

Appendix A

Outcomes from Consultation on the Council's Review of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB).

Detailed below are the findings from the consultation carried out during November and December 2011 with key stakeholders on the ASB review. The consultation period has been extended into early January to ensure the views of some key stakeholders who were unavailable during November and December are obtained before decisions are taken on proposals for change.

Customer Focus Group / Survey

Residents who have previously reported problems of ASB to the Council or the Police were invited to attend a focus group to share with us their experiences and their thoughts on the proposed changes being put forward by the review. Those who were unable to attend the focus group but wished to comment on the service were provided with a summary of the review findings and a questionnaire to complete. 17 people attended the focus group and 5 returned questionnaires. Some of the key issues and concerns raised by this group are listed below.

- Officers responding to complaints of ASB need to do so with more compassion and show a genuine interest in the problem being reported.
- Customer need to know who to contact when they are not happy with the service they have received.
- Customers need to be communicated with more effectively during their complaint so they know what is happening with their case.
- The person investigating the complaint needs to be independent and be seen to be independent.
- Diary sheets are seen as a barrier to accessing the service rather than as a tool to resolve the problem.
- Other methods for collecting evidence should be more widely used e.g. CCTV
- Case plans are not robust enough.
- Support for early intervention remedies with legal action (e.g. eviction) being the last resort.
- Support for better promotion of work done and to name and shame those involved in ASB
- Some concerns about out of hours cover
- A call for more to be done to build trust & confidence in the Police and Council

Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (DFTRA)

DFTRA who represent the views of Council tenants were consulted on the proposals for change within the review. Some of the key issues and concerns raised by this group are listed below.

- DFTRA expressed the view that the response provided in Housing Services to complaints of ASB was better when there was a specialist team looking after the complaints.
- DFTRA felt strongly that any action taken to resolve problems of ASB should not give the impression of rewarding bad behaviour.
- DFTRA were supportive of checks undertaken at application stage for housing but queried if the Police should have a wider role in this.
- Suggestions made that access to the service should be available through the internet and Digital TV.
- A strong view that the safe and sound partnership needed to work together more effectively.
- Concerns that diary sheets were a barrier to accessing services to respond to ASB

Joint Area Housing Panels

There are 5 Area Housing Panels which each have a membership of 5 local Elected Members and 5 local elected tenant representatives. A specially convened meeting of all the panels was held on 29th November 2011. Some of the key issues and concerns raised by this group are listed below.

- Concerns were expressed by some panel members that the proposals for change were nothing new and doubt was expressed over the improvement they would bring.
- Proposal made that diary sheets where used should be available to submit on-line.
- A comment made that access to the service needed to be available more widely than just through DC+

Elected Members

A number of Elected Members have been consulted through different forums and meetings to seek their views on the review. Some of the key issues and concerns raised are listed below.

- A request for specific service standards relating to how the partnership will respond to ASB to be agreed and communicated as an outcome from the review.
- Any standard letters included in case plans must be flexible enough to cover individual circumstances.
- Must ensure sufficient resources are made available to tackle ASB.
- A preference for specialist officers and teams to respond to ASB.

- Systems need to ensure the protection of vulnerable groups and children

Saltwells Youth Club

A group of young people who attend the Saltwells Youth Club were consulted to seek their views on why some groups of young people engaged in ASB and their views on what needed to be done to tackle such problems. Some of the group members had previously engaged in ASB but had changed their lives to become valued members of their community. Some of the key issues and concerns raised by this group are listed below:

- Some young people engage in bad behaviour because of a lack of understanding on what is right and wrong
- Not enough effort is made to communicate with young people in a way that they can relate to and will respect and by individuals they respect
- Peer group pressure can influence the behaviour of individuals
- Groups / gangs of young people will form to resolve problems they are experiencing as individuals
- Groups of young people will target those who are vulnerable or those who do not show them any respect
- Detached Youth workers were considered to be a good way of communicating with young people, providing they can offer some positive activities to the young people to get involved
- Rewards for good behaviour were considered to be more effective than enforcement and punishment
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders were considered to be ineffective and no deterrent to those who will engage in ASB
- Evicting parents of young people who misbehaved was considered inappropriate and likely to just move the problem and increase the bad behaviour of the young person who was responsible for causing their family to have to move
- A real willingness from young people to do positive work in their community e.g. gardening for older people, in return for recognition and / or reward
- A need to target the right individuals to maximise impact i.e. lead members of groups / gangs will influence what others do so efforts to correct their behaviour will have wider impact than just dealing with that individual

All of the feedback received during the consultation will be considered and used to shape and redesign our service early in 2012.