

Meeting Date: 5 March 2013

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Communities & Housing Portfolio Holder's Report**

Councillor Jessica Riddle

CDRP

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 placed statutory obligations on Local Authorities and the Police to act in co-operation with Health Authorities and other relevant agencies, to work together to develop and implement a strategy for tackling crime and disorder in their area.

Carlisle and Eden CDRP (Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) has, and continues to be a successful catalyst for the multi-agency working to address crime and disorder in North Cumbria. Since its inception, we have worked effectively to contribute to significant and sustained falls in crime and disorder.

Performance figures for the Carlisle area for the period of 01/04/12- 31/1/13

Crime Category	Number of offences 2011 (YTD)	Number of offences 2012 (YTD)	Difference in number of incidents	% Change
All Crime	6,332	5,449	-883	-13.9%
Serious Acquisitive Crime	521	516	-5	-1.0%
Assault with Injury	538	474	-64	-11.9%
Burglary Dwelling	158	169	+11	+7.0%

All Vehicle Crime	341	340	-1	-0.3%
Robbery	22	7	-15	-68.2%
Criminal Damage	1,364	1,051	-313	-22.9%
Damage to Dwellings	437	333	-104	-23.8%
Damage to other Buildings	149	94	-55	-36.9%
Damage to Vehicles	514	409	-105	-20.4%
Other Damage	212	180	-32	-15.1%
Arson	49	34	-15	-30.6%

Crime statistics across Carlisle still continue to fall with the exception of burglary. The increase in burglary in a dwelling is decreasing month by month but still continues to be an issue for both the rural and urban areas. Police and partners are continuing to work together to tackle the issue through targeted media campaigns and covert and overt operations.

Operation Street Safe

As part of Neighbourhood Policing Week (11th – 18th February) Carlisle & Eden Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and partners from Cumbria Constabulary, Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service, Carlisle City Council, Riverside Carlisle, Cumbria Trading Standards, Victim Support and INSPIRA will be taking part in a StreetSafe Operation.

The event will take place on Tuesday 12th and Thursday 14th February. During the two days the partners will be visiting approximately 200 households in Scalegate Road and Beaumont Road areas of Upperby, Carlisle between 5.00pm and 8.00pm each evening.

Streetsafe is the best opportunity to consult with residents about issues in the community. The initiative provides a high profile police and partnership presence to demonstrate our commitment to working together to improve the quality of life for our communities through reducing crime and anti social behaviour. We take the opportunity to listen to concerns about burglary, theft from vehicles, anti social behaviour, street lighting, dog fouling, fly tipping, graffiti and other such issues affecting the quality of life of the Neighbourhood. We

are then able to feed this back to partners and make some immediate and longer term positive impacts in those communities, thereby improving that "feel safe" factor.

Problem Solving Groups

The Carlisle East and City West PSG's (Problem Solving Group) continues to work well and provide early interventions to ensure a quick response to community issues.

PSG Performance Monitoring	City West (March 2011 -)	Carlisle East (March 2012 -)
Total number of actions dealt with	144	51

Noise nuisance has been highlighted as one of the key priorities across the west of the City. The City Council's Environmental Health Team is working closely with partners (Police and Housing Providers) to ensure issues are tackled quickly and efficiently.

Environmental Crime including littering and dog fouling is still a serious concern for local residents in the east of the City. The Environmental Enforcement Team is continuing to tackle the problems through a co-ordinated and intelligence led approach. Patrols have been increased and the use of covert measures is being considered in some locations.

Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan

The Crime & Disorder Regulations 2007 place a statutory duty on Community Safety Partnerships (CSP's) / Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to prepare a Strategic Assessment of crime and disorder in their local areas.

The aim of the Community Safety Strategic Assessment is to provide partners, and other responsible authorities, with an understanding of the levels and patterns of crime, disorder and substance misuse in the county and local areas which will enable partners to plan their resources in order to tackle crime and disorder.

The Strategic Assessment has now been produced and will be used by the Carlisle and Eden Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to produce this year's Partnership Plan.

HOUSING

Home Improvement Agency

Age UK have been successful in a £10,000 bid for Warm Homes, Healthy People funding to provide practical help and assistance to vulnerable households with cold-related health conditions. Homelife Carlisle will be helping Age UK deliver the scheme to ensure that all households, including working-age, will benefit. The scheme will be promoted alongside Homelife Carlisle 'Keep Warm, Keep Well, Keep Safe' campaign this Winter.

Help available includes:

~Free Winter warmth packs which include: blanket, automatic night-light (replaced by hot water bottle for working age households), thermos flask, thermal socks, energy advice, thermometer and message in a bottle.

~ Free or subsidised home energy measures such as draught-proofing, radiator reflector panels etc.

