
**WEST LOTHIAN ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY
2010 - 2012**

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1 Introduction	3
2 The nature and extent of anti-social behaviour in West Lothian	5
3 Vision, aims and outcomes	10
4 Delivering the strategy	14
5 Achieving the anti-social behaviour outcomes	19
6 Cross cutting issues	28
Appendix : Anti-social Behaviour in the Community Planning Structures	30

1. Introduction

West Lothian has a population of more than 165,000 living in a diverse range of towns and villages. Some communities are relatively prosperous with high levels of well-paid employment and car ownership; others, particularly in some areas of Livingston and in the west of the county, are relatively deprived. Residents in all these communities have expressed concern about anti-social behaviour and the threat such behaviour poses to their quality of life and sense of security. Preventing, challenging and responding to anti-social behaviour is a major priority for the community planning partners in West Lothian.

This Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy 2010 – 2012 will guide partnership work aimed at maintaining and improving the quality of life in our communities and at achieving the outcomes specified in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) for 2008 to 2011.

The ASB strategy contributes to one of the three major strands of the Community Safety Strategy, and the ASB strategy will be delivered and monitored through the governance arrangements agreed by the Community Safety Forum.

The ASB Strategy builds on a foundation of successful intelligence-led partnership working which has already made a significant impact on levels of anti-social behaviour in West Lothian. Shared intelligence has improved our knowledge about “hotspots” and youth issues and has allowed us to focus on known problems and problem areas.

The Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004 required local authorities to prepare and publish an antisocial behaviour strategy in partnership with the police. This Strategy develops and updates the strategy which was prepared to comply with the 2004 Act, and strengthens and extends the range of measures and partnerships to prevent and respond to anti-social behaviour.

The most significant partnership initiative has been the development and roll-out of Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs). By the end of 2008, an SNT was operational in each of West Lothian’s nine locality planning areas. Each SNT is staffed by police officers and a local authority Neighbourhood Response Team (NRT) officer, and has access to youth worker support. SNTs

- base their priorities and activities on analysis of local intelligence

- provide a flexible, visible response to local anti-social behaviour issues
- work to deter anti-social behaviour
- provide structured interventions – often through youth worker support
- enforce the law.

SNTs will work with the locality planning approach to maximise their impact on anti-social behaviour.

Implementation of the ASB Strategy will be through annual action plans with progress reported through the ASB sub group and the community safety structures of the Community Planning Partnership.

2. The nature and extent of anti-social behaviour in West Lothian

Anti-social behaviour is behaviour which, over a period of time, causes alarm or distress to individuals, households or communities. It is often described as “low level, high volume” activity which is not, in itself, serious criminal activity but which degrades the quality of life in communities. Different communities, and different social groups, often have differing views of what constitutes anti-social behaviour.

Common examples of anti-social behaviour include

- groups hanging about in the street in a way that causes alarm or distress to residents
- vandalism
- neighbour disputes and noisy neighbours
- drug misuse and drug dealing
- drinking or drug use which leads to people being rowdy and causing trouble
- a range of fires which are started deliberately, and attacks on fire crews
- fly tipping, graffiti, dog fouling and litter problems.

There is no comprehensive definition of anti-social behaviour although the principles can be clearly articulated and understood. Anti-social behaviour can lead to, can be a result of, or can be co-terminous with

- more serious violence and crime
- domestic violence
- hate crime.

Anti-social behaviour is often viewed as a problem which is caused by young people. This is an oversimplification. Young people have a disproportionate involvement in anti-social behaviour, but are often victims of ASB, as well as perpetrators. Many adults are also perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

It is important to have accurate and relevant statistical information on the extent, nature and distribution of anti-social behaviour in West Lothian. Work to improve the

statistical base will continue throughout the lifetime of this strategy. At this point in time, we have statistics from Lothian & Borders police, from West Lothian Council's customer contact centre, and from Lothian & Borders Fire and Rescue Service.

The police and environmental statistics are as robust as they can be, but still have to be treated with a degree of caution. First of all, these statistics under represent levels of anti-social behaviour as not all occurrences of ASB are notified to the Police or the Council. They can also be subject to fluctuations which do not reflect trends in anti-social behaviour. For example, a successful publicity campaign or a successful prosecution can generate increased reporting of ASB without there being an actual increase in ASB incidents.

