
**SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY & COMMUNITY SERVICES – 12
MARCH 2009**

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

Purpose of Report

1. To review the work in which the Directorate of the Urban Environment is involved to comply with Section 17 - Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Background

2. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires Local Authority Directorates to "exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area".
3. It is incorporated within the Directorate's service planning template and where appropriate service plans have specific actions to address issues relating to Crime and Disorder. It is also a key element contained within the Directorate Strategic Plan 2008/11.
4. The Directorate recognises the importance of a partnership approach in tackling issues relating to Crime and Disorder and is represented on the Safe and Sound Thematic Partnership. The Strategic Housing and Environment Partnership and Area Committees has representation from the West Midlands Police and along with DUE officers deal with Section 17 issues. The Directorate also supports the Safe and Cohesive Communities high level outcome priority contained within the Next Generation Local Area Agreement 2008/11.
5. The Directorate is divided into the following four Divisions:- Culture and Leisure; Planning and Environmental Health; Economic Regeneration and Transportation; and Environmental Management, this report highlighting the contribution made by each team to achieving the requirement of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

Culture and Leisure

Culture and Tourism

6. The Culture and Tourism section supports a range of initiatives similar to the Sport and Physical Activity Service designed to provide purposeful, diversionary activities in public halls and in the wider community. The Services support of the National Youth Theatre and the programme of activities that they are producing is an

illustration of the work done in this area along side the events provided at Himley and in the wider Borough by the Events Team.

Museums, Greenspaces and Bereavement Services

7. Establishment of Friends Group in 33 parks across the Borough; developing programmes of events within their respective parks which is increasing the number of people regularly visiting the parks. The Council continues to support Park Watch and Nature Reserve Watch Scheme working with the Friends Groups to promote local reporting.
8. The main type of actions taken to reduce or prevent crime in the borough's cemeteries and crematoria are to improve security measures, e.g. fencing, report crimes and work with the police on crime prevention, and ensure all sites are maintained to a high standard so they are positive places less likely to attract anti social behaviour and vandalism.

Sport and Physical Activity

9. Through the Sports and Physical Activity section Leisure Centre Clubs, Sports Development Programmes, Holiday Play Schemes, Summer Programmes, Targeted Programmes provide 'diversionary activities.' Leisure Centres provide a wide range of clubs, sessions and coaching courses for young people on an 'open access' basis from casual swimming through to specific clubs or courses. Other examples include the introduction of 'DanceMats and Trixter Bikes at Halesowen, Crystal and Dudley Leisure Centres getting young people active and keeping them off the streets and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and skate/BMX facilities for young people in parks. It is the aim of the Skate/Wheeled Sports Strategy to provide a facility in each of the Area Committee areas. Six skate/BMX facilities have been provided although it should be noted that it has not been possible to identify a suitable location in the Brierley Hill Area Committee area.
10. Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) is a Home Office funded programme which targets young people considered at risk of offending or are already offenders. PAYP was highlighted as good practice in the WM Regional Plan for Sport 'Sign Up for Sport' – Creating Safer and Stronger Communities Through Sport.
11. The Sport and Physical Activity Section leads on child protection/safeguarding issues in sport in conjunction with the Safeguarding Board and also at a sub-regional level for the Black Country Sports Partnership. The roll out of the 'seal' coaches licence in Dudley across all agencies providing coaches and instructors has further emphasised the commitment to safeguarding in sport.

Planning and Environmental Health

Planning

12. The determination of planning applications is based on 'Secured by Design' principles and applying the Council's 'Community Safety – Supplementary Planning Guidance' thereby designing out crime and disorder to new developments.

13. The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) is focused on assisting the repair and conversion of historic buildings in the Dudley Town Centre Conservation Area. A principal aim is to stimulate residential-led regeneration as it is felt that bringing people back into the town centre will promote an increased range of active uses outside of normal shopping hours and increase natural surveillance and "ownership" of the street scene.
14. THI complementary initiatives include working with Dudley schools to instill a sense of citizenship and an appreciation of sense of place and local distinctiveness amongst young people leading to a greater understanding of and respect for the physical environment of the town. Public consultation through the process of Conservation Area Character Appraisal flagged up local concerns regarding security, lighting, litter and anti-social behaviour and a Conservation Area Management Plan (CAMP) has been adopted by the Council as a means of addressing those concerns. This will include the production of shop front design guidance that will positively address the issue of shop front security whilst seeking to avoid the creation of "dead" frontages through the indiscriminate use of solid security shutters.

