

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

## **Gravesham Borough Council**

**Report to:** Community & Leisure Cabinet Committee

**Date:** 15 September 2020

**Reporting officer:** Community Safety Operations Manager

**Subject:** Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Update

### **Purpose and summary of report:**

To update on progress with the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That the Committee comments on progress with the ASB Strategy and associated actions.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy was published in March 2020 and an ASB Strategy Delivery Group was put in place to co-ordinate delivery of the Strategy. This comprises officers from across the Council, including Community Safety, Housing, Waste Management, Private Housing, Planning Enforcement, Environmental Protection, Leisure Service, Community Engagement, Licensing, Digital and Communications.
- 1.2 The focus has been on taking forward an Action Plan in relation to the Strategy's key priorities:
  - 1.2.1 Prevention and community involvement;
  - 1.2.2 Early identification;
  - 1.2.3 Supportive intervention;
  - 1.2.4 Enforcement; and,
  - 1.2.5 Communication and reassurance (cutting across each of the above)
- 1.3 This report updates on actions to date.
- 1.4 There have been significant increases in ASB reported during the pandemic (see Corporate Plan Q1 Performance Report, also on this agenda). This increase

appears to relate to more people being at home resulting in e.g. noise nuisance complaints, bonfires, etc. and reports of breaches of COVID-19 restrictions, e.g. household and other gatherings, parking in the vicinity of parks, etc.

## 2. Prevention and Community Involvement

### 2.1 Reducing environmental damage

- 2.1.1 6 additional street cleansing operatives have been recruited to enhance cleansing activities within the Town Centre.
- 2.1.2 New equipment for the removal of chewing gum, grime and pollution from pavements and a new road sweeper for use in the Town Centre and beyond.
- 2.1.3 The *No More Litter* communications campaign has been revived – posters distributed to independent cafes and takeaways and signage has been erected at entrances to parks and in the Town Centre. This has been bolstered by social media posts accompanied by photographs of community litter picking activities.
- 2.1.4 The *No More Litter* campaign will develop to complement the launch of *Adopt a Street - The Street Champions* in September 2020. 168 volunteers have registered for this and 151 streets, pathways, alleyways and open spaces have been proposed for adoption.
- 2.1.5 Resident sign up to the Great British Clean Up have been postponed until September 2020.
- 2.1.6 Community litter picking has resumed with changes in place to make activities COVID-19 secure.
- 2.1.7 Mars Wrigley anti-gum littering weatherproof signage will be installed in the Town Centre at the appropriate time to avoid signage overload.
- 2.1.8 Talks in schools are currently suspended, but will be reviewed by the Waste Projects & Compliance Officer now that schools are reopening.

### 2.2 Promote good disposal of household waste

- 2.2.1 Gravesham and Kent-wide social media campaign activity, covering litter, fly-tipping and the recycling. Recycle Week and the Great British September Clean will be promoted in September 2020.
- 2.2.2 Kent-wide videos informing the public about what happens to their recycling and refuse are in production by the Kent Resource Partnership for release early 2021.
- 2.2.3 The Bin Contamination Policy to tackle repeat contamination of recycling bins was approved by the Council in June for launch in September 2020. This will educate residents about correct recycling with the aim of minimising rejected bins left uncollected.
- 2.2.4 *A Your Recycling and Waste Services* leaflet has been produced for distribution to new housing developments and to letting agents. Street

Champions will be issued with copies of the leaflet and are asked to continue to report waste management issues via a dedicated mailbox.

- 2.2.5 Targeted approaches to specific streets and neighbourhoods where there are instances of ongoing fly-tipping from people living nearby.
- 2.2.6 40 *We Are Watching - CCTV Active Locally* glow-in-the-dark signs have been put up in 'hot spot' fly-tipping locations across the Borough. These have proved to be a deterrent in other areas.
- 2.2.7 Litter bin signage has been amended to make clear that litter bins can also be used as dog waste bins. New litter bins will be placed in St Andrew's Gardens.
- 2.2.8 Safer Place Officers continue to patrol public spaces, deterring ASB, littering and signposting to services.
- 2.2.9 The Town Centre Public Space Protection Order is currently out to consultation for an extension of the current Order which is due to expire in October 2020.

