

## Overview

- a) In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of LASBT, the team has been consulting on the how it can redesign aspects of the service to better respond to the challenges it faces.
- b) The consultation has highlighted that current levels of demand are unsustainable and that an increasing number of individuals interacting with the service – both perpetrators and victims – have very complex needs and vulnerabilities.
- c) The consultation identified a need to:
  - a. Revise processes to ensure decision making is based on an effective triage system
  - b. Embed the identification and assessment of risk in procedures from the first point of contact.
  - c. Extend and strengthen partnership working.
- d) Redesigning some of the ways in which LASBT operates offers the opportunity to complement wider LCC ambitions around the Inclusive Growth Strategy, and will also reflect the priorities of both the Safer Leeds Community Safety Strategy and the Best Council Plan.

## 1. Background information

### 1.1 Development of Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT)

- 1.1.1 In October 2009 the Home Secretary, Rt. Hon. Alan Johnson MP announced a package of practical measures to improve the collective response to ASB. This followed an incident elsewhere in the country where a subsequent report criticised the failures of both the local council and the police to share information and respond appropriately.
- 1.1.2 In January 2010 it was agreed that a comprehensive review would take place in Leeds of the local partner agency protocols and processes used to respond to, and tackle, Anti-Social Behaviour. This was completed using the nationally recognised QUEST methodology and under the guidance of a governance board representing senior leaders of partner agencies.
- 1.1.3 As a result of the recommendations of that review, a multi-agency unit – Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT) – was established to deliver a specialist ASB service through locally based teams. Uniform service standards were also introduced to ensure consistency of delivery across all teams.
- 1.1.4 Due to the success of the team, the domestic noise and out-of-hours noise nuisance team was transferred and integrated into LASBT in 2012.

## **1.2 Current Provision**

- 1.2.1 LASBT is part of Safer Leeds. It includes officers from Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Police, Housing Leeds, Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services, Youth Offending, and Victim Support.
- 1.2.2 There are currently three operational teams covering the South and City Centre, East North East, and West North West areas of Leeds. The team are supported by a performance and information team based at Merrion House.
- 1.2.3 The out-of-hours noise nuisance team is co-located within the LeedsWatch Service.

## **1.3 Defining Anti-Social Behaviour**

- 1.3.1 LASBT was designed to deal with behaviour that cannot be reasonably resolved through tenancy management or mediation. This includes (but is not limited to) those listed below:-
  - **Harm to individuals**  
Harassment, threats of violence and/or intimidation, racist behaviour or language and verbal abuse.
  - **Harm directed at communities**  
Drug dealing and misuse, street drinking, prostitution, kerb crawling, aggressive begging, public drunkenness and disorder and persistent domestic noise nuisance.
  - **Environmental harm**  
Graffiti and vandalism/damage to public property.
- 1.3.2 The Anti-social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 uses two definitions of ASB depending upon whether the ASB is related to a housing function.
- 1.3.3 In relation to housing, LASBT works across all tenures. Where anti-social behaviour has occurred in a housing context, LASBT will consider whether the conduct is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises or whether the conduct is capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person.
- 1.3.4 Where anti-social behaviour occurs in a non-housing related context the test will be as to whether the behaviour has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person.

## **1.4 Why is a review needed?**

- 1.4.1 The nature of the issues facing LASBT has evolved since the service was established. There has been increased demand for the service, which is responding to a far greater number of complex cases and high risk incidents.
- 1.4.2 The volume of incoming referrals relating to noise nuisance, in particular, is significantly limiting the team's ability to deliver much needed work around prevention, intervention and community empowerment.
- 1.4.3 The breadth of issues being referred has also increased. The interpretation of many people outside of the service of what constitutes 'anti-social behaviour' has expanded, with ASB becoming a 'catch all' for activity ranging from minor instances of noise nuisance to serious criminal activity.