Environmental Health and Trading Standards

15. The Environmental Protection Service provides advice and takes formal action on disputes between parties over noise and vibration and smoke from domestic chimneys, industrial premises and bonfires. The service is involved in preventing unauthorised access to unused and derelict industrial buildings thereby preventing arson, crime and unsociable behaviour at such locations. Officers from Environmental Protection attend the Arson Task Force meetings with the police & fire authority. This group identifies void property and notifies the Council in order to get the property made secure against unauthorised access. This helps to reduce arson & other crimes involving anti-social behaviour such as involvement with drugs from occurring in the void premises.
16. Environmental Protection Service actively consults with Development Control on conditions to control activities at proposed developments within the borough. For example, where a development proposal is in for a site previously used for industrial or commercial activity planning conditions requiring the developer to undertake an assessment of the types and levels of toxicity in the soil and type and quantity of landfill gas below the surface of the site may be included on a planning decision notice where necessary.
17. Food and Occupational Safety Section provide advice to the hospitality trade and commercial premises to help reduce conflict and violent attacks on staff at premises, ensuring health and safety compliance, and working in partnership with the West Midlands Police.
18. Trading Standards in partnership with Consumer Direct West Midlands offers advice and assistance to consumers on rogue traders, doorstep crime and illegal scams. The service also works in partnership with the Police and trade mark holders in the detection and investigation of the sale of counterfeit products which include DVD's, CD's, clothing and other branded goods. Trading Standards, along with the Food and Occupational Safety Service, are consultees in premise licence applications under the Licensing Act 2003. Trading Standards are active partners in the Safe and Sound Partnership and Distraction Burglary Network and investigate complaints relating to doorstep crime and rogue traders.

19. Trading Standards work in partnership with the West Midlands Police on enforcing age restricted sales legislation relating to the sale of alcohol in pubs and clubs, sale of fireworks, cigarettes, spray paints, knives, solvents and related materials.
20. They also work in partnership with Age Concern through the 'Fix a Home' scheme which was launched by Dudley Trading Standards to help Borough residents find reliable tradesmen and avoid becoming the victim of rogue traders. With a list of over 150 tradesmen and businesses the scheme was one of the first in the Midlands region and is among 30 in the country to be approved by the Office of Fair Trading.

Economic Regeneration and Transportation

Economic Regeneration Strategy

21. Future Skills Dudley (FSD) deliver a wide variety of skills and employment support programmes to help local people move into sustainable employment. Clients assisted include ex-offenders/offenders and referrals are currently being taken from the Probation Service and Progress to Work. FSD also undertake physical improvement works, i.e. security fencing and clearance works, to improve visibility and eliminate no go areas especially in parks.
22. Economic Regeneration Strategy section also works in partnership with The Prince's Trust who give practical and financial support, through six nationally acclaimed programmes, to enable young people, aged 14 – 30 years, to overcome barriers, develop skills, confidence and motivation, enabling them to move into work, education or training. The Trust's focus is aimed specifically at those young people who are unemployed, educational underachievers, young people in or leaving care and ex-offenders.
23. An average of 40 young people start their own businesses in the borough every year with support and finance provided by the Council and the Trust. Over 60% of these businesses are still trading after 2 years. Over 40 unemployed 16-25 year olds enter education, training or employment every year after completing the Trust's 12 week personal development programme based in Sedgley. A total of 98 young people aged 14 – 16 from 4 local schools, who are at risk of truanting, exclusion or underachievement, participate in the Trust's XI Clubs, which offer team based programmes of personal development in their last two years of compulsory education, have proved successful in helping to improve attendance, motivation and social skills.
24. The section has overseen the implementation of the Dudley and Sandwell Business Park Network and secured funding from the European Community and Advantage West Midlands for security and environmental improvements to industrial areas. European funding for this project ceased in December 2008. The project worked in partnership with the Black Country Chamber of Commerce and West Midlands Business Link to engage businesses on industrial estates and to help them set up estate committees and self help groups. Grant funding was also available towards capital costs for physical improvement works including image and security improvements.
25. The section is also responsible for 31 managed workspace units, for small start up companies, at the Lye Business Centre. A number of actions have been taken to

improve security for businesses located there including the installation of door grills, metal door re-enforcements and barriers for each unit, cutting back of the trees surrounding the site to improve visibility from Hayes Lane and the completion of the erection of barriers at the entrance to the centre in March 2008.

