

WANDSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 2ND NOVEMBER 2009

Report by the Director of Technical Services on the work of the Anti Social
Behaviour Unit in 2008/9.

SUMMARY

Background. The Anti Social Behaviour Unit, with partners, has made significant progress in tackling anti social behaviour on behalf of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership since its inception. In 2008/9, 461 individuals have been referred to the unit, up to 50% of which have been profiled in detail, with 14 successful applications for Anti Social Behaviour Orders being made at various Courts in addition to a range of other judicial outcomes involving a further 10 cases where ASBO applications were made. The number of individuals reviewed in detail as a proportion of the total number of referrals has remained fairly constant.

Successful ASBU intervention and coordination with other agencies has recently been shown to reduce reported local ASB by up to 80%.

The ASBU continues to work with other authorities to assist in breach proceedings for “all England” orders. Training continues for the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and other partners including RSL staff, with over 200 SNT and RSL staff trained in 2008/9. Liaison arrangements have been reviewed to ensure they are in line with current best practice. The Unit has become adept in adopting any new relevant ASB legislation and guidance, which has broadened the range of legal remedies and increased the complexity of the work

The ASBU could not tackle Anti-social behaviour so successfully without working with a wide range of partners from Council and other services including; Housing Department, the dog control team, Adult Social Services, Children’s Services, Youth Offending Team, parks police, noise and licensing teams to the SNT’s, Probation and Courts Services, Crown Prosecution Service, RSLs, UK Borders Agency, Department of Work and Pensions and with the DAAT.

Policy. Tackling anti social behaviour is a key part of the Council’s lead role in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. The CDRP’s Partnership Plan clearly states that dealing with anti-social behaviour is important in improving the quality of life for all in the Borough

Issues/proposals. None as this is a report for information

Director of Finance comments. In 2008/09 the ASBU was funded by the Council

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via Area Based Grant for Safer and Stronger Communities, £62,500 and the police via the Basic Command Unit (BCU), £72,000. In addition the police provided a police officer to work directly with the unit and both parties provided other staff time to assist in the work and monitoring of the unit. General running costs were met from within the Community Safety revenue budget.

Metropolitan Police's comments. Wandsworth Borough Police continues to work in successful partnership with the ASBU to tackle antisocial behaviour to contribute positively towards making the Borough safer.

Supporting information. Not applicable.

Conclusions. The ASBU continues to face challenges relating to raising the profile of the work it does in dealing with anti social behaviour whilst avoiding raising unrealistic expectations given that the primary role of the Unit is not a front-line one. Police managers are keen to see the caseload of the ASBU expand further, and this will represent a challenge for all concerned.

The report is for information.

GLOSSARY

ABC	-	Acceptable Behaviour Contract
ASB	-	Anti Social Behaviour
ASBO	-	Anti Social Behaviour Order
ASBU	-	Anti Social Behaviour Unit
AQPR	-	Annual Quality and Performance Review
BCU	-	Basic Command Unit
BYC	-	Balham Youth Court
CCTV	-	Closed Circuit Television
CDRP	-	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CCDRS	-	Crime, Drugs and Disorder Reduction Strategy
CPS	-	Crown Prosecution Service
DAAT	-	Drug and Alcohol Action Team
DZO	-	Dispersal Zone Order
MPS	-	Metropolitan Police Service
PNC	-	Police National Computer
RSL	-	Registered Social Landlord
SLA	-	Service Level Agreement
SNT	-	Safer Neighbourhood Team
SSCF	-	Safer and Stronger Communities Fund
SWMC	-	South Western Magistrates Court
YOT	-	Youth Offending Team

1. **Recommendations.** The Regeneration and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to receive this report as information.
2. However, if the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decide that recommendations on the report need to be made, these will be reported to the Executive and/or appropriate regulatory and other Committees as necessary for consideration.

