

Antisocial Behaviour Operational Strategy 2008 to 2011

Document Information

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Issue Date | | |
| Version/Issue Number | | |
| Document Status | | |
| Effective From Date | | |
| Scope of Document | | |
| Objective | | |
| Document Sponsor | Name | Maggie Cornall |
| | Job Title | Director of Housing Services |
| | Division | |
| Author | Name | Richard Scholes |
| | Job Title | Neighbourhood Manager |
| | Team | ASB |
| | Contact Tel: | 01253 477628 |

Amendment Record

| Date | Issue No. | Section/Page | Details of Change | Authorised By: |
|-------------|------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Amendment Notes

- Documents at draft status are to use letter designations to denote issue status: a, b, c, etc.
- Documents at full issue status are to use number designations to denote issue status after full revision: 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, etc.
- For an amendment to a full issue document you are to use number designation to denote issue status: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, etc.
- On full issue the draft amendment record should be deleted from the above table.
- Notification of the amendment must be sent to the person maintaining the Central Register.

Contents

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1 | Context..... | 4 |
| 2 | About The Service..... | 5 |
| 2.1 | Aims & Objectives Of The Service..... | 5 |
| 2.2 | Equality & Diversity | 6 |
| 3 | Key Delivery Frameworks & Partnerships..... | 6 |
| 3.1 | Approaches To Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour | 6 |
| 3.2 | Prevention | 7 |
| 3.3 | Enforcement..... | 8 |
| 3.4 | Working with Perpetrators | 10 |
| 3.5 | Supporting Victims and Witnesses | 10 |
| 3.6 | Partnership Working..... | 11 |
| 3.7 | Respect..... | 12 |
| 4 | What The Service Needs To Change And Why..... | 13 |
| 5 | Resources..... | 13 |
| 6 | Risks | 14 |
| 7 | Customer Involvement..... | 15 |
| 8 | Value For Money | 15 |
| 9 | Monitoring, Reporting and Review..... | 15 |
| 10 | Strategic Objectives & Key Actions..... | 16 |

1 Context

The traditional resort economy of Blackpool has been in decline for many years. The town now faces a unique combination of regeneration challenges. The continued loss of tourism spend in the local economy has created a growing number of complex and inter-related economic, social and environmental problems, including:

- Acute levels of highly concentrated deprivation – in particular, parts of inner Blackpool are amongst the 5% most deprived areas within the country and evidence suggests that this position is worsening;
- The lowest average wages in the North West (2nd lowest in UK) in a labour market characterised by seasonality and a low proportion of higher order occupations;
- Extremely high levels of worklessness (16th highest in the UK);
- Lack of private sector investment;
- Declining quality of the visitor offer within a tired and outdated infrastructure and urban environment;
- Acute and accelerating housing market imbalance that is undermining efforts to regenerate the resort and driving social deprivation. There is a growing number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), with thousands more hotels and guest houses – with average rates of occupation lower than 30% - at risk of changing into inappropriate forms of use;
- Poor educational and skills attainment – over 20% of the working age population in Blackpool have no qualifications, compared to a national average of 14%, and a lower than average proportion possess Level 4 plus qualifications; and
- Worsening levels of poor health and high levels of violent crime.

The Council established an Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO) called Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) in 2006 and the company took on delegated responsibility for providing housing management and maintenance services with effect from 15th January 2007.

The functions delegated to BCH can be summarised as:

- Stock investment decisions and repairs ordering;
- Rent collection, dealing with arrears, debt counselling;
- Consulting and informing tenants on matters which are the ALMO's responsibility;
- Promoting tenant participation, including involving tenants in monitoring and reviewing service standards;
- Enforcement of tenancy conditions;
- Similar functions for leaseholders;
- Managing lettings, voids and under-occupation;
- Estate management, caretaking, and housing related support services under the Supporting People programme.

The overall strategic direction for services is taken from the Councils Housing Strategy and HRA Plan. BCH's business plan describes the strategic objectives that BCH will deliver within the Housing Strategy and HRA Plan.

This strategy will also be shaped by BCH's partnership with Blackpool Council, its partners, and customers who all see tackling anti-social behaviour as a key issue. BCH will continue to work closely with BSafe, (the Blackpool Community Safety and Drugs partnership) and will follow and adhere to guidance issued under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, the Housing Act, Respect Agenda and all other government legislation both locally and nationally.

BCH will also look at the Local Area Agreement (LAA) that sets out the priorities for Blackpool from Central government. The primary objective of the LAA is to deliver better outcomes for local people. Blackpool's Local Area Agreement includes an outcome, which contributes to reducing ASB in the communities.

Strategic direction will also be taken from Blackpool's Domestic Violence Strategy 2007-10, which will deliver a comprehensive way of addressing all aspects of domestic violence.

BCH will seek to deliver an ASB service that:

- Has a customer focus - BCH acknowledges that customers are at the heart of everything we do. We will continue to work closely with residents via the Tenant Involvement Groups, Tenant Liaison Forum and through various consultation exercises.
- Is locally sensitive – BCH will work in partnership with Police and other agencies to identify what the local issues are so that we can target our resources effectively.
- Delivers performance excellence – we will continuously review our service through monitoring and consultation with our residents and partners.

