
**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.

Environmental Services

Street Scene

Winter Maintenance

2. Management of winter maintenance services and emergency call-out transferred to Street Scene in October 2009. Although the recent winter has been the harshest for some 30 years, no significant issues have been raised in relation to the transfer of responsibilities and to date activities in relation to winter maintenance operations have run smoothly. Despite a national salt shortage, Darlington Borough Council at all times carried an amount of stock which allowed for the treatment of all highways throughout the winter period, and therefore were able to offer residents and visitors to the Borough safe passage of travel at all times. It is envisaged at the end of the winter period that the Council will have approximately 500 tonnes of rock salt to carry forward to the following winter period.

Dog Control Orders

3. The Council implemented the Dog Control Orders (Prescribed Offences and Penalties etc) Regulations 2006 within the Borough on Monday 12 April 2010 replacing existing bye-laws for the Control of Dogs and The Dog Fouling of Land Act 1996. Within the Dog Control Orders there are four offences that have been introduced, these being:
 - (a) Failure to remove dog faeces (Borough-wide)
 - (b) Not keeping a dog on lead (in prescribed areas)
 - (c) Not putting and keeping a dog on a lead when directed by an Authorised Officer
 - (d) Permitting a dog to enter land from which dogs are excluded
4. The Council are, however, to retain existing bye-laws excluding dogs from the Council's three Cemeteries. Monitoring and enforcement of Dog Control Orders is to be undertaken by the Street Scene Enforcement Team and signs advising members of the public as to where each category of offence applies are being erected throughout the Borough.

Anti Social Behaviour

5. The Anti Social Behaviour Team are currently involved in a number of operations/initiatives, working in partnership with several agencies and the Police:

- (a) Operation Belgowin in the Park East area has moved into its second phase after community consultation and agreement on priorities. The Anti Social Behaviour Team and Police are currently carrying out surveys with residents in the area to gauge opinion on the Operation to date.
- (b) Operation 'Staysafe' which targets alcohol related anti social behaviour and vulnerable young people continues to be a success. In February and March 2010, the average number of alcohol related youth incidents was 10.6 on a non-Staysafe night, this figure fell to 5.6 on evenings where Staysafe was taking place.
- (c) The Anti Social Behaviour Team are currently deploying the CDRP (Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership) mobile unit into 'hotspot' locations for anti social behaviour. This is part of the Safer Streets Initiative, which aims to deal with perceptions of anti social behaviour and raise public confidence and reassurance. The deployment of the unit will continue to be advertised in the press and on the Team's web pages. In March 2010, 22 members of the public accessed the mobile unit to discuss various issues with the Team and partners, ranging from anti social behaviour to environmental issues.

Housing

Housing Tenancy Enforcement

- 6. Housing continues to take a proactive approach to managing nuisance and anti social behaviour. All officers work closely with the perpetrator and victim and follow a range of practices and procedures to achieve a positive outcome. Officers always endeavour to seek successful outcomes without the need to resort to legal action. This is not always possible and during 2009/10 the following actions were taken. There are many varied actions possible and officers always seek to use the most appropriate to the situation. Many of the actions involve working with our CDRP partners.

(a) Undertakings signed (2 were at court)	3
(b) Notice of Seeking Possession served	20
(c) Notice of Demotion Intent served	16
(d) Notice of Possession Proceedings served	4
(e) Anti Social Behaviour Injunction with Power of Arrest	2
(f) Possession	2
(g) Postponed Possession Orders	3
(h) Extension of Introductory Tenancies	7
(i) Voluntary Terminations (relating to enforcement/legal action)	7
(j) Restorative Practice sessions	6
- 7. Housing were successful in bidding for funding from the CDRP and have installed additional fencing at Redhall and updated street lighting at Parkside, both these measures will increase safety and well being.
- 8. On the 19 March 2010, I attended the Tenant Board Annual General Meeting, the meeting was well attended and there were a range of information stands for tenants to visit. The theme of the event was "Growing the Future" and there were talks on the benefits of the Darlington Credit Union, growing vegetables, taking out home contents insurance and budgeting and the challenges faced by younger first time tenants. Good Neighbour Awards were presented on the day by the Tenant Board and on 27 April 2010, the Tenant Board

gave similar awards to 15 young people who have been recognised for their contribution to the community.

