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**OVERVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND  
COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. The following were the main areas of work under my Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio:

**Private Landlords Forum (July 2007)**

2. July's Private Landlords Forum was extremely well attended, attracted by a wide and diverse range of speakers covering a number of presentations. These included presentations by the Police in respect of Door Step Crime, the Anti-Social Behaviour Team promoting their work and the support services available, the Domestic Violence Co-ordinator promoting the advice and support available in often challenging circumstances, financial support and access to affordable housing through Darlington's Bond Assistance, and, financial planning, including Inheritance Tax and estate planning. Display boards with information about Housing Benefits and access to support from Norcare were also available.

**Private Landlords Forum Newsletter**

3. The recent Landlord's Forum Newsletter captures a year of change in private sector housing with the anniversary of the Housing Act 2004 legislation, including the introduction of the Health and Housing Safety Rating System (HHSRS) covering the standard of private sector housing and mandatory licensing for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
4. The Newsletter provides useful updates and information on a wide range of topics such as Home Information Packs (HIPs) whose introduction was initially delayed, but is now being rolled out nationally, the requirements of the smoke free regulations introduced on 1 July 2007, the range of incentives available as part of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme, information about recent enforcement action by the Housing Renewal Team and signposting to other associated support services locally.

**Darlington Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership**

5. In April 2007 the Home Office requested that Darlington CDRP should aim to achieve a 6% reduction of PSA1 by September 2007 based on the year to date position on an October 2006 baseline. It was agreed that the CDRP would aim to achieve this target by setting new targets for Criminal Damage and Theft from Motor Vehicle offences while adopting a 'holding position' on the other crime types that comprise PSA1.

6. The target set for Criminal Damage was a 10% reduction, with an 8% reduction being set for Theft from Motor Vehicle.

### **Headline Performance to July 2007**

7. Up to July 2007 the following reductions were achieved against the September 2007 targets:

<b>Crime Type</b>	<b>Oct 2006 baseline</b>	<b>Target to Sept 07</b>	<b>% Change from baseline</b>
PSA1	7895	7421	-10.5
Criminal damage	3276	2948	-15.8
Theft from vehicle	1659	1526	-12.8

8. The CDRP is to surpass the 6% reduction in PSA1 crime by September 2007.

### **Operational Activity**

9. A summary of operational activity undertaken during the last three months to tackle the current CDRP priorities in regards to theft of vehicles, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour is detailed below.

### **Action Week**

10. A multi-agency Action Week has been carried out in the areas of Skerne Park, South Park, Clifton Road, Victoria Embankment and Bedford Street. An evaluation report of the week is currently being compiled.

### **Vehicle Crime**

11. On 2 July 2007 the Operation Droplet Team was re-launched consisting of 1 Sgt, 2 PC's and 2 DC's. Since that date the team have achieved the following:
  - (a) 32 arrests, resulting in 28 charges and a further 52 offences.
  - (b) Execution of 3 'category A' FTA warrants.
  - (c) 3 breaches of bail conditions on prolific offenders resulting in prison remands.
  - (d) 2 CRASBO applications approved and submitted to the CPS on the two most prolific offenders.
  - (e) Diversion of one prolific offender onto a farming apprentice scheme.
  - (f) Prosecution for no insurance and seizure of motor vehicle.
  - (g) Vehicle crime messages are currently being displayed on the rear of buses on the main routes of Darlington.
  - (h) Funding has been secured to purchase a 'sat nav' tracker system and the use of a 'rat-trap' vehicle. The sat nav has a tracking system installed, which allows it to be allocated at any given time. This tactic will allow for 2 possible outcomes – to locate the original thief or locate an individual responsible for receiving stolen property which would allow the police to build a substantial intelligence case to execute warrants when they wish.

## **Criminal Damage and Anti-Social Behaviour**

12. Activity to address criminal damage and ASB included:

- (a) 66 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued between June and July 2007.
- (b) The Council's Tenancy Enforcement Service has been expanded, with the appointment of an additional Tenancy Enforcement Officer.
- (c) 75 young people have taken part in the Young Caretakers programme and 157 young people have been engaged in the process.
- (d) Anti-Social Behaviour Officers are continuing to collate evidence on offenders of criminal damage in hot spot areas.
- (e) The YOS have recruited a Reparation Worker and will be in post in September 2007.
- (f) Arson awareness training for PCSOs and Beat Officers has taken place on 14th & 21st August 2007.
- (g) An Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy has been drafted and consultation with partners is currently taking place.
- (h) Dispersal of Groups and Closure of Premises Protocols adopted.
- (i) The ASB Team have investigated 21 new cases, issued 4 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and 2 injunctions between June and July 2007.
- (j) Three wireless CCTV Camera's have been purchased and will be deployed in hot spot areas.

## **Darlington Drug and Alcohol Action Team**

13. Darlington DAAT has recently received a score of 4 indicating an excellent performance in a recent audit of planning, commissioning systems and harm reduction services by the Health Care Commission, Department of Health.

**Councillor Bill Dixon**  
**Cabinet Member with Portfolio for**  
**Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety**