It could be that more residents have dogs and animals following the pandemic or reporting on-line is easier, and the tolerance of nuisance from animals and dog barking is low. Educating our communities, working with our partners including our registered providers is key when managing these complex cases and is an ongoing task.
- 2.7 The policy continues to support the requirements for ASB Case Reviews. ASB Case Reviews give victims of persistent anti-social behaviour, the right to request a multi-agency case review of their case, where a local threshold is met. Our threshold is 3 complaints in the last 6 months.
- 2.8 We pride ourselves on the work we do at the very beginning of an ASB complaint and manage it appropriately. We work with partners and internal staff on the receipt of ASB complaints, similar to the process of an ASB Case Review to ensure that customer issues are dealt with avoiding the need to apply for an ASB Case Review. In the past year, there has been 1 application and 1 application whereby the ASB Case Review application did not meet threshold.
- 2.9 The use of a new reporting tool through an ASB App is scheduled to be implemented later this year. The ASB app is a tool customers can access when they report ASB to us. They can download to their smart device that enables you to collect and report ASB information on the spot or when able. Customers can upload ASB evidence of photos, videos, diary sheets and any other supporting documentation to support their case.
- 2.10 This method of reporting ASB will be promoted, and customers encouraged to use, in line with our Customer Experience Strategy. Residents will still be able to report via the website and by phone as well as downloading traditional methods, like the use of diary sheets to ensure access for all.
- 2.11 The use of a fully integrated ASB toolkit is currently being built with our digital and communications team. This platform will give our customers a wealth of information and advice in tackling ASB, self-help, good neighbour agreements, along with direct referrals into support services. This will help to improve access to services and the issues being addressed by the right agency or partner. Our focus is on customers helping themselves as much as possible or the responsible agency/partner in the first instance.
- 2.12 ASB is continuous and varying from day to day. Our top 5 complaints of ASB currently are neighbour disputes (involving foul language and shouting at one another), noise nuisance, smell of cannabis and domestic abuse. Cuckooing, which is related to drugs, crime and taking advantage of the most vulnerable has a huge impact on the community.
- 2.13 The complexity of ASB cases is demanding on resources both internally and externally and the impact on our community is challenging. Evidence shows that mental health and wellbeing is the highest factor in the cause of ASB with drug and alcohol following. We currently have a Service Level Agreement with

Hertfordshire MIND to support mental health. Whilst the cost for the service is covered for 2024 – 2025, future funding is required for this to continue. The Drug and Alcohol provider for Hertfordshire, Change Grow Live accepts referrals from the council but the wait is long and perpetrators of ASB are sometimes difficult to engage due to their abuse. Therefore, there can be a reliance on the council and partners to manage the ongoing issues.

- 2.14 The No More Service also known as the as the South West Youth Action Panel (YAP) supports young people involved in ASB and Crime. The support worker helps those youths chose a positive path in life. There are currently 22 individuals being supported. Whilst we have seen an increase in referrals this year and we believe this will be a consistent pattern here on, we have seen some life changing behaviour from some of our youths which has been really positive and the decline in ASB in pockets across the district has been apparent because of the service and their outcomes. Again, this funding is currently being supported through the OPCC, we do not know if this funding will be available to us for 2025-2026.
- 2.15 In the past 18 months the ASBAG (Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group) has assessed 209 medium to high risk ASB cases. Year to date there have been 7 Community Protection Notices Served. This does not include the Police enforcement action and that of our housing providers.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Policy and Resources agree the revised Anti-social behaviour policy and recommend to Full Council for adoption.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council’s agreed policy and budgets. The relevant policy is entitled The Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and was agreed previously on 21st October 2021 at Policy and Resources Committee.

5 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications

6 Legal Implications

Legal Services support the Community Safety Partnership in responding to complaints of ASB that have been referred to the Council under the corporate complaints procedure or Local Ombudsman and represent Council at court on breach of relevant ASB powers i.e. Closure Orders. This Anti-social behaviour policy supports this process.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

Impact Assessment

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact? Attached at Appendix B	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment	No

8 Staffing Implications

None Arising

9 Environmental Implications

None Arising

10 Community Safety Implications

The revised policy will support the Community Safety Partnership and reduction of crime and disorder.

11 Public Health implications

None Arising

12 Customer Services Centre Implications

The policy reflects the roles of the Customer Service Centre

13 Communications and Website Implications

The new policy will be provided on the website. Further information and support will also be provided on the website via the new look ASB Toolkit in relation to anti-social behaviour and how to tackle and access support.

14 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

14.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Strategy and Partnerships Service Plans. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
Failure to achieve Community Safety targets and ASB KPIs due to policy being out of date and not setting public expectations	The Community Safety Partnership fails to demonstrate clear actions and process to tackle ASB leading to an	Agree new Anti-social behaviour policy and communicate this with staff, members, partners and residents.	Treat	6

	increase of issues in Three Rivers.			
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14.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- ▼ Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Impact Low -----▶ Unacceptable			

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)

3 (Critical)

2 (Significant)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))

3 (Likely (21-79%))

2 (Unlikely (6-20%))

1 (Remote (≤5%))

14.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

15 Recommendation

15.1 **That;** Policy and Resources agree the revised Anti-social Behaviour Policy and recommend to Full Council.

That public access to the report be immediate

Report prepared by

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Data Quality

Data sources: Strategic Assessment

Data checked by: Shivani Dave

Data rating: Tick

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	X

Background Papers

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A Draft Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2024 - 2028

Appendix B Equality Impact Assessment