
OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION PORTFOLIO

Purpose of Report

1. The following were the main areas of work under my Community and Public Protection Portfolio:-

Supporting People Inspection

2. The Audit Commission inspected the Supporting People Service in April. The purpose of the inspection was to assess the effectiveness of the Supporting People programme in Darlington and in particular:
 - How good the service provided by Darlington Borough Council is.
 - The prospects for the service to improve.
3. The inspectors report was published on 2nd June 2005 and the service has been judged as a two star “good service that has promising prospects for improvement”. Overall the Audit Commission were very impressed with the quality of services being provided for some of the most disadvantaged people in Darlington and highlighted a number of strengths of the service including:
 - The effective mechanisms in place to engage and consult with service users.
 - The range of information about Supporting People available to service users.
 - The Supporting People 5-year strategy setting out the vision and priorities for the future.
 - Progress with the Supporting People service reviews.
 - The support from the Council and members for the programme and that Supporting People are high on the corporate agenda.
 - The well-developed partnership working within Darlington.
3. Of course the Audit Commission highlighted areas for improvement in their report and an Action Plan has been developed to address these issues. However, the successful inspection and report reflects the Council’s commitment to drive up the quality of housing related support services for vulnerable people in Darlington and the hard work of the Supporting People team.

DAISY 2005

4. A very successful Daisy Day was held for the fifth year in the Market Square on 1st July 2005. Darlington Active Independent and Staying Young is a fun, free event organised by the Warden Service Team each year for the over 50's. More than 20 organisations were represented at the event to provide information on a wide range of issues including health, housing, leisure, exercise, employment, falls advice, home adaptations and benefits advice. As important however was that it was an afternoon of fun, live entertainment and dancing.

Tenant Empowerment Officer

5. A new post of Tenant Empowerment Officer has recently been created to support the improved tenant governance arrangements, which were established earlier this year. The Officer will act as the tenant's champion and actively support and encourage Council Officers and other key stakeholders to put tenants issues at the centre of service development and delivery.

New Homes at Lascelles Park

6. On 9th June 2005 I officially opened the new housing scheme at Lascelles Park provided by Home Housing. A total of eighteen much needed family homes, including one designed to wheelchair standards have replaced three outdated blocks of flats, which were no longer in demand.

Anti Social Behaviour/Warden Service

7. A review is currently underway of how the Leisure Service, Arts Service, Youth Service (including detached work) and the Early Intervention Team engage with partners on the anti social behaviour agenda. This review will include:
 - Mapping exercise of what activity already exists on the ground for young people throughout the Borough, provided by a range of agencies.
 - An assessment of where there are any gaps.
 - How to bring together the work carried out by the Detached Youth Workers and Early Intervention Team ensuring that both are working on the same agenda.
 - Identification of external funding opportunities to provide additional resources.
 - Identification of any training needs for existing employees.

3. It is anticipated that the review will be completed by the end of August 2005. The outcome will ensure the Council is best placed to engage with partners on providing appropriate intervention and activity for targeted hot spots for anti social behaviour.

Councillor Bill Dixon
Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Community
and Public Protection