



Housing Scrutiny Commission

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service Proposal

Lead members:

**Cllr Cutkelvin Assistant Mayor for Housing &
Education**

Cllr Singh-Clair Assistant Mayor for Neighbourhoods

Lead directors: Chris Burgin, Director of Housing
John Leach, Director of Neighbourhood & Environmental
Services

Report Authors:

Gurjit Minhas/Daxa Pancholi – Head of Service Housing/Community Safety and
Protection

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out a proposal for the reconfiguration of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Services within the Council.
- 1.2 Existing services are provided within two Divisions, Neighbourhood and Environmental Services and Housing split by tenure type and also severity of Anti-Social Behaviour. Private sector cases and all serious cases are managed by the Crime and Anti- Social Behaviour Unit (CRASBU). Lower level ASB cases are managed by Housing relating to Council properties.
- 1.3 This report advises members of the proposal to transfer the ASB function from the Housing Division to the CrASBU Team. This will lead to one central team within the Council having responsibility for dealing with all ASB cases across the City from the first report to conclusion regardless of tenure.

2. Background

- 2.1 Currently ASB services are delivered by two areas from within the Council, the Tenancy Management Service within the Housing Division and the Crime and ASB (CrASBU) Team based in the Neighbourhood and Environmental Division.
- 2.2 The Housing Division have a responsibility to ensure that Leicester City Council tenants adhere to responsibilities and obligations outlined within the Conditions of Tenancy. Housing Services deal with low to medium reported ASB incidents which will primarily involve Leicester City Council housing stock (however this can also involve dealing with owner occupiers or leaseholders if they are implicated or are affected by the ASB). As the case progresses and if it may lead to litigation or becomes complex, /serious or high-risk then a referral is made to the CrASBU.
- 2.3 CrASBU deal with ASB across all tenures, they deal with referrals from the Housing Division, partner agencies, residents, landlords and businesses to deal with all levels of ASB from low to complex/ high-risk cases. CrASBU deal with all reports of ASB from residents and tenants in private sector housing from initial report to high level investigations and legal action. Due to the nature of this work CrASBU have accumulated specialist knowledge of dealing with ASB.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to seek feedback from the Housing Scrutiny Commission and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Members on the transfer of the ASB function from the Housing Division to the CrASBU Team. This will lead to one central team within the

Council having responsibility for dealing with all ASB cases across the City from the first report to conclusion regardless of tenure.

- 3.2 With the function transferring, funding from the HRA would transfer to support the entire service to council tenants being delivered by the CrASBU team.
- 3.3 This proposal will lead to a more streamlined, seamless and efficient service for all reported ASB incidents regardless of tenure to meet both public and partner expectation in terms of dealing with crime and ASB encountered by the citizens of Leicester.
- 3.4 While it is anticipated this proposal will generate operational efficiency by creating a more effective specialist service that will reduce any duplication of functions, the primary reason for the change is to improve the services.
- 3.5 For all stakeholders, service users, ward councillors and partner agencies there will be one single point of contact for referrals and support.

4. Scope and Impact of Proposed Change

- 4.1 A Business Case for Organisational Change in accordance with the Organisational Review Policy is proposed to be prepared by the Head of Service for Community Safety and Protection with support from the Head of Housing Services. This would need to be consulted on as this potential change will impact on the job roles of Neighbourhood Housing Officers within the Tenancy Management Service and job roles within the CrASBU team.
- 4.2 This will also impact on Council Tenants, as currently tenants most often report ASB to housing staff and contact housing officers for updates on individual cases. The future model will mean that housing staff will signpost to appropriate services, however, they will not deal with or manage cases, therefore tenants will also need to be consulted and made aware of this change.