Crime statistics

Data relating to policing issues is presented below for 2007/08 for West Lothian and for locality planning areas.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CRIME STATS 2007/08					
	Population ¹	Vandalism	Assault	Hate crime	Total
Armadale & Blackridge	12,848	502	75	27	604
Bathgate	15,485	499	200	29	728
Broxburn	16,701	403	115	23	541
East Livingston & East Calder	19,571	426	140	12	578
Fauldhouse & Breich Valley	15,454	365	100	18	483
Linlithgow	15,828	191	68	5	264
Livingston North	19,923	478	96	24	598
Livingston South	23,756	671	190	40	901
Whitburn & Blackburn	19,148	563	156	26	745
WEST LOTHIAN		4098	1140	204	5442

¹ 2001 census

In 2007/08, 38% of call volume to West Lothian Police division related to ASB and youth disorder incidents, and 34% of all recorded crime was in relation to vandalism.

Fire statistics

In 2007/08 there were 77 deliberate primary fires, 1,272 deliberate secondary fires and 9 attacks on fire crews. A high proportion of the deliberate fires would constitute anti-social behaviour including youths setting fires to common stairs (primary fires) and fires in bins, fields, bonfires and rubbish (secondary fires).

Environmental issues

Environmental issues are important both because they can be criminal, and because damage to a community's environment makes it more likely that there will be other forms of anti-social behaviour. The following 2007/08 data is from West Lothian Council's customer contact centre logging system.

COMPLAINTS/ENQUIRIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES 2007/08							
	Population ¹	Dog Fouling	Litter	Flytipping	Abandoned vehicles	Graffiti	Total
Armadale & Blackridge	12,848	53	66	144	29	12	304
Bathgate	15,485	79	103	207	51	23	463
Broxburn	16,701	95	99	205	45	68	512
East Livingston & East Calder	19,571	68	106	331	41	38	584
Fauldhouse & Breich Valley	15,454	63	74	204	33	28	402
Linlithgow	15,828	38	67	135	20	11	271
Livingston North	19,923	60	170	233	48	41	552
Livingston South	23,756	108	249	370	30	114	871
Whitburn & Blackburn	19,148	92	134	226	99	33	584
WEST LOTHIAN		656	1,068	2,055	396	368	4,543

¹ 2001 census

Citizen's Panel 2007

In 2007, 2,700 West Lothian residents were asked for their views and experiences across a wide range of issues. The responses which are most immediately relevant to ASB issues are shown on the table on the next page. In particular, it is worth noting that

- all respondents feel that community safety is important
- over 80% of respondents are satisfied with their local neighbourhood as a place to stay, and feel safe walking in their local area during the day
- more than 60% believe that there is more ASB now than there was five years ago
- only 34% feel safe walking in their local area after dark
- there are differences in perceptions and feelings about community safety from the more prosperous areas (such as Linlithgow where more people feel safe) and more deprived communities (such as Livingston North where fewer people feel safe).

WEST LoTHIAN CITIZEN'S PANEL 2007										
	Armadale & Blackridge	Bathgate	Broxburn	E Livingston & E Calder	Fauldhouse & Breich Valley	Linlithgow	Livingston North	Livingston South	Whitburn & Blackburn	West Lothian
Very/fairly satisfied with local neighbourhood as a place to live	82%	87%	86%	87%	85%	92%	89%	91%	83%	87%
Feeling safe in community is very/fairly important	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Agree/strongly agree that there is more antisocial behaviour than there was 5 years ago	60%	63%	60%	60%	66%	63%	65%	56%	67%	62%
Agree/strongly agree that there is more graffiti and vandalism than there was 5 years ago	45%	37%	41%	39%	44%	46%	47%	44%	50%	43%
Feel safe/very safe walking in local area during the day	80%	89%	79%	84%	84%	92%	71%	73%	75%	80%
Feel safe/very safe walking in local area after dark	33%	39%	33%	36%	41%	52%	19%	31%	29%	34%

Tenants' satisfaction survey 2008

10% of 12,000 West Lothian Council tenants responded to the 2008 satisfaction questionnaire. 80.5% of tenants said that they were satisfied with their local neighbourhood; and 88.3% feel safe in their own home. These findings are broadly in line with the annual surveys carried out since 2004. A new question on safety in the community was added in 2007. 82.3% of tenants felt safe in their local community in 2008 (compared to 81.5% in 2007).

3. Vision, aims and outcomes

Vision

We aim to encourage civic responsibility and prevent anti-social behaviour in all our communities. We intend to reduce instances of anti-social behaviour and the numbers of people who are involved in anti-social behaviour as victims and offenders. Where anti-social behaviour does occur, we are committed to addressing both the underlying causes, and the specific issues and problems which concern communities.

