

**Report of:** Head of Oxford City Homes

**To:** City Executive Board

**Date:** 26 November 2008 **Item No:**

**Title of Report:** Anti Social Behaviour Procedure – Proposed Revisions.

### Summary and Recommendations

<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To give the background to the Precedure and outline the proposed changes.
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Board Member:</b>	Councillors Antonia Bance, Sajjad-Hussain Malik, Ed Turner
<b>Scrutiny Responsibility:</b>	Communities and Partnership
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All
<b>Report Approved by:</b>	
<b>Board Members:</b>	Councillors Antonia Bance, Sajjad-Hussain Malik, Ed Turner
<b>Director:</b>	Tim Sadler
<b>Finance:</b>	David Higgins
<b>Legal:</b>	Jeremy King
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Reduce Crime and Anti Social Behaviour.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	That City Executive Board notes the proposed changes and fully endorses the procedure for use by Oxford City Council.

### **Background –**

1. The original procedure/policy was drafted in 2005 and is currently shown on the City Council Website. The proposed changes within the new procedure incorporate current best practice and the “Respect” campaign and is explained in more detail below.

2. The Government's introduced the "Together" and "Respect" campaigns between 2004-2008. The Together campaign worked to improve the response to tackling anti-social behaviour by putting the needs of the local community first. The Respect campaign continued the drive to tackle anti-social behaviour and adopted a broader and deeper approach to intervene early and tackle underlying causes of anti-social behaviour.
3. The Respect Agenda is a cross-government strategy tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) and its causes. Perceptions of ASB are more common amongst those in the most disadvantaged communities, which are often characterised by higher levels of social housing. To reflect this, the Respect Standard for Housing Management (The Standard) was developed for social housing landlords to assist them in tackling ASB in their areas of operation. The Standard forms a key part of the Government's Respect initiative.
4. Oxford City Homes has reviewed the way it worked and interacted with all the agencies involved - the Police, CANAcT, Social Services, the Mediation Service etc by talking with representatives of these organisations to analyse how effective we were.
5. Following this review, Oxford City Homes has compared the policy/procedure with other successful Landlords' policies and the Respect Standard requirements. Procedures were then amended to align with the revised policy.
6. Much research has been done, making use of databases and benchmarking services, to find way to better monitor the service so that we could improve it. Causes of nuisance and anti social behaviour are now recorded on our database and the data is reported to HouseMARK for benchmarking purposes. Tenants also receive the data by way of the quarterly newsletter "Tenants' Issue" and the Community Safety & Anti Social Behaviour Topic Panel.
7. In December 2007 Oxford City Homes organised and hosted a conference for all local landlords and Anti Social Behaviour Units, CANAcT and SLCNG – the Social Landlords Crime & Nuisance Group, to find ways of working together to improve the life of the residents of Oxford. As a consequence, The CANAcT/RSL/LHO Liaison Group was changed to Oxfordshire ASB Forum. This will enable the landlords to share information, best practice, areas of concern and training. It is also hoped that the university landlords and private lettings agencies will also join in the future.
8. The Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE) for Tenancy & Estate Management was changed in July 2007 and now states: "Has set clear and challenging service standards which are based on feedback from service users and stakeholders (for example, by mystery shopping). These have been tailored to meet local need, and are reviewed annually. All service standards exceed the requirements set down in law or other benchmarks, for example, Respect Standard."

9. There is ongoing consultation with the Tenants' Community Safety and ASB (Anti Social Behaviour) Topic Panel to find the best ways to promote good behaviour, report work done and improve our services.

### **Options –**

10. There are realistically three options:-
  - A) Do not have a procedure and deal with cases of anti-social behaviour on an ad hoc basis, which could lead to inconsistency and lack of consultations with partners.
  - B) Retain the existing procedure, which does not incorporate current best practice or the Respect standard.
  - C) Revise the existing procedure to incorporate recommended guidelines, the Respect standard, current best practice and working with our partners.

### **Proposals –**

11. The proposal is to adopt option C above. The draft revised procedure is attached, see (Appendix 1).

### **Legal implications -**

12. There are no legal implications for the Council in adopting this revised procedure and full Council approval is not required.

### **Financial implications –**

13. There are no direct financial implications to this report although it is expected that less anti-social behaviour will result in less graffiti and damage which will in turn save on remedial costs.

### **Value for Money**

14. Updating our policy and procedures to be open and clear about acceptable standards, together with our approach to tackling anti social behaviour, is expected to reduce the number of incidents and therefore provide better value for money.

## **Environmental Implications**

15. The expected reduction in anti-social behaviour will impact favourably on the local communities with less vandalism and an improvement in the lifestyle of residents.

## **Consultation**

16. The draft procedure was sent to the 103 tenants and leaseholders who expressed an interest in this topic. They were then contacted and their views noted. Subsequently a meeting was held on 30 April 2008 with 6 residents who read through the procedure and added their comments.
17. Local agencies, City Councillors and members of staff were sent a copy of the procedure for comment and the Cross Party Group were given the opportunity for the project officer to attend a meeting to speak to their group about the RESPECT Standard.
18. All comments received were noted and used to draft the revised procedure which was approved by the Housing Advisory Panel on 15 October '08. See appendix 2 for the results of the consultation process.

## **Recommendation**

19. That City Executive Board notes the proposed changes and fully endorses the revised procedure for use by Oxford City Council.

## **Appendices -**

20. Appendix 1. The Draft Anti Social Behaviour Procedure.
21. Appendix 2. Results of the consultation process.

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