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

Purpose of the Report

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

Street Scene Information

2. Members will be aware of recent information in the Street Scene Weekly Update advising of additional weed growth now that we are no longer able to use residual weedkiller. This means that only those weeds that the weedkiller makes direct contact with are now killed at the point of treatment. Further weed growth subsequent to weedspraying now occurs and Street Scene are currently liaising with subcontractors with regard to the best way of managing weed growth.
3. Successful recruitment has recently been undertaken in a number of areas within Street Scene. Additional Enforcement Officers, Area Team Leaders and Support Services staff are all now in place and this will only assist in the efficient and effective running of the service.
4. Members will be aware that issues surrounding litter are often raised throughout the year. Street Scene Services are therefore launching a new litter initiative with the priorities being the town centre/access corridors, rural roads/car litter, publicity campaigns, education awareness and clean neighbourhoods. It is hoped that the combination of the above will see a reduction in levels of litter throughout the Borough in the forthcoming year.

Anti Social Behaviour

5. Since the last report, the Anti Social Behaviour Team have issued seven Acceptable Behaviour Agreements including agreements not to:
 - (a) Damage property
 - (b) Congregate in groups
 - (c) Drink alcohol
 - (d) Throw missiles
 - (e) Engage in anti social behaviour or behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm and distress
6. The team will regularly monitor the behaviour of these individuals and if necessary will take further action including Anti Social Behaviour Orders.

7. In May's Overview of Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio report it was reported that: "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 above individual has breached the terms of his Injunction on several occasions and the Anti Social Behaviour Team are attending court on 3 September when committee proceedings will take place.

Compass

9. Compass the Tees Valley Choice Based Lettings System went live in early July. There are presently around 1500 applicants registered with Darlington as part of the scheme. Every applicant is placed in a band and allowed to make up to 3 bids each week for the properties that are advertised. Vacant Council Housing and Registered Social Housing property is advertised weekly. The properties are advertised from Thursday morning and close at midnight the following Tuesday. The adverts are displayed in the Customer Services Centre windows and are viewable when the office is closed. Compass is available on the internet and applicants can place bids in person by using a coupon, over the telephone, by text or the internet. Applicants who ask or who are identified as vulnerable can be assisted to make bids.
10. The system has been positively received and applicants have commented that it is good to be able to see what vacancies there are, what their position is when they bid and they like the weekly report that tells them what the outcome was of the previous bidding cycle. The system is very transparent and is much easier for applicants to now appreciate the limited availability of Council housing so that they are increasingly interested in exploring other options.
11. Compass has also been welcomed by Registered Social Landlords and advocates and statutory agencies working with applicants. To further promote the use of the internet, Housing Officers are working with staff at the Central Library and holding a weekly advice session. Applicants are allowed up to 30 minutes free use of the internet each day. Over the coming months Officers will be working with private landlords who are accredited with the Council and it is our intention to advertise their properties on the system in due course, thereby giving applicants increased housing options.

Whinfield Fencing and Footpath Works

12. Work to renew the rear fencing and footpaths to properties at Whinfield is now complete. 78 properties benefitted from the work which cost £140k and was undertaken by our partner Seymours. Tenants have welcomed the improvements which have provided 1.8m

close boarded fencing and new garden paths and drying areas to the flats.

Tenant Engagement Officer

13. A Tenant Engagement Officer has been appointed within Housing Services to promote and raise awareness of tenants signing up to home contents insurance. The post is funded by the Department of Works and Pension (DWP) following a joint tendering process with organisations from the Financial Inclusion, North East and North West England initiative. The post is already proving effective and the number of tenants benefitting from the scheme is steadily increasing.

Enablement Service

14. A recently established Enablement Service is being provided by Housing Services and Supporting People to all residents in Darlington over the age of 55. The Enablement Service is a short term help service (maximum of 12 weeks) which helps and supports residents to improve skills, promote independence and well-being, improve aspirations and achieve goals. Referrals to the service can be made directly or through a third party.

Customer Service Excellence

15. Housing Services and Housing Benefits have been awarded the Customer Service Excellence Award for the second year in succession by EMQC Limited, the company which assesses organisations for Customer Service Excellence (previously known as the Chartermark). Darlington was among some of the first teams in the country to be awarded the Customer Service Excellence Award, and have been accredited with the award based on the ability to work with partners to meet customer needs and contact hard to reach groups. Five criteria: customer insight, culture of the organisation, information and access, delivery and timeliness and quality of the service had to be met.

