

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services)

Social Justice Committee: 14 March 2007

Subject: Anti Social Behaviour Survey (September 2006)

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with details, and the results of the anti social behaviour survey conducted in September 2006, and to compare the results with a similar survey carried out in September 2005.

2. Background

- 2.1** In September 2006 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** Almost 800 (797) residents completed the survey. The response rate was calculated at 22% which is a very good rate of return. The responses to the questionnaire came from the following areas, Clydebank (49%) Dumbarton (21%) and Alexandria (24%). 6% of respondents failed to disclose the area in which they live.
- 2.3** Copies of the results of this survey have been placed in Members' rooms and will be posted on the Council's website.
- 2.4** This survey is a follow up to a similar survey carried out in September 2005. The report highlights the percentage increase/decrease in residents' perceptions of anti social behaviour over the 12 month period 2005 -2006.
- 2.5** Key findings
- Dog fouling was considered to be the most common form of anti social behaviour, followed by problems of rubbish/litter
 - 17% of respondents reported that noisy neighbours are a problem
 - 70% of respondents had not reported anti social behaviour in the last 12 months
 - 39% of respondents thought that anti social behaviour had increased in the past 12 months
 - There is a low awareness of some key anti social behaviour services.

- 2.6** 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

A summary of the main issues raised by the respondents to the questionnaire is shown in section 3 below.

3. Main Issues

3.1 Survey Results

3.1.1 Q1. How common are these to your neighbourhood?

From a choice of 8 options, dog fouling was the most commonly occurring anti social behaviour, with 59% of respondents reporting that dog fouling is either common or very common, and of these respondents, 32% felt that the problem was very common. This was followed by rubbish and litter lying around (45%). Only 27% of respondents indicated that vandalism and graffiti was a common problem.

The least common form of anti social behaviour was that of noisy neighbours or loud parties with 62% of respondents stating that noisy neighbours are uncommon or very uncommon.

This same question was asked in last year's survey. An analysis of the results from both surveys highlighted in table 1 below, shows that for each of the above anti social behaviour activities there have been reductions in the perception of how common or very common residents perceive problems to be.

For example, between the period September 2005-2006, the prevalence of rubbish or litter lying around has reduced from 55.5% to 45.2%, vandalism and graffiti has reduced from 33.6% to 26.9%, dog fouling has reduced from 65.4% to 59%, harassment from groups of people hanging around has reduced from 31.7% to 26.2% and rowdy behaviour has reduced from 35.1% to 29.9%.

There were also notable reductions in the number of people who have been drinking (-5%) drug misuse or dealing (-2.6%) and noisy neighbours (-1.9%).

These figures highlight positive reductions in each area and suggest that there is a perception that anti social behaviour is reducing across West Dunbartonshire.

**Table 1: How common are these to your neighbourhood?
Comparison Table 2005 -2006**

Indicator	% Common/Very Common 2005	% Common/Very Common 2006	% Decrease from 2005- 2006
Rubbish or litter lying around?	55.5%	45.2%	-10.3%
Vandalism and graffiti?	33.6%	26.9%	-6.7%
Dog fouling	65.4%	59%	-6.4%
Harassment from groups of people	31.7%	26.2%	-5.5%
Rowdy behaviour	35.1%	29.9%	-5.2%
People who have been drinking	44.8%	39.8%	-5.0%
Drug misuse or dealing	24.5%	21.9%	-2.6%
Noisy neighbours or loud parties	19%	17.1%	-1.9%

3.1.2 Q2. Are there any other issues in your neighbourhood that you would like us to address?

Almost half of the respondents (46%) agreed that there were other issues that should be addressed. Issues highlighted included street lighting, car parking, traffic control, and facilities for young people. Details of resident concerns have been passed to appropriate departments and community safety partners for them to address and respond directly to individual respondents.

3.1.3 Q3. In which of the following areas do you live?

The responses to the questionnaire came from the following areas:

Clydebank (49%)
Dumbarton (21%)
Alexandria (24%)

6% of respondents failed to disclose the area in which they live.

3.1.4 Q4. Do you think that in the last 12 months anti social behaviour has increased/decreased?

Some respondents (25%) did not comment either way, but of those who did, 52% perceived that the frequency of anti social behaviour had stayed the same, 9% thought that it had decreased and the remaining 39% thought that anti social behaviour had increased.

An analysis of the results from 2005 surveys shows that there has been a slight increase in the number of people who view that anti social behaviour had decreased from 9% (2006) compared to 6% (2005).

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

Almost one quarter (23%) had no strong views on safety after dark, but 50% said that they felt unsafe walking in their neighbourhood after dark. The remaining 28% felt safe. This represents a slight decrease from the results from last years survey which showed 31% of respondents indicated that they felt safe in their neighbourhood after dark.

It is anticipated that the support offered to communities by extra policing, and high visible patrols by the community wardens will help contribute to people feeling safer in their communities.

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

There has been extensive advertising of our services in the local media. In the past 12 months we have publicised “good news” stories and taken out adverts and news space in local and council newspapers. We have also published new information leaflets and posted information on the Council’s and the Scottish Executive’s website.

Table 2 below highlights the levels of awareness among residents in West Dunbartonshire and compares the figures with the responses from last year.

As can be seen from the table below, awareness of some services are increasing e.g. awareness of the Anti Social Behaviour Helpline has increased by over 10% whilst others service areas are witnessing slight decreases. However, overall awareness of some of our key services is still particularly low and is an issue which requires further exploration and which will be addressed through the Anti Social Behaviour Task Group’s Communication Strategy.

Table 2: Percentage of residents who are aware of availability of ASB support services

Service	2005	2006	% increase/decrease 2005-2006
Environmental Services	59.1%	63%	+3.9%
Housing	56.9%	54%	-2.9%

Offices			
ASIST	31%	38%	+7%
Community Wardens	39.4%	35%	-4.4%
Anti Social Behaviour helpline	24.2%	35%	+10.8%
Graffiti removal Squad	29.7%	28%	-1.7%
Litter rapid response	27.1%	26%	-1.1%
Neighbourhood mediation	21%	23%	+2%
Litter control officers	21.2%	20%	-1.2%
Litter out of Hours	11.9%	14%	+2.1%

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

In answer to this question 15% answered “yes”, and 52% stated they that they were not aware of any information being provided. These results essentially mirror the results from last years survey where in response to the same question only 14% responded “yes”.

As outlined above efforts will be made to continue to address awareness issues by targeting and marketing these services as widely as possible across West Dunbartonshire.

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

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. The majority of problems were reported to the police (63%) followed by the council (22%) and housing associations (7%) and other landlords (3%). Only 5% of problems fell into the “other” category which included utility companies, the fire brigade, solicitors and members of parliament.

Regardless of whether the particular agency was able to solve the problem, there was a an even split with the satisfaction levels of the outcome, i.e. 42% were satisfied, 46% dissatisfied and 12% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

In analysing the results from last years survey suggest there has been a slight reduction in the overall satisfaction levels from 46% (2005) to 42% (2006).

The data from the survey will allow partner agencies involved in tackling anti social behaviour to focus on, and prioritise, the areas of concern highlighted by the public.

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 2007.

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. Risk Analysis

6.1 Scottish Ministers have stated their wish to see local authorities and community safety partnerships make real impact at a local level in tackling anti social behaviour. The Executive have stated that failure to evidence this throughout 2007/8 will potentially impact on the level of anti social behaviour funding awarded to local authorities. There is therefore a risk that Scottish Executive funding to tackle antisocial behaviour could be reduced if there was evidence that local initiatives established to tackle anti social behaviour were not having an impact at a local level.

7. Conclusion

7.1 It is evident from the results from the survey that whilst anti social behaviour is still a concern for residents in West Dunbartonshire, in the twelve month period between the surveys, residents perceive that the problems of anti social behaviour are reducing.

7.2 The results indicate that resident perceptions of the prevalence of dog fouling, vandalism and graffiti, groups of young people hanging around, noisy neighbours, rubbish or litter, people who have been drinking or using drugs, and rowdy behaviour have all reduced between September 2005 and September 2006.

7.3 The survey also indicates that despite considerable efforts to publicise the anti social behaviour services, further publicity is required to raise the overall profile of the full range of services established to help prevent and tackle anti social behaviour.

7.4 The results from the survey highlight the need to increase residents feelings of safety in their communities, and to achieve this, will require commitment from all community safety partners involved in the prevention and enforcement of tackling anti social behaviour.

8. Recommendation

8.1 The Committee is asked to note this report.

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Date: 8 February 2007

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Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Report by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services, Social Justice Committee 12 April 2006
Wards Affected:	1-22