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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:

**Older People**

2. GEM - Housing Services via the Warden Link Team have delivered the GEM gentle exercise programme for many years, the scheme is very successful and there is well documented evidence to prove the programme delivers a great number of benefits these include opportunities to increase mobility and physical well being and time to socialise. Following a recent review, the activities on offer are to be increased. Further training is being delivered to the Warden Link Team and we are now able to offer, indoor bowls, table tennis, curling, floor lacrosse, tri golf and boccia. It is hoped that these new activities will invigorate the sessions and appeal to both male and female service users. A number of taster sessions have been held and have been thoroughly enjoyed with lots of positive feedback. During the warmer weather, some of the GEM sessions will be delivered outdoors in the grounds of the Extra Care and Sheltered Housing.
3. Care staff employed within Adult Services are currently receiving GEM training and will help to deliver the GEM sessions in the Extra care accommodation, this will allow enhanced support for tenants who are more frail.
4. Discussions are ongoing with the PCT and in the near future it is hoped that we will be able to offer some training in Otago, this is a programme that is delivered at present by the Hundens Rehabilitation Unit for people who have fallen or at risk of falling. Scheme Managers will then be able to encourage tenants to continue with the exercises they have learned at the Hundens Centre.

**Assistive Technology**

5. Housing and Adult Services working together with partners Tynetec and Goldshield have set up an assistive technology room at Rosemary Court. The room has examples of the assistive technology available such as bed sensors, falls detectors, door sensors and is being used as a training room for Adult, Housing Services and health professionals. Officers are able to see the equipment in use and learn first hand its benefits
6. Thereafter interested clients and their families will be able to see the devices and how they work prior to installation.

## **Housing Investment Programme 2007/08**

7. The annual housing investment programme for 2007/08 has delivered measurable improvements to the quality of life of many of our tenants. Council homes have benefited from a £10m investment in 2007/08 and further improvements are to be programmed for 2008/09 to increase the benefits to more of our tenants. The Council has engaged with new partnering Contractors such as Wates and Mitie who have brought with them additional qualities and expertise, to enhance the quality and efficiency of existing programmed works.
8. A total of 350 properties have benefited from internal planned maintenance work which includes kitchens, bathrooms and rewiring. The thermal efficiency of 441 properties has been improved through heating replacements, loft insulation works and other energy saving measures to help reduce household fuel bills. 150 properties have benefited from environmental work such as improved footpaths, fencing and verge hardening for improved traffic safety and refurbishment works are underway at Branksome Hall Drive. Linden Court has been demolished and a purpose built sheltered scheme is under construction on the same site, which will meet the needs and aspirations of older people for many years to come, increasing their independence and well being.

## **Enforcement/Waste**

9. One case is currently pending court dates against businesses carrying waste and failing to have a valid waste carriers licence. Three cases have already been to Court with results ranging from conditional discharge to fines of £450 plus costs.
10. The offender for the double-glazing waste found at Forge Way, Darlington has moved on but there are ongoing enquiries to try to trace the person.
11. In relation to the fly tip of household waste at Lingfield, interviews have now been conducted and a prosecution case under Household Duty of Care is pending at Court.
12. The fly tip of garden waste west of Sadberge is also pending Court for fly tipping and failure to produce waste carriers licence.
13. A fly tip at Amdega is currently under investigation. CCTV footage has been examined but could not be enhanced sufficiently for vehicle details. Enquiries ongoing with suspect vehicle.
14. A resident witnessed furniture being thrown from a rear yard in Cartmell Terrace. An interview with a suspect has been delayed due to a requirement for legal advice.
15. A Litter Clearance Notice has been served on a business in respect of an untidy perimeter. If no compliance with 28 days, a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued.

## **Enforcement/Dogs**

16. Several warning letters have been sent to owners of stray dogs that have been reclaimed.

## Enforcement/Vehicles

17. Two further Fixed Penalty Notices and one Formal Warning have been issued in Whessoe Road in relation to advertising vehicles for sale on the highway.

## Darlington Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

### Headline Performance at January 2008

18. At January 2008, the following reductions have been made against the March 2008 targets:

Crime Type	March 2004 baseline	Target to March 2008	Latest 12 months	% Change from baseline
<b>PSA1</b>	6987	-21.4%	6101	-13%
Common Assault	540	-20%	217	-60%
Criminal Damage	2574	-25%	2437	-5%
Burglary	606	-25%	474	-22%
Robbery	98	-10%	66	-33%
Theft from Person	123	-10%	120	-2%
Theft from Motor Vehicle	1637	-25%	1151	-30%
Theft of Cycle	351	-25%	224	-36%
Theft of Motor Vehicle	598	-20%	410	-31%
Vehicle Interference	108	-10%	111	+3%
Wounding	352	-10%	893	+154%

19. The CDRP continues to perform well across the majority of crime types. The impact of changes in crime recording has significantly influenced the figures for wounding offences.
20. Performance with regard to domestic abuse remains a concern as at December 2007 there were 1589 incidents recorded to police compared to 1673 in the same period for 2006. However, the number of repeats victims has increased from 667 in 2006 to 722 in 2007. Work is ongoing through the CDRP to implement measures to reduce victimisation including the establishment of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to deal with those cases of greatest risk.

### Voluntary Target to March 2008

21. In October 2007 the CDRP set a voluntary target to further reduce PSA1 Crime by 10% by March 2008, taking the year to date crime at September 2007 as the baseline.
22. Figures to January 2008 show that PSA1 Crime has fallen by 8% from 6642 crimes in September 2007 to 6101 in January 2008.

## **Community Safety Plan 2008 - 2011**

23. During the last quarter the CDRP has completed a Strategic Assessment of Community Safety issues impacting upon the Borough. The Assessment included detailed analysis of the Sustainable Community Strategy widespread consultation, which was carried out with the community, partners and other agencies
24. The Strategic Assessment findings were used to determine CDRP priorities for 2008-2011. The priorities identified are:
  - (a) Anti-Social Behaviour
  - (b) Reducing Offending
  - (c) Violent Crime and Disorder in the Night Time Economy
  - (d) Domestic Abuse
  - (e) Public Reassurance
25. Reducing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol cuts across all themes.
26. The priorities are included in the new Community Safety Plan 2008 - 2011 that will be considered by Cabinet.

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