

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

## **Gravesham Borough Council**

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

**Date:** 3 June 2021

**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 since last update in September 2020.

### **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 A recent Community Safety public consultation Public consultation received a total of 184 responses. Of these, 88 (47.8%) of the respondents live in Gravesham; 59 (32.1%) both live and work in Borough; 33 (17.9%) work but do not live in the Borough; and 4 (2.2%) live and study in Gravesham.
- 1.3 Residents were asked to select the top 3 most important issues that they believe affect community safety most significantly and to prioritise their choices.
- 1.4 More than half of all respondents (102 or 55.4%) identified ASB as their single greatest priority (in the last Community Safety Survey completed in February 2019, ASB was also the greatest priority although then by 40% of all respondents).

## Consultation Top ASB Concerns

| Issue  | Top concerns related to this issue  |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>ASB</b> (170 respondents chose ASB as one of their top 3 issues and 169 responded to this question) | Alcohol-related ASB (44/9.1%)<br>ASB – drug dealing/drug use (78/16.1%)<br>Criminal damage (68/14.0%)<br>Dog fouling (34/7.0%)<br>Fire/arson-related ASB (8/1.6%)<br>Fly-tipping (91/18.8%) | Irresponsible parking (19/3.9%)<br>Littering (37/7.6%)<br>Noisy/rowdy behaviour (54/11.1%)<br>Nuisance bikes/scooters (38/7.8%)<br>Nuisance vehicles (cars) (9/1.9%)<br>Unauthorised encampments (5/1.1%) |

- 1.5 The focus has been on taking forward an Action Plan in relation to the Strategy's key priorities:
- 1.5.1 Prevention and community involvement;
  - 1.5.2 Early identification;
  - 1.5.3 Supportive intervention;
  - 1.5.4 Enforcement; and,
  - 1.5.5 Communication and reassurance (cutting across each of the above)
- 1.6 This report updates on actions to date.

## 2. Prevention and Community Involvement

- 2.1 Reducing environmental damage
- 2.1.1 Community Litter Picking, or our 'Adopt a Street' network of Street Champions. Improving the litter bins in areas such as Camer Park providing two bulk bins in aesthetically pleasing housings for general waste and for recycling by the car park, so that users of the park have every opportunity to correctly dispose of their litter.
  - 2.1.2 Street Champions scheme consists of over 342 active volunteers across the borough who have pledged to 'adopt' more than 254 streets, parks and alleyways. The Street Champions do more than litter picking - they act as our eyes and ears; reporting fly tipping, graffiti and other problems to us. Some volunteers even suggest locations for new litter bins and educational signage.
  - 2.1.3 Volunteers are supplied with their own litter picker, a hoop to hold rubbish sacks open, a Hi-Viz jacket and orange waste sacks. Volunteers are free to litter pick as often as they like and usually we ask that waste is left in our orange sacks next to any of our litter bins so that they can be removed by our Operatives as soon as possible.

- 2.1.4 Improving the litter bins in areas such as Camer Park providing two bulk bins in aesthetically pleasing housings for general waste and for recycling by the car park, so that users of the park have every opportunity to correctly dispose of their litter. Work has begun to replace the bins at Woodlands Park and the Riverside Leisure Area and a new project is also being planned for litter bin replacement on the main routes into Gravesend and at the shopping parades across the borough.
- 2.1.5 WMU working on a system to engage Members on a Ward level and we are currently preparing to support community clean-up events for the Great British Spring Clean (28th May - 13th June).
- 2.2 Promote good disposal of household waste
  - 2.2.1 WMU have provided all Lettings Agents within the borough with a waste information leaflet for tenant welcome packs, which will hopefully ensure that new residents have the right information and signposting to other resources. The WMU are also engaging with the Environmental Enforcement Team to ensure that properties and landlords that do not manage their waste responsibly are given the correct information and Section 46 Notices where appropriate.

