

Report to: Community Protection Panel

Date: 12 November 2007

Subject: Review of Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership Anti-social Behaviour Process

Report of: Director of Environmental Services

Contact officer: Sally Wolstencroft Telephone: 01942 827595

Purpose/summary: To inform Panel about improvements being made to the Anti-social Behaviour Process

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: Options were to keep process unchanged, or for each partner to develop its own process, which would have frustrated commitment to a multi-agency approach. The option proposed improves the current process and is aligned to corporate, Partnership and national direction. The proposals fall within the framework agreed by Cabinet.

Recommendation/decision: The Panel is asked to note the report and comment on whether the key recommendations from the Evaluation of the Contact Card System document should be incorporated into the existing Anti-social Behaviour Process.

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision.

Risks/Implications:

Financial:	Within existing resources
Staffing:	Within existing resources
Policy:	Within the legislative requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 and Wigan and supports delivery of Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership's Crime and Disorder and Drugs Strategy 2005 – 8
Equal Opportunities - has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	Yes
Wards affected:	All

Property – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

A diversity impact assessment is not necessary at this stage, however, equality and diversity implications have been considered when producing this report.

Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes/No ***

Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes/No***

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **Yes/No***

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only:

Categorisation of the report:	x		
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
12 Nov 2007			

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Document	Date	File Reference	Place of Inspection

Proper Officer Martin Kimber

Date 30 October 2007

1. **Background:**

- 1.1 Since the inception of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local authorities and the police have had a statutory duty to work together to develop strategies that tackle crime and the fear of crime, and to produce three-year community safety plans, setting out how they intend to tackle local priorities. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is one of the government's four key national policing priorities.
- 1.2 The government's Respect Action Plan emphasises the importance of tackling anti-social behaviour and its underlying causes, intervening early where problems occur and broadening efforts to address other related areas of poor behaviour.
- 1.3 Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership's Crime and Disorder and Drugs Strategy 2005 – 8 introduced a local action plan within an Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy that focuses on prevention, enforcement and resettlement and rehabilitation. The broad aim of the strategy is to develop a sustained approach to tackling the causes and consequences of anti-social behaviour.
- 1.4 The partnership's Respect Group provides strategic guidance and drives local delivery of services within the scope of the anti-social behaviour strategy. An Anti-social Behaviour Process is central to the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy. It provides clarity and guidance about the full range of partnership interventions that can be taken when anti-social behaviour is identified.

2. **Current Anti-Social Behaviour Process**

- 2.1 The process is largely informed by a Contact Card System, co-ordinated by the Council's Anti-social Behaviour Unit (ASBU). Contact cards are generally issued by police officers and PCSOs to young persons who are behaving in an anti-social way. They provide intelligence, alert partners and guardians and practitioners about problems, and facilitate tracking of individuals presenting anti-social behaviour, and 'hot spot' locations where anti-social behaviour occurs.
- 2.2 At present, incidents of anti-social behaviour are recorded, and individuals behaving anti-socially and 'hot spot' locations are identified. A letter-based system aims to deter further acts of anti-social behaviour by providing information to parents or guardians and a warning to the person presenting anti-social behaviour. Individuals, groups and locations with persistent or escalating anti-social behaviour-related problems are considered via a multi-agency case conference (MACC) approach and serious cases, i.e. where partners are considering issuing an Anti-social Behaviour Order, referred to the community safety partnership's Orders Group.
- 2.3 A review of the contact card system and the wider process was undertaken in 2006 and highlighted a number of problems with the current system (see Appendix 2: Contact Card Evaluation recommendations). An Anti-social Behaviour steering group, comprising of representatives from key Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership members subsequently met to consider how improvements could be made to that system and the wider process.
- 2.4 Some of the highlighted weaknesses are outlined below:

- Lack of targeting of resources to prolific locations and individuals
- Prevention and early intervention elements are not consistent or robust
- Inconsistency in standard and quality of contact card submissions and evidence gathering processes
- Letter system fails to evidence specific information about behaviour and is accusatory in style, which doesn't encourage a positive relationship with young people and their parents
- Minor anti-social behaviour is accelerated through the current process at exactly the same rate as serious anti-social behaviour
- Responsive interventions need to be more tailored and supportive
- Lack of home visit at early stage impedes decision-making process and leaves vulnerable people at risk for longer
- Lack of consideration of community and victim needs
- Multi-agency case conferencing, ABC and ASBO referral process needs modification to align with Neighbourhood working group.