3. **Introduction.** In April 2007, the Committee considered (Paper No. 08-380) the progress of the ASBU since its inception in 2003. The work of the Unit has previously been included in the overall Annual Quality and Performance Review (AQPR) for the Community Safety Division, reported elsewhere to this Committee. This report is an annual report for 2008/9 for the ASBU.
4. **Background.** The Anti Social Behaviour Unit forms part of the integrated response to anti social behaviour by the Council and its partners in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).
5. The Unit acts as;
 - (a) a case progression unit for anti social behaviour order applications to Court;
 - (b) an advice unit/centre of excellence for front-line practitioners including Safer Neighbourhood team officers and housing management officers;
 - (c) co-ordinator of Council procedures and policies on anti social behaviour; and
 - (d) the monitoring unit for volumes and trends in anti social behaviour in the Borough.
6. The Unit has an establishment of 3 Council posts, 1 seconded Police officer and an anti social behaviour Statement Taker, recruited in February 2009. The posts are currently externally funded, with legal costs being partly externally funded. The funding provided by the Police is subject to Service Level Agreements (SLAs). The posts were made permanent following Paper No. 08-417, presented to this Committee on 2nd June 2008. For the latter part of the year, the Administrative Officer post was filled in August 2008 from a re-deployee. This has greatly improved the data gathering and analysis ability of the ASBU.
7. The ASBU caseload was managed through a monthly Inter Agency officer Meeting convened by the Head of Community Safety. The meeting continues to be the forum for reaching agreement between agencies as to which cases will be taken forward by the ASBU and proceed to the formal consultation stage with the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator or Deputy Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator (the Director of Technical Services and the Head of Environmental Services and Community Safety respectively). Case review meetings are standard procedure in all cases brought to the Inter-Agency meeting.
8. **Achievements in 2008/9.** There have been 461 individuals referred to the ASBU at the end of 2008/9. This is a slight increase on 2007/8. Of these 461 complaints, 14 individuals were progressed to full ASBOs. There were 17* Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) signed in 2008/9, with a further 6 contracts being validated. There were 10 known breaches of ASBOs (*source: YOT records) with a small number of subjects being responsible for multiple

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breaches. At any one time, there are typically 40-50 'live' ASBOs in force and these are recorded on the Police National Computer (PNC). Although the numbers of ASBOs and ABCs was lower than in 2007/8, this can be taken as an indicator that other anti-social behaviour interventions, before the civil court processes, are becoming increasingly effective in deterring individuals from behaving anti-socially. However, the number of potential applications taken forward during the year was similar to the year before and reasons for alternative outcomes were varied. It should also be noted that the number of ASBO breaches is notoriously hard to capture accurately, and it is acknowledged at Government level that national statistics for breaches (which are based on Court records, which vary from Court to Court) are incomplete.

9. Additionally 3 crack house closures were successfully made and basic guidance was given for 35 potential estate champions for RSLs in how to respond to anti social behaviour issues relating to young people. (Estate Champions are volunteer residents, living in RSL owned properties, who work closely with Estate Management and Tenancy Services teams to improve their local area. They are an extra pair of eyes and ears on their estates, reporting any problems so that they get resolved as quickly as possible). Parenting contracts and referrals to Education Welfare were also made additionally. Other anti social behaviour related housing powers were used where appropriate. Other ASB interventions arising from court hearings were also applied. These included Intensive Supervision and Drug Treatment Orders. The overhaul of the ASBU database, which was started in 2008/09, is expected to enable better reporting of statistics for different outcomes next year. Between 10% and 25% of the 461 individuals cases referred in 2008/9 are being monitored by the ASBU should their behaviour deteriorate into more severe forms of anti social behaviour. It is not uncommon for suspects to refrain from their previous behaviour for a period of time so that the six month window for evidence is lost before then resuming their activities. The ASBU continues to maintain good links with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to assist their officers in the progression and obtaining of Anti Social Behaviour Orders on Conviction.
10. Times for initial response to anti social behaviour referrals remained consistently high, with a 99% response on the same day of referral. This rose to 100% within three working days despite the limited administrative and monitoring support available in the first part of the year. The cumulative total for ASBOs since the unit's inception in 2003 stands at 126 cases and 159 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (as at 21st September 2009).
11. Recent case work has shown a marked reduction in reported ASB when the ASBU coordinates partner activities. One case in Earlsfield demonstrates this particularly well. The level of reported ASB to local police fell by over 80% as soon as a coordinated response was arranged by the ASBU. Ongoing future analytical work will consolidate reporting this effectiveness in dealing with ASB.
12. The proportion of ASBOs relating to young people was 45%, with the remaining 55% being for adults. The continued emphasis on earlier intervention and the use of diversion and voluntary work with the Preventions Service no doubt played a part. The greater focus on tackling the main

perpetrators of anti social behaviour rather than associates and followers may also partly explain the shift in age profile.

13. It should be noted that in addition to Council and the Police, other bodies can and do apply to the courts for orders including British Transport Police, Transport for London and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The main RSL providers in the Borough engaged with the Inter-Agency meeting process more consistently than in the previous year, and the exchange of information is developing.
14. The ASBU continued to work with officers from Servite Housing Association to facilitate the pilot Family Intervention Project, which has worked successfully with 2 Wandsworth families, both of which presented with complex issues. The scheme covers Lambeth, Wandsworth and other areas where Servite have social housing.
15. The Unit continues to be involved with other local authorities and Police forces on “all England” cases to support breach enforcement action in the area of jurisdiction where the ASBO was granted. In practice, no more than a couple of cases per year have fallen into this category, and there were no cases in 2008/9.
16. **Publicity.** Following a review of existing publicity material available to Borough residents, a ‘hotline’ credit card-sized card with the seven key telephone numbers residents need to report anti social behaviour was produced and over 20,000 have so far been distributed .Early reports coming in from a pilot review are very positive, and a further reprint is already underway. A number of agencies have already commented on their popularity and practicality. In addition to the recent publicity associated with the Housing Department signing up to the ‘Respect Standard’ for dealing with anti social behaviour and their re-launch of the ‘Guide For Residents of Council Properties’, more anti social behaviour-related publicity materials relating to those in privately owned or rented residential accommodation are planned for 2009/10.
17. **Training.** As part of the funding requirements in the SLA with the Police, ongoing training for Safer Neighbourhood Team officers in Wandsworth was provided in 2008/9. 150 SNT officers were given ASB training. The formal training session was supplemented by a number of one-to-one and small group sessions throughout the year (an average of three per week). Changes are planned to widen this to include Parks Police and Dog Control Officers and an ongoing programme of instruction and advice is currently being put together.
18. The Unit continues to be a proactive and respected member of the pan-London ASBU Practitioners forum, and is often asked to contribute ideas and good practice for new initiatives and pilot projects, which are then disseminated to an increasing number of agencies and ASB practitioners throughout the country.
19. The very rapid turnover of SNT officers still places heavy demands on the Unit, though time invested in briefing SNT officers in person, where possible, is frequently repaid with an improved understanding of the ASBO process and

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subsequently more timely and better evidence to support applications. The seconded Police officer in the ASBU has access on site to the Police AWARE system, and this has proved an invaluable tool for checking information and updating local intelligence records. Greater pro-active use of the AWARE system is now being made in the progression of ASBOs on conviction.

20. **Targets.** The work of the ASBU was reflected in the Local Area Agreement for 2007/08 – 2009/10 with six targets relating to anti social behaviour. The targets were as follows:-

Generic target	Indicator	06/07 Actual	07/08 Actual	08/09 Target	09/10 Target
Build respect in communities and reduce Anti Social Behaviour	Increase in percentage of people who feel very well or fairly well informed about what is being done to tackle Anti Social Behaviour in their local area	21%	N/A	N/A	25%
Build respect in communities and reduce Anti Social Behaviour	Decrease the percentage of people who feel that parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children is a big or fairly big problem in the local area	57%	N/A	N/A	53%
Build respect in communities and reduce Anti Social Behaviour	Decrease the percentage of people who feel that people not treating other people with respect and consideration is a very big or fairly big problem in their local area	47%	N/A	N/A	43%
Build respect in communities and reduce Anti Social Behaviour	Reduce people's perceptions of Anti Social Behaviour	16%	N/A	N/A	12%
Build respect in communities and reduce Anti Social Behaviour	Number of ASBO applications	16	26	25	25
Build respect in communities and reduce Anti Social Behaviour	Volume of ASBOs issued as percentage of ASBO applications brought forward	80%	100%	76	78

Note: Boxes marked N/A in table above await the outcome of a repeat survey in 2010. The CDRP, through the ASBU and partners, is developing an action plan to build on current approaches and ensure the targets are met.

21. The targets for the LAA for 2008/09 and beyond were reported to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2008 (Paper No 08-518). The changeover to National Indicators and revision of the LAA for 2008/09 – 2010/11 meant that ASBU became a contributor to NI 15 (Serious Violent Crime), NI 16 (Serious Acquisitive Crime), NI 30 (Reducing the rate of prolific and priority offenders) and NI 19 (Rate of proven re-offending by

young offenders) as well as the 'Old' LAA reward targets 11a, b and c. Performance on these indicators was regularly reported elsewhere.

