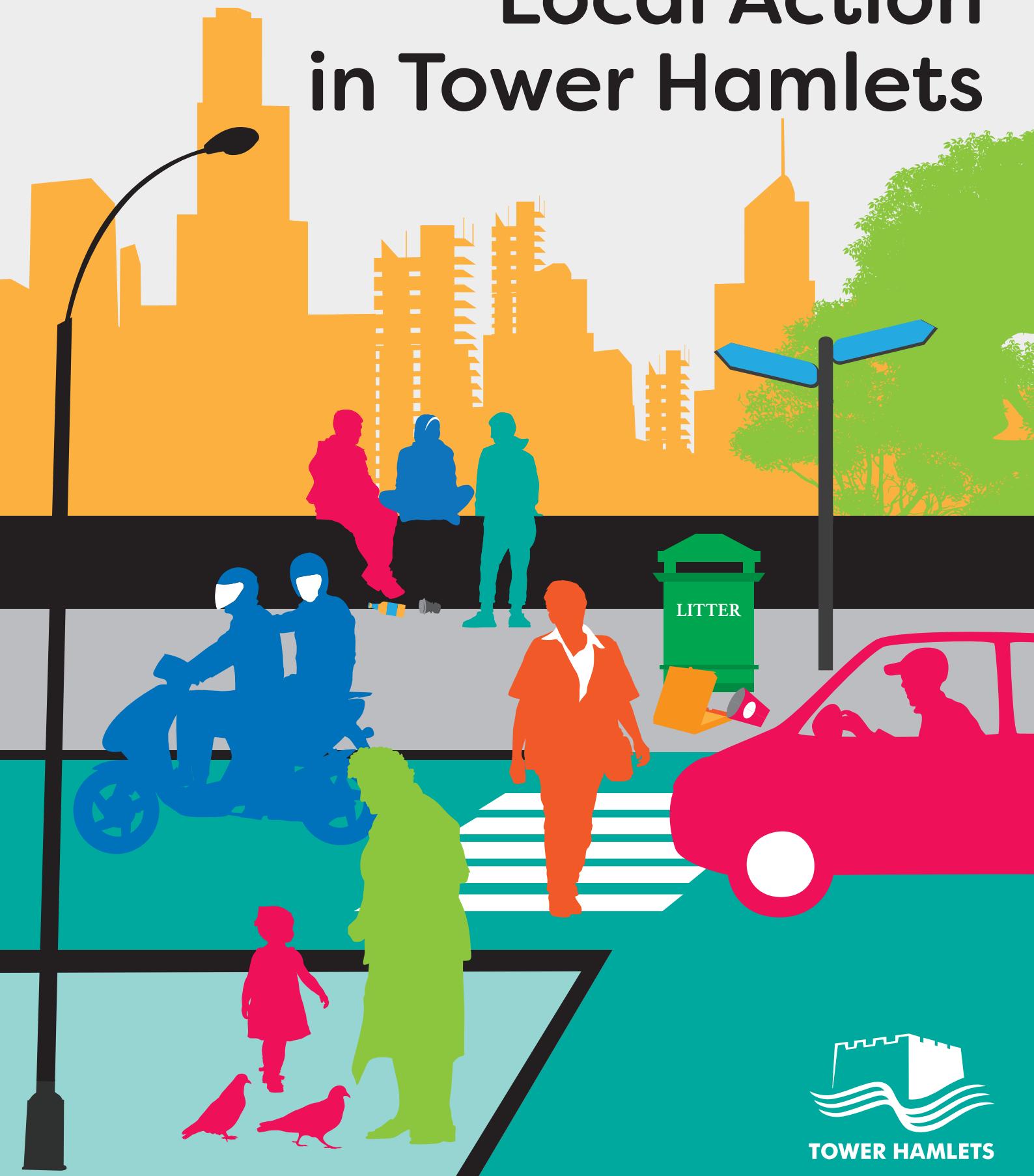


Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB): A Blueprint for Local Action in Tower Hamlets



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Foreword



John Biggs
Mayor of
Tower Hamlets

Tackling anti-social behaviour is one of the biggest challenges we face in Tower Hamlets. Our borough is a vibrant, diverse and exciting place to live, work and visit and we want everyone to feel and be safe and enjoy everything that it has to offer.