3. **Proposals:**

3.1 Proposals build on the current system, address its weaknesses and place emphasis on:

- Providing opportunities for positive behavioural change at every level
- Positive prevention - early interventions that 'nip low level anti-social behaviour in the bud'
- Delivering a proportionate, robust and supportive responsive approach where anti-social behaviour is escalating
- The needs of communities and victims as well as the person behaving in an anti-social manner
- Clear lines of responsibility for involved partners
- Agreeing an acceleration process that is determined by the seriousness of behaviour and level of support needed rather than the number of contact cards issued
- Developing a performance management framework, which is not yet incorporated into the process, but which will focus on improving community perception and measuring the value and effectiveness of delivered interventions
- Creating a toolbox of actions and interventions that contains information about referral processes and identifies lines of responsibility

3.2 The updated process (Appendix 1) will encourage consistency across the borough and within multi-agency teams. It allows each individual incident to be assessed and appropriate interventions to be delivered in line with the seriousness and type of anti-social behaviour presented, and any prevailing special circumstances.

3.3 Flow charts sign-post practitioners towards a range of interventions and services and map each partner's responsibility and accountability. Anti-social behaviour is defined in order to manage customer expectation of when it is, and is not, appropriate to intervene.

3.4 The process will facilitate better consultation and collaboration between partners and has been aligned to national and local priorities and policies, eg

the national Respect Agenda and Wigan and Leigh Housing's Anti-social Behaviour Policy.

- 3.5 Crucially, it establishes the right balance between preventative/early intervention and specific, positive action to address prolific and serious anti-social behaviour. Where anti-social behaviour continues or escalates, so does the partnership response, supported by a robust evidence gathering framework.
- 3.6 Partner agencies will have a better understanding of their own and each other's priorities and can work collaboratively together. Parents, guardians, the person presenting anti-social behaviour, communities and elected members will be able to influence local priorities.
- 3.7 The process deters silo working and duplication, and instead encourages smart, streamlined and focused delivery – put simply it helps practitioners and the other 'interested parties' to work together to deliver the right intervention to the right person or location at the right time.
- 3.8 The full range of interventions is set out separately, but typically includes: -
 - Written advice to parents/guardians
 - Outreach work at locations where there are ASB-related problems
 - Reducing crime and ASB opportunities by designing out problems and improving the local environment
 - Diversionary activities organised for individuals, groups or in 'hot spot' locations
 - Specialist one-to-one support
 - Parenting interventions
 - Voluntary agreements or contracts
 - Formal action, i.e. Anti-social Behaviour Orders, Final Warnings or Injunctions

4. **Recommendation**

- The Panel supports further development of the ASB Process
- The Panel comments on the recommendations of the ASB contact card review
- The Panel endorses the introduction of an updated process

5. **Alternative options considered and reason for the recommended option:**

- 5.1 Options were to keep the process unchanged, or for each partner to develop its own process, which would have frustrated commitment to a multi-agency approach. Partners including the police and Wigan and Leigh Housing are currently reviewing their own ASB processes, and these proposals ensure that individual partner arrangements are fully aligned to an overarching Anti-social Behaviour Process.
- 5.2 The option proposed improves the current process and ensures that services and interventions are tailored to community and individual need. In line with national direction, the revised process provides opportunities for positive behavioural change at every level.

5.3 The proposals add value to Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership's Anti-social Behaviour Strategy that has been agreed by Cabinet.

6. **Conclusions:**

6.1 If Panel accept the recommendations of the report the Anti-social process will be made with immediate effect. Development of a performance management framework will commence and further progress will be reported to the Panel in due course.

