

**Anti-Social Behaviour Service  
Tenant Scrutiny Board Inquiry  
April 2018**

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# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Desired Outcomes and Recommendation Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Introduction and Scope</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. Evidence and Witnesses</b>	<b>11</b>

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# Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

**Desired Outcome** – Improve customer satisfaction

**Recommendation 1** – That the Anti-Social Behaviour team carry out an initiative such as a 'Noise Action Week' to provide a wide range of information about noise, around prevention in the first place and how to deal with this if it does occur.

**Desired Outcome** – Increased service improvements, efficiencies and opportunities for savings

**Recommendation 2** – That the Board support the implementation of a new computer system for Anti-Social Behaviour cases and that the Board are kept informed of the implementation of this.

**Desired Outcome** – A consistent approach to the link up of CCTV cameras

**Recommendation 3** – The Council look at their current plans and consider in certain circumstances to use rooftop signals to provide centrally linked up CCTV quicker – but with a longer term objective of moving over to fibre.

**Desired Outcome** – Customers are clear as to what CCTV pictures can and cannot be used for

**Recommendation 4** – That the Council make available a clear code of practice around the sharing of CCTV camera pictures to members of the public.

**Desired Outcome** – Staff are equipped with the most up to date knowledge to support their role

**Recommendation 5** – That the Council agree, as a matter of priority, their approach to carrying out future training with staff, especially in regard to the new IT system which will be implemented in the future.

**Desired Outcome** – Reassure customers of the service the Council provides

**Recommendation 6** – That the Council consider providing information that reporting Hate Crime does not affect an asylum case which may be ongoing.

**Desired Outcome** – Reassure customers of the service the Council provides

**Recommendation 7** – That the Council consider providing information that reporting Domestic Violence can be done with confidence.



# Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

**Desired Outcome** – Improve customer satisfaction

**Recommendation 8** – That the Council consider looking at the survey being used and identify if dissatisfaction is more predominant in Housing Officer cases or Anti-Social Behaviour Team cases.

**Desired Outcome** – Customers are aware of all the different types of services available to resolve their complaint

**Recommendation 9** – That the Council provide more information around the Mediation Service, and more importantly the benefits to this in potentially resolving complaints between parties.

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# Introduction and Scope

## Introduction

1. This is our fourth Inquiry report since the amalgamation of the scrutiny panels previously established under the three ALMOs.
2. Our first Inquiry report looked at Annual Home Visits. The second report focused on Environment of Estates. The third was around the responsive repairs service in East Leeds, provided by Leeds Building Services. This report focuses on the Anti-Social Behaviour Service.
3. This inquiry has been a complex one, especially in comparison to the previous inquiries the Board has carried out. The number of agencies and parties, alongside the large variety of case types which the team have to deal with means this area of work is not easy to recommend improvements to.
4. Co-ordination of services and agencies
5. Developing and delivering standards
6. Performance measuring
7. Customer satisfaction
5. The Inquiry was conducted over six formal evidence gathering sessions which took place between October 2017 and March 2018.
6. The Board also conducted a survey with involved residents and tenant groups.
7. The Board would like to thank all those involved in this Inquiry. A full list of those who participated is detailed at the end of this report.

## Scope of the Inquiry

4. The Board chose this topic as there was compelling performance evidence and feedback from key stakeholders that indicated there was a need to improve performance and service for tenants.
5. The Terms of Reference for this Inquiry were agreed on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2017 when it was concluded that the purpose of the Inquiry would be to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
  - Current policies and processes
  - Consultation with tenants (questionnaire)



# Conclusions and Recommendations

## Noise Nuisance

1. The Board noted from their evidence gathering throughout the inquiry, that the largest type of Anti-Social Behaviour cases are around noise and that this complaint makes up around 50% of the workload.
2. The Board appreciate that there are a number of factors which can cause this complaint, from lifestyle, flooring and property construction type.
3. Evidence suggested that some noise, especially in blocks of flats was caused due to children running around above and that this is becoming more prevalent, given the shortage of stock the Council has not got the ability to rehouse families in other types of property.
4. It should be noted that the Board support the Council's initiative to have some blocks in the City identified as 'Family Friendly'.
5. The Council have a difficult task in dealing with noise, but the Board felt that there was more emphasis on dealing with the problem once it had happened, rather than trying to prevent it occurring in the first place.
6. The Board were also informed that there is often a number of weeks wait before noise equipment can be installed, and the Board were told this can't always be used in some cases because it would not be possible to identify the source of the noise.
7. The Board therefore recommends that the Council look towards carrying out a 'Noise Action Week' which could

highlight what things can cause noise, in an educational format.