### **3. Prevention and Intervention**

- 3.1 Progress is being made to collate information on fly-tipping 'hot-spots', including liaison with KCC. This will support the activity of the new Environmental Enforcement Manager, as set out per below.
- 3.2 Community engagement activity has been somewhat reduced with Covid-19 restrictions.
- 3.3 New GBC Housing newsletter to be developed by Communication Teams, who have been asked to include a 2 x A4 article on responsible waste disposal.

### **4. Supportive Intervention**

- 4.1 Identifying underlying safeguarding and vulnerability concerns, referrals to support agencies and information being shared between agencies has been ongoing across the Council. Key agencies attend both the Gravesham Vulnerability Panel and Rough Sleeper Initiative. Further progress is being made with all staff being reminded of the referral process for safeguarding vulnerable adults.
- 4.2 ASB officers as part of any investigation refer individuals/families to respective agency for support and will follow up the referral and work closely with the identified agency to resolve ASB issues. Working with partner agencies is a key part of the ASB officers' role in addressing ASB and any support needs identified.
- 4.3 The Government extended the stay on the Court dealing with possession claims by 4 weeks to 20 September 2020. It also extended the notice periods that landlords are required to give to tenants; this was extended to 3 months back when Covid-19 started. From 29 August 2020, landlords are required to give tenants 6 months' notice of their intention to seek possession of the property there are some exceptions to this, including rent arrears and nuisance/annoyance/illegal or immoral use of the property.

## **5. Enforcement**

- 5.1 The Council's Environmental Enforcement Manager will start mid-September. This new post will focus on enforcement activity in respect of fly-tipping, litter offences, abandoned vehicles and tent encampments. The new Officer will be based in the Community Safety Unit and manage the Safer Place Officers.
- 5.2 Restructuring of the Community Safety Unit has brought environmental enforcement alongside parking enforcement, the Anti-Social Behaviour Housing Officers and Safer Place Officers. This strengthens the Council's response to ASB co-ordination.
- 5.3 During the pandemic the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices was suspended and the Safer Place Officers supported essential operational tasks in support of vulnerable persons in the community and visiting the parks to respond to littering concerns and undertaking social distancing checks.
- 5.4 From June, the Safer Place Officers returned to normal duties, but have currently been reduced in number due to two vacancies and one long term health issue.

## **6. Communication and Reassurance**

- 6.1 The ASB strategy recognises that improved reporting, co-operation across the Council and co-ordinated action alongside other partners in respect of ASB is essential to responding to ASB.
- 6.2 To assist this steps are being taken to ensure that ASB incidents are recorded and shared effectively via a Council-wide ASB database. Options for this range from additions to existing databases used within the Council, development of a new database within the Council that can draw upon information collated, or acquisition of a database available on the market, such as those used by other local authorities. These are being investigated with the Council's digital team and service departments. Each has advantages and disadvantages in terms of their capabilities and their ease of use, especially is alongside existing databases.
- 6.3 This is seen as a high priority in demonstrating the delivery of the Strategy and ensuring a more 'joined up' approach. Steps are being taken to move this forward and to have in place a workable system, as soon as possible.
- 6.4 Additional communications activity is referenced above in this report.

## **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 There are no background papers pertaining to this report.

Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
<b>Legal</b>	No
<b>Finance and Value for Money</b>	Any additional costs related to an ASB database will be explored fully and reported through the Council's budget monitoring/setting process.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	<p data-bbox="416 562 1520 658"><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p data-bbox="416 678 1520 837">a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of <a href="#">personal data</a> or <a href="#">special category data</a> or <a href="#">criminal offence data</a>? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links.</p> <p data-bbox="416 846 1520 913">b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice?</p> <p data-bbox="416 981 1520 1048">c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at <a href="mailto:gdpr@medway.gov.uk">gdpr@medway.gov.uk</a>.</p>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	<p data-bbox="416 1120 1520 1279">a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p data-bbox="416 1288 1520 1406">b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p data-bbox="416 1415 1520 1512"><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
<b>Corporate Plan</b>	# 1 People - Create Stronger Neighbourhoods - Work with Kent Police on the prevention, detection and reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, and the safeguarding of local residents.
<b>Climate Change</b>	The are elements of the Council's Climate Change action plan, including expansion of waste and recycling facilities, together with education initiatives that accord with ASB Strategy work.
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	Addressing this issue will improve the quality of life of those living in the area and reduce environmental crime.
<b>Digital and website implications</b>	Digital Team expertise required for exploration of ASB database.
<b>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</b>	Progress will assist in identifying risk and vulnerability.