Diversity Impact Assessment form

Section: ASBU

Policy/Service Area: Neighbourhood Services

Person completing form: Sally Wolstencroft	Date: 29/10/07
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Do any of the below groups suffer specific disadvantage (please indicate)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Race			Disability		
Ethnicity			Gender	Y	
Age	Y		Religion		
Class	Y		Sexual Orientation		

Is there evidence of disadvantage or associated problems?
<p>There are high concentrations of ASBU in disadvantaged areas, particularly affecting diverse groups, including young people, particularly young males, and elderly vulnerable people and victims.</p>

How was the information collected and/or who have you consulted with?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders from Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership through a specific Anti-social Behaviour Steering Group. An evaluation of the current contact card system, that incorporated the views of young people issued with contact cards, and their parents, and officers involved in delivering the process. Citizen Panel surveys, concerning people's perception and experience of anti-social behaviour. Use of other relevant partner consultation processes, eg Wigan and Leigh Housing's ASB process review and Children and Young People's Services. Informal feedback from users via other service providers Seeking views at Partnership meetings; Partnership Business Group, Respect Group, Orders Group, Township and PACT meetings, GMAC's Anti-social Behaviour theme group

Action Plan – What specific actions are planned to tackle any disadvantage identified?
<p>The process provides opportunity to tackle ASB in a balanced way, and considers the needs of each individual. It provides opportunity for positive behavioural change and support at every level.</p>

Is the policy in line with current equality legislation and relevant codes of practice?

Yes

Timescale	
Responsibility	
Comments	

Are the actions specified included in any other documents/plans?

Departmental Service Plan	N/A
Section/Team Plan	N/A
Other (specify)	ASB Strategy 2006-08

Date for further review	November 2010
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APPENDIX 1

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR PROCESS

2007

Introduction

Wigan Council and members of the Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership are committed to addressing Anti-Social Behaviour in the Borough. Since the inception of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Local Authorities and the Police have had a statutory duty to work together to develop strategies that tackle crime and the fear of crime, and to produce three-year community safety plans, setting out how they intend to tackle local priorities. Anti-social behaviour is one of the Government's four key national policing priorities.

The Government's Respect Action Plan builds on the drive on anti-social behaviour. It emphasises the need to tackle its underlying causes, intervening early where problems occur and broadening efforts to address other areas of poor behaviour.

In summary, it has six main strands:

- Supporting families
- A new approach to the most challenging families
- Improving behaviour and attendance in schools
- Activities for children and young people
- Strengthening communities
- Effective enforcement and community justice

A similar theme runs throughout Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership's Crime and Disorder and Drugs Strategy 2005 – 8. The Partnership has developed a local action plan within an Anti-social Behaviour Strategy that focuses on prevention, enforcement and resettlement and rehabilitation. The broad aim of the strategy is to develop a sustained approach to tackling the causes and consequences of anti-social behaviour. The partnership's Respect Group provides strategic guidance and drives local delivery of services that fall within the scope of the anti-social behaviour strategy.

Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership's Anti-social Behaviour Process is central to the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy as it provides clarity and guidance about the full range of interventions that can be taken when anti-social behaviour is identified.

The Anti-social Behaviour Process is not a performance management tool. Each partner has its own performance targets and indicators, which are linked to delivery of specific elements of the Anti-social Behaviour Process. Instead the process supports the achievement of individual and shared targets.

Central to the process is an agreement that partners will work collaboratively to deliver a range of flexible services and interventions that are proportionate, appropriate and aligned to the needs of the person who presents anti-social behaviour, their family, victims and the wider community. There is also shared support for the robust evidence gathering process, which will enable the partnership to take effective enforcement action as a last resort, where required.

Consultation has been an important part of process development and will be ongoing to ensure that the process continues to meet customer needs. Consultation has been undertaken by the following methods: -

- Partners from Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership through a specific Anti-social Behaviour Steering Group
- An evaluation of the current contact card system, that incorporated the views of young people issued with contact cards, their parents and guardians, and officers involved in delivering the process
- Citizen Panel surveys, concerning people's perception and experience of anti-social behaviour
- Consideration of other relevant partner processes, eg Wigan and Leigh Housing's ASB process review
- Informal feedback from users via partners and other service providers
- Seeking views at Partnership meetings; Partnership Business Group, Respect Group, Orders Group, Township and PACT meetings, GMAC's Anti-social Behaviour theme group

The Anti-social Behaviour Process

The process is largely informed by a Contact Card System, co-ordinated by the Council's Anti-social Behaviour Unit (ASBU). The ASBU has recently been absorbed by the Neighbourhood Teams section within Wigan Council's Environmental Services Department.

Contact cards are generally issued by Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers to young persons who are behaving in an anti-social way. They provide intelligence, alert parents, guardians and practitioners about problems, and facilitate tracking of individuals and 'hot spot' locations where anti-social behaviour occurs.

Proposals build on the current contact card system and place specific emphasis on a clear, stepped and proportionate approach that provides opportunities for positive behavioural change at every level, particularly: -

- Positive prevention - early interventions that 'nip low level anti-social behaviour in the bud'
- Delivering a proportionate, robust and supportive responsive approach where anti-social behaviour is escalating
- Consideration of the needs of communities and victims as well as the person presenting anti-social behaviour

- Clear lines of responsibility for involved partners
- Acceleration process determined by the seriousness of behaviour and level of support needed rather than the number of contact cards issued

The updated process will encourage consistency across the borough and within partner teams, departments and organisations. Early interventions will be delivered within the framework of the Partnership's process model, which drives multi-agency service delivery at a community and strategic level. Case conferencing will be undertaken via the Partnership process up to where an Anti-social Behaviour Orders is being considered. Responsibility at this level will remain with the Orders Group.

Each individual incident will be assessed and appropriate interventions to be delivered in line with the seriousness and type of anti-social behaviour presented, and the history of parties involved. Clear sign-posting takes practitioners through the range of available interventions and services and allows them to make decisions on the lead agency and the most appropriate course of action, which may include: -

- Written advice to parents/guardians
- Outreach work at locations where there are ASB-related problems
- Reducing crime and ASB opportunities by designing out problems and improving the local environment
- Diversionary activities organised for individuals, groups or in 'hot spot' locations
- Specialist one-to-one support
- Parenting interventions
- Voluntary agreements or contracts
- Formal action, i.e. Anti-social Behaviour Orders, Final Warnings or Injunctions

Proposals ensure that partner agencies understand their own and each other's priorities and can work collaboratively and productively. They also ensure that parents, guardians, the person behaving anti-socially and the community are involved in the decision-making process at all levels.

The use of the Partnership process model deters silo working and duplication and will reduce the number of meetings that front-line officers have to attend. Instead it encourages smart, streamlined and focused delivery. Put simply it helps practitioners and other 'interested parties' to work together to deliver the right intervention to the right person or location at the right time.

The accompanying flow charts and diagrams explain the processes for identification, referral, intervention and acceleration of anti-social behaviour, and are aimed at: -

- Providing greater clarity around partner responsibilities and accountability through a streamlined structure that encourages consultation

- Tailoring interventions to meet the needs of all parties
- Providing reassurance that anti-social behaviour is a priority and will be addressed effectively
- Improving customer and partner communications, managing expectation and providing clarity of when it is, and is not, appropriate to intervene
- Establishing the right balance between preventative/early intervention and specific, positive action to address prolific and serious ASB
- Improving the evidence gathering process
- Delivering services and interventions within agreed time frame
- Improving collation and dissemination of partner data
- Aligning process with relevant national and local partnership priorities and policies, eg the national Respect Agenda and Wigan and Leigh Housing's ASB Policy, Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership's PACT model

What is Anti-social Behaviour?

Anti-social Behaviour is a general term used to describe a whole range of behaviours and activities that may effect the quality of life of individuals or communities.

Examples are outlined in the Government's Respect Standard and include:

- Noise
- Verbal abuse/harassment/intimidation/threatening/behaviour
- Hate-related incidents
- Vandalism and damage to property
- Pets and animal nuisance
- Nuisance from vehicles
- Drugs/substance misuse/drug dealing
- Alcohol - related
- Domestic abuse
- Physical violence
- Litter/rubbish/fly-tipping
- Garden nuisance
- Misuse of communal areas/public spaces or loitering
- Prostitution/sexual acts/kerb crawling
- Criminal behaviour/crime (other than recorded elsewhere above)

The legal definition of Anti-Social Behaviour is '*acting in an anti-social manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the complainant*'

The individuals who make up our communities each have different lifestyles, expectations and tolerances levels. Wigan and Leigh Community Safety Partnership helps neighbourhoods adopt a consensus view of what is and

isn't acceptable. Partners understand the importance of local flexibility but need a guiding framework to ensure consistency.

All reasonable complaints of anti-social behaviour will be taken seriously, recorded immediately and investigated thoroughly. However, we will not normally deal with minor issues that are considered to be everyday living noises or minor lifestyle differences rather than anti-social behaviour, for example: -

- People mowing their lawns
- People vacuuming
- People walking across a wooden floor whilst wearing shoes
- People using washing machines
- Children falling out with each other
- Cooking smells
- Noise of children playing in their own home

We also do not class children playing ball games as anti-social behaviour. The partnership supports the Government's aim to encourage children to play outside to help reduce the problem of childhood obesity. Unless those playing ball are engaged in other more serious nuisance, such as verbal abuse, playing ball games at unreasonable hours or criminal damage, no action will normally be taken as this would be unreasonable and disproportionate.

Process Flow Charts

These flow charts outline how the process will work. They identify what will happen when a complaint is received, how it will be allocated and dealt with, when escalations will occur and how decisions will be made. It also maps the commitment of partners to build in opportunities for positive behavioural change at every level of the process.

The ASB Levels flowchart indicates how low-level anti-social behaviour is dealt with initially through an informal letter process and the local practitioner group before being accelerated via the process up to the Orders Group.

The Letters flowchart explains how low level anti-social behaviour is identified usually through the contact card system. It maps the early process and explains how the contact and intervention process works for persons presenting low level or non-persistent behaviour. Interventions at this stage will not be shared via the Partnership process unless there are vulnerability issues that require a multi-agency approach.

The Partnership Process flowchart and Acceleration flowchart provide a more detailed breakdown of the intervention, referral and acceleration processes identified in the ASB Levels flowchart.

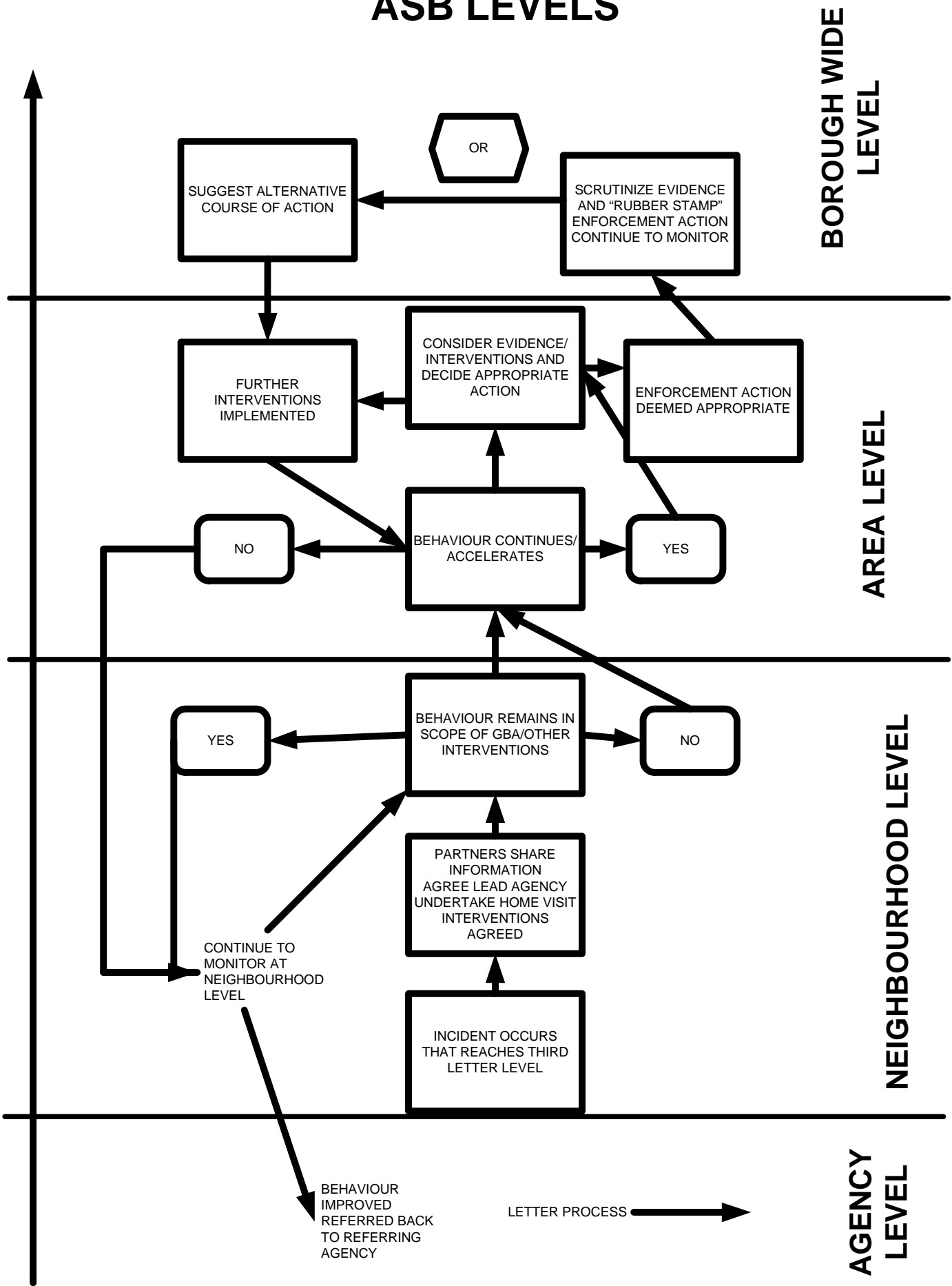
Future Progress

Partners will need to agree how the process is best embedded within their teams, departments and organisations so it is supported strategically and at operational level.

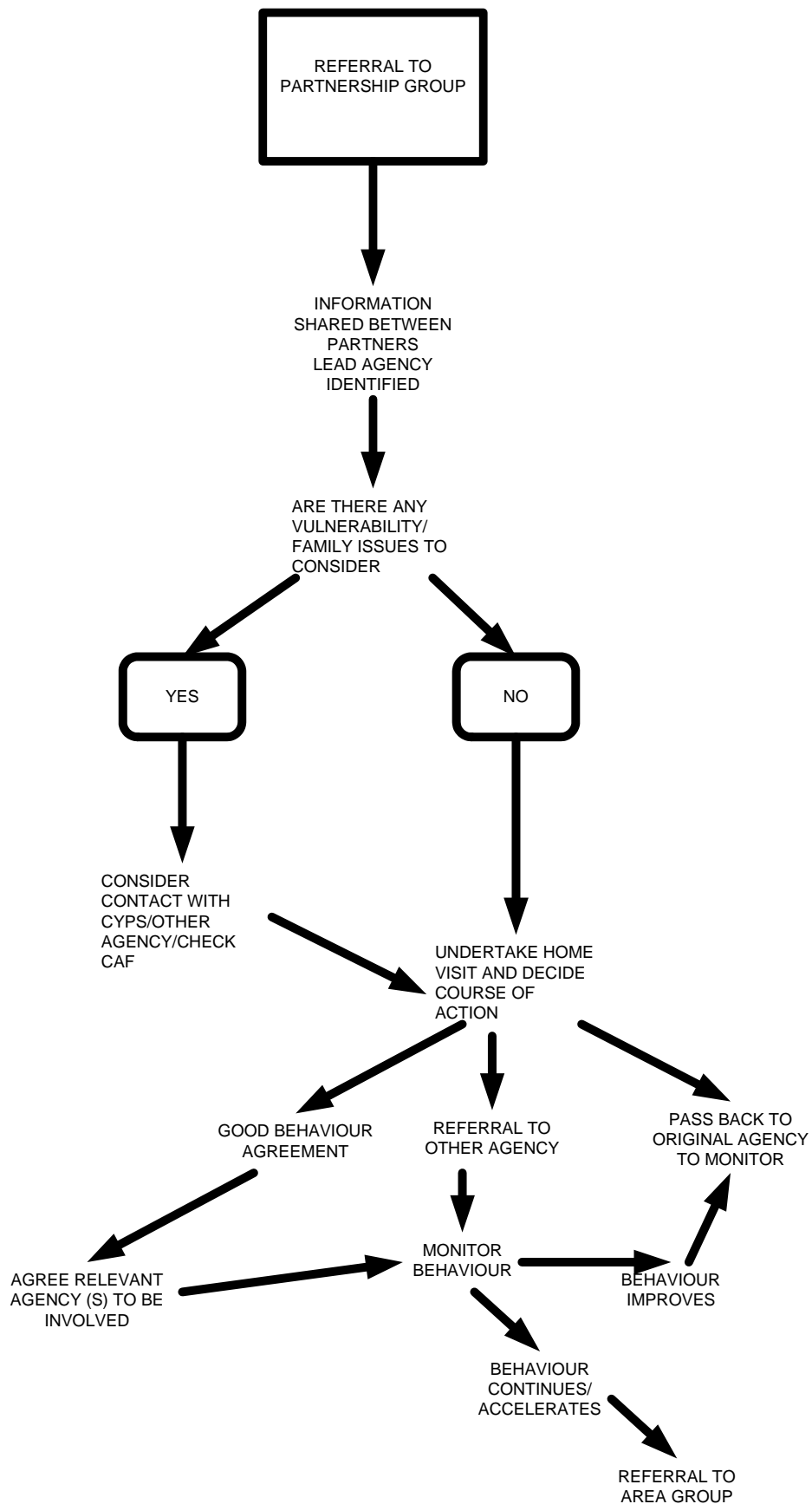
Next steps are currently being agreed, with priorities identified so far including: -

