

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Community and Leisure Cabinet Committee

Date: 10 November 2022

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 the last update in June 2021.

Recommendations:

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

Key Implications:	
Item	Implications
Legal	
Finance and Value for Money	No adverse effect on finances for planned activities. No spend above departmental budgets. Grant funding has been sought via Violence Reduction Unit.
Corporate Plan	# People. A proud community, where residents can call a safe, clean and attractive borough their home.
Climate Change	

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour [ASB Strategy](#) was published in September 2019 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. This report updates on actions to date.

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.

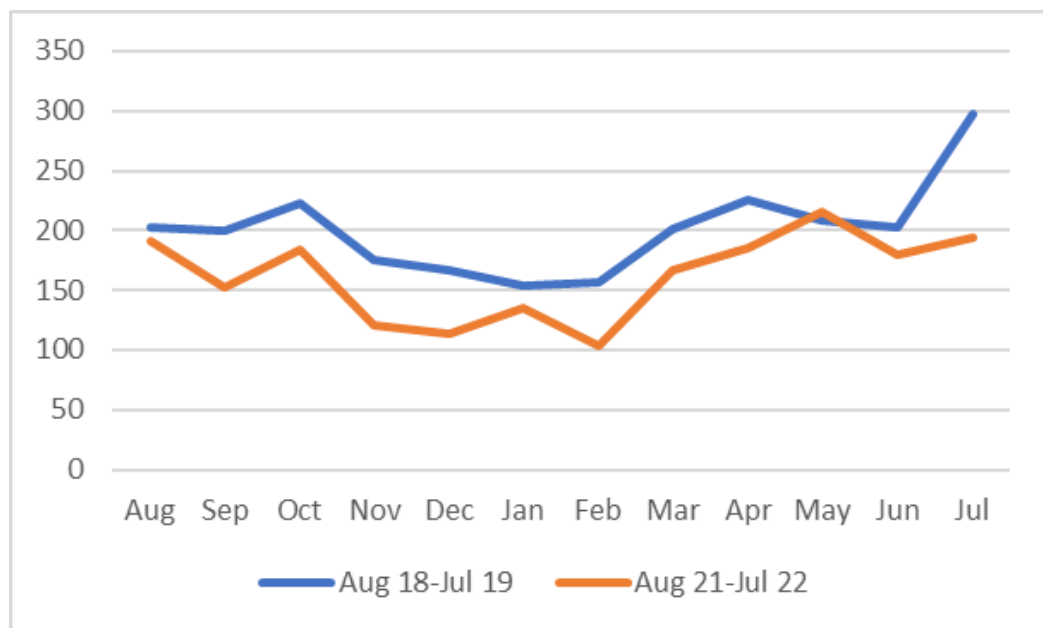
1.2.2 Early identification.

1.2.3 Supportive intervention.

1.2.4 Enforcement; and,

1.2.5 Communication and reassurance (cutting across each of the above).

1.3 ASB incidents reported to Kent Police are routinely monitored as one indicator of levels of ASB in the Borough. During the Covid-19 pandemic there was a significant increase in the number of ASB incidents recorded both nationally and locally. However, this was primarily due to a considerable number of calls to Police that concerned breaches of Covid-19 social distancing rules and that were recorded within the ASB offence category. Therefore, the most recently published Kent Police data for the 12 months August 2021-July 2022 is provided below with data for the same period in 2018-2019 to provide a more reliable comparison. This demonstrates that overall levels of reported incidents have generally been at a lower level in the most recent year and most significantly, 298 ASB incidents were recorded in the month of July 2019 compared to 194 incidents in July 2022 (a reduction of almost 35%).



2. Prevention and Community Involvement

2.1 Reducing Environmental damage

2.1.1 The "The Street Champions" initiative, now has 458 volunteers. To date, 311 streets have been adopted.

2.1.2 In 2021-22, volunteers collected 2,857 sacks of litter in 1,052 litter picks that have been reported to the Council.

