

The Highland Council
Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities
Committee – 12 June 2014

Agenda Item	15
Report No	CPE 25/14

Partnership Report on Antisocial Behaviour

Report by Director of Community Services

Summary

This report provides an update in relation to the Highland Antisocial Behaviour Strategy and a summary of activity across partner agencies who have responsibilities for managing specific issues relating to antisocial behaviour.

The report also sets out the revised arrangements for Antisocial Behaviour Strategy under the Safer Highland Structure.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 requires that each Local Authority and the Chief Constable prepare a strategy for dealing with antisocial behaviour.
- 1.2 The current Highland Strategy reflects current national policy and guidance and places antisocial behaviour in the context of wider arrangements for community safety in Highland.
- 1.3 The current Strategy has been in place since 2011 but requires to be reviewed following the creation of national services for Police and Fire, further strengthening local engagement and participation in community safety.
- 1.4 Additionally, the Highland Public Services Partnership Performance Board (Community Planning Partnership) has been considering enhancing arrangements for community safety under the Safer Highland Structure.
- 1.5 Arising from this work a new multi-agency Antisocial Behaviour Group has been formed under the Safer Highland structure which will be chaired by Scott Hay, local Senior Fire Officer for Highland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- 1.6 This group met for the first time on the 29 May 2014 to begin to review policies, practice and procedures and monitor progress against the Single Outcome Agreement.

2. Partner Updates

- 2.1 This section of the report provides information from each agency in relation to their involvement in dealing with issues of antisocial behaviour.

The Highland Council

- 2.2 Community Services is responsible for overseeing the Council's response to antisocial behaviour complaints, although this response may vary where other services have a lead role. One of the key roles of the Service is managing and chairing local Antisocial Behaviour Partnership Groups where more complex cases are discussed with partner agencies in order to achieve a solution.
- 2.4 The Council's Antisocial Behaviour Policy sets out 3 categories of complaints, which are recorded on the Housing Information System. During 2013/14 **943** cases were reported and action taken to resolve the problem. The information below shows the number of incidents reported by category:
- Category A: e.g. Minor breach of tenancy conditions, disputes solely between two neighbours - **697**
 - Category B: e.g. Antisocial Behaviour, where the behaviour is of a serious and persistent nature - **169**
 - Category C: e.g. Severe Antisocial Behaviour, where the involvement of the police is necessary - **77**
- 2.5 The highest number of cases reported come under Category A which are generally Council tenancy related and are dealt with as breach of tenancy agreement. Category B and C cases can be more complex and can often require multi-agency input from Care and Learning Service and / or Police Scotland. It is intended to review the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Policy during 2014/15.
- 2.6 Antisocial Behaviour Partnership Groups meet locally across Highland to discuss more complex cases. There is no formal Antisocial Behaviour Partnership Group in Skye, but there are well established liaison arrangements between Police Scotland and Community Services locally and meetings take place as required. There have been 2 cases requiring joint working in 2013/14.

The table below provides the number of cases discussed in this forum during 2013/14.

Caithness	22	Inverness	27
Sutherland	9	Nairn, B&S	15
Ross & Cromarty	32	Lochaber	21
Skye	see text above		

- 2.7 The cases referred to the Antisocial Behaviour Partnership Group range in severity and include issues such as serious or persistent neighbour disputes; persistent noise nuisance; issues involving drug / alcohol use; problem animals; problem vehicles/parking; assault; vandalism.
- 2.8 The solutions to these cases vary depending on the types of issues and

severity of the problems. Interventions include: joint visits; warning letters; acceptable behaviour contracts; referral for support; criminal charges; applications for Antisocial Behaviour Orders; tenancy related court action; house transfer (perpetrator or victim). The Partnership group will review the effectiveness of measures taken and the need for different or additional measures.

- 2.9 Community Services is also responsible for managing the response to littering and fly tipping, dog fouling, stray dogs, dog control, abandoned vehicles and noise nuisance.
- 2.10 In 2013/14, the Environmental Health team responded to over 200 complaints of noise nuisance. This included noise from barking dogs, industrial sites, fans, a windfarm and construction sites, and 117 domestic issues such as loud music and barking dogs.
- 2.11 The TECS Committee approved a Zero Tolerance approach to litter in May 2013. This approach will see a shift from education to enforcement with the main centres of population being the target of enforcement days. Education and awareness resources will continue to be provided to schools and others on the problems associated with litter and fly-tipping.
- 2.12 Following this decision consultation on changes to the role and remit of Community Wardens has taken place with staff and trade unions. The Scheme of Delegation has been amended to allow Community Wardens to issue fixed penalty notices and staff training has been provided.
- 2.13 Antisocial behaviour and offending by young people is managed by Care and Learning. The Council provides a specialist service to young people who commit offences and those who are involved in substance misuse.
- 2.14 The Council funds three police constable posts within Police Scotland. These posts, called Youth Coordinators, work very closely with Youth Action Teams and help identify young people who are in danger of becoming involved in offending behaviour, with a view to prevention through diversionary activity.
- 2.15 Action for Children is also funded by the Council to provide an advice service on drug and alcohol within the community. This work is usually carried out in conjunction with local Youth Development Teams at Highlife Highland and Active Schools Co-ordinators. Communication is had with police in order to target the most problematic areas.
- 2.16 Action for Children is also funded to provide Intensive Support and Supervision for young people whose offending/harmful behaviour is placing themselves or others at risk.
- 2.17 Diversionary Activities are provided in partnership with Action for Children, Police Scotland, Highlife Highland and Youth Action Teams.
- 2.18 Diversionary activities play a key role in reducing offending behaviour by

