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

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**Purpose of the Report**

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

**Street Scene Information**

2. Members will recall that changes were made to the cemetery and crematorium provision in late 2008 with introduction of a dedicated team to look after and maintain the three cemeteries and the crematorium. To date, significant progress has been made within the cemeteries and crematorium in relation to upkeep and appearance and a number of compliments have been received by the service in this regard.
3. An exercise was undertaken earlier this year to recruit 10 permanent members of staff and 15 temporary staff for the summer period. Both the recruitment of the permanent and temporary staff has now been undertaken with employees either now in place or are about to, pending CRB checks being received.
4. Members will be aware of forthcoming changes to the Anti Social Behaviour/Environmental Crime Unit and as a result of these changes, the Environmental Crime Team are to transfer to Street Scene Services to allow for more integration between the two elements leading to more effective enforcement being undertaken around environmental issues such as litter, dog fouling, placing waste out for collection on the wrong day, etc.

**Anti Social Behaviour**

5. An Interim ASBO served on a male for persistently causing annoyance and nuisance to members of the public by presenting himself as a member of the local authority to enforce license provisions and gain entry to various on-license premises, has been adjourned again pending mental health assessments. On one occasion the male stole items from an establishment during a false visit and has also been accused of wasting police time, posing as a security guard in a number of outlets, carrying false ID and wearing a radio and ear piece and claiming to be investigating covert matters that would allow him access to staffing areas.
6. A full two-year Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) has been served against an 18 year-old male due to the persistent nuisance he caused to residents of Skerne Park by riding various mini motos, off road bikes and motor scooters at high speed and in a dangerous manner around the estate. As a disqualified driver, the 18 year-old openly sped around the estate, riding on pavements and grassed areas with no concern for other road users or

pedestrians, often with passengers and wearing no helmet and creating a noise disturbance throughout the day and night. He is also reported to be regularly seen trespassing on private property and residential drives, looking into car windows and inspecting various vehicles during the evening. He is now subject to a full two-year ASBO which prevents him from:

- (a) Behaving in **any** manner which causes or is capable of causing harassment, alarm or distress to anyone.
  - (b) Trespassing in or on any private property or land within the Borough of Darlington.
  - (c) Encouraging anyone else to act in a manner which causes or is capable of causing harassment, alarm or distress to anyone.
  - (d) Driving or riding on any mechanically propelled vehicle on a public footpath pavement or park area within Darlington.
7. A County Court Injunction has been obtained against a 38 year-old male, of no fixed abode. Evidence was presented to the court relating to the appalling behaviour of this male over the last 12 months, who caused a great amount of alarm and distress to residents of Hawkesbury Mews, Darlington, by regularly sleeping rough and urinating in their property doorways, often leaving empty glass bottles and litter wherever he had been. Additionally, the male regularly attended Darlington Memorial Hospital where he verbally abused and threatened hospital staff, members of the public and hospital security and openly drank alcohol in the hospital grounds and deliberately caused a nuisance to hospital staff with nuisance calls and false injuries. He is now subject to a 12-months Injunction that prevents him from entering any part of the hospital site or Hawkesbury Mews. He faces up to two years in prison if he breaches the Order.
8. The Council's approach to dealing with anti social behaviour has now changed and the Uniformed Warden Service has been replaced with the Anti Social Behaviour Team. This team consists of an Anti Social Behaviour Manager, four Anti Social Behaviour Officer and four Anti Social Behaviour Assistants. This team will focus on more persistent problems of anti social behaviour, putting in place interventions and enforcement action as required. High visible patrols will still take place in line with the priorities of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.
9. Residents can still use the existing telephone number (07816 820048) up to 10pm and these calls will be received by members of staff in the CCTV Control Room. A member of staff will then offer the individual the opportunity of an appointment with an Anti Social Behaviour Officer at a time that is convenient to them, whereby the issues can be discussed and appropriate actions/ interventions put in place should they be required, or the member of staff will use CCTV, if available, in the area the resident is ringing about to monitor the problem and where appropriate, contact the Police to deal with the situation.
10. The 'Summer Nights' campaign won a National PR Award for best not-for profit campaign and has now concluded. Multi-agency attention is now focused on the Borough-wide 'Nightsafe' operation. Tackling violence in the night time economy, alcohol related hospital admissions, underage alcohol, sale and consumption and general youth and disorder, Nightsafe is a multi-agency initiative managed via the CDRP Problem Solving Group (PSG) between Police, Fire Services, Youth Services, Anti Social Behaviour Team and the DAAT s. This initiative includes a multi-agency media campaign incorporating the use of bus backs advertising; local press coverage and a number of community roadshows throughout the summer.

