

Executive Report

HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO

COUNCILLOR GEORGE CLEMENTS – PORTFOLIO HOLDER

TERRY CHILCOTT – LEAD OFFICER

1. KEY ISSUES – PROGRESS REPORT

1.1 Community Safety

Violent Crime

On a positive note alcohol related violent crime in Whitehaven and Workington town centres is reducing. It is, however, still increasing in other towns and villages. We all have a responsibility to support crime reduction by our agencies contributing at strategic and operational levels.

The partnership has invested in an initiative which focuses on young people, who become involved in under age drinking and the implications of it, to be delivered to school children in year 8 in all our secondary schools.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service are launching an Action Awards Initiative in the Harbour Ward, Whitehaven, which is aimed at reducing the numbers of call outs to dwelling/commercial properties, vehicle and rubbish fires, false alarms and road traffic collisions.

Anti-social Behaviour

The actions plans have been developed to address issues of measuring offending behaviour of offenders subject to ASBO's and ABC's. Identify and develop interventions to prevent offenders subject to ASBO's and ABC's from committing further offences.

An action plan is being developed to support partners working together to tackle incidences of criminal damage.

The Anti Social Behaviour Unit is being reviewed with the intention of providing in the future a single point of contact for reporting and dealing with anti social behaviour.

Environmental nuisance is a concern to everyone, the group are looking at how environmental nuisance reports are made and processed through to a satisfactory conclusion.

Community Safety TG

Burglary

The partnership has recently launched Smartwater, the intention is to roll it out into Copeland shortly to support our already reducing burglary targets.

Fear of Crime

We are currently reviewing a communications plan with the intention of liaising with the LSP to co-ordinate a joint plan.

Work is ongoing to make full use of existing newsletters for delivering positive messages to aid a reduction in people's fear of crime.

Vehicle Crime

We are developing a campaign to focus on people who leave valuables on display in their vehicles.

Work closely with Crimestoppers to promote anonymous crime reports.

1.2 Housing Health and Safety Rating System

New legislation will be introduced on 1st November which replaces the 'unfitness' legislation. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System, as well as assessing a property for unfitness (for example damp and mould) also assesses health and safety aspects (for example missing stair rails). Two officers have attended training sessions and will be qualified assessors by the end of the month. Training on enforcement action will take place in November which will give us the tools we need to make sure householders are not housed in unfit housing.

1.3 Homelessness

We have secured two more properties from Copeland Homes which we will use as temporary accommodation. The properties we already have are continually full; the two extra properties will reduce the amount of time people spend in bed and breakfast.

A countywide bid has been submitted to the ODPM for funding from the homelessness Innovation Fund. £160,000 has been requested to develop good working relationships with private landlords across Cumbria and to support landlords to provide longer assured short hold tenancies by developing a county-wide accreditation scheme. It is anticipated that this will reduce the need for temporary accommodation because applicants will be able to access private tenancies easier and have longer-term tenancies.

1.4 Fire Safety

When our technical officer visits homes to assess whether work is required for a renovation grant/home improvement grant he often comes across properties without smoke alarms, faulty wiring etc. Arrangements have now been made with the fire service that they will carry out a fire assessment and fit smoke alarms to properties if the technical officer thinks it necessary.

2. **EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

None

3. **EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

Subject: Disabled Facilities Grant

Date of Decision: 27 September 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0067

Context: Monitoring of the budget for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants has revealed a shortfall in meeting anticipated commitments for the remainder of the year.

Decision

That a) the current position be noted;

b) the budget for Disabled Facilities Grants be increased by £100,000 in the current year by virement from the Renovation Grants Budget; and

c) that an application for supplementary credit approval be made to the Secretary of State

Subject: Homelessness

Date of Decision: 27 September 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0068

Context: Monitoring of the budget for temporary accommodation has revealed an overspend.

Decision

That a) the existing situation be noted; and

b) the shortfall of £118,071.00 be funded from the unallocated balance relating to the right to buy receipts following stock transfer.