We face significant challenges and residents tell us that crime and anti-social behaviour are among their biggest concerns. The borough is fast growing and ever changing with residents in different parts of the borough experiencing different types and levels of anti-social behaviour. Rowdy or drunken behaviour, vandalism and noise can all have a huge impact on quality of life.

Our aim is clear – to tackle anti-social behaviour and reduce the harm that it causes. Everyone has the right to feel safe in their homes and the community, including businesses and visitors to the borough, which is why reducing anti-social behaviour is a priority for the Council, the Police and for other members of the Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership (the Partnership).

This ‘Blueprint for action’ defines what anti-social behaviour is and is not. Some activities which are reported as anti-social behaviour, such as drug dealing on streets and estates, are clearly criminal acts and should always be reported to the Police. In contrast, some anti-social behaviour is often wrongly dismissed as trivial when compared to more serious crime, however we know – and tragic case studies have shown – that anti-social behaviour is often targeted at the most vulnerable people in our communities who are least able to protect themselves.



Asma Begum
Cabinet Member
for Community
Safety

Our approach includes a clear and robust focus on enforcement where appropriate and we will make full use of the range of tools and powers available to us to tackle persistent behaviours and repeat offenders. With young people, enforcement should be where possible a last resort. It is therefore very important to identify young people as early as possible who are at risk of being involved in ASB and ensure that they are signposted to the correct support agencies. We believe that a strong focus on prevention, particularly as it relates to children and young people who might be involved or at risk of involvement in anti-social behaviour, will help us tackle issues in the longer-term, addressing the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour and preventing it from escalating or happening in the first place.

Tackling the full range of behaviours that constitute anti-social behaviour requires effective partnership working with the Schools, Children's Centres, the Youth Service, the Youth Offending Service, Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Substance Misuse Treatment, Outreach Providers, Mental Health Service Providers, the Police, Hostels, Housing Providers, the NHS, Fire Brigade and the voluntary and community sector. Together, our aim is to reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour in Tower Hamlets, improve community resilience, support vulnerable victims and challenge the perpetrators.

The Council, Police and Partnership cannot solve the problem of anti-social behaviour alone but we will do all we can to work with the whole community to help change negative behaviour and create a safer borough.

Introduction

The Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB): A Blueprint for Local Action sets out three Priorities and a targeted approach that the Council and the Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership (the Partnership) will take to address the issues of Anti-Social behaviour (ASB) in the borough over the next year.

Why do we need a blueprint?

The impact of ASB can be devastating on residents and communities. For victims and the wider community, it can be a cumulative, corrosive issue which undermines their ability to live in peace. If it is not dealt with, ASB can severely damage the residents' quality of life and destroy community cohesion.

The government recently placed more focus on victims. For example, the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 includes a specific measure, 'the Community Trigger' which gives victims and communities the right to request a review of their ASB Case and bring agencies together to take a joined up, problem solving approach to find solutions. Long running problems of ASB can destroy a victim's quality of life and impact on the community's trust in the Police, the Council and other agencies. Details of how to request a Community Trigger response can be found at: http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgnl/community_and_living/community_safety_crime_preve/anti-socialBehaviour/asb_community_trigger.aspx

The approach stated in this Blueprint aims to ensure that victims and communities will be placed at the centre of the re-designed ASB service delivery in Tower Hamlets.

How have we written the blueprint?

