

# Stockport Homes Group

One team, transforming lives

## ASB STRATEGY 2022-25

01 April 2022

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# 1 ASB STRATEGY 2022-25

## 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 2.1 BACKGROUND

- 2..1 Stockport Homes Group (SHG) is an ambitious, innovative organisation with a proven track record of delivering excellent services to customers. SHG recognises that all customers have the right to the peaceful enjoyment of their home and neighbourhood and that left unchallenged, Anti -Social Behaviour (ASB) can have a significant negative impact on the lives of residents. Equally every resident has a responsibility not to interfere with their neighbour's right to the peaceful enjoyment of their home.
- 2..2 Working through the Safer Stockport Partnership (SSP) with key partners such as Stockport Council, Greater Manchester Police, Youth Offending Services, Probation, other Greater Manchester housing providers, voluntary sector organisations and engaging with Members of the Council and customers, is central to this Strategy. The Strategy has therefore been developed in consultation with all of these stakeholders so that it is representative of a joint approach to tackling and preventing ASB in Stockport as a whole. For the purpose of this Strategy the term "customers" does not exclusively relate to the Council's tenants but is used to describe residents of Stockport who engage with SHG's ASB services, regardless of tenure.
- 2..3 In March 2019 Stockport Homes Board approved a three-year ASB Strategy and Action Plan. The ASB Strategy 2019-22 identified a range of actions all of which have been completed. Some notable achievements of those actions that were completed include:
- Ongoing high performance of the ASB resulting in 99.40% per cent of cases being resolved in an average of 50 days whilst achieving satisfaction of 97.84 % with the outcome of the case<sup>1</sup>
  - Providing services to other organisations generating income of £94,086 in for reinvestment into the ASB Service<sup>2</sup>.
  - The introduction of an Apprentice ASB Case Support officer to support delivery of the expanding noise and CCTV services, so that demand for installations can be met and cases continue to have evidence gathered swiftly.
  - Further expansion of services including a Domestic Abuse Case Worker and Exploitation Protection Officer to support SHG most vulnerable victims.
  - Development of the ReMote reporting App making it easier for customer to report incidents via a Smartphone/Device

- Delivery of prevention of ASB activities for young people with particular emphasis on sports
- Improved existing redeploy able CCTV system and purchase new more enhanced systems to deal with issues in open spaces managed by SHG.

## 2.2 ASB Strategy 2022-25

2.2.1 The ASB Strategy 2022-25 sets out how SHG intends to continue to tackle ASB, together with key partners, and has been structured around six strategic aims which reflect the SSP priorities and SHGs overarching ambition in relation to ASB, which is:

**“To contribute to the reduction of crime and ASB in Stockport including its impact on individuals, their families, and the whole Community”**

2.2.2 The six strategic aims are to:

- **Implement effective early measures to prevent ASB occurring** – The aim of this theme is to put measures in early to lower the risk of anti-social behaviour. Prevention of anti-social behaviour has a profound impact on the quality of community life. By working with partners to tackle the root causes in communities we can ensure we deliver more effective and sustainable long-term solutions.
- **Deliver Successful and Sustainable Interventions for those engaging in ASB**– Intervention measures are put in place when preventative action has failed, and someone has become involved in committing anti-social behaviour. The aim is to provide support and/or diversion to stop that individual engaging in further ASB. This is premised on an understanding that delivering support as early as possible reduces the potential for behaviour to escalate. Critical to this process will be assessment of risk in the evaluation process to ensure that vulnerable people with complex needs have the opportunity to receive specialist support from the right services. Ideally early intervention should be arrived at through engagement with individuals, families, and communities to maximise the potential for success
- **Take effective and robust enforcement action against those who persist in causing ASB**- protecting individuals and the community as a whole by using appropriate and effective action, including legal action, against the minority of people who are persistently engaged in ASB
- **Facilitate strong complainant and community empowerment and support for those who experience ASB**- ensuring complaints and victims feel engaged, supported, and listened to and confident that SHG is delivering an effective approach to tackling ASB.
- **Contribute to effective "Integrated Intelligence" to help solve community problems in partnership**– where intelligence is shared

between partners, there is greater scope to identify early interventions that can achieve long-terms, sustainable resolutions for communities. Furthermore, where integrated intelligence allows the early identification of risk, there is reduced likelihood of those victims or perpetrators with complex being passed between different bodies. Sharing information with a clear understanding of each other's responsibility and capability will facilitate the identification of shared priorities, pooling of resources and the potential to deliver timely problem solving and early intervention.

- **Expand the reach of the ASB service externally through the growth of the commercial offer to partner organisations and other landlords, reinvesting any to further improve services delivered to customers** – SHG has a strong reputation both nationally and regionally for delivering excellent ASB services and offers unique services including CCTV, noise and Positive Engagement Services. Offering these services to other partners and organisations to generate income, means that income can be reinvested to further improve services delivered to SHGs own customers.

## 2.2 CONSULTATION

2.3.1 Consultation has taken place across a number of areas including:

- Customers, via two ASB Focus Groups and a Social Media Campaign engaging over 200 customers.
- The Council and the Police via the Partnership Business Group, an arm of the Safer Stockport Partnership
- Teams within the SHG who contribute to delivering services linked to ASB
- Presentation to SHG's Operations Committee and Members Committee

2.3.2 The strategic priorities identified through this consultation are reflected in the strategy and action plan. Progress against the Strategy will be monitored annually and reported to the Members Committee and will be publicised on the website and in the Stockport at Home customer newsletter.

