

Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Task and Finish Group

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14 November 2023

Present:

Councillor Hitchen – in the Chair

Councillors:

Appleby, Doswell, Good, Ogunbambo and Wills

CESC/CAB/23/7 Minutes

Decision: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 be approved as a correct record.

CESC/CAB/23/8 ASB Opportunities and Challenges

The Task and Finish Group considered a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) which focused on the challenges and opportunities to addressing antisocial behaviour (ASB).

Key points and themes within the report included:

- Feedback from young people on antisocial behaviour and from work undertaken by Remedi UK, a restorative justice organisation;
- Challenges in addressing ASB, particularly for housing providers; and
- Opportunities for improved responses to ASB.

Some of the key points and queries arising from the group's discussion included:

- What was required of residents experiencing ASB to ensure that the Council and partners could address the situation;
- Whether the Council's Out-of-Hours team wore bodycam equipment;
- What work could be undertaken to build trust with young people and to encourage them to report incidents of ASB;
- What happened in areas where Multi-agency Prevention and Support (MAPS) was not being piloted;
- Whether MAPS could be considered by the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee;
- Whether MAPS required additional resources and officer capacity;
- How the work of MAPS helped to de-escalate community issues;
- ASB issues in short-term and holiday let properties;
- Noting issues with reporting ASB in apartment buildings where a reporter might not know an exact flat number;
- The need for better guidance on reporting ASB in business premises;
- The current caseload for the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Team (ASBAT);

- Timeframes for resolving complaints of ASB; and
- How cyber antisocial behaviour was dealt with, and how parents and guardians were able to recognise and report such incidents.

The Strategic Lead (Community Safety) introduced the report and explained that it included feedback from children and young people on their experience of ASB, which had previously been requested by the Task and Finish Group, feedback from housing providers and provided an overview of emerging work for the Council's ASBAT team and partners. She recognised that communication had been a key area of focus for the Task and Finish Group in addition to approaches to early intervention and prevention and having consistency across service providers.

The Superintendent, GMP stated that the main role of residents experiencing ASB was to report incidents to the police and highlighted the guidance provided to the group earlier in the review regarding what incidents should be reported to the Council, the police and housing providers.

It was confirmed that the Council's Out-of-Hours staff did not wear bodycam equipment.

The Superintendent, GMP acknowledged the importance of establishing trust with young people and highlighted that anonymous reporting was available. The Strategic Lead (Community Safety) explained that children and young people could also report incidents of ASB to a trusted adult in their school or local community group if they did not feel comfortable to approach the police or Council. She agreed to further examine how to encourage children and young people to report ASB.

In response to queries regarding MAPS, the Director of Communities explained that this was launched several years ago and was tested in a number of areas to ensure value and benefit. This was then widened across the city through the Kickstarter Fund and there had been positive feedback from housing providers and ASBAT with work still underway. She also confirmed that MAPS was reported back to the Health Scrutiny Committee under the Making Manchester Fairer work.

The Group was informed that ASB in short-term let properties was dealt with by working with property owners to resolve issues informally. Where this was not possible, the Council would work with partners and residents to issue a closure order for the property.

The difficulty in reporting ASB in apartment buildings where a reporter might not know an exact flat number was acknowledged and the Service Lead – ASB stated that the Council did not want there to be any barriers to reporting ASB and that she would look into amending the online reporting form.

The Service Lead – ASB also recognised the need to work with the Compliance team to tackle ASB caused by businesses and gave examples of closure orders issued. This could also be included in the reporting guidance, which the Group had previously recommended be created.

In response to a query regarding ASBAT's current caseload, the Service Lead – ASB stated that this was ambitious but currently felt to be reasonable and individual caseloads were under consistent review. The Strategic Lead – Community Safety highlighted that the service required some more resource but an uplift in 2018 had allowed for a competent service. She acknowledged, however, that there had been recruitment challenges since the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Superintendent, GMP stated that each case of ASB was different and she would not be able to provide a general timeframe for resolving cases. She also stated that cyber ASB was a criminal offence – *malicious communication* – which would be recorded and investigated with the victim's views taken into consideration. The Strategic Lead – Community Safety also explained that cyber ASB would be referred to safeguarding boards and the victim's and perpetrator's school(s) would be informed.

Decision: That the report be noted.

CESC/CAB/23/9 Recommendations of the Task and Finish Group

Following careful evaluation of the evidence, the Task and Finish Group agreed the following recommendations to respond to the issues identified by the review and to be summarised within the Final Report.

Decision:

The Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Task and Finish Group recommends that:

1. The Council publishes guidance, through leaflets, posters for notice boards and on social media, to be clear on how antisocial behaviour can be reported, what constitutes unacceptable behaviour, including ASB by businesses, and potential penalties. This should clearly highlight which issues should be reported to specific agencies, including the Council, Greater Manchester Police and housing providers, and should also include contact details of relevant services both within the council and the council's partners.
2. Members of the Task and Finish Group, service users of ASBAT and young people be consulted on the guidance and communications referenced in recommendation 1 prior to publication.
3. Through the Community Safety Partnership, the Council encourages Youth Outreach Services across the city to adopt a consistent approach to tackling ASB and barriers to reporting experienced by children and young people.
4. Through the Manchester Housing Provider Partnership, the Council encourages housing providers across the city to create and adopt a 'Manchester Standard', a consistent approach to tackling ASB and barriers to reporting ASB across all housing providers.
5. The Council's Out-of-Hours staff be provided with body camera recording devices to provide additional protection and, where required, evidence of ASB.

6. Recognising that many residents in the city live in apartment buildings, the Council's online form for reporting ASB should be amended so that users can provide a building name or floor number, rather than an exact flat number.
7. The Council continues to work collaboratively with partners and other local authorities in Greater Manchester to share best practice and success.
8. The Council continues to communicate with multi-agency partners on ASB issues to ensure appropriate support is provided to both victims and perpetrators.
9. The Manchester Housing Provider Partnership includes ASB as a standing item on the agenda at their meetings to share good practice and monitor work being undertaken to address ASB.
10. That the final report of the Task and Finish Group be shared with all partners in Manchester's Community Safety Partnership to inform of the findings and recommendations that arose from this review.
11. The Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee continue to be involved in the development and review of strategies and policies in relation to antisocial behaviour.

CESC/CAB/23/10 Terms of Reference

Decision:

That the Terms of Reference and Work Programme be noted and approved.