- 1.4.4 Furthermore, an increasing number of those interacting with the service – both victims and perpetrators - are displaying complex support needs and vulnerabilities. Those support needs often require specialist interventions, which LASBT is not best placed to deliver.
- 1.4.5 Organisations including Shelter have demonstrated that ASB is often prevalent where there are wider risk factors such as living in a disadvantaged neighbourhood and/or poor housing, or in a family where there is conflict, social exclusion or poverty.
- 1.4.6 With this in mind, redefining the way in which LASBT operates offers the potential to complement wider ambitions around the Council's inclusive growth strategy, especially in the context of support for priority neighbourhoods and also work within children's services and adult social care to support vulnerable families.

## **2. Main issues**

- 2.1 The consultation process to date has underlined the strengths of the **multi-agency approach** to tackling ASB in Leeds, highlighting the positive impact of the service on communities and the value of the knowledge and skills of staff.
- 2.2 The consultation has reinforced the fact that anti-social behaviour cannot be tackled or prevented in isolation by one agency. In order to address the causes of ASB, a joined up, partnership approach is required. This will involve LCC colleagues in areas such as mental health, adult social care, children's services and housing, as well as external partners and residents.
- 2.3 Decision making should be based upon a thorough assessment of the severity of incoming cases. It is intended that **a triage system** is introduced to manage this process, and that the **identification and assessment of risk is embedded** within the system from the first point of contact.
- 2.4 It is recognised that the proposed programme of change within LASBT must be underpinned by **staff training** to ensure officers are confident using all tools available to them, and to empower them to provide robust advice, deliver successful early intervention and, where necessary, to challenge customer expectations.
- 2.5 It is recommended, following feedback during the consultation process, that a programme of **regular training** about the role of LASBT is also introduced for LCC colleagues in other services and for partners such as the Neighbourhood Policing Teams.

## 2.6 Areas for Priority Action

- 2.6.1 Triage of referrals:** it is recommended that the service designs and implements a triage system for all incoming referrals so that cases can be appropriately prioritised.
- 2.6.2 That system should be based on clear Terms of Reference, which support the priorities of the Safer Leeds Community Safety Strategy. It should be supported by a revised system of performance monitoring.
- 2.6.3 The identification and assessment of vulnerabilities must be embedded in that process from the first point of contact with service users. This will require scripts to be revised and regular training to be provided for both LASBT officers and officers in the contact centre.
- 2.6.4 Where cases are assessed as not being ASB cases but a support need is identified customers will be signposted to appropriate, alternative services. For complex cases it may be appropriate to refer the case for consideration by a community MARAC.
- 2.6.5 It is crucial that strong partnerships are in place to enable officers to access support from colleagues in services such as mental health, youth offending, children's services adult social care and housing, as well as partners such as West Yorkshire Police.
- 2.6.6 Community MARACs:** For complex and persistent cases it is recommended that the service establishes the use of community MARACs. This will promote early resolution of cases, joint decision making and more effective problem solving. This will enable officers to assess and manage risk more effectively for both perpetrators and victims.
- 2.6.7 Mediation:** Early intervention has the potential to resolve more ASB cases before they escalate and become increasingly entrenched. Not only could this deliver improved outcomes for the individuals involved it also has the potential to reduce costly demands on public services created through having to resolve more complex cases if they escalate.
- 2.6.8 It is recommended that a mediation service is commissioned which has the flexibility to work in various localities and at times which suit the needs of those residents involved.
- 2.6.9 Noise:** Over 60% of incoming referrals relate to noise nuisance. The existing resources cannot meet the demand and expectation of the service. The provision therefore needs to be revised, joining up day time and out-of-hours services more effectively and ideally delivering increasingly flexible coverage.
- 2.6.10 The use of technology – such as apps to record and report noise nuisance - should be explored.
- 2.6.11 In addition, a communication plan should be put in place to ensure that customers understand what actions they can take themselves.
- 2.6.12 Communication:** External communications need to be revised to provide clear advice to those seeking to use the service, particularly in the case of out-of-hours noise nuisance.
- 2.6.13 In order to manage customer expectations information about details such as anticipated response times should be accessible and, with the introduction of a triage system, customers should receive accurate information about how their case will be taken forward.
- 2.6.14 Officers need to be empowered to challenge unrealistic expectations and to set out, if necessary, the limitations of tools available to them in some circumstances.
- 2.6.15 The consultation process has highlighted a gap in terms of social media presence. Advice is being sought from the communications team as to options available.
- 2.6.16 Location of the West Team:** Currently officers based in the west of Leeds are in accommodation that does not fully meet the needs of the service. Work is on-going to identify a suitable alternative base, ideally co-located with other services in the same area of

the city. Consultation with Trade Union representatives is taking place in relation to this proposal.

