
**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

Refuse Collection

2. Officers are currently planning for the forthcoming Easter, Royal Wedding and May Day Bank Holidays to ensure collections are undertaken throughout the period with minimal disruption to both residents and the service. Revised dates will be published through all available media leading up to the period.
3. A minor route rebalancing exercise has recently been undertaken following concerns that some refuse collection routes (due to the inclusion of new housing estates etc) are becoming too heavy to complete in the working week. As a result, minor changes to refuse routes are planned for summer 2011 allowing them to settle down prior to the August Bank Holiday revised dates.

Street Cleaning

4. Although National Indicator (NI) 195 has now been removed as a result of recent Government changes, officers are working towards an alternative that still allows for the service to monitor its cleanliness standards across the Borough. In relation to 2010/11, two inspections were undertaken in accordance with the guidelines of NI 195 with only 5% of all streets failing to meet the required standard upon inspection. This signifies an improvement on 2009/10 when 6% failed to meet the required standard.

Grounds Maintenance

5. Work on an evaluation exercise following last year's introduction of meadow areas across the Borough is currently being undertaken. It is envisaged that two current meadow areas are returned to the previous regime of regular cutting due to their location and health and safety concerns respectively. There is also the potential for other areas to be added to the scheme and Members will be informed accordingly should additional areas be identified for this method of maintaining open space.

6. A briefing note for Members has been provided in relation to Street Scene ceasing to cut any grassed banks over a gradient of 25 degrees in this forthcoming grass cutting season. The reason for this is that equipment utilised for the cutting of the banks can only be operated in a safe manner up to a gradient of 25 degrees and therefore, for reasons of health and safety, we can no longer undertake cutting of any gradient across the Borough greater than this.

HCA – Funded Developments

7. Excellent progress is being made in the delivery of the local authority new build project with Dinsdale Close (10 x 2 bed apartments) completed and let in October 2011, Burnside Road (8 x 2 bed apartments) and Richmond Close (12 x 2 bed houses, 1 x 3 bed house) due to be completed and let by April 2011, and, the final 34 new dwellings on schedule to be completed by June 2011. All 65 new dwellings are built to a higher sustainable level than any other current properties within the Borough (Code for Sustainable Homes Levels 3 and 4) and, the grant award from the Homes and Communities Agency, represents the highest single regional allocation of funding under Round 1 of the local authority new build programme, a total investment of nearly £7M. All remaining vacancies will be advertised and allocated through the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Policy and be targeted at those local people in greatest housing need.

Housing

Housing Investment Programme 2011/12

8. The Annual Housing Investment Programme for 2011/12 which will deliver essential home improvements for council tenants to ensure their homes meet their longer term expectations, create safe and secure environment and meet quality standards over and above Decent Homes has now been approved. The range of measures include internal planned maintenance (kitchens and bathrooms), heating replacements, the continuation of major regeneration works at Parkside, the commencement of major refurbishment works at Rockwell House and Ted Fletcher Court sheltered housing schemes, a range of external improvements including footpath and fencing improvements, and, the provision of digital television aerials to communal blocks of accommodation.

Tenants Board AGM 2011

9. The Tenants Board held its third open AGM on 23 March 2011 at the Dolphin Centre. A group of tenants worked throughout the year to organise the event and put together a programme for the meeting. They also produced an annual report.
10. All Council tenants and leaseholders received an open invitation and for the first time tenants representing the other social housing providers in Darlington also received an invitation. I am pleased to report that tenants from Railway Housing, Darlington Housing Association, Endeavour and Fabrick (Tees Valley Housing) all attended. The meeting was a good opportunity to promote the Tenant's Board in Darlington and to learn more about how organisations can share best practice and learning.

11. The event was opened by His Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Bryan Thistlethwaite. A number of Community Awards were given to recognise the achievements of Council tenants and these were nominated by other Council Tenants. The winner was Stephen Lunn who rescued a neighbour from a fire. He won the first prize of £100, whilst six other awards of £20 were made to David Darke, Harry Hunt, Wendy White, Chris Percival, Lisa Cook and Terence McGee.
12. The Tenant Board devised a quiz to gain a better insight into how those attending felt about their neighbourhood and the services provided, which will be used to review services in the coming year.

Development & Commissioning

Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)

13. Serious Acquisitive Crime includes Domestic Burglary, Robbery, Theft of Motor Vehicle and Theft from Motor Vehicle. The CSP target is to reduce SAC by 8.2% by 2010/11.
14. The table below shows overall performance based on the **last rolling 12 months**:

2008 Baseline	2010/11 Target	12 Months to 28/02/11	Performance against Target
1933	1774	1349	- 24%

Theft of Motor Vehicle (TOMV)

15. There was a 22% reduction in thefts from motor vehicles in the rolling 12 months to February 2011, compared with the rolling 12 months to February 2010, and the CSP is performing well within its target for the year.

