

**Belfast City Council**

**Evaluation of Anti Social Behaviour Service Provision and  
Integrated Service Delivery Model**

**Executive Summary**

January 2016

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 Introduction

As part of its role in supporting strategic delivery of the policing and community safety agenda in Belfast, Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) commissioned RSM McClure Watters to under an economic and options appraisal of anti-social behaviour (ASB) service delivery.

ASB can vary in scale from simply being a source of irritation to having major impacts on the quality of people's lives. In its worst form it can lead to the victimisation and intimidation of individuals, families and whole communities, and as such at times requires a full and rigorous response from the criminal justice system. Equally, there can be times when the behaviour falls short of a breach of criminal law and a more thoughtful problem solving approach is called for.

The key drivers for undertaking this piece of work were:

- Acknowledgement by Members of Belfast PCSP that anti-social behaviour is one of the top community safety issues affecting communities
- Diminishing resources across the sectors working to tackle anti-social behaviour and the need to ensure that what resources are available are used in the most efficient and effective manner
- Agreement within Belfast PCSP (political, independent and statutory members) that there was significant opportunity for improvement in how ASB service delivery across sectors met the needs of communities both strategically and at a local level
- The implementation of Community Planning and the opportunity for Belfast PCSP to play a leading role in supporting this work

### 1.2 Terms of Reference

This report explores how Belfast PCSP can play a tangible and meaningful leadership role tackling the issue of anti-social behaviour.

The Terms of reference have been developed by Belfast PCSP taking into account "The Belfast Agenda" and the key drivers identified by Belfast PCSP as above. They are to:

- Examine potential for ASB service delivery improvements within existing provision across agencies;
- Examine the effectiveness of other integrated service delivery models of good practice;
- Identify opportunities for learning and implementation of good practice; and
- Explore and articulate the costs and benefits associated with progressing toward more integrated service through the presentation and assessment of a range of options for consideration

### 1.3 Belfast PCSP and the Belfast Agenda

Partnership working to improve outcomes for communities is a way of working that Belfast PCSP (and its predecessors Belfast Community Safety Partnership and Belfast District Policing Partnership) is very experienced in, having been in operation since 2012 and which already creates a platform for alignment and integration of services between partners.

Community Planning is underpinned by an identical ethos of public services and other stakeholders working with communities to deliver real improvements for local communities with the community plan in Belfast known as “The Belfast Agenda”.

Indeed, a recent review by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate (NI) comments on the important role to be played by PCSP’s in delivering the long term ambitions of the Community Plan (The Belfast Agenda) with Department of Justice Officials already engaging with local government on ensuring that happens.

As Belfast develops its joint long term vision (The Belfast Agenda) for the city up to 2030, its citywide consultation identified as a top priority **“to improve safety by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour”**.

### 1.4 Strategic and Data Context

A review of the strategic context and high level data identified the following:

- Community Planning and Belfast (D)PCSP’s (and the legislative basis upon which partnership working is underpinned within these partnerships) provides the best opportunity for developing the much needed agreed vision in tackling ASB supported by aligned and integrated service delivery
- Dealing with ASB is a key priority for the Northern Ireland Executive as part of the Programme for Government 2011 – 2015 and the Department of Justice “Community Safety Strategy 2012 – 2017”
- ASB is also a priority for a range of individual organisations e.g. Belfast City Council, PSNI, NI Housing Executive as evidenced by their designation under the Anti-Social Behaviour (NI) Order (2004) and the supporting organisational policies
- Recent citywide consultation undertaken by Belfast PCSP identified ASB as the second highest community safety issue of concern for people in Belfast
- A review of available NINIS statistics shows an upward trend in recorded ASB incidents in Belfast from 2011 – 2013
- Consultation with relevant stakeholders (Section 5) agrees that ASB is widely under reported

- However, despite this there remains a lack of strategic vision and oversight or a single operational framework, by which to effectively use the information/skills/resources of each of the relevant partners to tackle the issue

### 1.5 Current Service Delivery

A review of existing service delivery identified the following:

