

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

Social Justice Committee: 12 April 2006

Subject: Anti Social Behaviour Survey

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with the results of an anti social behaviour survey carried out in September 2005.

2. Background

- 2.1** In September 2005 an anti social behaviour questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of 4,000 residents throughout West Dunbartonshire. The purpose of the survey was to determine residents' perceptions of the extent and type of anti social behaviour issues that impact on their lives.
- 2.2** Copies of the results of this survey have been placed in Members' rooms and will be posted on the Council's website.

3. Main Issues

3.1 Survey

- 3.1.1** 891 residents completed the survey. This was a response rate of 23% which is considered to be a very good rate of return.
- 3.1.2** Respondents were asked 10 questions and were also requested to select from 5 options within each question:-

Very common/Common/Neither/Nor/Un-common/Very Un-common.

- 3.1.3** Below is a summary of the main issues raised by the respondents to the questionnaire.

3.2 Q1. How common are these to your neighbourhood?

- 3.2.1** From a choice of 8 options, dog fouling was the most commonly occurring form of anti social behaviour, with 65% of respondents reporting that dog fouling is either common or very common, and of these respondents 39% felt that the problem was very common. This was followed by rubbish and litter lying around (56%). 34% indicated that vandalism and graffiti was a common problem.
- 3.2.2** The least common form of anti social behaviour was that of noisy neighbours or loud parties (31%).

- 3.2.3** The Council employs Litter Control Officers to tackle litter and dog fouling. These officers aim to raise awareness of these issues through promotional campaigns, education and enforcement measures. They carry out local patrols, including joint patrols with officers from Strathclyde Police, reminding dog owners of their responsibilities regarding dog fouling.
- 3.2.4** To date the Litter Control Officers have issued 5 Fixed Penalty Notices for litter and 3 for dog fouling.
- 3.2.5** As a preventative tool West Dunbartonshire Council is one of a small number of local authorities in Scotland who provide free dog waste bags to dog owners. Over 400,000 free waste bags have been distributed this year to help tackle the issue.
- 3.2.6** These services are in addition to the work undertaken by the Council's dog wardens who promote responsible dog ownership, deal with barking dog complaints and apprehend stray dogs throughout West Dunbartonshire.
- 3.3** Q2. Are there any other issues in your neighbourhood that you would like us to address?
- 3.3.1** A number of respondents highlighted other issues in their locality that they wished to be addressed. Issues included improved lighting, car parking, traffic control, gangs of people hanging around and facilities for young people. Details of residents' concerns have been passed to appropriate departments and Community Safety Partners for them to address and respond directly to individual respondents.
- 3.4** Q3. In which of the following areas do you live?
- 3.4.1** The responses to the questionnaire came from the following areas:-
- Clydebank (48%)
Dumbarton(27%)
Alexandria (24%)
- 3.5** Q 4. Do you think that in the last 12 months anti social behaviour has increased/decreased?
- 3.5.1** 19% of respondents did not comment either way, but of those who did, half perceived that the frequency of anti social behaviour had stayed the same, 6% thought that it had decreased, and the remaining 44% thought that anti social behaviour had increased.
- 3.5.2** Police statistics for 2005/2006 to December indicate that there has been a reduction in some elements of anti social behaviour namely vandalism, car crime, house breaking and violent crime. The Police have arranged to publicise positive news stories around these reductions to reassure residents of West Dunbartonshire that rates of crime and anti social behaviour in West Dunbartonshire are falling.

3.6 Q5. How safe do you feel in your neighbourhood after dark?

3.6.1 24% had no strong views on safety after dark, but 45% said that they felt unsafe walking in their neighbourhood after dark. The remaining 31% felt safe.

3.6.2 It is anticipated that the support offered to communities by the police and the teams of Community and Mobile Wardens will help reassure residents about issues of safety and that we will witness increases in the number of residents feeling safer in our communities.

3.7 Q6. Are you aware that you can report incidents of anti social behaviour or obtain advice from the following sources?

3.7.1 The highest levels of awareness were:-

- Environmental Services (59%)
- Local Housing/Housing Association Offices (57%)
- Community Warden Services (39%)

3.7.2 The lowest levels of awareness were:-

- Litter out of Hours (12%)
- Litter Control Officers (21%)
- Neighbourhood Mediation (21%)

3.7.3 There has been extensive advertising of our services in the local media. In the past 12 months we have broadcast adverts and sponsored local radio, publicised good news stories and taken out adverts and news space in local and council newspapers. We have also published new information leaflets, posted information on the Council's and Scottish Executive's website and distributed promotional items such as key rings and calendars.

3.7.4 One of the reasons which may perhaps account for the lack of awareness of some of our services is that the survey was sent to all households across West Dunbartonshire including owner occupiers, housing association and private tenants and not only to tenants of the Council who may have a higher awareness of our services.

3.7.5 74% of respondents to the survey indicated that they had not reported a problem of anti social behaviour in the previous 12 months.

3.7.6 The above services will continue to be promoted via local media and other outlets. The work of the litter control team featured in the recent edition of the Council Newspaper and adverts were broadcast on local radio in March 2006 highlighting the team's efforts to tackle litter and dog fouling.

3.7.7 The next meeting of Scottish Mediation Forum is to be staged in West Dunbartonshire on the 26 April 2006 and we will arrange publicity for our service around this event. The Leader of the Council has also recently sought a commitment from the Scottish Executive to follow the English example of establishing a National Mediation Awareness Week in October 2006.

3.7.8 We are currently examining ways to broaden the scope of our advertising and promotional campaigns with the Community Safety Partnership.

3.8 Q7. Do you think West Dunbartonshire Council provides enough practical information regarding anti social behaviour?

3.8.1 In answer to this question 14% answered “yes”, and 58% stated they that they were not aware of any information being provided.

3.8.2 As outlined above we will address awareness issues by targeting our services at a wider audience in tandem with our community safety partners.

3.9 Q8-10. Reporting Anti Social Behaviour: Satisfaction levels

3.9.1 Almost three quarters of those who responded to the survey said that they had not reported a problem regarding anti social behaviour within the last 12 months. Of those who indicated that they had reported a problem, 24% did so to the Council and 62% to the Police.

3.9.2 Satisfaction levels with the Police were the highest, with 50% being either very or fairly satisfied. This was followed by Housing Associations (44%) and Council (43%). Of the three agencies, the Council came out highest in the “very satisfied” category.

3.9.3 To monitor progress on how the Council, Police and other partner agencies are responding to anti social behaviour, a follow up survey will be carried out in September 2006.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 There are no personnel issues relating to this report.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications relating to this report.

6. Conclusion

6.1 There is a wide range of initiatives to tackle anti social behaviour undertaken by the Council and partner organisations, and Police statistics indicate that there has been a reduction in some areas of anti social behaviour.

- 6.2** The Council has demonstrated its commitment to provide responsive services and has recently funded Strathclyde Police to provide additional resources and support to tackle anti social behaviour in West Dunbartonshire, in addition to its contribution to the operation of the Clydebank CCTV Trust.
- 6.3** The survey indicates that despite considerable efforts to publicise services which tackle anti social behaviour, further publicity is required, and this will be reviewed in consultation with members of the Community Safety Partnership.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to note this report.**

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Date: 27 March 2006

Wards Affected:	1-22
Appendix:	None
Background Papers:	Resident Survey on Anti Social Behaviour-September 2005
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