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Copeland Community Safety 2009 Progress Report

Background

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006), requires responsible authorities to consider crime and disorder (including antisocial behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the exercise of all their duties, activities and decision-making. This means that in all policies, strategies and service delivery there is a need to consider the likely impact on crime and disorder.

A legal responsibility

'Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority... 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'.

Which put simply means:

Copeland Borough Council must:

- Take responsibility through future planning and day to day activity to reduce and prevent crime
- Understand that the primary responsibility for action lies with the **service departments** themselves so that crime and disorder reduction and community safety becomes an intrinsic part of service provision
- Work with the Safer Communities Officer to identify gaps in service provision and develop action to address issues
- Record and share good practice regarding crime reduction initiatives
- Ensure all policies, strategies, plans and budgets consider the potential contribution to the reduction of crime and disorder

This responsibility affects **all** employees, Elected Members and Contractors who work on behalf of the council. As such it is important all staff are aware of the act and how they can contribute towards reducing crime and disorder.

The role of the Local Authority

- Copeland is a statutory partners within the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
- As a statutory partner this means they are part of the decision making process for crime reduction, and have a role to play in the allocation of resources and identifying local priorities
- They ensure each service department works with the Safer Communities Officer to mainstream **Section 17** of the Crime & Disorder Act in order to clearly demonstrate they are working to meet statutory requirements
- Contribute at CDRP Strategy Group, Performance Group and Task Group levels.

Copeland

- Is required to provide information to support the CDRP Strategic Assessment, and ensure they implement their responsibilities highlighted in the Partnership Plan
- Has extended the powers of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to include the work of the CDRP
- Encourage appropriate officers and elected members to involve themselves in the CDRP where appropriate
- Support departments to record and share data (Under Section 115 of the Act)
- Use powers, tools and techniques to support problem solving locally

There are many ways in which Copeland address crime reduction issues. Some examples of which are:

- Accessible and improved housing – Service Level Agreements with housing providers, Private landlord Forums
- Designated Public Place orders – on street drinking bans
- Can use injunctions, ABC's and ASBO's for things like littering, noise nuisance, abandoned vehicles, harassment etc
- Support and implement Domestic Abuse initiatives
- Reduce Fear of Crime through media campaigns

The Role of Safer Communities Officer & Work to date:

As you can see Copeland has a huge part to play in Community Safety. The Authority is involved in many local initiatives, and has the power to influence decisions. The Safer Communities Officer is employed to support the Council in meeting responsibilities detailed above, raise public awareness into how the Council tackles crime issues, further develop partnerships and initiatives.

The Officer has been in position for 12 months, and to date has worked intensively both internally and externally: Some examples of which:

Public-Facing:

Community Safety Groups

Working with the Police to identify local areas in need of additional support to address specific issues. Liaising with residents and supporting the set-up of Safety Groups where needed.

Problem Solving

Working with Police to address local issues such as Burglary and Youth Crime using a proven method of assessment and action. Delivering Problem Solving training to new Police Officers and other partners at their request.

Local Initiatives

For example: Park Watch. Identifying public spaces which suffer high levels of anti-social behaviour and working with residents and partners to reduce such incidents.

Website & Media

Regular updates in Copeland Matters and involvement in Pride in West Cumbria. The development of a Community Safety Section for Copeland's internal and external website. Production of Crime Reduction leaflets for internal and external distribution.

Representing Copeland

At all CDRP Task Groups; delivering Copeland Problem Solving training and providing support to new Police probationers and other partners on request; attending relevant Police meetings on behalf of CBC.

Internally:

Section 17

Work with **all** service departments to ensure Crime & Disorder Reduction is considered in all they do and actions are included in Service Plans; Work towards achieving CIP objectives and support Copeland in reaching NI targets relating to Crime Reduction. Work with Counter Terrorism Police to ensure Copeland is prepared for potential Terrorist attacks.

Training Presentations and Policy

Section 17 legislation and practice training delivered to ALL Members and Staff. Regular presentations delivered to Scrutiny and Service Managers. Support Council services regarding Equality Impact assessments, policy development and service planning. The development of a Training Pack and leaflets etc regarding Community Safety and Section 17 for use by Managers and Staff. The development of Community Safety 'Champions' who can link to CDRP activity and promote good practice throughout the Council.

The Future

It is anticipated the Officer can continue to strengthen links with Partners such as the Police, Health Services other Local Authorities, County Council and the Media. More local initiatives will be supported and publicity surrounding this will clearly demonstrate the Council's commitment to reducing Crime issues.

Internally, all services will continue to understand responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act, and Managers will know how to implement action to better address problems. Good practice will be shared and new training tools developed.

This work will regularly be fed back to Members and suggestions from Members, Staff and the general public will be taken on board and work will move flexibly to meet local need.