

Crime and Antisocial Behaviour Task and Finish Group

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 17 October 2023

Present:

Councillor Hitchen (Chair) – in the Chair

Councillors Azra Ali, Doswell, Good, Ogunbambo, Sheikh and Wills

Apologies: Councillor Appleby

Also present:

Tracey Ferguson Black, MSV Housing

Lacey Foster, Remedi UK

Superintendent Nicola Williams, GMP

CESC/CAB/23/4 Minutes

Decision: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.

CESC/CAB/23/5 ASB Tools and Powers to address ASB and Policy and Procedures

The Task and Finish Group considered a report of the Strategic Director (Neighbourhoods) that provided an overview of the tools and powers used to address antisocial behaviour (ASB).

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Case studies of how the Council uses the tools and powers it has;
- The work undertaken with partners to prevent the escalation of ASB
- The Council's policy and procedure for addressing ASB;
- Interventions with children and young people and youth provisions;
- Early intervention methods;
- The powers available only to the Council, such as Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs);
- The powers available to the Council, police and social landlords;
- The powers available to the Council and police;
- The powers available only to the police;
- The different ways to report ASB; and
- Barriers to reporting.

Some of the key points that arose from the Task and Finish Group's discussions were:

- If Greater Manchester Police (GMP) could monitor the efficacy of neighbourhood patrolling;

- What powers PSPOs afforded the police that they did not already have;
- How long it took housing providers to deal with cases of ASB and whether there was a consistent approach to this across all providers in the city;
- How soon ASB Case Reviews took place once a report had been made;
- When partners would become involved in ASB Case Reviews;
- What work was being undertaken with reoffenders of ASB;
- The other partnerships in place across Manchester to tackle ASB;
- How proceeds of crime funds could be used to tackle ASB;
- How the Council and partners dealt with instances of multi-generational cases of ASB;
- How aggressive begging could be addressed;
- Requesting a breakdown of all areas in the city where a PSPO has been issued;
- What youth provisions were in place to reduce ASB;
- The lack of feedback on cases that were reported, and querying how complainants could receive updates on cases they report to GMP;
- Whether there was a link between lack of local provisions and ASB;
- The criteria for different levels of ASB, and what made a specific case severe;
- How the effectiveness of dealing with ASB was monitored;
- When mediation would be offered and how long this would be undertaken for;
- How closure orders could be used to tackle ASB; and
- The need to understand a young person's experiences of ASB.

In introducing the report, the Strategic Lead for Community Safety informed members that a representative of the Withington and Old Moat Youth Outreach Service could not attend the meeting. She provided an overview of the work of the service in his absence, advising the Group that this was established through a 12 month project with partners in response to antisocial behaviour. The service engaged with young people in the area and provided services such as drug and alcohol awareness courses and arts and crafts, and that there had been a reduction in the amount of ASB reported in the area.

The Strategic Lead for Community Safety also advised the committee that the Council was undertaking other targeted work and had reviewed the policy and procedure for addressing ASB to enable greater partnership links with the Housing Operations team.

Lacy Foster of Remedi UK attended the meeting and provided an overview of the organisation. She explained that Remedi UK was a restorative justice organisation with four commissioners across Manchester who worked with children and families to support a voluntary behaviour change. They also aimed to bridge the gap between key services. Lacy stated that the organisation had a high level of engagement with 81% of people completing the course. She advised that surveys were undertaken at the end of sessions, with 98% of service users saying they would think differently about their behaviour in future and 100% saying they had enjoyed the course and had learnt something new. She provided a case study to the Group of a 10-year-old who had been referred to Remedi and completed 9 sessions with the organisation,

which focused on the impact of their previous behaviour; how to be safe in public spaces; and managing conflict.

Tracey Ferguson-Black, Assistant Director of Communities and Engagement at MSV Housing, also attended the meeting. She informed the Group that MSV Housing used mediation, civil injunctions and eviction as a last resort to deal with cases of ASB in and around their properties. She also stated that the provider utilised target hardening measures such as Ring doorbell cameras to dissuade offenders. She noted that the government's ASB Action Plan extended the powers of housing providers to issue closure orders, which were currently issued through a partnership between the provider, the Council and GMP.

In response to a member's query regarding the efficacy of neighbourhood patrols, the Superintendent of GMP stated that ASB figures were monitored weekly by locality policing teams and further broken down into categories. She also highlighted that GMP had recently invested into its neighbourhood policing teams and a review of this was being undertaken.

The Group was advised that PSPOs were used to tackle ASB over a longer period of time, compared to a dispersal order which lasted 48 hours. The Superintendent of GMP explained that dispersal orders were frequently used by the police and that a Superintendent would always be on duty and would be notified to authorise a dispersal order. The Strategic Lead for Community Safety explained that PSPOs allowed authorities to target specific behaviours and enabled different sanctions to be imposed, such as Fixed Penalty Notices, but she noted that there was significant work involved in issuing a PSPO.