Aims

The key aims of the Strategy are

- to make West Lothian's communities more attractive places to live
- to provide a range of positive alternative activities for young people who might otherwise engage in anti-social behaviour
- to engage pro-actively with communities on their concerns and priorities relating to anti-social behaviour
- to have a presence and a profile in communities which works to prevent anti-social behaviour
- to deal effectively with cases of anti-social behaviour responding both to the underlying causes and to the specific cases
- to provide support to the victims of anti-social behaviour.

Outcomes

The outcomes which will be used to monitor this strategy are

- increases in the % of residents who feel safe in their local neighbourhood
- reductions in the number of recorded anti-social behaviour offences and incidents
- reductions in the numbers of people (victims and offenders) affected by anti-social behaviour

- number of partner organisations involved in information sharing protocols.

Key Principles

West Lothian already has a strong track record of effective partnership working on anti-social behaviour issues. For that reason, this is an ambitious strategy which aims to make real differences to the quality of life in communities throughout the county. Achieving the Strategy's outcomes will require even closer partnership working founded on key principles.

Focus on outcomes

West Lothian Community Planning Partnership is firmly committed to an outcome-based approach to planning, delivering and monitoring performance. This approach is the foundation of the Single Outcome Agreement, will be at the heart of the new Community Plan, and is a key driver of the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy and the Community Safety Strategy.

Working from the evidence

We are committed to an intelligence-led approach to tackling anti-social behaviour. Lothian and Borders Police and West Lothian Council work together on identifying and monitoring anti-social behaviour incidents. The initial identification of the SNT pilot deployments was on the basis of this shared intelligence.

We will develop an action plan to guide the implementation of the Strategy. The action plan will contain detailed baseline information and targets. Monitoring performance against these targets will be of critical importance.

Prevention Intervention Enforcement and Rehabilitation (PIER)

The partnership approach to tackling ASB in West Lothian has been built on the PIER principles (prevention, early intervention, enforcement and rehabilitation). This holistic approach attempts to get to grips with the underlying causes of ASB on the understanding that prevention is the preferred option. At the same time, it recognises that individuals, families and communities should be able to enjoy life without the threat or the reality of becoming the victims of anti-social behaviour. People involved in committing anti-social behaviour, specially young people, are likely to benefit from early intervention.

Community engagement

The SNTs and the Council's Environmental Wardens engage with communities on a daily basis on quality of life issues which are of direct concern to residents. Police officers, including community officers, who may not be part of the SNTs, also engage with the general public on a daily basis.

We aim to build closer community engagement links with the locality planning arrangements. We aim to develop a relationship which encourages a two-way flow of information and influence. Localities will be able to bring their ASB concerns and proposals to the SNTs, and anti-social behaviour initiatives will be clearly communicated within the locality planning arrangements.

Information sharing

We have already developed a capacity for joint analysis of anti-social behaviour information. Information sharing protocols have also been developed to allow for information sharing on individuals and families where such data sharing is appropriate and permissible within the relevant legislation.

It is important that we continue to develop both approaches to information sharing – community based information sharing informs the work of the SNTs and other agencies; information on offenders and potential offenders is the basis for effective intervention to break patterns of offending and re-offending.

Joint tasking

A joint tasking approach is a logical extension of the PIER and problem solving approaches adopted by the ASB partners in West Lothian. The details of a joint tasking approach are still being developed, but discussions are at an advanced stage. A joint tasking approach would involve

- a joint strategic assessment providing a comprehensive analysis of joint intelligence and information to inform priority setting
- monthly tasking meetings at a West Lothian level and at more local levels to ensure that resources are allocated to address the identified priorities.

Problem solving

The problem solving approach involves scanning communities for anti-social behaviour problems, analysing the information from the scan, responding to the

problems and the analysis, and reviewing the success of the response. The approach has the merits of being structured; of providing the opportunities to learn from experience; and of embedding that learning into future operations.

4. Delivering the strategy

Introduction

Preventing and responding to anti-social behaviour has been a long-standing priority for several organisations in West Lothian, including the police and the local authority. There is a track record of activity and of partnership working. However, in recent years, this whole area of work has become more important as a result of social trends, legislation, and specific funding streams to support work on anti-social behaviour.

The introduction of the Single Outcome Agreement means the end of ring-fenced Scottish Government funding for tackling anti-social behaviour, but there is little doubt that anti-social behaviour policies and services are even more important than they have been in the past.

The Single Outcome Agreement

Anti-social behaviour is one of the fourteen priority outcomes specified in the Single Outcome Agreement. The specific outcome is that *the number of people (victims and offenders) affected by anti-social behaviour is reduced.*

Implementation of the ASB Strategy will contribute to meeting SOA targets associated with

- residents feeling safe in their homes and neighbourhoods
- rates of recorded crimes and offences
- numbers of persistent young offenders
- numbers of hate crimes
- domestic abuse incidents
- violence against women and children
- environmental issues such as litter, flytipping and graffiti.

