

**Report of the Chief Constable to the Chair and Members  
of the Operational Policing Panel  
23<sup>rd</sup> September 2009**

**Executive & Presenting Officer: Mr Sean White, Assistant Chief Constable  
(Territorial Operations)**

**Status: For information**

**Force Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Performance Report  
(April to July 2009)**

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1 To present to the Police Authority an update on Force performance in respect of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) against the 2009-10 Policing Plan priority areas.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Members note the contents of the report.

**3 Reasons**

- 3.1 Within the broader Force Performance Report that has been presented to Members of the Police Authority at today's meeting it can be seen that there has been an overall increase in recorded incidents of anti-social behaviour during the period April to July 2009 when in fact the Force had agreed to seek to achieve a reduction during the course of 2009-10.
- 3.2 The purpose of this more detailed report is to focus specifically upon the issue of anti-social behaviour as it is a priority policing area within the 2009-10 Policing Plan. Given that significant reductions in crime are continuing to be achieved together with increases in the number of offences brought to justice and set within the context of high levels of public confidence, it is important that the key issue of anti-social behaviour, as it affects communities, is both understood and responded to effectively.

3.3 The purpose of this report is to provide commentary and a detailed overview of the current position in respect of anti-social behaviour and to propose a number of interventions and further improvements to ensure that the promise to achieve a reduction during the current financial year is realised.

3.4 At the Force level, the Stockton, Hartlepool and Middlesbrough districts show a very small increases or reductions in reported anti-social behaviour between April and July 2009 when compared to the same period during 2008, Redcar & Cleveland's has risen by 4.8% during this period, the most significant increase. The charts below plot these changes.



3.5 The recorded rise in anti-social behaviour promotes the questions to be asked as to whether there has been an actual increase or whether internal processes ie call handling and recording are contributing to an increase in recording. In order to answer these questions, the Operational Policing Team (OPT) initially with Redcar & Cleveland and later with all districts, researched recording processes and analysed the true nature of ASB calls. Initial findings did identify an error rate of approximately 10% in respect of the over recording of ASB by Cleveland Police and a lack of clarity between public perception of ASB i.e. rowdiness, harassment and other categories e.g. night time economy related public disorder. A more detailed case study was therefore commissioned within the Redcar & Cleveland district.

3.6 It was quickly identified that there was a correlation between rising anti-social behaviour and the use of the dedicated neighbourhood policing telephone number. Each district uses a unique telephone number that residents can ring when they wish to speak with their neighbourhood officer or PCSO. This number is answered at Police Headquarters by a call handler at any time of day or night. If the officer/PCSO is on duty, the member of the public will be connected to them via their airwave radio. If they are not on duty, an e mail

may be sent to the officer/PCSO asking that they contact that person on their return to work. If the call handler thinks they need to speak to someone more urgently or be seen by an officer/PCSO that day or the member of the public requests it, then an 'event' is created which will be coded as an anti-social behaviour incident. In many cases where callers were re-contacted they expressed surprise that their call was classed as an incident rather than a request to speak to their NHP officer.

3.7 Redcar & Cleveland initiated Operation Contact in July 2009 in order to improve public confidence and contact particularly around Neighbourhood Policing. This involves every house in the district receiving a visit from their Neighbourhood Police Officer or PCSO. They are provided with a leaflet identifying who their neighbourhood officers are and how to contact them directly using the neighbourhood telephone number should they wish to discuss any issues. They have also invested heavily in advertising direct neighbourhood telephone numbers as part of an overall campaign to increase public confidence. These telephone numbers now appear on the back of parking tickets, on book marks at local libraries, on boomerangs given out to local children and on every piece of literature they distribute.

3.8 As a result of their campaign, the number of calls from Redcar & Cleveland residents to the direct neighbourhood number has risen by 43% during this period when compared to 2008. Hartlepool and Stockton also show increases of 23% and 25% accordingly. They have also invested in advertising this telephone number but to a lesser extent than Redcar & Cleveland.



3.9 Redcar & Cleveland's ease of contact satisfaction survey results show steady increases to a current level of 97.4% compared to 89.3% in March 2008 which demonstrates that the use of the neighbourhood telephone lines does help.

- 3.10 Although there is a direct link between the increased use of this telephone line and the rise in recorded anti-social behaviour, the feedback from local communities is in direct contrast to this rise. It is felt that public confidence and trust in Cleveland Police has increased and the rise in the reports of this type of behaviour is a reflection of neighbourhood officers being more accessible and the public being more confident that they will act on their concerns.
- 3.11 Indeed, Redcar & Cleveland have just held their five 'kin meetings' and all reported that they feel there has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour and they are increasingly satisfied with how we deal with such problems. This is supported by the APACS 2.2 measure (dealing with crime and ASB) which indicates that Cleveland Police is on course to achieve the target of 58% for 2009/10.
- 3.12 Additionally, there has been a sharp reduction in the number of anti-social behaviour related calls to the Redcar & Cleveland Local Authority during 2009 when compared with 2008. Indicating a 'transference' of calls from the Local Authority to NHP teams.

<b>Incidents reported - January to July</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Noise (not neighbours)	27	2
Rowdy/nuisance (Neighbours)	145	74
Rowdy/nuisance (Rowdy and inconsiderate)	904	368
Street drinking	9	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,085</b>	<b>444</b>

- 3.13 On a national level, the recording of anti-social behaviour incidents is also under review. The NPIA recognise that the recording of ASB is problematic with no clear differentiation between that behaviour which causes fear, alarm or harassment and that which could be termed a 'quality of life issue'. A national working group has been tasked with addressing the anomalies within NSIR to allow forces to more accurately record ASB.
- 3.14 As well as reviewing reporting and recording practices, districts are using various reassurance, prevention and enforcement activities to reduce anti-social behaviour. Repeat callers are all visited in person. Specific high profile operations are commencing in the run up to mischief night. Dispersal zones in areas experiencing higher levels are being introduced. Partnership work with Trading Standards and youth intervention will concentrate upon anti-social 'hot spots'. Acceptable behaviour agreements and ASBO/CRASBO will be issued to youths who are regularly involved in this behaviour.

## **4 Implications**

### **4.1 Finance**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **4.2 Diversity and Equal Opportunities**

There are no diversity or equality opportunities implications arising from this report.

### **4.3 Human Rights Act**

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

### **4.4 Sustainability**

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

### **4.5 Risk**

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The Force continues to work to address local concerns regarding anti-social behaviour. As well as reviewing reporting and recording practices, districts are using various reassurance, prevention and enforcement activities to reduce anti-social behaviour.

5.2 This report identifies that whilst ASB has slightly increased during 2009/10, there is a clear body of evidence and data to suggest that this is as a result of greater responsiveness and better engagement with NHP teams leading to more problems being resolved and higher levels of satisfaction. However, the Force recognise that the overall ambition is to achieve a reduction and whilst there will be no retrenchment from effective 'engagement', there will be a focus upon call and incident handling procedures to ensure that the recording of ASB is entirely accurate. A further report on ASB will be provided to the Police Authority prior to the end of 2009.

Sean Price  
Chief Constable