

Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Review

**Examining the proposal to establish a
central housing Anti-Social Behaviour
Team**

**A Review Report of the Housing
Scrutiny Commission**

10 January 2021

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Housing Scrutiny Commission

Participating Commission Members

Councillor Paul Westley (Chair)
Councillor Padmini Chamund (Vice Chair)
Councillor Ruma Ali
Councillor Hanif Aqbany
Councillor Stephan Gee
Councillor Sharmen Rahman

Other Contributing Members:

Councillor Karen Pickering
Councillor Aminur Thalukdar – as Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission

Evidence to the Commission was provided by:

Assistant City Mayor Councillor Elly Cutkelvin
Chris Burgin: Director of Housing, Leicester City Council
Gurjit Minhas, Head of Service, Housing, Leicester City Council
John Leach, Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services, Leicester City Council
Daxa Pancholi, Head of Community Safety and Protection, Leicester City Council
Caroline Green, Team Manager, Crime and ASB, Leicester City Council
PCSO Joanne Barton, Leicestershire Constabulary
Joe Carroll, Tenant Representative.

FOREWORD

I'm delighted to present the final report of the findings of the Housing Scrutiny Commission's work in examining the proposal to establish a team within the Housing division to deal with cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Anti-social behaviour is sadly something that affects a great many people; both across the country and here in Leicester. It can dominate the lives of victims and affect people in a variety of significant ways. As a local authority, we must do all within our capabilities to support victims and tenants affected by ASB. The role of each agency in addressing ASB and processing cases is vital. There are a number of approaches in doing this and here in Leicester, we have adopted different approaches over time.

I was very keen for the Housing Scrutiny Commission to investigate this matter further. Our work was in no way a wholesale review of the entire ASB service in Leicester, but was more of a focused exercise to gain clarity and assurances over a new proposal for a central housing ASB team that would work closely with CrASBU (Crime and Anti-Social behaviour Unit). We wanted to find out more about how the new structure would work and how it would improve processes and outcomes. Crucially, I wanted to ascertain how the team would work alongside other agencies including CrASBU and to understand the benefits that this could bring.

The work of the task group was relatively short and focussed. I'm very thankful for the input of officers, from within the City Council's Housing division and also from CrASBU in providing evidence to the task group and engaging with members throughout the process. I'm also very thankful for the input of my commission colleagues and other members with a strong degree of knowledge in this area. In addition, given the extent to which tenants can be affected by the issues presented by ASB, it was fundamental to gain insight from tenants was part of this work and I'm grateful for the input of those involved.

I was delighted that from a closer inspection of the proposal and from examining a range of evidence, that colleagues and I were able to form a number of recommendations that I hope will enable and enhance future service delivery. I feel that the proposal can be successful in supporting those affected by ASB, but it is vital that the commission continues to engage with the service and provides feedback and support once the new structure is in place. Continuing to examine the impact of the new team will be central in ensuring that the local authority is most appropriately dealing with cases of anti-social behaviour.



Councillor Paul Westley
Chair of Housing Scrutiny Commission

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background to the Review

- 1.1.1 For a number of years, the Housing Scrutiny Commission have maintained a strong interest in examining the arrangements for dealing with cases of ASB. The commission received a report in July 2020 which recommended a transfer of the responsibility for the handling of council tenancy related ASB from Housing Services to the Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (CrASBU). This proposal was met with a number of questions and concerns by the scrutiny commission, and also by the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum.
- 1.1.2 Assistant City Mayor, Councillor Elly Cutkelvin, along with officers, took into consideration the position adopted by scrutiny and by the forum, and as a result, drafted a new proposal that was presented to the scrutiny commission in June 2021, having sought comments from the Tenants and Leaseholders Panel. The new proposal recommended creating a central housing ASB team that would work closely with CrASBU. This would enable council tenants to report ASB cases to their Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHOs), with all investigations then being carried out by a central housing ASB team rather than NHOs.
- 1.1.3 Whilst broadly welcoming the direction of travel, commission members sought greater detail in terms of a number of areas of the proposal and required a significant amount of further information to gain assurances that the proposal was suitable. To enable the level of examination deemed necessary, the commission resolved to establish a task and finish group to gather the evidence required to clearly determine its position on the proposal.
- 1.1.4 From the outset, the intention of the task and finish group was to inspect the detail of this particular proposal and its implications on council tenants and relevant groups of staff. It was not in any way intended to examine the entire topic of anti-social behaviour. Nonetheless, the overlapping interests with the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission were apparent and as such, the Chair and Vice-Chair of Neighbourhood Services were invited to participate in the task and finish work.
- 1.1.5 The task and finish group held two meetings to gather evidence; hearing from officers, partners, councillors and tenants. These meetings provided the opportunity to probe, question and to ultimately form several recommendations for the future delivery of the service.
- 1.1.6 This review serves as an example of short, focused piece of work. It was apparent that the commission required further evidence in order to reach a view on the proposal and the level of engagement that took place in two informal sessions enabled conclusions to be reached. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 set out more detail of the evidence gathered and summarises how conclusions were reached.

1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.2.1 At the task group meeting on 3 November 2021, members endorsed the following set of proposed recommendations:

- a) That mechanisms be established to ensure that the new Housing ASB team has access to the data and information held by other agencies required to progress cases, including adequate access to relevant police records and data.
- b) That a comprehensive communication strategy be compiled which sets out the changes and benefits for tenants, the respective roles of each agency in dealing with ASB and clearly explains the new process in incremental stages
- c) To use fliers/letters to tenants and residents to communicate the changes and the benefits of these, and to consider additional methods of contact in areas with a higher prevalence of ASB cases.
- d) That further communication on the new proposal be provided to the Tenants and Residents Forum and that the forum receives a regular summary of progress.
- e) That, where appropriate, representatives from the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum be invited to participate in inter-agency liaison, particularly through regular beat meetings arranged by the Police.
- f) That a robust programme of training be put in place for the new team, including mediation training and training in relation to mental health when supporting victims and those that report ASB.
- g) That a training programme regarding the new process be embedded into the work of all corporate customer services staff.
- h) That a more robust and regular system of contact between the new team and victims of ASB be established, particularly in respect of those cases that take many months to resolve.
- i) That future consideration be given in respect of the size and structure of the newly established team based on its initial period of work, with consideration given to flexibly transferring resources to support areas of the city with the highest need.

- j) That further work be undertaken to continue to benchmark the service provision against neighbouring and comparable local authorities, given that several other authorities are in the process of establishing a similar model to that proposed.
- k) That in addition to the preparation of an Executive response report, further reports be brought to the Housing Scrutiny Commission every six months once the new team has been established. Such reports would cover to what extent the anticipated benefits had been achieved, including benefits to the work of NHOs.

2. REPORT

2.1 Review Rationale/Further Background

2.1.1 As detailed above, this work was initiated as a result of the Housing Scrutiny Commission receiving the revised proposal for how the city council delivers ASB services.

Current Arrangements

2.1.2 In terms of the current structure, Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHOs) deal with the lower level cases of ASB associated with council tenancies and provide an incremental approach to council tenants. CrASBU deal with cases across all tenures including the higher-level cases in relation to council tenants. With the increasing mixture of tenants on estates, the two investigatory functions sitting separately is not seen as being in alignment with the nature of ASB service requests being reported.

2.1.3 The current arrangements require NHOs to investigate ASB cases in their own geographical area, which has led to an uneven and often excessive workload for some officers. The existing pool of 37.6 NHOs currently spend approximately 20% of their time dealing with cases of ASB.

Initial Alternative Proposal

2.1.4 At the commission meeting on 7 July 2020, a report was presented that proposed a transfer of the function for dealing with all cases of ASB (regardless of tenure) from the Housing Division to the CrASBU Team.

2.1.5 The Housing Scrutiny Commission did not favour the proposals, and they were also met with concern by representatives of the Tenants and Leaseholders Panel. Such concerns included:

- *fewer resources for housing services with the retention of the £100k efficiency saving*
- *a loss of housing officer's specialist knowledge*

- *a view from tenants that they wanted to report incidents to housing officers*
- *views that CrASBU would not be sufficiently resourced to deal with the work*
- *concerns that the new arrangement would need to be monitored to check its effectiveness*
- *questions around the support for people poor mental health.*

2.1.6 The commission requested that a further report be provided that included the views of the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum.

Revised Proposal

2.1.7 At the Housing Scrutiny Commission meeting on 15 June, a revised proposal was presented that took into consideration the points raised previously by the commission and by the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum. This proposal would see the establishment of a central housing ASB team that would work closely with CrASBU. Under the proposal, tenants would still be able to report ASB to their housing officers, though all case investigations would be performed by the specialist team.

2.1.8 Amongst the benefits of the proposal that were explained to the commission were the provision of a consistent specialist ASB service to all complainants, regardless of tenure, and the proposal would also equip Neighbourhood Housing Officers to focus on supporting tenants given the significant proportion of their time that had been spent dealing with ASB cases.

2.1.9 Whilst the commission broadly supported the proposals, there was large elements of the proposal that were deemed unclear, and it was concluded that a deeper level of investigation was necessary in order for the commission to reach a view on whether or not they supported the proposal and to understand the level of any additional benefit it would have. Furthermore, a task and finish exercise would allow the commission to be in a clearer position to make recommendations on how the proposal should be taken forward.

2.1.10 The commission were clear on what they wished to ascertain from conducting the task and finish exercise. This included:

- *A general provision of further information to help better determine the proposal's overall level of service impact, and whether it will produce improved outcomes.*
- *Detail to provide an overall enhanced understanding of the working relationship between the proposed ASB team based in Housing, CrASBU and the police, and an understanding of the role of each service based on case categorisation.*

An understanding of a structure for the new team, including detail of the impact on the current work of Neighbourhood Housing Officers and CrASBU.

An opportunity to review a full Equality Impact Assessment, including a focus on how the new service can address language barriers.

To obtain case studies of a range of different cases that cover differing levels of intervention and clearly set out the respective roles of Housing and CrASBU in dealing with such cases - and to what extent these roles will differ under the new service proposal.

An understanding of the approaches taken by other comparable local authorities

2.1.11 The full scoping document for the review is attached at Appendix A.

2.2 Review Approach

2.2.1 The Chair of the Commission made it clear from the outset of the work that the intention was to find out further information about the proposal for a central ASB team based in Housing in order for the commission to reach a clear view in respect of it.

2.2.2 It is relatively commonplace for scrutiny commissions to request further detail in relation to proposed policy and this often results in additional information being provided to subsequent commission meetings. However, in this particular case, the report presented on 15 June 2021 was in response to previous scrutiny, and given the extent of the change proposed and the level of further detail sought, the preferred approach was to exercise the ability to engage with relevant officers and partners away from a formal meeting setting and to gain sufficient evidence in order for a clearer view from the commission to be brought back to a future meeting.

2.2.3 The work itself differed a little from that usually undertaken as part of scrutiny reviews. Such reviews ordinarily examine the operation of an entire service or a broader topic area and aim to understand wider service implications. This particular piece of work more closely resembled a task and finish exercise, whereby commission members sought to gain clarity on a number of points in response to a policy paper that was presented to them and aimed to issue a set of recommendations to shape future service delivery.

2.2.4 As such, the review was relatively short in comparison to many of the more detailed reviews performed by scrutiny commissions. The Commission held two separate informal meetings that provided a platform for the following evidence to be presented:

- A detailed presentation by Housing Services in respect of the new proposal, with particular reference to those points of interest outlined by the commission at its meeting on 15 January.

- A detailed presentation by CrASBU on their existing operation and their anticipated role as part of the proposed new arrangements.
- Input from representatives from the Tenants and Leaseholders Panel, and from other identified witnesses.

2.2.5 The first session allowed the commission to receive the level of further detail required in order to understand the proposal more fully. A comprehensive overview of the proposal was provided by service officers and the Assistant City Mayor. It also provided clarity on the respective roles of Housing and CrrASBU and offered members the opportunity to question officers from both service areas.

2.2.6 A number of further areas of clarity were identified during the first session and officers were tasked to provide additional information in response to these as part of the second session. This primarily concerned a focus on ASB case numbers and also allowed a contribution of evidence from PCSO Joanne Burton.

2.2.7 PCSO Burton was one of several witnesses invited to present evidence and engage during the sessions. The Chair also invited a number of councillors with an advanced level of experience in dealing with cases of ASB, as well as knowledge of the structures and processes that have been in place for dealing with cases. Finally, representatives from the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum were invited to participate in the evidence gathering element of the work, with one representative in particular (Mr Joe Carroll) attending and engaging with both meetings.

2.2.8 In compiling evidence for the task group, service-based officers were required to carry out further investigatory work, including gathering data and evidence from internal sources and by also undertaking desktop research and engaging with other relevant parties, such as by contacting other local authorities in terms of benchmarking levels of service provision.

2.2.9 As stated, the two informal sessions allowed members to engage informally with officers and to seek clarity and ask questions on as many matters that they wished to. This level of investigation allowed sufficient evidence to be gathered to enable a set of recommendations to be established (as outlined in paragraph 1.2).

2.3 Presentation of Evidence/Review Findings

2.3.1 In providing further evidence to the task group, the following was made clear to the commission in relation to the proposed new arrangements:

Further information on the proposal from Housing Services

2.3.2 Clarity was provided in respect of the present arrangements for dealing with cases of ASB, as outlined in 2.1.2

2.3.3 It was made clear that under the new proposal (which was anticipated to be introduced later in 2022), tenants can still report cases of ASB to NHOs, and that NHOs would continue to deal with low-level nuisance, but that in the

majority of cases, the NHO would appropriately signpost the referral, which in many cases would be to the new specialist housing team. The team would investigate all cases that relate to council tenancies.

2.3.4 It was clarified that a major anticipated benefit of the proposal was that it would free up a significant amount of time for NHOs to undertake other tasks, including supporting those requiring council housing who have more complex needs. The NHOs dealt with approximately 1,220 cases per year.

2.3.5 Other benefits of the proposal that were reported included:

- Less duplication of work between different services.
- Increased consistency of approach and personnel involved. Cases would be more easily tailored to individual needs. This was particularly welcomed by task group members, who felt that a dedicated case officer throughout an entire case period would be more reassuring for victims.
- A smooth and clear process of case transition between Housing Services and CrASBU (where appropriate)
- Greater consideration of protected characteristics when dealing with cases, and more robust support mechanisms in place for issues concerning mental health. It was seen imperative that a robust training mechanism was in place for staff to support both victims and those that report ASB, given that both were reported to often suffer from poor mental health.
- Greater access to police information/records

2.3.6 Further clarity on overall case numbers were sought and provided at the second of the task group meetings, and the following points in relation to this were made:

- A total of 1,244 cases of ASB were reported during 2020/21, and that between April and September 2021, a further 674 cases had been reported
- 55% of cases reported related to neighbour disputes.
- A higher proportion of cases were predominantly located in the west of the city, with the highest reported level within the New Parks area.
- Respective monthly figures for the West, East and South areas of the City were provided to the Task Group.

2.3.7 In relation to the new team structure, it was reported that this would consist of four dedicated and specialist Housing ASB officers, who would report to a Neighbourhood Housing Team Leader, but would also be managed in partnership by CrASBU. Officers would be based at local neighbourhood hubs and would also have access to an office at Mansfield House, which would enable intelligence to be more easily shared between the Housing team, CrASBU and the Police.

- 2.3.8 It was anticipated that each ASB officer would command approximately 18 intensive cases each month, and that this represented a more manageable case approach and would offer a greater level of dedicated support to victims and those affected by cases. Caseloads were anticipated to be evenly spread amongst staff, with officers being deployed to areas with a higher case prevalence if deemed necessary.
- 2.3.9 A prime concern of the commission regarding the current arrangements related to the impacts on NHOs, and assurances were sought that the new proposal would ease the case load of NHOs, and in turn, benefit tenants and residents by allowing them to concentrate on more complex tasks. It was reiterated that the establishment of a dedicated team would free-up a sizeable proportion of the current workload of NHOs, though NHOs would continue to report cases of ASB, and engage with lower-level cases that did not meet the legal definition of ASB. By being co-located with officers from the specialist housing ASB team, NHOs would be able to lodge referrals quickly and provide local intelligence to the ASB team as cases progress. Similarly, this new arrangement would allow ASB officers to share progress with the NHOs as cases progress. Therefore, the communication processes between internal agencies were seen as being much improved.

Relationship with CrASBU

- 2.3.10 A significant element of the evidence-gathering work related to how CrASBU would operate as part of the new arrangements. Under the initial proposal, it was recommended that the responsibility for dealing with all cases of ASB would be transferred to CrASBU.
- 2.3.11 Under the revised proposal, the new team would lead on all cases primarily involving council housing, whilst CrASBU would lead on those primarily involving private housing and would also work cross-tenure to include council housing when required (the proposed referral process is depicted in *figure a* below). It was explained that the new co-managerial and co-location arrangements would support the cross-working arrangements between CrASBU and Housing. The arrangement would also enable improved joint working with the police through the use of the SENITEL shared intelligence system, which is currently used by CRASBU officers to manage cases.
- 2.3.12 The commission were interested in the level of training provided to those who would form part of the new team. As part of a robust training regime that would be put in place, both the Police and CrASBU would provide access to training to ensure that all parties have a full understanding of the arrangements across each agency.
- 2.3.13 In finding out more about the operation of CrASBU, along with finding out about the benefits that working alongside CrASBU would have for the new specialist team, the following points were made:
- CrASBU specialise in dealing with high risk and complex cases that often result in legal sanctions. Under the new proposal, cases that have been solely investigated by the specialist Housing team may then

be directly passed to CrASBU for legal action to be progressed, without any further case investigation by CrASBU.

- The CrASBU team holds specialist knowledge in terms of dealing with cases of ASB. They receive referrals from many agencies in addition to Housing, such as the Police, Adult and Children’s Services and the Fire Service
- CrASBU responds to an average of 143 cases per month.
- CrASBU can initiate community triggers, which are covered by statutory legislation and provide victims with a right to ask for their case to be reviewed. All such reviews across the city are performed by CrASBU.
- CrASBU can also initiate Complex Individual Management Meetings (CIMM) and Corporate Decision-making Meetings (CDMM).
- A CIMM establishes an appropriate multiagency plan for a complex individual or family who have continued to cause ASB when several interventions have not been successful in bringing about change. It often serves as a pre-cursor to a CDMM.
- A CDMM is used to consider individual circumstances of individuals and agencies involved and in situations where a decision on case progression is required. These are convened when certain risk factors are known such as vulnerability and mental health issues. In taking decisions, strong consideration is given in respect of the impact on victims and the wider community,

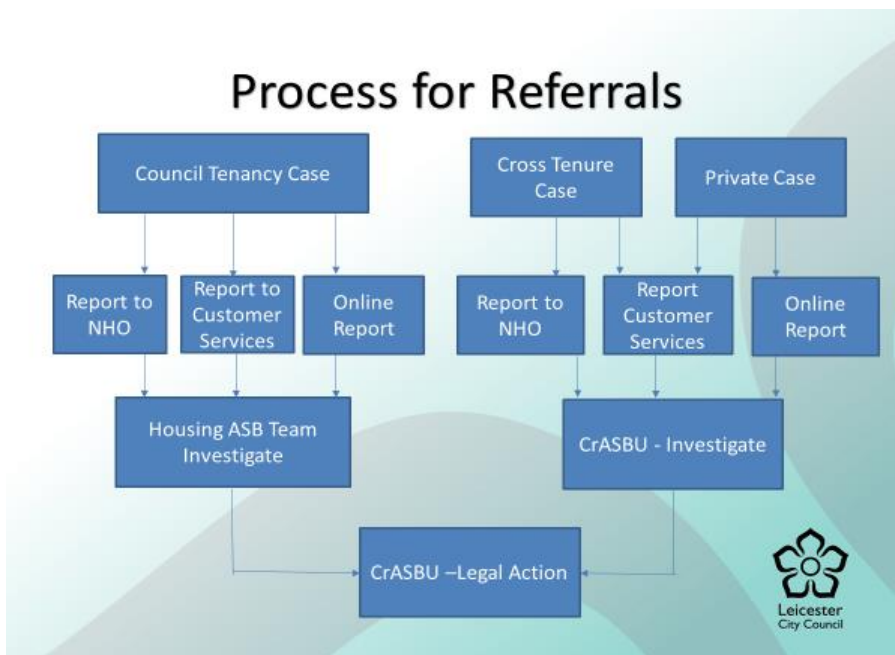


Figure 1 – proposed referral process

The role of the Police

- 2.3.14 As part of the second task group meeting, the Chair invited PCSO Joanne Burton to participate. Although the role of the police did not form a key part of the rationale for this work, PCSO Burton described some of the detail behind the police's processes for dealing with anti-social behaviour.
- 2.3.15 In terms of the communication regarding ASB cases between Housing and the Police, Joanne confirmed that quarterly meetings took place between relevant beat teams and Housing officers. In respect of more complex cases, dedicated meetings are held that often include representatives from other relevant agencies. It was generally felt that the level of information sharing at these meetings was extremely helpful in progressing ASB cases, and as part of the new arrangements, the task group were keen for all to be done to ensure that information between the police, CrASBU and Housing be appropriately shared. In particular, members welcomed the input of tenant representatives as part of regular and case-specific meetings where appropriate.

Equality Issues

- 2.3.16 When the Scrutiny Commission first considered the revised proposal, one area that required further detail related to the carrying out of an equality impact assessment, and detail of how the new service would improve equality and accessibility outcomes
- 2.3.17 Since the Scrutiny Commission meeting of 15 June, comprehensive equality profiling and an impact assessment had been undertaken and a number of actions had been put in place in preparation for the new team. These included:
- Ensuring that a multi-lingual work force was in place, with staff using their own language skills to meet interpretation needs.
 - To forge closer links with the Community Languages team in supporting any translation requests that can't be dealt with by the ASB team.
 - Translating written materials into other languages where appropriate
 - To ensure that robust and regular training was in place to allow team members to support staff dealing with those experiencing mental health issues.
 - To ensure that regular equality and diversity-related training was undertaken by all team members given that staff were to provide an appropriate service to people with a range of protected characteristics.

Benchmarking

- 2.3.18 As set out in the scoping document, further detail was sought in relation to approaches taken in dealing with ASB across other authorities, particularly those seen as comparable to Leicester. The task group were keen to find out the extent to which the proposed approach had been replicated elsewhere.

- 2.3.19 It was reported to the task group that in general terms, there were mixed approaches, but that there was an emerging trend in relation to the establishment of specialised teams. In particular, officers had engaged with colleagues from Sandwell Borough Council who had reported their successes in adopting a specialised team, particularly in relation to an improvement in the process for transferring cases and in following a uniform approach in respect of the policy and procedures that were in place.
- 2.3.20 Of other authorities that were contacted by officers, some, including Manchester City Council, were also in the process of setting up a specialised team. The task group were keen for the arrangements in other authorities, including Manchester to be monitored with a view to adopting any examples of particularly good practice.
- 2.3.21 It was also reported that some local authorities only provided ASB related services to council tenants.

Case Studies

- 2.3.22 As part of the task group work, members were also keen to receive case studies from both Housing and CrASBU in order to illustrate the respective roles that both agencies performed.
- 2.3.23 The use of case studies by both teams was welcomed and seen by the task group as helpful in not only setting out the respective roles of both agencies, but also in helping to understand how cases will be progressed under the new proposal and where the role of each agency begins and ends. They also helped to evidence the problems of the existing approach, particularly in relation to the level of current input by NHOs and the lack of clarity around case handling. The case studies are reflected in both appendix D and E.

2.4 Summary of Task Group Conclusions

- 2.3.24 As a result of the additional evidence received in response to the concerns raised previously, and the ability for members to probe and engage with officers and stakeholders as part of this work, the task group concluded that they were in broad agreement with the proposals, though issued a number of recommendations as set out in paragraph 1.2.
- 2.3.25 In hearing the evidence in respect of caseloads and by examining case data more rigorously, members saw the need for a dedicated team to be established and the need for the present workload of NHOs to be better balanced. Members hoped that the new structure would allow cases to be dealt with more quickly and that this would provide a clearer and more consistent approach to support victims. It was also hoped that a flexible team structure would allow the spread of cases across the city to be more evenly managed.

- 2.3.26 A key area of uncertainty prior to the task group work related to how the new team would work in partnership with CrASBU. The attendance by CrASBU at these meetings and the detail that officers provided was well received, and as a result, members were satisfied that in principle, the new model would support better inter-working relationships between the two agencies, which in turn, would benefit tenants and residents.
- 2.3.27 A fundamental theme raised by task group members concerned communication. In order for the new arrangements to provide the anticipated benefits, members felt that it was vital that the appropriate communication mechanisms be put in place to inform tenants and residents of how the new arrangements would work in practice and the benefits that these would bring. The task group felt that it was vital that as part of communicative materials, a clear incremental approach was evidenced, advising what support would be provided and by whom in respect of each stage of a case process.
- 2.3.28 A further area of priority in relation to communication concerned the need for ensuring that inter-agency communication is robust and consistent throughout cases. At some point in the future, the task group were keen to receive examples of the benefits of this approach to particular cases and how they had been dealt with more efficiently. The task group also recommended increased communication with the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum, both in respect of the proposed new arrangements, but to also allow them to monitor the arrangements once they were in place and to participate in inter-agency liaison where appropriate.
- 2.3.29 Throughout the work, a series of points were raised in respect of ensuring that adequate training was in place, not only for those forming part of the new team, but also across the City Council, particularly for those front-line staff such as customer services officers who would often initially liaise with tenants and residents, and would need to know more about the new arrangements to appropriately signpost customers. A range of training needs for the new team were also identified, which included robust training to support mental health needs and to undertake mediation training.
- 2.3.30 In order to gain assurances that the new arrangements were providing the anticipated benefits, the task group recommended that six-monthly updates be brought to the Housing Scrutiny Commission.

3. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

3.1 Financial Implications

There are no significant financial implications arising from the recommendations set out in this report which cannot be accommodated within existing budgets.

Stuart McAvoy – Acting Head of Finance

3.2 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Jeremy Rainbow – Principal Lawyer (Litigation) – 371435.

3.3 Equality Implications

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.

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 the Equalities Impact Assessment is updated to reflect any changes as it is an iterative document. 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.

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.

Advice and guidance can be sought from the Corporate Equalities Team.

Kalvaran Sandhu – Equalities Manager, 454 6344

3.4 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications arising from this report.

Duncan Bell – Climate Change Manager

4 Summary of Appendices

Appendix A – Review scoping document

Appendix B – Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission – 7 July 2020

Appendix C – Report to Housing Scrutiny Commission – 15 June 2021

Appendix D – Presentation by Housing Services provided to task group meeting on 7 October

Appendix E - Presentation by CrASBU provided to task group meeting on 7 October

Appendix F – Additional information presented to task group meeting on 3 November

5 Officers to Contact

Francis Connolly

Scrutiny Support Manager

Francis.Connolly@leicester.gov.uk

0116 454 6353

Leicester City Council
Scrutiny Review

Examining the role and effectiveness of the proposal to
establish a central housing Anti-Social Behaviour Team

A review of the Housing Scrutiny Commission

July 2021

Background to scrutiny reviews

Determining the right topics for scrutiny reviews is the first step in making sure scrutiny provides benefits to the Council and the community.

This scoping template will assist in planning the review by defining the purpose, methodology and resources needed. It should be completed by the Member proposing the review, in liaison with the lead Director and the Scrutiny Manager. Scrutiny Officers can provide support and assistance with this.

In order to be effective, every scrutiny review must be properly project managed to ensure it achieves its aims and delivers measurable outcomes. To achieve this, it is essential that the scope of the review is well defined at the outset. This way the review is less likely to get side-tracked or become overambitious in what it hopes to tackle. The Commission's objectives should, therefore, be as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic & Time-bound) as possible.

The scoping document is also a good tool for communicating what the review is about, who is involved and how it will be undertaken to all partners and interested stakeholders.

The form also includes a section on public and media interest in the review which should be completed in conjunction with the Council's Communications Team. This will allow the Commission to be properly prepared for any media interest and to plan the release of any press statements.

Scrutiny reviews will be supported by a Scrutiny Officer.

Evaluation

Reviewing changes that have been made as a result of a scrutiny review is the most common way of assessing the effectiveness. Any scrutiny review should consider whether an on-going monitoring role for the Commission is appropriate in relation to the topic under review.

For further information please contact the Scrutiny Team on 0116 4546340

To be completed by the Member proposing the review		
1.	Title of the proposed scrutiny review	Examining the proposal to establish a central housing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team
2.	Proposed by	Councillor Westley, Chair of Housing.
3.	Rationale Why do you want to undertake this review?	<p>In July 2020, the Housing Scrutiny Commission received a report that sought to transfer the ASB team from the Housing Service division to CrASBU. This proposal was met with a number of concerns by scrutiny and the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum, which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fewer resources for housing services with the retention of the £100k efficiency saving • a loss of housing officer's specialist knowledge • a view from tenants that they wanted to report incidents to housing officers • views that CrASBU would not be sufficiently resourced to deal with the work • concerns that the new arrangement would need to be monitored to check its effectiveness • questions around the support for people poor mental health. <p>A revised proposal was presented for the delivery of ASB services was presented to Housing Scrutiny in May 2021, having sought comment from the tenants and Leaseholders Panel. Taking into account the comments raised previously, this proposal broadly recommended the establishment of a centrally based housing ASB investigation team that would work in close partnership with CrASBU.</p> <p>Although there was some support for the new proposal from the tenants and leaseholders panel, several questions were raised and further questions and concerns in terms of the role and function of the delivery of the service were raised by the Housing Scrutiny Commission.</p> <p>These are set out in more detail in section 4, and as a result, it was agreed to initiate a review in conjunction with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Commission to scrutinise the proposal in more detail and upon the receipt of further evidence, to form recommendations in respect of the future delivery of ASB services.</p>

<p>4.</p>	<p>Purpose and aims of the review What question(s) do you want to answer and what do you want to achieve? (Outcomes?)</p>	<p>This review will generally seek to provide assurance in respect of the proposal by serving to examine it in greater detail and to determine the level of impact that it will have. The review will call upon a wider range of witnesses and will learn more about the relationship between the Housing ASB team and CrASBU. The review may form a number of recommendations regarding the future delivery of ASB services prior to the taking of an Executive decision.</p> <p>Fundamentally, the review aims to establish further detail to help establish any clear recommendations regarding future service delivery. Such detail includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The provision of further information to help better determine the proposal's overall level of service impact, and whether it will produce improved outcomes. - Detail to provide an overall enhanced understanding of the working relationship between the proposed ASB team based in Housing, CrASBU and the police, and an understanding of the role of each service based on case categorisation. - Presentation of a structure for the new team, including detail of the impact on the current work of Neighbourhood Housing Officers and CrASBU. - The presentation and opportunity to review a full Equality Impact Assessment, including a focus on how the new service can address language barriers.
<p>5.</p>	<p>Links with corporate aims / priorities How does the review link to corporate aims and priorities?</p>	<p>The City Council works with partner agencies, residents, landlords and businesses to tackle neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour in Leicester, and has adopted an approach that covers all aspects from prevention to rehabilitation, and sets out to protect and support victims and witnesses.</p> <p>The City Council forms part of the Safer Leicester Partnership. Its current plan can be found here.</p> <p>This review aims to seek assurances that the new service proposal can most appropriately serve the aims and intentions of the City Council and partners who form the Safer Leicester Partnership.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Scope Set out what is included in the scope of the review and what is not. For example which services it does and does not cover.</p>	<p>This review intends to thoroughly examine the impact of the proposal on service users by understanding in greater detail of how the newly established team in Housing will deal with ASB cases alongside CrASBU.</p> <p>This review does not intend to examine in detail the role of the police in dealing with ASB. The police's role will be detailed as part of further overall presentation of evidence.</p>

7.	<p>Methodology Describe the methods you will use to undertake the review.</p> <p>How will you undertake the review, what evidence will need to be gathered from members, officers and key stakeholders, including partners and external organisations and experts?</p>	<p>To include:</p> <p>Staging one or more focus group/forum sessions to obtain further detail from officers proposing the service change.</p> <p>To obtain case studies of a range of different cases that cover differing levels of intervention and clearly set out the respective roles of Housing and CrASBU in dealing with such cases - and to what extent these roles will differ under the new service proposal.</p> <p>To obtain and examine detail of the operation of a similar service structure within local authorities and to potentially question representatives from other authorities in terms of their experiences of service operation.</p> <p>To enable further scrutiny, questioning and the proposing of recommendations by members, with input from tenant representations and any other witnesses seen central to further evidence gathering.</p>
	<p>Witnesses Set out who you want to gather evidence from and how you will plan to do this.</p>	<p>Officers from Housing Services responsible for overseeing the proposed ASB team with the Housing division.</p> <p>Officers from Neighbourhood & Environmental Services responsible for CrASBU.</p> <p>Relevant Executive members – Councillors Clair, Cutkelvin and Master.</p> <p>The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission.</p> <p>Other councillors with a level of knowledge and interest sufficient to contribute and support the task group.</p> <p>To invite questioning and general input from the Chair of the Tenants and Leaseholders Forum, and potentially other members of the forum.</p> <p>Service users – via the form of case studies presented to the commission.</p> <p>Other local authorities – in terms of gathering evidence around the functionality of structures elsewhere.</p>
8.	<p>Timescales How long is the review expected to take to complete?</p>	<p>It is envisaged that the review will be completed within three months</p>
	<p>Proposed start date</p>	<p>Following 15 July - Overview Select Committee meeting.</p>
	<p>Proposed completion date</p>	<p>October 2021</p>

9.	<p>Resources / staffing requirements</p> <p>Scrutiny reviews are facilitated by Scrutiny Officers and it is important to estimate the amount of their time, in weeks, that will be required in order to manage the review Project Plan effectively.</p>	<p>Scrutiny officer time within existing workload – from the Scrutiny Support Officer supporting both the Housing Scrutiny Commission.</p> <p>The officer time from services within Housing, Community Safety & Protection and any other service departments contributing to the review.</p>
	<p>Do you anticipate any further resources will be required e.g. site visits or independent technical advice? If so, please provide details.</p>	<p>Not at this initial stage.</p>
10.	<p>Review recommendations and findings</p> <p>To whom will the recommendations be addressed? E.g. Executive / External Partner?</p>	<p>The review recommendations will be forwarded to the Executive Member for Education and Housing prior to the taking of an Executive decision in respect of the future delivery of the ASB service.</p>
11.	<p>Likely publicity arising from the review - Is this topic likely to be of high interest to the media? Please explain.</p>	<p>Likely to attract medium attention from the media</p>
12.	<p>Publicising the review and its findings and recommendations</p> <p>How will these be published / advertised?</p>	<p>The findings of the review will be agreed by the Task Group and will be presented to the Overview Select Committee, and will be published in advance of doing so.</p>
13.	<p>How will this review add value to policy development or service improvement?</p>	<p>The review will ensure that the context and wider implications of the proposals are fully presented to enable scrutiny to potentially influence policy development or service improvement.</p>

To be completed by the Executive Lead		
14.	Executive Lead's Comments The Executive Lead is responsible for the portfolio so it is important to seek and understand their views and ensure they are engaged in the process so that Scrutiny's recommendations can be taken on board where appropriate.	
Comments from the relevant Director		
15.	Observations and comments on the proposed review	I welcome the focus and desire of the Commissions to scrutinise the proposals to improve Anti Social Behaviour services in the Council to the tenants and residents of Leicester.
	Name	Chris Burgin
	Role	Director of Housing
	Date	9/7/2021
To be completed by the Scrutiny Support Manager		
16.	Will the proposed scrutiny review / timescales negatively impact on other work within the Scrutiny Team?	It is anticipated that there will be no adverse impact on the Scrutiny Team's work to support this review. Although it is expected that this review will be completed relatively quickly, there may need to be some prioritising of work done during its undertaking.
	Do you have available staffing resources to facilitate this scrutiny review? If not, please provide details.	The review can be adequately support by the Scrutiny Team as per my comments above.
	Name	Francis Connolly, Scrutiny Support Manager.
	Date	9 July 2021



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.

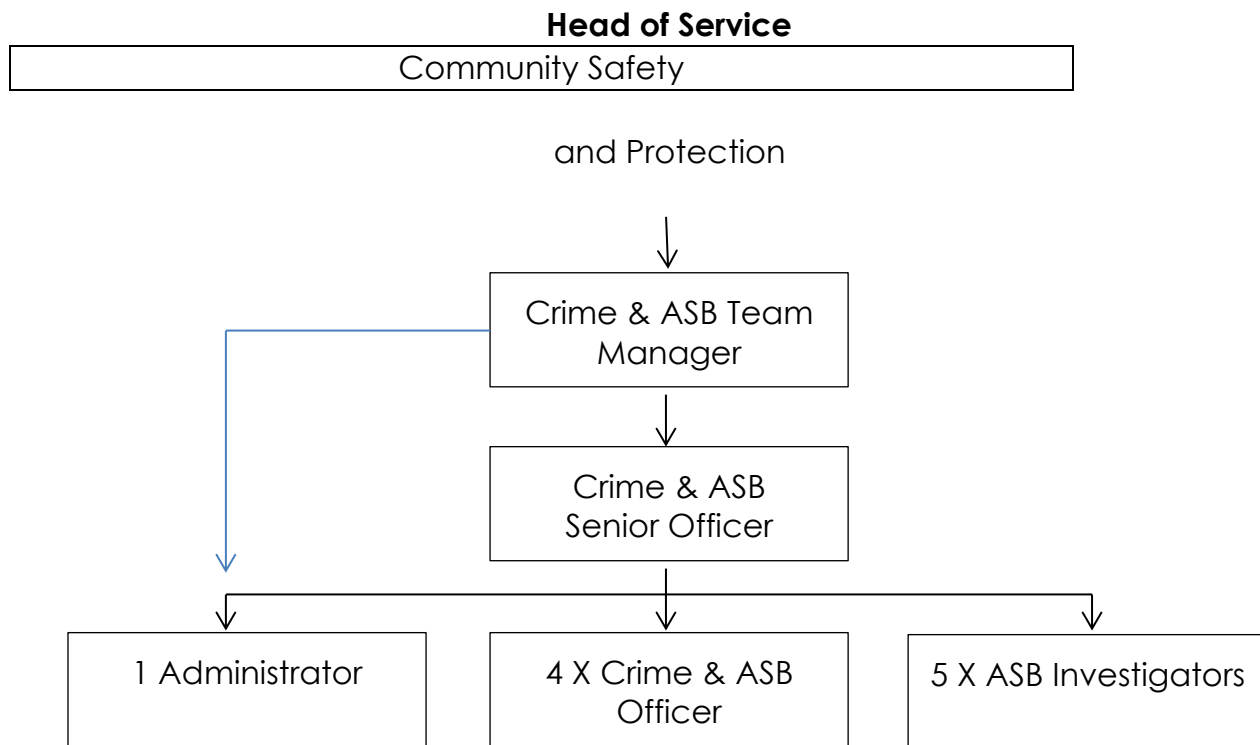
6. Proposed Future Working Model

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



Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service Revised Proposal

For consideration by: Housing Scrutiny Commission Date: 15 June 2021 Lead
director: Chris Burgin

Report Author:

Gurjit Minhas– Head of Service Housing

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out a revised proposal to change how we deliver Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Services. Currently services are delivered by Neighbourhood Housing Officers within the Housing Division and the Crime and ASB (CrASBU) Team based in the Neighbourhood and Environmental Division.
- 1.2 The revised proposal is to create a central housing Anti-Social Behaviour Team that will work closely with CrASBU. Council tenants will still be able to report ASB to their housing officers as they do now, however all investigations will be carried out by a central housing ASB team.
- 1.3 The key benefits of this proposal will be to provide a consistent specialist ASB service to all complainants regardless of tenure and enable Neighbourhood Housing Officers to focus on supporting tenants.
- 1.4 The proposal to change the ASB service has been consulted on previously with the Housing Scrutiny Commission and with the Tenant's and Leaseholders Forum in 2020 and has been amended in line with the consultation feedback received.
- 1.5 The original proposal was for all ASB to be dealt with by CrASBU, however you the Scrutiny Commission and the Forum told us that you had the following concerns about the original proposal:
 - less resources for housing services, retain the £100k efficiency saving
 - housing officer's knowledge would be lost
 - tenants wanted to report incidents to housing officers
 - that CRASBU would not be sufficiently resourced to deal with the work

- that the new arrangement would need to be monitored to check its effectiveness
 - support for people poor mental health
- 1.6 Creating a housing ASB team to carry out investigations and retaining the £100k efficiency saving to provide the face to face customer service role within housing, addresses the above concerns. A central housing team with specialist knowledge is also required as we are dealing with more complex cases in various parts of the City.
- 1.7 This revised proposal has now been consulted on with the Tenant's Forum in January and February 2021. Their feedback on the new proposal is wide-ranging and is attached, please see **Appendix 1**. A commitment has been made to the Forum that they will receive regular feedback on the performance of the ASB service for council tenants going forward. Publicity will also be provided on how services can be accessed. Forum members requested for a definition of ASB to be included in this report, which is as follows:
- Anti-social behaviour (ASB) was defined in the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) as acting 'in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator**
- 1.8 This report also highlights on how the service will be accessed in future and the work of other local authorities and how performance will be monitored in the new service model.

2. Background

- 2.1 Historically housing services have dealt with ASB associated with council tenancies separately as council estates used to be made up of mostly council owned properties. Low to medium level ASB could be managed through the legal responsibilities of the council as a landlord. This is outlined within 'The Conditions of Tenancy' document which all council tenants sign up to. Mainly due to Right to Buy we are seeing an increase in the mixture of tenures on estates, we have approximately 30 new applications each month. Some of these sold properties are owner occupied, leasehold and some are rented out to private tenants.
- 2.2 CrASBU historically has dealt with all reports of ASB from residents and tenants in private sector housing from initial report to high level investigations and legal action. CrASBU also deals with council tenancy cases as they progress and become more complex, serious or high-risk.

- 2.3 With the increasing mixture of tenures on estates, the two investigation functions sitting separately is not in alignment with the nature of ASB service requests being reported. Reports often involve disputes with households from different tenures. The proposal for the teams to be based centrally will help them to more effectively deal with ASB across all tenures and prevent duplication of work.
- 2.4 The needs of council tenants are also changing as more people are presenting with complex issues, related to substance use, mental health and poverty. Therefore, there is a necessity now to enhance the support role of Neighbourhood Housing Officers to support people in their tenancies. The enforcement function of tackling ASB no longer aligns with the support role Neighbourhood Housing Officers are increasingly having to carry out.
- 2.5 The current arrangement is that each Neighbourhood Housing Officer takes reports and investigates council housing associated cases in their area. This means an uneven and excessive workload for some officers especially in the West of the City. Having a central housing team will mean that caseloads can be more evenly distributed, and work can be resourced more effectively. Since April 2020 the Housing Service has received 931 reports of ASB.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is for members to consider the proposal of setting up a housing ASB investigation team that will work in close partnership with CrASBU and be based centrally.
- 3.2 This proposal will lead to a more effective specialist services that will reduce any duplication of functions. All officers dealing with ASB will be trained to provide support and signpost people who have poor mental health.
- Increasingly more service users are presenting with mental health issues and this can be a contributing factor in ASB cases.
- 3.3 In line with the feedback received from the Scrutiny Commission and Forum on the initial proposal for the new model would have realised efficiencies of 100k. This will now be retained within the Housing

Service to ensure Neighbourhood Housing Officers carry out the key link and customer contact role.

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 the creation of job roles within the new central housing ASB Team and the CrASBU team.

4.2 The proposed change will also impact on Council Tenants, as Neighbourhood Housing Officers will no longer investigate low level ASB cases. In line with feedback from the Scrutiny Commission and the Tenants Forum, in the future model, tenants will still be able to contact housing officers to report ASB and housing staff will provide advice and assistance and refer to the central teams where appropriate. Tenants will also be able to report cases directly to the ASB teams and will be able to contact the officer dealing with the case directly throughout the investigation.

5. Proposed Future Working Model

5.1 For council tenants, Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHOs) would continue to be a key contact person and provide advice and low-level assistance via the standard letters and information that is readily available.

5.2 NHO's will deal with issues that are not deemed as formal ASB. Cases that need formal investigation will be referred to the central teams, however NHO's will continue to be a point of local intelligence and local information for the central teams.

5.3 The central housing ASB team will be made up of housing ASB officers who will be managed in partnership by both Housing and CrASBU.

- 5.4 Housing staff will lead on cases primarily involving council housing but as with CrASBU will deal with cross tenure cases. CrASBU will lead on those primarily involving private housing and will work cross tenure to include council housing.
- 5.5 The central housing ASB Team will be managed in partnership by Housing Services and CrASBU and be based in Mansfield House while also utilising local bases. This will enable the housing team to have a close working relationship with CrASBU and utilise central resources and knowledge to deal with ASB more effectively. This will also enable improved joint working with the police, through the use of a shared intelligence system called SENTINEL, which is currently used by CrASBU officers to manage cases
- 5.6 As part of on-going commitment to ensure that this model provides continuous improvement and yields the type of outcomes required, the following key performance information will be captured and shared;
- i) Service/ Information Request (ensuring that data is captured where council tenants are involved as victims and/ or perpetrator)
 - ii) Action Taken
 - iii) Review/ Evaluation
- 5.7 As part of the consultation with members and the tenant's forum, there was interest in relation to how other local authorities delivered services in relation to ASB. With this in mind, officers contacted the 10 local authorities to understand their approach to dealing with ASB.
- 5.8 Of those 7 cities with housing stock and ASB services for residents of the city; 5 cities have a single route for reporting ASB regardless of tenure. One of the city's shared with us that they feel that there is a more uniform approach across their area with this approach and that the staff work more consistently using the same policies and procedures.

6. Benefits of Future Working Model

- 6.1 The point of contact for all stakeholders will be clear, avoiding any uncertainty about who is dealing with a case irrespective of tenure. Contact details of the case worker will be provided.
- 6.2 The new service will eliminate any duplication of work and improve partnership working.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 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.
- 6.5 All complainants regardless of tenure will receive a consistent and specialist ASB service with support for mental health.
- 6.6 Improved joint working with the police through a shared intelligence system, SENTINEL which CrASBU utilise; ensuring that issues are communicated and resolved much more swiftly.
- 6.7 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”.

7. Financial, legal and other implications

7.1 Financial implications

- 7.1.1 The total current cost of managing ASB across Council services is £727k (£432k within the CrASBU service and approximately £295k in the HRA). The proposed model will have no impact on overall costs. Centralising HRA ASB support into a single team will free up time to an estimated value of £100k for Housing Officers to spend on other tasks.

Stuart McAvoy – Principal Accountant

7.2. Legal implications

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

7.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Implications

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

7.4 Equalities Implications

7.4.1 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.

7.4.2 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

Appendix 1

Forum Members feedback on ASB proposals

In early January the revised Anti-Social Behaviour proposals report was sent to all Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum members. This was followed up with telephone calls to obtain individual member feedback on the revised proposals.

A Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum meeting was held on the 4th February 2021. At this meeting the individual feedback was shared. The Forum members were then given the opportunity to add any further comments they would like to make. The feedback received is as follows:

May Jones

Generally happy with the proposals and in favour.

- Thought the idea of setting up a central Housing ASB team was a good idea
- Agreed with the close working arrangements with CRASBU
- Pleased anti-social behaviour can still be reported to housing officers
- Pleased the previous saving of £100k will continue to be used to fund services

Ann Green

Generally, in favour of the proposals, but would like to know:

- What exactly what will the 100k be used for?

- There's already a shortage of housing officers. Will there be new Housing Officers recruited or will they use existing ones?

Wendy Biddles

- Would like dealing with ASB to stay as it is, Housing Officers and for them to be responsible for their tenants.
- In the report didn't understand why right to buy was being mentioned and what this had to do with things.
 - Asked what the £100k savings is to be used for? For Tenants who have needs, the money should be spent on their homes.

Jill Rhys

Generally, in favour of the proposals

- Concerned about the burden it would place on housing officers having to deal with more complex cases and thought more partnership working with mental health service to reduce this burden
- Providing a range of ways people reporting ASB was good but these could be kept simple and streamlined so people don't have to repeat themselves.
- Would like to see the project reviewed after a set period to see how it has worked. Views should be sought from tenants and staff for this to get feedback on the ground, not just reporting on numbers.
- Service should be published better on existing literature that goes out.

Joe Carroll

Not in favour of the proposals

- In relation to keeping Housing officer involved - what is proposed was not what was asked for
- LCC are reducing the number of housing Officers and funding CRASBU through the HRA, making Housing Officers do more.
- Where is the savings - if CRASBU are only to deal with serious cases - giving CRASBU more officers to do less work as LCC want to use HO to do the low level cases
- Joe was concerned about vulnerable tenants and the amount of work HO have helping these people
- The extra contact with CRASBU seems unrealistic.
- Joe wanted a separate in house ASB team and felt CRASBU had a poor record in tackling anti social behaviour, also their

lack of interest in the community. They only seem to assist the person that causes the ASB. He would like more information from CRASBU of existing cases

- Fears Housing office will have no impact or control over CRASBU
- Joe would like to increase the number of housing officers to be able to effectively deal with ASB themselves.
- Questions raised:
 - Where do STAR fit into this? ○ Why is Right to Buy in the paper
 - What will the £100k be used for? Can't we use it to improve services for council tenants?
 - – the paper talks about housing officers helping people with mental health difficulties, can this link into STAR's work? ○ How many tenants have CRASBU evicted
 - Will these proposals mean fewer housing officers to do regular housing officer work?

Jean Williams

Generally, in favour and happy with the ASB papers

- One thing she would like to know more about and see is an emphasis relationship between council tenants and leaseholders is addressed.
 - There seems to be a lot of issues between leaseholders and tenants she and would like to know more about and see more emphasis on how these issues are managed.

Peter Hookway

Not in favour of the proposals

- Why is there no mention of the night service for ASB? What are the plans for this?
- Doesn't see why we should go in with the private sector. The private sector seems to have a higher profile and get more consideration than council tenants – it feels like this is about improving the service for the private sector, not council tenants. I'm concerned that the needs of council tenants will be overlooked.
- Also, this proposal seems to be putting a lot of work on housing officers when they already have a full workload. Will this mean fewer housing officers having to do regular housing officer work?
- No mention of how STAR is going to be involved.

Phillip Allen

- Why doesn't this paper mention leaseholders?
- How is the proposal going to impact on the visibility of Housing Officers, can we expect to see a more visible housing officer presence in the future?
- Dealing with ASB should be pro-active. Will the new proposals result in a more proactive approach rather than reactive?
- Supporting homeless vulnerable people and those with mental health issues is admirable, however, the resulting issues completely prevent the vast majority of people being unable to live a peaceful life what support is offered to them?
- If implemented when will an evaluation of how it works take place?

Housing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service Proposal

October 2021



Current Arrangements

- Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHOs) deal with low level ASB, take an incremental approach for council tenants
- CrASBU deal with all tenures, higher level cases for council tenants, all other ASB for private sector. Deal with all legal action



What is the new ASB service proposal?

- Create a central housing ASB team
- Tenants can still report to Neighbourhood Housing Officer (NHO)s
- NHOs will still deal with tenant behaviour/low level nuisance
- All council cases to be investigated by housing ASB team



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Benefits

- **Less duplication**
- **One specialised service**
- **Increased consistency**
- **One person leading on case**
- **Case work tailored to individual needs**
- **Cases handed over in timely manner to CrASBU**
- **Protected characteristics considered**
- **Support for mental health**
- **New service will have access to Police information**
- **NHOs point of contact and can focus on support role**



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City Council

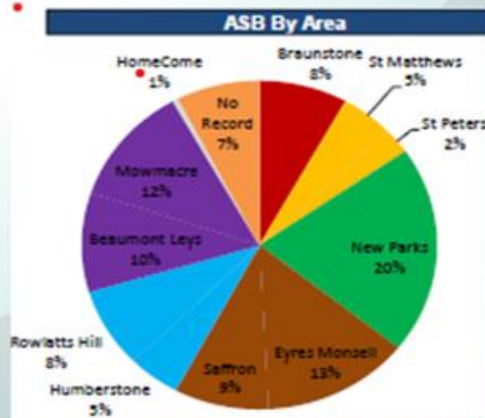
Impact on NHOs

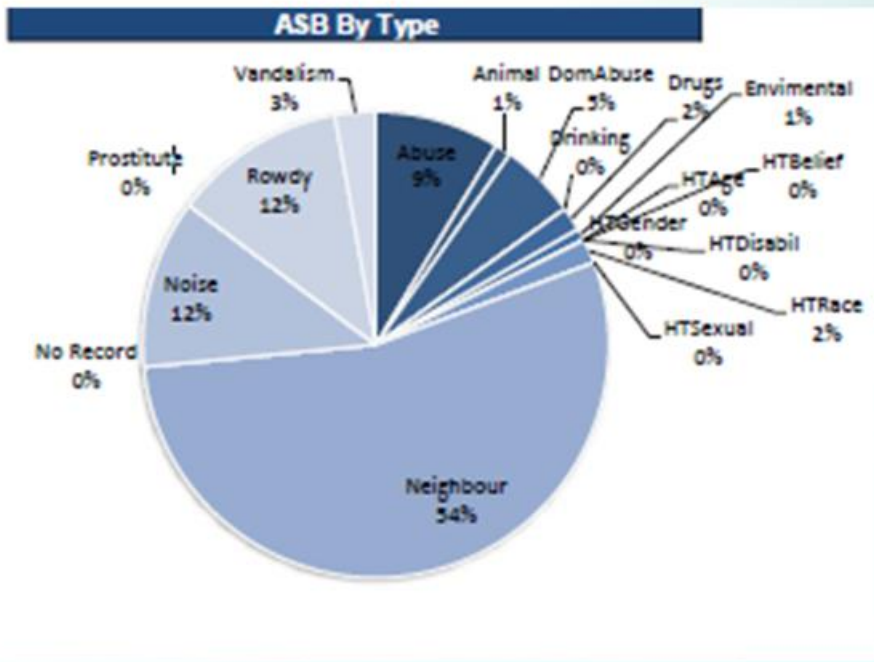
- Free up to deal with range of other NHO tasks
- Provide support to people getting council housing who have more complex needs
- Focus on support role not enforcement which can cause confusion



Housing Cases by Area

- Current work is allocated on area
- Officers in New Parks higher case load





NHO Tasks

Key functions and areas of Responsibility

- Abandoned Properties
- Building Officer Responsible work – Fire Safety
- Communal Cleaning checks
- Complaints
- Councillor/MP enquires
- Advice on damp and condensation issues
- Decant
- Domestic violence
- Estate management tasks – patch walks and referrals to relevant services, illegally parked cars, fly tipping, gardens
- Evictions
- Environmental project
- First visits
- Gas Gain Entry
- Home Come Inspections
- Right to Buy Inspections
- Harassment cases
- Insulation requests
- Insurance claims
- Key control/requests
- Management cases
- Mutual exchanges
- Capital programme
- Property management
- Rechargeable work
- Petitions
- Repairs customer role
- Right to buy/leaseholder requests
- Tenancy changes
- Tenancy enforcement
- Welfare cases - increasing with more tenants with complex needs, support role growing



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Time currently spent on ASB

- 37.6 Neighbourhood Housing Officers spend 20% of their time on ASB
- Approximately 1220 cases per annum
- Incremental approach, initial investigation, warnings, Anti Social Behavioural contracts
- Currently we deal with a wide range of types of incidents reported from lower level nuisance to more serious ASB
- New team will deal with those that meet ASB definition



New team structure



- 4 Housing ASB Officers
- Managed in partnership
- Based at local hubs and Mansfield House
- Work alongside CrASBU



Management and Role



- Deal with ASB cases that meet the higher threshold of corporate and national definition
- Definition - acting in a manner that caused, or was likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any persons
- Enhance online offer



Leicester
City Council

Case loads

- Currently 25% approximately noise/rowdy, NHOs will still address low level behavioural issues, will signpost as appropriate to Environmental Health and Police or online advice
- 18 intensive cases per ASB officer per month
- Some long term and some very short term
- More manageable and even distribution of cases and work load



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Housing Services Input

- NHO's take reports, low level non-case work
- ASB Officers co –located with NHOs in hubs
- NHOs share local intelligence and information
- ASB officers share progress on cases with NHOs
- Case outcomes communicated back to NHOs



Police/CrASBU Input

- Co- location at Mansfield House with CrASBU
- Access to Police system “Sentinel”
- Access to police and CrASBU intelligence
- Support from CrASBU to become specialised team
- Access to training from Police and CrASBU
- Use best practice CrASBU procedures – decision making meetings etc



Process for Referrals



Case Studies

- Case 1 where man required welfare support and ASB enforcement action. This case caused confusion and conflict for NHO in their role
- Case 2 where council tenants complaining about private sector tenants, NHOs were liaising with private landlord. NHO was getting involved in private sector issues that are not part of their role
- How would these examples work in new structure. Case 1 NHO focus on support. Case 2 NHO only deal with council cases, this case would go to CrASBU



Equality Impact Assessment

- Revised proposal
- Due regard to public sector duty
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations



Data to Inform EIA

- Equality Profile of tenants
- Census Data
- Feedback from consultation with Tenants and Leaseholders Forum
- Feedback from service users, case studies



Equality Profile

- 65.2% of tenants identify as White British compared to the City population which is 50.5%
- Asian households are concentrated in the East District of the City
- 15.% of tenants identify as Asian compared to the City population of 37.4%
- 14.3% of tenants identify as Black African compared to the City population of 6.2%
- 14.1% of tenants are 75+ compared to the City population of 7%
- 7% of tenants have indicated they have a disability although there is a lot of under-recording in this area



Equality Outcomes

- Staff to provide an appropriate service to people with a range of protected characteristics.
- People with poor mental health supported by the service
- Equitable access to the service for people from all backgrounds including translation facilities



Equality Actions

- Multi-lingual work force, staff to use their language skills to interpret
- Community Languages Line
- Translation of materials where appropriate
- Target hotspots in the City, ensure this is done in a culturally appropriate way
- Mental health training for team
- Equalities training
- Monitor take up and outcomes



Benchmarking

- Bristol – service for council tenants, ASB dealt with by housing officers initially then passed to city team
- Birmingham – service only for council tenants
- Cardiff - service only for council tenants
- Sandwell – One team for all tenures
- Manchester – Setting up specialised team



Conclusions

- Some authorities provide services to Council Tenants only!!
- Way forward seems to be specialised teams – Sandwell reported this led to a uniform approach, working to same policy and procedures, cases handed over appropriately
- Overall mixed approaches



Questions



Housing Scrutiny Task Group

**Dealing with Complex and
High Risk Anti-Social
Behaviour**



**Daxa Pancholi (Head of Community
Safety & Protection)**

**Caroline Green (Team Manager –
Crime & ASB Unit)**



Overview

- **Definition of Anti-Social Behaviour**
- **Service Provision**
- **The City Council's Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Unit**
 - Case Management
 - Duty Desk
 - Community Trigger
 - Corporate Decision Making Meeting
 - Complex Individual Management Meeting
 - Case Studies
- **Any Questions**



Anti-Social Behaviour



Anti-social behaviour is defined by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 as 'acting in a manner that caused, or was likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any persons.'



Service Provision Across Leicester



CrASBU – high risk
and complex with
legal sanctions

Housing Management –
low to medium level
ASB without legal
sanction



The City Council's Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (CrASBU)

- High risk and complex cases across all tenure and ASB cases in Private Sector Housing
- Legal sanctions
- Community Trigger (ASB case review)
- Specialist knowledge
- Flexible resources
- Link up with partners across the Safer Leicester Partnership



Tenancy Management (Housing)

- Low to medium level crime and ASB in neighbourhoods
- Non-legal sanctions to deal with crime and ASB associated with tenancies
- Housing officers ensure compliance with tenancy conditions
- Support to vulnerable tenants



CrASBU Case Management



CrASBU Duty Desk

- Specialist knowledge
- Enquiries via email, telephone and customer services
- Main point of contact for members of the public to report crime and ASB
- Referrals from Housing, Police, Adult and Children's Services, Fire service etc.
- Advice provided to Housing, Police, Probation, drug and alcohol services, domestic abuse and other support services
- Public offered help, support and advice
- Enquires from, City Mayor, MP and Elected Members
- Respond to an average of 143 cases a month



Community Trigger

- Community Trigger (AKA ASB case review)
- Statutory legislation to provide victims with right to ask for their case to be reviewed
- CrASBU have responsibility for all reviews across Leicester City
- Report to Chair of Safer Leicester Partnership
- Recommendations for better ways of working
- 19 requests to date in 2021, 7 of which met threshold for full case review



Complex Individual Management Meeting (CIMM)

- The purpose of the CIMM is to create a considered, appropriate and proportionate multi-agency action plan for a complex individual or family who have continued to cause ASB when several interventions have not been successful in bringing about change
- Considers mental health, vulnerability, self neglect, rent arrears, physical health, capacity to make decisions, domestic abuse, risky behaviours, insight into behaviours etc
- Platform for multi agency information sharing and problem solving
- Considers risk, the voice of the victim, community impact and identifies key agencies and any gaps in services
- Often a pre cursor to a CDMM



Corporate Decision Making Meeting (CDMM)

- CrASBU use a CDMM model to consider individual circumstances of individuals and agencies involved and where a decision on case progression is required
- CDMM is convened when particular risk factors are known such as vulnerability, mental health, organisational and reputational risk
- Considers risk factors, merits of the case, impact on victims and community as well as equality duty
- Decision made by Heads of Service across Housing and Community Safety and Protection
- Transparent and fair process



CrASBU Case Example A

- Targeted harassment of neighbour by alcoholic son of elderly tenant – incremental approach by housing and criminal conviction not preventing ASB
- CrASBU referred to multiple support agencies for victim and multiple referrals for perpetrator
- Sustained engagement with victim, perpetrator and agencies including Police and Turning Point – regular risk assessment and multi agency meetings
- CIMM model used
- CrASBU led Civil Injunction application at court to injunct perpetrator away from home as last resort to offer respite to victim and elderly tenant



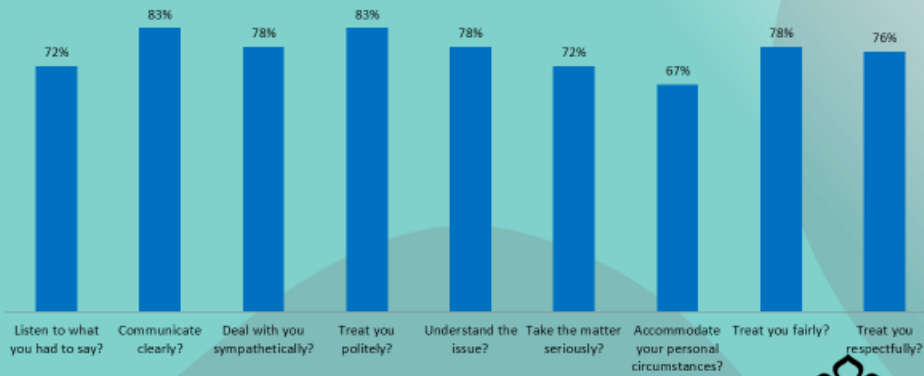
CrASBU Case Example B

- Drug dealing, drug use, prostitution and sexual activity in communal areas, threats to residents and significant disruption from visitors in tower block at the start of the first national lockdown in March 2020
- CDMM model used
- Despite lockdown CrASBU successfully applied to the courts for a (partial) Closure Order allowing the perpetrator to remain in their property alone to lessen impact on homeless services at this time
- Unique opportunity to obtain and file evidence to court remotely, first of it's kind
- Prompt, effective and proportionate response in difficult circumstances



CrASBU Customer Satisfaction 20/21

Anti-social Behaviour Staff



Feedback

"I am able to sleep soundly without having to worry for the first time in 2 years"

"They acted promptly and compassionate with my case, resolving the issues and giving me peace of mind"

"I like where I live again now, now my neighbour's have been evicted we can relax again"

"Now I don't have to worry about my Mum being on her own, it makes such a difference"

"Thank you for giving me my life back"



Housing Scrutiny Task Group Role of Proposed ASB Housing Team – Additional Information

Wednesday 3rd November 2021



Total ASB Cases Reported

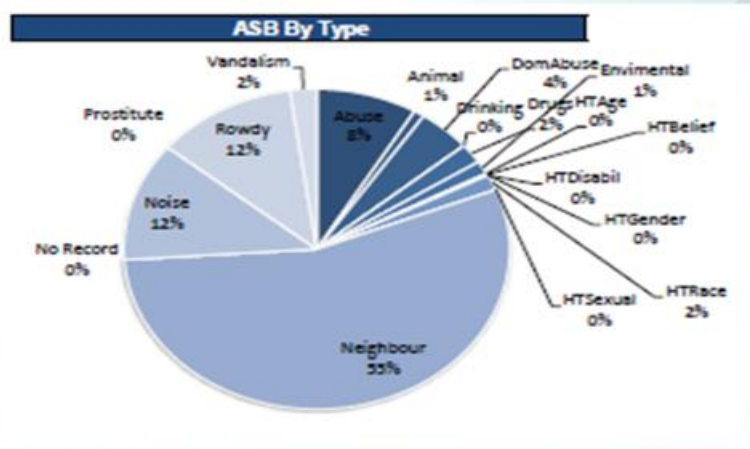
Total ASB Cases Reported													
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
2020-21	52	85	184	146	118	125	80	78	58	90	103	120	1244
2021-22	136	88	112	117	108	117							674

Cases That Escalated To Perpetrator Path													
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
2020-21	37	53	88	72	49	56	40	42	35	53	30	79	632
2021-22	47	40	53	54	51	53							298

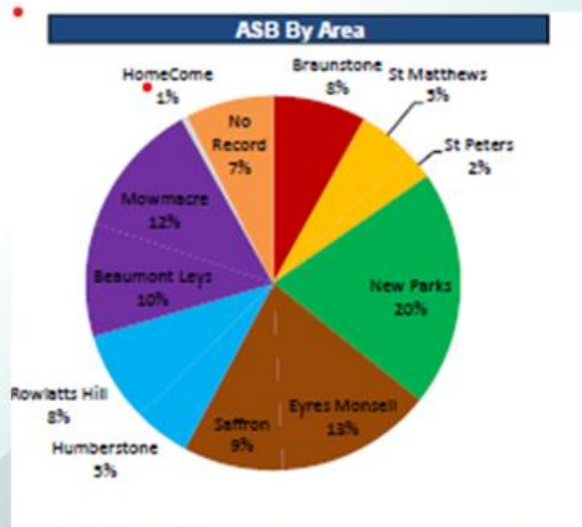
Cases Referred to CRASBU													
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
2020-21	2		4	1		1	1	2	1	3		1	16
2021-22	1	1											2



ASB by Type



ASB by Area



West Area

Total ASB Cases Reported														
By Housing Office														
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD	
Beaumont Leys														
2020-21	10	4	20	14	13	12	10	11	4	12	6	9	125	
2021-22	12	9	10	10	13	14							66	
Mowmace														
2020-21	6	4	12	13	11	10	7	7	5	8	12	9	104	
2021-22	13	4	8	15	12	9							61	
New Parks														
2020-21	13	18	32	30	20	27	19	21	9	14	15	18	239	
2021-22	23	20	26	19	20	25							132	
													West Total 2021-22	261



East Area

Total ASB Cases Reported														
By Housing Office														
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD	
Humberstone														
2020-21	2	3	17	4	3	6	2	4		3	7	8	59	
2021-22	6	5	6	8	9	4							38	
Rowatts Hill														
2020-21	8	12	24	25	19	16	10	6	9	13	14	18	174	
2021-22	15	8	10	13	9	14							69	
St Matthews														
2020-21		6	11	10	7	8	9	3	2	5	15	18	94	
2021-22	5	5	3	4	5	12							34	
St Peters														
2020-21	2	9	4	7	4	1	4	1	3	6	7	8	56	
2021-22	5	2	8	4	3	8							30	
													East Total 2021-22	171



South Area

Total ASB Cases Reported													
By Housing Office													
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	YTD
Brunstone													
2020-21	5	9	21	12	10	9	5	5	2	4	4	10	86
2021-22	18	8	9	7	10	4							56
Eyes Mansell													
2020-21	3	4	10	8	13	16	9	8	9	10	7	11	108
2021-22	17	7	12	18	14	12							78
Saffron													
2020-21	2	9	10	14	8	10	13	7	10	9	8	9	109
2021-22	16	13	9	5	7	8							58
												South Total 2021-22	190

