

**Appendix 1 to the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 21 February 2019**

**Written Response to Public Questions**

Question from Dr. Josiane Chuisseu

*"What are the procedures and timelines for actions when residents have reported issues with the upkeep of properties and more concerning when their tenants have been linked to substance misuse, intimidation and vandalism? What are the key performance indicators used by South Cambridgeshire council to ensure that the properties it manages and the tenants in those properties adhere to the rules and laws in place? "*

Response from Councillor Hazel Smith, Lead Cabinet Member for Housing

How a case is rated is an important judgement which may affect how quickly we deal with a case, although we will always keep an open mind and change the rating of a case if we feel it has become more or less serious.

All complaints of anti social behaviour made to South Cambridgeshire District Council's Neighbourhood Support Team are categorised according to their level of seriousness as set out in the following table:

CATEGORY	DEFINITION	TARGET TIME FOR FIRST RESPONSE
HIGH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Behaviour that is a serious risk to individuals or the peace of the neighbourhood and which may include violence, serious threats of violence or other criminal activity.</li><li>▪ Any complaint (including those that would otherwise be classed 'Medium') where the victim or perpetrator is a adult at risk*</li><li>▪ Any complaint that would otherwise be classed 'Medium' but where there have been previous incidents and it appears to the officer concerned that, taking these together, a more serious position has developed or may be developing.</li></ul>	1 DAY

MEDIUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unreasonable, prolonged disturbance such as verbal abuse or persistent noise nuisance.</li> </ul>	2 TO 5 WORKING DAYS
LOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disputes between neighbours such as disagreements about parking, boundaries, minor noise issues, children, pets and minor lifestyle differences.</li> </ul>	5 WORKING DAYS

Our policy outlines our commitment to trying to reach a fair and lasting solution to ASB problems as quickly as possible. In most non serious cases we will start with low level action and then, if this does not stop the problem or reduce it to reasonable level, we will start to take stronger measures. Tenancy sustainment is at the very core of the Neighbourhood Support Officers role (NSO) and it will always be the aim to find a solution. In the cases where a victim and / or perpetrator clearly has support needs, such as mental health, alcohol / drug related issues, the role of the NSO is to sign post to other relevant agencies to get correct support in place to resolve these issues. Unfortunately there are times that a solution cannot be found and the perpetrator does not amend their behaviour. In these cases the team will instruct legal to commence proceedings; this could be seeking to take possession of the property and / or a civil injunction. Other tools available are:

- Criminal Behaviour Order
- Community Protection Notice
- Public Spaces Protection Order
- Closure powers
- New absolute ground for possession
- Community trigger

Where a support need has been identified, the NSOs will make regular contact and visits to ensure that any breaches of tenancy are being regularly addressed and not allowed to escalate. All witnesses / victims will be contacted regularly and will be provided with actions that the NSO has taken, whilst maintaining confidentiality at all times. Witnesses / victims will be given support and guidance on procedure with realistic timelines.

Extreme serious cases where a victim is at significant risk will warrant a prompt and immediate response from a member of the NSO team and partner agencies who we work with. This could be that the NSO officer seeks an urgent without notice injunction. In cases of vandalism and intimidation, this will require partnership working with the police, who will determine if a criminal act has taken place and if proven, police will charge the perpetrator with any such offences. On the back of any criminal charge the appropriate Housing warning will be issued, this could be the

service of a Notice of Seeking Possession as a final warning to cease any nuisance or, in the most serious of cases, the commencement of proceedings,. This notice remains in place for 12 months and should there be any further nuisance in this time, legal would be instructed to commence possession proceedings.

Information sharing agreements are in place so that we maintain GDPR compliance. The Council has adopted the use of the ECINS case management system; here information can be shared in a secure and safe manner. The use of this system prevents duplication and ensures that any vulnerabilities are addressed by all partners and accountability is identified. It is key to ensure that actions and outcomes are proportionate to the victim and perpetrator, and this can vary greatly in cases.

You also ask about the KPIs used to monitor the performance of the department in tackling ASB, Having taken control last year we are reviewing the KPIs we ask for in the light of experience. Currently we report successful resolution of the complaint and we do very well against that. Perhaps a more useful measure would be the time taken, as I can see that is an issue for neighbours, and we will feed that into our review, though, as stated above, our aim will always be to support the tenant to stay in their home if they can work with us to achieve that within the rules, and that may take time.