- 2.1.3 Between April and June 2022, 1,121 sacks of litter were collected by volunteers in 618 litter picks.
 - 2.1.4 A 'Meet & Greet' event was held in May 2022 at which Street Champions, Officers & Members were able to meet, network & exchange ideas. Featured in the North Kent Neighbourhood Watch Association newsletter. Regular Police attendance with some degree of success.
 - 2.1.5 In Spring 2022, bespoke anti-littering signage for The Hill, The Hive and the rural parts of the borough (via Parish Councils) was launched.
 - 2.1.6 Six months since the implementation of a new Bin Contamination Policy the number of rejected bins reported & left uncollected has fallen by 27%. In the 11 months since the campaign began, more than 2,000 properties have received educational letters, leaflets & visits.
 - 2.1.7 Bin stores are being stickered, and residents are receiving leaflets to explain how to recycle correctly to ensure that their recycling bins are not contaminated and left uncollected. Bin stores are being stickered, and residents are receiving leaflets to explain how to recycle correctly to ensure that their recycling bins are not contaminated and left uncollected. To date, residents at 964 flats have been engaged with so far.
 - 2.1.8 Waste Management working with Environmental Enforcement Team written to properties in 'hot spot' areas where black sacks and other items are commonly dumped, explaining the waste collection rules, our bulky waste service and the penalties for fly-tipping.
- 2.2 Promote good disposal of household waste
- 2.2.1 Where bins are left on the pavements or sacks are put out early, educational letters are sent to the occupiers of these properties. As part of the new Council website, Officers are looking to include a form for residents to report bins on the pavement or sacks put out early.
 - 2.2.2 A trial was also undertaken at the Dickens Estate which included writing to properties to ask residents to move their vehicles on set days to enable thorough road sweeping to take place. This was well-received and was followed up with an educational letter about managing waste responsibly. The educational letter and additional street cleaning have also been undertaken around Denton.
 - 2.2.3 An educational letter was sent to properties in Peacock Street and Edwin Street.

3. Prevention and Intervention

- 3.1 Abandoned vehicles now with Environmental Enforcement. There were more than 600 reports made via GBC website, plus other reports that come from Love Clean Streets, Fix My Streets and internal emails from many various departments over the last 2 years. From these 603 reports of abandoned vehicles, 30 were removed.
- 3.2 Gravesham Council Officers can refer cases of concern to the sub-groups of the Community Safety Partnership and thus improving prevention, intervention and communication across departments. These groups include Gravesham Vulnerability Panel; Youth Engagement Panel; Serious Organised Crime Group; Area-Based Action Group; Modern Slavery Working Group.

- 3.3 Best Bar None (BBN) – working alongside Kent Police and G-Safe BBN was launched in June 2022. Voluntary and free scheme for all premises that are selling alcohol; aim is to improve their management standards; address ASB related issues around alcohol and night-time economy; each premise that would like to take part will be assessed by trained assessors. Assessors training completed for our borough. Led by Kent Police across the County, but with local authorities' help. Best Bar None is a nation-wide initiative that proved to be successful and reduced ASB in certain areas.
- 3.4 Internal Service Level Agreement between Environmental Protection (EP) and Housing on handling noise nuisance complaints established and implemented. In summary, Housing will be responsible for issues at GBC properties, EP will cover the rest of the borough. Full noise procedure and suite of template letters provided to Housing to follow/use as appropriate. Joined up working between managers has been very positive.
- 3.5 Report a smoke nuisance (including bonfires) on GBC webpages:
<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/environmental-health/smoke-air-pollution-1>
- 3.6 Housing Services upgraded and expanded their CCTV cameras to cover key location around their portfolio. The Council operates a number of closed circuit television (CCTV) systems on its council managed housing estates within the Borough to promote the safety and security of users of its buildings and to protect the asset value of those buildings it owns and controls. The system managed by Kyndi is an observational and retrieval function which promotes the health, safety and security of residents, staff and other users of buildings, communal areas and open spaces. It also helps to maintain asset value of properties and equipment owned by the council by deterring/ preventing vandalism or theft.
- 3.7 An Estate Management Policy has been introduced with the aim to ensure services are provided to residents to enable them to have a quiet enjoyment of their homes in a safe and secure environment that they can take pride in. A clean and tidy estate means a lot to residents and because of this it is important to have clear standards as to what they can expect and demonstrate that the Council is committed to making sure residents have estates that are clean and cared for, safe and secure and in a good state of repair.
- 3.8 Rate My Estate Inspections have been introduced to ensure that council-managed properties and estates are kept clean and in good condition, inspections are carried out once a month to assess caretaking standards. These are carried out by nominated officers within the service and take into account all areas within a block or within a specified inspection area. The scoring system is based on a traffic light system, green is the standard we aim for, amber means satisfactory and red means poor.
- 3.9 Robust estate inspections undertaken by the Housing Officer has been introduced and promoted which is in addition to the monthly caretaking inspections. An estate inspection is an inspection of the exterior and communal parts, facilities and grounds of an estate comprising blocks of flats or a mixture of flats and houses built on land managed by the Housing, The purpose of these inspections is to review the management of the whole estate in line with the elements set out within the Estate Management Policy and people's tenancy agreement.
- 3.10 In order to combat some of the issues on our estates, communal improvement works have been undertaken which included the upgrading of lighting, both internally and externally as well as widening the door entry systems to restrict unauthorised access to the landing areas of our buildings.