Experts have been working with partners across the borough to undertake a detailed six-month review into how the borough deals with ASB, including:

- Tower Hamlets Council: Community Safety Team, Drugs and Alcohol Action Team, Youth Offending Service, Community Engagement, Communications, Youth Service, Public health and Public Realm, Town Centre Team (Brick lane)
- The Metropolitan Police
- Tower Hamlet Homes
- Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group
- Safer Neighbourhood Board
- West Ham United Foundation
- Voluntary sector: Victim Support Services
- Community and Faith Representatives

The Review identified six specific work streams and made recommendations for improvements.

- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Community Engagement
- Communication
- Tools and Powers
- Operations
- Resources

This Blueprint answers the following questions:

- Why do we need to address ASB?
- What is ASB?
- What are our long-term aims?
- Why have we chosen these priorities?
- What is our immediate work?
- How will we know if our work is successful?

What is ASB?

ASB is ‘any aggressive, intimidating or destructive activity that damages or destroys another person’s quality of life’. (Home Office)

Issues that can be considered to be ASB include:

Rowdy, noisy behaviour in otherwise quiet neighbourhoods



Night time noise (houses/gardens), especially 11pm- 7am



Threatening, drunken or intimidating behaviour



Vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting



Litter and fly-tipping rubbish



Aggressive begging



Drinking in the street



Setting off fireworks late at night



Speeding and abandoned cars and vehicles



Prostitution and kerb-crawling



Rubbish in front gardens



Alcohol, tobacco, nitrous oxide being sold to children



Issues that are not considered to be ASB include:

Children playing in the street or communal areas - unless they are causing damage to property



Children and young people gathering socially - unless they are rowdy, inconsiderate and being intimidating individuals



Being unable to park outside your own home



DIY and off road car repairs- unless these are taking place late at night or early in the morning.



Personal tolerance

Reporting ASB is a subjective and not completely reliable process due to personal tolerance and perceptions as to what constitutes acceptable behaviour. It can also be difficult to accurately analyse and resolve given its lack of categorisation and procedural rigours of crime recording.

1

Cumulative

Research shows that ASB tends to be a cumulative, corrosive issue that undermines health and wellbeing of its victims. Experience varies in terms of level of harm but in most cases, repeat victims experience far higher levels of impact, especially those who define themselves as disabled and/or suffer ill-health.

2

Tackling ASB

Working with communities and businesses to tackle ASB, from persistent noise nuisance to low-level offences linked to the harms associated with drug related offending, is a top priority for the Council and partners

3

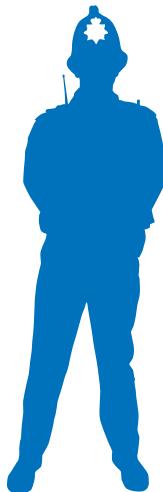
What do the residents want?

The 2016 Tower Hamlets Annual Residents Survey (ARS) shows a downward trend in the levels of concern about ASB problems. However, the Council is aware that despite the downward trend in perception and concern, ASB remains the top priority for the residents. Following a scrutiny review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2014/15, an action plan and a subsequent report in 2017 were produced and a dedicated residents consultation meeting took place in March 2017. Residents told us:

- They want to play a part in finding solutions to tackle ASB working with partners.
- They want communications to improve with
 - Better feedback
 - Better outcomes
- They want a single person to contact in the Council and one telephone number.
- They want better information sharing across the Partnership
- They want a zero tolerance approach to drugs misuse and supply in local areas through high visibility and robust enforcement
- They want clarity on advice and promotional materials, how to report, who to report to and feedback on the outcome of their complaint.

The residents are also aware that some issues they face are criminal activities, which is beyond ASB. Criminal activities should be reported to the Police, but boundaries between criminal activities and ASB can be unclear.

Better communications with the residents, between the Council and the partners will help tackle under-reporting of crime and ASB as well as tackle the local issues.