### **Additional Handyperson funding assists more vulnerable, elderly, and disabled people to remain safely in their homes**

11. We have successfully secured additional funding from Communities and Local Government over the next two years. In 2009-10 the Council has been awarded £50k and in 2010-11 £70k. The additional funding will provide a broader range of services not currently provided through the Handyperson Service (operating via the Care and Repair Home Improvement Agency) as well as increasing capacity. The service is targeted at vulnerable groups, particularly, the elderly, or, disabled, and, can assist with the delivery of minor improvements to a home at low or nil cost to improve the health, well being and safety of residents.

### **Additional Homes and Communities Agency funding for Hanover bungalows provides for affordable homes for rent**

12. The Homes and Communities Agency have allocated additional funding of £284k for 7 bungalows at Blackton Grove managed by Hanover Housing which are being converted from shared ownership to 100% rented. All allocations of the properties will be nominated through Darlington Borough Council's Housing Options team through the new Tees Valley Choice Based Lettings Policy.

### **Priority Appointment System puts Urgent Customers First.**

13. A new priority customer service has been introduced by the Private Sector Housing Team to ensure that all complaints are dealt with in priority order and customers receive urgent assistance when required. Based on health and safety risks private tenants and home owners will now be given a priority appointment time depending upon how urgent their complaint is. Customers with heating breakdowns in winter, dangerous electrical installations or blocked drains will receive a visit from the team within two working days and will be given a Priority 1 appointment.
14. Customers with less urgent cases will be given a lower priority appointment of at least five days. These cases could include a heating breakdown in summer and property conditions that are likely to deteriorate if left but are not urgent. Customers reporting non urgent cases will be given a 10 day or more appointment. These are for cases where the risks to health and safety are low and could include empty properties that are secure and pose no risk to the general public and Landlord Accreditation Inspections.
15. Early indications have shown that both customers and staff are happy with the new system and it also enables private landlords to have more time to rectify repairs before a visit from the council.

### **Forum Forges Partnership with National Landlords Association**

16. The first Private Landlord Forum of the calendar year held on the 3 March was very well attended by over 60 private landlords. Two agenda items in particular captured the interest of private landlords. These being, Choice Based Lettings (CBL) and a summary of the Rugg Review of Private Rented Housing. John Lighten MBE of the National Landlords Association (NLA) delivered his presentation on the Rugg Review of Private Sector Housing. The Rugg Review has made a number of recommendations for Government to consider changing within the private rented sector and may form part of a Green Paper later in the year. Many private landlords praised the Rugg Review for its positive appraisal of the

private rented sector. Further details on the Rugg Review can be found at:  
[www.york.ac.uk/inst/chp/publications/pdf/execsumweb.pdy](http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/chp/publications/pdf/execsumweb.pdy)

### **Bridge to Home (B2H) offers support and accommodation for vulnerable homeless people**

17. The Bridge to Home (B2H) project was officially launched in April 2009 with the appointment of a dedicated project worker and some early successes in engaging with private landlords to increase the supply of affordable housing for the vulnerable homeless. B2H is a multi-partnership jointly funded project involving the Council, the 700 Club, NHS Darlington, CAB, and the homeless charity Firststop.
18. Clients hoping to access the service will be subject to an assessment of their requirements, and, will be required to raise £100 to contribute towards a bond. The remaining bond will then be provided by the B2H project and through an agreed savings programme with the client.
19. B2H offers access to quality private rented homes subject to Darlington's successful private landlords accreditation scheme. To date, one client has been matched with a new home and is due to move in shortly, and, eight further properties have been identified for future lets.
20. The Mayors Fund has also acknowledged the value of this service and the role it plays in tackling the damaging effects of homelessness, with a donation of £5k on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

### **The Housing Capital Investment Programme 2009-10**

21. Cabinet approved an ambitious investment programme for housing on 31st March 2009 delivering a total of £12.6M worth of housing and environmental improvements to Darlington.
22. The programme will support continued investment in sheltered schemes for the elderly with the expected completion of the new Dinsdale Court in October 2009 and further sheltered scheme improvements starting at both Windsor Court and Branksome Hall Drive.
23. The investment programme will also continue to deliver new kitchens, bathrooms and heating replacements on a rolling programme of renewal. In addition, environmental and external improvements such as fencing, footpaths, roofing and energy efficiency works will be extended taking advantage of a Government initiative to bring forward some Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) investment from 2010-11 to 2009-10.

### **Darlington Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Durham Police Authority**

24. The North East Alcohol Office, now branded 'Balance', was launched in February 09, providing a lead on social marketing, consistency of service provision and practice across the region and a focus for lobbying government on alcohol related issues. The DAAT has been successful in a bid to become an Early Implementation site around NI39 (reducing alcohol related admissions to hospital), drawing an additional £150k into Darlington for 2008-09 and a further £200k for 09-10 and 10-11. This will fund a pilot project to put a paramedic on the streets at key times with the police and other agencies, a Matron Management post to co-ordinate and implement an alcohol action plan in hospital settings; large scale training of GPs and other generic staff in adult services to screen, assess and deliver Alcohol Brief Interventions at Tiers 1 & 2; homelessness and housing support for adults and young people; Alcohol Arrest Referral; education and awareness raising projects

and a thorough, independent evaluation of the above projects and implementation of the Community Alcohol Service.

25. Provision is planned for 09-10 or 10-11 – subject to confirmation of additional PCT AOP funding – for additional services for the roll-out of Alcohol Treatment Requirements for adult offenders with alcohol issues and a rolling alcohol programme for non-offenders alongside. Also, for additional nursing capacity in the Community Alcohol Service and training and performance support within the DAAT.
26. Darlington DAAT worked in partnership with the Police over a period of time before, during and after the recent drugs raids, to ensure that anyone affected by the raids requiring support, advice and/or treatment for substance misuse issues received the services they required. Working in this joined up way enabled services to be put in place in a timely and effective manner and displayed high degrees of organisational trust between police and provider agencies.
27. Between April 2008 and February 2009 there were 8,261 crimes recorded by the Police in Darlington, which is a 4% reduction in the same period last year (April – Feb 2008, 8625 crimes).
28. For the rolling 12 months up to 28 February 2009 crime reduced by 4% compared to the same period in 2007/08. There were 9,645 recorded crimes in Darlington between March 2007 and February 2008. For the same months in 2008/09 this fell to 9,249, a reduction of 396 crimes (4%).

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

29. The priorities identified within the plan are:
  - (a) Anti-Social Behaviour;
  - (b) Reducing Offending;
  - (c) Violent Crime and Disorder in the Night Time Economy;
  - (d) Domestic Abuse and
  - (e) Public Reassurance
30. Reducing the harm caused by Drugs and Alcohol forms a cross cutting theme across all priorities. For each of the priority themes specific delivery plans have been developed, each plan being progressed through an identified plan owner. Actions within the plans around Drugs and Alcohol have been updated following stakeholder events in January and are largely completed or moving onto implementation and monitoring stages. New actions have now been included.

## Crime and Disorder Performance against Targets

31. The CDRP targets are:

Description	Ref
Serious Acquisitive Crime	NI 16
Perceptions of ASB	NI 17
Assault with Injury	NI 20
Repeat Incidents of Domestic Abuse	NI 32
Alcohol Related Hospital Admission Rates	NI 39
Drug Users in Effective Treatment	NI 40

32. There are a number of data collection issues that are currently being progressed locally and nationally. In addition, some indicators will not be in place until 2009/10.

### Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)

33. Serious Acquisitive Crime includes Domestic Burglary, Robbery, Theft of Motor Vehicle and Theft from Motor Vehicle. The CDRP target is to reduce SAC by 8.2% by 2010/11.

34. The table below shows overall performance based on the **last rolling 12 months**:

2008 Baseline	2008/09 Target	12 Months to 28/02/09	% Change
1933	1888	1759	- 7%

### Theft of Motor Vehicle (TOMV)

35. For the rolling 12 months to February 2009 there was a 17% reduction in TOMV with 68 less crimes being recorded between March 2008 and February 2009 (337 crimes) compared to 405 crimes between March 2007 and February 2008.

36. Comparative quarterly data also shows an improving trend with 68 crimes being recorded between December 2008 and February 2009. A reduction of 29% or 28 crimes compared to the previous quarter.

37. The detection rate at the end of quarter three (December 2008) was 12.8%.

### Theft from Motor Vehicles (TFMV)

38. For the rolling 12 months to February 2009 there was a 27% reduction in TFMV with 294 less crimes being recorded between March 2008 and February 2009 (796 crimes) compared to 1,090 crimes between March 2007 and February 2008.

39. During the last quarter (December 2008 to February 2009) there were 238 recorded crimes equating to a 36% increase (63 crimes) compared to the previous quarter (175 crimes).

40. The detection rate at the end of quarter three (December 2008) was 2.5%.

## **Robbery**

41. For the rolling 12 months to February 2009 there were 67 recorded crimes which are six more offences compared to the same period in 2007/08.
42. The detection rate at the end of quarter three (December 2008) was 69.2%.

## **Domestic Burglary**

43. For the rolling 12 months to February 2009 there was a 19% increase in domestic burglary with 89 more crimes being recorded between March 2008 and February 2009 (559 crimes) compared to 470 crimes between March 2007 and February 2008.
44. During the last quarter performance remained a concern with 163 crimes being recorded between December 2008 and February 2009, which equated to 50 more offences compared to the previous quarter.
45. The detection rate at the end of quarter three (December 2008) was 28.6%.
46. The Police Offender Management Unit, through the Prolific and Other Priority Offender Scheme continue to target those individuals who cause the greatest risk in terms of burglary, in February 2009 the detection rate was 46%.

## **Perceptions of ASB - NI 17**

47. This indicator measures the percentage of people with high levels of perceived anti-social behaviour within the Borough.
48. The Place Survey 2008 indicated that 17.1% of people perceive there to be a high level of anti-social behaviour in their area, which is an improvement on previous general survey results.
49. The CDRP have set a target to reduce this to 14.1% by 2011.
50. Between April 2008 and February 2009 there were 10,241 incidents recorded by police compared to 9,800 the same period in the previous year, an increase of 4.5% (441 incidents).
51. The number of recorded alcohol related ASB incidents has decreased with 1,904 incidents being recorded between April and February 2009 compared to 2,652 in the same period in the previous year, a 28% reduction.

## **Assault with Less Serious Injury (AWLSI) - NI 20**

52. This includes actual bodily harm and other injury and racially/religiously aggravated actual bodily harm.
53. For the rolling 12 months to February 2009 there were 614 incidents recorded by police which equates to 225 less crimes (27%) than recorded in the previous 12 months.

54. The target to March 2009 is 746 crimes against a baseline of 789 crimes. Hence current performance is ahead of baseline by 22% and ahead of target by 18%.
55. As part of the refresh of the Local Area Agreement the target for AWLSI has been reset to a 4% reduction by 2011 based on a proxy April 2009 baseline of 593 crimes.

### **Repeat Incidents of Domestic Abuse - NI 32**

56. This measure comes into place in 2009/10 and relates to the repeat victimisation rate of those individuals supported through the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
57. Since the MARAC went “live” in December 2008 there have been 9 cases referred. To date none of these 9 cases have been repeat victims.
58. Between April 2008 and February 2009 there were 1855 domestic abuse incidents recorded by Police compared to 1482 in the same period for the previous year, this should be viewed as a positive result, with more people coming forward to report incidents. An increase of 25.1%.

### **Alcohol Related Admission Rates - NI 39**

59. This data is provided in arrears and was not available for inclusion in this report.

### **Drug Users in Effective Treatment – NI 40**

60. At September 2008 there were 432 problematic drug users in treatment ahead of the 416 target to March 2009.

### **Substance Misuse**

61. The Community Alcohol Service is now operational and a formal launch will take place in September 2009. Awareness raising roadshows are underway with GP’s, practice nurses and practice managers to ensure that appropriate referrals are made. The care pathway is being refined and developed with links with mainstream services and significantly third sector organisations.
62. A Family Intervention Worker was recruited in March and this appointment will complement the multi-disciplinary team.
63. A training strategy is in place with regards to the delivery of Brief Interventions and this will be rolled out into GP surgeries.

### **Prolific and Other Priority Offending Rate – NI 30**

64. In 2007/08, 23 PPO’s committed 134 offences. The CDRP target was to reduce this to 94 offences by March 2009. Up to December 2008 the 23 PPOs had been convicted on committing 29 offences.



65. A new PPO cohort has been selected for 2009/10, with a reduction target of 23% against a baseline of 121 convictions.

**Councillor Bill Dixon**  
**Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio**