

# Item no.

Report to: **Executive**  
Date: **5 July 2005**  
Report of: **Partnerships Scrutiny Committee**  
Subject: **Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour through Partnerships**  
Ward: **All**

## 1 **Purpose of Report**

1.1 The report details the work undertaken by the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee in examining how the Council aims to address Anti-Social Behaviour through partnership working. The report represents a snapshot position between July 2003 and September 2004 and will be supplemented by follow up review reports once this report has been agreed.

## 2 **Consultation**

2.1 In preparing this report, consultation has been undertaken with Management Team, Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives, Head of Environmental Health and Licensing, Environmental Services Manager (Enforcement) and the Senior Community Safety Officer.

## 3 **Background**

3.1 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee agreed that as the main thrust of its work for 2003/4 it would examine how the Council addressed the problem of Anti-Social Behaviour through partnership working.

3.2 To commence the review, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee received reports from the Council's Head of Community Safety which:-

- set out the Council's current policy relating to tackling Anti-Social behaviour
- identified the Council's lead partners in relation to dealing with Anti-Social behaviour
- explained the mechanisms by which the Council and its partners dealt with Anti-Social behaviour
- highlighted those partnership projects that had been established to address the problem of Anti-Social behaviour.

3.3 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee agreed that it would progress its investigations by:-

- meeting with each of the Council's partner organisations that had been identified and discussing areas of best practice in

relation to joint working together with any perceived gaps in service provision that might have become apparent

- benchmarking the activities of the Council with other local authorities to assess their effectiveness in tackling Anti-Social behaviour
- reviewing the Council's existing mechanisms for tackling Anti-Social behaviour through partnership working

3.4 The key partner organisations identified by the Head of Community Safety is attached to the report (Appendix A)

#### 4 **Position Statement and Option Appraisal**

4.1 At an early meeting, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee considered a report which identified the key policies of those agencies within the Community Safety Partnership who were involved in tackling Anti-Social behaviour within the district.

4.2 These included:-

- District of Easington Crime and Disorder Strategy 2002/5
- District of Easington Youth Strategy
- District of Easington Cultural Strategy
- Easington Divisional Policing Business Plan

4.3 Each strategy was examined to establish the interventions which could be utilised to tackle Anti-Social behaviour as well as the targets which had been drawn up to monitor the success of these key strategies.

4.4 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee agreed that members would visit each of the partner organisations in turn to discuss areas of best practice. In order to facilitate discussion at the visits, a short questionnaire was drawn up which partners would be asked to complete prior to the visit.

4.5 A copy of the questionnaire is attached to this report for information (Appendix B)

4.6 Questionnaires were completed on behalf of the following organisations/partnerships/initiatives

- District of Easington Community Safety Partnership
- East Durham Education Welfare Service
- County Durham Youth Offending Service
- Youth Inclusion Programme
- Positive Futures Programme
- Education in the Community
- Durham County Council Community Safety Team
- Durham Constabulary
- District of Easington Private Landlords Accreditation Scheme
- District of Easington Tenants and Residents Federation
- Groundwork East Durham
- Developing Initiatives for Support in the Community (DISC)
- Easington Primary Care Trust

4.7 Further detailed information was provided by the following partner organisations during visits by members of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee:-

- Durham County Fire and Rescue Service
- “On Track” Programme
- Investors in Children and Hear by Right

4.8 Members also received presentations by the following organisations on their activities which aimed to support the work of the Community Safety Partnership in tackling Anti-Social behaviour:-

- Groundwork East Durham
- DISC

4.9 Attempts were unsuccessfully made to invite the local Magistrates to attend a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee to talk specifically about the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders to deal with persistent Anti-Social behaviour offenders.

4.10 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee was able to secure the services of Ray Partridge, who was the appointed training provider to Magistrates within County Durham. Mr Partridge gave members a thorough presentation of the implications of the new Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the new powers afforded to both Local Authorities and partner organisations to deal with Anti-Social behaviour.

## 5 **Benchmarking**

5.1 As part of their investigations the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee agreed that some benchmarking activities be carried out to establish how the Council’s approach to tackling Anti-Social behaviour compared with other Councils.

5.2 Arrangements were made for representatives of the Partnerships Committee to visit Blyth Valley District Council who had previously received a ‘two star good service with promising prospects for improvement Best Value Assessment for their Community Safety service.