The local picture

The Annual Residents Survey 2016 shows trends in resident perceptions around the following four different types of ASB:

- Drunk and rowdy behaviour in public places
- People using or dealing drugs
- Rubbish and litter lying around
- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles.

Levels of concern about ASB problems have fallen for all the four areas monitored, continuing last year's downward trend in perception. However, Tower Hamlets receives the highest number of drugs and alcohol related ASB complaints in comparison to similar east London boroughs.

We can see from calls to the Police that there are strong links with ASB and the operation of drug markets in the Borough. During 2014/15, there were 2,172 drug related offences (dealing and possession) in Tower Hamlets, an average of 181 offences per month. In comparison to other London boroughs, Tower Hamlets has the fifth highest rate, a reflection of a combination of factors including the Police commitment to tackling drug related offending, provision of additional resources for enforcement, targeted police action and Tower Hamlets increasingly popular night time economy around such areas as Brick Lane. The most recent estimate (2011/12) suggests that there are around 3,561 people using Opiates and/or Crack Cocaine in Tower Hamlets. Of this number, 1,674 (47%) are estimated to have

not yet engaged with treatment. Two thirds of people in treatment during 2014/15 were in treatment for opiate drug use. One in five was in treatment for alcohol use and the remaining were in treatment for non-opiate drug use (including Crack Cocaine).

There is also emergence of the wider use of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) or 'legal highs', nitrous oxide which is a serious concern for the Council and residents in the borough.

There has been an upward trend of the reported ASB incidents in the borough over the last five years. The exact causes leading to the increase in ASB incidents are unknown, but several factors and conditions, including high population density, may play a part. The borough is set to have the highest population density in the country by 2025. If population density is one of factors that impacts on the number of ASB incidents, this demographic change, along with others, may have implications for future demand in terms of ASB services. In order to 'future proof' our approach, we will need to consider demand management solutions and activity moving forward as part of the service re-design.

A full equality analysis has been developed as part of this approach and we will continue to review the impact of actions on those with protected characteristics in this borough.

What we intend to do

Our approach

We will make Tower Hamlets a safer place to live, work and visit by:

- **Working together in partnership to prevent ASB**
- **Listening to victims and witnesses and providing them with support**
- **Intervening early robust use of enforcement powers where appropriate**
- **Keeping the community updated with clear messages and information about ASB action and how to report it**
- **Taking robust enforcement action against offenders and ensuring they are brought to justice.**

ASB is multifaceted and highly localised in nature and therefore requires a multi-agency and holistic local approach. The Partnership, including the Council, the Police and housing providers, will work together to reduce the harmful effects of ASB.

A key focus of our approach is to provide effective support to ASB victims in a neighbourhood setting. We will ensure that we better understand the impact ASB has on their lives and ensure safeguarding processes are in place to protect those most vulnerable from further harm.

Therefore, our top priority is the identification and protection of high risk or vulnerable victims of ASB, as the impact of it on them is likely to be greater than on others, by reason of their vulnerability.

Current initiatives

The Council has already committed to a number of significant projects and increased resources to tackle ASB, including:

- Investing in additional enforcement on housing estates of Tower Hamlets Homes (THH)
- Supporting the Metropolitan Police ASB warning system which is now seen as good practice with the potential to become a new London-wide approach
- Providing funding for a dedicated Police Task Force focusing on the most concerning issues in the borough: ASB; Drugs and Prostitution
- Additional monies to support CCTV deployment in the borough
- Additional Legal service's capacity to support the expected increase in enforcement activity
- Standardising and implementing tools and powers from the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – providing training for enforcement agencies
- THH offer and promote a range of methods to report ASB
- THH and RPs (registered providers), working with the Police, are making proactive use of the Civil Injunction Powers to target perpetrators

Priority 1

Improved, victim focused, response to ASB in Tower Hamlets

The impact of ASB can be devastating on both residents and their wider communities.