- Formally linking the process into the Local Area Agreement (LAA)
- Developing a performance management framework with outcome targets focused on improving community perception and measuring the value and effectiveness of delivered interventions
- Issuing guidance to PCSOs and other officers on the criteria for recording anti-social behaviour and proper issue of contact cards
- Identifying agreed interventions, referral processes and level of commitment from each partner
- Formalising the evidence gathering process
- Process awareness training for all partners

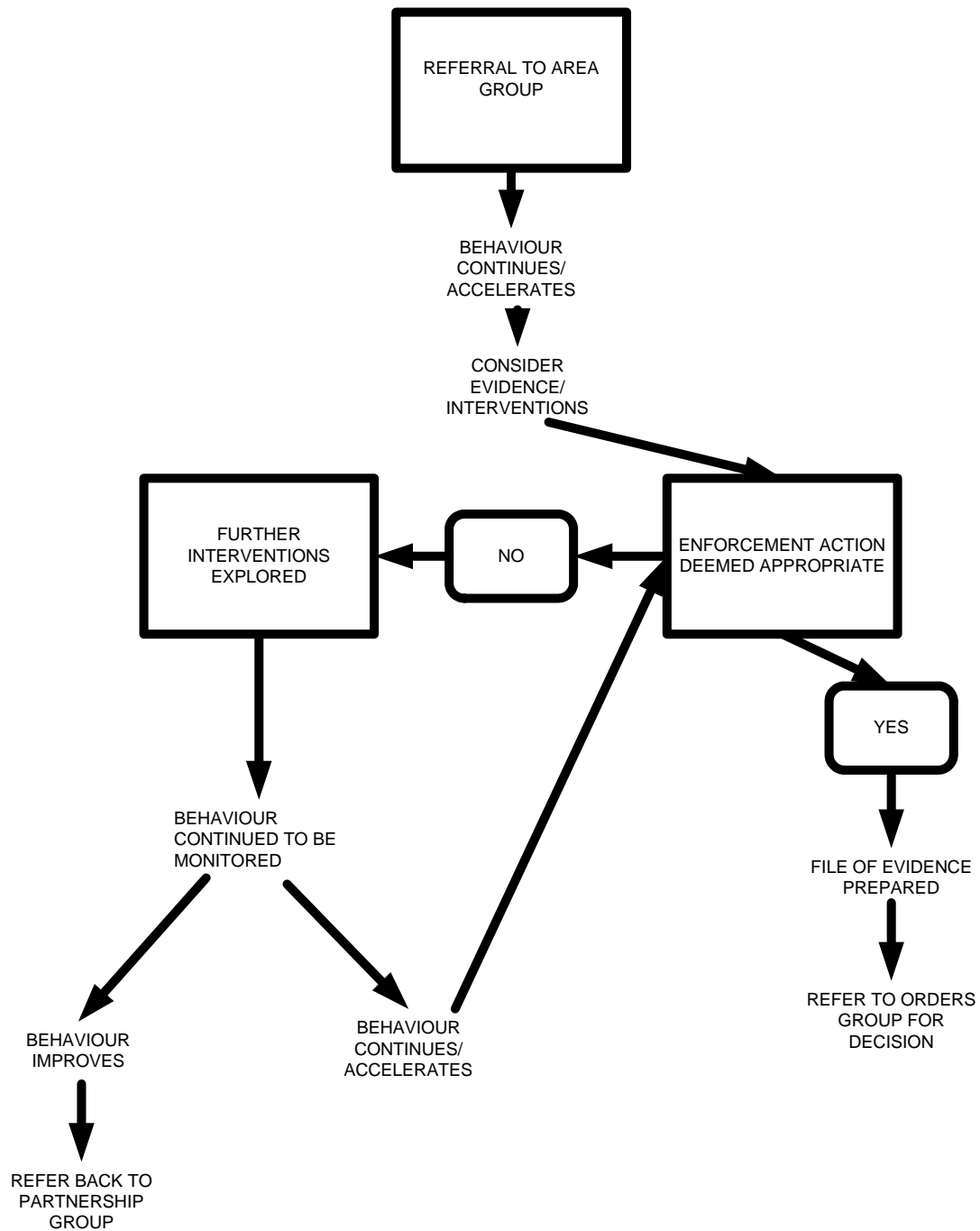
ASB LEVELS



ASB PARTNERSHIP PROCESS



ASB PARTNERSHIP ACCELERATION PROCESS



Contact Card Review Recommendations

In May 2004 the Wigan Council's Anti Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU) set up the contact card system as a multi-agency strategy for responding to incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) across the Borough.

Since May 2004, the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU) has received over 6000 contact cards from Greater Manchester Police (GMP) regarding young people's behaviour. This has resulted in 3665 first to third warning letters and 170 Good Behaviour Agreements (GBAs) being issued (to 19th December 2005).

These recommendations are based on a quantitative/qualitative analysis of the process currently employed by GMP/ASBU.

Interviews were conducted with professionals in both the ASBU and with officers from GMP who use the Contact Card System. One to One interviews with parents and young people were also conducted, and questions about how they viewed the process and how it affected them were asked.

The purpose of the following recommendations is to improve practice and targeting of the cards and letters as well as point to more effective practice in challenging and changing behaviour. These recommendations will need systematic implementation and ongoing monitoring to ascertain the extent to which the contact card system itself contributes to the achievements of the overall targets on ASB.

Recommendation 1. That a decision is made about whether to use the Partnership's Contact Cards or GMP Stop & Account forms. The outcome of any decision is clearly communicated to operational staff;

Recommendation 2. That a written definition/ criteria is produced and publicised outlining the types of behaviour that warrant a contact card given the decision to issue a contact card is subjective;

Recommendation 3. That training is provided to all of the officers responsible for issuing the contact cards and that particular attention is paid to improving the nature and extent of information completed under the 'nature of the incident' part of the form;

Recommendation 4. That the Partnership considers issuing a contact card for every incident rather than every individual present at a particular incident. The former would still require the collection of individuals' details perceived to be involved in the incident and subsequent investigation and problem-solving to identify those directly responsible for the incident against which warning letters could be issued;

Recommendation 5. That statistical analysis of anti social behaviour data and/ or repeat callers be employed to target those geographic hotspot areas

experiencing anti social behaviour and thus the need to use the contact card system;

Recommendation 6. That a more rigorous Victim-Offender-Location (PAT) problem-solving standard practice be employed to identify those individuals directly responsible for anti social behaviour. This should include qualitative intelligence from the perceived victims, offenders and location in the hotspot;

Recommendation 7. That a mechanism is put in place to facilitate feedback from parents and young people at every stage of the contact card system. For example, a RSVP form is enclosed with warning letters asking parents to acknowledge receipt of the letter and providing them with an opportunity for them to have their say and to provide intelligence.

Recommendation 8. That a mechanism is put in place to proactively engage parents at a much earlier stage in the process in order to establish a relationship with the people who with the right knowledge and support can do most about their child's anti social behaviour. For example, face-to-face meetings are made available to parents pre- and post- the GBA interview;

Recommendation 9. That a minimum set of guidelines is developed to deliver the GBA stage of the process with specific reference to both enforcement and support mechanisms in place to address anti social behaviour. The support element would need particular attention to ensure a standardised and quality assured product is produced.

Recommendation 10. That all of the recommendations are implemented systematically and collectively in order to sharpen and define how the process efficiently targets those incidents and individuals responsible for the worst ASB. In addition to these recommendations being accepted and implemented that all ASBU staff adopt an evidence-based approach to measure, monitor and evaluate the impact of their working practices on the

- Positive change in individual's ASB
- Reduction in the volume of incidents
- Reduction in the number of ASB repeat callers
- Improving quality of life for victims of ASB
- Improve public perception of ASB