
OVERVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-
 - (a) **Work Programme** – The Committee considered the Work Programme for the 2008/09 Municipal Year and will continue to update and add to our Work Programme throughout the year. We also examined Cabinet’s Forward Plan for particular areas of interest and concern to be included within our Work Programme and also further areas for undertaking Task and Finish Review Groups.
 - (b) **Community Safety Plan 2008-11 Performance April – October 2008** – We received an update on the delivery of the Borough’s Community Safety Plan 2008-2011 and the targets within Darlington’s Local Area Agreements. We were pleased to see that they had been a seven per cent reduction in the number of crimes recorded by the Police in Darlington between April and October 2008 compared to the same period in 2007 and an eleven per cent reduction for the rolling twelve months up to 31st October 2008 compared to the same period in 2006/07. We were also pleased to note that the number of alcohol related Anti Social Behaviour incidents, assault with injury incidents and repeated incidents of Domestic Abuse had also reduced, although Domestic Abuse and Anti Social Behaviour remain key challenges for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

In October 2008 the Crime and Disorder and Children’s Trust were awarded £790K over three years to support the delivery of the Governments Youth Crime Action Plan at a local level. The funding would purchase a highly visible mobile unit to provide a base for the deployment of resources at the heart of local communities experiencing problems, a Street Safe Officer would be employed as part of this Council’s Anti Social Behaviour Team, a dedicated Social Worker would be appointed to provide immediate intervention/support whilst based in communities ensuring that the appropriate follow up action had been taken to support individual young people and families, a Youth Offending Officer would be appointed to work with young people who would be coming into custody and would provide intervention and support to young people identified as prolific offenders and dedicated resources would be provided to support the delivery of initiatives on Friday and Saturday evenings.

We also received a presentation on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Panel (CDRP), which covered the CDRP Local Delivery Framework, the responsibilities of the CDRP, the linkages that the CRDP have to the boards, the structure of the Safer Communities Unit and the responsibilities of the Safer Communities Unit.

- (c) **Youth Offending Service** – We received a presentation on the Youth Offending Service, which gave the background to the service and also covered the structure of

Darlington's Youth Offending Service Capacity and Capability Plan Structure, the Capacity and Capability Youth Offending Service Plan 2008-09, the Her Majesty's Inspectorate inspection, criteria and judgements, examples of good practice, an analysis of young offenders in 2007-08, a breakdown of offences in 2007-08 and the Youth Justice System national priorities and challenges.

- (d) **Civil Contingencies Arrangements in Darlington** – We requested a report informing us of the arrangements that were in place to prepare and respond to emergency situations that also meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. It was pleasing to note that this Council had a suite of plans in place, which were regularly tested and exercised ensuring that it responds adequately to emergency situations. We were informed that its capacity was enhanced by the work of the Durham and Darlington Civil Contingencies Unit, of which this Council is a major funder.

We also received a presentation that covered the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the multi agency approach to emergency situations, Darlington's approach including the Civil Contingencies Unit's approach to emergency situations, the risk assessments of Emergency Planning, the voluntary sectors involvement in emergency situations, the schedule of training and exercising built into the Emergency Planning process, the Business Continuity Planning and the current priorities and issues.

- (e) **Street Scene Review Group** - The Group met with Ian Thompson, Assistant Director of Environmental Services on 4th November, 2008, and received a presentation on Street Scene. The presentation covered the terms of reference, performance data, the core principles of Street Scene, the hot spots in Darlington for dog fouling, the Street Scene budget and financial implications, figures of the fixed penalty fines that have been issued and the number of Street Champions in each Ward in the Borough.

Following the presentation the members of this Review Group agreed to visit a number of local supermarkets to enable us to engage with residents and seek their views on Street Scene. We also suggested visiting other Authorities' to compare how their Street Scene operates in comparison to this Authority.

The next meeting of the Group has been arranged for 27th January, 2009.

Councillor Doris Jones
Chair of Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee