

Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee



13 December 2024

Anti-Social Behaviour: Six Monthly Update Report

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

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To update Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SSOSC) with the most recent anti-social behaviour (ASB) data available at both a national and local level.
- 2 To inform SSOSC of our progress in relation to the key projects and actions undertaken by the council and its partners to address and reduce ASB, including actions set out within the our ASB delivery plan ('the plan') 2024/2025 and linked to our [ASB Strategy 2022-25](#).

Executive summary

- 3 The Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2022-2025 Vision – “Improving lives, through tackling anti-social behaviour” provides the framework by which the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP) will work together to prevent and deal with ASB across County Durham.
- 4 Following on from the publication of the ASB Strategy, the ASB Strategic Group was tasked to develop the approach identified in the strategy and work is ongoing to develop a local ASB delivery plan to help realise the full potential of this strategic approach.
- 5 The ASB Delivery Plan 2024-25 focusses on the following key strategic themes:-
 - **Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and crime which disrupts our communities**
 - **Building community cohesion and tackling hate crime**

- **Tackling sexual violence and other violent crime**

- 6 At their meeting on 14 March 2024, the SDP Board agreed the ASB Delivery Plan for 2024-25 which focussed on the delivery of key priority actions including time limited projects around three focus areas namely Partnerships, People and Places as outlined in Appendix 2.
- 7 Performance dashboards have been developed in line with these areas of focus and this report includes the presentation of our interim performance over the last six months against the plan and in line with our agreed performance management framework.
- 8 This is the latest update report setting out the progress being made by the council and its partners in addressing ASB issues across the county. It builds on the previous update report, presented to Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2023.
- 9 Since the last update report, we have continued to address ASB through key projects the actions linked to our ASB Strategy, and these are highlighted in the accompanying presentation at appendix 4.

Recommendation

- 10 Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the progress being made by the council and its partners in addressing and reducing ASB.

Background

- 11 The SDP co-ordinates efforts to tackle ASB through the Strategic ASB Group. Meeting every two months, the group is well attended by representatives from the police, fire service, council, health partners, probation service, the police and crime commissioner's officer and housing providers amongst others.
- 12 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:
 - being and feeling safe and that those actions improve their emotional and physical wellbeing.
 - improving personal resilience and overall community's resilience, confidence, and cohesion.
- 13 We have adopted a strategic and co-ordinated approach to tackling ASB which is outlined in our [ASB Strategy 2022-25](#). Our supporting action plan not only sets out the short-to-medium term action we will take to help immediately improve the situation, but the longer-term action that we hope will manifest into a changed and improved situation.
- 14 The Durham County Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2022-2025 supports the Vision – “Improving lives, through tackling anti-social behaviour” and provides the framework by which the SDP will work together to prevent and deal with ASB across County Durham whilst embracing the following 8 principles:
 - Working in Partnership
 - Champion the Victims' Voice
 - Provide the Best Victim Support
 - Provide Victim Centric Community Trigger & Community Remedy Processes
 - Implement Preventative Measures
 - To make full use of the tools and powers
 - Maximise use of digital technologies

ASB Delivery Plan 2024-25

- 15 An overview of the ASB Delivery Plan 2024-25 is attached in Appendix 2 and key actions are presented in a 'Plan on a Page format' around the three focus areas Partnerships, People and Places.
- 16 Whilst some priority actions included within the plan may have been implemented as from April 2024, relevant target delivery times may extend beyond the calendar year.
- 17 In addition, all 'business as usual' and 'time limited projects' have continued to be delivered and where appropriate progress and performance around these ongoing commitments have been incorporated within our interim performance management report.

Performance Monitoring and reporting

- 18 Quarterly ASB incident data has continued to be provided to the ASB Strategic group to assist with action planning and priority setting throughout the year.
- 19 The subjective nature of ASB, and its varying impact, means it is difficult to identify a single definition. But the following is widely used:

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.
(Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

- 20 This broad definition recognises the need for local definitions which reflect local problems and perceptions. Our local definition is attached in Appendix 3.
- 21 This is the latest update report setting out the progress being made by the council and its partners in addressing ASB issues across the county. It builds on the previous update report, presented to Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2023. Appendix 3.
- 22 This interim performance report presented reflects progress against the plan over the last 6 months and highlights key areas of activity particularly around those actions linked to time limited projects.
- 23 A review of performance and monitoring of reported incident data will help inform the ASB delivery plan actions for the year ahead 2025/2026. It is envisaged that the annual performance report and the ASB delivery Plan 2025/2026 will be presented to the SDP Board in April / May 2025.

ASB Strategy and Action Plan

24 We have been working to achieve the objectives set out in our [ASB Strategy and Action Plan 2022-25](#) (which runs from April 2022 to March 2025).

