

# Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

## Resources And Community Services Scrutiny Panel

### Service Improvement Performance Monitoring Of The Community Safety Service Improvement Plan Domestic Burglary May 2005

#### - Contents -

	Paragraph	Page No.
<a href="#"><u>Introduction by the Chair</u></a>	1	1
<a href="#"><u>Summary</u></a>	2	2
<a href="#"><u>Membership of the Panel</u></a>	3	3
<a href="#"><u>Terms of Reference</u></a>	4	3
<a href="#"><u>Methodology</u></a>	5	3
<a href="#"><u>Background Information</u></a>	6	3 – 7
<a href="#"><u>Community Safety Improvement Plan</u></a>	6.1	3 – 4
<a href="#"><u>Priority C – Domestic Burglary</u></a>	6.2	4 – 7
<a href="#"><u>Targets for Reduction of Domestic Burglary In Tameside MBC</u></a>	7	7 – 8
<a href="#"><u>Community Safety Initiatives To Tackle Domestic Burglary</u></a>	8	9 – 17
<a href="#"><u>Preventative Measures</u></a>	8.1	9 – 12
<a href="#"><u>Victim Support/ Detection Rates</u></a>	8.2	12 – 13
<a href="#"><u>Measures to deal with offenders/ reduce Re-offending rates</u></a>	8.3	13 – 17
<a href="#"><u>Budget Growth</u></a>	9	17 – 18
<a href="#"><u>Borough Treasurer's Comments</u></a>	10	18
	Paragraph	Page No.

**Borough Solicitor's Comments**

**11**

**19**

**Recommendations**

**12**

**19**

# Service Improvement Performance Monitoring Of The Community Safety Service Improvement Plan

## Domestic Burglary

### 1. Chair's Introduction

Following the Best Value Review of Community Safety in April 2004, the Resources and Community Services Scrutiny Panel met with the Best Value Inspector who outlined the findings and Members agreed to independently monitor the outcome of the Improvement Plan.



The Improvement Plan consists of eight priorities and Members decided to commence with domestic burglary, which is regarded as a high priority to the people of Tameside, but at the time was felt to be an area of weakness. The great value of scrutiny is that it can provide independent critical friend challenge and innovative hands on methods to reality check the progress of the Improvement Plan.

In the course of the review Members of the Scrutiny panel met staff working in community safety, the Probation Services, convicted burglars on the Prolific Offenders Programme and Home Watch Co-ordinators. Members learned far more from these sessions than would have been possible through briefings and reports and were especially impressed by the work of the Home Watch Co-ordinators and their pleasure at having the opportunity to meet the panel and explain their experiences.

The Scrutiny Panel's findings are contained in the report and show that overall there has been a significant improvement in the reduction of domestic burglary levels with the service on track to meet the targets set in the Improvement Plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bernard Walsh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Bernard Walsh  
Chair of the Resources and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

## **2. Summary**

This report reviews the progress of the implementation of the Improvement Plan of the Best Value Review of Community Safety in Tameside insofar as it relates to domestic burglary, with reference also to the Prolific Offenders' Programme.

The Scrutiny Panel met with key participants in the strategy and considered written comparative information about the achievement of key targets. The information received by the Scrutiny Panel indicated that although this priority had been identified as an area of weakness at the time of the Best Value inspection, considerable improvements have been made in performance and the service has met current targets for the reduction of domestic burglary. The service is also confident that it can meet future targets including reaching the upper quartile performance compared with other similar Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. The Panel found that alley gating and target hardening schemes are successful and additional budget allocations approved to support the service are being used effectively and appear to offer value for money. The Prolific Offenders Programme is offering an alternative approach to the problems of domestic burglary and although it is recognised that it is too early to give an indication of long-term success, it is felt that the programme should be given every encouragement.

The Scrutiny Panel felt that the Home Watch Scheme could be given a higher profile in the community through District Assemblies and that the mobile witness video scheme and other witness friendly interviewing systems should be given greater publicity. It is felt that there is also a need for consideration to be given to the long-term maintenance of alley gating schemes.