5.3 Members recognised the strong synergy between the two Councils in terms of population, economic and social history and the specific anti-social behaviour problems prevalent within the two districts.

5.4 Additionally, Blyth Valley District Council had transferred the management of its housing service to an Arms Length Management Organisation as had been agreed here at Easington.

5.5 The Chair and Vice Chair of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee together with another member of the Committee and the Scrutiny Support Manager attended an Anti-Social Behaviour open training event on Monday 15 December 2003. At the event presentations were given by representatives of the three main organisations represented on the local Community Safety Partnership namely:-

- Tony Moran, Community Safety Co-ordinator, Blyth Valley District Council

- Ian Johnson, Senior Tenancy Enforcement Officer, Blyth Valley Housing
- Inspector Alan Brown, Northumbria Police

5.6 As part of the presentations members received information regarding a number of initiatives which were being implemented within the Blyth district and which necessitated multi-agency co-operation and involvement. These included:-

- a performance management system adopted from the USA entitled 'SARA' which was used to identify instances of Anti-Social Behaviour, analyse any patterns to these incidents, respond to the incidents by targeting resources to tackle the problems and assess the effectiveness of these measures
- the use of both fixed and mobile CCTV systems to both capture evidence of Anti-Social behaviour within specific 'hot spots' but also to act as a deterrent for the same
- the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and the implementation of a new tenancy enforcement policy and procedure to tackle problem tenants within Blyth Valley Housing
- regular meetings with other Registered Social Landlords and private sector landlords to promote responsible tenancies and decent standards in accommodation
- the establishment of multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Units thought the district to address the problems of inter-agency communications and to look at diversionary activities as well as enforcement

5.7 Discussions also took place regarding the recently introduced Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the potential powers that would be afforded to local authorities, the police and other agencies to address anti-social behaviour. Such powers included:-

- powers to close crack houses quickly and easily
- powers to disperse intimidating groups
- powers to tackle fly-tipping, graffiti, litter and fly-posting
- powers to 'demote' tenancies and widen the use of injunctions
- expanding the circumstances in which parenting contracts and orders could be used

5.8 It was clearly acknowledged that for the abovementioned powers to be effective, the local authority needed to work even closer in partnership with other agencies.

5.9 A report was given back to the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee on 6 January 2004 regarding the visit to Blyth Valley.

5.10 During the feedback session members generally felt that the District of Easington were utilising the same methods as Blyth Valley District Council in tackling Anti-Social Behaviour. It was evident that the Anti-Social Behaviour experienced within Blyth Valley were similar to that within Easington District.

- 5.11 Members expressed the view that the use of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and regular liaison meetings with the Police and other agencies were a feature of Blyth Valley's approach and enquired whether the Council may wish to examine if these initiatives could be pursued within Easington.
- 5.12 It was agreed that a briefing session be held between the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee and officers of the Council to discuss the issues arising from the visit to Blyth Valley.
- 5.13 The meeting was held on 22 March 2004.
- 5.14 At the meeting, Members were informed that an Anti-Social Behaviour Unit had been established as a joint venture between Easington District Council and Durham Constabulary to specifically tackle the problem of Anti-Social Behaviour within Easington.
- 5.15 Members were advised that Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's) had been used within Easington to deal with persistent anti-social behaviour. However ABC's were merely one stage in the process for dealing with persistent Anti-Social Behaviour offenders.
- 5.16 In examining the procedures to be followed in securing the ABC's, Members noted that representatives of the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit met with representatives of other agencies such as the Youth Offending Team and Education Service via a series of "Case Conferences". At such meetings, it was established whether the use of ABC's for young people committing Anti-social behaviour offences was suitable.
- 5.17 The Committee noted that the use of ABC's could not be considered in isolation as this process was one of a number of steps which was utilised by the Council's ASB Unit in consultation with partner agencies to tackle persistent anti-social behaviour offenders. These steps included first warning letters, second warning letters, ABC's and ultimately through the judicial system following the breach of an ASBO.
- 5.18 To put the success of the policies and procedures followed by the Council in conjunction with partners into context, it was established that from April 2002 to March 2004 over 750 first warning letters issued, only 59 second warning letters had been issued. Thereafter 18 of these cases had resulted in 18 ABC's being entered into.
- 5.19 Reference was made to the close working relationships at Blyth Valley between the police and Blyth Valley Housing, especially when dealing with problem tenants. It was evident that tenants were advised in no uncertain terms of the potential implications for their tenancies of anti-social behaviour.
- 5.20 Members had expressed concerns that the synergy between the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour team, Blyth Valley Housing and Northumbria Constabulary seemed greater than it appeared within Easington.
- 5.21 This need for synergy was acknowledged by officers within District of Easington particularly between the recently established East Durham Homes, the Council and Durham Constabulary.