- ASB is a cross cutting issue that no one agency can resolve in isolation, yet there remains the absence of an agreed vision for Belfast on this issue and lack of operational co-ordination in the realisation of this vision
- The Criminal Justice Inspectorate Review on ASB (2012) indicates a fragmented approach to dealing with ASB which continues to be the case
- Individual organisations continue to make huge efforts to address ASB individually, however, the absence of a clear vision and framework has led to significant levels of duplication and lack of co-ordination which has detrimentally impacted on the customer experience
- The current ASB Fora currently operate as the primary vehicle for operational collaboration, however do not act as a mechanism for strategic decision making for Belfast as a whole
- Additionally, the current ASB Fora have limited membership and are not set up to maximise the contribution from other agencies and community/voluntary sector can make to service delivery
- The direct cost of ASB services to Belfast City Council, NI Housing Executive, PSNI and Housing Associations was circa £4.8m in 2013. Approximately £1.6m of these direct costs were borne by Belfast City Council.
- There is a strong body of evidence which suggests high societal costs of not tackling ASB in the form of impact on quality of life, physical and social regeneration, health inequalities and educational attainment

### 1.6 Stakeholder Consultations

Consultation with relevant statutory agencies and a range of local delivery partners has identified the following:

- ASB service delivery in Northern Ireland is characterised by a lack of strategic oversight, or single operational framework, by which to most effectively utilise the information and skills of each of the relevant agencies and organisations in tackling the issue
- PCSPs should have been the vehicle to provide a strategic platform for all relevant agencies to come around the table to address these issues, but this has not been realised

- There remains a need to create some form of overarching strategic vision and approach to ASB service delivery supported by a strong and committed partnership approach from all stakeholders, and it is hoped that Community Planning will assist in making this happen
- An agreed strategic vision and approach is needed, but it is important to focus on achieving results and making an impact on this issue quickly as well
- Information Sharing needed to be reviewed recognising the contribution that a wider range of stakeholders (outside the existing ASB Fora) brings in resolving ASB
- There is a lack of clarity around understanding the issue of ASB. This can cause indecision and friction and sometimes issues get thrown around with no one taking responsibility
- Unanimous agreement of under-reporting of ASB in Belfast due to mistrust of statutory authorities, confusion over mechanisms for reporting ASB, and a perception that complaints will not be addressed which has led to an overall of lack of confidence
- As well as duplication of services, there remain gaps in the provision of support for both victims and perpetrators of ASB
- No one agency possessed the capacity and range of powers to effectively address ASB within Belfast – there must be a shared approach
- In order to overcome confusion in reporting ASB, it was widely felt that a central point for reporting was required which would then be able to delegate out to the relevant authority. It could also be utilised to manage unrealistic expectations of what actions would be taken
- There were a number of advantages and disadvantages identified for the potential establishment of a formal centralised body for ASB service delivery which was viewed by stakeholders as a desirable outworking of community planning

### 1.7 Review of Best Practice in ASB Service Delivery

Three best practice models of service delivery that are employed within urban areas across the UK were considered, namely:

- Tower Hamlets and Poplar HARCA (Housing and Regeneration Community Association)
- Community Safety Glasgow
- The Belfast Youth Engagement Programme

There are a number of elements within each model for consideration around future delivery of ASB services in Belfast:

- While it is important to note that two of these examples (Tower Hamlets and CSG) come from methods of ASB service delivery employed by Local Authorities in England and Scotland and are not directly comparable to the Northern Ireland context due to structural differences, a number of elements within each model could potentially be applied to the future delivery of ASB services in Belfast
- All three examples demonstrate a willingness to participate in formal multi-partner delivery. This is in recognition of general agreement that no single agency can effectively or efficiently deal with ASB but further than that organisations have made formal commitments to deliver services in a collaborative way

Indicators of success are common to all three examples in all or some of the following forms:


- Increased satisfaction with ASB services from customers
- Significant reductions in rates of ASB
- Acceptance that collaborative service delivery provides for more effective service delivery in an environment of finite resources and in the case of the Youth Engagement Project, evidence of an actual financial saving to organisations can be evidenced

All three examples of good practice demonstrate the following:

- Importance of leadership in dealing with ASB and long term vision as well as short term goals
- Cross agency agreement on priorities and actions needed to achieve those priorities
- Shared understanding of the evidence of need and collaborative tasking
- Focus on victims/customer experience
- Importance of partnership with the community
- Structured information sharing
- Focus on early intervention and prevention
- Value in restorative practice
- Collaborative and focussed case work to prevent costly escalation
- Ensuring the directing of finite resources to meet the greatest need in order to ensure maximum effectiveness

### 1.8 Key Issues/Areas for Improvement

- This section summarises the key areas for improvement in the current model of ASB service delivery within Belfast as identified through the previous stages.