### **3. Membership Of Panel**

Councillor Walsh (Chair), Councillor P Harrison (Deputy Chair), Councillors Grundy, Hill, A Holland, M J Smith, Wareing, Welsh and K Wright

### **4. Terms Of Reference**

#### **Aim**

To monitor the implementation of the Community Safety Improvement Plan (March 2003 – March 2007) and to assess it's impact on the community following the Best Value Inspection. The review commenced with priority "C", "Tackling Domestic Burglary".

### **5. Methodology**

5.1 The Panel met with representatives of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (referred to in the remainder of this report as the "Partnership") to discuss the impact on the community of the initiatives to tackle domestic burglary.

5.2 The Panel met with convicted offenders of domestic burglary to discuss the effectiveness of the Partnership's measures to deal with domestic burglars from an offenders' perspective.

5.3 The Panel met with Homewatch Area/District Co-ordinators together with the Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Homewatch Administrator to discuss the impact on domestic burglary of the Homewatch Scheme.

### **6. Background Information**

#### **6.1 Community Safety Improvement Plan**

6.1.1 The Best Value Community Safety Improvement Plan 2003 - 2007 was produced following the Community Safety Best Value Review. The Improvement Plan identifies what needs to improve and why, together with actions to show how that improvement will be delivered. The Improvement Plan also details outcomes by which the success of the improvements to the service will be measured. The 2003 – 2007 Improvement Plan consists of the following 8 "core themes" or priority areas;

- A. Information, Intelligence and Co-ordination between Partner Agencies
- B. Sustainability

- C. Tackling Domestic Burglary
- D. Dealing with Prolific Offenders
- E. Improving Safety in Town Centres
- F. Tackling Drug and Alcohol Misuse
- G. Community Cohesion
- H. Youth Nuisance and Anti Social Behaviour

6.1.2 Each priority area consists of one or more key outcomes and a number of key actions intended to achieve these outcomes.

6.1.3 The Scrutiny Panel commenced the review by monitoring the Community Safety Service's performance in relation to domestic burglary.

6.1.4 In April 2004 the Audit Commission report identified domestic burglary as an area of weakness, stating that there had been some increases in domestic burglary in Tameside in recent years. However the Audit Commission also acknowledged that tackling domestic burglary is a high priority to the residents of the borough and consequently an important Council priority.

6.1.5 In addition, the Audit Commission report identified weaknesses in the Community Safety Service's monitoring of the impact of improvement initiatives relating to domestic burglary. The report states that some of the actions identified in the Improvement Plan "lack Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time – related (SMART) and outcome focused targets." It made the following recommendations:

- "Develop SMART and outcome focused targets and performance indicators in town plans and policy action team plans by March 2005."
- "Ensure that comparative information is systematically used to learn how initiatives have benefited other areas and the impact that ongoing activities are having on reductions in crime by September 2004."