Delivering the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy requires important contributions from a wide range of organisations working on their own plans, and working in partnership.

The Community Safety Forum

The Community Safety Forum is one of the three Forums supporting the Community Planning Partnership to deliver the Single Outcome Agreement and the Community Plan. The Forum is responsible for providing strategic vision and direction for partnership-based community safety work in West Lothian. The ASB sub group is one of three sub groups reporting to the Forum. The Appendix to this Strategy outlines the relationships.

The ASB sub group

The ASB sub group is responsible for

- developing an ASB strategy
- developing and renewing action plans
- ensuring that the plans are implemented and that any gaps or problems are addressed
- monitoring progress against the plans
- reporting to the Community Safety Forum
- making recommendations to the Community Safety Forum on funding issues.

A detailed action plan is being developed and will be renewed annually. The action plan will detail

- how the ASB outcomes are to be achieved
- the lead organisation(s)
- key indicators
- baseline information
- targets
- resources.

Partner organisations

A very wide range of organisations make a contribution to preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour. Those most centrally involved in developing and implementing the strategy are

- Lothian and Borders Police
- West Lothian Council
- Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service
- West Lothian Youth Action Project
- Victim Support West Lothian
- The Risk Factory
- Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA).

Lothian and Borders Police have five key priorities, one of which is anti-social behaviour. The Force recognises the destructive impact of ASB on communities and on the quality of life of many individuals and families. ASB can also lead to crimes of violence. ASB is a major drain on police resources. The Force's approach to anti-social behaviour is based on prevention, intelligence and enforcement

- prevention includes community engagement, working through community safety partnerships to promote positive social behaviour, and working with planners and developers to "design out" anti-social behaviour through the "secured by design" principles
- intelligence involves gathering intelligence on ASB incidents, persistent young offenders and prolific vandals, and improving information sharing with partner organisations
- enforcement encompasses the full range of police enforcement powers including specific ASB powers and test purchasing to identify outlets selling alcohol to underage customers.

West Lothian Council has a very wide range of commitments, responsibilities, powers and activities which address anti-social behaviour issues. At a strategic level, the Council is committed to promoting a high quality of life and to addressing

anti-social behaviour as a threat to community cohesion and self-confidence. Housing and Building Services are responsible for the management of the Council housing stock, and ensuring that the appearance of the local environment and quality of life issues within communities are effectively delivered. Education and Cultural Services (particularly the Work with Young People Team) and the Sports and Outdoor Education Service promote citizenship and responsible behaviour, and provide positive activities for young people. They also have specific programmes and activities for young people who engage in, or are seen to be at risk of engaging in, anti-social behaviour. The Curriculum for Excellence encourages school students to be responsible citizens with respect for others. The Youth Justice Team responds to early identification of offending by young people, and aims to reduce offending behaviour through family and parental support, group work and encouraging young offenders to address the causes and consequences of their offending behaviour. The Council's Environmental Wardens deter anti-social behaviour and enforce environmental legislation relating to dog fouling, littering, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and graffiti. The Council also deals with a range of noise complaints. Environmental health staff contribute to local environment and quality of life issues, and have specific regulatory roles in relation to environment crime, noise and dog control issues. Neighbourhood Environment Teams (NETs) and Land Services play a significant role in the management and maintenance of public open spaces.

The Neighbourhood Response Team (NRT) was a specific Council led response to anti-social behaviour. Most NRT officers are now being merged into the partnership-based Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service are the lead agency in the Cool Down Crew project, which does intensive work with young people involved in, or at risk of involvement in, offending and anti-social behaviour.

West Lothian Youth Action Project provides a range of positive activities for young people throughout West Lothian and has specific programmes and activities for young people who have been involved in anti-social behaviour or who have been identified as being at risk of getting involved.

Victim Support West Lothian provides emotional support, practical help and essential information to victims, witnesses and others affected by crime, including anti-social behaviour.

The Risk Factory provides “hands on” experiential community safety lessons for primary 7 schoolchildren from throughout West Lothian. Many of the sessions have an anti-social behaviour focus.

The Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA) is a national body focused on children most at risk. Working through the Children’s Hearings System, SCRA and partner agencies aim to provide a safety net for vulnerable children, and to deliver tailored solutions which meet the needs of the individuals involved, while helping to build stronger families and safer communities.

Safer Neighbourhood Teams

In 2007 the Council and West Lothian Police Division established Safer Neighbourhoods Teams (SNTs) made up of police officers and Council officers from the Neighbourhood Regeneration Team to provide a more robust, enforcement-based, multi-agency response to anti-social behaviour ‘hotspots’. Locality-based teams were operational in all nine local community planning areas by December 2008.

Locality planning

Local communities have all expressed concern about anti-social behaviour in their locality although the nature of the behaviour and its frequency varies from community to community. In the course of 2008, links between the SNTs and the locality planning structures have been established and will be strengthened. We intend to promote dialogue and joint working between the locality planning structures and the ASB partners as an integral and ongoing part of this Strategy.

CCTV

Closed circuit television (CCTV) may have a role to play in West Lothian in preventing anti-social behaviour, and in identifying and prosecuting perpetrators. The nature and scope of any role depends upon strategic and funding decisions on the deployment of CCTV. West Lothian Council takes the strategic lead on CCTV issues.

5. Achieving the anti-social behaviour outcomes

Introduction

This chapter of the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy provides in depth analysis of ASB issues, problems and approaches in terms of the PIER (prevention, intervention, enforcement and rehabilitation) approach.

It is important to recognise the linkages between ASB activity, the broader community safety agenda and other community planning issues. West Lothian is developing an Outcome Planning Model based on a life stages approach to community planning. The life stages approach provides a framework for developing outcomes relating to the early years age group, school age children, young people in transition, adults of working age and older people. For example, successful early years work, and work on parenting issues, could, in the longer term, reduce anti-social behaviour.

The ASB sub group recognises the part alcohol has to play in many ASB incidents. The Health and Wellbeing Forum also focuses on alcohol issues through the Drug Action Team (DAT). Successful ASB activity will impact on alcohol misuse, and DAT activities should have an impact on some aspects of anti-social behaviour.

The Economic Forum is working with young people in need of More Choices and More Chances (those not in employment, education or training), and these are often the young people who find themselves involved in anti-social behaviour. So, the diversionary work that is being done through the ASB Strategy has a positive impact on the work being done through the More Choices More Chances agenda.

The keys to effective collaborative work are sharing information through the community safety and community planning structures, and the involvement of key individuals across these structures.

There are close and obvious linkages between anti-social behaviour and crime and violence. Low level anti-social behaviour can generate crime and violence, and people involved in committing anti-social behaviour can move on to involvement in more serious and violent crimes. A community which is the location for criminal activity is also more likely to be subject to anti-social behaviour, so actions which tackle violence and crime are also likely to impact on anti-social behaviour and vice versa.

The linkages between ASB and alcohol issues are vitally important and are discussed elsewhere in this Strategy. There are other linkages with important community planning themes such as employability, addictions, and health and wellbeing. Where people are confident about their personal safety and the community in which they live, they are more likely to address other problems in their lives and to seize opportunities to live a fuller and more rewarding life. Tackling ASB issues should help to achieve outcomes and targets across a range of other community planning priorities.

Prevention

West Lothian Police Division is committed to a focus on preventative, intelligence-led policing. Intelligence on anti-social behaviour hot spots is collated and analysed by police analysts, and a co-located analyst funded by West Lothian Council.

Alcohol is a major contributory factor to much anti-social behaviour, and a range of initiatives, including initiatives targeted at young people, have had some success in curbing anti-social behaviour. The Armadale under 21 alcohol ban (March to May 2008) was the result of an agreement between local licensees, police and community representatives to stop the sale of alcohol from off licenses to people under the age of 21 between 5 and 10pm on Fridays and Saturdays. The result was a significant reduction in the volume of youth calls received by the police. There was a further reduction in youth calls related to alcohol, and a reduction in vandalism incidents.

The “Best Bar None” initiative is open to all pubs, bars and nightclubs, and aims to promote best practice in the licensed trade in West Lothian. The initiative focuses on prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, public health and protection of children; and should impact on levels of alcohol-related ASB.

The Risk Factory provides “hands on” experiential community safety lessons for primary 7 schoolchildren from throughout West Lothian. Many of the sessions have an anti-social behaviour focus.

West Lothian Council works to promote sustainable communities through focusing on both the built environment and community development. Sustainable communities are likely to have a stronger sense of community identity and social cohesion, which are likely to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Better street lighting, fencing, improvement of communal areas, external lighting and door-entry systems all contribute to community safety and are likely to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour.

Locality based Environmental Wardens have an educational and preventative impact on littering, graffiti, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling. The Wardens worked with schools, Neighbourhood Environment Teams and Street Cleansing squads to deliver an award-winning local clean up campaign in April 2008. The “play your part” campaign takes messages about the neighbourhood environment and anti-social behaviour into schools and communities.

Youth work, delivered by West Lothian Council’s Work with Young People Team and the Sports and Outdoor Education service, and by voluntary organisations, makes an important contribution to the prevention of anti-social behaviour. This work includes

- general youth work and youth clubs which offer positive activity, personal development and active citizenship
- specific diversionary activity such as late night football in areas where there is a pattern of young people being involved in anti-social behaviour
- streetwork and other initiatives aimed at engaging with “hard to reach” young people, many of whom are at risk of becoming involved in, or becoming the victims of, anti-social behaviour.

THE STONEYBURN PROJECT

The Stoneyburn Project was developed in response to complaints about anti-social behaviour in the Stoneyburn/Bents area. Stoneyburn is a former mining village a few miles south of Bathgate.

West Lothian Youth Action Project have been the project’s lead organisation. WLYAP’s streetwork team and the police spent several months speaking to young people and residents. WLYAP then formed a committee of local young people to develop a youth drop-in at the Wee Croft, a converted flat in Stoneyburn. The drop-in opened in June 2005.

Since then, the project’s achievements have included

- a successful application for a grant to do up the garden and communal area around the Wee Croft - this involved some heavy manual work, creating a wall mural and planting, and made a vast improvement to the look of the drop-in
- work with local adults and professionals leading to two young people becoming Community Council members.

- work with the Council's Neighbourhood Environment Team to upgrade the War memorial in the village and paint fences in the area - this work was carried out voluntarily on Saturdays by local young men
- acting as an advisory group to the Citadel Youth Theatre in Edinburgh when they were devising a play for young people
- working with local community members and staff on the development of a community newsletter for the village.

The project has not eradicated anti-social behaviour caused by young people within Stoneyburn. However, ASB has been reduced and local residents know that there is a direct route to access the views of young people, or to ask for their involvement in community activities. The project ensures that young people feel listened to and valued in their community, therefore reducing isolation, frustration and lack of support which can lead to anti-social behaviour.

A great deal of concern has been expressed recently over problems in West Lothian relating to underage drinking, particularly on a Friday afternoon, amongst young people. Evidence gathered by the police indicates that the problem is serious, with young people putting themselves and others at risk through drinking alcohol to excess. Furthermore, this behaviour is causing concern as it can often lead to anti-social behaviour.

West Lothian Council has allocated £250,000 per year, over three years, to develop a strategy to tackle the problem of underage drinking. The strategy will focus on providing young people with educational opportunities relating to alcohol and drugs. A key objective of the strategy will be to link the educational message with a programme of diversionary activities, particularly on Friday afternoons and evenings.

Intervention

The Social Work Youth Justice Team, West Lothian Youth Action Project, and other partners, attempt to identify young people most at risk of getting involved in anti-social behaviour at the earliest opportunity so that they can be referred to services and projects which address their anti-social behaviour or offer alternative activities.

There is a particular focus on intensive work with young people who are classified as persistent offenders.

Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service are the lead agency in the Cool Down Crew project, which does intensive work with young people involved in, or at risk of involvement in, offending and anti-social behaviour. The programme has been successful in challenging anti-social attitudes and behaviour.

COOL DOWN CREW

West Lothian Cool Down Crew is a youth fire-training scheme which provides a one-week programme for young people who have been involved in anti-social behaviour; are having difficulties at school; or who have low levels of motivation or self esteem. The programme aims to:

- give young people some operational firefighting skills
- develop young people's personal life skills and enhance their sense of community and positive attitudes
- address their anti-social and offending behaviour
- reduce malicious calls, fire-raising, attacks on fire-fighters and vandalism by the young people concerned
- promote fire and community safety.

The programme is run by the Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service in partnership with the West Lothian Youth Action Project and West Lothian Council Social Policy and Community Education services.

Similar programmes operate throughout the Lothian and Borders area. The programme is delivered in fire stations by operational firefighters who volunteer to work on their days off.

The main elements of the programme include practical team working, personal safety and well-being and a community improvement activity.

An independent evaluation has confirmed that the programme is targeting the right young people and has a positive impact on the behaviour, skills and confidence levels of most participants.

The Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) was established in April 2007 to address anti-social behaviour issues in West Lothian. The multi-agency team worked to deliver robust long-term solutions in specific geographical areas for intensive periods of time.

By the end of 2008, an SNT had been allocated to each of West Lothian's nine locality planning areas. Each team pro-actively targets anti-social behaviour hotspots which are identified through intelligence analysis.

Evidence to date shows that deploying SNTs, together with a range of initiatives related to under-age drinking, has led to significant reductions in youth calls and vandalism. There was a 38% reduction in youth calls in the first three months of 2008, compared to the first three months of 2007.