Economic Regeneration Delivery

26. The team assist in the provision of sporting recreational activities to occupy young peoples' time, provide support to Parks Friends Groups to address issues of safety and security in parks, and apply 'Safer by Design' Supplementary Planning Guidance to every planning application. The team ensure that landscape works are compliant with the 'Code of Practice' based on 'Safer by Design' principles and have received awards for this piece of work.
27. The Landscape Team continue to secure funding for, consult upon, and deliver a number of multi use games areas, skate parks and other permanent outdoor sporting facilities which have proven effective in reducing anti-social behaviour and petty crime.
28. DUE through the Town Centre Management Team were successful in obtaining external funding from the Home Office and Government Office for the West Midlands to set up the Dudley Borough Business Crime Partnership (DBBCP). The aim of DBBCP is to reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour within business outlets, town centres and local centres. Owned and managed by the business community it consists of members from both the day and evening economy. Through stringent protocols the partnership provides its members, with the aid of West Midlands Police, photo and crime details of prolific offenders operating within the Dudley MBC area. These updated details are issued to members every six weeks by a secure Bulletin which lists prolific offenders banned from entering any of the partners' premises.
29. The scheme covers the whole of the borough and has strategic partners including Dudley MBC, West Midlands Police and The Crown Prosecution Service. Established in June 2003 the partnership has 131 members from the areas of Dudley, Brierley Hill, Kingswinford, Stourbridge and Halesowen. The partnership also provides the town centres and other local centres with a radio link scheme, which currently has 91 members, enabling stores and businesses to keep in contact with each other and the police on current activities of crime and incidents as and when they occur. Lye Town Centre radio link scheme also came on line in January 2009.
30. The partnership's integrated business radio link is the first of its kind in the UK and operates through the Council's intranet network. The Partnership was awarded the Home Office backed 'Safer Business Award' following a stringent audit of the protocols and practices of the partnership in February 2008. The Bulletin, exclusion and radio link schemes are complemented by other services provided by the partnership including:-
 - Crime Activity Report, whereby each business has details on crime and criminal offences within their premises, analysed to key times and days of offences
 - Membership only Website, where up to date information on crime activity across the borough is available throughout the day
 - Training, where members have the opportunity for their staff to have police supported training on confrontation and identifying vulnerable areas

- Body Video Cam Scheme, which is currently undergoing trials, when launched will be the first scheme in the UK where DBBCP members, following investigation with West Midlands Police, can borrow free of charge a body video camera to record incidents of crime or criminal activity taking place on their premises
31. The partnership is also working towards a scheme that will provide crime and criminal activity for the prolific offenders who operate on business parks or industrial estates. The scheme will be open to all businesses residing on the 216 business parks/industrial estates within the borough.

Engineering, Traffic and Transportation

32. The Road Safety and Travel Awareness (RSTA) team work with schools to help them deliver their School Travel Plan commitment to carry out a Safer Routes to School Project. The Team, working with the school council identify any traffic or other problem that may deter pupils from walking or cycling to school. Suggested highway improvements from the council are passed to the highway engineers for consideration to be included in the Council's 'Safer Routes to Schools schemes' programme. Other concerns would be passed to the relevant organisation such as West Midlands Police. The school council also work with the RSTA team to promote sustainable travel using their schools' 'School TravelWise' web page on the Dudley Site.

As part of the West Midlands Driver Improvement Providers Group (WMDIPG) Road Safety and Travel Awareness Section provides driver improvement courses to retrain traffic offenders. Studies on the effectiveness of the scheme show that those completing the course reduce their chances of being involved in road collisions.

Environmental Management

Street and Green Care

33. Street and Green Care Section operate a number of initiatives to reduce the impact of crime and anti social behaviour including:
- A specialist graffiti removal team, who operate 52 weeks of the year to remove graffiti from public places. Priority is given to racist or highly offensive graffiti and the team will be re-deployed to be on site within 90 minutes of receiving a call regarding such graffiti
 - A specialist syringe collection service, which will make appointments to collect syringes or respond within 90 minutes to urgent calls
 - The Street Cleansing team also work in partnership with the Youth Offenders Team, tenants and residents groups and local stakeholders to jointly clean the local environment through community litter picks at identified litter hotspots
 - Other activities include the removal of fly tipped material, maintenance of green spaces, and the improved standard of street lighting in residential areas.
34. Parking Management support the 'Safer Parking Award' managed by the British Parking Association and supported by the Home Office and Association of Chief Police Officers. To date there are 13 Council owned car parks with this award. Work is being undertaken to secure a further Safer Car Park Award. 26 Civil

Parking Enforcement Officers are employed by the Council which provide an ongoing, visible presence, to deter crime.