# 1 THE ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY 2022 – 25

## 1.2 WHY AN ASB STRATEGY?

- 1.2.1 An effective ASB service plays a key part in maintaining safe and sustainable communities and can directly affect customers' desire to choose to live and stay in neighbourhoods. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a key service area that customers see as a core service.
- 1.2.2 Since inception SHG has driven the ASB service forward and in doing so has greatly improved performance. Satisfaction with the ASB service continues to be high with 100 per cent of customers being satisfied that their ASB case had been resolved and 100 per cent of cases are being resolved in an average of 59 days which is upper quartile performance<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2.3 Stockport Homes has made effective use of the tools and powers available to tackle ASB, moving away from possession to more effective injunctions which are quicker and more cost effective to obtain and more successful in stopping ASB. In addition, new systems have been introduced to identify and support the most vulnerable victims and perpetrators.
- 1.2.4 Stockport Homes recognises that all residents have the right to the peaceful enjoyment of their home and neighbourhood and that left unchallenged, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) can have a significant negative impact on the lives of residents. Equally every resident has a responsibility not to interfere with their neighbour's right to the peaceful enjoyment of their home.

## 1.3 WHAT IS ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR?

- 1.3.1 Anti-Social Behaviour is any activity that impacts on other people in a negative way. The term 'anti-social behaviour' is defined within the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 as:

- conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to any person,

Or

- conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises,

Or

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<sup>1</sup> As at the end of November 2021 and upper quartile performance as benchmarked through HouseMark

- conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person

1.3.2 SHG also defines the terms ASB within its tenancy agreement as:

- “anything which causes or is likely to cause a nuisance annoyance or disturbance to any person in the local area” this applies to members of the household, visitors, and pets (Stockport Council’s/Homes’ Tenancy Agreement)

1.3.2 ASB takes many forms. Examples of Anti-Social Behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Noise/loud music
- Using or threatening to use violence
- Damaging or threatening to damage other people’s property
- Racist/equality/discrimination/hate related behaviour or language
- Harassment or intimidation
- Drug abuse
- Rowdy drunken behaviour
- Arguing and door slamming
- Using abusive or insulting words
- Environmental Crime
- Graffiti and vandalism
- Nuisance vehicles

## **2 CONTEXT**

### **2.1 NATIONAL CONTEXT**

#### **2.2.1 THE CHARTER FOR SOCIAL HOUSING TENANTS AND REGULATION**

2.2.2 The Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017 prompted significant debate within the social housing sector and beyond about the role and function of social housing. The incident prompted the Government to undertake a discussion exercise with residents of social housing. In November 2020 the Government published the Social Housing White Paper which aims to ensure that social housing residents

have positive experiences in their communities, in their homes, and with their landlord. It builds on the Government's commitment on building safety, its funding of affordable housing, and to encouraging home ownership. The White Paper supports that work by creating a new Charter for social housing residents

2.2.3 The Charter sets out what social housing residents should expect from the sector. It has seven themes which are:

1. To be safe in your home:
2. To know how the landlord is performing.
3. To have complaints dealt with promptly and fairly:
4. To be treated with respect:
5. To have your voice heard by your landlord
6. To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
7. To be supported to take your first step towards ownership:

2.2.4 It is felt that SHG has strong evidence that it consistently delivers positive outcomes for customers around this standard, as illustrated by the estate inspection programme in which estates are consistently rated 'good' or better and also having high levels of satisfaction with 'area as a place to live', 'home' and 'SHG as a landlord'. SHG's ASB Service is very proactive and well-publicised and uses a range of initiatives to enhance the safety of neighbourhoods, including working in partnership with the Police and the Council, the use of positive engagement, use of technology, and where required, legal action. SHG has recently undertaken a review and relaunch of the Community Trigger with partners from the Council and also has a robust Domestic Abuse policy and procedure and is developing a separate Domestic Abuse Strategy as well as seeking Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation.

## **2.2.5 BEATING CRIME PLAN 2021**

2.2.6 A new plan to reduce crime, protect victims and make the country safer was set out by the Government in July 2021. The measures build on progress to date toughening sentences to keep the most dangerous offenders behind bars and the delivery of almost 9,000 of the 20,000 extra police officers promised by 2023 – one of the Prime Minister's first commitments in office.

2.2.7 The plan will ensure the public is better protected across all parts of the country, with each neighbourhood having contactable, named police officers, who know their area and are best placed to ensure that persistent crime and anti-social behaviour is tackled.

2.2.8 The Government's promise to the public through this plan is that every crime matter, every victim matters and every neighbourhood matters. That is why, alongside getting more officers out on streets and making local forces more easily contactable, the public will be given more opportunity to scrutinise

results, with league tables for 101 and 999 call answering times to be introduced for each force.

2.2.9 The Beating Crime Plan spans work across the police, courts, prison, and probation service to drive down and prevent crime, improve confidence in the criminal justice system, rehabilitate offenders to ensure they do not go on to commit crimes again and create the safer streets and homes the public want for themselves and their neighbours.

2.2.10 A particular focus is given to early intervention, prevention, and practical measures to deliver real results across communities, and to tackle serious violence and neighbourhood crimes.

### **2.2.11 DOMESTIC ABUSE ACT 2021**

2.2.12 On 29 April the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent following a much-delayed journey through Parliament. The Act will have important ramifications for social housing providers. including changes for homelessness under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 which came into effect on 5 July 2021. Section 1 of the Act introduces, for the first time, a statutory definition of “domestic abuse” which recognises a wide range of abusive, coercive, or controlling behaviours beyond the use of physical violence.

2.2.13 Some of the other provisions of note within the Act includes providing a new Domestic Abuse Protection Notice and Domestic Abuse Protection Order and the ability for advocates (for example the Domestic Abuse Case officer) to apply for these orders on behalf of victims. It further places a duty on local authorities in England to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation and also provides that all eligible homeless victims of domestic abuse automatically have ‘priority need’ for homelessness assistance. Furthermore, the Act ensures that where a local authority, for reasons connected with domestic abuse, grants a new secure tenancy to a social tenant who had or has a secure lifetime or assured tenancy (other than an assured shorthold tenancy) this must be a secure lifetime tenancy.

