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**COMMUNITY SAFETY REVIEW**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Dixon, Deputy Leader  
Ada Burns, Chief Executive**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is two-fold
  - (a) Firstly, to inform Cabinet of a number of improvements to the way in which the Crime and Disorder Partnership conducts its business and anticipated benefits for the residents of Darlington.
  - (b) Secondly, to provide Cabinet with an overview of the conclusions and key recommendations arising from a recent review of a number of the Council's Community Safety Services.

**Background**

2. During 2006 a review of the Crime and Disorder Partnership (CDRP) structure was carried out to ensure that that the delivery framework was robust enough to meet the key challenge of reducing crime and anti-social behaviour within the Borough. This report highlights a number of improvements that are currently being implemented to support partnership working and improve agency visibility within the Borough.
3. In parallel, a review of a number of the Council's key community safety services was also completed to ensure services work together to make Darlington a safer place to live work and visit.
4. This review included aspects of the Youth Offending Service, the Anti-Social Behaviour and Uniformed Warden Service, CCTV, Dog Warden and Abandoned Vehicle Service and the Community Safety Unit. This report highlights some of the key improvements that will be implemented as an outcome of the review.

**The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP)**

5. Partnership working to tackle crime and disorder within the Borough is well established with agencies working collectively at both a strategic and operational level. To ensure the CDRP is able to meet the challenges of reducing crime and disorder across the Borough a review of the CDRP delivery groups was undertaken in 2006.
6. Following extensive consultation with partner agencies a number of improvements in the current CDRP delivery framework have been agreed, which will facilitate increased accountability for delivery across the CDRP.

7. In addition, three multi-agency Geographical Problem Solving Groups (GPSG) have been established linking with the Street Scene areas. The GPSG for the East covers Street Scene areas North West and South West, the West GPSG covers Street Scene areas South East and North East and the North GPSG covers the Central Street Scene area. These groups are responsible for addressing specific crime and disorder issues within the area as well as providing a forum for officers to address issues raised by residents through either direct contact with officers or via the existing community networks that have been established across the Borough.
8. Representation on each of these groups will include Police, Street Scene Officers, ASB and Uniformed Warden Service, Housing and other agencies, as and when required.
9. The new framework brings with it transparency in terms of accountability for delivery with Chairs reporting to the CDRP Executive Board, which is made up of Chief Officers from the Council, the PCT, Fire and Rescue Service, Police and Police Authority.
10. It is envisaged that the work of the groups will enhance the multi-agency response at a local level, providing timely and responsive services to the community.

### **Improving the Council's Community Safety Services**

11. The review confirmed that the Council invests significant resources in tackling crime and disorder through providing a diverse range of proactive services to support local communities. The review confirmed the need to split the Council's strategic Community Safety functions and further develop its operational approach in terms of bringing operational services closer together under one department. This section of the report provides a summary of the main recommendations arising from the review and the potential benefits for the people of Darlington.

#### **(a) Dog Warden and Abandoned Vehicle Service**

Both the Dog Wardens and Abandoned Vehicles Officer are currently located within Development and Environment (Environmental Health). Relocating these two posts to the Anti-Social Behaviour and Uniformed Warden Service within Community Services will:

- (i) Enable the Council to fully integrate its operational front-line approach to tackling environmental crime through effective enforcement and education.
- (ii) Build relations between frontline staff enabling them to work proactively on specific problems.
- (iii) Facilitate improved service delivery providing resilience amongst the service to cover holiday and sickness periods.

(b) CCTV

The CCTV Unit is currently located within Corporate Services. In building and integrating the Council's operational frontline services the CCTV Unit will transfer to Community Services under the direction of the Assistant Director (Environmental Services). The benefits include:

- (i) Integrating CCTV with other operational community safety frontline services.
- (ii) Encouraging joint working between CCTV operatives and the ASB and Uniformed Warden Service providing a co-ordinated, responsive approach to issues raised by residents and others.
- (iii) The potential for the Wardens to operate from the CCTV Unit during peak periods is currently being explored. This would improve responses to issues identified through CCTV or by residents with the CCTV Unit acting as a central hub for resource deployment.

(c) Community Safety Unit

In February 2006 the Community Safety Unit transferred from Community Services to the Chief Executive's Office to reflect and support the Community Safety crosscutting agenda. As the community safety agenda increases at both a national and local level it is evident that the work of the unit must remain strategic facilitating partnership working and developing the Council's and its partners' approach to community safety.

A review of staffing resources within the unit has been completed and a number of changes will be implemented to the roles and responsibilities of officers. In addition, the CDRP have agreed to fund a temporary post to support the work of the unit for one year from April 2007.

The changes within the unit will:

- (i) Strengthen the Unit's ability to support the CDRP delivery framework, in particular there will be additional support provided to each of the CDRP groups. This will help officers to focus on achieving sustained reductions in crime and ASB.
- (ii) Enable the Council and CDRP to meet the challenges of external inspection including rigorous Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) within CPA for Community Safety.
- (iii) Enable the Unit to focus on strategic issues rather than becoming embroiled in day-to-day operational issues.

(d) Youth Offending Service (YOS)

- (i) As a top performer nationally, the YOS is well established with Community Services providing responsive and proactive services to support young people and parents. The review has highlighted the need to ensure that the work of the

YOS is fully tied into the work of the Locality and Targeted teams, which are being developed within Children Services. This will:

- (ii) Ensure the coordination of services for children and families at an operational level.
  - (iii) Maximise the use of limited resources.
  - (iv) Ensure that the right support is targeted to those in need.
- (e) Domestic Abuse

Tackling Domestic Abuse is a key challenge for both the Council and its partners. The review of the Council's approach to Domestic Abuse was completed in parallel with the development of Darlington's Local Area Agreement (LAA).

During recent years the Council and its partners have provided financial support to sustain the post of Domestic Violence Coordinator within Children Services.

Through the LAA a Senior Practitioner and Support Worker will be appointed to work with victims and families subject to domestic abuse and through Supporting People two Housing Float and Support Workers will be appointed to support victims in their own homes. The development of this service is a major achievement for the Borough and will bring about significant improvements in the services available for victims and perpetrators.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

12. The completion of the Community Safety review and the service improvements have been subject to full consultation with officers from the Council and CDRP and Darlington Partnership.

### **Legal Implications**

13. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

### **Financial Implications**

14. There is no direct financial cost to the Council as a result of this review.

### **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

15. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area.

16. It is expected that the service improvements identified throughout this report will support both the Council and CDRP in making Darlington a safer place to live, work and visit.

### **Council Policy Framework**

17. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

### **Decision Deadline**

18. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

### **Recommendation**

19. It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the progress being made in developing the Council's approach to Community Safety across the Borough.

### **Reason**

20. The recommendation is supported as Community Safety is a key issue both for the Council and it is essential that Cabinet be appraised of developments within the Council and CDRP.

**Lorraine O'Donnell**  
**Assistant Chief Executive**

### **Background Papers**

Background papers are held with the Community Safety Unit

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