

REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 15 SEPTEMBER, 2003

**REPORT ON: ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TEAM –
OUT OF HOURS SERVICE**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO: 622-2003

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To propose an out of hours addition to the service currently provided by the Housing Department's Anti-Social Behaviour Team.**

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. It is recommended that a pilot Out of Hours Service be introduced, as outlined in this report, during the period 1 October, 2003 to 31 March, 2004.**

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The cost of this scheme will comprise standby and overtime payments, where appropriate, for the members of staff on duty. This cost, estimated at approx. £25,000 per annum, subject to the volume of cases and call out, can be met from existing resources in the Housing Revenue Account for the remainder of this financial year.**
- 3.2. If the pilot scheme is successful, it is proposed to meet the costs of the Out of Hours Service for financial years 2004/05 and 2005/06 from the additional resources allocated for Community Based Anti-Social Initiatives by the Scottish Executive, subject to further consultation and a successful bid to the Scottish Executive, in accordance with the bidding process outlined by the Scottish Executive in the Wardens Scheme consultation document.**

4. AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The key theme of crime prevention, community safety and other initiatives to eliminate violence and harassment against people because of their race, gender, sexuality or connection to other target groups is addressed by this report.**

5. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The key theme of people living without fear of personal violence from crime is addressed by this report.**

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. Since its inception 2 years ago, it has not been possible to introduce an Out of Hours Service based in the Anti-Social Behaviour Team due to workload issues. The Team's remit has now been extended and the need for an Out of Hours Service has been reviewed in line with the remit given in Housing Committee Report No. 641-2002 of 16 September, 2002.**

7. MAIN TEXT

- 7.1. Recent consultation papers by the Scottish Executive confirm that Local Authorities should continue to look at ways to support victims of and witnesses to anti-social behaviour.**
- 7.2. It is proposed to introduce an Out of Hours Service to provide victims of anti-social behaviour with support from members of the Anti-Social Behaviour Team. By responding to calls, members of the Team could witness incidents of anti-social behaviour outwith normal working hours which is when many of incidents occur.**
- 7.3. The service would take the format of two members of the Team being on-call between the hours of 17.00 and 00.00 between Monday and Thursday. The service would then be available between 17.00 Friday until 00.00 Sunday/Monday as experience indicates weekends to be the most vulnerable times for victims due to incidents being more regular and prolonged. A designated telephone number would be identified for use during these hours which the victim would call. The number would only be given to victims where the Anti-Social Behaviour Team were investigating their complaints and corroboration and/or support to these complaints was required. Prior to issuing the number, Investigation Officers would consult with the Senior Investigator or Team Leader to gain authorisation. The duty to participate in an out of ours standby service is already covered by the Housing Officers' current job description.**
- 7.4. When a call is received, the lead officer will discuss the nature of the ongoing incident with the caller to identify if attendance is required. Options available to the officer would be to offer the victim advice over the telephone if the incident is of a minor nature or to advise them to contact the Police if the incident is of a serious/violent nature. Should attendance be necessary, the lead officer would contact their back up officer and attend at the locus of the ongoing incident. From there, the officers would decide on the most appropriate place from which to witness the incident. This may be from outside the property or from within the complainants property. The course of action taken thereafter would be left to the officers discretion in conjunction with the victim. This may be simply to witness the incident to obtain corroboration with a view to taking action against the perpetrator at a later date (e.g. Breach of Tenancy/ASBO warning) or contacting the Police to request they take action and the Investigating Officers providing statements as professional witnesses. The information gathered at the call-out would be recorded on the case notes relevant to the investigation.**

- 7.5. The importance of the risk assessment of all relevant background information and the current situation at the time of the call is acknowledged. To that end, the Council's Health & Safety Team will be consulted to ensure that staff in the Anti-Social Behaviour Team are able to carry out the duties of this new service safely and in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance.**

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1. All Chief Officers have been consulted on this report. Dundee Federation of Tenant Associations have also been consulted and are in support of the proposal to introduce this service.**

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1. Housing Committee and Personnel & Management Services Committee of 16 September, 2002 (Report No. 641-2002).**
- 9.2. Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities : A Consultation Document on Wardens and Other Community Based Initiatives to Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour – Scottish Executive March, 2003.**

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SEPTEMBER, 2003