<p><b>High Priority Issues - require immediate action</b></p>  <p><b>Lower Priority Issues – require action in longer term</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use of existing partnership arrangements (Community Planning and PCSP's) to agree shared outcomes and get formal in principle commitment from relevant stakeholders to better integrate service delivery for improved customer experience</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development of an over-arching strategic framework for ASB service delivery in Belfast providing clarity on the roles and responsibilities of all agencies involved</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Focus of ASB service delivery on victims and the customer experience</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improvements to information sharing structures between all agencies engaged in dealing with ASB and valuing the contribution the community can make to information sharing</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Agreed understanding of the issue of ASB across Belfast and shared collaborative tasking and case work to address this to maximise effectiveness and efficiency</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provision of support for perpetrators of ASB (vulnerable repeat perpetrators and young people)</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Consideration of future options for more effective commissioning of services and infrastructure supporting ASB service delivery based on good practice review</b></li> </ul>

### 1.9 Options Appraisal for Future Service Delivery

A number of options for potential future ASB service delivery in Belfast were identified that could provide a more integrated approach to ASB service delivery in Belfast, as well as address the priority areas for action identified through this project. These options were:

- Option 1: Status Quo: ASB service delivery would continue to operate as it currently does
- Option 2: Addressing Immediate/High Priority Issues: This option would seek to formally co-ordinate the relevant statutory agencies considered to have a role to play in ASB service delivery under one strategic vision with a focus on developing the systems and processes to address the high priority opportunities for service improvement. This would need to be in keeping with “The Belfast Agenda” approach to planning and measuring performance using Outcomes Based Accountability.

- Option 3: Funding and Infrastructure Review: This option would consider benefits of creation of a separate entity to administer and provide strategic focus for ASB service delivery within Belfast or co-located teams and shared services (as per good practice review in particular Community Safety Glasgow). Each of the identified options is described and analysed in more detail below.

#### 1.10 The Preferred Option

- Option 1, the status quo, would entail ASB service delivery continuing to operate as it currently does. As highlighted above, a number of issues relating to the effectiveness of the currently delivery model have been raised by stakeholders and the conclusion is that the current model is inadequate in addressing the identified need. **The status quo is therefore not the preferred option for the future delivery of ASB services in Belfast.**
- Option 3 would involve a fundamental review of service delivery in the context of infrastructure and funding with a view to providing a fully integrated and strategic focus for ASB service delivery within Belfast. This option would address all the priority issues (high and low) that have been identified in relation to the effectiveness of the current delivery model. However, this option would require significant structural changes to the current models of ASB service delivery and may have resource implications. Given that a number of high priority issues have been identified that require immediate action to be taken, **we therefore conclude that Option 3 is not the preferred option for immediate consideration but would be recommended as a medium to long term objective realised through Community Planning**
- Option 2 would seek to address the immediate high priority issues that have been identified in relation to the effectiveness of the current delivery model which would realise short term improvements in service delivery and customer experience. This option would create a greater degree of collaboration, co-ordination and integration between all agencies involved through the development of an over-arching strategic framework for ASB service delivery in Belfast. This would guide service delivery and provide clarity on:
  - The roles and responsibilities of all agencies;
  - Where each agencies' input is required and the supporting systems and processes to maximise this input;
  - Information and data sharing/analysis including the role of community partners
  - Definitions and categorisation of ASB incidents.
- The strategic framework would also ensure buy-in from all agencies through the inclusion of an agreed set of measures by which to demonstrate impact thereby improving performance. Within the framework,



there would also be a commitment to the annual roll out of citywide early-intervention initiatives of the manner demonstrated through the examples of best practice, and which have already been successfully delivered in Belfast through the Youth Engagement Programme. These interventions should be based on an assessment of local need and targeted at specific groups. Future funding of interventions should be based on evidence of efficacy and effectiveness.

- Option 2 could be implemented with no structural change and relatively little disruption, but would support the phased implementation of a longer term approach in keeping with Option 3 and the aspirations of the Community Planning Approach. **We therefore conclude that Option 2 is the preferred immediate option.**
- Option 2 may include some small implementation costs, but this would be covered by a realignment of existing resources within individual organisations by improving service delivery and reducing duplication.
- Consideration should also be given to the need for work stream leadership in the implementation of Option 2 and it is recommended that a realignment of existing staff resource is considered to give this work focus