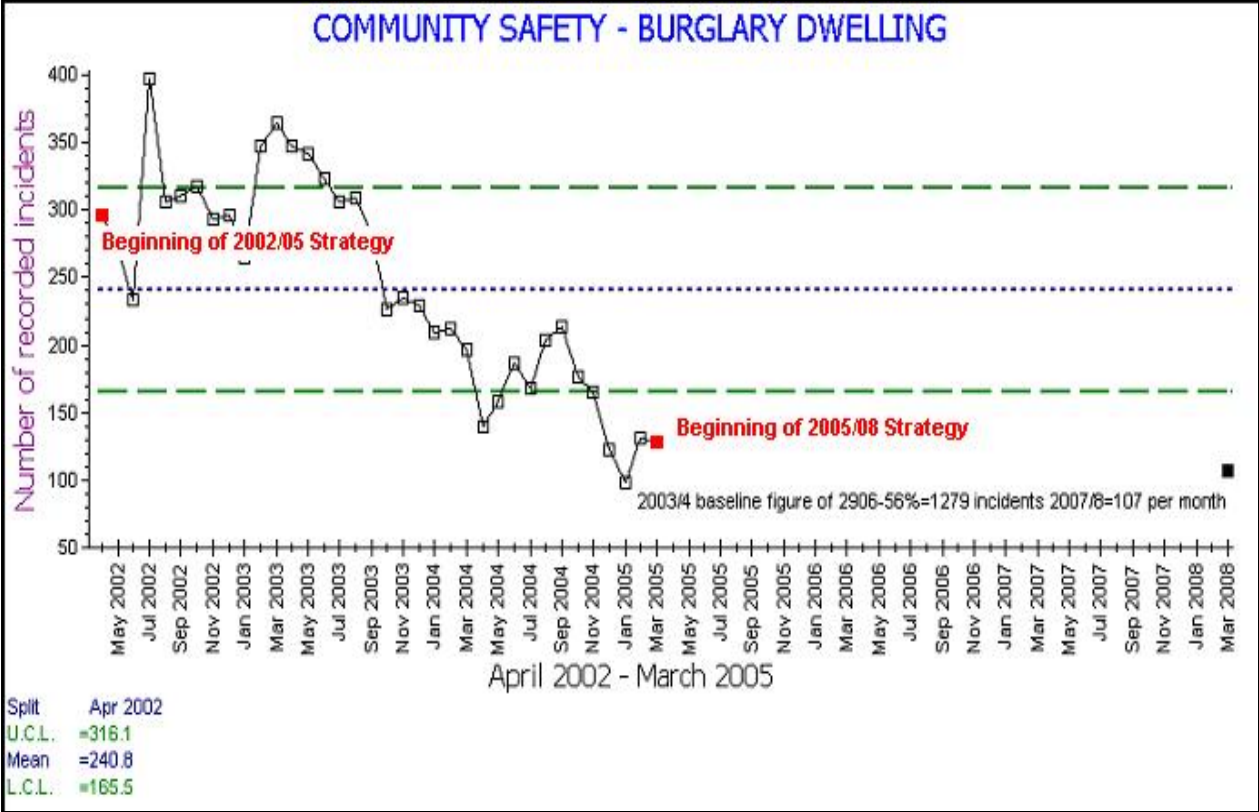
## **6.2 Priority C - Domestic Burglary**

6.2.1 Between 2001/02 and 2002/03 the number of recorded cases of domestic burglary in Tameside increased by 18.3%, from 3,121 to 3,691. Over the same period of time Tameside's position in its family group of similar Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships declined from 7<sup>th</sup> worst to 4<sup>th</sup> worst out of the 18 Partnerships in its group.

6.2.2 Since 2002/03, however, performance across the borough has shown a sustained improvement. In 2003/04 the number of domestic burglaries recorded fell to 3314; and the number of young people committing domestic burglary also declined by 3% compared to 2002/03 levels.

6.2.3 In addition the rate of improvement has accelerated during the 2004/05 municipal year. The most recent crime and disorder performance data shows there has been a significant decrease in the number of domestic burglaries recorded.

6.2.4 The graph below shows the number of domestic burglaries recorded each month between May 2002 and March 2005.



6.2.5 The graph shows;

- 1888 domestic burglaries were recorded during the 2004/5 municipal year. This equates to a 43.03% reduction on 2003/4 levels.
- Between the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 and the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004 1,516 burglaries were recorded, compared to 2,586 burglaries during the same period in 2003.

6.2.6 Despite the decrease in the number of recorded domestic burglaries, Tameside’s rank in its family group of most similar Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships remained low in relation to levels of domestic burglary throughout 2004.

6.2.7 The Home Office Partnership family groups were re-formulated in 2004 according to more detailed socio-demographic criteria. This re-formulation aimed to increase the level of similarity between a given

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and the other Partnerships in its group. Tameside's new family group contains 15 Partnerships.

