

**Select Committee Community Safety and Community Services**  
**2 September 2010**

**Report of the Chief Executive**  
**Anti- Social Behaviour Minimum Service Standards**

**Purpose of Report**

1. This report is to inform Committee Members of progress made to date in establishing a set of common minimum service standards in response to complaints of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

**Background**

2. Tackling anti-social behaviour is a key priority of Dudley Council and of its key partners. It remains a key priority of the new coalition Government. Across England and Wales, establishing minimum service standards for tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has been a significant theme of Community Safety Partnerships, and a pre-eminent one for many organisations whose core business is focused on reducing and managing ASB. This was given considerable impetus following the tragic deaths of Fiona and Francesca Pilkington in October 2007. All local Community Safety Partnerships were mandated by the then Home Secretary, Alan Johnson, to produce and publicise minimum standards for their response to anti-social behaviour by 31 March 2010. A number of specific areas were highlighted for attention:

- Reducing ASB perceptions year on year
- Taking reported cases of ASB seriously: recording, investigating, and keeping victims informed of actions taken.
- Providing regularly information to residents as to what action is being taken to tackle ASB
- Offering support and practical help to victims of ASB
- Ensuring an effective link between neighbourhood policing and neighbourhood management
- Providing residents with a right of complaint to CDRPs if effective action is not taken by local agencies through existing channels.

Following meetings between managers from DMBC Housing, Dudley MBC Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, and West Midlands Police, a set of minimum service standards were agreed ahead of the 31 March deadline. These are attached and can be viewed on the *safe and sound* website.

These standards were derived in part from a small number of case studies of examples submitted by other partnerships to the Home Office. In other respects however, Dudley went further. In particular, Dudley introduced the principle of having a flexible time formula for action that is negotiated between agency and complainant, the provisos being that the timescale be timely and prompt, and that it accords to an assessment of the vulnerability of each complainant.

In terms of marketing the standards, the safe & sound, DMBC, and West Midlands Police websites were updated in March. Through the spring and summer, they have either appeared, or else are imminently to appear, on screens in doctors' surgeries, and within editions of Dudley Together, Dudley Matters, Home Affairs, and local West Midlands police newsletters.

West Midlands Police are currently reshaping their processes and procedures for managing ASB complaints. At the heart of this is the drive to improve the service provided to ASB complainants, and to have clear processes for identifying and protecting vulnerable victims. Dudley Council's ASBU is conducting its own review of how to grade cases and recognise vulnerability. DMBC Housing is doing similarly. A corporate review of ASB is intended for the latter half of 2010.

In the interim, further work continues in order to establish good joint reviewing and action planning processes, with the identification of vulnerable victims being of key importance. The latter point is crucial in terms of determining where and how the most effective support for victims can be targeted. Progress has been made between DMBC and West Midlands Police in terms of routinely notifying each other of ASB complaints. Discussions are in progress with Victim Support regarding cases of non-crime ASB.

Across the wider West Midlands region, it is hoped that there can be a set of agreed set of Minimum Service Standards, along with common ASB definitions and criteria for assessing vulnerability.

### **Finance**

3. There are no immediate implications arising from this report

### **Law**

4. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council is empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

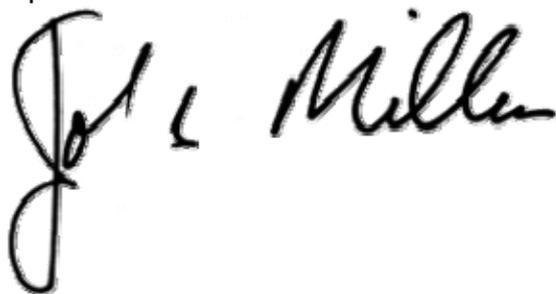
The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act places a statutory duty on the local authority to work with partner agencies, and to do all it reasonably can to reduce crime and disorder within its jurisdiction.

### **Equality Impact**

This report is in accordance with the council's equality and diversity policy

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the committee note the information contained in this report.



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**On behalf of the Chief Executive**

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Anti- Social Behaviour - Minimum Standards of Response**

#### **Dudley**

Dudley *safe and sound* Community Safety Partnership recognises that anti-social behaviour, where it occurs, can be a serious problem that can affect the quality of the life of individuals, families and communities. Dudley is committed to preventing, tackling and resolving problems of anti-social behaviour.

The Partnership will continue to work together to reduce instances of anti-social behaviour by means of prevention, early intervention and effective enforcement. The partnership's aim is to make our residents feel that their neighbourhoods are safer and better places in which to live, work and visit.

#### **Our Key Roles are to:**

- Protect local people from intimidation, alarm, harassment and distress.
- Enable every member of the community to enjoy their home and neighbourhood safely and peacefully.

#### **The Partnership will ensure the following: -**

##### **1. Take reported cases of ASB seriously**

- ❖ All victims and witnesses are treated fairly with dignity and respect, with all instances of anti-social behaviour taken seriously, and their complaints heard fairly and sympathetically.
- ❖ Cases are investigated promptly, efficiently and thoroughly.

- ❖ There will be a shared assessment of the vulnerability of each complainant, and of any potential risks presented to them.
- ❖ All complainants will be told the name of the case officer who will be responsible for managing their case
- ❖ Interventions and action taken will be prompt and timely. They will be within a period negotiated and agreed with the complainant. This will be to suit the individual and will also include an assessment of that person's vulnerability.
- ❖ Complainants will have the right to give feedback on the response and service provided via a Customer Satisfaction Survey upon closure of their case.

## **2. Reduce Perceptions of ASB**

- ❖ Within the most recent Place Survey (2008) conducted in the borough, just over a fifth of all respondents (22.6%) said that anti-social behaviour was a problem around where they lived. Though this level of concern has been reduced by half in five years, we aim to reduce this further to 19.4% by the end of 2011.
- ❖ We will evaluate our progress on perceptions of anti social behaviour against the bi-annual Place Survey. We will separately monitor against the quarterly West Midlands Police "Feeling the Difference" survey. We will undertake periodic local surveys in areas that have either suffered high levels of ASB and where there has been focussed action.

## **3. Provide Regular Updates to Complainants and to Communities**

- ❖ Complainants will be consulted about a plan of action, and informed as to actions taken.
- ❖ Complainants are kept regularly informed of agencies' progress throughout the process about how their case is being dealt with. This will be negotiated and agreed with the complainant. Requests for an update will be responded to promptly.
- ❖ Communities will be kept informed what is happening within their neighbourhoods through a variety of means including police surgeries, PACT meetings, local newsletters, WMP neighbourhood policing website and leaflet distribution (when appropriate).
- ❖ Communities will be informed of Council led ASBOs against individuals who have committed acts of anti-social behaviour in the local area either through the media or by leaflet.

## **4. Right of Redress**

- ❖ Victims have the right of complaint to the Community Safety Partnership through their elected members, or by letter to the Chief Executive of

Dudley Council, when agencies have failed to take any action to address an ongoing series of anti-social behaviour directed towards an individual or individuals. This would be appropriate once the individual agencies' normal complaints procedures had been followed, and where the matter has not been resolved to the complainants' satisfaction.

#### **5. Offer support and practical help to victims of ASB**

- ❖ All relevant services and support that are available will be made known and explained to victims of ASB, and take-up encouraged.
- ❖ Where the complainant is judged to be vulnerable, the property can be made secure, along with a suite of other measures available to ensure their safety.

#### **6. Partner Agencies within a Neighbourhood**

- Once a complaint of anti-social behaviour is received, it will be entered on a database. Relevant partner agencies will then be engaged at the earliest opportunity, and will attempt to quickly resolve problems by the most effective and co-ordinated means.
- All agencies will share relevant anti-social behaviour information and intelligence to identify key location hotspots, known offenders and vulnerable victims and witnesses.

These are current minimum standards. They will be regularly reviewed and updated by partner agencies within safe and sound Community Safety Partnership in consultation with local communities.