8. This measure could potentially cause an increase in number of noise complaints as any such initiative would, but it may have longer term benefits of informing tenants of the ways their lifestyle may be having an impact on their neighbours which they were otherwise unaware of. It is important that the name of the week is considered, and has a positive stance, because the image which needs to be portrayed is that the Council want to deal with noise nuisance but and also prevent it.

**Recommendation 1** – That the Anti-Social Behaviour team carry out an initiative such as a 'Noise Action Week' to provide a wide range of information about noise, around prevention in the first place and how to deal with this if it does occur.

## IT Systems

9. It has been a theme during all the Boards investigations that the IT systems which are used are not always positively received by those using them.
10. However, the Board were informed during their evidence gathering about the introduction of a new Housing Management system, which as part of it contains a module for Anti-Social Behaviour case monitoring.
11. This will replace the current system being used, which was reported by officers as being 'clunky' and not user friendly. An example of this being that template letters which are in the system cannot be



# Conclusions and Recommendations

easily changed to be more bespoke to a particular case. This has an impact on the time taken to carry out general administration of a case.

12. The Board were also advised that the current systems do not easily identify whether a property is Council or privately owned.
13. The Board are supportive of any measure which will make Officers work easier and more efficient, and appreciate there will always be issues faced when introducing a new IT system into an organisation.

**Recommendation 2** – That the Board support the implementation of a new computer system for Anti-Social Behaviour cases and that the Board are kept informed of the implementation of this.

## CCTV

14. The Board support the view that CCTV should be an effective tool for supporting with Anti-Social Behaviour case evidence.
15. However, the Board were informed that there currently isn't a consistent approach to CCTV across the City, and this has been due to how systems have been installed in the past.
16. Because of this, the Board were informed that there is a programme ongoing to make this consistent across the City and that all areas are linked centrally.

17. It was explained that there are two possible approaches to ensuring this; through fibre or rooftop signals.
18. The Board were told that fibre is a more expensive approach when compared to rooftop signals. However, rooftop signals would be a quicker way of providing the ability to link up cameras centrally.
19. The Board appreciate in the longer term, fibre is the future and by ignoring this option could leave the Council technologically disadvantaged in the future.
20. However, the Board do recommend the Council look at their current plans and consider if it would be appropriate in some instances to use rooftop signals to provide centrally linked up CCTV quicker – but with a longer term objective of moving over to fibre.

**Recommendation 3** – The Council look at their current plans and consider in certain circumstances to use rooftop signals to provide centrally linked up CCTV quicker – but with a longer term objective of moving over to fibre.

21. The Board were told of a project to identify where the Council and Police have CCTV cameras. This is so that in future, both parties do not install cameras in the same place, as it was told that the camera pictures can be shared with both parties in appropriate circumstances. The Board appreciate that in some cases, Police operational cameras would remain secret and that duplication could be an unavoidable occurrence.



# Conclusions and Recommendations

22. The Board also queried the ways that CCTV pictures could be viewed by members of the public. The Board were informed that there are limitations as to who can view it and under what circumstances. The Board felt that this should be made clear to residents, who may rely on this information in the case of incidents occurring to themselves or their property.

**Recommendation 4** – That the Council make available a clear code of practice around the sharing of CCTV camera pictures to members of the public.

## Staff Training

23. The Board appreciates the work which has gone on whilst the inquiry has been ongoing around training Officers around Anti-Social Behaviour, especially for new starters in the Department.
24. The Board however are concerned as to how this training is carried out in future, especially in regard to new policies and procedures and for existing staff. The Board were informed of the complexities of taking out a large number of Officers from their roles to provide training to.
25. The Council need to agree, as a matter of priority, their approach to carrying out future training with staff. The Board feel that training allows Officers to carry out their roles effectively and efficiently.

**Recommendation 5** – That the Council agree, as a matter of priority, their approach to carrying out future training with staff, especially in regard to the new IT system which will be implemented in the future.

## Hate Crime

26. The Board acknowledge the good work being carried out on Hate Crime by the Council.
27. However, the Board are of the belief that Hate Crime is still being under-reported. Concerning information was received which explained that sometimes asylum seekers who could be more at risk of a Hate Crime think that if they were to report this to authorities it may jeopardise their asylum case.
28. Given the above, the Board were assured this wasn't the case by Officers, however the Board feel that if this is the perception, then there is a need to provide confidence to people that this isn't the so and the Council should consider better information on this.

**Recommendation 6** – That the Council consider providing information that reporting Hate Crime does not affect an asylum case which may be ongoing.

## Domestic Violence

29. As with Hate Crime, the Board felt that there could be concerns around confidence of reporting domestic violence to authorities.
30. The Board note that in some cases domestic violence may be reported via the Police, but the Council should advertise that people are able to report Domestic Violence to the Council in confidence.