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

- 3.1 Creation of new post of Specialist Housing Officer to operate in the Denton area, covering Housing owned property within the area and the Denton Caravan site and specialising in dealing with the traveller community.
- 3.2 Training via Chartered Institute of Housing has been undertaken by Housing Officers covering ASB with the aim of being more consistent in approach and use of all legal remedies.
- 3.3 The Town Centre Public Space Protection Order for Alcohol Control in place until 2023.
- 3.4 Public Space Protection Order for Dog Fouling in place until 2023.
- 3.5 A new drop-off point in Gravesend for charity crisp packet recycling.
- 3.6 Lead Safeguarding Officer updated Safeguarding Policy with training to be set-up for staff and rolled out to Members.
- 3.7 New updated Council Tenants Handbook in process.
- 3.8 Specialist Housing Officer now in post to operate in the Denton area, covering Housing owned property within the area and the Denton Caravan site and specialising in dealing with the traveller community.
- 3.9 New Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy which took effect from 1 May includes new provisions to reflect national statutory standards brought in last year which primarily aim to improve the fitness and propriety of licence holders. Such measures include 6 monthly enhanced DBS checks for drivers, Annual basic DBS checks for vehicle licence holders, Annual basic DBS checks for operators, and their staff, and plans to extend the content in our safeguarding and CSE awareness training, to include County Lines Exploitation awareness.

3.10 E-scooters advice and regulations promoted in Your Borough Magazine.

#### **4. Supportive Intervention**

- 4.1 Continuation in identifying underlying safeguarding and vulnerability concerns, referrals to support agencies and information shared between agencies has been ongoing across the Council. Key agencies attend both the Gravesham Vulnerability Panel and Rough Sleeper Initiative.
- 4.2 Safeguarding Policy Lead Safeguarding Officer updated Safeguarding Policy with training to be arranged for staff and rolled out to Members
- 4.3 Council Safeguarding Champions list in process of review to identify key staff across departments.
- 4.4 Rough Sleeper initiative continues to work with vulnerable rough sleeper and those at risk of homelessness.

#### **5. Enforcement**

- 5.1 An improved approach to dealing with littering/fly-tipping offences since the arrival of the Environmental Enforcement Manager.
- 5.2 The Street Scene Enforcement Officers (previously Safer Place Officers) have increased in number from 3 to 5 (one currently out to advert).
- 5.3 A dedicated Environmental Crime Investigator who deals with complicated and protracted investigations.
- 5.4 The Street Scene Enforcement Officers role streamlined to focus on environmental crime prevention and enforcement.
- 5.5 Since December 2020, Four (4) FPNs issued for litter offences and twenty two (22) FPNs for Fly-tipping. There has also been 108 Community Protection Notice Warnings and three Community Protection Notice issued for environmental offences.
- 5.6 One case is currently with the legal team for prosecution and approximately 20 other cases are in preparation for court prosecution.
- 5.7 Since December 2020, the team have attended several hundred fly-tipping offences and carried out around 170 investigations.
- 5.8 The Communications Team has publicised a number of fly-tipping prosecutions and this has received very favourable feedback from the community.
- 5.9 Eviction of resident on Mandatory Grounds after conviction of cultivating drugs in property.
- 5.10 The commencement of an estate inspection programme with all estates inspected on a monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly basis depending on size of estate. These will pick up on environmental nuisance such as rubbish, fly-tipping and vandalism and have undertaken inspections with Street Scene Enforcement for greater co-ordination of service/enforcement across the council.
- 5.11 Gravesham Community Safety Unit now independent and no longer in partnership with Dartford Council with a more focused approach on Gravesham.

- 5.12 Restructure of Community Safety Partnership has seen creation of new Working Group including Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Group, Area Based Action Group and Youth Engagement Panel.
- 5.13 New Community Safety Project Coordinator recruited in April to lead on area based ant-social behaviour.
- 5.14 Community Safety Unit web pages updated.
- 5.15 Abandoned vehicles process now with Parking Services and working well.

## **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 Public Consultation completed yearly as part of Community Safety Partnership.
- 6.3 New Community Safety Unit Database currently under testing; the new IT system, which will incorporate procedures and a staged approach to enforcement action.
- 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>                 | None to Report  |
| <b>Risk Assessment</b>                             | Not Applicable  |
| <b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>           | <p><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>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>?<br/>A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice?</p> <p>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>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.<br/>No</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer.<br/>No</p> <p><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>                              | None  |
| <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.   |