A key focus of this blueprint will be how we can provide effective support to victims of ASB, ensuring that together we better understand the impact ASB can have on their lives, promote health and wellbeing and ensure safeguarding processes are in place to protect them from further harm.

Our first priority is the identification and protection of high risk or vulnerable victims of ASB. A vulnerable person is one whose experience of ASB, and resulting harm, is likely to be more significant because of their individual personal circumstances.

In cases where perpetrators of ASB have certain vulnerabilities, we will ensure that they have access to appropriate support to help modify their behaviour. This may include liaising with relevant professional organisations or support being provided in-house by a dedicated professional. We will work closely with partner agencies to ensure that relevant support is available.

If perpetrators of ASB with certain vulnerabilities refuse support, we will use powers available to the partner agencies to address this anti-social behaviour, these could include the use of positive conditions on Civil Injunctions, to ensure that they engage with appropriate support.

Feedback from resident meetings and analysis of complaints tell us that residents would like to have:

- more support for ASB victims
- preventative activity to address the underlying causes of ASB
- intensive support to children and young people, to prevent them from becoming victims and perpetrators.

What are we already doing?

- Commissioning Victim Support to assist caseworkers to prioritise the needs of victims through a vulnerable victims MARAC
- Promoting the borough's Community Trigger process which allows members of the community to invoke the Partnership to review their responses to complaints of ASB.

What will we do in the next 12 months?

- Improve the quality of service to the community and the customer experience in reporting ASB
- Protect victims of ASB by taking action against perpetrators and bringing them to justice
- Providing specialist training for staff and partners involved in addressing ASB

- Improve safeguarding of victims by introducing a Vulnerable Victims Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to address cases of complex need involving vulnerabilities such as mental health, safeguarding and high risk concerns
- Enhance information sharing across the Partnership and implement a problem-solving approach to ASB
- Work in partnership to ensure we intervene early where there are risks that children and young people may be victims or perpetrators of ASB
- Develop and deliver an annual programme of summer activities for children and young people.
- Victim satisfaction.
- Number of perpetrators brought to justice and active use of the Council's enforcement powers.
- Number of Community triggers invoked and satisfactory outcomes (to date 5 Community Triggers activated).

How will we know if it's working?

- The Council and the Partnership will provide oversight through robust critical enquiry and scrutiny of a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- ASB Demand (Computer Aided Despatch calls (999 and 101) to the Police to report incidents of ASB
- Number of ASB vulnerable repeat callers to the Police (999 and 101)
- Number of individuals causing drug / alcohol related crime or ASB required to engage in structured treatment programmes via criminal or civil orders

Outcomes

- Local people will feel safer
- Vulnerable victims will be safeguarded
- Perpetrators will be held to account for their actions
- Local people will be clearer about how to report incidents, and who to report them to
- Local people will understand the tools and powers available to tackle ASB, and will be working collaboratively with frontline teams to use these appropriately and effectively
- Individuals committing drug / alcohol related crime and/or ASB will be required to address their substance misuse issues via positive requirements on criminal or civil orders.

Priority 2

Improved understanding of the impact of ASB on local communities and associated harm

The Council and partners will work together with our communities, with those who are suffering ASB as well as with those who cause it, to learn what works best to reduce ASB in the longer term and co-produce solutions.

We recognise that long term and sustainable solutions to ASB will require us to tackle its root causes, which can include alcohol and drug dependency, troubled families, domestic abuse, mental health needs and poverty. We will ensure that links are made with existing policies and procedures and services to achieve the best outcomes.

As data shows, the borough has ASB hotspots and the residents' experience of ASB varies widely. Better understanding of ASB in the communities will help protect the victims from further harm by improving the service we offer and our partnership response.

What are we already doing?