2.6.17 **ASB Strategy:** It is proposed that an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy is developed for the city which sets out a strategic framework for activity moving forward. It is intended that this should be focused around the themes of prevention, intervention, enforcement, community empowerment and integrated intelligence.

2.6.18 This will inform the future allocation of capacity and resources and ensure that activity is reflective of the ambitions set out in both the Safer Leeds Community Safety Strategy and the Best Council Plan.

## **2.7 Consultation and engagement**

2.7.1 A wide range of consultation events have taken place with staff, elected members and partners. This has included a multi-agency OBA session and a series of staff workshops.

2.7.2 Work has been undertaken with West Yorkshire Police Independent Advisory Board and residents have been consulted via TARA. Additional consultation is due to take place via the citizen's panel.

2.7.3 An initial workshop took place with members of the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board in December 2018 ahead of a formal meeting on 25 February 2019. Community Safety Champions were consulted in January 2019. Consultation with Community Committee Chairs is ongoing.

2.7.4 The Executive Board member for Communities has been engaged throughout the process.

2.7.5 In addition the LASBT review steering group, which is chaired by the Chief Officer for Safer Leeds, includes officers from a range of services including Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Communities and Housing. Two elected members also sit on the board, along with a Trade Union representative and colleagues from partner organisations such as Victim Support, West Yorkshire Police and the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

## **2.8 Resources and value for money**

2.8.1 The aim of this review is to change the way LASBT operates in order to maximise the value derived from existing resources.

