

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy

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Introduction

The main purpose of this policy is to set out Stevenage Borough Councils (SBC) approach to managing anti-social and nuisance.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour continues to be a priority for Stevenage Borough Council in a survey with residents in 2017, 87% of those surveyed stated that “youth causing crime/disruption” was a concern for them. These findings together with talking to residents and visitors to the town at various events help us to determine our aims and objectives when tackling ASB and related nuisance. (These objectives can be found in Community Safety Strategy 2018-21)

Everyone who lives, work and visit Stevenage has the right the right to do so in a safe environment that allows them to enjoy the area. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) can be destructive force within communities and the lives of a significant number of people can be blighted by the behaviour of an unreasonable minority making other people’s life unbearable. Anti-Social behaviour can also damage the sustainability of communities and adversely affect our ability to let our properties.

Anti-Social Behaviour is taken very seriously by Stevenage Borough Council and will not be tolerated. We expect our tenants, residents, their family members including children or visitors to their home to show consideration and toleration for their neighbours and the wider community.

Stevenage is a safe place to live but we do recognise that we must be effective in tackling ASB and addressing the problems it creates. We will work co-operatively with partners and focus on problem solving methods within includes using preventative and early interventions measures to reduce incidents of ASB to avoid escalation.

We will look to provide support to those perpetrators who are willing to change their behaviour and although we will seek to resolve complaints of ASB informally, we will take formal or legal enforcement action including seeking possession of a property when necessary.

We maintain that any complaints of ASB remain an allegation until proven or legally tested. We will always take a measured, reasonable and proportionate approach to enforcement based on the available evidence.

1	Aims of the policy
1.1	<p>The aims of this policy is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the approach to the management and prevention of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) adopted by Stevenage Borough Council (SBC); • to ensure SBC operates to a framework that complies with its legal and best practice obligations; • to provide staff and customers with a flexible but clear range of information, expectations and tools; • to adopt approaches that will enable our ASB/Community Safety strategic objectives to be achieved that will improve the quality of life of SBC residents and people who visit or work in the borough • Those residents may not have the enjoyment of their home blighted by the behaviour of a minority who act irresponsibly and unsociably.
2	Scope of the policy
2.1	<p>This policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applies to residents of Stevenage and those with introductory and secure tenants who have a tenancy with Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) • private tenants and homeowners • leaseholders of SBC • any person who may live, work or visit Stevenage
2.2	<p>SBC is required by the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Anti-Social behaviour Act 2003, Section 12) and the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 to publish a Statement of Policy and Procedures in relation to anti-social behaviour.</p>
	SBC's Statement of Intent
2.3.1	<p>SBC recognises that all forms of anti-social behaviour (ASB) can have a destructive and negative consequence on peoples' lives and is of real concern to people in Stevenage. One of SBC's key strategic objectives is to tackle anti-social behaviour by encouraging good behaviour and building respect between individuals and communities.</p>

2.3.2	<p>In dealing with incidents of anti-social behaviour, we will actively seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stop the anti-social behaviour • encourage residents to resolve their own differences in a reasonable manner • provide a framework for supporting both the complainant and perpetrator • target repeat victims by prioritising areas or individuals affected by repeated anti-social behaviour • take early and effective action against perpetrators when they fail to engage with support offered • introduce preventative measures • monitor the effectiveness of action taken • escalate enforcement action if the anti-social behaviour is not modified or ended, using a multi-agency approach in the more complex cases • work in partnership with other agencies to tackle ASB • Support witnesses throughout the lifetime of a complaint of ASB and beyond.
2.3.3	<p>SBC believes that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • everyone has the right to enjoy a peaceful and secure environment in which to live, free from intimidation and ASB • there must be tolerance of and respect for others, regardless of their ethnicity, race, religion, gender, age and sexuality • Everyone has the right to their own chosen lifestyle providing this does not impact adversely on the quality of life of others.
2.3.4	<p>SBC is committed to recognising that we play a key role with our partners in tackling anti-social behaviour and its causes. SBC's policy reflects all of the various elements of the building blocks introduced through the ASB promise which are implemented through our operational practices.</p>
2.3.5	
3	Contents of the policy
3.1	<p>Definitions Responsibilities Policy Consultation Equality and Diversity Monitoring and review Performance indicators Links</p>