- 5.22 In discussing the sharing of operational information between the District Council and Durham Constabulary regarding tackling anti-social behaviour, it was established that a draft protocol on information exchange had been developed between the members of the District of Easington Crime and Disorder Partnership.
- 5.23 The purpose of this protocol was to facilitate the exchange of data in order to comply with the statutory duty on police chief officers and local authorities to jointly develop and implement a strategy and tactics for crime reduction.
- 5.24 Reference was made once again to the “Case Conference” system which engaged representatives of Easington Divisional Police, District of Easington Council’s housing and Environmental Enforcement Unit, and other external agencies such as the Youth Offending Team, Educational Welfare Service, Social Services and the Probation Service.
- 5.25 In concluding their benchmarking deliberations, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee considered that the partnership arrangements in evidence within Easington to tackle anti-social behaviour compared more than favourably with those within Blyth Valley.

## **6 Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour within the District of Easington**

- 6.1 Anti-Social behaviour is a key priority for both national and local government and as such, there are a number of tools available to enable local authorities, police and other agencies to take action to stop problems associated with anti-social behaviour.
- 6.2 The Council has recognised that it is not simply a choice between preventing anti-social behaviour and taking enforcement action. It needs to do both and has been taking radical steps with partner organisations to do so.
- 6.3 In July 2004, the Local Government Association published Guidance for Councillors on tackling anti-social behaviour locally. The guide highlighted a number of areas for members’ consideration in assessing their Council’s effectiveness in tackling Anti-Social behaviour and how partnership working could be used to drive forward improvements in this area.
- 6.4 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee established that there were a number of mechanisms for obtaining information relating to Anti-Social Behaviour within the District. These included the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership crime audit, feedback from the Council’s Envirocall and Customer Services Unit and information gathered by the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit.
- 6.5 Members soon realised the importance of having all key agencies represented at a senior level on the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Within Easington it was established that members of the CDRP were represented by senior officials and that there were clearly defined targets and actions defined within the strategy, each with defined resources and timescales.

- 6.6 Key Partners within the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership have been reviewing the Crime and Disorder Strategy 2002-5. A full audit has been undertaken by all partners which will inform the 2005-8 strategy.
- 6.7 During the course of their investigations, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee noted that one of the biggest problems facing both the Council and its partners was the need to ensure that people felt able to report complaints relating to anti-social behaviour. A number of examples were received where anti-social behaviour was evident but people were reluctant to come forward with their complaints.
- 6.8 The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit has produced a customer charter for Investigations relating to complaints of Anti-Social Behaviour. A copy of the charter is attached as Appendix (C).
- 6.9 The Terms of Reference for the Community Safety Partnerships Anti-Social Behaviour Case Conference Group also outlines how a proportionate and graded multi-agency response to Anti-Social Behaviour Complaints across the district will be actioned.
- 6.10 Complainants are also advised that if they are reluctant to act as witnesses then they can pass information over to officers within the ASB Unit and/or Street Wardens who will act as 'professional' witnesses on their behalf.

## 7 **Enforcement**

- 7.1 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee have examined a number of mechanisms by which the Council, in partnership with other agencies tackle anti-social behaviour using enforcement.
- 7.2 The Council itself has a comprehensive and clear Enforcement policy which highlights enforcement mechanisms available to the Council in ensuring the implementation of law in the delivery of **all** Council services. This policy includes a number of enforcement policies available to tackle a variety of Anti-Social behaviour from dog fouling and litter, to underage drinking, abandoned vehicles and arson to neighbour disputes and noise nuisance.
- 7.3 The policy has been widely publicised both internally within the Council and also externally to Partners and on the Council's Website. The policy also establishes the powers available to the Council to take enforcement action against anti-social behaviour both individually and with other agencies.
- 7.4 Examples of multi-agency Enforcement Initiatives that have been undertaken within the district of Easington include:-
- Easington's Response to Arson
  - Easington Off-Licence Test Purchasing Scheme
  - Operation Lariat – a joint operation with the Police and the DVLA to deal with unlicensed and illegally parked motor vehicles in Peterlee.

- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 – Section 30 Order, Deneside Estate, Seaham

- 7.5 During its investigations, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee have acknowledged that the Courts have an important role to play in building the confidence of the community in tackling Anti-Social Behaviour. A number of concerns had been expressed regarding the lack of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders being used to target persistent offenders.
- 7.6 The Committee received evidence to suggest that there were instances where Anti-Social Behaviour Orders were being used within the district, although one issue which was raised was the length of time it took to secure an ASBO as well as the cost of the preparatory work in pursuing an ASBO.
- 7.7 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee were keen to interview local magistrates to discuss their role in dealing with persistent offenders when they reached the Court. However, an invitation to attend the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee was declined by the Clerk to the Magistrates Court on the grounds that their attendance at Committee may prejudice future Court hearings.
- 7.8 As mentioned earlier in this report, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee considered that the current “case conferencing” system adopted to investigate and address incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour worked well, with all agencies inputting into the process. There was evidence of strong linkages between the front line service staff for EDC, EDH, the County Council and the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit in ensuring that an early-intervention approach was adopted in tackling Anti-Social Behaviour.

## **8 Prevention of Anti-Social Behaviour**

- 8.1 During its investigations, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee recognised that early intervention in dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour can prevent such incidents from escalating. This also sends out a strong message to the community that anti-social behaviour will be tackled and not tolerated.
- 8.2 In examining how the Council and its partners ensured that this message was sent out to the community, a number of initiatives were discussed ranging from high profile, uniformed presence being established throughout the district to initiatives aimed directly at young people which provided them with diversionary activities.
- 8.3 The District Council introduced uniformed street wardens within two areas of the district namely the Easington Colliery/Horden pathfinder area and the “villages” west of the A19. Utilising resources from Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Neighbourhood Renewal, the Street Wardens initiative rapidly provided this high profile, uniformed presence in the areas concerned.
- 8.4 Some initial concerns were raised that these officers were seen to be a replacement for police “beat officers”. However these were soon dispelled and estate walkabouts with street wardens, police officers and housing officers have proven to be extremely successful in combating anti-social behaviour in these areas.



- 8.5 The success of the initiative has led to an agreement that the Street Wardens Service will be extended 'district-wide' although the Council has only agreed to mainstream 9 of the posts at the end of their external funding.
- 8.6 This service has received further accolades when it gained the Wade Quality Standard with distinction. This quality mark is awarded by the ODPMs Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.
- 8.7 During the course of its investigation, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee established that there were often clear linkages between the environmental appearance of an area and the incidence of anti-social behaviour in the same location.
- 8.8 As a result, a number of agencies were visited to assess their role in contributing to the environmental well-being of the district.
- 8.9 Members found numerous examples of positive partnership working which dealt with environmental problems such as abandoned cars, litter and fly tipping and graffiti. Agencies involved in such initiatives included Durham County Fire and Rescue Service, the Probation Service, Easington and Horden Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Board, Durham Constabulary, local schools and the DVLA.
- 8.10 One of the common anti-social behaviour complaints received by the Council relates to anti-social street drinking, particularly amongst young people. Working in partnership with Durham Constabulary, the Council has established a number of initiatives aimed at tackling this problem.
- 8.11 Members were advised that problems associated with anti-social drinking amongst young people tended to be twofold, namely:-
- the sale of alcohol to underage persons by certain off-licences together with the problem of older persons purchasing alcohol on behalf of youngsters and;
  - the anti-social behaviour which arises from drunken youths congregating in public places.
- 8.12 The District Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team was involved, with Durham Constabulary in Operation Crux. This was a series of investigations into the selling of alcohol to under 18s by off licences within the district. The Operation involved young people trying to make purchases of alcohol at off-licences. As a result, 25 premises were found to be willing to sell alcohol to under 18 and, of these, a number are being prosecuted for multiple offences.
- 8.13 The District Council's Street Wardens also undertake joint patrols with Police and where, necessary have confiscated alcohol from young persons who were believed to be under 18 years of age.
- 8.14 Environmental improvements have also been identified as being an important tool in making an area feel safer. Through the case conferencing system, a series of environmental improvements have been undertaken at a variety of locations where anti-social behaviour has been prevalent. Resources have been provided on a shared/pooled basis, with

improvements including fencing at Peterlee, replacement of ageing bus shelters and provision of diversionary activities such as youth shelters.

- 8.15 Easington District has also been successful in becoming one of 27 “Liveability Funding” pilot areas. Funding from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had been secured totalling £3.154m which consisted of a £2.8m Capital Grant and £354,000 Revenue.
- 8.16 The District Council’s approach to the pilot was to implement a range of service reforms and capital projects designed to modernise its environmental services. Key to the success of the pilot was the Council’s ability to engage with partners and stakeholders in drawing up a range of initiatives, some of which had clear linkages to the Council’s aims in tackling Anti-Social Behaviour.
- 8.17 The reforms and service improvements had been agreed by the Liveability Working Group, a sub-group of the East Durham Local Strategic Partnership.
- 8.18 Of concern to members will be the implications for the Council once the Liveability Fund is expended as a number of the initiatives will need to be considered for mainstreaming.

## 9 **Diversionsary Activities for Young People**

- 9.1 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee were keen to examine the way in which the District Council worked with its partners in the Community Safety Partnership in providing diversionary activities for young people which is aimed at preventing anti-social behaviour occurring.
- 9.2 The Community Safety Partnership has secured resources for a variety of initiatives geared towards providing young people with something to do. The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, working closely with parish councils, local schools, Youth Workers, East Durham and Houghall College, and various community organisations have helped to provide services for youngsters including:-
- Youth Shelters at Easington, Thornley, Peterlee and Wingate
  - A mobile cinema
  - a youth bus
  - a mobile skate park
  - young peoples discos/music events at Peterlee and Seaham Leisure Centres
  - a communal “our house” facility at Easington Colliery
- 9.3 A series of events have also been secured for a number of community organisations to purchase sports and leisure equipment, particularly in the outlying villages within the District.
- 9.4 The Community Safety Partnership has targeted the development of six Community Activity Clubs throughout the district. District Council staff

working in partnership with School Sports Co-ordinating Officers have established two activity clubs namely, a tennis club at Seaham Leisure Centre and at Netball Club at Peterlee Leisure Centre.

9.5 The Council works with the Youth Engagement Service, Durham Constabulary and local schools to identify the top 50 young people who are likely to offend. Thereafter a range of sporting activities have been developed and delivered in targeted villages as diversionary measures.

9.6 Members of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee established that diversionary activities for young people were also provided by Partner Organisations such as the Youth Offending Service, Connexions and the Youth Inclusion and Positive Futures programme.

## 10 **Availability of Support Services to Offenders and their families**

10.1 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee has also examined the range of support services available to both offenders and their families. It has been recognised that a twin track approach of enforcement and diversionary activities coupled with support will ensure that the community is protected and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour are assisted in making sustained changes in their behaviour.

10.2 During the course of investigations it has been established that, as part of the multi-agency case conferencing system which has been adopted within Easington district, support agencies such as Education Welfare Services, Youth Offending Service, the probation service, social services etc, have played a key role in supporting offenders and their parents.

10.3 Members have examined the use of acceptable behaviour contracts and the provision of associated support when addressing offenders. It is pleasing to note that in the majority of cases, acceptable behaviour contracts have resulted in a marked improvement in behaviour which has in turn, negated the requirements for applying for anti-social behaviour orders. This has only been achieved because of the commitment of the families concerned and those organisations providing support.

10.4 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee have identified Drug and Alcohol Misuse as one of the main reasons for the incidence of Anti-Social Behaviour within the district. When interviewing Anna Lynch, Director of Public Health for Easington PCT, it was identified that the PCT commissioned substance misuse services in collaboration with Durham Alcohol and Action Team.

10.5 The work of the PCT in relation to substance misuse contributed to the District's Community Safety Partnership work particularly via the Substance Misuse and Violent Crime Task Groups. These two areas were often inter-related. It had also been acknowledged that the availability of substance misuse support networks and services would potentially impact on Anti-Social Behaviour also.

10.6 Concerns were voiced within the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee regarding the current funding shortfall within the PCT of approximately £26m per year. Unfortunately, this overall funding shortfall meant that historically substance misuse services in turn suffered from funding

shortfalls, although it had been identified as a priority development service.