4. Supportive Intervention

- 4.1 Homeless Outreach supportive intervention well established. Reporting of homeless can be completed via Streetlink: <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/>. This is then triaged by Housing Homeless team and Officers attend.
- 4.2 Rough Sleeper Initiative supporting rough sleepers with in-reach and outreach workers providing support, engagement and move on into more permanent accommodation.
- 4.3 Adult and Children Safeguarding training has been delivered across departments.
- 4.4 Prevent Awareness sessions delivered to Officers.
- 4.5 Several ASB related training sessions delivered to Housing Officers including use to Community Protection Warnings and Notices with more tailored training in dealing with anti-social behaviour. The Housing Management Team have undertaken specialist training with RESOLVE, recognised as a Centre of Excellence focussing on community safety and anti social behaviour, specifically around CPWs (Community Protection Warnings) and CPNs (Community Protection Notices). This has led to a more focussed and effective use of these tools to tackle ASB and nuisance such as noise and fly-tipping.

5. Enforcement

- 5.1 8 Premises Closures for the sale of illicit cigarettes and tobacco.
- 5.2 Environmental Enforcement Team embedded and making a significant impact on enforcement of fly-tipping across the Borough.
- 5.3 A number fly-tipping fines in excess of £20k have been issued following Court hearings (Environmental Enforcement).
- 5.4 Between October 2021 to the December 2021 the Environmental Enforcement Team issued 9 £400 Fines for fly tipping. In addition, 3 Fixed penalties have been issued for failing in a householders duty of care.
- 5.5 More than 270 Community Protection Warnings and more than 10 Community Protection Notices have been issued since June 2021.

6. Communication and Reassurance

- 6.1 New CSU ASB database active (Phase One). Phase Two and led by our IT Team is to interrogate all areas where information is held then be able to extract information to what will be essentially the central hub where information is held. Our aim is an interactive meta-dataset, that functions proactively on data that's held inside or outside the council.
- 6.2 New Group email established to create an enquiry platform across departments.
- 6.3 The new Housing Management System will go live imminently. In establishing the new system, officers have worked closely with MRI, the supplier of the system, to create robust processes that ensures all ASB cases are dealt with effectively and fairly. The action list added to cases, developed specifically for each case-type, guides the Officer dealing with the case through the process, and helps maintain the required level of contact with both the alleged perpetrator and the victim. Each case-type has an agreed deadline for actions to be taken and the system has a traffic light system for actions due so Officers are fully aware of what is required