The Strategic Lead for Community Safety acknowledged a challenge in achieving consistency between housing providers approaches in dealing with ASB, given the sheer number of housing providers in the city. The Director of Communities stated that housing providers were independent organisations but they engaged with the Council through the Manchester Housing Provider Partnership which encouraged aligning approaches.

The Group was advised that Engage Panels identified children likely to engage in ASB and included a range of partners including mental health groups and domestic violence organisations to promote a consistent approach. An ASB Case Review could be undertaken if the Council was unsatisfied with how a case had been dealt with and would involve a range of agencies identifying potential actions to be taken. It was clarified, following a query from the Chair, that these Case Reviews were undertaken with 10 days of the issue being reported but this was sometimes dependent on the availability of partners.

In response to a member's query, it was stated that the point at which partners would become involved in a Case Review depended on when a case was reported. Case Reviews were often received from professionals, such as the health service, and would seek to identify the most appropriate agency to provide an intervention. These were undertaken on a case-by-case basis, recognising that there was not a one-size-fits-all approach.

With regards to ongoing work to reduce ASB reoffending, the Strategic Lead for Community Safety explained that the Council worked closely with GMP where there were repeated challenges with ASB. She also advised that information on repeat offending was shared with partners to address underlying issues before enforcement action was taken.

The Group was also advised that other partnerships included Engage Panels in North, Central and South Manchester which included local providers. An example of this was Powerhouse in central Manchester. The Community Safety Partnership and the Manchester Housing Provider Partnership were also highlighted.

The Superintendent of GMP explained that proceeds of crime were distributed across the whole police force with localities able to bid for funding. These bids were reviewed and awarded by a panel and funding was dependent on local initiatives. An example of where proceeds of crime had been used to address ASB was the Kickstart football scheme in south Manchester.

It was suggested that multigenerational instances of ASB could be tackled through support from social care, health and addiction services where necessary. With regards to begging, officers advised that the Council worked closely with GMP's street and community patrols to identify and address underlying issues and that the Council would use civil tools and powers to address begging of an aggressive nature.

The Group was also advised that there were a range of activities available for young people, including sports, leisure and park provisions which contributed to reducing ASB.

The Strategic Lead for Community Safety acknowledged a need for the Council and partners to increase feedback provided to those reporting issues with ASB and stated that a useful benefit of Engage Panels was that they developed local relationships and improved communication between different agencies. The Superintendent of GMP emphasised the importance of reporting ASB to the police and welcomed members' efforts in providing information. She stated that neighbourhood policing teams should provide feedback on cases without disclosing sensitive and personal information.

Members were advised to raise concerns over ASB in their local parks or lack of provisions for young people with their Neighbourhood Officers.

The Superintendent of GMP reiterated that all cases of ASB should be reported to the police if a person felt concerned or unsafe. The effectiveness of responses to ASB was monitored through statistics, 28-day reviews and cost-benefit analysis, which was undertaken for events where ASB could be an issue. Members were informed that this was the process across all of Greater Manchester.

The Strategic Lead for Community Safety also advised that the Antisocial Behaviour Action Team (ASBAT) sought to intervene early in cases of ASB, where possible, and noted that everyone experienced ASB differently. Tracey Ferguson-Black, of MSV Housing, explained that her organisation's community safety team monitored

cases and had an out-of-hours telephone line for tenants to report ASB, which would be followed up the next day. She stated that this process was complainant-led, which members welcomed, and that a satisfaction survey was circulated to anyone who used the helpline.

Lacy Foster, of Remedi UK, also explained that her organisation measured efficacy by tracking the number of service users who entered the justice system or became known to ASBAT.

In response to a query from the Chair, the Group was informed that medication was offered as early as possible and where appropriate. The duration of these sessions was dependent on the type of mediation undertaken and availability of attendees.

The Strategic Lead for Community Safety explained that closure orders were used where serious issues or criminality were occurring and highlighted the particular use of closure orders in cases of cuckooing. She explained the process behind issuing a closure order, stating that a court date had to be set with evidence of a threat gathered prior to the closure order being granted. The Superintendent of GMP concurred with these comments and stated that closure orders were a useful deterrent and sent a strong message to those engaging in ASB and other criminal offences.

Officers noted a request for further information on young peoples' experiences of ASB and stated that this would be included in a report at the next meeting.

The Chair thanked officers and guests for their work and attendance.

Decision:

That

1. the report be noted;
2. the Group recommends the wording contained under the 'ASB in public spaces' section of the ASB Policy and Procedure be clarified to reflect the use and purpose of PSPOs;
3. the final report of the Task and Finish Group includes a recommendation that the Council's Communications team publish guidance on how residents can report ASB to the Council, police and housing providers; and
4. the final report of the Task and Finish Group includes a recommendation that the Council encourages Youth Outreach Services across the city to adopt a consistent approach to tackling ASB.

CESC/CAB/23/6 Terms of Reference and Work Programme

The Task and Finish Group considered the terms of reference and future work programme and were invited to make any amendments.

Decision:

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