9. The Tenant's Board have contributed to revised specifications for electrical rewiring and new central heating installations, the revisions introduced from the 1 April 2010 mean that there will be both financial savings and reductions in the invasive building works which means less disruption to tenants and their decoration. The Reader's Panel of the Tenant Board have also produced a new handbook issued to those tenants benefitting from the major work programme to better inform households of what to expect.

Extra Disabled Facilities Grant Money

10. We have recently successfully negotiated local agreements with Home Group, Darlington Housing Association and Railway Housing Association to contribute 40% of the cost of Disabled Facilities Grants on properties owned by the respective Registered Providers. Discussions are also ongoing with the remaining housing associations operating in Darlington. As the number of applicants for Disabled Facilities Grants increases and the projected future demand for such grants is expected to grow in line with the projected increase in the older population, the Registered Provider contribution is a welcome boost to the Authority. Any Registered Provider contributions will be automatically recycled to assist more applicants for grant assistance through the Home Improvement Agency, Care and Repair. So far contributions of over £50K have been agreed for 2010/11 but this will be built upon during the year.

Assistant Chief Executive

Youth Offending Service (YOS)

No Rogue Trader Zones

11. This scheme which has been developed by Trading Standards in conjunction with partners and the Darlington Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) aims to protect vulnerable householders from bogus callers. The scheme, which will begin to be rolled out after Easter, operates by providing residents with a number to ring if they are aware of bogus traders operating in the area. These will then be checked by Trading Standards Officers and appropriate action taken. Signs will also be put up warning people that the scheme is in operation.

Small Retailers Capital Grant

12. The above grant was made available to small retailers in the town from the Home Office. In order to obtain the grant, retailers had to complete an application, have their premises assessed by the Crime Prevention Officer and be subject to suitability checks. Up to now 21 applicants have been successful in the town and several more are still undergoing the required checks.

Inside Justice Event – Elected Members

13. An Inside Justice Event is currently being planned for later in the year by the CDRP and Local Criminal Justice Board. The aim of the event is to give members an overview of the Safer Darlington Partnership and the Local Criminal Justice Board. There will also be the opportunity to hear about the work of some of the community safety partners. A “You be

the Judge” sentencing exercise will form a significant part of the event. Facilitated by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and a Magistrates Clerk, the exercise will give members an opportunity to consider real cases and decide on the sentence and the issues to be considered.

Darlington Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Durham Police Authority

Community Safety Plan 2008-2011

14. Following publication of the Joint Strategic Assessment in November 2009, the CDRP has refreshed its priorities for 2010/11, as follows:-
- (a) Public Confidence
 - (b) Violent Crime around Domestic Abuse
 - (c) Protecting Vulnerable People
 - (d) Reducing Offending and Re-offending
 - (e) Anti-social behaviour
15. There are two themes which cut across all priorities, namely public confidence, and drugs and alcohol.
16. This report is based on provisional data and may need to be updated on receipt of confirmed data.

Crime and Disorder Performance against Targets

Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)

17. 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.
18. The table below shows overall performance based on the **last rolling 12 months**:

2008 Baseline	2009/10 Target	12 Months to 31/02/10	% Change
1933	1833	1589	- 13%

Theft of Motor Vehicle (TOMV)

19. For the rolling 12 months to February 2010 there was a 28% reduction in TOMV with 96 fewer crimes being recorded between March 2009 and February 2010 (241 crimes) compared to 337 crimes between March 2008 and February 2009.

Theft from Motor Vehicles (TFMV)

20. For the rolling 12 months to February 2010 there was a 3% decrease in TFMV with 20 fewer crimes being recorded between March 2009 and February 2010 (776 crimes) compared to 796 crimes between March 2008 and February 2009.

Robbery

21. For the rolling 12 months to February 2010 there were 62 recorded crimes representing 5 fewer offences (7%) than in the same period of 2008/09.

Domestic Burglary

22. For the rolling 12 months to February 2010 there was a 9% decrease in domestic burglary with 49 fewer crimes being recorded between March 2009 and February 2010 (510 crimes) compared to 559 crimes between March 2008 and February 2009.

Perceptions of ASB – NI 17

23. This indicator measures the percentage of people with high levels of perceived anti-social behaviour within the Borough.
24. 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.
25. The CDRP have set a target to reduce this to 14.1% by 2011.
26. Over the year to date to February, 11066 ASB incidents were recorded by police, compared to 10,241 for the same period in the previous year, an increase of 8% (825 incidents).
27. The number of recorded alcohol related ASB incidents has decreased. Between April 2009 and February 2010, 1849 incidents had been recorded, compared to 2217 over the same period in the previous year, a 17% reduction.
28. The number of recorded youth related ASB incidents increased between April 2009 and February 2010 by 44% compared to the same period in the previous year.

Assault with Less Serious Injury (AWLSI) – NI 20

29. This includes actual bodily harm and other injury and racially/religiously aggravated actual bodily harm.
30. For the rolling 12 months to February 2010 there were 594 incidents recorded by police which equates to 43 fewer crimes (7%) than recorded in the previous 12 months.
31. Between April 2009 and February 2010 524 offences were recorded against a target of 535, meaning that performance is currently within target by 2%.
32. The CDRP has identified assault with injury a key risk to performance. However, if the number of offences during March 2010 is less than or equal to 57, then the target will be achieved. Over the year to date, the highest number of offences recorded during a single month was 56.
33. Our family group position is particularly strong, currently standing at 2nd.

Repeat Incidents of Domestic Abuse – NI 32

34. 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).
35. Between April 2009 and March 2010 98 cases went to a MARAC, 14 of which were repeats, meaning that the repeat victimisation rate currently stands at 14%.
36. The number of domestic abuse related incidents recorded by police decreased by 8% in December 2009, compared to December 2008, but rose slightly by 1% in both January and February 2010, compared to the same months in 2009.

Alcohol Related Admission Rates – NI 39

37. The provisional outturn for 2008/09 is 2113 against a baseline of 1886: the target for 2009/10 is 2207. Due to the way NI39 is calculated, the PCT is expecting an increase in numbers, and has set its targets accordingly.

Drug Users in Effective Treatment – NI 40

38. Between November 2008 and October 2009 there were 458 problem drug users in effective treatment against a target to March 2010 of 449.

Prolific and Other Priority Offending Rate – NI 30

39. A reduction target of 23% (94 offences) was set for the 2009/10 PPO cohort. Between April and September 2009 24 offences were proven against members of this cohort, meaning that the CDRP is performing well against this indicator.

CDRP Delivery Plans

40. At the end of February 2010, progress against each of the actions within the CDRP Delivery Plans remains broadly on target. A small number of key risks have been identified, as below:
 - (a) Most actions within the Public Reassurance plan are complete. Those which are not were being led by individuals who have left the organisation, and these will go forward into the refreshed plan for 2010/11 for progression once new leads are identified.
 - (b) The Domestic Abuse plan owner has now returned to work, and outstanding issues are currently being progressed, but with commensurate adjustments to lead times. This means that most actions will be taken forward into the refreshed delivery plan for 2010/11.
 - (c) A number of actions within the Reducing Offending Plan were dependent on the implementation of POMIES, a web-based system for integrated offender management. This has now been superseded by SLEUTH. There has been an impact on lead times for associated actions, which will now be taken forward into the refreshed delivery plan for 2010/11.
 - (d) Delivery plans for 2010/11 are currently being finalised in line with the priorities identified earlier in this report. Therefore there will be actions across all delivery plans which relate to the reduction of alcohol and drug misuse in order to ensure that a co-ordinated approach is taken to this issue. Tackling violent crime (other than domestic

abuse) and the night time economy is another important priority for the partnership. However, it was decided that this would fit well within the drugs and alcohol theme.

41. With regard to public confidence, again all delivery plans will have actions which contribute to the increase in public confidence in Darlington. However, it was felt that in addition to this there should also be a specific delivery plan to progress this in order to ensure that the positive work of the CDRP is highlighted and that opportunities to increase confidence are not lost.
42. All delivery plans will also contain actions that contribute towards effective enforcement, rehabilitation and prevention in order to ensure that a holistic approach is taken to tackling crime and disorder across the town.

Councillor Bill Dixon
Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio