

**Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

26 June 2023

**Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Strategic
Group Update**



**Report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods
and Climate Change**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the ongoing work of the ASB Strategic Group.

Executive summary

- 2 It was requested by Committee that a report be brought to every meeting on the progress of the work of the ASB Strategic Group.
- 3 The report provides an opportunity for Members to receive an overview of the ASB Strategic Group priorities and work areas and the development of the ASB Strategy.

Recommendation

- 4 Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:
 - (a) Note information contained within the report from the ASB Strategic Group and comment accordingly.

Background

5 The aims of the ASB Strategic Group are to:

- Provide strategic leadership and direction, co-ordination and oversight for the Safe Durham Partnership's response to anti-social behaviour across County Durham.
- Deliver the strategic outcomes under the Safe Durham Partnership Plan that promote being safe and feeling safe in your community specifically focusing on the work area of anti-social behaviour.
- Ensure the actions of the group positively impact on residents and the wider communities in:
 - (i) being and feeling safe and that those actions improve their emotional and physical wellbeing.
 - (ii) improving personal resilience and overall community's resilience, confidence and cohesion.

Key Issues

6 At the last meeting of the group on the 17 April 2023 further consideration was given to a number of key issues including:-

(a) Home Office ASB Action Plan

- The Anti-social Behaviour Action Plan (Home Office) was published on 27 March 2023 and sets out the government's approach to stamping out anti-social behaviour and restoring the right of people to feel safe in, and proud of, their local area. A link to the plan is included as part of the background papers.
- The plan is an ambitious and wide-reaching new approach that will give Police and Crime Commissioners, local authorities, and other agencies the tools to tackle the blight of anti-social behaviour.
- As part of the ASB Action Plan, the Government launched a consultation on community safety partnerships and anti-social behaviour powers.
- The purpose of the consultation was to:
 - i. seek views on the relationship between Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), with the aim of enhancing the accountability model of CSPs

- ii. consider how CSPs and PCCs work together to tackle antisocial behaviour, with the aim of strengthening this co-operative working.
 - iii. The consultation also considered the expansion of antisocial behaviour powers, and whether amendments are required to ensure they are being used effectively.
 - iv. The consultation ended on 17 May 2023 and Durham County Council as well as other key partners have submitted separate responses to the consultation exercise. The outcome of the consultation exercise will be reported through to this Committee in due course.
- In addition, the Government intend to take a zero-tolerance approach, including cracking down on the illegal drugs that blight Communities.
 - In particular, the government will be taking decisive action to ban nitrous oxide by making it a Class C drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Control under the 1971 Act means that it will be unlawful to possess, supply, import, export or produce the substance, unless an exemption applies (for example, for use in healthcare) or the person undertaking the activity holds an appropriate licence.
 - An open consultation commenced on 2 May 2023 and invites views on which exemptions should apply. The government will take a final decision on the appropriate approach taking account of the consultation responses. The open consultation can be found using the following link:-
<https://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/EKNTX3/>

(b) ASB Trailblazer Pilots

- To support the Government's ASB Action Plan, 16 trailblazing places have been identified across England and Wales which includes County Durham and Darlington.
- The 'trailblazer' areas will receive funding from the Home Office to pilot urgent action to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).
- Funding will be provided to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for County Durham and Darlington over next two years to deliver a new Immediate Justice service where perpetrators of ASB will be made to repair the damage they inflict on victims and communities within 48 hours of being handed an out of court disposal by the Police.

- Additional funding will also be provided to the OPCC over the next two years to work with councils and others to deliver ‘hotspot’ policing and enforcement.
- To progress the pilot initiative an ASB Action Plan is being formulated by the OPCC with involvement from key partners within the ASB Strategic Group. In addition, funding bid proposals are currently being prepared for further consideration by the OPCC to support the delivery of the Action Plan.

Durham County ASB Delivery Plan

- 7 Following on from the publication of the Durham County ASB Strategy, the ASB Strategic Group are currently developing a local ASB delivery plan around the 8 key principles set out within the strategy and will focus primarily on five key priorities issues in the year ahead which have been identified from local data and incident reporting.
- 8 Data dashboards are now available with overlays which are co-terminous with the areas of each of the Multi Agency Problem Solving groups (MAPS). This enables us to plot ASB incidence within each area and assist in identifying emerging local priorities, hotspot areas and inform action planning.
- 9 A performance update document for the period March 2022 – February 2023 is attached in Appendix 2 and identifies the following priorities for action during the coming year:-
 - Deliberate Fires
 - Criminal Damage
 - Flytipping
 - Noise
 - Intimidation / Harassment / Abuse
- 10 In addition, and notwithstanding the above key local priorities, further work is ongoing to clarify the ‘unknown nuisance’ reports which are significant in number. The Data and Performance Team will continue to work with strategic partners regarding the quality of data so that the dashboards can present the best available information going forward.
- 11 Whilst the Durham County ASB Strategy readily supports the Government’s approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, our delivery plan will reflect our local priorities and will also have direct links to the emerging ASB Action Plan that will be developed by the OPCC around the specific ASB trailblazer outcomes.

Main implications

Crime and Disorder

- 12 Information within this report aims to contribute to objectives within the existing Safe Durham Partnership Plan to reducing crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Conclusion

- 13 The report provides an opportunity for Members to receive an update on the work of the ASB Strategic Group and feed into the relevant processes.

Background papers

- [Anti-social Behaviour Action Plan \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [Promote being safe and feeling safe in your community \(countydurhampartnership.co.uk\)](https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk).
- [Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2021-25](#)
- [County Durham Vision 2035](#)

Other useful documents

- None

Contact: Joanne Waller

Tel: 03000 260924

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Duty to consider crime and disorder implications.

Finance

None.

Consultation

The ASB Strategic group will continue to engage in consultation on the development of any local strategies and action/delivery plans as well as government proposals around tackling anti social behaviour.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Climate Change

None.

Crime and Disorder

Information with this report provides an overview of the newly re-established ASB Strategic Group, a sub group of the Safe Durham Partnership and the actions agreed from the discussion items within the agenda to help positively impact on Crime, Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour within the County.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

Appendix 2

Attached as a separate PDF document