
OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO

1. I am pleased to be presenting the first Community Safety Portfolio Report to Council. The new portfolio includes the following responsibilities; Policing, Community Safety, the Council's responsibility for Fire and Rescue Service, Street Scene Enforcement, Illegal Encampments, Private Sector Housing, Licensing of Premises (except where delegated to Licensing Committee), Trading Standards and Animal Welfare, Co-ordination of the Council's responsibility under the Floods and Water Act, Civil Contingencies and Emergency Planning, Parking Enforcement and CCTV.
2. This is an exciting Portfolio with a new team of Council Officers working closely with partners on the Community Safety agenda.

Civic Enforcement Service

3. This service will be launched early in the New Year once all vacant positions have been filled. This is a team of three Senior Enforcement Officers and ten full-time equivalent Officers working on a shift system, Monday to Sunday covering the hours of 8.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. The team will focus on parking enforcement, anti-social behaviour and environmental crime, including abandoned vehicles, waste in back lanes, fly tipping, graffiti, stray dogs/dog warden service as well as a range of other environmental issues. The team will support the work of Kingdom Services, the private sector partner the Council is working with, for litter and dog fouling enforcement.

Safer Parking Scheme

4. Recently, the Council's car parks have undergone their yearly safer parking assessment, completed by the British Parking Association. This year we have also had the car parks assessed and are pleased to announce that not only have our car parks passed the safer parking scheme but we have also secured the disabled parking accreditation. This reinforces that our car parks in Darlington are safe to park and accessible for disabled parking accreditation.
5. Whilst it is really encouraging our car parks passed the disability accreditation, I am aware of an issue with regard to the multi storey car park and ease of access for a wheelchair user. Officers are currently looking into a solution to improve the situation and I am hopeful that this will be resolved in the near future.

Back on Track

6. Back on Track is a school based project which commenced in December 2017 as a pilot with Longfield School, initiated by YMCA Tees Valley and Darlington's Anti-Social Behaviour Team. The project is supported by County Durham Fire and Rescue Service, Darlington Neighbourhood Police Team, Durham and Cleveland Road Policing Unit, all Darlington Secondary Schools and MSG Bike Wear, who provide helmets for the participants of the seven-week programme.
7. The programme is now rolled out to all Darlington Secondary Schools and revolves around young people accepting they must not participate in off road motorcycle nuisance, not to engage in any anti-social behaviour, co-operate with all school staff in terms of behaviour, uniform attendance and all project related homework. It broadens their knowledge and safety around motorcycles, their impact on the community and raises their achievement and self-esteem with a reward of a track day upon successful completion.
8. The young people gain valuable first aid and safety knowledge, gaining a certificate and the opportunity to build respectful relationships with the partners involved. We are celebrating a 90 per cent success rate (percentage of participants who don't go on to re-offend) and work experience and employment opportunities provide a long term positive outlook for the majority of participants. All Officers involved do this in addition to their everyday duties and consider the preventative approach a worthy investment in positively influencing young people's safety and future contribution to their communities.

Private Sector Enforcement

9. The Council started a six-month pilot with Kingdom Services on 17 September 2018. During the first two weeks, up until the end of September, an amnesty period was put in place whereby warning letters were issued instead of Fixed Penalty Notices. A total of 120 letters were issued during this period. For the month of October 2018 there were 272 Fixed Penalty Notices issued, the majority of which were issued in the Town Centre for cigarette ends.
10. The opportunity for residents and others to comment on the enforcement service continues to be available on the Council's website, which will help inform the final decision as to whether or not the Council continues with private sector enforcement following the pilot.

Trading Standards

11. Trading Standards has worked with the Police to seize a total of 7,870 cigarettes and 6.6kg of hand rolling tobacco during two visits to the same store in Darlington. Trading Standards took the investigation forward and the outcome was the prosecution of Alan Qader Ahmad trading as SV Market, Gladstone Street, Darlington. Mr Ahmad was convicted on 21 September 2018 and sentenced to a twelve-month Community Order during which time he must complete 120 hours of unpaid work. He also paid £700 in costs as well as a £85 victim surcharge. Forfeiture of the tobacco products was granted and they are in the possession of Trading Standards for destruction.

12. On 8 October 2018, Trading Standards participated in Operation Rogue Trader, which is a national multi-agency campaign co-ordinated by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute with Liberal, the National Police Intelligence Unit. The main focus of the operation was to visit garages selling part-worn tyres. It is not illegal to sell part-worn tyres, provided the trader follows industry guidance and standards to inspect, repair, mark and price the tyres correctly. Six tyre sellers in Darlington were visited as part of the operation. Unsafe, part-worn tyres were found on sale and these were removed from the supply chain. Traders received compliance advice. It is Trading Standard's intention to conduct revisits to check that the advice given has been implemented.
13. Partners came together to remove dangerous electric blankets from people's homes. Trading Standards working with AGE UK arranged free electric blanket testing on 17 and 18 September at Bradbury House. The event was well attended (over 40 attendees) and approximately 13 blankets were found to be dangerous and removed from use. AGE UK were able to replace six and Andrew Allison (community resilience officer) was able to obtain funding from CDDFRS/Safer Homes to replace the others. All attendees were offered information about scam phone calls and the use of call blockers and 17 people requested, and received Safe and Wellbeing Visits from CDDFRS crews.

Private Sector Housing

14. Extended Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing came into effect on 1 October 2018. For those who have applied, their applications are currently being processed. There are several other properties that have been identified as being used as a licensable HMO's and where applications have not been received, formal enforcement action is currently being considered.
15. As a result of licensing conditions being imposed, two properties have been improved with regard to fire safety and space standards.
16. In addition to licensing, two prohibition orders have been served on property owners of commercial premises where the first floor areas were being used as dangerous living accommodations, with inadequate fire detection and fire separation.

PREVENT

Appointment of Community Resilience Officer

17. Andrew Allison has been appointed as a Community Resilience Officer with Darlington Borough Council. Andrew is responsible for the delivery of the recently revised PREVENT programme (counter terrorism), improving community engagement (particularly with those considered 'harder to reach' and/or who are potentially more vulnerable to harm) and supporting the work of other partners to improve the lives of people living in, working in and visiting Darlington.

18. Andrew will also work closely with local Councillors, other internal teams and partners to ensure that the concerns of local people expressed via surveys, complaints procedures, Councillor surgeries, PACT meetings, etc. are responded to and actioned accordingly.
19. Andrew worked for the fire and rescue service for thirty years, most recently as the Community Safety Manager, so has good experience of working in partnership with other organisations to achieve positive outcomes for our communities.

Hate Crime Awareness Week: 13 – 20 October

20. Jim Welch, founder and chair of Blind Life, raised concerns at the Joint Hate Crime Action Group regarding how, on occasions, people with disabilities are subjected to abuse and hate crime when trying to negotiate their way around streets and shops. To understand more about the issues and to raise awareness as part of Hate Crime Awareness Week, Paul Ibbertson (Traffic Manager) and Andrew Allison (Community Resilience Officer) joined Jim on a tour of Darlington Town Centre to share his experiences as a person who is blind and uses a wheelchair.
21. A subsequent article appeared in the Northern Echo and on Darlington Borough Council's website and social media. It publicised the Council's policy 'Pavements for People', produced in collaboration with Darlington Association on Disability (a guide for businesses/contractors working on or near public roads and footpaths) and highlighted the Council's commitment to tackling hate crime.

Contest (Counter Terrorism) Strategy

Contest Delivery Plan 2018-19

22. Members of the Contest Silver Board recently met to consider the revised Contest - the United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism and review the Local Contest Delivery Plan 2018-19. The amended plan was presented at the Contest Silver meeting in Darlington in September and will be rolled-out in County Durham and Darlington in the coming months.

PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) Town Centre

23. Due to ongoing anti-social behaviour, including nuisance drinking, begging and threatening and abusive behaviour, a report was submitted to Cabinet in July in order to commence public consultation on the implementation of a PSPO.
24. Consultation began in September and will continue for three months. A final cabinet report will follow at the end of the consultation.

Street Friends

25. Darlington Community Safety Partnership has recently approved funding to support the introduction of Street Friends in Darlington Town Centre. Street Friends is a group of volunteers who will engage with the night time economy to safeguard people who are, or become, vulnerable in this environment.

26. They provide active support and advice to those considered vulnerable as well as additional 'eyes and ears' on the street to gather information concerning drug misuse, child sexual exploitation and modern day slavery. Darlington Street Friends were initially deployed with mentors from a similar scheme in Consett and the scheme went live in Darlington in November 2018.

Crime Prevention and Community Safety Roadshows 2018: 'Meet the Detectives'.

27. Detective Chief Inspector, Paul Gray, supported by Darlington CID and specialist detectives and community safety partners, delivered a series of community safety roadshows in Darlington during November. Across four venues, various community associations were utilised to deliver a series of practical tips and information on preventing crime and staying safe. Subject matters included online fraud, cyber-crime, drug and alcohol harm, hate crime and fire safety.

Appointment of Systems Data Analyst

28. The Council has appointed a Systems Data Analyst whose role it will be to identify crime and disorder threat and risk in our local communities. This will inform the tasking and coordination process within the Council and promote the effective deployment of joint-resources according to local need.

29. The Systems Data Analyst will have access to partner systems and manage the collection, storage and use of data associated with crime and disorder.

30. The role will include working closely with a range of partners, analysing and evaluating relevant data, identifying gaps in provision, research to check data consistency and producing reports to support local activity.

31. I have also attended :-

- (a) the Combined Fire Authority's Strategic Planning Day;
- (b) Durham PCVC'S Celebration of Local Heroes event at Shildon;
- (c) the North East Regional Prevent Forum at Hartlepool; and
- (d) a Meet the Detectives event at Corporation Road School.

Councillor Helen Crumbie
Community Safety Portfolio