

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods
2.	Date:	31st October, 2011
3.	Title:	Anti-Social Behaviour – Recording and Case Management
4.	Directorate:	Neighbourhoods and Adult Services

5. Summary

On 1st April 2011 the Home Office introduced a change to how police forces recorded anti-social behaviour (ASB) nationally. The purpose of the change is to focus more on the needs of the caller so that vulnerable persons or those who have made repeated reports of ASB are more readily identified and receive the most appropriate response.

In November 2010 South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and RMBC launched a Case Management System (CMS) data-base for recording and managing ASB complaints that allows key partners to share information about ASB incidents quickly and effectively. This co-ordinated approach facilitates integration of partner skills and resources to prevent and reduce incidents of anti social behaviour, more effectively report on local patterns of behaviour and identify hotspots for focused attention by the Joint Action Group and the ASB Priority Group. It is also seen as a significant development in Safer Neighbourhood Team working, with greater emphasis being placed on enhanced service delivery and customer focus, in particular in respect of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

The report also identifies how the data sharing is being developed to allow a more secure and open sharing of case information.

6.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods:

- 6.1 **Welcomes the improvements made to how ASB is managed in Rotherham including enhanced service delivery and customer focus and the planned introduction of the 'Public Service Network' into Rotherham communications, and**
- 6.2 **Notes the implications in the analysis of ASB incidents arising from the changes introduced in the recording of anti-social behaviour from 1st April 2011.**

7.0 Proposals and Details

ASB Case Management

A Borough-wide ASB Case Management System (CMS) went 'live' in November 2010 and its function is now located at Maltby Police Station. It is predominantly police resourced with appropriate levels of support from RMBC staff.

The case management system function is to identify risk based on a number of factors including the frequency of incidents, their location, and the age and vulnerability etc of the resident suffering the ASB. The system ensures that the right levels of support and activity are put in place to ensure the appropriate response from partners. This approach goes a long way towards eliminating/minimising the risk of failing to identify at an early stage, incidents that could result in serious escalation and consequences - (Fiona Pilkington, Leicestershire and David Askew, Greater Manchester).

Key to the process is 'first point of contact' with the person reporting to ensure that the call is correctly prioritised, followed by the subsequent risk assessment based on information to hand, local knowledge and professional judgement. Cases identified with a sufficient degree of 'risk' including vulnerability are then case managed involving all relevant partners. Where RMBC are the recipients of the complaint through their own recording systems, the information is imported into the Case Management System, subject to the normal application of risk assessment. This process however can take a number of days to complete due to incompatibility of systems and relies on effective communication at the Safer Neighbourhood Team briefings to share the information across agencies and services.

Since going 'live' in November 2010, the CMS has managed a total of 248 cases up to Friday 23rd September. 114 of those cases are still active. Of the total number of cases, 94 were categorised as having an element of vulnerability including race, age, disability, drug/alcohol dependency. Of those 94 cases, 52 are still active.

Vulnerable Victim Case Study – Case identified and managed through CMS

Male victim (27 years). Vulnerable through learning disability and alcohol dependency. 50 calls on Case Management System, being targeted by another alcoholic, causing problems for himself and neighbours. Inter-agency working through Police, RMBC Housing, Social Services, Victim Support and alcohol care workers. As a result of this co-ordinated work the victim no longer calls police several times a day, reduced his dependency on alcohol and become a better tenant with much fewer calls from neighbours complaining about his behaviour.

Data security within the case management process

In June 2011, SYP presented a proposal for South Yorkshire wide partners to 'buy into' a South Yorkshire Public Service Network that will:

'create a single, more secure communications infrastructure. It opens up new opportunities for more efficient information sharing and will provide the operating environment for the Government Cloud'

The Public Sector Network (PSN) will evolve out of, and replace the current Government Connect network used by RMBC and is already recognised as a main plank of the RMBC ICT Strategy. The introduction of the PSN is subject of detailed discussion between the four South Yorkshire Local Authorities, with the likelihood being that all four will subsequently form a South Yorkshire consortium. This project is already budgeted for by RMBC although it is likely to be the end of 2012 before PSN is introduced. Until that time, Rotherham will retain the current Government Connect network. SYP have since been advised of the work currently taking place between the four South Yorkshire Local Authorities in respect of the PSN and the timescales that are involved before it will be a fully functional service.

The transfer of restricted and sensitive data between partners has long been a challenging issue. By way of example, all SYP e-mail addresses are 'secure' through the police national network, whilst our standard rotherham.gov.uk address is not secure. The same applies to standard e-mail addresses of the NHS, Fire & Rescue Service and other partner agencies. Contingencies currently in place to address this issue include key RMBC staff being allocated secure Government Connect e-mail address and secure pages on the RMBC intranet site that can only be accessed by authorised officers – a work round solution until the PSN becomes a reality.

There is no doubt that a single set of standards and security in respect of information sharing across the wider partnership would enhance working practice and significantly increase overall efficiency. Discussions are to continue with SYP, the three other Local Authorities (LA's) and other key partners, but it is unlikely that full partnership integration of the PSN will take place before the end of 2012. Until that time existing case management and information sharing arrangements will continue.

ASB Recording

From 1st April 2011 the way the police record reports of ASB changed as a result of Home Office guidance.

In April 2006 the Home Office introduced the National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR), whereby all police forces in England & Wales recorded incidents in a consistent manner. All police forces adopted the same set of closing codes used to describe various incident types along with agreed definitions for each.

The NSIR comprised of fourteen incident types (see the following table) clustered in 4 main groups:

1. Transport
2. Anti-Social Behaviour
3. Public, Safety and Welfare
4. Crime

These have been the official measure of ASB since the introduction of NSIR in 2006. The main criticism of this approach to ASB is that it did not encourage call handlers to consider the risk to the caller.

From 1st April 2011 the existing fourteen codes for ASB were reduced to three.

ASB Types (Pre 1st April 2011)

- 1) Abandoned vehicles
- 2) Animal problems
- 3) Begging
- 4) Hoax calls to the emergency services
- 5) Inappropriate use of fireworks
- 6) Malicious communications
- 7) Noise
- 8) Prostitution related activity
- 9) Littering/drugs paraphernalia
- 10) Nuisance neighbours
- 11) Rowdy nuisance behaviour
- 12) Street drinking
- 13) Trespass
- 14) Vehicle nuisance

New ASB Types (Post 1st April 2011)

- 1) Personal
- 2) Nuisance
- 3) Environmental

New ASB Definitions

1 Personal

'Personal' is designed to identify ASB incidents that the caller, call-handler or anyone else perceives as either deliberately targeted at an individual or group or having an impact on an individual or group rather than the community at large. It includes incidents that cause concern, stress, disquiet and/or irritation through to incidents which have a serious adverse impact on people's quality of life. At one extreme of the spectrum it includes minor annoyance; at the other end it could result in risk of harm, deterioration of health and disruption of mental or emotional well-being, resulting in an inability to carry out normal day to day activities through fear and intimidation.

2. Nuisance

'Nuisance' captures those incidents where an act, condition, thing or person causes trouble, annoyance, inconvenience, offence or suffering to the local community in general rather than to individual victims. It includes incidents where behaviour goes beyond the conventional bounds of acceptability and interferes with public interests including health, safety and quality of life. Just as individuals will have differing expectations and levels of tolerance so will communities have different ideas about what goes beyond tolerable or acceptable behaviour.

3. Environmental

'Environmental' deals with the interface between people and places. It includes incidents where individuals and groups have an impact on their surroundings including natural, built and social environments. This category is about encouraging reasonable behaviour whilst managing and protecting the various environments so that people can enjoy their own private spaces as well as shared or public spaces. People's physical settings and surroundings are known to impact positively or negatively on mood and sense of well-being and a perception that nobody cares about the quality of a particular environment can cause those affected by that environment to feel undervalued or ignored. Public spaces change over time as a result of physical effects caused, for example, by building but the environment can also change as a result of the people using or misusing that space.

Reasoning behind the change

The focus of the new approach is more oriented towards the caller rather than the production of statistics on ASB incidents. With a number of recent high profile incidents that were a result of victims being subjected to repeated incidents of ASB, the Home Office was keen to ensure that the chances of this happening again are minimised. Hence the focus is on how ASB impacts the person and the 3 new closing codes are designed to help the call handler go through the correct thought process in order to ensure the effective risk management of each report of ASB. The onus is on the call handler to ensure that the correct initial response is taken and to record their rationale for their decisions.

The new Home Office approach to recording ASB incidents reflects a case management ethos of encouraging call handlers to consider the spectrum of harm associated with each incident. It also encourages the management of risk and emphasises problem solving.

Impact on Comparability of ASB statistics

From 1st April 2011 ASB statistics will no longer be directly comparable with those published prior to this date. As a result, there may well be a change in the level of ASB incidents recorded.

8. Finance

Any future change in Rotherham to the Public Service network has already been budgeted for by the Council/RBT.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Tackling anti-social behaviour is a key priority for SYP and the Safer Rotherham Partnership. As a result of the changes made to the recording process, the whole ASB landscape changed compared to our understanding of reported/recorded ASB built up over recent years. To a large extent previous baselines have become irrelevant and 2011/12 will be when an accurate baseline is identified for use in future years.

It is critical that there is the ability to seamlessly share assessed confidential information between agencies and the development of a culture of more inter-agency openness. The change in culture, supported by operational protocols needs to be matched with the IT systems to allow quick and easy access to information restrained into the databases and systems of individual services and agencies.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

There is clear linkage between how, as a partnership, Rotherham tackles ASB and the objectives within the RMBC Corporate Plan – Helping to create safe and healthy communities, People feel safe where they live, Anti-social behaviour and crime is reduced, People from different backgrounds get on well together. Improving the environment, Clean streets.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

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