- Improving the way we map and prioritise operations and communications in local ASB hotspot areas
- Improving the Partnership response to ASB by more effective information sharing and co-ordination of resources:
 - Developing an ASB communications campaign for 2017/18, to improve feelings of safety and to highlight the work being done across the borough by the Council, police and housing partners
 - Re-designing our council service offer and introducing a more localised problem-solving approach to tackling ASB
 - Implementing a neighbourhood management model pilot, which aims to deliver localised and responsive operations, engagement and accountability from a range of key partners under the co-ordination of a single area manager.

What will we do in the next 12 months

- Develop a Neighbourhood Agreement setting out the minimum standards and the services communities can expect from partners to tackle ASB
- Work with the community in order to identify their role and responsibility in promoting behaviour change
- Improve communication at both local and borough level to ensure that there is a clear reporting and operational response to concerns
- Undertake community engagement that identifies community concern, priorities and harm at the community level and involves communities in resolutions where appropriate.

What will we do in the next 12 months

- The Council and the Partnership will provide oversight through robust critical enquiry and scrutiny of a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- Measure the community perception of ASB through the Annual Residents' Survey (ARS) questions on the four ASB related areas:
 - Drunk and rowdy behaviour in public places
 - People using or dealing drugs

- Rubbish and litter lying around
- Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles.
- ASB Demand (Computer Aided Despatch calls (999 and 101) to the Police to report incidents of ASB
- Number of ASB repeat callers to the Police (999 and 101)
- Number of individuals causing drug / alcohol related crime or ASB required to engage in structured treatment programmes via criminal or civil orders.

Outcomes

- Local people will feel safer and harm will be minimised.
- Concerns about crime and ASB will have reduced in the residents surveys
- The % of residents telling us that drunk and rowdy behaviour in their area is a big problem will have decreased
- The % of residents telling us that people using or dealing drugs in their area is a big problem will have decreased.

Priority 3

Reduce the damaging effects of ASB by active engagement, working with communities, businesses and co-producing solutions to problems

Why is this important?

The Council and the Partnership cannot solve the issues of ASB alone. To tackle these effectively, we need to work with the whole community, which will assist behaviour change and create a safer borough.

Everybody has the right to feel safe and protected, no matter where they are or who they are with. Intimidating and nuisance behaviour caused by individuals or groups has the power to blight the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. We recognise that alone, the Council and partners cannot solve all of the issues all of the time. This is pertinent now more than ever in a climate of austerity and shrinking public resources. We will need to work even closer with our communities to identify and prioritise the services that have the greatest benefit in reducing ASB. Therefore securing the support of residents and communities in tackling the problems of ASB is key to the success of our new approach. This is particularly important in:

- Giving communities the confidence to report ASB to the relevant agency
- Letting communities have a say in setting priorities, promoting Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels, and the borough's safer neighbourhood board and working together to find solutions

- Providing support for victims and witnesses to come forward
- Recognising good work by individuals and groups across communities, promoting "champions" and role models.

What are we already doing?

Ensuring that council and police are visible by promoting Community Safety Ward Walkabouts with residents and businesses, to identify issues that matter and find solutions.

A rolling programme of partnership activity is targeting irresponsible business practice and those who are contributing to the blight of ASB in our communities for example, the supply of nitrous oxide.

- Introducing a more effective operations by focusing the right resources on priority hotspots and emerging areas of concern
- Developing a night-time economy charter to create a safe, vibrant and well balanced evening and night-time offer for those that reside in and visit the Brick Lane area.
- Introducing Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) in those areas most impacted by crime and ASB.

What will we do in the next 12 months?

- Deliver effective education and engagement activities to reduce ASB and victimisation in the long term
- Introduce a new Town Centre Strategy 2017-22
- Deliver new opportunities to make Tower Hamlets night-time economy more safer
- Consider the findings of the Night Time Levy Consultation and implement if appropriate.

How will we know if it's working?

The Partnership will measure its priority performance indicators on a quarterly basis via its quarterly performance dashboard and reports from the respective CSP Subgroups and CSP Priority Leads. These reports will measure current performance against the same period of the previous financial year, provide commentary and reasons for current performance as well as identify any strategic risks to this priority and the Partnership as a whole.

- Number of education and engagement activities delivered
- Number of businesses signed up to the Night Time Economy Charter

- ASB Demand (Computer Aided Despatch calls (999 and 101) to the Police to report incidents of ASB
- Number of individuals causing drug / alcohol related crime or ASB required to engage in structured treatment programmes via criminal or civil orders.

Outcomes

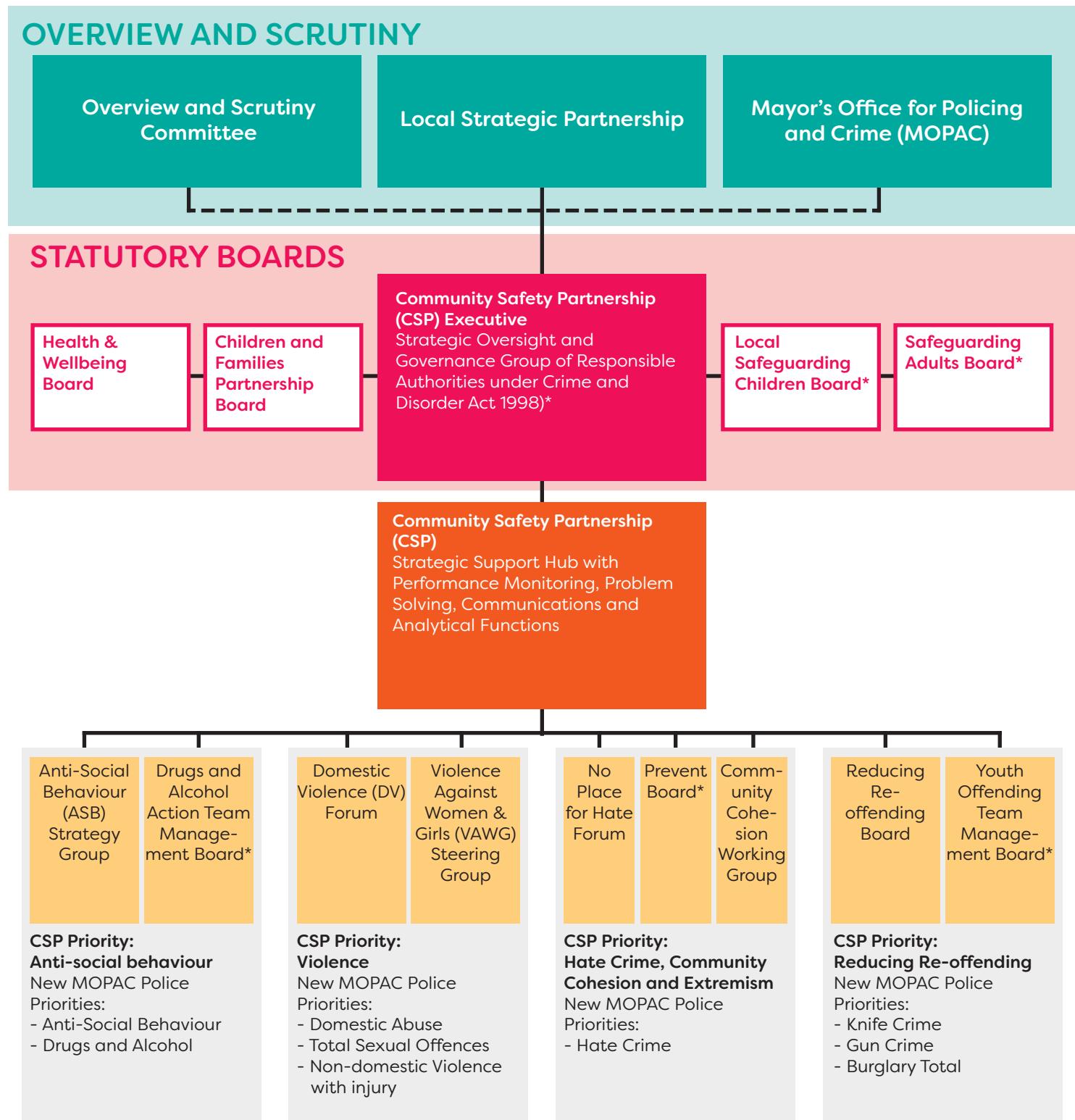
- A vibrant and well balanced evening and night-time offer for those that reside in and visit the Brick Lane area
- Effective operations that deliver positive outcomes for residents
- A safer night-time economy – minimising the impact of ASB
- Cohesive community working with partners to find solutions.

