

**Scrutiny Sub-Committee to  
Promote Strong, Healthy and  
Safe Communities**



**6 December 2004**

**Fear of Crime Scrutiny Project:  
Progress Report**

---

**Report of Head of Overview and Scrutiny**

---

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To report on the progress of the scrutiny project looking at Fear of Crime in County Durham.

**Background**

- 2 The Fear of Crime Scrutiny Working Group began its work in July 2004, when the following terms of reference were agreed for the project:

*“To carry out an investigation into the way in which the County is addressing the aim in the Strategic Vision to reduce overall levels of fear of crime by examining (in both a selected rural location and urban area within County Durham):*

- *What fear of crime is and its extent*
- *Why people are concerned about crime in the light of relatively low crime rates in the County*

*with a view to making recommendations about how the public can be reassured and the levels of fear of crime reduced.”*

Whilst the project will look at fear of crime issues generally, it was agreed that localities at Deneside (Seaham), Eggleston and St John’s Chapel would be examined in more detail to determine whether there were any differences in fear of crime between urban and rural areas.

- 3 Three meetings of the Working Group have taken place to date. Evidence has been given to the Group about the complex nature of fear of crime; what the main drivers are in fear of crime (and suggested actions by practitioners to overcome these); some examples of research in nearby local authorities; and most recently, crime statistics for the specific geographical areas identified for more detailed examination and an outline of the StreetSafe initiative which is being implemented by Durham Police.

- 4 The pace of the project will need quicken substantially in the coming months to enable this major project to be completed before County Council elections in May 2005. Evidence will be taken from Home Office officials, the Police Authority, relevant Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, the Community Safety Team and Community Support Unit, the Magistracy, local press and media, County Durham Youth Engagement Service, Education in the Community and Age Concern, amongst others.
- 5 It is planned to commence dialogue about fear of crime issues with both young people and older people in the coming months. Some consultation has already commenced, with public views being canvassed in September/October at Police Community Consultative Group meetings in Easington, Teesdale and Wear Valley Districts.
- 6 Although the project is still at an early stage, consultation has already identified some of the following issues as local factors in fear of crime. These will be explored in more depth as evidence is taken over the coming months:
  - Anti-social behaviour
  - Physical state of the environment (i.e. graffiti and litter)
  - Reporting in the media
  - Fear of people about reporting crimes (reprisals)
  - Police response times to calls (urban and rural)
  - Rurality issues (sparsity of housing/people)
  - Public perceptions that offenders not dealt with appropriately
  - Joint working (both between agencies and local communities)
  - Community Cohesion
  - Young people's fears about crime

### **Recommendation**

- 7 You are recommended to note the emerging issues.

---

**Contact: Tom Bolton      Tel: 0191 383 3149**

---