

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

KILMARNOCK NORTH LOCAL COMMITTEE – 4 FEBRUARY 2004

SAFER STREETS REPORT – HOUSEBREAKING FIGURES

Report by the Director of Homes and Technical Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To inform the Local Committee on the actions taken by the Department of Homes and Technical Services to address the current level of housebreakings in Kilmarnock North.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Members previously agreed to make “ Safer Streets” a standing item on the Committee’s Agenda. Community Safety and Security is a central theme in the work of the Department of Homes and Technical Services to ensure sustainable communities.
- 2.2** The Committee on 11 November 2003 requested a report be made on the action being taken by the Department of Homes and Technical Services to address the level of housebreakings in Kilmarnock North.
- 2.3** This report provides a general overview of the actions taken by the Department to address criminal behaviour in Kilmarnock North.

3. ACTIONS

3.1 Better Neighbourhood Services Fund

- 3.1.1** Northwest Kilmarnock is one of two ‘Pathfinder’ areas in Kilmarnock funded by the Better Neighbourhood Services Fund. Within this funding arrangement the Department works with a number of public sector partners with the aim of making Northwest Kilmarnock a safe, attractive and active community.
- 3.1.2** Within the Northwest Kilmarnock ‘Pathfinder’ area the Department has direct responsibility for managing a number of projects including a mobile security team who carryout security checks on public buildings, vacant council properties and streets. The security team has instructions to report to the police any criminal incidents they witness during the course of their patrols.
- 3.1.3** In addition the Department plays an active role in assisting its partners in any other ‘Pathfinder’ project where it does not have a direct management role.
- 3.1.4** Under the Better Neighbourhood Services Funding Strathclyde Police ‘U’ Division has been allocated in excess of £300,000 over a two year period to provide additional policing resources in the two ‘Pathfinder’ areas.

3.1.5 The Department has established and maintains a close working relationship with Strathclyde Police 'U' Division. The Department's Director and the Head of Homes meet on a regular basis with the local police sub-divisional officer to discuss issues affecting the community at a strategic level. In addition the local area housing team management hold regular formal and informal meetings with operational police officers based in Kilmarnock North to share information and resolve day to day matters of common interest.

3.1.6 The outcomes of all 21 'Pathfinder' projects are subject to a robust system of monitoring, evaluation and reporting to ensure best value.

3.2 Wider Action Proposals – Longpark

3.2.1 Following the results of a comprehensive household survey carried out in Longpark and the surrounding area by Market Research Scotland on behalf of the Department, Cunninghame Housing Association and Communities Scotland, the Housing Committee of 11 September 2002 authorised the Department to address the safety and security concerns of the community by undertaking to:

- fit security lighting, door call systems, coded PIR sensor alarms and where required five lever mortice locks to 215 homes at a total cost of £32,250. This work has been funded from the Housing Capital Programme under the Intermediate Labour Market initiative operated through the Wise Group. This project continues the Department's ongoing commitment to Home Security Improvement.
- demolish a number of long term vacant properties in Longpark in order to promote sustainable regeneration. Plans are in hand to undertake these demolitions over the next few months.

3.3 Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities

3.3.1 Following consultation with the Scottish Executive on proposals to help local people build strong, safe and attractive communities, East Ayrshire has been awarded an indicative funding allocation for 2004/05 of £525,000. £400,000 of the award is to be utilised for community warden schemes and £125,000 to fund a range of other community based initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour. Subject to successful implementation and evaluation, a further £525,000 will be made available in 2005/06.

3.3.2 After appropriate analysis of various forms of data e.g. population makeup, crime trends, incidents of disorder, etc it was decided that Northwest Kilmarnock and New Farm Loch should be two of the four areas in which community wardens will operate from April 2004.

3.3.3 The aims of the proposed pilot initiative, in which the Department will have the lead role, are crime prevention, public reassurance and the improvement of environmental quality through wardens.

- regularly patrolling local areas to provide a high profile public deterrence to anti-social behaviour, vandalism and environmental damage

- acting as a link between local people and service agencies in relation to anti-social behaviour, vandalism and environmental damage
- assisting, where appropriate, in the speedy resolution of incidents of anti-social behaviour, vandalism or environmental damage through reporting, gathering information and providing evidence (including attending court)
- developing a pro-active approach to engaging with young people by providing information on social and leisure activities, and enabling them to raise issues of concern
- engaging positively with local people, providing community safety advice, and assisting in reassuring and supporting vulnerable people and victims of crime, and
- making appropriate referrals to the Anti-social Behaviour Team and developing an awareness of community based initiatives designed to tackle anti-social behaviour.

3.3.4 The local agenda and priorities for the Community Wardens in Northwest Kilmarnock and New Farm Loch have been identified by local people in the community who have been contacted through existing focus groups and community organisations. Throughout the life of the project the Department will continue to consult and act in accordance with the wishes of local people as they are in the best position to know what needs to be improved in their neighbourhoods.

3.4 Other Actions

3.4.1 The Department is committed to the Secured by Design initiative when undertaking any outside capital environmental works. Secured by Design is primarily an initiative to encourage the building industry to adopt crime prevention measures in its projects to assist in reducing the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime.

3.4.2 The Department is currently in discussions with one of its partners in the Security Industry to consider implementing a “Tenants’ Alarm Scheme” in Council homes in Kilmarnock North.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 This report demonstrates that the Department of Homes and Technical Services is aware of the crime trends in Kilmarnock North and in partnership with the police and other agencies it has been and continues to be pro-active in trying to prevent criminal activity.

4.2 It is understood that the “U” Divisional Commander of Strathclyde Police will advise the Committee of the police perspective on this matter in a separate report.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that Committee members;

- i) note the content of this report.

James Lavery
Director of Homes and Technical Services
14 January 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report on Wider Action Proposals, Longpark - Housing Committee –11 September 2002

For further information please contact Joseph Cassidy, Policy Manager, on 01563 576617.