### **2.2.14 TAKING BACK COMMUNITIES REPORT**

2.2.15 Over the past year individuals and communities have been challenged and put under strain in new ways on an almost daily basis as a result of the Covid pandemic. Sadly, pre-existing ills that impact negatively on those same individuals and communities have not abated and in fact, many, including ASB, have increased. New research in the “Taking Back Communities” report, commissioned by Resolve in 2021, shows that the incidence of ASB has increased over the last three years at least, as have the concerns it engenders within and across communities. Police forces, councils and social landlords are reporting significant spikes in ASB cases – and these are not minor incidents. They are complex and serious cases causing real harm to many people.

- 2.2.16 The research in the report showed that 45% of people say ASB is a problem where they live 35% say that the situation has worsened over the previous three years.
- 2.2.17 This report highlights that ASB is increasing and addressing it is a priority in the eyes of the public. Resolve (of which SHG holds a seat on the Board) will be undertaking work to push the issue of ASB up the political agenda and make it a top priority of government.

### **3.0 STOCKPORT CONTEXT - ONE STOCKPORT**

- 3.1 Whilst much of Stockport is relatively affluent with suburbs such as Woodford, Bramhall and Hazel Grove ranking amongst the wealthiest areas of the UK, by contrast Stockport has pockets of very concentrated deprivation. Brinnington and Lancashire Hill (Central) are the most deprived areas in the borough. These areas are also amongst some of the most deprived areas in England. More areas in Stockport rank in the 1% most deprived nationally than average, and 7,250 people in Stockport live in these areas of highest deprivation. Levels of child poverty are especially high in these areas and there is estimated 34,560 people in Stockport are affected by income deprivation<sup>2</sup>
- 3.2 Education, health and wellbeing has never been more important. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on local people and communities and the impact will be felt for many years. Delayed access to services and lack of social contact has affected residents and increased existing inequalities.
- 3.3 The Council Plan approved in February 2021, is focused around five key ambitions, three of which are particularly pertinent to SHGs new ASB Strategy. The first is “Stockport people are able to make positive choices and be independent, and those who need support to get it”. It is envisaged that this can be achieved through developing the way services to adults are delivered to help the people of Stockport to live their best lives possible. Tackling substance and alcohol misuse is a key area of activity under this priority, by improving access to substance misuse and mental health service, working with partners, through prevention, reablement and a ‘Home First’ ethos
- 3.4 The second ambition relates to ‘Stockport being a place people want to live’ and key priorities to achieve this include, but aren’t limited to, developing the homes that the Borough needs and supporting Stockport Homes Group (SHG) to implement its delivery plan to support tenants and residents across the borough. Housing is an area of focus under this priority, including through reducing homelessness and providing better support to people experiencing severe and multiple disadvantages.

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<sup>2</sup> Stockport Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2020

- 3.5 The third ambition is for “Stockport communities to be safe, resilient and inclusive”. Key priorities to achieve this include working across services to empower vibrant and safe neighbourhoods, developing a ONE Neighbourhood Partnership model to coordinate support for people and local places, empowering people to keep them independent and connected in their community and promote safer communities and address crime and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.6 SHG recognises that it cannot resolve issues of ASB in neighbourhoods in isolation and that the causes and effects of ASB are wide ranging, varied and can affect all members of the community, not just SHG customers. SHG continues to work in partnership with other agencies, in particular the Council and Greater Manchester Police (GMP), to ensure that all intelligence and measures available are used effectively to tackle ASB, regardless of who owns the property.
- 3.7 The ‘Safer Stockport Partnership’ (SSP) is a partnership of statutory and voluntary organisations that focuses on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in Stockport. Having such a partnership has been a legal requirement since 1998 following the enactment of the Crime and Disorder Act. Stockport Homes actively participates both the SSP board and in a number of its Sub-Groups including the Partnership Delivery Group (PDG) where current crime and incident patterns are reviewed to ensure there is a collective approach and contribution to tackling issues across the Borough.
- 3.8 There is a statutory requirement on the Safer Stockport Partnership to undertake frequent strategic assessments of levels and patterns of crime and drug misuse in their area underpinning their strategic plans. This assessment covers not only the subjects for which the Safer Stockport Partnership (SSP) has specific statutory responsibilities and duties - crime and disorder, substance misuse and reoffending - but also the wider community safety picture. The latest strategic assessment has been taking place over Quarter three of 2021/22 and the Safer Stockport Partnership Board will use the strategic assessment to underpin a new Safer Stockport Partnership Strategic Plan for 2022-2025.
- 3.9 Since 2018/19 to 2020/21 the overall annual crime figures in Stockport reduced around by 12%. For most of these crimes, numbers either reduced or were roughly stable over the three-year period. It is important to note however that Covid-19 restrictions contributed, at least in part, to some of these reductions, as there were fewer opportunities to commit certain types of crime, especially during periods of lockdown. There were exceptions however, with report of domestic abuse and public order offences both increasing.
- 3.10 Stockport has consistently reported lower crime rates than the GM average, and all but one locality in Stockport also have consistently lower rates of

crime than the GM average. The Central/Brinnington locality accounted for approximately a quarter of all ASB recorded by police in Stockport and almost twice as many incidents as the locality with the second most incidents (Edgeley, which accounted for 15% of Stockport's ASB incidents). Heaton, Bramhall and Marple has the borough's fewest ASB incidents (with Marple lowest of all, accounting for 5% of the borough's total).