- and by when. By working with MRI officers have also improved the reporting availability for cases so a better picture of the issues on our Estates can be seen. Anyone with the correct level of access can progress or monitor any case. This means anyone answering a call from a tenant will be able to see the exact stage the case is at. It allows management to scrutinise what is going on with cases and helps Officers better manage cases so that none are left without the required action(s) taken or contact made. It also helps Managers ensure an even allocation of work between Officers and gives them the ability to move a case from one Officer to another if the Officer dealing with the case is unavailable.
- 6.4 Officers in Housing Management, Independent Living Team and Housing Income Team have been issued with i-pads so that they are able to work remotely, completing complete tenancy audits whilst on site, add notes and issue letters e.g. pet agreement letter etc.
 - 6.5 A new digital database on DASH is also being prepared to enable other departments to view progress and case history. The new database will be automatically updated by our Bartec Street Cleansing system which will update the report on the case in real-time - this is still being worked on by the digital team and a further update will be given in due course.
 - 6.6 Fly-tipping prosecutions publicised via social media with some large fines issued.
 - 6.7 Abandoned Vehicle Information on GBC website:
<https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/parking/abandoned-vehicles-1>
 - 6.8 Community Safety seasonal safety shop ran from 6-11 December.
 - 6.9 Community Events (such as ASB Awareness Week) publicised widely.
 - 6.9.1 ASB Awareness Week held between 18-23 July 2022. Few outcomes of the event: Kent Police security marked 44 bikes in total; 152 people attended the Prevent webinar – the highest attendance organised by Community Safety; 9 locations around Borough were attended with pop-up stands; Environmental Health Animal Control Team microchipped 1 dog but had a lot of engagement during the Woodlands Park Event; CSU provided safety advice/gadgets to adults and kids – the missing child bracelet was a hit (Appendix One and Two).
 - 6.9.2 Pop up stands were in Higham, Vigo, Perry Street, Medhurst Gardens, The Hive, Valley Drive Parade, Instead Rise, Carl Ekman House and St Patrick's gardens (Appendix One).
 - 6.9.3 Raised awareness of County Lines movie (52 bookings in the Woodville)
 - 6.9.4 Finale in Woodlands Park with Kent County Council Youth Services, Olympia Boxing; Charlton Football coaches; as well as Stop the Traffik, Environmental Health, Community Safety; The Grand; Kent Police and the Kent Fire & Rescue Service crew including fire engine managed to visit us on Saturday in Woodlands Park.
 - 6.10 Housing - there have been two partnership events held with Kent Police at Wallis Park and Dalefield Estate where copies of 'My Community Voice' were distributed to residents – leaflet contained information on how to report crimes and encourages residents to sign up for Neighbourhood Watch alerts.
 - 6.11 Community Safety Unit Closure Orders on 8 premises covered by social media.

7. Further planned activities

- 7.1 Progression on new ASB database
- 7.2 Delivery of Safer Streets Home Office Project
- 7.3 Improvements to CCTV and street Heritage lighting.
- 7.4 Best Bar None inspections to begin.
- 7.5 Evening and Night-time economy audit.
- 7.6 Deliver annual ASB Awareness Week.
- 7.7 Delivery of Youth Diversion Project (Violence Reduction Unit funded).
- 7.8 Seasonal Safety initiatives

8. Appendices

- 8.1 ASB Awareness Week Plan (Appendix One).
- 8.2 ASB Awareness Week summary (Appendix Two).

9. Background Documents

- 9.1 There are no background documents.
- 9.2 The following background documents were used:

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Secondary Implications	
Risk Assessment	NA
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<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>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links. personal data processed in a non-automated manner which forms part of, or is intended to form part of, a 'filing system' (that is, manual information in a filing system. No</p>
	<p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? NA</p>
	<p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk. Click here to start typing</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<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. 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. NA</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>
Crime and Disorder	Tackline ASB is identified as a priority within the Gravesham Community Safety Partnership's Community Safety Strategy .
Digital and website implications	Currently ASB performance data relates to reports received by Kent Police. An ASB database has been developed to collate additional data to provide a more comprehensive view on the impacts of ASB on Gravesham's communities.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	The impact of ASB may at times encompass a need to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.