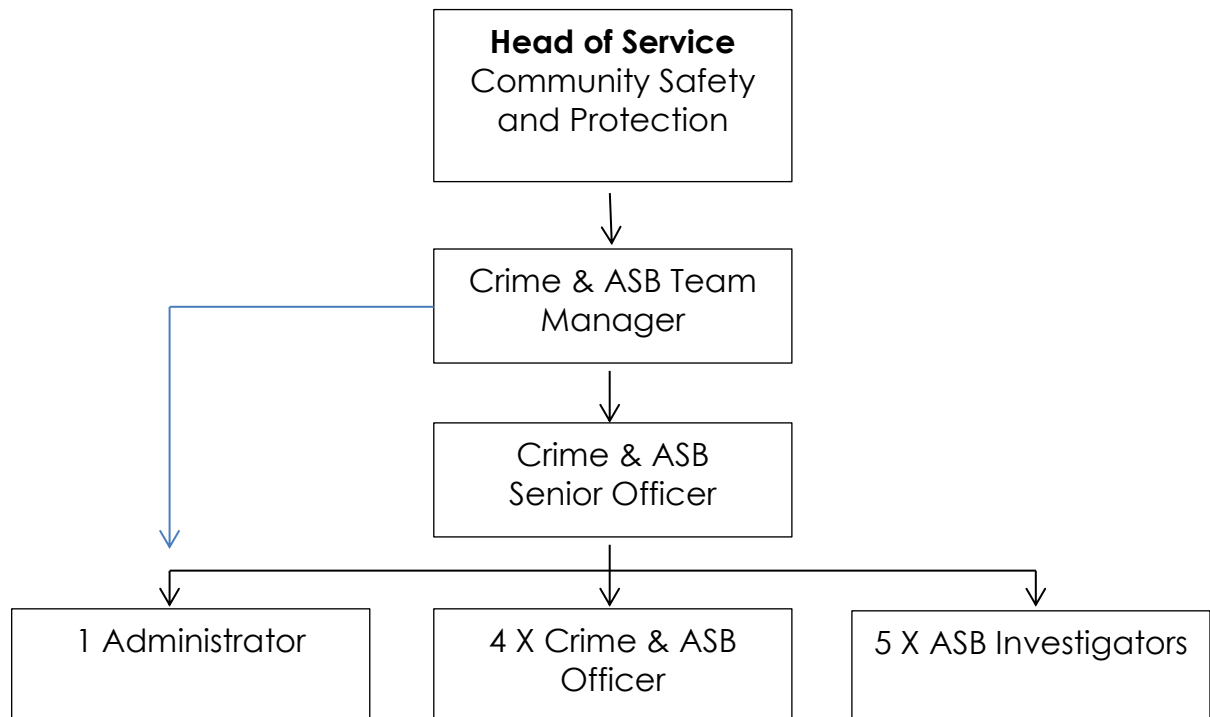
5. Current Working Model

- 5.1 There are 37.6 Neighbourhood Housing Officers who spend 20% of their time working directly on ASB, dealing with approximately 1220 cases per year. Within CrASBU there are currently 6 Crime and ASB officers who work directly on ASB.
- 5.2 A memorandum of understanding currently exists between the Housing Division and CrASBU, which requires the Housing Division to undertake significant work to manage the ASB case before a referral is made to CrASBU.
- 5.3 If housing intervention has not reduced ASB then the case is referred to CrASBU who will then manage the case to its conclusion, which can include litigation to repossess the dwelling. Often duplication of work occurs as the two services can be working on a case and overlap of work and responsibilities does occur.

6. Proposed Future Working Model

- 6.1 ASB cases from all tenures will be dealt with by CrASBU from the point of reporting to closure. The CrASBU team will need to be re-configured to reflect the increase in work and referrals.
- 6.2 For council tenants, Neighbourhood Housing Officers would provide advice via the standard letters and information that is readily available and would advise reports of ASB to be made directly to CrASBU.
- 6.3 We are working to try to deliver the service change utilising current vacant posts within the Neighbourhood Housing Officer establishment and there are not anticipated to be any compulsory or voluntary redundancies. Sufficient staffing resources will be retained within housing to enable signposting and to provide initial information.

Proposed New Structure for the Community Safety Team



- 6.4 The new roles proposed for the Community Safety Team include the Investigator Officer who will carry out initial investigations and interventions. The Crime & ASB

Officer who will carry out more complex case management and legal work. The Senior Officer will support the Team Manager and manage the ASB team. The Team Manager who will lead on partnership management issues, budgets and policy and strategy development.

- 6.5 The Housing Division currently deals with approximately 1220 reports of ASB, in future with earlier intervention work, the expectation is that many cases will be resolved before becoming more serious in nature. The resources proposed will meet the demand for this service currently and further benefits will be realised with the introduction of channel shift measures to enable complainants to self-help.

7. Benefits of Future Working Model

- 7.1 There will be one single point of contact for all stakeholders, avoiding any uncertainty about who is dealing with a case irrespective of tenure.
- 7.2 The new service will eliminate any duplication of work.
- 7.3 The current role of a Neighbourhood Housing Officer covering several landlord functions does not lend itself to providing a dedicated service to deal with ASB.
- 7.4 Removing the ASB function from the Neighbourhood Housing Officer role will enable officers to focus on supporting tenants to sustain their tenancies and their building responsibility duties.
- 7.5 All complainants regardless of tenure will receive a consistent and specialist ASB service.
- 7.6 A further benefit would be that CrASBU would be the sole liaison with the Police for the Council, which will improve the process of communicating intelligence and improve the specialist knowledge of officers working within the team.
- 7.7 This model will benefit from the Channel Shift programme, with an expectation that complainants reporting ASB are able to access help and support by way of information that can assist them in “self-help”.

8. Financial, legal and other implications

8.1 Financial implications

- 8.1.1 The total current cost of managing ASB across Council services is £727k (£432k within the CrASBU service and approximately £295k in the HRA, based on 7 FTE Neighbourhood Housing Officers). The proposed model set out in this report has an annual cost of £627k; the reduction of £100k reflecting efficiencies which arise through a centralised approach to managing ASB. Should the proposed model be implemented, the HRA would make an increased contribution towards funding the CrASBU service from £179k to £374k. A review will be built in after no more than 12 months to see if any additional HRA funding is required to deal any increased/unmet demand.

Stuart McAvoy – Principal Accountant

8.2. Legal implications

8.2.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report
Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer

8.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Implications

8.3.1. There are no significant climate change implications associated with this report.
Aidan Davis - Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

8.4 Equalities Implications

8.4.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

8.4.2 Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

If the recommendations are agreed and as part of the ongoing work to reshape the service, it is recommended that an Equalities Impact Assessment is undertaken.

However, the Equality Impact Assessment is an iterative document which should be revisited throughout the decision-making process and should, ultimately, also take into account any consultation findings including housing tenants. Consultation needs to be meaningful and accessible and this needs to be reflected in the Communications Strategy. Any strategies/policies developed as part of this proposal need to ensure they outline how they meet the Equality Duty as prescribed by the Equality Act, such as the development of an Anti-Social Behaviour Policy for the new central team.

An organisational review EIA will need to be completed once the staffing establishment has been fully determined looking at any positive and negative impacts on staff in scope of the review. A service change EIA is attached.

Advice and guidance can be sought from the Corporate Equalities Team.
Sukhi Biring -Equalities Officer, 454 4175

9.0 Summary of Appendices

n/a

10.0 Is this a private report?

No

11.0 Is this a key decision?

Yes