# Conclusions and Recommendations

**Recommendation 7** – That the Council consider providing information that reporting Domestic Violence can be done with confidence.

## Response Time to Cases

31. The Board were provided with evidence in a number of ways around concerns around the time taken to respond to Anti-Social Behaviour cases. Evidence received from Officers and also via the involved tenant survey showed this was a concern.
32. Tenants expressed concerns that response times in some cases were poor. However when the Board presented this concern to Officers, it was explained that there are service standards which act as the timescales in which cases should give updates to tenants. The Officers when explaining this said that the service standards should be seen as a minimum, and that in some cases more frequent contact would be better.
33. The Board understand that some ASB cases would be quicker to resolve than others, and that tenants may have a mind-set where they think something should be resolved quickly, when in practice this isn't possible.
34. Following on from this, Officers expressed concerns around where other agencies may need to be involved with a case that they often have such a backlog that they do not get dealt with quickly which makes a case go on longer, with a knock on effect of causing dissatisfaction.
35. In providing advice the Board felt that Officers should, even though it may be a difficult conversation, be honest about timescales and what can be done on a case at the outset, which may help with setting expectations.
36. Evidence was received by the Board that what are deemed 'low level' cases, which are usually related to the tenancy, are dealt with by local Housing Officers. More serious or complex cases would be dealt with by the Anti-Social Behaviour Team.
37. The Board received evidence of cases which are deemed low level and continue for a long period of time without resolution. The Board were informed that Housing Officers can liaise with the Anti-Social Behaviour Team, for advice and if they could help with resolving the case, but the Board felt that because these cases were ongoing for such a long time that something wasn't working right.
38. The survey conducted also provided evidence on dissatisfaction with the Anti-Social Behaviour Service. The Board have looked at this information and have questioned which element, is it the Housing Officer cases or the Anti-Social Behaviour cases, or both causing the dissatisfaction. And if dissatisfaction is being caused because the Housing Officer is carrying this work out, is it because they have other duties which take up their time, and so cannot commit more time to cases?
39. The Board feel that this is an area of work which should be looked at,



# Conclusions and Recommendations

perhaps through the current survey which is carried out at the end of the case, which highlights who was responsible for satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

40. The Board in providing the recommendation below do not wish to cause a 'them and us' attitude between the two teams who deal with cases, and that this information should be used to drive service improvements and thus provide a better service to customers.

**Recommendation 8** – That the Council consider looking at the survey being used and identify if dissatisfaction is more predominant in Housing Officer cases or Anti-Social Behaviour Team cases.

45. The Board feel that there may be some work which the service can do which could encourage better take up of mediation, for example providing more information on the mediation service, how it works and how it could provide a quicker resolution to cases.

**Recommendation 9** – That the Council provide more information around the Mediation Service, and more importantly the benefits to this in potentially resolving complaints between parties.

## Mediation

41. Finally, in closing this report the Board met with the Mediation Service, which is provided internally within Leeds City Council.
42. The Board were informed of what the service provides and in what types of cases this is used.
43. However, the Board were surprised to learn that the mediation service isn't taken up by complainants very much.
44. The Board appreciate some of the reasons that this might not be the case, most importantly that both parties have to agree to such an approach, a case going on for so long that mediation is no longer viable, or in some cases it wouldn't be appropriate, but there were other cases the Board found surprising that this isn't taken up by complainants.



# Evidence and Witnesses

## Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

## Reports and Publications Submitted

- Terms of Reference for the Board's inquiry into East Leeds Repairs
- Questionnaire on Anti-Social Behaviour Service and responses to tenants and tenant groups

## Witnesses Heard

- |                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Harvinder Saimbhi  | Head of Operational Delivery   |
| • Jeff Clarke        | Housing Manager                |
| • Sharon Guy         | Housing Manager                |
| • Lee Ward           | Neighbourhood Services Officer |
| • Neil Bowden        | ASB Team Manager               |
| • Jamie Martin       | Housing Manager                |
| • Claire Smith       | Housing Manager                |
| • Bryan Wagner-Adair | Senior Housing Advisor         |
| • Zahid Butt         | Service Development Manager    |
| • Michelle Pollard   | Police Link Officer            |
| • Leon Burton-Davies | Housing Officer                |
| • Michael Vilia      | Housing Officer                |
| • Maria Wheeler      | ASB Officer                    |
| • Melissa Pye        | ASB Officer                    |

## Dates of Scrutiny

Tenant Scrutiny Board meetings were held on:

- 11 October 2017
- 15 November 2017
- 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017



# Evidence and Witnesses

- 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018
- 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018

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**Tenant Scrutiny Board  
Anti-Social Behaviour Service April 2018  
Report author:**