providing alternative facilities and activities for young people. While the aim of diversion is to target young people engaging in, or on the edge of offending behaviour, a positive additional outcome is that all young people can take part in many of the activities.

2.19 Examples of diversionary activities taking place in Highland are:

- Action for Children's "Street Football Kit", and workshops offered by Eden Court's "Creative Identities" project on dance, music and drama, provide positive alternatives to drug and alcohol misuse/risk-taking behaviour within the community
- Fusion – Fusion events are run in partnership between Highlife Highland, Action for Children and Youth Highland
- Twilight Basketball – is now run with support from a number of partners including Cashback for Communities and Shell. This is a national programme which provides basketball sessions in safe setting
- Youth Advantage Outreach (YAO) supports vulnerable young people who are engaged in minor offending behaviour, are disadvantaged or disengaged. It is run in partnership with the Police, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Highland Council and Army Youth Teams. YAO is a five day residential course facilitated by the Army.

2.20 Parenting Programmes are offered to parents who are identified as requiring help to provide consistent and achievable boundaries for young people, taking into account the impact of their own behaviour on the behaviour of their children.

2.21 Most Youth Action Team staff members and all Action for Children staff have received the necessary training to deliver Future Childcare's "Handling Teenage Behaviour".

2.22 The main purpose of both programmes is to give parents an understanding of their child's development, the different types of behaviour displayed by children and young people, and offer tips and strategies of how to address these behaviours by implementing clear and consistent rules and boundaries.

2.23 One of the key areas underpinning the whole programme is to build parents' self-esteem and confidence in their parenting abilities, which inevitably leads to more positive parenting and better outcomes for our young people.

2.24 High Life Highland delivered Safe Highlanders this year on behalf of the Council. The event is an educational event for primary 7 pupils tackling issues of community safety. This delivers learning which is integrated with the nationally developed Primary Schools' Curriculum for Excellence and 'Health and Wellbeing' outcomes.

2.25 This year's event took place in May, through a partnership approach including:

The Highland Council; Police Scotland; Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; Scottish and Southern Energy; British Red Cross; Institute of Safety and Health; NHS Highland; Maritime Coastguard Agency; Fujitsu; and Youth Action Service. Further details of Safe Highlanders and evaluations of the event can be found on the Council's website.

Police Scotland

- 2.26 The Highland Local Policing Plan 2014-2017 contains a specific priority in relation to dealing with antisocial behaviour and disorder. From a Police perspective antisocial behaviour and disorder are often strongly linked with alcohol misuse and abuse and include offending such as: breach of the peace, disturbance/noise, drunkenness, petty assault, vandalism, neighbour disputes, fire-raising, public mischief (wasting police time), suspicious persons, litter/fly tipping and threats/extortion.
- 2.27 Over the past few years there has been a significant decrease in antisocial behaviour and disorder. This overall decrease has been achieved, in part, by working with partners to tackle the very few individuals who are frequently involved in antisocial behaviour and disorder as well as having a focus on locations where problems occur.
- 2.28 The key operations which are used by Police Scotland to tackle the various elements of antisocial behaviour within Highland are:
- **Operation Notebook**- which aims to make people feel, and be, safer by tackling antisocial behaviour in and around residential properties within the community. This includes a 3 stage escalatory approach.
 - **Operation Respect**- which aims to reduce street violence, disorder and incidents linked to licensed premises. This operation intends to provide enhanced levels of public reassurance, through visible and robust policing activity, working with key multi-agency partners to reduce the negative effect of antisocial behaviour, violence and crime. Events such as 'street briefings' which have been held in Inverness City Centre allow members of the public further opportunity to experience and understand the positive working relationship that Police Scotland and partner agencies have.
- 2.29 In addition to the above the Police will use legislative measures such as antisocial behaviour contracts and vehicle seizures to influence offender behaviour.
- 2.30 As part of Police Scotland's continuing commitment to tackling violence, disorder and antisocial behaviour, a national Campaign Against Violence (CAV) has been implemented across Highland. This makes the best possible use of all our resources by putting experienced officers, who usually carry out duties in essential support roles, out in our communities at peak times to support local policing officers. These deployments are based on sound analytical evidence to make sure that they are in the right place at the right

time to prevent crime and provide reassurance to the public. Examples of the types of activities which are being conducted under these operations are:

- High visibility patrols during the school holidays targeting town centres
- Increased frequency of Licensed Premises checks and Test Purchasing operations
- Intelligence-led stop and search operations
- Pro-active work in relation to persons wanted on Arrest Warrants and/or for crimes and offences relating to Domestic Abuse.