- 10.7 Notwithstanding the above, the PCT had accessed various funding streams via the Local Strategic Partnership such as Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Single Regeneration Budget monies and Childrens Fund resources. This had enabled some supported substance misuse services to be developed. There were, however gaps in service provision still evident.
- 10.8 Problems being experienced with the district regarding the availability of substance misuse support services included:-
- the absence of a district based drug addiction rehabilitation service
  - the reluctance of some GPs and Pharmacies to provide methadone to drug users as an alternative to criminalized drugs
  - the social stigma attached to drug and alcohol misuse and the availability of core services such as housing and social care as part of a package of support for substance misusers.
- 10.9 Members generally felt that the provision of support services for substance misuse (both drug and alcohol) warranted further investigation and that a separate line of enquiry was needed, preferably led by the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee. The lack of statistical information coupled with the issues detailed above meant that more detailed analysis of the problems of substance misuse and the links to Anti-Social behaviour was required.
- 10.10 As part of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committees examination of how the availability of social housing affects anti-social behaviour, discussions were held with Helen Clark, the Council's Private Sector Initiatives Officer.
- 10.11 During discussions, it was established that Helen worked closely with a number of private sector landlords within District of Easington to improve the quality of private sector rented accommodation and the tenants of such accommodation.
- 10.12 The Easington Private Sector Landlords Accreditation Scheme had been set up to encourage private sector landlords to apply for accreditation status for their properties which would demonstrate their commitment in providing good quality rented accommodation to an agreed standard. It also benefited prospective tenants of such accommodation as they could be assured of securing quality accommodation as part of the scheme. The scheme also provides a vetting service for prospective tenants to enable landlords to be sure that they will not let properties to problem tenants.
- 10.13 Members considered that this initiative would have a major impact on anti-social behaviour in that, absentee landlords in the private sector rented market, poor accommodation standards and the prospect of "problem tenants" inhabiting such properties often proved to be a recipe for problems of anti-social behaviour occurring.

10.14 With the transfer of the management of the Council's housing stock and service to an Arms Length Management Organisation, East Durham Homes, there will be other elements of partnership working that will need to be developed. In view of the establishment of East Durham Homes and the potential links between that organisation and the Council's own policies and procedures in respect of anti-social behaviour, it is essential that the positive examples of partnership working in respect of social housing are continued. However, because of the timing of the establishment of and transfer to East Durham Homes, in depth investigations of these have not been undertaken.

10.15 It may be prudent that the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee seeks confirmation of the role of East Durham Homes in respect of the LSP and Community Safety Partnership as well as their relationships with Council officers dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour.

## 11 **Reporting Anti-Social Behaviour**

11.1 The Home Office 2003 day count undertaken on 10 September 2003 collated reports of anti-social behaviour including litter, vandalism, intimidation, abandoned cars and begging. The count showed that nationally, twice as many reports are made to the local authority as to the police but that the reports are made to a wide range of agencies at both district and regional level.

11.2 Members of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee have been encouraged by the fact that there are agreed reporting lines for the public to report incidents of anti-social behaviour. The important issue appears to be one of co-ordination in that, reports are made to a variety of avenues such as EDC reception staff, East Durham Homes Estate Managers, Envirocall and Street Wardens.

11.3 Communication to the public on how to report anti-social behaviour and, to which agency should be co-ordinated between councils and other key agencies through the Crime and Reduction Partnership. The use of council frontline services, call-taking services and websites needs to be considered given the importance which will be placed upon tackling anti-social behaviour within the 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment and the emerging E-Government improvement agenda.

11.4 One important development in partnership working and communicating incidents of anti-social behaviour has been the commitment to purchase and use 'airwave radios' by the Council's Street Wardens. This has resulted in a better service for the residents of the district enabling the Street Wardens to provide a district-wide service. This in turn has freed up Police Officers to deal with more serious crime.

## 12 **Conclusion**

12.1 The Partnerships Scrutiny Committee have collectively and individually interviewed all of the Council's main partners within the District of Easington Community Safety Partnerships. Presentations have been given to the Committee and questions have been completed which will inform the Community Safety Practitioners regarding best practice and gaps in service provision.