The Council's Neighbourhood Environment Teams (NETs) aim to provide a rapid response to environmental problems including litter, graffiti, fly tipping and abandoned vehicles.

VICTIM SUPPORT WEST LOTHIAN ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PROJECT

Victim Support West Lothian (VSWL) began its Antisocial Behaviour project in 2005 to support victims of ASB through

- emotional support (some one to talk to)
- practical help with crime prevention and personal safety
- information on the criminal justice system
- support at court
- assistance with Criminal Injuries Compensation claims and information on other sources of help.

The service is provided by a Co-ordinator employed by VSWL and a small team of volunteers. In 2007-08, there were 175 referrals.

Over the last 3 years the work undertaken by the Co-ordinator and the volunteers has become more intensive. Victims are relying upon long-term support due to the time it can take for evidence to be gained in order to take action. Mostly this support involves explaining the civil legal process and the tools which can be used to tackle ASB.

Some complainers have experienced extreme levels of ASB or have endured problems over a lengthy period of time to the extent that they wish to be re-housed by the time VSWL initiates contact. In this situation, the Co-ordinator or volunteers arrange a meeting with the victim and note specific details of the case in order to write a supporting letter to the relevant housing association.

Victims supported as a result of their ASB experiences also receive information about other organisations that may suit their specific needs, including counseling, drugs and alcohol services, and a range of support services.

VSWL is committed to ensuring that all clients are made aware of their right to feel free from intimidation and abuse in their own home. VSWL is also committed to community safety by supporting victims and passing on intelligence concerning offenders responsible for ASB.

Enforcement

The Police and local authority staff have a wide range of enforcement powers, some of which are based on the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004.

The main responsibility for enforcement activity lies with Lothian and Borders Police. Tackling anti-social behaviour is one the Force's five key priorities. Operations Froth and Floorwalk are examples of effective enforcement action. Operation Froth was an alcohol test purchase operation testing licensees' willingness to sell alcohol to under-

age drinkers. Operation Floorwalk involves taking underage youths found with alcohol, or intoxicated, to a police station for discussions with a drug or alcohol counsellor in the presence of their parents. This is followed up by discussion with a senior police officer.

OPERATION FLOORWALK

Operation Floorwalk (originally know as Operation Floorsweep) was launched in West Lothian in February 2007, and was designed to target underage drinking and associated alcohol fuelled anti-social behaviour.

The operation involved small teams of community police officers being deployed to 'hot-spot' areas to identify under-age youths under the influence of alcohol. The youngsters were then brought back to a police station, their parents were contacted to attend, and all parties were warned regarding their behaviour.

The Operation set out to achieve a behavioural change in the young people rather than a quick short-term fix. It also aimed to make parents take responsibility for their child's behaviour and to hold to account those irresponsible enough to supply alcohol to underage young people.

Operation Floorwalk has now become a mainstream multi-agency initiative involving the police, West Lothian Youth Action Project and West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service.

A follow up survey examined the impact on 100 young people between 6 months to a year after their contact with the police.

Some of the key findings were

- Drinking alcohol was found to be a common activity for the majority of the sample. 53% of the study admitted to drinking alcohol by the time they were 13 years old, and this figure rose to 88% by the age of 14 years.
- 37% of the group drank Buckfast tonic wine, while 31% drank alcopops. 31% of the group admitted to drinking spirits, mostly vodka.
- The majority of the group (55%) had not discussed drinking with their parents prior to becoming involved in Operation Floorwalk.
- The majority of the group experienced adverse effects from drinking alcohol with over half (56%) admitting to having been sick; 13% to having been unconscious; and 16% to having fallen asleep outside.

Since Operation Floorwalk:

- 74% stated that their drinking has decreased with a direct move to less frequent drinking and a change in what they were drinking.
- 74% have since discussed drinking with their parents.

The Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the Council's Environmental Wardens also undertake enforcement activities. Environmental Wardens serve Fixed Penalty

Notices for littering and flytipping as well as preparing reports for the Fiscal. Environmental Health staff, employed by the Council, issue enforcement notices on a range of ASB issues including noise nuisance, and dog-related problems.

Rehabilitation

West Lothian Council's Youth Justice Team aims to respond to early identification of offending by young people, and to reduce offending behaviour through family and parental support, group work and encouraging young offenders to address the causes and consequences of their offending behaviour. Referrals come from a number of sources including the criminal justice system, where the team aims to reduce the number of probation orders being breached by young people. Referrals increased from 331 in 2006 to 408 in 2007. The approach is holistic, often encouraging young people to address drug, alcohol and lifestyle issues.

THE HEARTS ONSIDE INITIATIVE

The Hearts Onside Initiative was developed by West Lothian Council's Youth Justice Family Support Team to work with young males who have been referred to the Team because of their offending or anti-social behaviour.

By tapping into their interest in football, and working with Heart of Midlothian Football Club, it was possible to engage them in positive and purposeful activity, supporting them to make more informed choices in their lives; develop skills and knowledge; and choose healthier lifestyles.

All the participants were aged between 13 – 15 years, and were experiencing chaotic lifestyles and serious personal difficulties. The intended outcomes were

- to reduce the participants' offending behaviour
- to reduce anti social behaviour in local communities
- to support the participants back into mainstream education or alternative schooling
- to support them into work/further education where appropriate
- to encourage the young people to become more able and responsible citizens.

“Onside” is a programme of sessions, spread over nine weeks, with the involvement of the Youth Justice Team, Hearts Football Club and Lothian and Borders Police. The sessions include work on

- keep fit
- healthy eating
- drugs and alcohol
- racism and sectarianism
- gang and territorial problems

The outcomes have been positive, and include a reduction in offending behaviour, and improved attitudes to personal responsibility and self esteem. There is a need to do more work on opportunities and supports for young people when they have completed the programme.

Planned developments

The ASB Sub Group will continue to focus on **prevention** of anti-social behaviour wherever possible, providing evidence that a preventative approach is effective, testing new approaches, learning from what works, and seeking to roll out and consolidate good practice.

There will also be a focus on **intervention**, identifying young people who are at risk of offending or who are involved in anti-social behaviour to ensure that they are referred to services which can provide alternative and challenging alternatives to ASB.

Enforcement and **rehabilitation** will continue to be implemented where offending behaviour has already taken place.

The **Safer Neighbourhood Teams** are a relatively recent development, but they will be a key component of our approach to anti-social behaviour over the lifetime of this strategy. We will monitor progress and develop best practice in the SNTs across the county, strengthening linkages with locality planning processes.

In the course of 2009, West Lothian Council will be developing a comprehensive **litter strategy**. Locally based companies will be invited to contribute to developing and implementing the strategy.

More sophisticated **data** is now becoming available allowing us to have a better understanding of the types of anti-social behaviour and their impact on specific communities. We will ensure that this data is analysed, brought to the Anti-social Behaviour Sub Group, and used to inform resourcing and policy decisions.

Information sharing is central to our ASB approach which is both intelligence led and partnership based. We are committed to extending the range and coverage of our information sharing protocols relating both to the mapping of ASB and to work with offenders and potential offenders.

6. Cross cutting issues

Alcohol and drug issues

There are obvious and direct connections between alcohol and drug misuse, anti-social behaviour, and violence and crime.

In West Lothian, alcohol and drug issues are addressed under the Health and Wellbeing community planning theme.

West Lothian Drug Action Team (DAT) is a strategic partnership with representation from West Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, Lothian and Borders Police and the voluntary sector. The DAT has a commitment to reducing alcohol and drug-related deaths and injuries. The DAT funds specialist services to provide advice, information, support and treatment in relation to substance misuse in order to prevent injuries and deaths.

Young people and alcohol misuse

In the past year, Lothian and Borders Police have run a number of targeted operations to address underage drinking, including reducing sales of alcohol to underage drinkers, reducing availability of alcohol for purchase in off-licenses by those under 21 years old, and reducing anti-social behaviour fuelled by underage drinking in public places. In addition, a wide variety of different initiatives linking to substance misuse are run by DAT partners depending on local need and priorities.

The Police target specific localities based on information and intelligence. Specialist services are available for all ages and the current police initiatives are specifically targeting 12 – 18 year olds. In addition, as part of their new outcome contracts, specialist substance misuse services are required to target their services to the most deprived communities in West Lothian.

Deprivation

Areas of multiple deprivation, and individuals and households living in deprivation, are more likely to be the victims of anti-social behaviour and some types of violent and criminal activity. Anti-social behaviour hotspots are most likely to be in the most deprived areas.

Broader based community regeneration work, often organised through locality planning, should have a stronger connection with ASB work. We aim to develop closer joint working between the ASB partners and locality planning programmes.

Equalities

We are committed to providing ASB services to individuals, families and communities regardless of their gender, age, disability, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. We will actively seek to overcome any barriers which prevent victims and witnesses from reporting incidents of ASB or from accessing other ASB services. ASB services will be monitored to see whether particular groups are disproportionately affected by ASB.

An equality impact assessment of this Strategy will be completed at the action planning stage.

Appendix : ASB in the community planning structures

