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**OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION PORTFOLIO**

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**Purpose of Report**

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

**Supported Lodgings Service**

2. The Supporting People team has successfully awarded a contract for the delivery of a housing related support service for young people leaving care. The Council's Supporting People five year strategy identified the priority need for a supported lodgings service for young people leaving care. Although a range of options currently exist for this client group, no specialist supported lodgings service currently operates within Darlington. The service will provide much needed support to particularly vulnerable young people in their transition from residential care to independent living. A service specification was drafted in consultation with the Council's Leaving Care Team and the Supporting People Core Strategy Development Group. The Commissioning Body identified £50,000 per annum of Supporting People grant for the service. The contract was awarded to Barnardos, who currently operate a similar successful service in Northumberland and have considerable experience in supporting young people in care. The service is due to commence in April 2007 and will enable up to six young people at any one time to access support to help them maintain their tenancies. It has been widely evidenced and accepted that social and economic problems amongst young care leavers, such as unemployment, substance misuse, deprivation and crime are often symptomatic of a lack of appropriate support and housing when leaving residential care. The provision of this new service will play a crucial role in ensuring the Council can provide a full range of housing and support options to all the young people leaving care in Darlington.

**Shared Ownership Scheme at West Park**

3. A partnership with Three Rivers Housing Association and the developers, Bussey and Armstrong has resulted in 28 high quality apartments being made available on the West Park site for sale and Shared Ownership. With values from £93k for a one bed roomed apartment up to £145k for a larger two bed roomed apartment these properties will make a valuable contribution towards meeting the shortfall of affordable homes in Darlington as identified in the Housing Needs Assessment. Purchasers of the 17 shared ownership apartments will acquire 50% of the equity and rent the remaining portion.

## **Energy Efficiency Scheme**

4. Funding of £400k was received the Single Housing Investment Programme (SHIP) to deliver a sub-regional Energy Efficiency Scheme. A contract has recently been signed with TADEA to deliver the programme and lever in additional private sector funding of around £500k. This will represent in total around £300k investment specifically in Darlington. The scheme is targeted at the most vulnerable, fuel poor, and eligibility for grant assistance is calculated on the basis of means testing, vulnerability and the expected increase in household SAP rating by installing the energy efficient improvement measures.

## **Housing Business Plan Projects**

5. Frail and elderly tenants at the sheltered housing scheme at Park Place are benefiting from footpath improvements which will remove potential trip hazards. Other works to the area include re-pointing, roof and guttering reports and the provision of door canopies at an overall cost of around £100k.
6. A block of 18 unpopular flats and bedsits at Stocksmoor Close have been extensively remodelled and refurbished to create ten two bedroomed and two one bedroomed apartments. All ground floor accommodation is wheelchair accessible with level access bathing. All flats have the benefit of new kitchens and bathrooms and energy efficiency gas central heating. The communal areas have been refurbished and redecorated to a high standard and have a new door entry system with access control from each flat as well as a communal digital TV aerial. Externally the bin stores that were previously prone to vandalism have been demolished and re-provided with low level stores protected by secure perimeter fencing and enhanced with landscaping.

## **Demotion Order**

7. A tenant from Redhall has received a serious warning by the Courts for her anti-social behaviour activities and has lost many of her rights as a previously secure tenant. Her tenancy has been demoted and her full rights will not be reinstated unless she improves her behaviour. Further enforcement action will be taken through the Courts if necessary but it is hoped that the Demotion Order will act as a deterrent without the individual losing her home.

## **Darlington DAAT**

8. Darlington DAAT has submitted the initial draft of the Adult Drug Treatment Plan 2007/08 the strategic priorities being achieving value for money in contracting and Treatment Effectiveness in the way in which treatment is delivered. Numbers into treatment are predicted to be on target by April, leaving an increasing lower proportion of problematic drug users in the community.

9. Government Office for the North East have produced the 'North East Alcohol Misuse Statement of Priorities' which is intended to provide an umbrella strategic framework to guide practise across the region. The Darlington Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy is being reviewed in light of this guidance. A stakeholder event planned in February to bring all partners together in an attempt to create greater ownership of the alcohol agenda and a vision for the future.