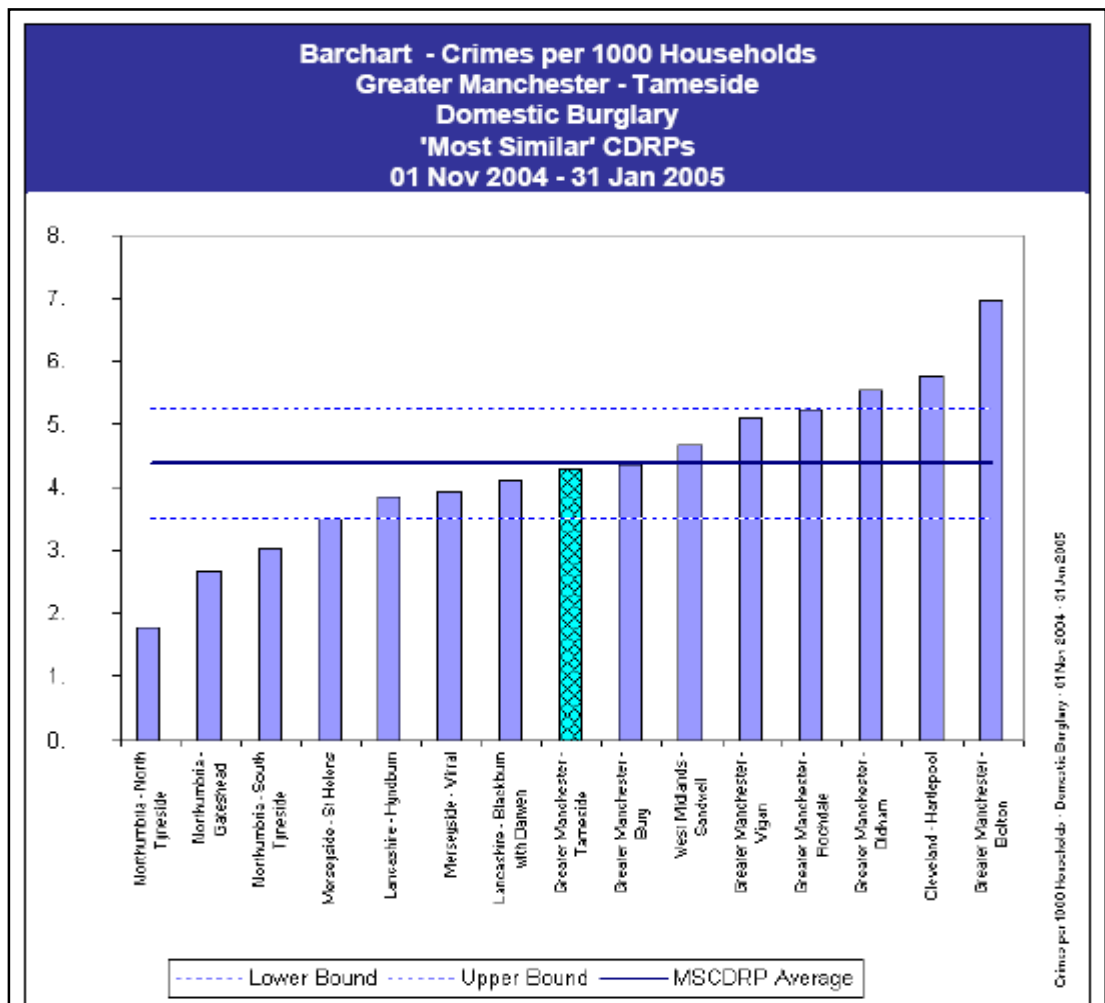
6.2.8 Between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2004 and the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004;

- Tameside was ranked 4 worst out of the 15 Partnerships in its new group
- 5,187 burglaries per 1000 households were recorded in Tameside during the last quarter of 2004.
- The average number of burglaries per 1000 households for Tameside's Most Similar Partnership group was 4,354.

6.2.9 However, most recent performance data shows that Tameside's rank in relation to domestic burglary has improved significantly in recent months.

6.2.10 The graph below shows the number of burglaries per 1000 households recorded between the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2004 and the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2005 for each of the Partnerships in Tameside's group;

6.2.11





6.2.12 The graph shows

- Between the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2004 and the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2005 Tameside's rank improved to 8<sup>th</sup> out of the 15 Partnerships in its group
- The number of burglaries recorded per 1000 households in Tameside between the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2004 and the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2005 fell to 4.285
- The average number of burglaries per 1000 households for Tameside's group was 4.387.

6.2.13 The Community Safety Service plan to visit the high performing Partnerships in Tameside's group in order to learn examples of best practice. In addition they plan to assess whether different crime recording procedures and socio-demographic variables affect the comparisons made between the Partnerships in Tameside's group.

## **7. Targets For Reduction Of Domestic Burglary In Tameside**

7.1 The "Tameside Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy" (2002) included a number of targets relating to domestic burglary for the period 2003 – 2005:

- To reduce the number of domestic burglaries by 25%
- To reduce the opportunities for distraction burglary by target hardening 300 vulnerable households per annum
- To reduce repeat victimisation by 25%

7.2 The Community Safety Improvement Plan (2003-2007) built upon and extended these targets;

7.3 The Improvement Plan's key outcomes commit the Service to;

- Reduce levels of domestic burglary to upper quartile performance for Tameside's "Most Similar Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership" Group by March 2007.
- Achieve the Local Public Service Agreement to reduce domestic burglary by a further 12.5% by March 2007, based on 2003/04 baseline data. This will require a reduction of burglaries by 576 offences over the three years of the agreement.

7.4 The Improvement Plan also specifies the following targets in relation to domestic burglary:

- Reduce the number of distraction burglaries (bogus doorstep callers) by 20% in those households most affected (over 75 age group);

- Reduce the number of acquisitive crimes by 8%, based on 2003/04 levels;
- Improve detection rates in relation to domestic burglary, including bogus callers (distraction burglaries);
- Further reduce the level of repeat victimisation for domestic burglary;
- Reduce re-offending rates amongst those participating in the Prolific Offenders' Programme by 30%.

The Panel was informed that these targets are incorporated into the "Tameside Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005 – 2008," launched in March 2005.

7.5 The Partnership achieved a 34% reduction in domestic burglary by March 2005 based on 2001/2 baseline data. Therefore they have exceeded the target specified in the "Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2002 – 2005" to reduce domestic burglary by 25% by March 2005.

7.6 In addition Home Office projections suggest that Tameside is on course to sustain its improvement and meet its LPSA target by 2007.

### **Conclusions**

1. **Overall, domestic burglary in Tameside has reduced by 34% since 2001/02, therefore the Community Safety Service has exceeded its targets to reduce domestic burglary by 25% by March 2005.**
2. **The Community Safety Service has responded to the Audit Commission's recommendations and is developing SMART targets for the actions in the Improvement Plan that relate to domestic burglary.**
3. **The Community Safety Service is confident that it will meet its Local Public Service Agreement target of reducing domestic burglary by a further 12.5% by 2008, based on 2003/04 baseline data.**
4. **The target to achieve upper quartile performance compared with the other authorities in Tameside's Most Similar Partnership Group will be challenging, but the Community Safety Service is confident that this can be achieved.**

## **8. Community Safety Initiatives To Tackle Domestic Burglary**

### **8.1 Preventative Measures**

8.1.1 Preventative measures focus upon alleygating and target hardening of properties.

#### **Alley-gating**

8.1.2 'Alley-gating' is a crime preventative measure that involves erecting steel, self-locking gates at the ends of alleyways and passages.

8.1.3 The alley-gating scheme has been administered on a "first come first serve" basis with interested residents approaching the Council to organise the installation of gating. However from April 2005, the Partnership intend to treat "burglary hotspots" as an alley-gating priority and raise residents' awareness of the scheme in these areas.

8.1.4 The Council provides a 50% grant towards the initial cost of installing the gates. Owner-occupiers or landlords are required to pay the remaining 50%. The Alley-gating Co-ordinator informed the Panel that private and registered social landlords have shown a willingness to sign up to the scheme; and in some cases Social Landlords such as Manchester and District Housing have contributed the entire 50% payment on schemes where they only own one house. No orders are placed with contractors until the full fee has been secured.

8.1.5 Residents are responsible for financing any maintenance costs, and are advised to set up a maintenance fund at the outset of the scheme. However the Panel heard that problems often arise when funding is unavailable to repair vandalised gates.

8.1.6 A Council survey of residents living in alley-gated areas, conducted in 2004, revealed only 2% of residents had been burgled after gates were erected. The same survey showed that 97% of respondents felt alleygating had "improved" the area in which they live and 95% felt "safer."

8.1.7 In addition, the panel heard that other benefits of the 'Alley-gating' scheme include; reduced opportunities for youths to cause annoyance, safer play areas for children and improved community spirit created by a sense of ownership of the alleys.

## Target Hardening Schemes

8.1.8 There are two key elements to the target hardening scheme;

- Physical security improvements; including the provision of perimeter fencing, “identislot” devices, door chains and window locks;
- Educational packages; including crime prevention literature, community presentations and advice.

The target-hardening scheme focuses on elderly people living in high crime areas identified through police statistics. The scheme works in conjunction with a number of different agencies including Greater Manchester Police, Nurses, Carers and Age Concern to identify “vulnerable households.” The Panel heard that the Service is currently considering plans to extend the scheme to include disabled people.

8.1.9 The target-hardening scheme is funded by the Council, however Registered Social Landlords are approached for 50% of the funding for large-scale projects. The Panel heard that firm links have been established between Social Landlords and the Community Safety Service; and the Service has not experienced any problems in securing the co-operation of Social Landlords.

8.1.10 In particular, a strong working partnership exists between the Partnership and New Charter Housing Trust (NCHT). The Partnership and NCHT work closely to identify and target harden vulnerable properties and burglary hotspots in NCHT estates. NCHT have an annual budget of £1.6 million reserved for fencing and security enhancement schemes; and a further £475k to fund contributions to alley-gating and other joint target hardening projects. During 2004/5 and 2005/6 NCHT plan to contribute the majority of costs towards the implementation of improved security measures at 56 locations throughout Tameside.

8.1.11 The Partnership’s target-hardening scheme has a target of improving the physical security of 500 properties per annum. This has been exceeded during the current municipal year, as 1200 properties had been target hardened by January 2005. In addition “Identislot devices have been made available to all Tameside residents over the age of 65.

8.1.12 A council survey conducted in 2004 showed 94% of residents felt “safer” after physical security improvements had been made to their properties. Furthermore 92% of respondents reported that they felt “more confident” in answering the door to strangers as a result of the educational strand of the project.

8.1.13 However, there is a lack of quantitative evidence to show the impact of target hardening schemes on the number of incidents of domestic

burglary in Tameside. The Community Safety Service has begun to address this weakness by installing GMAC (“Greater Manchester Against Crime”) software and appointing an Analyst. The Panel heard this would enable the production of annual strategic threat assessments, which will highlight the impact of schemes on incidents of domestic burglary in specific areas.

### **Homewatch**

- 8.1.14 Homewatch is voluntary scheme that aims to improve the safety and security of local communities. The GMP Homewatch Co-ordinator informed the Panel that schemes usually start because residents identify a crime problem in a specific area and want to reduce it.
- 8.1.15 Members of Homewatch schemes receive personal security advice at an initial “set-up” meeting. In addition they receive regular newsletters that provide general information on crime prevention.
- 8.1.16 There are 499 Homewatch Schemes in Tameside, covering 9,500 people. Each scheme has a Co-ordinator who acts as a contact point for Homewatch members. The Co-ordinator is required to attend regular meetings with Area and District Co-ordinators, Homewatch members and the police.
- 8.1.17 At a meeting with members of the Scrutiny Panel, Homewatch Co-ordinators discussed their views regarding the impact of Homewatch and the challenges they felt the scheme faces.
- 8.1.18 All Co-ordinators felt the Scheme has a positive impact on domestic burglary. They gave the following examples;
- The Scheme generates a sense of community spirit and solidarity that helps to combat crime by acting as a deterrent;
  - It promotes protection for the elderly and vulnerable;
  - It improves awareness of crime and security best practice in the local area.
- 8.1.19 Homewatch Co-ordinators welcomed the financial assistance provided by the Community Safety Service and acknowledged that there was now very little cost involved in setting up a Scheme. However, they discussed their difficulty in securing sufficient funds to hire venues for Co-ordinators’ meetings and print their monthly newsletter. Co-ordinators felt that these activities are essential in order to develop and consolidate community involvement in the scheme.
- 8.1.20 Homewatch Co-ordinators also identified lack of police support in helping to promote and administer the Homewatch Scheme as an “area of weakness”. Suggestions for improvement included: -

- Police attendance at District Assembly meetings to discuss issues relating to Homewatch and to help raise the profile of the scheme.
- Police attendance at Co-ordinators' meetings to provide a forum for 2-way communication concerning local security issues. Co-ordinators felt that this would help to focus Homewatch resources more effectively and thereby increase the impact on community safety of the Scheme. In addition Co-ordinators felt that improved communication would maximise the potential of Homewatch to contribute to Police intelligence concerning local issues.

### **Conclusions**

5. **Both the alley-gating and target hardening schemes introduced to date seem to be successful and offer value for money. However, long-term maintenance commitments need to be addressed.**
6. **Strong vibrant and well-supported Homewatch schemes continue to be successful and provide the conditions to deter domestic burglary in a cost effective way. They do however need continues support, encouragement and sustained funding to continue to develop their effectiveness. A higher profile including greater involvement at District Assembly level would help promote this voluntary activity.**

### **Recommendations**

1. **That consideration be given to the long-term maintenance of target hardening measures and alley-gating schemes.**
2. **That further consideration be given to ways that Homewatch Schemes can be supported, including a higher profile at District Assembly meetings; increased opportunities for information sharing between Homewatch Co-ordinators and members of the Partnership – especially the police; and low level funding.**

## **8.2 Victim Support / Detection Rates**

8.2.1 There are two key elements involved in the Community Safety Service's work to improve detection rates; these include,

- improving intelligence
- increasing the reporting of burglaries

- 8.2.2 The Scrutiny Panel heard that the Service is developing and maintaining extensive data sources by establishing strong links with agencies such as Crime Stoppers and Trading Standards.
- 8.2.3 In addition, a mobile video unit has been purchased to encourage “vulnerable” victims to report crimes by enabling them to give evidence through video links without attending court.
- 8.2.4 The current Greater Manchester Police detection rate target is 10.5%. In Tameside the rate is 11% compared with an average of 9.2% throughout Greater Manchester.
- 8.2.5 However detection rates for incidents of distraction burglary remain low, due largely to the underreporting of this type of crime. The Scrutiny Panel was told that the stigma attached to being a victim of distraction burglary often deters people from reporting incidents to the police. However the Panel was informed that raising detection rates for distraction burglary is a key Service priority. During the next financial year an additional £25,000 funding has been committed to “educational packages” including leaflets and presentations intending to raise awareness of distraction burglary and thereby increase the reporting of this crime. However, the Panel felt that not enough publicity is given to the mobile video unit and other witness friendly measures, which may encourage increased reporting of crime.

### **Recommendations**

- 3. That greater publicity be given to the mobile video unit and other witness friendly measures.**

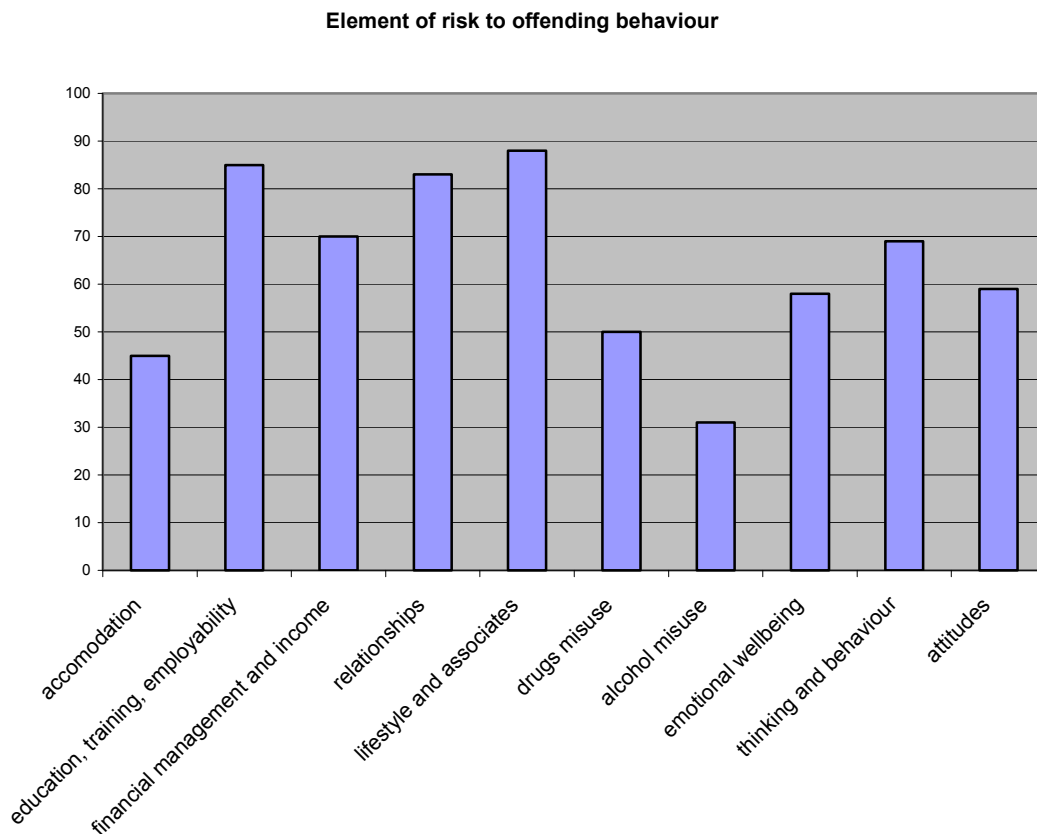
## **8.3 Measures to deal with offenders / reduce re-offending rates**

