

S22. Antisocial Behaviour

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting information on the ways in which the Council and its partners deal with antisocial behaviour.

The committee had identified antisocial behaviour on 17 August 2017 (ref SC9) as a potential area for further scrutiny and had asked for a report on how the Council tackles such behaviour so that the matter could be considered further, ahead of the committee identifying topics for inclusion on the scrutiny plan. Additionally the Executive had, on 17 October 2017 (ref EX49) referred the matter of antisocial behaviour to the committee following consideration of a motion.

The report set out mechanisms to tackle antisocial behaviour with particular reference to council tenants. In collaboration with partners such as Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, NHS and SACRO, the Council's services are:-

- Conflict Resolution Services;
- Community Safety Team;
- Restorative Justice; and
- Community, Learning and Development.

The report provided a detailed summary of each service.

The Head of Procurement and Housing Property gave a detailed overview of the services provided.

The committee thanked the Head of Procurement and Housing Property for the report and for thorough summary of the services provided. Members indicated that it was likely that the issue of antisocial behaviour in particular in regard to Council tenants would be recommended for inclusion in the scrutiny plan. The committee then discussed the report in detail.

Members considered that tackling issues at an early stage could prevent escalation, highlighting examples where minor issues such as the time taken to fix door entry systems, or remove litter, had caused or exacerbated antisocial behaviour. Members considered that although standards were in place to respond to "low level" issues, there were examples of instances where the standards had not been adhered to and this had caused neighbour disputes to escalate. Members also queried whether the sanctions available were strong enough to deter antisocial behaviour and suggested the complainants needed to have confidence in the mechanisms in place. Often, it was suggested, matters are not reported. In response, the Head of Procurement and Housing Property accepted that where there were delays, this should be addressed. Tenants sign a good neighbour agreement which sets out what is expected of them. While it is not necessarily straight forward to deal with, the public need to have confidence in the systems in

place to address antisocial behaviour. He agreed that the Council had to be, and be seen to be, responsive.

The committee discussed the arrangements to tackle and deal with antisocial behaviour and suggested that there was a need to build the public's understanding of, and confidence in, the arrangements and stated that it was vital that interventions were in place to prevent escalation.

Members accepted that the causes of antisocial behaviour were varied and often complex. For example the mix of tenancies within a housing block and the mental health issues within the communities. In regard to the latter point, the Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement summarised the work of the Community Planning Partnership.

The committee discussed the timescales set out in procedures for dealing with issues, such as the removal of litter in a Council tenancy. The Head of Procurement and Housing Property confirmed that timescales were in place and these were necessary, in some cases statutory. However, he confirmed that if a deadline for action had elapsed the matter would not be dropped and would remain on record. Cases would not have to "start again" if the antisocial behaviour repeated itself. In response, the committee suggested that the advice given by officers had been unclear or inconsistent on occasion.

In considering the agencies with which the Council worked, members highlighted that budget cost and future cuts would impact on their ability to deliver current services.

Following the discussion, the committee agreed to recommend antisocial behaviour to Council for inclusion in the scrutiny plan. The scope of the review would focus on council tenancies but would consider arrangements for mixed tenancies, causes of antisocial behaviour, prevention and enforcement and communication with the community.

Decision

The committee agreed to recommend the topic of antisocial behaviour to council for inclusion in the Scrutiny Plan for 2018.