Key Point of Access

16. From 10th August 2009, the Council, in partnership with First Stop Darlington, has established a new service for homeless people called the Key Point of Access (KPA). The KPA will be the access point for all people who are homeless or find themselves at risk of homelessness and in need of advice or hostel accommodation.
17. The objectives of the KPA are to:
 - (a) Provide comprehensive advice and guidance to all customers who request housing and support assistance, due to being homeless or being at risk of homelessness.
 - (b) Provide the customer with options as to how they move forward with their situation
 - (c) Provide a contact and assessment function that seeks to resolve and prevent homelessness in the first instance
 - (d) Conduct an initial standardised needs and risk assessment to identify all their support needs

- (e) Manage access routes and referrals into Supporting People funded homeless hostels
 - (f) Ensure that customers are referred to the housing and/or support service that will best meet their needs, or provide alternatives where the most appropriate option is not currently available
 - (g) Reconnect people who have support networks outside of Darlington back to their local area when appropriate
 - (h) Develop a resource facility as a “hub” of information on all homelessness issues, and collect data on people moving on from hostel accommodation
18. Crucial to the success of the project is that it has been set up as a partnership between First Stop and the Council’s Housing Options team. First Stop is a local charity who specialise in giving support and advice to vulnerable people who have a housing need. Having two diverse access points for customers will give them choice and enable them to seek support from whichever organisation they feel more comfortable with. Both access points will operate the same service.
19. The establishment of the KPA was one of the main findings from the strategic review of homeless services, funded by Supporting People. The Supporting People Team are currently preparing for a major tendering exercise for all homeless services, with new contracts starting from April 2010. It is anticipated that the KPA will support access to all these new services, from that date.

Darlington Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Durham Police Authority

20. For the rolling 12 months up to 30 June 2009 crime reduced by 4% compared to the same period in 2007/08. There were 9,440 recorded crimes in Darlington between July 2007 and June 2008. For the same months in 2008/09 this fell to 9,051, a reduction of 389 crimes (4%).

Community Safety Plan 2008-2011

21. 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
 - (e) Public Reassurance
22. Reducing the harm caused by Drugs and Alcohol forms a cross cutting theme across all priorities.

Crime and Disorder Performance against Targets

Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)

23. 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.
24. The table below shows overall performance based on the **last rolling 12 months**:

2008 Baseline	2009/10 Target	12 Months to 30/06/09	% Change
1933	1833	1745	- 5%

Theft of Motor Vehicle (TOMV)

25. For the rolling 12 months to June 2009 there was a 17% reduction in TOMV with 64 less crimes being recorded between July 2008 and June 2009 (313 crimes) compared to 377 crimes between July 2007 and June 2008
26. Comparative quarterly data also shows an improving trend with 59 crimes being recorded between April and June 2009, representing a reduction of 25% or 20 crimes compared to the previous quarter

Theft from Motor Vehicles (TFMV)

27. For the rolling 12 months to June 2009 there was a 2% increase in TFMV with 14 more crimes being recorded between July 2008 and June 2009 (837 crimes) compared to 823 crimes between July 2007 and June 2008.
28. During the last quarter (April-June 2009) there were 223 recorded crimes equating to an 18% decrease (50 crimes) compared to the previous quarter (273 crimes).

Robbery

29. For the rolling 12 months to June 2009 there were 65 recorded crimes which is 4 more offences compared to the same period in 2007/08.

Domestic Burglary

30. For the rolling 12 months to June 2009 there was a 10% increase in domestic burglary with 46 more crimes being recorded between July 2008 and June 2009 (530 crimes) compared to 484 crimes between July 2007 and June 2008.
31. During the last quarter (April-June 2009) 118 crimes were recorded, a reduction of 23% (35 offences) against the previous quarter.

Perceptions of ASB - NI 17

32. This indicator measures the percentage of people with high levels of perceived anti-social behaviour within the Borough.
33. 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.

34. The CDRP have set a target to reduce this to 14.1% by 2011.
35. Between April and June 2009 there were 3,514 incidents recorded by police compared to 2,877 over the same period in the previous year, an increase of 22% (637 incidents).
36. The number of recorded alcohol related ASB incidents has decreased with 565 incidents being recorded between April and June 2009 compared to 867 over the same period in the previous year, a 35% reduction.

Assault with Less Serious Injury (AWLSI) - NI 20

37. This includes actual bodily harm and other injury and racially/religiously aggravated actual bodily harm.
38. For the rolling 12 months to June 2009 there were 602 incidents recorded by police which equates to 166 fewer crimes (22%) than recorded in the previous 12 months.
39. 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. The target to March 2010 is therefore 581 crimes.
40. Between April and June 2009, 151 offences were recorded against a target of 145, therefore performance is currently below target by 4%.

Repeat Incidents of Domestic Abuse - NI 32

41. This measure came into place in 2009/10 and relates to the repeat victimisation rate of those individuals supported through the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).
42. During April and May 2009 five MARAC meetings were held, and 19 cases were heard, 3 of which pertained to repeat incidents (16%).
43. 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, an increase of 25.1%. This should be viewed as a positive result, with more people coming forward to report incidents. Data from February to date is being provided in arrears and was not available for inclusion in this report.

Alcohol Related Admission Rates - NI 39

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

Drug Users in Effective Treatment – NI 40

45. Provisional outturn for 08/09 indicates that there were 428 problem drug users in effective treatment against a target to March 2009 of 416.

Prolific and Other Priority Offending Rate – NI 30

46. In 2007/08, 23 PPO's committed 134 offences. The CDRP target was to reduce this to 94 offences by March 2009. The provisional outturn for 2008/09 indicates that the 23 PPOs were convicted of 61 offences.
47. A new PPO cohort has been selected for 2009/10, with a reduction target of 23% against a baseline of 121 convictions.

CDRP Delivery Plans

48. There are no significant issues with any of the CDRP Delivery Plans with the majority of actions being ahead of or on target.

Operation Summer Nights

49. Operation Summer Nights is a multi agency crime reduction and reassurance campaign which aims to prevent anti-social behaviour, particularly when it is alcohol related. The operation takes a triple track approach of enforcement, non negotiable support and prevention. The operation has been running throughout the whole of Darlington from Friday, 10th July 2009 and is due to end on Monday 7th September 2009. The timing of the operation deliberately incorporates the main school holiday period.
50. The launch of Summer Nights took place on the weekend of Friday 10th July, 2009 and received press and radio coverage. On Friday 10th, 150 young people attended a multi-activity evening at South Park; on Saturday 11th, 137 young people attended a skate and bike event at the Town Hall forecourt and 28 young people attended specific sessions at Arts and Dolphin leisure Centres, whilst on Sunday 12th, 70 young people participated in sessions at youth clubs and projects in various venues across the Borough. All activities continue to be very well attended.
51. For the duration of the Summer Nights campaign there is a wide range of activities available for young people. The Youth Service/Leisure Services is maintaining a programme of day-time, evening and weekend provision with a variety of events taking place in a wide range of locations. These include high profile events in parks and open spaces, street based work and deployment of the mobile resource (www) on Fridays from 5-9pm in direct response to police/community safety intelligence, to ensure the vehicle, equipment and youth workers are deployed to the area(s) of greatest need. The Police continue to carry out high visibility foot patrols and Stay Safe Operations. The Council Trading Standards and Licensing Departments are carrying out test purchases and visits to licensed premises. The positive work of Summer Nights continues to be publicised in the press.
52. A full evaluation of Summer Nights will be carried out once the campaign has come to an end. Information will be provided to future meetings.

Safer Neighbourhoods Unit (Mobile)

53. In July 2009 the Partnership purchased a Safer Neighbourhoods Mobile Unit. The unit will be deployed within the 'heart' of the Borough's most challenged communities, to address those issues of most concern. The Unit will be deployed on an intelligence led basis through the CDRP Business Group.
54. The aims and objectives of the unit are:
- (a) To provide a multi agency high visibility presence in areas with high crime and anti social behaviour.
 - (b) To increase public reassurance and create safer neighbourhoods.
 - (c) To increase public confidence to encourage residents to report incidents of crime and anti social behaviour.
 - (d) To support the delivery of multi agency interventions at a neighbourhood level to improve community safety outcomes for local people.
 - (e) To provide an operations hub from which partners can work and engage with communities.
55. In order to ensure the right people are deployed at the right time within local communities a 'Street Safe Officer' will be employed through Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP) funding. This process is ongoing.
56. The Launch of the Mobile Unit took place on Thursday, 6 August 2009 at 2pm, at St Joseph Pease Monument. Alan Milburn MP along with a number of multi agency partners and residents attended the event. The event received good publicity with local newspapers and radio.
57. Future updates on the deployment/achievements of the unit will be brought to future meetings.

Councillor Bill Dixon
Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio