
REPORT TO:	Community Services Committee	AGENDA ITEM:	14
DATE OF MEETING:	10 January 2002	CATEGORY:	DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Head of Community Services	OPEN:	
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Stuart Batchelor (Ext. 5820) John Morle (Ext. 5822)	DOC:	
SUBJECT:	Community Police Office	REF: SB/LPB	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Newhall	TERMS OF REFERENCE:	

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Members approve in principle the use of a council house in Newhall as a Community Police Office subject to the availability of a council house.
- 1.2 A feasibility report on the project is prepared for consideration by a future Community Services Committee.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To outline a proposal for the establishment of a Community Police Office in Newhall, using a council house.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Crime and Disorder Audit identifies that Newhall is the District's highest crime area for domestic burglary, and one of the highest for disorder, criminal damage and drugs offences.
- 3.2 These crime levels have a significant effect on the "Fear of Crime" for local people, contributing to people feeling unsafe in their community and withdrawing from involvement in that community.
- 3.3 The reduction of domestic burglary is also a Best Value Performance Indicator for the Council and its partners, and a target within the County Public Service Agreement. Reducing domestic burglary in Newhall would contribute significantly to achieving these targets.
- 3.4 Partnership working with the Police has resulted in a proposal, which could have a significant impact on crime levels and the "fear of crime" in Newhall.
- 3.5 It is proposed to adapt a Council House in a street in Newhall where crime levels are highest, i.e. drug supply, burglary, anti-social behaviour, and use it as a base for Neighbourhood Police Beat Officers, as well as other services, such as a drop in office for the Community Drugs Officer, Tenancy Liaison Officers, Neighbourhood Wardens, etc.

- 3.6 The establishment of a staffed Community Police Office in a residential area would ensure that the community has direct contact with police officers, with this contact being positive in people feeling protected from crime and restrictions on the supply of drugs leading to fewer house burglaries, plus reduced anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and car crime.
- 3.7 A semi-detached house would be identified and change of use planning permission applied for. The building would be modified to provide office accommodation, a meeting room and ancillary services.
- 3.8 If the Community Police Office is provided there would still be options to link with the OPRA project in terms of Neighbourhood Police Beat Officers holding surgeries at the OPRA building. The use of OPRA as the Police Office was considered but is not located in the ideal position to offer direct support to neighbourhoods as well as influence crime in those communities.
- 3.9 The main disadvantage of the proposal is the loss of a family sized house in an area which is relatively short of such properties. From a crime reduction point of view the project will make a significant impact on the quality of life of the local community and this needs to be weighed up against the loss of the accommodation.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The proposal is still at a very early stage, with the capital and revenue costs still being assessed. However, it is hoped that the project could be jointly funded between the Council and Police with a contribution towards revenue/capital costs being provided through a request to the Substance Misuse Group for the use of Year 2 Communities against Drugs funding.
- 4.2 A number of similar houses have been adapted in Derby City and partnership arrangements on these will be looked at as part of the feasibility study.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 This proposal would contribute to the Council's objective of supporting a safer community, and achieving Best Value Performance Indicator targets in Domestic Burglary, Auto Crime and Fear of Crime.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The establishment of a Community Police Office in Newhall would reduce crime in the community, as well as reassuring local people that the Crime and Disorder Partnership and the Police in particular are committing resources and staffing to making their lives safer. Officers believe that these benefits would outweigh the loss of this type of property from the housing stock (there is currently a waiting list for that type of property of 41 for two bedroom houses and 37 for three bedroom houses).

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The development of a Community Police Office in a council house would be a significant partnership initiative for the Council and Police to embark upon. It would be a direct intervention to reduce crime and disorder in one of the District's crime "hot spots" and support the local community's wish to see neighbourhood policing and direct delivery of council services.