2.31 Police Scotland is committed to working positively with partners to intervene as early as possible when instances of antisocial behaviour arise, including managing persistent offenders and locations. As well as pro-active interventions, the Division, in partnership with other agencies, carries out preventative activities through initiatives and campaigns aimed at preventing and reducing antisocial behaviour within Highland communities.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)

2.32 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is committed to improving the safety of our communities and staff. This improved safety is delivered through partnership and multi-agency activities including prevention, intervention, planning and preparation.

2.33 Fire-related antisocial behaviour within the Highland area consists mainly of deliberate fire setting and hoax/malicious calls. The SFRS Prevention and Protection (P&P) directorate recognises the importance of reducing the levels of fire related antisocial behaviour and the direct impact this has on community safety. At a local level the Local Senior Officer (LSO) also recognises this and will address it in partnership as identified in the Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2014-2017 and Area Committee wide Annual Operational Plans for 2014-2015.

2.34 In order to ensure a targeted and consistent approach to the delivery of community safety activity, the SFRS has developed a seasonal community safety calendar where specific historical and seasonal themes are identified. These themes include grass/wild land fires, rubbish/refuse fires, derelict property and bonfire safety. While reports and instances of fire related antisocial behaviour are addressed routinely and in partnership, they will receive focused attention during June 2014 in line with the seasonal calendar.

2.35 There are also close links between deliberately set secondary fires and other forms of fire related antisocial behaviour. SFRS and other partner agencies recognise the value in education and diversionary activities as methods of reducing these incidents. Examples of ongoing initiatives within the Highland area which are supported by SFRS are:

- **Firesetters Intervention Scheme-** which involves specially trained SFRS personnel delivering fire safety intervention to young people who have been identified as displaying previous fire setting/wilful fire raising

activity. This intervention involves active liaison with some or all of the following key people/agencies; parents, operational fire crews, teachers, police and social services.

- **Safe Highlanders-** delivered to all Highland wide primary 7 pupils and is an educational activity based on a partnership approach, which tackles challenging issues of community safety and crime prevention. Following the event children become more aware of personal safety, potentially avoid becoming victims of crime and understand how to react to emergency situations, and their chances of becoming good citizens increases.
- **Youth Advantage Outreach (YAO)-** supports vulnerable young people who are engaged in minor offending behaviour, are disadvantaged or disengaged. It is run in partnership with Police Scotland, Highland Council and Army Youth Teams.
- **Fire Youth Engagement Programme-** is aimed at young people aged 12-16 who are on the cusp of offending, are truanting, have behavioural issues and/or suffer from low self-esteem. The programme is held on fire stations across Highland and, through partnership, changes attitudes and perceptions of young people by promoting life skills and good citizenship. This is achieved by providing a positive work experience programme including the essential elements of first aid, use of operational equipment and simulated fire incidents, all within a disciplined and controlled environment.

2.35 The Local Senior Officer for Highland has taken on the chair of the recently formed ASB Group, a key management group forming part of the Safer Highland structure of the Community Planning Partnership. This partnership group will support local and area-specific antisocial behaviour partnership groups through a revised and updated strategy, practices and procedures.

2.36 The SFRS will continue to develop and support working practices to address incidents as a result of antisocial behaviour. Examples of which include:

- **Go Safe Scotland-** a web based teacher led/delivered tool designed specifically for pre-school and school aged children and young people with advice and guidance on safety, which includes fire safety, road safety, home safety, water safety, rail safety and outdoor safety. It also aligns to the Curriculum for Excellence
- **Local Area Liaison Officer-** a dedicated SFRS post designed to provide an embedded local link between the SFRS and partner agencies working at a local level. The key objectives of the post will be to enhance community safety through the provision of and access to SFRS data and resources, as well as build relationships with other key partner agency practitioners

- **Derelict Buildings Database-** this database is under review in partnership with Police Scotland and Highland Council. When completed, the database will contain a list of all known derelict properties within the Council area, which will receive a targeted and proportionate preventative plan to reduce/eliminate the potential for deliberate fire setting or fire-related antisocial behaviour.

3. Implications

- 3.1 Resources: The arrangements for responding to issues of antisocial behaviour are delivered through existing resources within each Council Service and Partner Agency.
- 3.2 Legal: Council Services and partner agencies work within a variety of legislative and regulatory requirements, however, the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 is the overarching legislation that applies to this report.
- 3.3 There are no known climate change, Gaelic or risk implications arising from this report.
- 3.4 The Highland Council Antisocial Behaviour Policy and Joint Strategy will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment which will identify any equality issues that require to be addressed.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the updates provided by partner agencies and the revised arrangements for overseeing Antisocial Behaviour Strategy under the Safer Highland Structure.

Designation: Director of Community Services

Date: 2nd June 2014

Author: Carolyn Thain, Housing Policy Officer