Implementation and monitoring arrangements

This Blueprint has a one year timeframe.

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) will be responsible for the implementation of this blueprint and will be held to account by the CSP Board, which is co-chaired by the Police and Council.

CSP Governance Structure 2017/18



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Appendix A:

Regional and local strategies that have contributed to the reduction of ASB in Tower Hamlets

Mayor of London Police and Crime Plan 2017-2021	The London Mayor has pledged to continue addressing ASB as a priority across all of London by increasing the number of dedicated police officers in each of the Wards, especially targeting the ones that have most ASB and Crime concerns. His Plan sets out that police will concentrate on a number of areas which will affect the boroughs approach to ASB. Those include prioritising Hate Crime, tackling repeat offenders and increasing protection for victims and vulnerable people.
Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Plan 2017-21	The CSP Plan is based on a strategic assessment of partnership performance in relation to crime, disorder, substance misuse and reducing re-offending, as well as a wide reaching public consultation on residents' top three concerns. The CSP Plan 2017-21 sets out the Partnership's four main priorities for the borough to address, one of those being ASB including Drugs and Alcohol.
Tower Hamlets' Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy 2016-2019	The VAWG Strategy looks at ASB in relation to gender based violence. In particular, it lays out our approach to tackling prostitution and our commitment to supporting sex workers to leave prostitution.
Community Engagement Strategy 2016-2017, Tower Hamlets Council	This strategy sets out how we strive through active community involvement to shape the borough, build community capacity and resilience and enhance our digital presence to engage more effectively with our community.

**Tower Hamlets Homes
Business Plan
2016/17-2018/19**

Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) working in partnership with the Council and key partners aim to use our combined resources to tackle drug dealing and drug use in our communities. In the following year THH will:

- Place new emphasis on using intelligence gained about ASB hotspots so that resources can be more effectively harnessed
- By giving front line officers clearer responsibilities, ensure that the landlord service has a more comprehensive and broad based approach towards tackling ASB which involves staff from both the Council and across Tower Hamlets Homes.

**Ending Groups, Gangs and
Serious Youth Violence
(GGSYV) Strategy
April 2015 – 2018,
Tower Hamlets Council**

This strategy sets our position that we will not tolerate groups, gangs and serious youth violence and its associated abuse in Tower Hamlets. It outlines how work will be underpinned by a safeguarding approach towards young people (and families) who are at risk of involvement in groups, gangs and serious youth violence and the associated forms of abuse. Young people and families will be offered targeted interventions at the earliest point to discourage involvement with support from the appropriate partners. If young people (or families) continue to engage in GGSYV the partnership will use all enforcement options available and also continue to offer support with appropriate interventions.

Hate Crime Strategy

This strategy is underpinned by a commitment to provide equality of access to services and support to every member of our communities; regardless of – age, disability, marital status, gender assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. It is widely understood that those most vulnerable in our society or those from diverse backgrounds are proportionally more likely to become victims of ASB or hate crime. Incidents of hate crime often manifest themselves in low level forms of ASB, which on the surface may appear minor but the impact on the victim and their family can be devastating if not dealt with quickly and effectively.

