

Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2019 - 2024

Anti-Social Behaviour:

Our Strategy 2019 - 24

Foreword

Introduction from Cllr Khan, Borough Commander, Michele Moloney

Foreword to include:

As a Borough and as a city, we face increasingly complex challenges when tackling anti-social behaviour. Prioritising the needs of those at risk of harm, whilst working with perpetrators to effect real change is becoming ever more difficult. As a Borough, we have chosen to rise to this challenge, and this 5-year Strategy is testament to this.

Our Strategy is borne from recognition that the only way to reduce ASB is to do so in partnership with others. We have already seen success when trialling new ways of working with partners, by adopting a 'hotspot' approach which focusses on difficult areas. For example, in joint operations with Police and partner agencies, we have seen a 7% drop in knife crime. This is not just a number – it is a person's life potentially saved, a community's safety and wellbeing improved. The Operating Model we have developed as a Borough should be read alongside our Strategy, as it describes in practical detail our approach across the Borough.

Our work should be visible and accountable, and underpinned by strong governance. As such, this Strategy is clear on how we will be held to account through robust reporting methods and intelligence-led analysis. Accountability applies not just to us, but to all our partners across the Borough who have a part to play in reducing ASB and its effects. The role of SafetyNet and the partners within it as the overarching strategic board is key to effectively delivering this Strategy.

We have chosen to adopt a public health model to ASB and community safety in our Borough, as we understand help and support for all are key to effecting real change. Tackling ASB sits mostly within the Curtail element of our model, and this Strategy should be seen as a partner to those covering gang crime, violence against women and girls, and all strategic documents linked to community safety.

Most important, this Strategy makes clear that no matter who you are or how you are linked to Waltham Forest, you will receive the same help and support when experiencing anti-social behaviour. ASB can affect every one of us, and every one of us has a part to play in reducing the harm it causes.

Introduction

Our **Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy** sets out our coordinated approach to address Anti-Social behaviour (ASB) in the borough. It is a shared strategy, delivered by the Council and the Waltham Forest Community Safety Partnership (the Partnership) in conjunction with Housing providers in the borough.

Vision

The partnership has a single overarching vision for tackling anti-social behaviour:

As a Borough we want to see a reduction in incidents of ASB and the harm it causes across Waltham Forest, with any incidents dealt with quickly and effectively using a multi-agency model.

Outcomes

The strategy sets out to achieve the following outcomes:

- We want incidents of ASB and the impact of ASB to be reduced, especially in hotspot areas
- We want residents to feel safer and more empowered to report ASB
- We want incidents to be dealt with efficiently, with support provided to those affected
- Where perpetrators are vulnerable, we want support to be provided to lessen the chance of further anti-social behaviour

Principles

In order to achieve the outcomes outlined we will work to the following principles:

1. **Resourcing:** We work together as part of a multi-agency team with clear accountabilities and lead roles for different cases.
2. **Tasking and Hotspot Operations:** Having a targeted impact in our problem areas.
3. **Governance:** Providing effective governance to oversee the multi-agency team at a strategic level and at an operational level to monitor open cases across the borough.
4. **Performance:** Sharing insight to understand anti-social behaviour across the whole borough.
5. **Customer Journeys:** Customers will be able to easily report issues and get a response from the right person. We will be “tenure-neutral” in our approaches – residents should not receive a different level of service depending on where they live
6. **Think family:** In Waltham Forest we recognise that in order to support families to make changes that are helpful and long lasting we need to work with all the members of the family. If we understand and recognise that the needs and desired outcomes of each person in the family affect each other, we are more likely to support and enable sustainable change.

Context

Why do we need an anti-social behaviour strategy?

Keeping the borough clean and safe is a priority for the local authority. Reducing anti-social behaviour is pivotal in achieving this. Its impact can be devastating to residents, businesses and visitors. For victims and the wider community, it can become a destructive, cumulative issue leading to a poor quality of life. It often overlaps with more serious crime, and this can contribute to communities feeling unsafe where they live and work.

We also know that often those responsible for ASB are often vulnerable themselves. We recognise that ASB related behaviours can be symptomatic of other issues which require support and care. We are committed to working in partnership to safeguard, support and protect vulnerable residents and provide meaningful opportunities for behaviour change.

We know that ASB is a concern for our residents. In 2017 31% of residents reported that they are worried about anti-social behaviour. In addition, 34% of our residents were worried about crime. This is 4% higher than the London average.¹

There is an overlap between hotspots for violent crime and hotspots for anti-social behaviour in the borough. Whilst the link is not necessarily causal, there are benefits in aligning approaches to tackling both. Addressing anti-social behaviour in the borough is a complex matter that requires the attention of many different agencies.

With the Borough's focus on a wider Public Health model to tackling social issues, this Strategy is required to direct staff and organisations in the effective management of ASB within the wider strategic context.

The Development of the Strategy

The strategy has been jointly developed by a number of agencies including the local authority, Metropolitan Police, Local Health services and local Registered Providers in order to provide a well-rounded multi-agency approach to tackling ASB. Our community safety partnership, SafetyNet brings together these agencies and it is this body that will monitor and review the effectiveness of the strategy under its anti-social behaviour priority. Victims, witnesses and the wider community are central to the strategy and it is important that people have confidence that the partnership will deal with their problems in order to increase their sense of community and safety.

In 2018 the council and partners launched its Violence Reduction Partnership which seeks to take a public health approach to reduce the level of violent crime in the borough. At the heart of the model is a recognition that we must curtail violence, including through robust enforcement where this is necessary and appropriate, alongside broader work to tackle the underlying causes of violence by strengthening our community and supporting vulnerable residents at the earliest point.

When we consulted with residents, the feedback we received was that over 80% of residents surveyed agreed with our priorities for this strategy. What also became apparent is that 64% of residents feel unsafe in the Borough at night and 81% are worried about crime, whilst 35% had experienced ASB or crime personally. This imbalance between experience and perception is important to note, as it highlights the importance of being visible and transparent in all we do. We must reduce incidents of ASB whilst also concentrating in increasing feelings of safety.

¹ Metropolitan Police Public Aptitudes Survey in 2017/18.

Why is a partnership approach so important?

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 brought enhanced powers to the local authority, police and partners. Since then, different agencies have independently developed their own approaches to responding and preventing anti-social behaviour. Having a clear and consistent approach across partners will mean:

- Clear accountability for agencies in preventing and responding to incidents.
- A focus on the “tenure-neutral approach.” whereby residents can expect the same positive outcomes, irrespective of whether they live in social housing, the private-rented sector or own their property.
- Effective joint working can maximise the impact and benefit achieved with limited, finite resources.
- An opportunity to review the full circumstances surrounding incidents of ASB for both victims and perpetrators, including family and social circumstances, education, health, etc.

What is Anti-Social Behaviour?

The Borough uses the following definition which is based on the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014:

“Anti-social behaviour is a conduct that:

- has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household
- is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises
- is capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person”

Given the broad definition, we recognise people will have difference thresholds and tolerances for anti-social behaviour. All agencies will take reports of anti-social behaviour seriously. Some of these examples can also be criminal offences, and when that is the case we maintain a strong partnership approach to deal with those causing the problems.

Our Approach to Anti-Social Behaviour

This ASB Strategy is central to delivering the ambitions of our Violence Reduction Partnership to reduce violence in Waltham Forest so that our residents feel safer. In particular it sits at the heart of the Curtail domain within the VRP, which seeks to curtail violent acts at source, pursuing perpetrators and enforcing action.

Our approach within the Curtail element is comprised of four key stages:

Stage 1: Prevention

Stage 2: Early intervention

Stage 3: Support

Stage 4: Enforcement

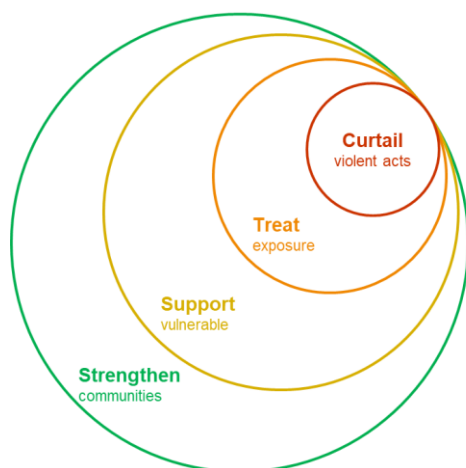
These stages are described in detail in the visual on the next page. These stages apply across all anti-social behaviour. However, our approaches differ slightly for dealing with hotspots to dealing with case management.

There is not necessarily a linear progression from stage to stage and not all stages are always necessary. For example, for enviro-crime cases we aim to prevent incidents from happening but when an incident has occurred we would proceed directly to enforcement.

Waltham Forest's Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP)

Violence works like a disease. It targets the most vulnerable, has a lasting impact on victims and perpetrators, and can spread across the population. To tackle it requires a range of partners to work collaboratively - for this reason, we have established a Violence Reduction Partnership with an ambition to reduce violence in Waltham Forest so that our residents feel safer.

Our VRP takes a public health approach to tackling violence – focused on tackling both the symptoms of violence and its underlying causes across four domains: Curtail, Treat, Support and Strengthen. This ASB Strategy will help to deliver activity across all four domains, but has a specific focus in delivering on our commitments to Curtail violence.



- **Curtail** violent acts at source, pursuing perpetrators and enforcing action
- **Treat** those who have been exposed to violence to curtail the spread
- **Support** those susceptible to violence due to their exposure to risk factors
- **Strengthen** community resilience through a universal approach

Anti-Social Behaviour Framework

Prevention

Ideally we stop ASB before it happens.

- Improved street-lighting
- Visible CCTV
- Visible joint patrols
- Hyper-local community engagement
- Gangs prevention programmes
- Community Safety initiatives

Early Intervention

When it does occur we act quickly with informal interventions to minimise impact.

- Follow-up visits or phone calls with victims and perpetrators.
- Warning letter
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract
- Parental Control Agreement
- Community Protection Warning

Support

The ASB can indicate that someone is vulnerable and in need of support services.

- Drugs and alcohol support service.
- Rough sleeping outreach service.
- Community mental health team referrals.
- Gangs interventions

Enforcement

Enforcement is a last resort but can sometimes be a necessary and effective tool.

- Injunction.
- Closure orders against cuckooing cases.
- Landlord licensing sanctions.
- Premise Closure Order
- Criminal Behaviour Order
- Notice of seeking possession

Tackling priority locations

The strategy is intended to prevent ASB and to effectively combat incidences of ASB whenever and wherever encountered. However, we recognise that much of our experienced ASB is currently located in certain 'hotspot' areas. The strategy will be underpinned by an intelligence-led approach to identify and tackle ASB within identified hotspot areas in the borough.

When tackling priority locations, this Strategy should be read alongside the ASB Operating Model 2019.

There is evidence in the Borough that the approach described within the Operating Model is successful. During Operation Langdale, the Borough trialled the Model. There was a 37% decrease in crime and ASB at the location over a 3–6 month period. The use of deterrents was highly effective. During this operation 76 Community Protection Warnings were issued to advise people that their behaviour was unacceptable. Of these 76 individuals, only 6 breached. This evidences that a stepped approach towards tackling ASB gives an individual the opportunity to change their behaviour before escalating to enforcement.

A new approach to case management:

Individual cases will have clear case leads depending on the category of ASB and property type or location. The lead officer could be a representative from the police, the council or housing providers among others. This means the case will be led by the best suited officer.

We will use an always-live partnership approach to tackling the most complex ASB cases, which regular reviews at a senior level to provide support, steer and challenge.

Quality assurance processes and robust governance will be in place to ensure a consistently high level of service is delivered at each stage. This will also allow us to assess if the complexity of the case changes (e.g. if there are safeguarding concerns)

Support for all

A key focus of our approach is to provide effective support to ASB victims. We will ensure that we better understand the impact ASB has on their lives and ensure safeguarding processes are in place to protect those most vulnerable from further harm. We recognise the work being done in the Borough by Victim Support and will continue to co-locate their staff within the ASB service, to ensure victims voices remain central to our work.

We recognise that within ASB there may not be a binary position between victims and perpetrators and we will work with partner agencies to offer support, behaviour change opportunities and protection to all residents who need it.

Engaging the public

Over the course of this Strategy, we will regularly review our engagement model with the public. Our aim is to remove as many barriers to reporting ASB as possible. We will make innovative use of technology to streamline reporting, for example in the development and use of chatbots, and the effective use of mobile technology.

Specifically, we will ask residents of the Borough to engage with in the following ways:

- To report what they see, in the knowledge it will be heard and responded to.
- To participate in Safer Neighbourhood Boards.
- To consider engaging with Neighbourhood Watch in their area.
- To report rough sleepers to the agencies there to support for them.

Implementation and Monitoring

The Waltham Forest Community Partnership “SafetyNet” will be responsible for implementing and monitoring this strategy. SafetyNet is a partnership between the council, police, probation, fire, and health services, as well as key partners including housing providers, victim services, plus community and voluntary sectors. The remit of the partnership includes reducing anti-social behaviour as one of its strategic priorities.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Board meets quarterly and will review progress against the strategy on a **quarterly** basis and evaluate on an **annual** basis.

There will performance reports on a monthly basis that will be monitored at an operational level. These performance reports will be informed by the Problem Solving Partnership and the Anti-social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference data, and other data gathered and analysed by the ASB service.

Related Documents

This Strategy is part of a wider approach by the Borough to reduce crime and ASB, and to improve the quality of life for those living and working in Waltham Forest. As such, it is intended that this Strategy be read alongside the following Strategic documents:

- Creating Futures
- Think Family 2020
- Safeguarding Thresholds

- Connecting Communities
- Public Health Approach to Violence Reduction