### **Safer Communities Team and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.**

10. The following section of the report details some key activity in regards to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour within the Borough.

### **Vehicle Crime**

11. The following actions continue to be taken to tackle vehicle crime:
  - (a) The creation of a dedicated team to tackle Vehicle Crime. The team consists of three PC's who are briefed on a daily basis and given ownership of all vehicle related crime investigations. They also target suspects with a view to gathering intelligence, carrying out surveillance and raising the awareness of all partners. The team has obtained five CRASBO's on identified key offenders and another six individuals have served terms of imprisonment. In addition a further six CRASBO applications are pending court with a further eight in preparation.
  - (b) Deployment of decoy vehicles in hotspot areas. As a result of this action four convictions have been secured and a large amount of intelligence gathered. This intelligence has assisted the dedicated team in identifying key suspects.
  - (c) Awareness raising – the partnership has invested significant resources in raising the issue of Vehicle Crime within the Borough. A variety of media channels have been utilised including a radio campaign, local press, the Council's monthly Town Crier magazine, publicity on parking tickets and on local bus networks. In addition, at least two messages per week are sent to over 1345 residents via the "crime ring" and Neighbourhood Watch.
  - (d) Local awareness raising events have and continue to be held in the major shopping outlets including Asda, Morrison's at Morton Park and Sainsbury's. All the Borough's Community Partnerships have been briefed and visits carried out to local schools.
  - (e) Over 400 Smartwater kits have been used to mark valuables and in excess of 2,800 leaflets and stickers have been distributed.
  - (f) Over 50 signs have been placed in the hotspot areas highlighting the problem to vehicle owners.

- (g) Over 10,500 employees have received an electronic flyer giving advice on Vehicle Crime. This is currently being extended to include other employers within the Borough.
- (h) Further work is to be undertaken to maximise the use of the “Crime Ring” to raise awareness of the problem.
- (i) Frontline staff from a range of agencies, including Police, Fire and the Council, have all received training in submitting intelligence regarding Vehicle Crime. In addition, the Council’s CCTV Unit proactively support the Police in specific operations.
- (j) ANPR operations continue to be carried out across the Borough in conjunction with the Council’s CCTV Unit.
- (k) Operation Hawkeye – proactive patrols are being carried out by Police, Uniformed Wardens and other officers, to identify vehicles with valuables left on display. The registered keeper is then sent information alerting them not to leave property on display whilst their vehicle is unattended. Since July 2006 over 344 vehicle owners have been provided with advice as a result of this operation.
- (l) The YOS continue to run Wise Drive events for Young People.
- (m) Hotspots continue to be discussed at intelligence meetings on a fortnightly basis and resources deployed accordingly. Leaflets are to be distributed during the next few weeks in the Lascelles and Bank Top wards (current hot spots) to raise awareness of the problem.

## **Theft**

12. The following actions continue to be taken to tackle theft:

- (a) Awareness raising – an event was held at Asda Darlington, towards the end of 2006, where more than 100 cycles were issued with marking kits. Winter assemblies were held at Primary Schools (nine schools took part - 2500 pupils). These sessions aimed to raise awareness of the importance of putting bikes safely away when not in use.
- (b) Regular input at Brownies and Cubs takes place with an aim to engage and empower young people to earn a Crime Reduction badge.
- (c) Through existing Neighbourhood Watch contacts ultra violet marking kits have been made available, including registration cards providing the opportunity to record serial numbers of bikes.
- (d) The Christmas issue of the Council’s Town Crier magazine included a section on cycle security encouraging property marking and highlighting the importance of keeping a record of serial numbers.

- (e) The Shed safe initiative aimed at reducing theft of cycles from sheds and garages by providing a cost effective solution to alarming these premises has been carried out. Excellent community involvement in the Eastern area of Darlington has led to this being expanded to the whole Borough over the coming two months. Extra shed alarms have been ordered and these will be distributed in the Pierremont area due to a rise in shed and garage burglaries. Alarms will continue to be distributed in hot spot areas as they emerge.
- (f) Cycle safety officers from DBC, are currently distributing security advice leaflets to students that they are working with on road safety projects.
- (g) A variety of crime prevention posters targeting ipod thefts have been ordered and will be distributed to all schools and colleges within Darlington.

### **Criminal Damage**

13. Activity to address criminal damage includes:

- (a) CDRP Action Planning day held with partners and Government Office.
- (b) In 2006 the partnership participated in a County Durham and Darlington awareness raising campaign “Don’t Damage Your Future” which included a wide spread poster and radio campaign across the Borough. The poster campaign is ongoing.
- (c) The Council’s Town Crier magazine has been used to raise awareness of the problem. Further articles are planned.
- (d) Street Safe multi agency action days have been completed in problematic areas. Further action days/weeks are to be conducted.
- (e) Truancy sweeps have and continue to be undertaken.
- (f) 23 Junior Schools and seven Secondary Schools have all received advice on Criminal Damage. The Police School Liaison Officer is currently developing a further awareness raising campaign with schools.
- (g) The Uniformed Wardens continue to target problematic areas linked to ASB.
- (h) A formal warning scheme is being developed in conjunction with the ASB Team to work with those involved in Criminal Damage.
- (i) Targeted Youth Work is being delivered in problematic areas e.g. in partnership with the Church youth based activities are being delivered in North Road (JA1/JA2 Beat) which is a problematic area.
- (j) The Youth Service has aligned resources into each of the Geographical Problem Solving areas; locality bases are being established.

(k) Funding has been secured to develop further Positive Activities for Young People.

(l) The YOS continue to run reparation projects for offenders.

## **Violent Crime**

14. Activity to address violent crime includes:

(a) Re-alignment of Police and Uniformed Warden shift patterns to maximise resources at peak times resulting in higher visibility in key locations. Further work is ongoing in regards to this to ensure a consistent approach to the night-time economy.

(b) Multi agency visits are carried out at licensed premises developing relations with licensees.

(c) Challenge 21 was launched on 15 December 2006; 258 out of 263 premises agreed to voluntarily adopt the scheme.

(d) Pub Watch has recently been re-launched and now covers the majority of Town Centre licensed premises.

(e) The partnership recently ran a publicity campaign for the period November 2006 – January 2007 to raise awareness of the potential consequences of alcohol fuelled Violent Crime. This campaign consisted of adverts on Century Radio and poster displays on regularly used and relevant bus shelters and the interior of buses.

(f) Violent Crime messages continue to be delivered in schools by the Police School Liaison Officer.

(g) A 24/7 Domestic Abuse support service is being developed within Children's Services – four additional posts.

(h) An officer has been appointed within Children's Services specifically to work with Children and Young People in schools on issues relating to Domestic Abuse.

(i) Domestic Abuse Training delivered to all frontline Police and Housing Officers.

(j) A Sanctuary Scheme is being developed within the Borough.

(k) Domestic Abuse media and publicity materials are being reviewed and developed further.

## **Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan**

15. Some of the activity to tackle anti-social behaviour includes:

- (a) Geographical Problem Solving Groups being developed.
- (b) Dispersal Order to address ongoing problems of ASB in hotspot location (Nightingale Avenue)
- (c) Full range of ASBOs, CRASBOs and Injunctions utilised against offenders.
- (d) Crack House Closure Order obtained.
- (e) Multi-Agency StreetSafe operations completed in hotspot areas. Further weeks planned for 2007.
- (f) Five CCTV cameras installed in problematic areas.
- (g) 445 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued for Litter, Graffiti and Dog Fouling since April 2006.
- (h) Proactive approach to motor cycle nuisance adopted by Uniformed Wardens
- (i) Uniformed Wardens shift patterns changed to cover peak periods.
- (j) Safer Schools project being developed at Eastbourne.
- (k) Parenting Practitioner to be appointed to support families.
- (l) Family Intervention Project is due to be in place by March 2007.

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