

**COUNCIL**  
**26 SEPTEMBER 2019**

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**OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO**

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1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work undertaken under the Community Safety Portfolio.

**Crime and Disorder**

2. There has been a four per cent decrease in the number of reported crimes in Darlington during the period 1 April to 31 July 2019, compared with the same period for 2018. This equates to a total of 4,226 crimes. Crimes showing an increase, include: violence without injury (disorder) and sexual offences. Crimes showing a decrease include theft, burglary, vehicle crime, theft of a pedal cycle and shoplifting.
3. During the same period there has been a one per cent reduction in the number of reported crimes in Darlington Town Centre. This equates to a total of 600 crimes. Crimes showing an increase include: violence against the person, sexual offences, possession of weapons and metal theft.
4. Darlington has also experienced a twelve per cent decrease in all reported incidents to the Police during the same period, and anti-social behaviour is currently eleven per cent lower than last year.
5. Exceptions relating to increases in anti-social behaviour, include: Faverdale, Haughton East and West, Whessoe, Middleton St George and Lingfield. Further analysis is being undertaken into the reasons for the increase in these areas and exceptions will be reported to the multi-agency problem solving group. To date, the following has been ascertained :-
  - (a) in Faverdale there have been numerous reports of youths gaining access to the new build site and throwing objects around. Reports have also been received of youths gathering around the shops and causing annoyance to members of the public. Patrols were subsequently increased in this area and as a result reports of incidents are now very few;
  - (b) in Middleton St George there has been an increase in off road vehicles being reported, and young people gathering and potentially drinking alcohol.

**Civic Enforcement**

6. Civic Enforcement Officers have supported several events during the summer months:
  - (a) Officers supported Darlington Community Carnival, assisting with traffic management at the event;

- (b) Officers supported the Hazardous Waste Live Exercise (led by the Environment Agency) in South Park, on Tuesday 23 July;
- (c) Officers supported the North Lodge Park Blues Festival, on Sunday 28 July, where they had the opportunity to speak to members of the public and promote the work they do;

### **Operation Staysafe**

- 7. A multi-agency operation, which I attended, involving Civic Enforcement, Licensing, Trading Standards, Police and the Emergency Duty Team took place on 19 July. The aim of the operation was to tackle the issue of young people putting themselves at risk by drinking alcohol on the streets and in the parks of Darlington.
- 8. The operation was a success and several bottles of alcohol, from beer to strong spirits, were seized. Follow up referrals to relevant support agencies were completed.

### **Trading Standards**

- 9. Trading Standards received reports from residents about a letter sent to them by the International Fifa World Cup Online Lottery. The letter claimed that the named recipient had won a large cash prize but it was, in fact, a scam. As one of the best ways to deal with scams is through preventative action, Trading Standards acted swiftly to warn people about the letter using the Council's social media, and offered tips on how they could protect themselves from scams of this nature.
- 10. To develop Trading Standards' work in combating criminals and protecting the vulnerable victims of scams, a new link between the National Trading Standards Scams Team and Trading Standards has been established. This link enables details of scam victims in the Darlington area who have been identified through the national team's enforcement work to be passed over. Trading Standards can then intervene with victims on a one-to-one basis to prevent them from becoming repeat victims and connect them to other available support mechanisms.
- 11. Trading Standards test purchased six toys from local retailers and sent them to the Public Analyst for testing against the toy safety standard BS EN 71-1 (mechanical and physical properties). Two of the toys failed and are therefore unsafe. Trading Standards took the necessary actions to deal with this issue.

## **PREVENT**

### **Counter Terrorism Local Champions**

- 12. Durham Constabulary Special Branch and the Counter Terrorism Unit launched a Counter-Terrorism Local Champions (CTLC) scheme in July. Staff from organisations from across Darlington and Durham listened to presentations and worked through case studies to enable them to promote the Prevent message among colleagues, partners and the general public. The CTLCs in Darlington will help disseminate information to colleagues via regular bulletins and updates provided by the Police and will attend further CPD type events in the future.

The Community Resilience Officer attended and was accompanied by the staff from Darlington Borough Council.

### **Prevent 'train the trainer' sessions**

13. The Community Resilience Officer, together with colleagues from Durham County Council and Education, have held WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) 'train the trainer' sessions for staff across Darlington and County Durham. 16 x 3 hour sessions were offered to staff during 4 days in September, with subsequent sessions planned for October. Those staff who participated in the WRAP training will act as points of contact within their organisations for further Prevent information and updates. This was the first in a number of revised or new actions following a review of the current Silver Board action plan.

### **Road Safety**

14. Darlington Borough Council and Police have started working on enhancing an existing schools' road safety scheme; rolling it out to secondary schools as well as primary schools in Darlington. The scheme aims to empower schools and their students to keep themselves and the roads around their schools safe. It also enables the Police and Council to better utilise their time, delivering targeted interventions where required.

### **Darlington Daytime Pride**

15. On 6 July 2019 over a thousand-people walked and danced through the Town Centre to support the celebration of Darlington Daytime Pride. Darlington ARQ organised the parade supported by the Community Resilience Officer, the Events Team, Police and Fire and Rescue Service. This is the second year the event has been held and it was a great success.

### **Purple Flag**

16. Purple Flag aims to raise the standard and broaden the appeal of town and city centres at night. It is the benchmark for good night time destinations. Town and city centres that achieve a Purple Flag will be those that are safe, diverse, vibrant, appealing, well-managed and offer a positive experience to consumers. Community Safety and its partners have recently completed a self-assessment of the night-time offer which was most encouraging and will support the accreditation process which will be considered in Autumn 2019.
17. The Purple Flag Steering Group has also recently completed a survey regarding access to the town centre for disabled people which has attracted a significant return. Initial findings indicate concerns regarding access to premises, difficulties encountered with the use of local transport and problems relating to anti-social behaviour. These issues will be addressed by a time-limited group and chaired by Andrew Allison, DBC Community Resilience Officer.

## **Licensing**

### **Management of Licensed Premises**

18. The Responsible Authorities Forum continues to identify problem premises and emerging issues. Of the two premises previously identified as having poor management issues, by working with partners one of these premises has seen significant improvements, and work is ongoing to raise standards of the other. Licensing have also been made aware by Immigration that a premises in Darlington has been employing illegal workers and they are in consultation with their legal team to decide if a review of the alcohol licence will be an appropriate response.
19. On Friday 26th July, an intelligence led operation was carried out by Licensing Enforcement, in conjunction with Responsible Authority partners, targeting those premises in the town where poor management has been an issue, and providing visible support for those enjoying the Night Time Economy. Partners included Police, Security Industry Authority (SIA), Fire and Rescue and Immigration Enforcement. This was to ensure compliance with the terms of the premises' licences and to provide both support and advice. Most premises were found to be compliant with conditions with only one exception highlighted, which led to further work being carried out with a view to undertaking a licensing review in the event the premises concerned fails to implement the improvements identified.

### **Cross Border Authority**

20. A North East regional agreement has now come into effect where Licensing Enforcement Officers have been granted authority to deal with taxis from outside their area. This means, for example, that a taxi from Middlesbrough coming into Darlington can now be dealt with by local enforcement officers in the same way as they would deal with a taxi that was licensed in Darlington. Previously Darlington Borough Council has not been able to deal with out of town taxis, which has often been a source of frustration within Licensing and the taxi trade throughout the region. This arrangement is subject to a Memorandum of Understanding between the Local Authorities forming the North East Strategic Licensing Group (NESLG); Sunderland and Stockton are not currently part of this agreement.

**Councillor Jonathan Dulston  
Community Safety Portfolio**