4	Definitions
4.1.1	SBC has adopted the definition from the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 to define ASB. The definition is: “Any person acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause Harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself (herself).
4.1.2	SBC requires its residents and those who work or visit the borough to comply with the law and the spirit of the law in terms of their behaviour toward others, in general to act in a ‘neighbourly fashion’. The definition of anti-social behaviour may take many forms and SBC take reports about noise, abusive behaviour, late night or frequent visitors, parking, car repairs, pets, smell, running a business from home, drugs, prostitution, alcohol abuse, untidy gardens, rubbish dumping, vandalism and graffiti very seriously.
4.1.3	SBC has grouped anti-social behaviour into three priority categories depending on their nature and severity. These are A,B and C. The grouping reflects the urgency with which staff will respond and the types of remedies that are likely to be considered. All hate crimes and domestic abuse are classed as Category A and will be responded to within one working day.
5	Responsibilities
5.1	<p>Customer Services advisors</p> <p>The Customer Service Centre provides initial advice to people making enquiries or ringing to report incidents to the Council.</p>
5.2	<p>Housing</p> <p>Are expected to respond to reports of anti-social behaviour by interviewing complainants’ witnesses and alleged perpetrators, completing a risk assessment and action plan then referring the case to the ASB Team, by using the electronic referral form.</p>
5.3	<p>Community Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will give advice on actions that can be taken against people who have been identified as having carried out acts of anti-social behaviour • They will investigate and take action in respect of cases referred to Community Safety using the tools and powers provided through legislation. • Officers are responsible for investigating and taking action in the cases

	<p>referred to them. This includes tenants and non-tenants. Living in Stevenage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each case referred will have an action plan and risk assessment (unless agree by a Team Leader or Manager within the Community Safety) • Community Safety Officers are responsible for recording and monitoring all cases assigned to them.
5.4	<p>The Senior Community Safety and Partnerships Officer and the Community Safety Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides on-going advice and assistance to internal and external partners
5.5	<p>The Tenancy and Income manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors and reviews the actions taken by tenancy involved in implementing this policy.
5.6	<p>The Senior Community Safety and Partnerships Officer provides on-going advice and assistance on this policy and any enforcement actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agrees the actions taken by the Community Safety Officers to address reports of anti-social behaviour • Is responsible for updating the policy in relation to changes in legislation
5.7	<p>Community Safety Manager Makes sure that our practices are carried out in accordance with this policy and legislation.</p>
5.8	<p>The Assistant Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods Has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and its periodic review.</p>
6	Policy
6.2	<p>Our approach to anti-social behaviour</p> <p>Our approach in dealing with ASB takes into account a number of aspects from prevention to rehabilitation. We will protect and support victims, witnesses and their families. Where necessary, we will also refer alleged perpetrators for assistance either in-house or to partner agencies. As each case of ASB is unique, so is the way in which we handle each complaint, and our actions will depend upon the nature and severity of each incident.</p>
6.2.1	<p>SBC's attitude to hate crimes such as racial harassment, domestic abuse, modern slavery, Child Sexual Exploitation, sexual or sexual orientation harassment, religious or cultural intolerance is not flexible. We will take a victim centred approach and will act promptly and decisively to protect the person/s making the complaint. . In all</p>

	cases the approach will be to support the person making the complaint by appropriate and agreed means, this will also include referrals to partner agencies.
6.3	<p>Partnership Working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will actively participate in information sharing protocols with the Police and other agencies to enable us to have a coordinated and effective response to ASB complaints. • The Community Safety Team work co-operatively with partners to support the work of the Stevenage Sosafe partnership • We recognise the benefits of diversionary activities and it is our policy to promote, support and facilitate these activities where appropriate.
6.4	<p>Internal Organisation</p> <p>SBC will provide the resources to enable ASB to be dealt with in accordance with this policy, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of our staff will be trained to handle ASB complaints and given refresher training periodically. • Record ASB activities through React data management system to track and effectively manage cases • Use good practices and feedback from service users to implement improvements • Cases will be reviewed by managers and the ASB forum to maintain service quality • Will carry out ASB satisfaction surveys on all cases
6.5	<p>Involving the Customer</p> <p>It is our Policy to involve the community in assessing our effectiveness in delivering this policy and the supporting procedures. This will help us to positively develop our services to achieve our Community Safety strategies.</p> <p>We involve the community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of service standards which are published on the website • Set internal performance targets that are continuously measured and reviewed • service satisfaction checking through case closure questionnaires, telephone calls neighbourhood surveys and enquires; • Periodic consultation with focus groups of people who have experienced or committed ASB to provide detailed feedback on how our performance could be improved, this is known as the ASB Forum.
6.6	<p>Publicity</p> <p>We recognise that it is important to publicise the availability of the services within the Community Safety department to encourage reports.</p>

	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce service standards in relation to ASB • provide information on ASB on our website and other social media • revise the tenants handbook content periodically • produce press releases and articles at least once a year describing our approach to ASB/Community Safety and the actions we have taken to deal with reported cases in general terms • publicise our stance on domestic abuse, modern slavery, hate crime and Sexual Exploitation on posters in our receptions, on our website and social media, in press releases and in media campaigns • make sure publicity is in alternative formats
6.8	<p>Tenants and Leaseholder Obligations</p> <p>We want all our tenants and leaseholders to behave in a manner that does not cause harassment, alarm or distress to their neighbours and the wider community. Therefore, we have clearly set out the obligations of our tenants in relation to acceptable and unacceptable forms of behaviour in a revised Tenancy Agreement. Our leases also contain express clauses against causing ASB.</p>
6.8.1	<p>Enforcement</p> <p>Where appropriate we will take action under the Housing Act and will also use the powers and tools available through legislation to deal with and resolve ASB. We operate an Introductory Tenancy scheme, which enable us to take action against new tenants that are in breach of the tenancy agreement.</p>
6.9	<p>Supporting victims, witnesses and alleged perpetrators</p> <p>We will support victims and witnesses of ASB in a number of ways and they include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • taking all complaints of ASB seriously • offer support to complainants and witnesses of ASB • keeping complainants informed throughout the process • protecting confidentiality • referral to specialist support agencies • improving safety measures • using professional witnesses where necessary • using surveillance equipment where necessary
6.9.1	<p>We will consider whether the alleged perpetrators of ASB is as a result of mental health or disability issues and ensure that we comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. We will support and rehabilitate alleged perpetrators where we have identified and considered a need for referral to relevant support agencies. This includes referring them to our specialist internal Family Intervention Project or to one of our No More projects if there are issues in relation to drug or alcohol addiction.</p>

8	Equality and Diversity
8.1	This policy will be implemented in accordance with SBC's equality and diversity policy. An equality relevance check has been completed and a full equality assessment review undertaken with reference to the implementation of this policy.
9	Consultation
9.1	We have consulted with the Joint Action Group, the Responsible Authorities Group and the ASB Forum in reviewing this policy.
10	Monitoring and review
10.1	<p>The Community Safety Manager monitors the effect of this policy and makes sure it is applied appropriately and consistently.</p> <p>Accountability All of the Council's enforcement activities will be open to public scrutiny, with clear and accessible policies. There is also a fair mechanism for dealing with appeals and complaints associated with enforcement.</p>
11	Performance indicators
11.1	Performance in relation to ASB Satisfaction is submitted to the Senior Leadership Team on a quarterly basis through InPhase.
12	Links
12.1	<p>Internal links</p> <p>Environmental Enforcement Policy Tenancy Agreement Lease agreement Environmental Enforcement Policy Domestic Abuse Procedure Modern Slavery Procedure</p>
12.2	External links

ASB Act 2003 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Housing Acts 1985 & 1996 Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 TSA Code of Guidance ASB Powers and Tools 2014 GDPR General Data Protection Regulation 2018