25 The accompanying presentation to this report provides further update on the priority activities and actions structured around three areas of focus:

Partnership. Focusing on:

- Enhancing partnership arrangements.
- A focused approach to resolving ASB.
- Adopting preventative measures to tackle ASB.
- Using Digital Technology and sharing information with our partners.

People. Focusing on:

- Championing the victim's voice and building an environment where victims and witnesses feel confident and safe in coming forward to report ASB.
- Providing victim centric case review (formerly the community trigger) and community remedy processes.
- Providing the best victim support to individual(s) affected by ASB in a way that meets their individual needs.
- Ensuring that young people involved in ASB are supported and diverted from re-offending.

Places. Focusing on

- Reducing the overall incidence of ASB and its impact on individuals and communities.
- Targeting interventions in places where ASB incidence or risks of harm are highest.
- Taking a victim centred approach and championing the development and use of community standards to promote neighbourly behaviour.
- Reducing the risk, harm and severity of ASB in our neighbourhoods.

Performance Summary

- 26 We have made good progress towards the actions set out in our strategy and action plan.
- 27 It is important to note however that this is a living document. The action plan is designed to change as the ASB landscape changes, new funding opportunities and programmes arise, and existing programmes end or are further developed. Therefore, new actions can be added, and existing actions can change.
- 28 As ASB is an entrenched problem with systemic causes, significant improvements will take time and will be impacted on by a range of national policies as well as those implemented locally.
- 29 To fully understand the impact of our Strategy and Action Plan, we need an evaluation programme that can identify which policies, actions and programmes are working and delivering better and more sustainable outcomes. We are working on developing this programme.

Challenges and Opportunities

Funding

- 30 Increasing budgetary pressures on the council and its partners is threatening our ability to sustain any longer-term momentum in tackling ASB. Government funding tends to be short-term. When that funding ends, the progress made can stall or reverse.

National Strategy/Policy

- 31 Many key policy decisions that influence ASB are set nationally. The Strategic ASB Group must work in the context set by national policy.
- 32 Changes have been made to national policy which could impact, both the prevalence of and our ability to tackle ASB, since the last update. This is:
 - High street rental auctions. New powers to help councils tackle wide-ranging issues (including ASB) resulting from prolonged high street emptiness. If a high street shop has been empty for more than a year, the council can auction off a rental lease for up to five years (more detail can be found [here](#)).
- 33 The government announced in the King's Speech ([link](#)) in July 2024 a range of proposed policies and those which could potentially impact the work of the council and its partners in relation to ASB include:

- Crime and Policing Bill: containing new police powers to help tackle ASB including Respect Orders for persistent adult offenders, fast-tracked Public Spaces Protection Orders for rapid escalations in street drinking, and new powers to tackle off-road bikes. It will also create a duty for local partners to co-operate to tackle ASB, with an ASB lead in every local authority area.
- Victims, Courts and Public Protection Bill: will help ensure victims of ASB receive the necessary support. The bill will strengthen the powers of the victims' commissioner, require offenders attend their sentencing hearings and reduce delays in the courts system.

Setting Realistic Expectations

34 As previously noted, while there is much that can be done locally, many of the policies that influence ASB are set nationally. Setting realistic expectations, focussing activity where it can make the most difference and adopting a pragmatic approach to how much we can achieve requires us to be open about the scale of the challenge, the impact that local policy can have and the challenges we face.

Moving Forward

35 The locally led actions described in this report are a critical and effective part of tackling ASB across our communities.

36 We will continue to maintain our partnership-based approach to delivering our key projects and the objectives of our Strategy. By working together, we can maximise our resources and draw on a wide range of expertise to help develop programmes and initiatives.

37 We will continue to monitor our progress towards achieving the outcomes of the ASB strategy and action plan and report our progress to the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee every six months. The next report will be presented at the meeting in June 2025.

38 In addition, the current ASB Strategy and action plan which covers the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025. We are starting the process to refresh the ASB Strategy and Delivery Plan. An update will be provided in the next report.

Conclusion

39 The ASB Strategy and ASB delivery plan supports the delivery of the overarching community safety plan for County Durham and will be used

by partners to achieve the vision of ensuring that 'Durham is a county where every adult and child will feel and be safe'.

Background papers

[Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2022-25](#)

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Through Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, we have a duty to consider crime and disorder implications. However, there are no direct legal implications arising out of this report, which is provided to give members an overview of the current situation regarding ASB issues and to update on the progress of the council and partners in addressing and alleviating ASB across the county.

Finance

Latest performance information is being used to inform the development of actions.

Consultation

The ASB Strategy and Action Plan was informed by feedback and engagement through consultation with council services and partners. The ASB Strategic group will continue to consult on the development of any local strategies and action/delivery plans as well as government proposals relating to tackling anti-social behaviour.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Equality measures are to be monitored as part of the performance monitoring process.

Climate Change

Not applicable.

Human Rights

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder

This report sets out our progress in addressing and reducing ASB, including actions delivered in line with our ASB strategy. It also provides an update of any changes to national policy / legislation and how this will impact our progress.

Staffing

Not applicable.

Accommodation

Not applicable.

Risk

Not applicable.

Procurement

Not applicable.

Safe Durham Partnership (SDP) Strategic Vision

Priority Outcome 1

Anti-social behaviour and crime which disrupts our communities (ASB)

Priority Outcome 2

Hate crime and building community cohesion

Priority Outcome 3

Sexual violence and other violent crime

County Durham ASB Strategy 2022-2025

'Improving Lives through tackling Anti-social Behaviour'

ASB is a cross cutting issue that impacts on all of the SDP priorities

Key Areas of Focus:

PARTNERSHIPS

PEOPLE

PLACES



Better for everyone

Area of Focus: PARTNERSHIP

ASB Delivery Plan 2024-25

Provide enhanced partnership working to support collaborative working and share knowledge, resources, and expertise to prevent and address ASB, We will

- Facilitate and support a co-ordinated multi-agency approach at a local level, providing a balance between enforcement and assistance to reduce the risk of future problems and ensure that vulnerable people are protected
- Develop and deliver the ASB Delivery plan and regularly review the Theory of Change (ToC)
- Develop a performance management framework and evaluate effectiveness of actions and interventions
- Estimate the cost to agencies of dealing with reports of anti-social behaviour and develop return on investment evaluation tool

Implement preventative measures to tackle anti-social behaviour where possible. We will

- Explore the data and intelligence which can be used to better understand level, type and impact of ASB in County Durham.
- Collect customer insight data on complainants and perpetrators
- Identify funding opportunities to pool resources and support the delivery of early intervention and preventative measures through co-commissioning and joint bidding processes.

Take a focused approach to resolve ASB and make full use of the tools, powers, evidence and other interventions to protect victims and communities. We will

- Undertake a mapping exercise to identify relevant tools and powers available to tackle ASB
- Ensure that the ASB escalation plan utilises the full range of ASB powers available including use of fixed penalty notices where possible and appropriate.
- Produce an aide memoire and other training material for use by partners to signpost to relevant enforcement authorities and promote joint working.
- Develop evidence based strategies utilising all available powers including Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)

Maximise use of digital technology and share information with our partners, including the Police and Registered Social Landlords to help us work out how best to respond. We will

- Identify barriers to data collection and sharing and consider solutions and system changes as necessary.
- Map CCTV assets (mobile and fixed installations) across the County and analyse footage to determine level and type of ASB, identify perpetrators and support enforcement action.
- Identify re-deployable CCTV (including Drones) and their capability to provide information for partners.

Priority Outcomes:

- Effective partnership working with a clear strategic approach around the key underlying principles of our work and accountability for delivery of our priority actions
- Better understanding of the causes of ASB and effective measures to prevent and reduce incidence of ASB.
- Improved Data Quality and evidence to inform planning & decision making.
- Improved public confidence and trust in partners agencies tackling ASB .

Key performance measures

- Number of key ASB priority actions delivered within target timescale.
- Number of interventions (preventative, enforcement, advisory / educational)
- % Reduction of ASB incidents and re-offending
- % Public confidence in police and local authority in effectively tackling ASB

Area of Focus: PEOPLE

ASB Delivery Plan 2024-25

Champion the victim's voice and build an environment where victims and witnesses feel confident and safe in coming forward to report anti-social behaviour. We will:-

- Promote 'no wrong door approach' to support incident reporting and partnership working.
- Consider current reporting arrangements and develop new approaches to enable and encourage victims to readily report ASB incidents.
- Identify and develop opportunities for co-production.
- Develop and deliver an evaluation framework to assess the Victims' experience / journey

Provide victim centric case review (formerly community trigger) & Community Remedy processes. We will :-

- Provide regular updates on the outcomes of case reviews and any shared learning with Partners.
- Consider and evaluate Victim Impact
- Monitor and report on the ASB Trailblazer Reparation Pilot Programme
- Support alternative intervention strategies to deliver restorative justice

Provide the Best Victim Support to individual/s being affected by ASB in a way that meets their individual needs. We will:-

- Identify and assess vulnerability to ensure children, adults and families access appropriate advice, guidance and support.
- Discuss the court process with the victim when securing victim impact statements, discussing the special measures available to protect victims when testifying, and apply for extra help when giving evidence in court if appropriate
- Provide regular feedback to victims on progress with ASB investigations which is accurate, timely and relevant

Ensure that young people involved in ASB are supported and diverted from reoffending. We will:-

- Develop and implement clear pathways of support to identify and address young people's ASB which is understood by all key partners working with children, young people and families in County Durham
- Work with families through Education and Children and Young People Services to address the damage that ASB can cause
- Explore potential interventions and evidence base to support parents with children involved in ASB
- Produce, maintain and distribute a 'go to' directory of key contacts and available diversionary schemes

Priority Outcomes

- Increased awareness of access to ASB services and support pathways
- Appropriate and tailored support to meet the needs of victims of ASB
- Victims feel confident and in control of their case, trusting agencies to act in their best interests.
- Perpetrators of ASB are supported to prevent / reduce reoffending and the severity of offending.

Key performance measures

- % Increase in reporting of ASB incidents.
- % resolution of ASB cases
- % service satisfaction (feedback from Victims / complainants)
- No of case review referrals and appeals

Area of Focus: PLACES

ASB Delivery Plan 2024-25

Reduce the overall incidence of ASB and its impact on individuals, communities. We will:-

- Advocate early intervention and prevention measures as part of community remedies.
- Establish links to community platforms and provide everyone with the opportunity to understand local issues and contribute to solutions.
- Develop regular Community Engagement events and Education campaigns
- Promote and implement community initiatives and discretionary activities.

Target interventions in localities (areas) and places where ASB incidence or risks of harm are highest . We will:-

- Target available resources at those situations where risk of harm to individuals and impact on communities and places is highest
- Develop a risk assessment approach to inform and rank local ASB issues, assess victim vulnerability to support 'hot spot policing' and targeted interventions.
- Tackle long term empty homes and abandoned buildings which are a target for ASB and a blight within the community

Take a victim centred approach and champion the development and use of Community Standards to promote neighbourly behaviour. We will :-

- Undertake regular consultation and engagement events with local communities to inform service developments and partnership initiatives
- Engage with local social housing providers and private landlords as part of the multi-agency approach to problem solving.
- Facilitate and promote the development of a Local Community Safety Charter

Reduce the risk, harm and severity of ASB in our neighbourhoods. We will:

- Utilise all methods of engagement inviting communities to co-design solutions when resolving issues, such as ASB questionnaires, door knocks and wider consultation with residential and business communities
- Undertake street activity audits and walkabouts to capture local community intelligence and visualise community impact from ASB
- Deliver awareness campaigns and preventative measures around ASB including increased visible policing, CCTV coverage, Pub Watch and Neighbourhood watch schemes

Priority Outcomes

- Communities do not tolerate ASB in any form and report through incidents and intelligence to help partners tackle ASB behaviour.
- Partners resources are targeted appropriately.
- Communities are empowered and enabled to ensure the needs and issues within their neighbourhoods are addressed and victims are supported.
- Improved feeling of safety within communities

Key performance measures

- Outputs / outcomes from Targeted Policing / TLPs / Street audits within hot spot areas
- % Reduction in ASB incidents in targeted areas
- No empty properties brought back into use / demolished
- Community feedback from engagement events / awareness campaigns / Community Safety Charters

Appendix 3: Our local definition of ASB

ASB Types	Category
Personal	Intimidation / harassment / abuse
Environment	Abandoned Cars
	Criminal Damage / Vandalism / Graffiti
	Environmental cleanliness <i>E.g., Litter, fly-tipping, untidy yards /gardens, abandoned shopping trolleys, drug paraphernalia.</i>
	Pollution <i>E.g., associated with smoke, light, smells.</i>
Nuisance	Animal related problems <i>E.g., Stray or uncontrolled animals.</i>
	Deliberate fires
	Drug / substance misuse and/or dealing
	Loitering / pestering <i>E.g., Aggressive begging.</i>
	Noise <i>E.g., Parties, loud music, noisy neighbours, noisy cars, alarms, excessive DIY or car repairs pubs/clubs/industry.</i>
	Nuisance Behaviour <i>E.g., climbing on buildings, throwing missiles, letting down tyres, inappropriate use of fireworks, knocking on door and windows.</i>
	Rowdy Behaviour <i>E.g., Shouting, swearing, fighting, drunken behaviour, hooliganism, loutish behaviour.</i>
	Vehicle Nuisance <i>E.g., Speeding, joyriding, off-road motorbikes</i>

Our local definition of ASB does not consider the following to be ASB:

- boundary disputes;
- children playing in a street or communal area;
- young people gathering socially, unless they are intimidating;
- minor personal disputes and differences;
- everyday living noises (e.g. flushing toilets, using stairs, vacuuming);
- not being able to park outside your house / someone else parking outside your house.