
**Select Committee on Community Safety and Community Services –
8th November 2007**

Report of the Chief Executive

The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU).

Purpose of Report

1. To inform select committee of the current structure and work programme of the ASBU.
2. To inform select committee of the potential future structure and work programme of the ASBU.

Background

2. Following extensive debate between the members of the safe and sound community safety partnership board in 2006/7 the ASBU came into being, working within the Council's Community Safety Team on 1st April 2007.
3. The ASBU currently comprises:
 - One ASB co-ordinator
 - One ASB case-worker
 - One hate crime co-ordinator
 - One Young Persons Community Safety Co-ordinator
 - One part-time admin worker
 - Three professional witnesses
 - Two Home Security Initiative (HSI) lock-fitters

Please see appendix for structure

With the exception of the professional witnesses and the HSI fitters, all ASBU members work from the offices of the community safety team, in Falcon House, The Minories, Dudley.

The professional witness team continues to work from Capstone House, at the Waterfront, Brierley Hill- However "hot desking" arrangements are in place and the Supervisor regularly attends Falcon House and community safety meetings

The HSI fitters continue to work from Brierley Hill Police Station, although they also have desk facilities at Falcon House.

- 4 Currently, the ASBU work programme is managed by the ASB case-worker. With the exception of the professional witnesses, each member of the team carries out the same work they have been responsible for previously, but the team now has the benefit of having their work co-ordinated through a single manager. The exception to this is that of the role of the YP CSC, this role has been "updated" to include the work of pulling together Youth Pacts.

5. The professional witness team previously only responded to complaints of domestic noise. Since joining the ASBU their remit has been widened to include the investigation of complaints of nuisance and anti-social behaviour. Owing to the joint-funded nature of these posts a service level agreement is in the process of being drawn up between the community safety team and D.A.C.H.S. Currently their capacity is restricted owing to the long term sickness of one member of the team.

6. The caseworks system of ASB case management is now fully operational and all relevant members of the ASBU, including the professional witnesses input their data. The system is also populated by data from housing managers.

7. The HSI fitters continue to respond to vulnerable person referrals, victims of burglary and in providing first and second level security responses for the Sanctuary scheme (for victims of domestic violence). The fitters are still currently funded through Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, and a case for mainstreaming is currently being submitted.

8. Last year the ASBU case-worker received 407 complaints of nuisance or anti-social behaviour. At the halfway point of the current year there have been 263 complaints, a significant increase. As the majority of complaints are received through Dudley Council Plus, it would appear there is an increasing confidence in reporting these issues to the Council.

9. In the immediate future, a police officer is being seconded to the ASBU from Dudley North Police. This secondment is intended to assist and support the work of the caseworker who, in turn, is jointly (supported by Head of Community safety) covering the long term absence of the ASB Co-ordinator.

9. Work is currently in progress negotiating with private sector housing and DUE regarding the issue of monitoring and witnessing of out of hours commercial noise. Currently this is undertaken on an informal basis by the professional witnesses. The intention is to formalise this arrangement and to secure funding via DUE/Private Sector to enable the professional witness to include this within their remit. This will be done by service level agreement.

10. The ASBU has now been "live " for six months and it is pertinent to commence the process of looking at what works, its effectiveness and the future/and ongoing development. Included in this is the need to establish the effectiveness of the current staffing and unit responsibilities, a possible measure may be the unit becomes responsible for screening all complaints of nuisance or anti-social behaviour coming into the Council regardless of tenure. The ASBU would then either provide an appropriate response or refer to an appropriate directorate or partner agency. Providing a single point of contact, via Dudley Council Plus.

11. The community safety team will table a report to the safe and sound board in November outlining proposals. The next stage would be to ask partner agencies, in the light of those results, to consider the merits of seconding staff e.g. police officers, environmental health officers, trading standards officers.

Finance

8. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage.

Law

9. There are no legal implications arising from this report at this stage.

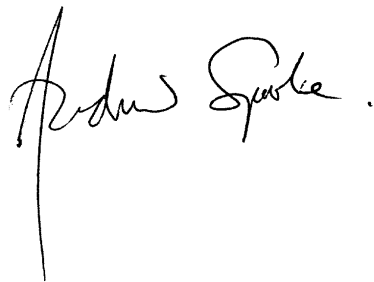
Equality Impact

10. This report is in accordance with the Council's equality and diversity policy.

Recommendation

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

12. That a further report be brought before this committee when the safe and sound board have reflected upon the work programme and resourcing of the ASBU in it's current form.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrew Sparke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long vertical line extending downwards from the end of the name.

Andrew Sparke
Chief Executive

Contact Officer : Peter Burford
Telephone : 01384 812457
Email: peter.burford@dudley.gov.uk