- 3.11 Many complaints received by SHG relate to criminal behaviour including drug use/dealing, domestic abuse, hate crime and assaults for which a police response is more appropriate. Given the significant pressure faced by GMP at the present time in terms of resources and following Her Majesty's Inspectorate escalating the force into special measures in 2020, SHG's ASB Team continue to support GMP to address criminal behaviour within neighbourhoods.
- 3.12 The new Chief Constable for GMP has published public promises that communities can expect to see, feel, and experience in consequence of GMP successfully delivering upon GMP's "Plan on a Page". These promises do not define the totality of GMP's endeavours and are not an exhaustive list; rather they are the things GMP know communities care most about and can use to easily evaluate its progress. GMP will develop simple indicators that everyone can use to track and measure how well GMP deliver these promises.
- 3.13 In addition to improving how GMP responds to incidents and emergencies, another significant promise to the public is to "prevent and reduce harm and antisocial behaviour". GMP has stated that its residents will see monthly high-profile operations that targets the problems it knows they care about and that every area will have a neighbourhood policing team including named officers responsible for local policing.
- 3.14 GMP has pledged that the public will be able to contact its neighbourhood policing team directly and that a proportion of its neighbourhood policing team resources will be ring-fenced and will only undertake duties that are focused on addressing local concerns. GMP has also committed that it will focus extra help for people who are particularly vulnerable to the risk of harm, for example, people targeted by hate crime or people who are repeatedly targeted.
- 3.15 In this context, it is apparent that the work of SHG's ASB Strategy 2022-25 cuts across, and supports the delivery of, all key partnership ambitions.

#### **4. STOCKPORT HOMES CONTEXT**

- 4.1 SHG has a clear mission which is "One team, transforming lives". Underpinning the overall Group mission are Stockport Homes' (SHLs) aims and the ASB Strategy 2022-25 clearly links to these, specifically:
- Engage customers and communities

- Provide comfortable, affordable homes
- Deliver thriving, safe, and sustainable neighbourhoods
- Support the Council to meet its aims in Stockport

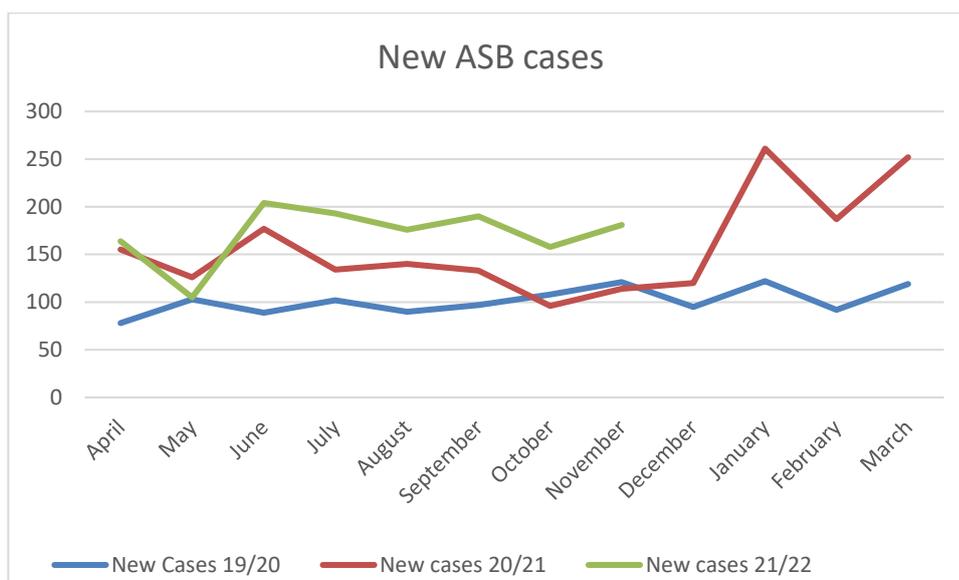
- 4.2 The specialist ASB Service sits within the Directorate of Operations and delivers a tenure neutral ASB service dealing with more serious cases both in its own neighbourhoods and within the private sector. The Housing Management Team deal with all lower-level tenancy related breaches and the ASB Service works closely with the Housing Management Team, as with other services across the organisation, who also play a key role in tackling ASB in the Borough.
- 4.3 The number of new cases received by the ASB Service has increased significantly in the past 18 months and this can be attributed to the effects of the Covid pandemic. Cases in 2020/21 increased by 56% compared to the previous year 2019/20, as detailed in the table below, and cases so far in 2021/22 continue to remain high and have not returned to pre-pandemic levels, despite restrictions being lifted<sup>3</sup>.
- 4.4 Whilst it is evident that the amount of ASB has increased during the pandemic, it is also clear that tolerance levels during the various lockdowns were lower, leading to more reports of ASB. A deterioration in mental health during the pandemic, increases in alcohol and substance misuse as a coping mechanism and reduced access to services are all thought to be contributing to the ongoing high level of cases being received. SHG is an active member of the Greater Manchester Housing Providers (GMHP) Community Safety Group, Greater Manchester Police and Crime Leads Group and HouseMark, the leading data and insight company for the UK housing sector and it is apparent from discussions with Community Safety Leads in each of these groups, that the increased levels of ASB is a trend which is not unique to Stockport but is being seen regionally and indeed nationally<sup>4</sup>.

	New Cases 19/20	New cases 20/21	New cases 21/22 (YTD)
April	78	155	167
May	103	126	105
June	89	177	206
July	102	134	198
August	90	140	173
September	97	133	187
October	108	96	184

<sup>3</sup> Figures represent cases in both SHG managed neighbourhoods as well as private

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/noisy-neighbour-complaints-soar-more-quarter-during-covid-lockdowns/>

November	121	114	186
December	95	120	
January	122	261	
February	92	187	
March	119	252	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1216</b>	<b>1895</b>	<b>1406 (1800)<sup>5</sup></b>



- 4.5 A breakdown of the main types of ASB complained about is as follows. In 2020/21 the largest type of ASB related to noise, followed by Covid restriction breaches in properties and the third highest type was verbal harassment/threats or violence. In 2021/22 to date, noise remains the largest type of ASB complaint with verbal harassment coming second. As expected Covid related complaints have reduced significantly but Domestic Abuse is continuing to increase. A new Domestic Abuse Case Officer has recently been recruited to deal with all cases of this type with a view to protecting victims whilst preventing homelessness and trying support perpetrator to access specialist support to change behaviour.

<b>Case Types</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Alcohol related	7	4
Boundary Dispute	5	4
Car Parking	9	7
Condition of Property	33	32
Covid Breaches	527	112

<sup>5</sup> Predicted number for year end

Criminal Behaviour	94	58
Domestic Abuse	140	128
Drugs	219	117
Garden Nuisance	45	32
Hate incidents	43	26
Litter/Rubbish	53	22
Misuse of Communal Areas	69	35
Noise/Rowdy Behaviour	739	739
Nuisance vehicles/bikes	31	12
Personal Allegation dispute	31	14
Pets	73	29
Vandalism	39	29
Verbal abuse/harassment/threats	613	409
YE/YTD <sup>6</sup>	2763	1805

4.6 In addition to being linked to the Council's priorities, the ASB Strategy has clear links to many of SHG's strategies, policies, and action plans, in particular:

- Business Plan
- Service Improvement Plan
- ASB Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Hate Crimes Policy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Allocations Policy
- Social Investment Strategy
- Age Friendly Strategy
- Neighbourhood Action Plans
- Asset and Sustainability Strategy
- Delivery Plan
- Value for Money Strategy
- Customer Voice & Influence Strategy
- Greenspace Strategy
- Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy

4.7 The Concierge CCTV control room at SHG provides CCTV monitoring and is able to monitor and record ASB activity around, and in some cases, within multi-storey blocks, assisting with the gathering of evidence for ASB or criminal

<sup>6</sup> The total number of case types is higher than the total number of new cases received, as there is often more than one type of nuisance in some cases.

- cases. During 2021, expansion of the Concierge Service included the addition of cameras to landing areas and door entry in various blocks. In addition to fixed CCTV monitoring, the ASB Service also operates a bespoke “Lend-A-Cam” service which temporarily loans CCTV systems to customers experiencing ASB. Delivering a wide-ranging CCTV service is essential to ensuring that customers remain confident that ASB can be tackled effectively and reduces the onus on victims to provide direct evidence by providing high quality CCTV images for use in its place.
- 4.8 Further to monitoring the SHG CCTV network, which has expanded to more than 1200 cameras during 2021, the Concierge Service is also merging with the Public Space CCTV service, which is currently provided by TLC<sup>7</sup> on behalf of Stockport Council. As of April 2022, all Security Services will transfer to SHG, and Public Space CCTV monitoring will be delivered from Cornerstone’s Control Room. This will create a central site from which intelligence can be shared over the secure GMP / Storenet radio systems and incidents will be tracked in real time with more than 1400 cameras at the team’s disposal. This merger will support ASB and Criminal enforcement action by improving the opportunity for evidence to be captured ‘end-to-end’ over a wider geographical area, and by reducing the time it takes for evidence to be collated to start proceedings.
- 4.9 Pre-tenancy support is delivered to customers most likely to be offered a Stockport Homes tenancy where there has been evidence of previously failed tenancies or evidence of issues which could lead to an unsuccessful tenancy. Intervention and education before a tenancy commences works to address a wide range of issues including anti-social behaviour. Support from the Tenancy Ready service continues through the initial first weeks and months of a new tenancy started supporting the customer into their new home and engaging with Housing Support if ongoing support is required.
- 4.10 Housing Support provided by the Independent Living Service, plays a key role in supporting customers, including older people, to sustain their tenancy and address any support issues they may be experiencing such as debt, poor health, ASB or domestic abuse. The service also supports to ensure tenants understand their obligations and responsibilities as tenants and therefore not to commit ASB, contributing to prevention of ASB.
- 4.11 Neighbourhood Action Plans have been developed within the Neighbourhood team in consultation with Customers and stakeholders and include actions to address issues of ASB. As part of the Action Plans, Neighbourhood Housing Officer's (NHOs) working in partnership with other SHG services and stakeholders, are able to deliver programmes of physical improvements through the Neighbourhood Investment Budget and Capital and Revenue programme to address community safety issues and to deliver diversionary activities that help prevent ASB occurring. The NAPs are developed by acting

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<sup>7</sup> Totally Local Company – TLC are a wholly owned company of Stockport Council.

on customer feedback and tailoring service in neighbourhoods, where possible, to meet local need.

- 4.12 Robust customer and community engagement underpins the success of Stockport Homes and is central to the organisation realising its vision, mission and aims. The Customer Engagement and Inclusion Team supports the ASB service in effectively engaging customers in decision making and helping to shape the service. As part of the consultation with customers about the new ASB Strategy two ASB Focus Groups were held which invited customers to attend but also specifically targeted invitations to those customers who were dissatisfied or had complained about the service over the last 12 months. A total of 11 customers attended the workshop with a further 189 customers taking part in the social media campaign and subsequently sending in emailed feedback. The views of customers put forward both at the in-person event, and through the social media campaign have directly influenced the ASB Strategy with specific actions relating to victim support, suggested by customers, being included in the action plan
- 4.13 The Customer Engagement and Inclusion Team positively engages with young people to address a range of issues, taking a proactive approach to developing confidence and skills. Since August 2020, the Youth Diversionary Officer role has been working with a dual focus on supporting young tenants to sustain tenancies and young people in communities who are struggling. Support is provided on a 121 basis for vulnerable young people who are referred in by partner agencies. Partnerships have been developed to deliver prevention work in schools around homelessness and ASB diversionary activities are delivered several evenings a week in priority neighbourhoods to help reduce youth ASB engaging young people in activities of their own choosing, largely based around sports.
- 4.14 Whilst there are currently no national indicators for ASB, Stockport Homes measures performance in line with industry standards as detailed in schemes such as the ASB Quality Assessment Framework (QAF). The new Resolve Standard, which replaces the QAF, will be launched in April 2022 and SHG will be one of the first landlords in the country to undertake the assessment, having been heavily involved in the working group that has developed the final overall standard. It will involve a self-assessment against a range of standards and an onsite assessment by facilitators which will establish how well the organisation meets or exceeds the standard.
- 4.15 Performance is also monitored by how many cases are successfully resolved. A successfully resolved case is defined as a case in which the behaviour being complained of has either stopped completely, or is now so sporadic, that there is no legitimate or proportionate further action that SHG can take.
- 4.16 As at the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021, SHG has successfully resolved 99.40% of cases in an average of 50 days against a target of 52 days<sup>8</sup>. However, 98.27% of complainants were satisfied with the outcome of the case on closure (against

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<sup>8</sup> As at end November 2021

a target of 98.50%)<sup>9</sup>, evidencing that whilst a case is resolved and the behaviour has stopped, customers remain unhappy. A customer may remain dissatisfied in a successfully resolved case if they had not achieved the outcome they had wanted. For example, the nuisance can be stopped in cases because of an injunction, but the complainants wanted the outcome to be eviction.

- 4.17 The performance of the service both within SHG managed neighbourhoods and the private sector, compared with national averages, is upper quartile meaning the Councils performance is now also in this region<sup>10</sup>.
- 4.18 SHG is committed to using its full range of both non-legal and legal tools to address ASB, taking action that is incremental in nature, giving opportunity for changes in behaviour and with an overall aim of sustaining tenancies. There was a range of initiatives to enhance the safety of neighbourhoods in 2020/21, including 'target hardening' work for 212 customers experiencing ASB. SHG has successfully utilised mediation as a way of resolving ASB issues with 70% of referrals resulting in resolution. SHG was proactive in serving 45 Community Protection Warnings with the majority used to tackle Covid related ASB and served four Community Protection Notices on behalf of the Council. SHG also secured 44 injunctions and undertakings to address 'hotspot' issues as well as 13 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and one nuisance premises closure order.
- 4.19 SHG recognises possession as a useful tool in tackling ASB but supports the Council's policy to reduce homelessness and therefore uses eviction as an absolute last resort. In 2020 Notices of Seeking Possession were served upon several persistent nuisance tenants; however, a national eviction ban that was in force during Lockdown meant that these could not be progressed until after 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 when the ban was lifted. During that time most tenants modified their behavior meaning eviction was no longer necessary, however one tenant still failed to comply with the notice and was subsequently being evicted in August 2021.
- 4.20 So far in 2021/22 SHG has continued to take positive action including 15 injunctions with one committal to prison for being breached. Officers have served nine Community Protection Warnings and four Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. As the effects of Covid on ASB levels gradually recedes it is widely anticipated that new case numbers will reduce, however many cases dealt relate to lifestyle differences between households which are not related to Covid and SHG will continue to use tools such as mediation and community conferencing to address disputes
- 4.21 SHG is not only committed to taking effective enforcement action against perpetrators of ASB but also to implementing effective interventions to assist perpetrators in modifying their behaviour and bringing about lasting change. The Positive Engagement Service continues to play an integral role in helping

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<sup>9</sup> As at end of November 2021

<sup>10</sup> Average performance across the country being 81 per cent of customers being satisfied with outcome of case, being resolved in an average of 84 days.

perpetrators of ASB change behaviours and sustain tenancies successfully whilst reducing the need for injunctive or other legal action.

- 4.22 The overall purpose of the Positive Engagement Service is to prevent incidents and the reoccurrence of ASB in neighbourhoods managed by SHG, work with vulnerable perpetrators and support agencies to address and then prevent tenancy breaches occurring which result in legal action and, ultimately, homelessness.
- 4.23 Demand for the service has continued to increase and there has been ongoing significant success in resolving ASB by bringing about changes in behaviour. By recognising the individual needs of perpetrators and victims, Positive Engagement Officers (PEOs) supported 83 new referrals in 2020/21 of chaotic drug and alcohol users and people with mental health or anger management issues to help them sustain their tenancies. In total 90<sup>[1]</sup> cases were successfully closed during the year without the need for legal action an increase compared to 69 the year before. This contributed to reducing spend on legal action by £191,352 compared to anticipated spend. This approach has contributed to sustainable changes in behaviour, with 96.77 per cent of clients having stopped causing nuisance altogether because of this specialist support
- 4.24 SHG's ASB Service is accessible and responsive to Members who make enquires on behalf of members of the public in response of ASB they are experiencing and a series of workshops for Councilors on "ASB Tools and Powers" are scheduled to take place in early October. The workshops will cover how investigations are carried out, what legal and non-legal remedies SHG use and highlight some of the key issues the team plan to tackle going forward including domestic abuse and cuckooing.
- 4.25 Resolving ASB in neighbourhoods is often a difficult and lengthy process, some needing legal interventions that prolong outcomes for customers, and whilst SHG always strives to deliver a high performing ASB service it is never complacent and recognises that there is always room for improvement. SHG acknowledges that some dissatisfaction in how ASB is handled still remains and it will continue to work with the Council and other agencies to effectively tackle issues as they arise.

## 5. DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGIC AIMS

### **Implement effective early measures to prevent ASB occurring**

Over the next three years, Stockport Homes will build on the work done to date by:

- Continue to expand and deliver pre-tenancy support through the Tenancy Ready Service with particular emphasis on customers most at risk of tenancy failure or those with complex previous housing issues, working to address identified issues before a tenancy commences

- Undertake the external peer review "Resolve Standard" process, to have the ASB service formally assessed against industry identified standards to ensure it delivering excellent services
- Undertake the Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation (DAHA) process, to have the SHGs approach to domestic abuse formally assessed against industry identified standards to ensure it delivering excellent services
- Exploring capabilities of the new CX system to identify ASB hotspots on a monthly basis and then utilise data to identify neighbourhoods at greatest risk of ASB and crime
- Explore how the use of New Tenant Visits and Current Tenant Visits can be improved to assist identifying and protecting those at risk of causing ASB
- Undertake a review, and implementation of, Neighbourhood Action Plans and utilising ASB data develop actions to address ASB in those neighbourhoods identified as hotspot areas
- Continue to utilise designing out crime principles using the investment programmes and Community Safety Budget, to make places and premises less vulnerable to crime and develop sustainable local solutions to protect public spaces
- Work with partners such as the Council's Targeted Youth Service and RTime, to deliver regular Youth Diversionary action in areas identified as hotspots, to reduce ASB amongst young people
- Secure long-term funding for the Youth Diversionary Officer to ensure SHG is able to deliver activities with partners.
- Deliver engaging holiday activities and youth projects for young people throughout the year to increase self-confidence and resilience.
- Deliver Heartstone programme (hate crime prevention programme) in identified schools
- Maximise use of the Allocations Policy to make applications from customers who have previously displayed high level anti-social behaviour (or behaviours that would lead to ineffective housing management) within an area ineligible, instead signposting to personal housing plans and alternative housing options and support.
- Continue to complete new tenancy sign up actions in advance of any tenancy being signed up including checks of all property offers with the relevant Neighbourhood Housing Officer including affordability and fraud checks where applicable
- All viewing to be accompanied viewings with rehousing checklists completed as part of the viewing process and sign-ups to continue to include specific reference to acceptable tenant behaviour with a focus on what is deemed to be unacceptable and anti-social
- Ensure regular and pro-active monitoring of CCTV across Stockport Homes' estates is being undertaken by the 24hr Concierge Service, reporting incidents of ASB to the dedicated officer and supporting any enforcement action by collating evidence and sharing this with the ASB team.
- Deliver an 18-month tenure neutral project in partnership with the Council and GMP, to tackle "cuckooing" in the Borough identifying those

at risk of being cuckooed and putting adequate safeguard in place to prevent cuckooing occurring

Key outcomes expected from actions within this strategic aim include:

- Increased numbers of customers accessing services and strong evidence that those tenancies have gone on to not cause ASB.
- Increased customer confidence that the ASB Service delivers excellent services
- Increased customer confidence that the SHG delivers excellent services for survivors of domestic abuse
- Ability to identify vulnerable customer groups with ease and develop targeted approaches to address
- Ability to identify vulnerable customer groups or neighbourhood with ease and develop targeted approaches to address
- Increased feelings of safety within neighbourhoods
- Reduction in ASB and Youth Disorder across Stockport/ Referred young people not engaging in ASB
- Effective risk-based approach towards the support and management of rehousing applicants with a history of ASB and complex needs
- Reduction in ASB from new tenants and a greater understanding of what is classed as ASB by new tenants
- Improved safeguarding of individuals and reduced community impact.

### **Deliver successful and sustainable interventions for those engaging in ASB**

Over the next three years, Stockport Homes will build on the work done to date by:

- Deliver an 18-month tenure neutral project in partnership with the Council and GMP, to tackle "cuckooing" in the Borough by taking interventions to protect resident who have already been cuckooed and taking appropriate action to reduce harm and enforcement action against those identified as perpetrators
- Review the approach to perpetrators using the Positive Engagement Service to further expand those clients who can be referred into the service to improve outcomes in intervening in ASB
- Housing Support Officers continue close liaison with the Positive Engagement Officers to ensure appropriate support in place for those customers who have stabilised from engaging in serious ASB but require ongoing support to sustain positive changes to behaviour most at risk of eviction as a result of ASB
- Deliver one to one mentoring with vulnerable young tenants through Youth Diversionary Officer to reduce ASB and improve tenancy sustainment.
- Continue to educate new tenants who are receiving Tenancy Ready support around ASB and specifically examples of ASB which could impact on neighbours and the neighbourhood, engaging promptly with ASB team if service users become perpetrators or victims of ASB early in their tenancy

- Ongoing development of Housing First and Rough Sleeping Accommodation programme to deliver intensively supported housing options to people with complex needs
- Development of inhouse Drug and alcohol outreach services to target those causing community-based issues
- Establishment of new inhouse Adult Social Care role focussing on the support of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and with complex needs

Key outcomes expected from actions within this strategic aim include:

- Reduction in crime, harm and antisocial behaviour, and reduced risk of re-victimisation cuckooing
- Improved safeguarding of individuals and reduced community impact.
- Customers presenting with additional vulnerabilities are supported to live as independently as possible and successfully maintain their tenancies.
- Increased numbers accessing the service and strong evidence that those tenancies have gone on to not cause ASB.
- Reduction in ASB with new tenants specifically those receiving support from tenancy ready Team. Greater reporting of ASB experienced by tenants who have used the Tenancy ready Service

### **Take effective and robust enforcement action against those who persist in causing ASB**

Over the next three years, Stockport Homes will build on the work done to date by:

- Undertaking a review of the structure of the ASB Service to ensure that it is fit for purpose and effectively meets the changing demands of ASB in neighbourhoods
- Deliver refresher training to all ASB staff on legal tools and powers and how best to apply them in different cases
- Deliver training in domestic abuse legalisation and non-molestation orders and how to apply for these on behalf of survivors
- Increase the use of community protection warnings and notices as the first stage of legal action to try and resolve problems swiftly
- Deliver training on the Care Act and Equality Act with a focus on effective approaches on how to overcome the legal barriers it places on enforcement officers in being able to take legal action swiftly
- Work with partners, in particular GMP, to identify the swiftest way to take effective and proportionate enforcement action against prolific perpetrators identifying whether criminal or civil action is the most appropriate
- Request at least one positive requirement clause with every injunction application so that prohibitions run alongside effective interventions to prevent behaviour linked to drug, alcohol, or mental health from continuing
- Explore the use of electronic signatures for witnesses statements to reduce the time taken to get cases into court

- Utilise SharePoint effectively using to share written witness statements with legal services to enable amendments of statements to take place more speedily, thus reducing the time taken to get cases into court.

Key outcomes expected from actions within this strategic aim include:

- An effective and adequate structure in place to meet current demand
- Knowledgeable and highly skilled staff that are able to deal with cases and support customers
- More effective case management, cases being progressed more quickly and improving the customer journey
- Positive requirements orders increase and repeat incidents of ASB reduce
- Cases being issued to Court more quickly bringing speedier resolutions

### **Facilitate strong complainant and community empowerment and support, for those who experience ASB**

Over the next three years, Stockport Homes will build on the work done to date by:

- Review the ASB Risk Assessment Matrix to ensure it correctly identifies complainant's vulnerabilities and that those classed as high risk/vulnerability are then sign-posted to suitable support services
- Explore the feasibility of reintroducing dedicated Complainant Support Officers to provide specialist, one-to-one support to the most vulnerable complainants for the duration of an open that they are involved in.
- Signpost those experiencing ASB who need additional support whilst their case is being dealt with to The Target Prevention Alliance or GM Victim Services
- Undertaking two benchmarking visits to other organisations that have been identified as providing a service or scheme for victims that is considered to be Best Practice and consider if similar schemes can be introduced
- Explore the benefits and feasibility of providing a more specialist ASB out of hours service in the evenings and at weekend, such as security patrols in hotspot areas
- Case Officers will develop meaningful action plans with complainants and maintain at least weekly contact to provide the human touch and give updates and check on their welfare.
- Establish a training provider of motivational interviewing, empathy and active listening techniques and deliver to all ASB Service colleagues
- Promote the increased use of the reporting app which has the facility to talk back to customers and improve communications making it easier and faster to keep in touch
- Work with "Rainbow Roof" tenants group undertake an early review of the Hate Crime policy and procedure to ensure it is fit for purpose and victim focused

- Explore the feasibility of developing a "peer support" network, utilising customer volunteers who have experienced ASB to provide support to current complainants in ASB cases
- Ensure all success in tackling ASB and organised crime is effectively publicised so as to increase customer confidence.

Key outcomes expected from actions within this strategic aim include:

- Well supported complainants who feel safe and during their case and result in high levels of satisfaction with the service
- Best practice explored and implemented where appropriate
- Increased feelings of support for customers
- Improved communication to complainants in cases, high levels of satisfaction with the service.
- Engaged and empowered tenants and residents and an improved policy and procedure for tackling hate crime
- Increased customer confidence that the ASB Service delivers excellent services

### **Contribute to effective "Integrated Intelligence" to help solve community problems in partnership**

Over the next three years, Stockport Homes will build on the work done to date by:

- Ensuring consistent and outcome focused attendance at PBI to develop local solutions to cases which is centred on people and enables increases in early intervention and prevention activity
- Raising awareness of existing, new and/or emerging crime and ASB risks through active awareness programmes and campaigns including hate crime and exploitation awareness weeks
- Work closely with Operation Challenger Team to increase Intel to the Challenger Inbox on Organised Crime Groups in Stockport so that effective legal action, both criminal and civil, can be taken and disrupt criminal activity.
- Identify and target the most persistent offenders using multi-agency forums including the Youth ASB Panel and Ward Level meetings and take the lead in enforcement cases that directly affect SHG Housing Management Function.
- Ensure regular attendance at Safer Stockport Partnership and subgroups (including but not limited to the Partnership Delivery Group and MARAC) so that approaches to tackling crime and crime and ASB are joined up and support the aims of all agencies
- Working with the partner agencies including GMP, Targeted Youth Services and the MASSH to identify the most vulnerable young people at risk of being involved in ASB and/organised crime and assist in delivering measures to prevent them doing so.

- Merge the Public Space CCTV control room and the Stockport Homes Control Room together to create a dedicated hub for all Public Space and housing / estate management CCTV to be monitored from.
- Ensure intelligence gained through CCTV monitoring is shared with GMP and Merseyway storenet users over the dedicated Radio systems.

Key outcomes expected from actions within this strategic aim include:

- Increased scope to identify early interventions in partnership, that can achieve long-term resolutions and reductions in ASB
- Growth of the service and income for SHG.
- Improved safeguarding of individuals and reduced community impact.
- Improved speed and accuracy of incident reporting by operating from a single site
- Enhanced opportunity to gather evidence by having access to more than 1400 cameras across the Borough

**Expand the reach of the ASB service externally through the growth of the commercial offer to partner organisations and other landlords, reinvesting any to further improve services delivered to customers.**

- Supporting the Council by being open to alternative methods of delivery of ASB services in the “place private sector” and domestic noise delivering services for the Council.
- Develop a business plan for the ASB Service detailing activities it will undertake to grow the income received from delivering CCTV, Noise and other services to other organisations across Greater Manchester and beyond.
- Explore more integrated neighbourhood and place based working arrangement with the Council and other partners

Key outcomes expected from actions within this strategic aim include:

- Growth of the service and income for SHG.
- Improved services delivered to all residents of Stockport regardless of tenure.
- Increased positive reputation of SHG as a leading ASB Service provider.

## 6 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 6.1 An EIA has been carried out and the ASB Strategy and the ASB Policy. The ASB Strategy is linked the ASB Policy which makes provision for interpreter services, by making race and hate crime incidents a priority for investigation and by using a risk assessment matrix to establish vulnerability. As a result, both the strategy and policy have no differential outcomes or impacts for any customer or employee of Stockport Homes.

## **7 ACTION PLAN**

- 7.1 An action plan to accompany this strategy is appended at Appendix One.

## **8 OWNERSHIP MONITORING AND REVIEW**

- 8.1 The ASB Strategy is owned by the Head of ASB and sits within Directorate of Operations, but there is responsibility in each Directorate for the implementation of actions. Its success will be demonstrated by the outcomes it delivers.
- 8.2 Progress against the Strategy will be monitored annually and reported to Members Committee and will be publicised on the website and in the customer newsletter Stockport at Home.