22. A detailed report by the Director of Housing on work being undertaken by the Housing Department as a landlord to address anti social behaviour was approved by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7th July 2009 (Paper 09-534). The report referred to the high degree of cooperation and joint working with the ASBU on the serious cases and to the new database in the Housing Department which will assist the ASBU in its monitoring and reporting of anti social behaviour throughout the Borough, irrespective of tenure or location, on behalf of the CDRP.
23. The referrals to the ASBU included a number of area based anti social behaviour related issues. Many of these are referred on to Community Safety colleagues for further action, including gating schemes. The ASBU follow a tried and tested tiered approach to investigating those alleged to be involved in anti social behaviour. The 'ring leaders' are generally quickly identified as are those who might be looking to move up the ASB hierarchy to fill any "vacancies" which may occur, although this is not always the case, and some investigations take considerable input from Police analyst and other intelligence before identities can be firmly established. The presence of serious intimidation and criminality is also a factor. For those young or vulnerable people who are on the fringes of this activity, or are identified as being at some or significant risk of harm by being drawn into situations which will very quickly escalate beyond their control, the ASBU will make referrals to the appropriate partner or agency as a matter of urgency, as well as making safeguarding referrals where appropriate.
24. The Unit also looked at the potential of Premises Closure Orders which were introduced with Section 118, Schedule 20 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act (2008) which was effective from 1st December 2008. Premises Closure Orders focus on premises used by 'hardcore' and persistent offenders who cause significant and persistent disorder or nuisance in their local area and beyond. These orders are modelled on the existing Closure Orders used in connection with production of drugs. The main feature of these new orders is that they apply to all tenure types – i.e. private and commercial premises as well as residential properties where such significant and persistent disorder is found.
25. The Unit continues to look at the effect of alcohol and ASB. This is a complex issue as data is difficult to gather. No one agency retains or records information on alcohol and anti social behaviour. Further investigation is underway in conjunction with the Drugs and Alcohol Action team's Alcohol Advisory group to establish the extent of the connection. Following discussion which started in 2008/09, the St George's NHS Trust are working with Police and the Council to make available data from the Accident and Emergency Service to address this gap and this data will be available by the end of 2009.
26. The ASBU team has continuously contributed to the Crime Prevention Services Chartermark, which was successfully renewed each year and was again retained in April 2008 (Paper No 08-419). Staff in the ASBU continue to receive positive feedback from colleagues in other agencies and from

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members of the public as follow up calls are made to the original ASB complainants after 4-6 weeks. Many responses have been complimentary including;

“ yes, I would say that everything was dealt with in a very satisfactory manner and I feel confident about contacting the Council if there are any problems in the future” (resident West Hill)

“Yes, I met with SNT and everything was resolved. Thank you very much. I really appreciate your help!” (resident Thamesfield)

27. **Gangs.** The ASBU is a key participant in the information sharing around gang-related activity. Some of the focus for this information rests with the Police-convened Youth Crime Panel, which seeks to prioritise the most serious cases and pool intelligence. The group has some capacity to look at emerging cases. The ASBU also participates actively in the review process for Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPOs).
28. Witnesses are generally still reluctant to come forward to provide valuable evidence for anti social behaviour. This remains a major obstacle in dealing with anti social behaviour. Professional witnesses such as Council officers, partner agency representatives and Councillors can provide evidence. During the year, use was made of special measures to protect a witness who was believed to be at risk from reprisals. The introduction of the Criminal Evidence (Witness Anonymity) Act 2008 in July 2008 can be expected to assist in creating a greater climate of acceptance that witnesses are likely to need support and protection given a trend to greater use of violence in society. As part of the Unit’s ongoing programme to improve support for witnesses and victims of ASB, The ASBU is looking at ways to develop closer links with Victim Support and the Court Witness Service. This will enable those who need specialist or longer term advice to be supported at a much earlier stage in the ASB process, and hopefully address feelings of isolation which can arise from unavoidable delay in court proceedings. This will also give them the confidence to continue to take a stand against the intimidation and ASB they have experienced, sometimes for months or even years as cases have shown.
29. **Comments of the Metropolitan Police Service.** Wandsworth Borough Police continues to work in successful partnership with the ASBU to tackle antisocial behaviour to contribute positively towards making the Borough safer. The delivery of awareness training by the unit to the SNT and proactive unit personnel has helped to raise the profile of the unit and forge closer links with the police.
30. The low number of ASBOs granted this financial year has raised concerns as to whether we are working proactively and effectively enough to maximise the opportunities available to produce meaningful outcomes to residents and visitors of the Borough.
31. An internal review of procedures from application to court order will highlight those areas where improvements can be made and it is envisaged that

deficiencies will be addressed robustly. This review has full support from all parties.

32. The disbandment of the court users group has impacted on the ability to raise concerns about the disparity in the number of orders issued across the MPS and the apparent reluctance of local courts to issue such orders. The conflict to be addressed is whether the issue of an order is viewed as a successful outcome by some or as a punitive measure by others.
33. **Comments of the Director of Housing.** The Housing Department continue to work closely with the ASBU to tackle ASB in the borough. The Department attends the monthly interagency meeting and contributes to the work of the Unit. It also chairs a bi-monthly meeting between the Housing Department, ASBU and Police. In addition close collaboration is maintained through regular exchanges and meetings to focus on specific cases. The Department welcomes the on-going support of ASBU in signing up to the Respect Standard for Housing Management in May 2008. The introduction of the ASB database in March 2008 collects a much wider range of ASB cases and provides valuable information to supplement Police call centre data and information held by the ASBU. The Department continues to contribute to the broader aims around tackling ASB and delivering community reassurance as set out in the Council's Partnership Plan.
34. **Comments of the Integrated Youth Service.** Since its inception the ASBU has continually sought to work in close partnership with the Integrated Youth Service, and particularly with the YOT and its preventions team. This has been a meaningful partnership and has led to the development of new and effective procedures that ensure both prompt inter-agency communication and the generation of appropriate responses to anti-social behaviour issues involving young people.. During 2008/09, 22 ABCs were signed by young people and their families who were identified as causing anti social behaviour within the Borough. Working closely with the Housing Department, Anti Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU), the police and Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNTs) the aim of ABCs is to improve the behaviour of young people within the Borough. Those young people that sign an ABC are supported by staff within the YOT to engage with local initiatives or restorative justice projects. Successful completion of the terms of an ABC contract can prevent the young person being made subject to an ASBO.
35. **Comments of the Borough Solicitor.** Officers in Legal Services continue to work closely with colleagues from ASBU and other agencies to provide legal advice in the ever developing field of anti-social behaviour, including the preparation of cases for court, thereby enabling prompt legal action to be taken against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour in the Borough. All ASBO applications made by the Council during 2008/09 were handled by in-house legal officers who have acquired specialist knowledge in this area. This knowledge has been further utilised with Legal officers assisting in the preparation of, and speaking at the training sessions held for the SNT's. Legal officers also attend all inter-agency and consultation meetings
36. **Comments of the Director of Finance.** In 2008/09 the ASBU was funded by the Council via Area Based Grant for Safer and Stronger Communities,

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£62,500 and the police via the Basic Command Unit (BCU), £72,000. In addition the police provided a police officer to work directly with the unit and both parties provided other staff time to assist in the work and monitoring of the unit. General running costs were met from within the Community Safety revenue budget.

37. **Conclusion.** The ASBU continues to play a key role in dealing with anti social behaviour. The ongoing presence of gang-related activity in the Borough as well as dog related anti social behaviour continues to increase the complexity of the Unit's work. The ASBU continues to face challenges relating to raising the profile of the work it does with the other parts of the Council in dealing with anti social behaviour. The Police are keen to see the caseload of the ASBU expand further, and this will represent an additional challenge for all concerned.

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23rd October 2009

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: -

1. Paper No. 08-380 - Regeneration and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee, April 2007. Report on the Anti Social Behaviour Unit
2. Paper No. 08-417 – Regeneration and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee, June 2008. Report on staffing arrangements in the ASB Unit.

All reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees, regulatory and other committees, the Executive and the full Council can be viewed on the Council's website (www.wandsworth.gov.uk/moderngov) unless the report was published before May 2001, in which case the Committee Secretary Mr M Newton (Tel: 020 8871 6006); email mnewton@wandsworth.gov.uk can supply it if required.