This strategy sets out how the way forward in delivering the objectives of the BCH Business Plan and provides a basis for Team Plans.

2 About the Service

2.1 Aims & Objectives of the Service

BCH recognises that it has a major part to play in identifying the problems of anti-social behaviour faced by its residents and the community in which they live and will use all the tools with which it has been provided to tackle these problems.

The anti-social behaviour strategy seeks to highlight remedies to:

- Reduce, prevent and deter the incidence of anti-social behaviour;
- Tackle the causes and deal with the consequences of anti-social behaviour;
- Take appropriate action against the perpetrators;
- Support victims and witnesses;
- Further develop partnership working. Compliment Borough wide, regional & national approaches to address anti-social behaviour;
- Ensure the effective use of existing resources and partnerships where appropriate.

In partnership with other agencies, BCH will try to use innovative approaches to tackle a diverse and complex range of problems, involving a mixture of prevention, enforcement, diversion, and support. We will build on this and ensure that the benefits of multi-agency working bring the required results to our community.

The strategy has been drawn up within the context of Borough wide, regional and national initiatives already underway within the area including:

- Government's Respect Agenda and Respect Action Plan;
- Blackpool Council's Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy.

The ASB service works to:

- Prevent or deter the incidence of anti-social behaviour;
- Address the causes of anti-social behaviour and manage the consequences;
- Take appropriate action against the perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and communicate a 'no acceptance' message;
- Support victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour;
- Work together with partners both internal and external to ensure the best possible outcome;
- Provide an excellent housing environment for our customers and the residents of Blackpool.

2.2 Equality & Diversity

Blackpool Coastal Housing is committed to providing services that meet the needs of all sections of the community housed by Blackpool Council, living near properties managed by Blackpool Coastal Housing or seeking access to or information on housing services in the Blackpool area.

We seek to ensure that access, services and opportunities are equal, regardless of race, religion, culture, nationality, ethnic background, colour, physical or mental disability, mental health, gender, sexuality, age, literacy, income level and marital status.

Blackpool Coastal Housing is also committed to developing a workforce and a democratic Board that reflects the community it serves. We seek to be an employer that values and develops the skills and abilities of people from different backgrounds.

3 Key Delivery Frameworks & Partnerships

3.1 Approaches to Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 created new powers for tackling anti-social behaviour and in January 2004, the Home Office Anti-social Behaviour Unit launched the 'Together' campaign to support the delivery of anti-social action.

BCH is now using these powers and is working with Blackpool Council to access services, which are intended to improve the quality of life for its tenants. BCH is aware that tackling anti-social behaviour can also bring wider community benefits:

- It can deflect young people from involvement in more serious crime;
- It can disrupt the activities of persistent criminals;
- It can empower and strengthen local communities;
- It can release scarce resources currently used to repair damage caused by anti-social behaviour for other much-needed investment;
- It can improve communities' confidence in the police and other local agencies.

The key to successful action is striking the right balance between enforcement and prevention. It is important to ensure whilst taking any enforcement action, that those experiencing anti-social behaviour receive appropriate support.

The anti-social behaviour strategy has strong links with Partner Agencies and Blackpool Council. In many instances, in order to pursue one or more of the available options in tackling anti-social behaviour, joint working will be an integral part of the approach taken. As well as providing evidence and additional information, it is recognised that other agencies such as Environmental Protection have the use of specialist skills and resources or powers at their disposal.

3.2 Prevention

BCH acknowledges that responding to incidences of anti-social behaviour is a key area of work however; we also understand that the prevention of anti-social behaviour requires significant emphasis. BCH ensures that all new and existing tenants and owners are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Tenancy Agreement. By working closely with both our tenants and partner agencies, we strive to prevent anti-social behaviour occurring and prevent the escalation of acts of anti-social behaviour.

The first course of action would be for the relevant Housing Officer to resolve the problem informally. This may involve a telephone call or a visit, or perhaps an interview at the Housing Office to establish the facts and resolve the problem without taking any formal action. This approach is not always possible, and a risk assessment should always be carried out before visiting an alleged perpetrator at their home.

An informal and low-key approach is often seen as the best way of early intervention. If a problem can be resolved early on there is a better chance that the two parties may get on in the future, and avoids either party adopting an entrenched position. If this approach fails, or this action was not appropriate due to the seriousness of the case, other options would have to be considered to determine how an appropriate resolution will be reached.