2008 Baseline	2010/11 Target	12 Months to 28/02/11	Reduction against Target
419	356	187	-47%

Theft from Motor Vehicles (TFMV)

16. There was a 26% reduction in thefts of motor vehicles in the rolling 12 months to February 2011, compared with the rolling 12 months to February 2010. The CSP is performing well within its target for the year:

2008 Baseline	2010/11 Target	12 Months to 28/02/11	Performance against Target
987	938	579	-38%

Robbery

17. The number of robberies reduced by 28% over the rolling 12 months to February 2011, and performance is within target for the year:

2008 Baseline	2010/11 Target	12 Months to 28/02/11	Performance against Target
58	58	43	-26%

Domestic Burglary

18. For the rolling 12 months to February 2011 there was a 5% increase in the level of domestic burglaries compared with the previous year. The CSP set rigorous targets for 2008-11 and this year's target will not be achieved: in the year from April 2010, 503 offences have been recorded, against a target for the year of 422. Forecast performance is currently suggesting an outturn of 551 at the year end – an increase of 7.8% on 2009-10.

2008 Baseline	2010/11 Target	12 Months to 28/02/11	Performance against Target
469	422	540	28%

Perceptions of ASB – NI 17

19. This indicator measures the percentage of people with high levels of perceived anti-social behaviour (ASB) within the Borough.
20. 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 was an improvement on previous general survey results.
21. The CSP have set a target to reduce this to 14.1% by 2011. However, the place survey scheduled to take place later this year has now been cancelled, and data for NI17 will not be collected.
22. Durham Constabulary conducts quarterly surveys which include questions on perceptions of ASB, though the sample population is much smaller than that used for the place survey. Data from December 2010 for the CSP indicated that the percentage of people who perceived a high level of ASB in their area was 7.1% (± 5.1). The roll up figure for the last four quarters is 7.7% (± 2.6).
23. CSP performance over the year to date is set out below. Please note that the CSP has not set specific reduction targets in respect of ASB incidents.

Anti Social Behaviour Incidents	Year to Date		
	February 10	February 11	Change
Incidents	10999	9275	-16%
Per 1000 Population	109.9	92.7	-17.2

Youth Related Anti Social Behaviour Incidents	Year to Date		
	February 10	February 11	Change

Incidents	4117	3149	-24%
Per 1000 Population	41.1	31.5	-9.6

Alcohol Related Anti Social Behaviour Incidents	Year to Date		
	February 10	February 11	Change
Incidents	4141	3784	-9%
Per 1000 Population	41.4	37.8	-3.6

Assault with Less Serious Injury (AWLSI) – NI 20

24. This includes actual bodily harm and other injury and racially/religiously aggravated actual bodily harm. Figures for the rolling 12 months to February 2011 are detailed below:

2008 Baseline	2010/11 Target	12 Months to 28/02/11	Performance against Target
789	569	590	+4%

25. Forecasts to the year end indicate an outturn of 602, and it is highly unlikely that the CSP will meet its target for this indicator. Over the 11 months from 01 April to 28 February, 549 offences were committed, meaning that in March, if the CSP records more than 20 offences the target will not be achieved – the average per month this year has been 50 offences.

Repeat Incidents of Domestic Abuse – NI 32

26. 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).
27. Between April and December 2010, 63 cases went to a MARAC, 15 of which were repeats, meaning that the repeat victimisation rate currently stands at 24%. The CSP target is 30% for 2010/11 so performance is currently green against this indicator.

Alcohol Related Admission Rates – NI 39

28. There was a 1% increase in the number of alcohol related hospital admissions from 2008/09 to 2009/10.

2010/11 Target	Q1	Q2	Q1 + Q2	% increase from 2009/10	Estimated 2010/11 Total
2388	584	599	1183	10%	2366

- (a) For 2010/11, at present only the figures for Q1 and Q2 are available
- (b) The DAAT has provisionally classified performance against this indicator as amber
- (c) If the half-yearly figure is doubled, it would still be just under the target of 2388. However, the number is increasing every quarter, and therefore the final figure may exceed the target set for 2010/11.

Drug Users in Effective Treatment – NI 40

29. Performance against this indicator is green.

2008 Baseline	2010/11 Target	12 Months to 31/10/10	% Change from Baseline
406	447	481	18%

Prolific and Other Priority Offending (PPO) Rate – NI 30

30. A new PPO cohort was selected for 2009/10, with a reduction target of 23% against a baseline of 121 convictions. There is no local target this year, because advice from GONE is that this is one of the indicators that has been deleted from the national set. Nevertheless, if the CSP were to perform in line with the national cohort, then for the six months to September 2010 we would be looking for a figure of 68 offences from our cohort: our performance to September 2010 stands at 64 offences so is better than the national figure.
31. The government is currently consulting on a single indicator for offending, to replace the six indicators currently in place. Advice is that statistics on cohorts of interest will still be available once the single indicator is adopted.

CSP Delivery Plans

32. Themed groups have been established to take forward CSP priorities over the twelve months from April 2011. These groups are currently developing their action plans, and actions will be taken forward from the current delivery plans as appropriate.

Councillor Bill Dixon
Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio