

REPORT TO: Communities
Cabinet

DATE: 31st March 2010

SUBJECT: Anti-Social Behaviour: Minimum Service Standards

**WARDS
AFFECTED:** ALL

REPORT OF: Dave Fenney
Head of Community Safety

**CONTACT
OFFICER:** Ros Gatehouse
0151 288 6118

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

For members to agree the proposed anti-social behaviour minimum standards (attached annex 1) that have been developed in conjunction with Merseyside Police and the Sefton's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

To allow the minimum standards to be publicised so the public understand the service standards of partners in addressing anti-social behaviour in Sefton

RECOMMENDATION(S):

It is requested that Members consider the attached Anti-Social Behaviour minimum standards (attached annex 1) and that:

1. Members agree the service standards (attached annex 1.) so they can be developed into a customer facing material for victims, witnesses and the wider community.

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: No

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: N/A

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: N/A

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework:	N/A There is no additional capital or revenue financial implications for Sefton as expenditure in relation to promoting the minimum standards has been allocated through Government Office North West.
Finance:	
Legal:	To ensure that Safer, Stronger Communities Partnership spend profile is compliant with Home Office Grant allocation terms and conditions
Risk Assessment:	Sefton MBC is compliant with the terms and conditions
Asset Management:	None

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

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CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		√	
2	Creating Safe Communities	√		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	√		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	√		
5	Environmental Sustainability	√		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	√		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	√		
8	Children and Young People	√		

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

1 Background

Tackling the debilitating impact associated with antisocial behaviour is one of the key strands identified in the 'Engaging Communities in Criminal Justice Green Paper'; and the 'pioneer area programme' introduced in Sefton through the Home Office in 2009.

In addition the new 'Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods Strategy (next steps in Neighbourhood Policing) published in March 2010 centres on ensuring that Community Safety Partnerships '*tackle not tolerate*' anti-social behaviour.

Tackling antisocial behaviour, addressing local crime priorities, demonstrating that criminals do face tough consequences as well as improving the support given to victims of crime, especially those victims of antisocial behaviour, are key issues that Community Safety Partnerships are expected to lead upon.

Improving public confidence in the services provided by criminal justice agencies remains at the heart of a more engaged and efficient criminal justice service.

Making sure that victims, witnesses and the public are aware of their entitlements, the standards of service they can expect to receive and how they will be treated and kept informed are all now known to be critical if Community Safety Partnerships are to increase and to improve victim, witness and public satisfaction.

Community Safety Partnerships have been set some challenges nationally, and perhaps more importantly locally to address the communities real concerns in relation to anti-social behaviour.

- Improving the consistency and support available to **victims of anti-social behaviour**, including feedback on case progression and outcomes of investigations.
- Ensuring that **antisocial behaviour victims** are aware of the support available and how to access it
- Promote and publicise the **services that are available to victims, witnesses** and the wider community so local people feel confident that services are 'on the side' of victims, witnesses and their families.
- **Communicating** the actions taken by Community Safety Partnerships to local communities that address their local concerns, including those actions taken to reduce the prevalence and perceptions of anti-social behaviour.

In relation to the last two points there is a clear expectation nationally that all Community Safety Partnerships should, by March 2010, set out their ASB minimum standards, making it clear how they will deliver these standards locally, working effectively as a partnership to tackle anti-social behaviour, support victims and witnesses and communicate the outcomes of their work in addressing anti-social behaviour to local residents.

To assist in this new funding has been granted to each local area to drive forward this agenda.

2. New Funding: Anti Social Behaviour: ‘Tackling not tolerating’.

In November 2009 it was announced that Sefton, as one of the 60 Pioneer Areas, was to benefit from a new package of measures specifically introduced to add value to the above programme and to further assist local partners tackle antisocial behaviour and to keep communities informed and safe.

In Sefton the measures announced will assist in the delivery of the Pioneer Programme and will see a **further investment of £40,000** made available this financial year from Communities and Local Government funded through S.31 of the Local Government Act (LGA) 2003.

It has been stated in the guidance that the areas receiving the funding will be allowed to determine how best to spend the funding in line with locally identified priorities, and whilst funding through S31 of the LGA 2003 is not ‘ring fenced’ advice from Government Office is that, in line with the Ministerial letter, there are clear expectations as to how the funding should be used to address antisocial behaviour

Given the Home Secretary has set Community Safety Partnerships the challenge to set, agree and **publicise minimum standards of service** on how antisocial behaviour will be addressed by March 2010 there is a clear expectation from Government Office that this funding would and should support that work

In Sefton ‘**Communicating Confidence**’ is central to the work of the Community Safety Partnership and is an intrinsic part of the current partnership plan given the number of National Indicators based on perception rather than prevalence of anti-social behaviour.

Work within the partnership has confirmed that communication can make a real difference, echoing national studies that found that Communication, and especially that specifically designed around the needs of a local community, can

- Provide a better gateway to **access** services, what they can expect from those services as well as what services are available
- **Reassure** people that the Council and its partners understand local

concerns and are working to address them. In a recent study people who were better informed were also more likely to be confident and satisfied with what local services were doing

- **Inform** local residents about what the Council and its partners have been doing to address their community safety priorities, the impact of their efforts and whether as a result they have made things better for local people so that as a 'partnership' we become more transparent and accountable.
- **Explain** how the Council and its partners work together to address local community safety priorities, how we support victims and witnesses, how we have brought offenders to justice, how we ensure offenders 'payback' to the community when on Community Orders.
- **Engage** with local residents to ensure that they are always at the heart of what we do so that we remain accountable and deliver services that make a difference to their daily lives.

Members will recall that the previous Cabinet Communities paper recommended that officers prepare a discussion paper for partners in the Community Safety Partnership to consider regarding the possible spend profile for the funding made available through the Pioneer programme and that this be presented to Cabinet Communities for final approval.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership met on the 4th February 2010 where, in relation to communicating the ASB minimum standards the following was agreed

ASB Service Standards (design, production and publicity)

The draft of the ASB service standards (see annex 1) has been developed and agreed by partners in the Police along with Sefton's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit who collectively take the operational lead in providing services and supporting victims of anti-social behaviour in Sefton.

To ensure that these standards are effectively communicated to residents requires the use of a media mix/ social marketing model that will ensure that residents, as well as victims, are aware of the services to which they are entitled.

To be effective and impactful the material needs to be 'market tested' with the end-user, so that it is 'personalised' and appropriate in its design.

If this report is approved by Members the final design of the material will be heavily influenced by service users, such as victims and witnesses who will be invited to comment on content, language, definitions and overall flow to make sure the final product is 'fit for purpose'.

If Members approve the ASB minimum standards (attached) it will allow officers to commence those discussions with service users so that the final

product reflects what it is they would wish to see produced, using the attached as the starting template for those discussions.

The amount set aside for this is £20,000 that would cover the final stages of the production of the ASB minimum standards (working title at present)

Adopting this approach would mean that whilst the final 'customer version' of the ASB minimum standards would be ready for March the service standards for partners would be approved within the defined timeframe, thus allowing partners within the Community Safety Partnership to remain compliant with the expectations of Government Office.

Adopting this approach would also allow 'market testing' of the material with service users so as to maximise the effectiveness of the final 'community and customer facing version of the ASB standards.

Recommendation

It is requested that Members consider the attached Anti-Social Behaviour minimum standards (attached annex 1) and that:

1. Members agree the service standards (attached annex 1.) so they can be developed into a customer facing material for victims, witnesses and the wider community.