

Minutes



Minutes of ASB scrutiny group
26th February 2009, 5.30 – 7.30pm
Board room, 14 Hounds Gate

Present:

Members of the ASB scrutiny group:

Margaret Pugsley (Chair)	MP	Ennis Peck	EP
Anne Dean	AD	Janet Storar	JS
Jean England	JE	Maria Hemphill	MH

Officers:

Kathy Mason	KM	Andrew Filer (mins)	AF
Richard Antcliff	RA	Chris Raynor	CR

<u>1.0</u>	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	Action
	Apologies: Anne Dean Introductions: Richard Antcliff introduced himself as Head of Community Protection, Chris Raynor introduced himself as service Improvement Manager for the repairs service	
<u>2.0</u>	Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising	
	No matters arising	
<u>3.0</u>	Property Service – Repair Response targets	
<u>3.1</u>	KM explained what information the group requested.	
<u>3.2</u>	CR explained the procedures and routines for the repairs service. CR discussed the statutory right to repair list (and added that NCH have added to this list), and detailed what state a property should be left in after a responsive repair. The average time for routine repairs to be finished is 13.7 days (working days). If an emergency responsive repair, the operatives attend the property within 4 hours and ensure it is safe and secure, with the repair being finished within 3 days. If a double glazed unit is required to be fixed, the timing can be longer as the glass needs to be made to fit.	

3.3 EP raised the issue of potential risks out-of-hours operatives could face. CR explained NCH has a duty of care to its operatives and customers. If any operative at any time feels they are in danger, they have been told to remove themselves from the situation. Operatives double up after 10pm. The new van fleet also have tracker devices fitted. EP suggested there is a link between repairs and Police, as if repairs aren't completed due to a potential risk, it could leave the customer vulnerable. JS added that the RSPCA have a system where police presence can be requested if required. CR will look in to the possibility of having a Service Level Agreement made up, but will check on the numbers and details of any reported incidents where this has occurred.

CR

3.4 MP raised the issue that many properties around the city have various types of windows (UPVC, wooden, metal) which could cause a problem when repairs are called in. CR explained that in the tenancy handbook and repairs handbook it does explain this issue, and operatives do ask when the customer calls. The Asset Management database also should show what type of window is present in the property (this is being updated through the SWARM work).

3.5 CR added that the areas where new doors and windows have been fitted through the SWARM work has shown a reduction in burglaries (SmartWater is also being used in these properties). He also added that any repairs being carried out in other parts of the city which cannot be fixed adequately will have the new SWARM windows / doors fitted as a matter of course.

3.6 JE – Would repairs get done any quicker if the police rang rather than the tenant?
CR – No. All repair requests are dealt with using the same procedure, as NCH need to ensure consistency.

3.7 AF – Can I have a copy of the definitions and timings to for members of the group unable to attend?
CR – Will forward them by email to send out with the minutes.

CR / AF

3.8 EP mentioned some complaints he had been made aware of with regard to the attitude of some operatives. CR explained 'Toolbox talks' campaign which shows the procedures that will be followed if disciplinary action of operatives is required. The operatives now have a new handbook with lots of useful information in, and the 'Lets make a difference' campaign ensuring customer care is key for all operatives.

4.0 Community Protection

4.1 RA started by explaining that despite the Crime & Drugs Partnership setting very high targets at the start of the year, these targets have been surpassed. In line with national trends the number of ASBOs has not hit target (as these are now quite difficult to obtain), but numbers of injunctions have increased dramatically (quick, cheap and effective). The number of actions taken has doubled in comparison to previous years.

4.2 RA went on to say that the processes and procedures need to be more victim led, and this was a no.1 priority for this coming year. He also mentioned that some funding has become available for training for 'Community Crime Fighters', on top of any provided by the Home Office.

4.3 JS – Are targets set by the Government and how are they set?
RA – National Indicators are used, but a lot is done around perception. Mori polls, ASB surveys are also used together with crime statistics to ascertain targets to ensure they are relevant to the city as a whole. More work is required to break this down to an area by area basis. KM added that new software is being used to map out problem areas.

4.4 JE - Are / can the Youth Offending Team be used to help deliver any of the years training programme?
RA – Links need to be built between community protection and the YOT and probation, so is a possibility for the future.

4.5 EP expressed his concern (and that of others) that the general public would prefer to see police rather than Community Protection Officers (CPOs), as they 'can't do anything'. RA explained that although they work alongside the police they are council civil enforcement officers, and that they do have powers to deal with civil orders. RA would like them to have all powers possible. The main thing seems to be that the general public are unsure of what they can do, so need to promote and educate. RA went on to say he would prefer CPOs to deal with the low level issues allowing the police structure to deal with serious offences.

4.6 MP brought up the subject that perceptions can be media-fuelled, and so could distort problem areas. RA said that any media attention needs information / statistics to back it up. Weekly hot spot tasking meetings together with police operational meetings and local tasking meetings give information that is used to help plan the resourcing of the city.

RA

4.7 MP raised the point that informants could be castigated in the area in which they live and could also be targeted in court by barristers. RA said less and less people are willing to stand up and give evidence due to this and need to be supported more throughout the processes, going back to initial point that process needs to be victim led. There are also special measures available such as screens and video links that can be used in court to help protect the victims / witnesses.

5.0 **Audit Commission Report**

5.1 KM disseminated the report, but stated that the report was very favourable on the service provided by NCH with the strengths far outweighing the weaknesses.

5.2 The only minor issue was that NCH did not 'Evaluate customer satisfaction with ease of accessing service'. This is now being done as part of the Vision Management System.

5.3 KM also stated that NCC are now evaluating the ASB helpline.

5.4 KM then mentioned a Northern Housing Consortium Conference in April. It is looking at 'Preparing for inspection' and as the ASB service was well received by the Audit Commission, NCH have been asked to do a workshop.

6.0 **Target setting 2009-10**

6.1 KM discussed the Performance Indicators used by the ASB service. The targets for 08/09 were based on national research, and the performance to date is very encouraging. The group discussed this issues and felt that Performance Indicators for early intervention and victim care should be a priority, but were happy for KM to work with partners to set the targets for 09/10, with the figures fed back once they had been agreed. KM will bring proposals back to the group for discussion.

KM

7.0 **Any other business**

7.1 KM has been approached to see if NCH want to enter in to an accreditation pilot scheme to show that NCH is effective in dealing with ASB. The group discussed this. There is a Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group Conference in Coventry on 2nd April from 1.00 am – 2.30 pm which will give further information. Please let KM or AF know if you wish to attend the Conference. There are two places available.

KM / AF

8.0 **Date of next meeting**

8.1 Tuesday 21st April, 2.00 – 4.00 pm,
Boardroom, 14 Hounds Gate