- 12.2 Members have visited another local council with similar issues relating to anti-social behaviour with a view to assessing how they deal with anti-social behaviour and any lessons which could be learned.
- 12.3 In general terms, the District of Easington compared more than favourably with Blyth Valley in tackling anti-social behaviour through partnership working although concerns were expressed about the relationship between Easington District Council and the recently established East Durham Homes. Members may consider that this issue warrants further investigation in due course.
- 12.4 One area which has been identified as being of specific importance within the district is the availability of support services for people with substance misuse problems and their families both in terms of detox treatment and social support when they are undertaking treatment. Substance misuse has been identified as a contributory factor in respect of anti-social behaviour and, accordingly, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee may wish to pursue their inquiries in this area, specifically regarding the services provided by health and support organisations.
- 12.5 In terms of mainstreaming services to tackle anti-social behaviour, the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee are pleased to note the commitment given by the district Council and Durham Constabulary in establishing a mainstreamed Anti-Social Behaviour Unit. Support for the Community Safety Unit has also been mainstreamed as well as a district Council commitment to mainstreaming street wardens within the Easington district. Partnerships Scrutiny Committee would seek assurances that mainstreaming services to tackle anti-social behaviour should not be the sole responsibility of the Council but that partners would also make the same levels of commitment.
- 12.6 Members are satisfied that the Council and its partners are tackling anti-social behaviour in a number of ways both in terms of the use of enforcement powers and the provision of diversionary activities and support services. The success of the policies and procedures put in place will need to be addressed as part of the 2005 Crime and Disorder Audit and Strategy.
- 12.7 With regard to the available channels for members of the public to report anti-social behaviour, members may feel that some discussions should be held with partners to establish some reporting protocols common to all Community Safety Partnership organisations. Options for this may be enhanced as the development of the Council's contact centre is firmed up.
- 12.8 As highlighted in Section 1.1, the report before members represents a snapshot of the overall position at the time when the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee were undertaking their investigations.
- 12.9 Accordingly, it has been acknowledged by the Council and consultees to this report that significant developments in a number of areas in relation to tackling anti-social behaviour through partnership working have been made.

12.10 It is suggested that these developments be examined as part of a review mechanism in respect of this report, and that they be investigated within a period of no later than six months from the date of this report.

### 13 **Implications**

#### 13.1 **Financial**

13.1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### 13.2 **Legal**

13.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### 13.3 **Policy**

13.2.1 There are no policy implications arising from this report.

#### 13.3 **Risk**

13.4.1 A risk assessment has been completed and the necessary actions required to manage the identified risks have been identified.

#### 13.5 **Communications**

13.5.1 The report and its findings will be published and the Marketing and Communications Unit have been approached to arrange an appropriate press release.

13.5.2 The report will also be circulated to those parties identified therein together with the Community Safety Partnership.

### 14 **Corporate Implications**

#### 14.1 **Corporate Plan and Priorities**

14.1.1. The report has been produced to assess how the District Council is tackling anti-social behaviour through partnership working. This reflects the Council's priority objectives MDS1, MDS2 and MDS3 in respect of making the district safe.

#### 14.2 **Equality and Diversity**

14.2.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

#### 14.3 **E-Government**

14.3.1 There are no E-Government implications arising from this report.

#### 14.4 **Procurement**

14.4.1 There are no procurement issues arising from this report.

#### 14.5 **Crime and Disorder**

- 14.5.1 The report identifies a number of areas which would benefit from further investigation in respect of the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for tackling anti-social behaviour through partnership working.
- 14.5.2 The report and recommendations will be submitted to the District of Easington Community Safety Partnership for their consideration.

## 15 **Recommendations**

- 15.1 Members are invited to receive this report, agree its content and to approve the following recommendations arising from the report:-
- (a) the findings from the completed Anti-Social Behaviour questionnaires be forwarded to the Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives for use in further developing relationships between Community Safety Partner Organisations.
  - (b) further investigations be made to ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place for joint working relating to anti-social behaviour between the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and East Durham Homes.
  - (c) the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee pursue their inquiries regarding substance misuse, specifically in respect of services provided by the PCT and support organisations to treat addiction and ensure that individuals receiving treatment are afforded appropriate support services to prevent relapse.
  - (d) the effectiveness of current reporting procedures for Anti-Social Behaviour be reviewed to ensure that all Community Safety Partnership organisations have common protocols and that public access to these reporting mechanisms is readily available and widely publicised.
  - (e) this report and the recommendations therein be submitted to the District of Easington Community Safety Partnerships Strategic Group for Anti-Social Behaviour to enable the further development of multi-agency action to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour.

## **Background Papers**

District of Easington Crime and Disorder Strategy 2002/5  
District of Easington Youth Strategy  
District of Easington Cultural Strategy  
Easington Divisional Policing Business Plan  
Anti- Social Behaviour Act Visit Questionnaires  
Anti- Social Behaviour Act 2003  
Blyth Valley Borough Council Anti-Social Behaviour Seminar Notes

SG/MA/050201  
21 June 2005



