

Briefing note on Norwich City Council's new ASB reporting line and approach to dealing with antisocial behaviour

Introduction

Norwich City Council have introduced changes and improvements that will increase the range of responses the city council can provide to communities who are suffering antisocial behaviour and to give greater prominence to working with partners.

These interventions are intended to prevent and deal with the effects of antisocial behaviour and increase public confidence.

This paper is a summary of those changes and recent developments to improve the council's working with partners.

The Antisocial Behaviour Hotline

As part of the Norwich Connect programme new, 'end-to-end', customer facing processes have been developed and introduced (using Comino Customer Relationship Management and Workflow software products) for reporting antisocial behaviour, e.g. noise, fly tipping, abandoned cars, litter, youths causing disturbance. From the 16 May 2006, residents will be able to telephone the city council 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to report antisocial behaviour. These calls will be answered in the Residents' Services Team during normal office hours and to the Norwich Community Alarm Service at other times.

Council staff will use 'Comino' to capture the relevant details of the issue and arrange an appropriate response. Responses will vary and could include, arranging for a service such as collecting fly tipped material or removing graffiti; a 'real-time' response from the council's new citywide Neighbourhood Warden's service, referring the call to the police, or simply logging the call if no action can be taken.

Responses to the calls can be logged and tracked through the Comino system and information on reports of ASB can be aggregated, reviewed and monitored corporately, irrespective of which council service responds. The information can then be analysed and shared with our partners, to identify trends and hot spots, so that longer-term actions can be taken. Collating intelligence in this way is an essential part of the council's overall response to tackling antisocial behaviour and will be the basis, along with data from other partners, for designing effective strategic interventions and tactical responses to antisocial behaviour.

This work has received grant-aid from the Home Office Respect Taskforce (formerly Antisocial Behaviour Unit).

A City Wide ASB Service

The Neighbourhood Wardens Team

The Council have agreed to extend the two Council Neighbourhood Warden Schemes into a City Wide scheme, which will build upon the successes of the original teams. The new wardens service will:

- Cover more of the City
- Focus on areas of greatest need
- Maintain a local presence
- Be part of a corporate approach to reducing anti-social behaviour
- Contribute to a wider Council response to anti-social behaviour, which includes CCTV, Street and Citizen Services, Tenancy Enforcement and Licensing

The successes of the Wardens Schemes so far have been in working with partners, in particular the Police to reduce anti-social behaviour and low-level crime, increase community confidence, reporting issues to other agencies, and providing direct support to vulnerable people.

We also know that Wardens have been successful in interacting with young people and introducing them to activities to divert them from anti-social behaviour, e.g. football, circuit training, environmental projects. Evidence of good practice suggests that this should be extended further.

The new service will have four geographically focussed teams who will cover the areas of greatest need in the City, based upon reports to the ASB reporting line and Police intelligence.

These areas will broadly cover:

Bowthorpe, Earlham, Larkman and Marlpit
Lakenham, Tuckswood and Vauxhall Street
Plumstead, Heartsease and Heathgate
Mile Cross and Catton

The teams of Wardens will operate during the day from their geographical areas, hot desking from a combination of Council offices, community centres and sheltered housing schemes and working closely with the Neighbourhood Housing Officers.

Each of the four geographical areas will have at least two wardens on duty between 12:00 hrs to 22:00 hrs, which is when in the Council's experience, the majority of incidents are reported to wardens. This will be the advertised hours of operation of the wardens. However, the proposed rota provides the opportunity for four wardens on duty between 10:00 hrs to 22:00hrs on two days per week and these additional hours could be used for planned visits to schools and sheltered housing schemes.

At any one time there will be two Senior Wardens on duty across the City to advise the local teams.

To manage and co-ordinate the City Council's corporate approach to anti-social behaviour, including the City Wide Warden Scheme and to make effective use of the intelligence gathered through the reports to the Comino system, a new post of Anti-Social Behaviour Manager has been created to:

- 'Triage' anti-social behaviour reports and cases
- Monitor the effectiveness of our actions
- Monitor trends in anti-social behaviour
- Co-ordinate a corporate response to anti-social behaviour issues
- Be the focal point for liaison with the police and other relevant agencies
- Work with the police to direct the tasking of operational staff e.g. Wardens and Police Community Support Officers through the Police Tasking and Co-ordinating Group

Four teams of Neighbourhood Wardens will focus on and cover the areas of greatest need in the City in a specific geographical area and will:

- Have a purposeful presence within their geographical area and cover locations based on reports to the anti-social behaviour hotline and data from partners
- Develop links with young people, schools and local businesses
- Report incidences using the Comino processes
- Engage with young people causing anti-social behaviour and who are at risk of offending
- Provide a link to existing activities for young people
- Some wardens will also develop new activities with the young people

Tenancy enforcement

In addition, a specialist Tenancy Enforcement Team, ABATE, has been established in the Housing Landlord Service which will use the Council's powers as a landlord to discourage and tackle anti-social behaviour by tenants and their families or visitors which are related to the occupation of the Council's housing stock and primarily occur within the boundaries of land owned by the Housing Service.

Working with partners to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour

Council ASB and Community Staff are now starting to co-locate with the Police in Vantage House. The ASB Manager, 3 ASB Case Workers, a Home Office funded ABC Caseworker and the Community Safety Officer will be moving in over the next few weeks. One of the Council's Licensing Officers will also hot desk in Vantage House.

Discussions have recently started with the Police to investigate how the Council's Neighbourhood based staff (Neighbourhood Housing Officer, Neighbourhood Warden) can work more closely with the developing Neighbourhood Policing Model including possible sharing of hot desking facilities and neighbourhood surgeries. Other geographically and operationally focussed staff e.g. Community Development, Tenant Participation, Citizen and Street Services and Green Spaces are linking into this work to share information and be aware of local issues and opportunities.

The City Council and Police with other partners have just moved into a new level of partnership working, with a fortnightly meeting (Partnership Tasking and Co-ordination meeting). This will use current tactical crime and disorder data from the ASB Hotline, Police and Fire and agree taskings and actions to resolve the issues. The meeting is chaired by the City Council's Chief Executive Officer and is attended by a number of Senior Managers.

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