Affordable Housing Completions

In the period of October to December 2012, 18 new affordable homes were built and delivered for occupation. These affordable homes are made up as follows:

- Ten properties in the rural villages of the district. Eight of these new homes were built at Cumwhinton by Two Castles Housing Association, and provide much-needed bungalows and family-sized accommodation for the local community. The £1.2million scheme secured a £.216m grant from the Homes and Communities Agency, following support from the City Council. All eight units are now fully occupied by people local to the area. Two further properties, both three bedroom properties, have been developed in Talkin, which were secured following negotiations with the developer. The delivery of rural affordable housing, especially family-sized accommodation, is a key priority in the Carlisle Housing Strategy 2012-16.
- Eight properties at Barley Edge, Botcherby, including six properties provided for sale at a discounted price. These discounted units are allocated through the City Council's Low Cost Housing Scheme, which provides a vital option for prospective homeowners who are being priced out of the open market. Two further properties are being made available under the Government's FirstBuy scheme.

HOMELESSNESS, PREVENTION AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

Accommodation and Support Services

The Accommodation and Support Services currently have a 98% occupancy rate; and the move on period from temporary accommodation is currently 7 weeks for singles and 8 weeks for families.

The team have arranged and facilitated a number of events and activities at both the men and women and family accommodation schemes including:

- ⇒ Food donation project with Sainsbury's
- ⇒ Barnardo's family parenting sessions being held within the women and family hostel; development of additional collaborative programme for home-share residents to be delivered within Shaddongate Centre
- ⇒ Development of social work placements within the services
- ⇒ Quilting project with residents of the women and family hostel

- ⇒ Easter art projects being developed with Carlisle College for the children and families
- ⇒ Zumba classes for residents within the women and family hostel
- ⇒ Regular healthy eating and cookery classes for residents within the women and family hostel
- ⇒ Partnership working with Hayton School to develop art work for the replacement women and family accommodation; teaching worksheets for children within the hostel; and teaching worksheets to be developed for the children attending Hayton School to promote homelessness awareness

Replacement family women and family accommodation

We are pleased that work has started on site, is on schedule and progressing well:

Key Steps	Anticipated timescales
Start on site at Water street	Begun
Anticipation completion	May 2013

We are currently developing several community projects and partnership initiatives which will take place once the hostel has relocated:

- ⇒ Partnership working with Hayton School to develop art work for the replacement women and family accommodation; teaching worksheets for children within the hostel; and teaching worksheets to be developed for the children attending Hayton School to promote homelessness awareness
- ⇒ Community initiative to develop the garden / play area
- ⇒ Continuation of the collaborative Art project with Carlisle College to develop unique bespoke Art work pieces for the new building; (this project last year developed art work for the Shaddongate Centre)

Welfare Advice Service

From 1 October 2012 to 31 December 2012, the team increased income to local residents and therefore to the local economy by £252,719.39.

WELLBEING TEAM

Community Centres

Meetings are taking place with each Community Centre to finalise Service Level Agreements. The Agreements have been well received by Managers and Chairs of the Centres Committees, who are pleased that the document is easy to understand and they recognise that producing business plans and local profiles will assist them in making their Centres more sustainable.

Carlisle Community Neighbours

The recruitment process has begun to appoint a Community Neighbours Co-ordinator. External funding has been secured through the Flexible Spend Health to Adult Social Care Monies. The successful applicant will be responsible for coordinating the provision of a Community Neighbours Scheme for vulnerable older people throughout Carlisle.

Communities & Housing (Equalities)

Training on the role of the Third Sector and the importance of the Cumbria Compact was delivered in February by CVS.

eCUSTOMER SERVICES

Customer Demand

Customer demand is rising steadily via all access channels. This is particularly within the areas of revenues and benefits. The increased demand has resulted in advisors being stretched the majority of the time. Within customer services, we are going through an intense training programme for advisors to get them up to speed with welfare reform changes as well as other service changes. This has come at a time when we have new starters replacing staff that have either retired or are going on maternity leave. This intense period will mean more training than ever for staff and their dedication to this, whilst serving a high volume of customers, deserves to be recognised.

Automating Services

The automating services project has gone live with self serve for the first service, which is Council Tax. Customers can register for a PIN number and view their Council Tax account online. They can also give information, sign up for direct debit via the web and register to get an e-bill rather than a paper bill. So far well over 100 customers have signed up for this service following a 'soft launch'. A more focused marketing strategy will fall in line with the main Council Tax bills being produced in March 2013. This will mean a more convenient service for the customer as well as savings for the authority.

DWP

The DWP Fraud team will be moving into the Civic Centre in March 2013. They will be moving from their current base at Rufus House which is due to be closed. The team will occupy a room on the ground floor which was previously occupied by the Communications Team whilst the first floor was being rewired. The team are due to merge with the local authority fraud team under welfare reform, currently scheduled for 2014. The advantages of this agreement will include income to the authority and closer working links with the DWP in light of welfare reform changes. The Single Point of Contact for DWP will be the Customer Services Manager as with the other external partners.

Identity and Passport Service

The Identity and Passport Service (IPS) currently occupy one interview room and office space two days per week in the contact centre. The service has advised that they would like to procure an extra interview room for the two days a week they carry out the service at Carlisle. This will generate income into the authority. Customer services are working with property services to align a business case for this effective from 1st April 2013.