35. Parking Management supports the Safe and Sound Partnership through ongoing membership and is represented on the project team of the Anti Social Behaviour Unit.
36. When new street lighting schemes for residential areas are designed, in establishing illumination levels the relevant European Standard code of practice is used to deliver the optimum levels of lighting for the type of road under consideration. In establishing the annual programme of works we utilise a Lighting Improvement Requests Register, compiled from requests for improved lighting and into which all such requests are entered. Prioritisation is carried out on the basis of requests received, crime statistics for the hours of darkness and engineering condition of any existing street lighting. The result is that our annual programmes reflect both the expressed needs of residents and levels of crime in those areas.

Waste Care

37. The Waste Management section undertakes a number of functions specifically to target crime and anti-social behaviour including the removal of abandoned vehicles and untaxed vehicles, the investigation concerning the illegal deposit of controlled waste, the enforcement of litter and dog fouling offences. These offences in many instances involve the issuing of fixed penalty notices and prosecutions where it can be proven that offences have been committed contrary to the relevant legislation.
38. Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) working from Halesowen Police Station were authorised to issue fixed penalty fines by the Council. The officers have actively been issuing fines around Halesowen Town Centre. The arrangement was further extended to include PCSO's operating from Lye Police Station, officers also operating around Lye and Stourbridge Town Centre.
39. Officers from Waste Care also investigate incidents of fly tipping, where controlled waste has been illegally deposited on land where a Waste Management Permit is not in place. Officers will quite often liaise with other agencies including the Police, Environment Agency, other local authorities and directorates to seek further information where it is apparent that offences may have been committed contrary to the relevant legislation.
40. The Council has undertaken a number of stop and searches in partnership with the Police and the DVLA. The purpose of the exercise is to try and reduce the level of incidents of fly tipping in the borough. The checks were carried out on vehicles carrying waste to verify that they are registered waste carriers and that the waste was going to a licensed disposal point. During the exercise the Police had the opportunity to check vehicles being used were currently taxed, insured, roadworthy, etc. In certain cases vehicles were impounded.

41. In April 2007 Waste Care have taken on devolved powers on behalf of the DVLA, these powers allow the Council to remove untaxed cars from the public highway where road fund licence is more than 28 days out of date and in situations where the DVLA has authorised the removal. From the 1st October 2008 these powers were extended to areas beyond the public road allowing where appropriate the Council to enforce on private land. Council officers are also authorised to issue notices on vehicles where the road fund licence is more than 14 days out of date.

Finance

42. The delivery of the programmes outlined above has been contained within existing DUE budgets.

Law

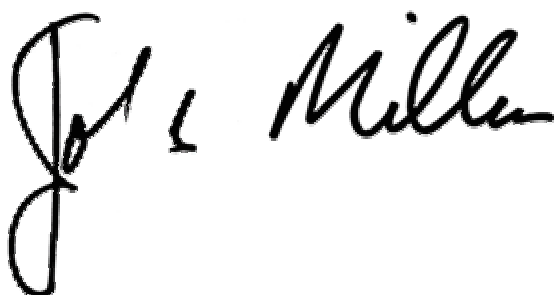
43. The report considers the Directorates contribution in the context of the Council's obligations under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Section 17 places a duty on key stakeholder groups (including local authorities) to do all they can to reasonably prevent crime and disorder in their area.

Equality Impact

44. A wide range of the activities covered in the report also contribute to promoting equality. Crime, Anti Social Behaviour (ASB), and fear of crime do impact in different ways on particular groups or communities. For example, the report outlines a range of activities for young people who may be at risk of being involved in ASB or crime; the work to secure car parks impacts on reducing the fear of crime particularly amongst women who can feel vulnerable using car parks especially at night; and the graffiti removal team give priority to dealing with racist or other highly offensive graffiti.

Recommendation

45. Members are asked to note the work undertaken by DUE in response to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.



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