BCH has a number of preventative measures that are available for the anti-social behaviour officers to utilise as shown below:

- **Tenancy Audits**- In partnership with the Police and Fire Service, Estate Management Officers carry out tenancy audits by visiting hotspot areas to check that the legitimate tenant is in occupation. These audits are used to check illegal occupation or subletting. As part of this exercise occupation and benefit claims are checked.
- **Mediation** – Mediation is a tool used to negotiate between two or more parties. Low-level neighbour disputes can sometimes be resolved by using mediation. It involves sitting together in a neutral environment and then each party is given a certain amount of time to air their views and opinions on the problems. The outcomes are then documented and all parties sign to say they will adhere to the conditions. A solution is not always reached, however an agreement is always made. Working with *Active Mediation*, BCH is piloting an external meditation service for those cases that have already been dealt with by ASB Officers and no appropriate solution has been reached. *Active Mediation* will be used as a referral service for up to four cases in the pilot year. It is hoped that this mediation service will enable tenants to resolve their dispute satisfactory in order for them to live within the same community environment and sustain their tenancy.
- **Early Intervention** - Early intervention involves working with children and young people who may be at risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour, or are perpetrators of minor anti-social behaviour, to prevent the development of criminal careers. BCH works in partnership with agencies such as Sure Start, Homestart, and the Youth Offending Team through referrals to these agencies.
- **Diversion** – Diversionary activities channel the energies of young perpetrators or potential perpetrators of anti-social behaviour into more constructive activities. When dealing with cases of anti-social behaviour involving young adults BCH will make referrals to its partners such as PAYP who organize diversionary activities. Examples of this work can be seen through the Queens Park Action Group, a multi-agency group that organizes various activities in order to create diversionary channels. Young people are also given the opportunity to share their own ideas through a Young Persons Residents Association established on the Grange Park estate.

PACT Meetings have also been set up, led by the Police. PACT Panels are designed to include members of the local community, Police, Councillors, local leaders and members of the local housing organisations, and at each monthly meeting three separate issues are discussed and targeted over the period until the following meeting where the panel are updated on the progress of any actions. In conjunction with this ASB drop-in sessions are run by Housing Officers within community centres on a regular basis. No appointment is necessary and all cases can be reported in a confidential and informal environment.

End users using hard copies of this document are responsible for ensuring that their copy is up to date.

- **Welcome Pack/ Welcome Visit** - All tenants receive a Welcome Pack when they are signed up for their tenancy. Alongside this, new tenants are taken through the tenancy agreement and standards of behaviour and conduct are explained. This is supplemented by a Welcome visit from an Estate Management Officer. Those new tenants who have an introductory tenancy receive 3 visits during their first year, which enables officers to identify and address issues that may be arising at an early stage in the tenancy. During the visit, the Officer will explain the terms of the tenancy agreement and amongst other things how tenants should dispose of their rubbish.
- **Estate Inspections** - Our Estate Management Officers carry out regular walkabouts with our tenants and leaseholders to assess the standard of cleanliness of blocks and estates. Such events are advertised in the Estate Offices and on the website so that anyone who is interested has an opportunity to be involved. As part of these inspections, criminal damage, graffiti and anti-social behaviour will be recorded and fed through to the relevant officers or department to be actioned. The importance of identifying issues at an early stage is key to effective action.
- **Introductory Tenancies** - Every new tenant that is offered a property within Blackpool Council is subject to an Introductory Tenancy that lasts for a period of 12 months. A leaflet is included in their sign-up pack, which details the reasons for this and possible action in the event that the tenancy agreement is breached. If the tenancy agreement is breached within this period and the case is taken to Court, the Judge must grant mandatory possession of the property.

3.3 Enforcement

BCH will take enforcement where necessary however, we acknowledge that there are risks and limitations associated with the use of enforcement remedies.

BCH will enforce Tenancy Agreement / Covenants by taking all necessary steps, including legal action against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour to ensure compliance. Enforcement will demonstrate BCH's commitment to tackling anti-social behaviour on its estates with an intention to deliver an effective response using current legal powers, targeted towards the more serious incidents of anti-social behaviour. BCH will also work with partners by addressing problems such as noise, fly tipping, graffiti, and parental responsibilities.

Legal action against a perpetrator is only investigated when no other course of action has worked, or is appropriate, and if there have been sustained and very serious breaches of the tenancy agreement, for example violence, threats of violence, racial harassment, other forms of harassment or damage to Council property. BCH's primary concern is to sustain tenancies and work with both victims and perpetrators.

Examples of remedies against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour include:

- **Cautions & Warning Letters** - If informal action is not appropriate, or did not work, the next stage would be to notify the perpetrator that they have breached their tenancy agreement. This would involve a letter being sent to the perpetrator detailing their breach of tenancy and informing them that any future breaches of tenancy may result in legal action being taken against them. In order to pursue a substantiated complaint of anti-social behaviour good quality evidence is essential. This may take the form of data obtained from the Police, or video/photographic evidence from the complainant or victim. The documentation of incidents as witnessed is an integral part when building up a case, and complainants should be advised that this would need to be continued through the case. Only in very exceptional circumstances may a professional witness be used.
- **Exclusion from the Housing Register**- If an application is made for housing and it is discovered that the applicant has been evicted from a previous BCH property then they may be excluded from the Housing Register. The decision to exclude is made by a panel, which comprises of Officers from Blackpool Council and BCH.

End users using hard copies of this document are responsible for ensuring that their copy is up to date.

- **Injunctions with the power of arrest** - Under the ASB Act 2003 Landlords have more powers to use injunctions effectively. Where as before in order for the Judge to grant an injunction there had to be the use or threatened use of violence and a significant risk of harm, there now only needs to be one of the two under the ASB Act 2003.
- **Demoted Tenancies and extension of introductory tenancies** - Under the ASB Act 2003, demoted tenancies have been introduced as an alternative to possession proceedings. It sends out a strong message to the tenant that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated. The tenant's position then becomes vulnerable for a period of one year. Demotion also provides the tenant with one last chance to rectify their behaviour, and it is thought of as another tool in controlling a tenant's behaviour rather than seeking outright possession of their home.
- **Anti-social Behaviour Orders** - Anti-Social Behaviour Orders were introduced in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and came into force in April 1999. They are aimed at tackling persistent offenders and can be used in a range of situations, for example juvenile nuisance, harassment, and violent behaviour. ASBO's can be applied for by either the Police or Housing Authorities and can last for a minimum of two years. Once papers have been prepared, an application is made to the Courts who make the final decision.
- **Anti-social Behaviour Injunctions** – BCH can apply for an injunction in respect of a tenant's breach or anticipated breach of their tenancy agreement where the tenant is engaging in or threatening to engage in conduct that is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person, or is allowing, inciting or encouraging anyone else to do so.
- **Dispersal Orders (through the Police)** - Where there is a persistent problem with the congregation of large groups in one area, senior police officers can designate an area for up to six months with local authority agreement. This area could be as small as a doorway where groups often gather, or it could be as wide as a whole area, as long as there is evidence of anti-social behaviour. In partnership with the Police and the community, a dispersal order was designated on the Grange Park Estate in 2005.
- Within designated areas, the police have the power to disperse groups where they have reasonable grounds for believing that their presence has resulted, or is likely to result, in a member of the public being harassed intimidated, alarmed or distressed. Individuals can be directed to leave the locality and may be excluded from the area for up to 24 hours.
- **Acceptable Behaviour Contracts** - Acceptable Behaviour Contracts play an integral part in any complaint of nuisance. The aim is to sign the perpetrator up to the Agreement, explaining that although it is not legally binding; if it is adhered then it may avoid any further action being taken for breach of tenancy. The ABC Contract has to be written up and agreed to, and then signed by the perpetrator. ABC's can be taken out on anyone 10 years or older. Also present should be any other agency, which knows of the problems, for example the Police, Education, Social Services. ABC's are routinely used by Housing Officers.
- **Notice of seeking possession (NOSP)** – This is served when BCH decides to commence legal proceedings against a tenant for the continuous and sustained breach of their tenancy agreement. BCH will apply to the Court for an order requiring the tenant to give up possession of their home. In these circumstances, BCH would present a case to the judge who upon listening to the evidence will make a decision.
- **Notice of pending possession (NOPP)** – This is similar to the NOSP but only applies to those tenants that have an introductory tenancy. The main difference with the NOPP is that once legal proceedings are commenced the Judge has no discretion and the tenant is automatically evicted from their home.

3.4 Working with Perpetrators

Wherever possible we will work with perpetrators of anti-social behaviour to assist them to modify their behaviour. This might include tenancy support services or referrals to drug support agencies, or youth offending teams.

The partner agencies see modifying the behaviour of the perpetrator as being an important part of any intervention. Taking positive action alone can lead to the problem being displaced to another area. Whenever support is provided it should be tailored in a way, which balances community safety with the perpetrators, needs.

Juvenile perpetrators often experience problems with their family and school due to their behaviour. BCH will try to ascertain the causes of the juvenile's ASB and consider involving their parents/guardians, if appropriate, and possibly obtaining information from their school or other appropriate agencies, e.g. social services. We will use acceptable behaviour contracts with juvenile perpetrators, as they can be particularly effective. BCH will ensure any actions against juvenile perpetrators of ASB are compliant with the council's responsibilities under the Children's Act.

BCH will work in partnership with other agencies that have developed rehabilitation projects that attempt to engage tenants whose behaviour has not been successfully changed by preventative work and enforcement action.

3.5 Supporting Victims and Witnesses

To sustain effective action witnesses are essential in any case of anti-social behaviour. In some cases, third parties, such as housing officers or a professional witness, can supply evidence. However, many tenants are in fear of reprisals and intimidation, actual or perceived.

BCH is seeking to develop a 'Buddy system', which will include a system for effective support. BCH will also investigate any approach that seeks to improve success rates in tackling cases of anti-social behaviour, whilst boosting the confidence of the witness. This is because we recognize that safety and well-being of victims and witnesses come first. In addition many perpetrators of anti-social behaviour are often vulnerable individuals who also require support which is likely to be a complex tailor made package that would complement the appropriate legal action.

We will respect the confidentiality of witnesses, including the use of professional witnesses. We will not use any evidence or information supplied by a witness until we have obtained their approval, verbally or in writing. Witnesses and complainants will be kept informed of the progress of their case on a regular basis, this will be a minimum of four weekly. In cases where our witnesses feel threatened or unable to give evidence, our staff will testify on behalf of witnesses in court.

Where witnesses are called upon to testify in court, or face additional harassment as a result of the actions taken by BCH we will discuss what additional support the witnesses require and where possible offer additional security measures. BCH will reimburse witnesses for expenses incurred whilst they are attending court to give evidence on our behalf. This includes travel expenses and refreshments. In exceptional circumstances, we may reimburse an employer for the cost of an employee attending court to give evidence on our behalf.

BCH staff will accompany witnesses attending court and where appropriate will arrange transport for them to and from court. Officers will also offer and arrange for victims/witnesses to view the Court building in advance of their case.

During the court date, witnesses can be accompanied by BCH employees and taken to a separate waiting area. The Officer will also remain with the witness whilst they are in the courtroom and up until the hearing is finished. Volunteers from Victim Support are also available to assist victims and witnesses to deal with harassment and anti-social behaviour where crimes have been committed.

End users using hard copies of this document are responsible for ensuring that their copy is up to date.

BCH will consider requests from tenants for re-housing and will submit Emergency Transfer reports to the Area Housing Managers to support their request. Copies of these reports will be made available to tenants on request.

Blue line – Where residents are unwilling or unable to provide evidence or are worried about attending court for fear of reprisals, it may be necessary for BCH to use professional witnesses.

Blue line is an agency that we can use in these circumstances. They offer an investigative service using specialist personnel and the latest in electronic covert surveillance equipment. They gather the information and produce evidence to the standard of proof required by a court. They will also present that information in Court if required to do so which reduces the need for victims to give evidence themselves.

Buddy Service – The Buddy Service is now fully operational and offers confidential emotional support for those tenants who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair caused by anti-social behaviour. Volunteers made up of tenants who have experienced anti-social behaviour deliver the service. BCH strongly believes that tenants who have been victims of ASB are the best-placed people to provide support.

If a tenant is suffering from ASB and they want to talk to someone other than a friend, family or their Housing Officer then they can contact their buddy who will listen and offer support and advice. To be a buddy you do not need formal qualifications or previous experience, but a natural ability to listen and remain open minded. All the Buddy's receive full training from the Housing Officer.

3.6 Partnership Working

Multi-agency working is an essential and integral part of any anti-social behaviour strategy. Working with other agencies not only strengthens relations with the local community but it can also help to achieve key objectives and help to achieve a holistic approach to problem solving. These agencies include the Police, Fire Service, Social Services, Education, Youth Offending Team, Homeless Action Team, Community Mental Health Team, Voluntary Organisations, Partners, Private Landlords, Resident Associations, Home Start, Sure Start, and other Support Agencies. These agencies can provide additional information and evidence, and their powers can be used to help to resolve problems / issues.

BCH is also involved with the Reassurance Plus initiative, in particular on Grange Park, which is a dedicated Reassurance Plus area. The team is accessible and known to the community and identifies public concerns so that prompt, targeted action can be taken. Reassurance Plus seeks to accelerate and promote joining-up of local services such as the Police, Lancashire Fire & Rescue to directly be responsive to the needs of the local community. Both the Queens Park and Mereside Housing Offices have stock in the Reassurance areas and are fully committed to its principals.

Our partners include:

- Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- Education Departments
- Probation Service
- Mental Health Team
- Muir Housing Group
- Manchester Methodist - Five Piers Housing
- Windmill Housing Group
- Community and resident Groups
- Police
- Lancashire Fire and Rescue service
- Springboard Project
- Positive Activities for Young Children
- Social Services
- Domestic Abuse Team
- Crime and Disorder Group
- Sure start

End users using hard copies of this document are responsible for ensuring that their copy is up to date.

- Home start
- Reassurance Plus Initiative
- Primary Health Trust
- Youth Offending Team
- Environmental Health
- Bsafe
- Blackpool Council Hate Crime Working Group

3.7 Respect

Blackpool Council signed up to the Housing Management Respect action plan at the end of March 2007.

BCH welcomes the Government's Respect agenda and we are developing our procedures and processes to ensure that we fully comply with its requirements. We recognise the powers within Respect in the fight against anti-social behaviour.

We will review our anti-social behaviour procedures to further develop the links between the provision of support and enforcement action, which includes working with support agencies, such as Social Services.

We are already using the full range of legal powers such as injunctions, demotion orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts to change behaviour without the need to evict families from their homes. We are working with support agencies to identify referral arrangements for families who may benefit from additional parenting skills or support to help control the behaviour of children.

The developments we are making to our policies and procedures will enable us to act quicker and more decisively in the area of anti-social behaviour.

Elsewhere, in this strategy we have illustrated how we are complying with the Respect agenda, in that we are:

- Engaging with the community;
- Accountable to the community through our service standards;
- Responsive to our clients;
- We use the full range of enforcement tools open to us;
- We will link in with other agencies to have a programmed of diversionary activities.

This strategy shows that we are visibly committed to the community we serve and want to deliver an excellent anti-social behaviour service.

4 What the Service Needs To Change and Why

To achieve the objectives of this strategy BCH need to work in partnership with the community, who have an interest in the prevention and resolution of problems of anti-social behaviour and have a role to play in helping us to achieve this.

BCH needs to change resident and partners attitudes towards tackling anti-social behaviour. It is important that BCH emphasises the significance to residents and support agencies that we cannot tackle anti-social behaviour alone. Effective solutions to these problems are not the responsibility of a single agency or organisation. Many other groups such as the police, social services, schools, and businesses have a role and responsibility to tackle anti-social behaviour.

BCH needs to emphasise the importance to victims of making regular complaints and to stress the significance of completing records of incidents. A diary log is a major step forward in tackling anti-social behaviour. It provides evidence of occurrences, which will enable BCH to take action against such behaviour. Without logs and the evidence they provide, BCH cannot always tackle anti-social behaviour as effectively as we would like. BCH can resolve most disputes without taking serious action. However, to pursue legal action BCH needs a carefully written down description of every incident.

Many people are afraid to come forward to tell us about problems they are having. Gaining the trust and confidence of witnesses is key to keeping witnesses on board. No more so than at the crucial first stage when a complaint is made. This is the point at which a victim and witness's expectations are set.

BCH also need to ensure that we have a unified way of working across all our housing areas. Each management area encounters different problems, which may require a different approach. However, through a continuous programme of training we will look to ensure that our method of working is more consistent.

5 Resources

At BCH, we are continuously striving to deliver the best service we can. We have a strong commitment to tackling anti-social behaviour and will use all the resources at our disposal to maximum effort and look to employ new ones wherever necessary. We now have two dedicated Anti-social Behaviour Officers based in each of our three Housing Offices. Last year we purchased React, which is a bespoke anti-social behaviour IT software system. Over the forthcoming year, we will upgrade React so that it can produce reports in greater detail, which will allow us to identify hotspot areas, types of nuisance, most effective type of action and a break down of costs, so that we can tailor our service and direct resources more effectively.

The intensive ongoing training and development of our staff will ensure that we continue to tackle anti-social behaviour using all the legal tools and powers at our disposal. The training will be provided by Blackpool Council's Legal Services department and will give staff an understanding of new legislation and case law. BCH is committed to providing this training so that our employees are equipped and skilled to provide an excellent housing management service.

6 Risks

BCH will endeavour to manage risks effectively so that we can protect our organisation and our residents and succeed in providing an excellent anti-social behaviour service. It is important that we integrate good practice into our day-to-day operations and apply it to the wider aspects of our service.

Risks arise due to factors such as changes in resident's priorities, changes in law and political developments. The potential benefits from risk management are:

- Supporting effective use of resources;
- Promoting continuous improvement;
- Fewer shocks and unwelcome surprises;
- Quick grasp of new opportunities;
- Enhancing communication between our partners and other agencies in dealing with anti-social behaviour;
- Reassuring tenants and leaseholders and other members of our community.

The main categories of risk to consider when delivering this strategy are as follows:

- **Compliance** – Changes in legislation can affect the way in which BCH deals with anti-social behaviour. A sudden change in law can lead to BCH having to change policies, procedures and service standards and will impact on how we deal with complaints. To ensure BCH is up to date with new law we have developed a service level agreement with Blackpool Council's legal services department who keep us informed of changes. Also, as part of this agreement BCH receive yearly legal training.

BCH is also a member of House mark and the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group who keep us up to date with any changes in practice and law. Furthermore BCH works in partnership with Blackpool Council's ASB co-ordinator and are members of the Respect Forum. The forum is an opportunity to share good practice and to discuss new legislation.

BCH is also a Respect Standard Housing Management area. The Respect Standard for Housing Management forms part of the respect agenda. It is a voluntary Standard, provides up dates, and informs new legislation.

- **Financial** - Changes in government funding can impact on the service we provide. BCH will whenever necessary endeavour to source funding opportunities to support new initiatives.
- **Resources** -. BCH will continue to invest heavily in staff so that they can deliver an excellent housing management service. We are committed to providing a continuous programme of training, for both staff and resident volunteers. We will continue to work with our residents to identify their needs through consultations, Tenant Involvement Groups (TIG), Tenant and Resident Conferences and other groups.

7 Customer Involvement

As part of our ongoing commitment to actively encourage customer involvement, our Customer Involvement Team is dedicated in assisting tenants in sharing our decision making process. The team helps set up and continually support community groups throughout the Borough, and provide every opportunity for individual tenants and local groups to become involved.

The team has written a tenant compact, developed in partnership with customers and is reviewed annually. Funding and support for training is provided and for those who do not wish to have a direct input a bi-annual newsletter "Viewpoint" to keep in touch with what's happening in their local community. In addition to these methods, an Anti-Social Behaviour Tenant Involvement Group has been established to ensure that tenants are involved in the workings of the ASB team.

BCH recognises that the best people to comment on our service are the people who use it. With this in mind, we have developed an ASB focus group, which comprises of tenants who have been victims of anti-social behaviour.

The group meets on a quarterly basis and is a two-way process involving tenants and housing officers sharing information and ideas, and tenants influencing decisions and taking part in what is happening. The group have been influential in developing the ASB service standards and handbook, which is a significant contribution in the development of our service.

8 Value for Money

In improving and developing services, Blackpool Coastal Housing aims to balance the aspirations of its customers and the ideas of its staff with value for money and cost effective services. To achieve this BCH involves service users, staff and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of service improvements and operates within an Efficiency Strategy that covers the whole organisation.

Providing value for money is not about cuts, but about doing more for the same through raising productivity and increasing effectiveness. It is about developing more efficient and effective ways of delivering the same or better outcomes for customers.

During the duration of this strategy, BCH will be looking at the most effective ways of tackling ASB issues. Particular value for money issues to be addressed by this service includes:

- Mediation Service
- Witness Support
- The best use of the tool and powers at BCH's disposal for example Anti-social Behavior Injunctions
- Warning Letters
- A Centralized ASB Team

9 Monitoring, Reporting and Review

Progress towards this strategy will be reported quarterly to the Director responsible for this service area.

This strategy shall be reviewed subject to legislative or regulatory changes or recommendations and shall be fully reviewed after a period of no longer than 2 years.

10 Strategic Objectives & Key Actions

The Blackpool Coastal Housing Business Plan describes the organisations short medium and long-term priorities. For this service these are:

| Cross Cutting 01 – Access & Customer Care | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------|---|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Corporate Culture & Governance | | | | | | |
| ID | Strategic Objectives | ID | Key Actions | Cost | Lead | Timescale |
| SO01 | To develop reporting mechanisms to supply information and statistics on the quality of customer care. | ASB01 | A tenant satisfaction survey will be sent on the closure of every ASB case. This will also be achieved via the Peer Review Monitoring and through the IPA process. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| SO02 | To ensure that customers are told what will happen as a result of their enquiry at the first point of contact. | ASB02 | To develop a flow chart that ASB Officers can present to a complainant detailing the stages we will follow in dealing with their complaint. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 1 to 5 & Onwards |
| Access To The Service | | | | | | |
| SO04 | To further develop service standards to ensure that they are realistic and challenging. Improve reporting to customers and raise customer awareness of the standards and performance. | ASB03 | Using the quarterly report and React database we will continually review and monitor the ASB service standards and report our performance back to customers via the tenant focus groups and view point. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 2 to 4 |
| SO06 | To develop an understanding of groups of customers who are not accessing the service as frequently as others. Take action to remove any barriers to accessing the service. | ASB04 | Work with the faith, equality and diversity forum and other such groups to look at ways of removing barriers to access services and to make complaints. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 2 to 4 |
| Complaints | | | | | | |
| SO08 | To develop mechanisms to enable customers to be involved in monitoring performance on complaints and identifying service improvements. | ASB05 | To continue working with the ASB Tenant Focus group. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 2 to 4 |

| Cross Cutting 02 – Diversity | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------|--|-------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Corporate Culture & Governance | | | | | | |
| ID | Strategic Objectives | ID | Key Actions | Cost | Lead | Timescale |
| SO11 | To improve the quality of customer diversity information and reporting. | ASB06 | A tenant satisfaction survey will be sent on the closure of every ASB case. This will also be achieved via the Peer Review Monitoring and through the IPA process. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 1 to 5 & Onwards |
| Access & Customer Care | | | | | | |
| SO13 | To develop a clearer understanding of customer base, and local demographics and ensure that resources are prioritised accordingly and services are adapted appropriately. | ASB07 | Devise a programme of consultation with tenants in the different management areas. Continue to work with the Police, Reassurance Plus, and the Clifton Community Action Team in order to identify local issues, so that we can tailor our service accordingly. | | Neighbourhood Manager | Year 1 |
| | | ASB08 | To create a multi-agency group on Mereside in order to tackle the issues on the estate. | | | |
| | | ASB09 | Develop a Citizens Jury on ASB. This will enable partners to work together to produce information for younger people. | | | |
| SO15 | To improve systems for monitoring and reviewing the provision of services to evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery, to ensure that all tenants are getting the support they need. | ASB10 | A tenant satisfaction survey will be sent on the closure of every ASB case. This will also be achieved via the Peer Review Monitoring and through the IPA process. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| Partnerships | | | | | | |
| SO18 | To work with partners to develop a greater understanding of the cultural and other issues of all minority groups. | ASB11 | BCH to have representation on Blackpool's Hate Crime Group, and the Faith, Equality and Diversity Group. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 2 to 4 |
| | | ASB12 | Develop links with the Faith & Equality Unit. Develop links with other established community groups working with minority groups. | | Customer Involvement Manager | |

End users using hard copies of this document are responsible for ensuring that their copy is up to date.

| Harassment & Domestic Violence | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------|---|-------------|-----------------|------------------|
| ID | Strategic Objectives | ID | Key Actions | Cost | Lead | Timescale |
| SO19 | To ensure that repairs staff understand their responsibilities in relation to harassment and domestic violence. | ASB13 | To provide relevant training to the repairs staff in order to give them a full understanding of how to deal with victims of harassment and domestic violence. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| SO20 | To obtain resident feedback on the organisation's stance on harassment and domestic violence and refine approach in line with feedback. | ASB14 | To ensure that Customer Involvement is embedded across the entire organisation. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |

Landlord Functions 02 – Tenancy & Estate Management

| Access customer care and user focus | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------|---|-------------|------------------|------------------|
| ID | Strategic Objectives | ID | Key Actions | Cost | Lead | Timescale |
| SO43 | To refine existing service standards and ensure that they are clear, measurable and challenging and performance is fed back to customers. | ASB15 | Work closely with the customer Involvement team in refining the current ASB service standards. Examine React and the quarterly reports to find out if the current service standards are being met. Feed newly refined service standards back to the ASB Tenant Focus Group. | | Housing Services | Years 2 to 4 |

Tenancy Management

| | | | | | | |
|------|--|-------|---|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| SO44 | To ensure that the Board and management all use clear and regular information on costs and the quality of services to challenge how these compare to others (both currently and over time) and that this information is used to actively manage costs and quality. | ASB16 | Always look at value for money when deciding on new initiatives / service provisions. | | Neighbourhood Manager | Years 2 to 4 |
| | | ASB17 | The ASB service will recruit residents to form part of the "Buddy Service" and to be mediators. | | | |
| | | ASB18 | Review Mediation service for value for money. | | | |
| | | ASB19 | Develop a Leaseholder procedure. | | | |
| | | ASB20 | Analysis of Out of Hours Hotline. | | | |

| ID | Strategic Objectives | ID | Key Actions | Cost | Lead | Timescale |
|--------------------------|---|-------|--|------|-----------------|--------------|
| SO46 | To provide customers with comprehensive and accurate information on services, including costs and benefits, and uses this as an integral part of its consultation arrangements. | ASB21 | Achieved via the Tenant Involvement Group. Will be published via Viewpoint, the Tenant Annual Conference and the Website. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 2 to 4 |
| | | ASB22 | Create an index of agencies. This would provide staff to have a detailed list of the relevant agencies with contact details, which would make the referral process easy. | | | |
| | | ASB23 | Create a Victim Support Pack that will provide customer with information in the support that we have available. | | | |
| | | ASB24 | To develop ASB Leaflets & Booklets for younger people | | | |
| SO47 | To fully support perpetrators of ASB to amend their behaviour where this is a reasonable remedy to addressing the ASB concerned. | ASB24 | Identify diversionary activities by, developing links with partner agencies such as the Police and Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP). | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| | | ASB26 | Use the relevant tools and powers at our disposal such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. | | | |
| | | ASB27 | Convene Multi Agency Group to develop a streamlined referral route for dual diagnosis / mental health support needs. | | | |
| SO48 | To ensure that the impact of different interventions is known and that partnerships are evaluated to determine the most effective local solutions. | ASB28 | To monitor via React the success / failure rate of different interventions used. Continue to have a presence on the Respect Forum looking at different interventions. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| Estate Management | | | | | | |
| SO49 | To ensure that opportunities to participate in estate management activities are accessible to all. | ASB29 | The ASB service will recruit residents to form part of the "Buddy Service" and to be mediators. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 2 to 4 |

| Landlord Functions 04 – Customer Involvement | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------|---|-------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Access, Customer Care And User Focus | | | | | | |
| ID | Strategic Objectives | ID | Key Actions | Cost | Lead | Timescale |
| SO61 | To effectively monitor challenging service standards in conjunction with customers. | ASB30 | To provide information on services and performance to customers through a variety of different media. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 2 to 4 |
| Diversity | | | | | | |
| SO63 | To develop a clear understanding of the local community using all relevant information, including the input of partners, and develop a robust customer profile that can be used to adjust service provision. | ASB31 | Invite residents to attend the TIG groups. Continue to hold the Bi-monthly ASB meetings with the Police and partners in each of the three estate offices. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 2 to 4 |

| Specialist Functions 01 – Supported Housing | | | | | | |
|--|---|-----------|---|-------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Access, Customer Care and User Focus | | | | | | |
| ID | Strategic Objectives | ID | Key Actions | Cost | Lead | Timescale |
| SO69 | To actively canvass the views of customers and use them to review or improve services. Customers are consulted and involved in major decisions that affect the service. | ASB32 | To ensure that Customer Involvement is embedded across the entire organisation. | | ASB Team Leader | Years 1 to 5 & Onwards |
| SO70 | To improve customer confidence that their input will be valued and acted upon. | | | | | Years 1 to 5 & Onwards |

| Recommendations From Inspection | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------|--|-------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Performance Management | | | | | | |
| ID | Strategic Objectives | ID | Key Actions | Cost | Lead | Timescale |
| SO115 | To ensure that all service standards are monitored, measured and reported on. | ASB33 | Agreed service standards reported upon into quarterly report. Forms part of supervision and peer monitoring. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| SO116 | To ensure that service standards are checked for accuracy and those standards can be monitored. | | | | | Year 1 |
| SO117 | To ensure that the approach to measuring customer satisfaction is systematic across all service areas and that it is monitored and reported effectively. | ASB34 | To improve number of responses to satisfaction survey and use of data to drive service improvement. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| SO118 | To ensure that there is consistency between procedures, actions and management in all service areas. | ASB35 | This will be achieved through the ASB monthly meetings and via the Peer Review Monitoring. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| SO119 | To develop plans that are SMART and include resource information. | ASB36 | The development of area team plans through consultation with customers and stakeholders. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| SO120 | To ensure that the approach to staff one to one meetings are consistent and monitored. | ASB37 | Supervision policy rolled out across BCH. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| Diversity | | | | | | |
| SO121 | To ensure a systematic approach to collecting diversity data. | ASB38 | This information will be collected on the ASB tenant satisfaction survey after the closure of each case. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |
| SO122 | To ensure that all services are using data consistently to demonstrate targeted approaches to service improvement. | ASB39 | This will be identified via the Peer Review Monitoring. | | ASB Team Leader | Year 1 |