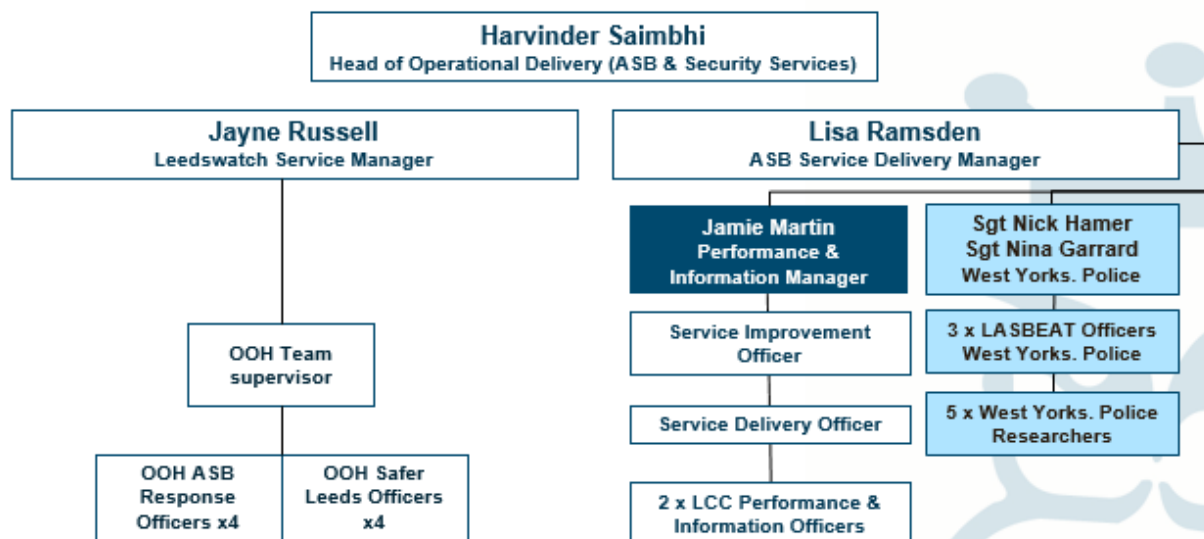
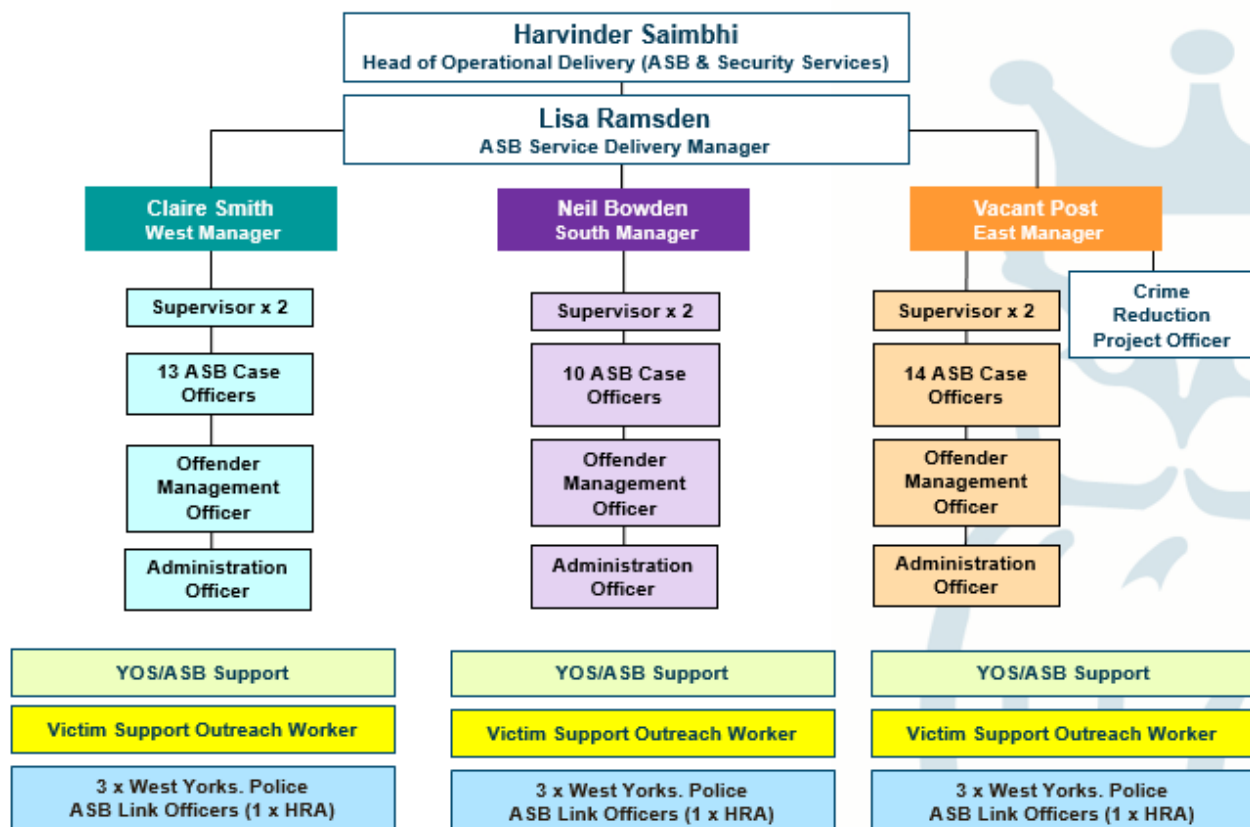
2.8.2 The ambition is to enable officers to work with communities, and to make better use of early intervention tools, thereby reducing demand on public services and the associated cost of dealing with complex cases that have escalated.

## **3. Next Steps**

3.1 Under the direction of the Chief Officer for Safer Leeds, officers will continue to redesign the current LASBT provision with a view to implementation of a final scheme after consideration by the Executive Board in June.

3.2 The LASBT Review steering group will continue to meet in order to bring partners together to shape the programme as it develops.

Figure 1: Current Structure



**Figure 2: ASB in Leeds**