8.3.1 The Community Safety Improvement Plan identifies the need to deal with adult and young offenders as a key priority. The Improvement Plan specifies a number of actions aimed at extending and developing the scope of its measures to reduce re-offending rates and re-integrate offenders into society. These measures include: -

- Increase awareness amongst offenders of targeted work in the borough;
- Improve tracking systems to monitor the whereabouts of young offenders;
- Extend mentoring schemes to a wider group of offenders;
- Improve accommodation opportunities;
- Improve access to drug and alcohol treatment programmes;

- Increase the number of young offenders reintegrated into mainstream school;
- Increase sport/leisure activities for young offenders.

8.3.2 The Partnership takes a holistic approach to tackling the roots of offending behaviour. By using the Risk Assessment tool available to the Probation Service, the Partnership is able to identify the factors or “risks” which often result in offending behaviour. The graph overleaf shows the factors that most commonly contribute to burglary offences.



8.3.3 The most dominant contributory factors include lifestyles and associates, education, training and employability and relationships. The influence of drugs misuse on burglary is also high compared to its influence on other types of crime.

8.3.4 Consequently, the Partnership adopts a multi agency approach to meet the diverse range of offenders’ needs in order to reduce the likelihood of re-offending and re-integrate offenders’ into society.

### **The Prolific Offenders Programme – the Burglary Project**

8.3.5 The Prolific Offenders Programme administers measures for dealing with adult offenders. The Tameside Burglary Project is a pilot project that forms part of the Prolific Offenders Programme. The project has been



running for 11 months and is currently being reviewed by representatives of GMP and the Partnership.

8.3.6 Offenders eligible for the Burglary Project have committed three acquisitive crimes during the previous 12 months. Offenders on the programme experience different levels of intervention, depending upon their sentence. Levels of intervention include;

- At liberty and subject to basic monitoring
- Voluntary rehabilitation
- Proactive targeting by the Police
- Under active supervision in the community
- Subject to enforcement proceedings and a statutory programme of intervention

8.3.7 The Burglary Project is led by the Drugs Intervention Team (DIP). The DIP provide/administer the following services;

- Mentoring and victim awareness sessions aimed at enhancing offenders' life skills and instilling a sense of responsibility for the impact of their offending behaviour;
- Support in relation to housing, employment and educational issues;
- Drugs and alcohol rehabilitation services where relevant;
- Advice on mental and sexual health;
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders to tackle associations of offenders.

8.3.8 Currently, offenders undertaking the Burglary Project are specifically required to:

- Complete a one-to-one victim awareness programme related to domestic burglary;
- Access drug treatment through SMS drug worker (if appropriate);
- Attend planned appointments in line with national standards or face an expedited return to court or recall to custody.

8.3.9 The most recent performance data for the impact of the burglary project shows some encouraging results;

- Of 33 offenders who commenced the programme, 20 (61%) have completed it.
- 10 (30%) offenders have not been able to complete the programme due to breach/reconviction/other.

8.3.10 Of those who have completed the programme;

- 11 (55%) offenders have been reconvicted
- Only 6 of these offenders (30%) have been reconvicted of domestic burglary. The remaining 5 offenders were convicted of other crimes.

- 9 (45%) offenders have not been reconvicted. This equates to 27% of the total number of offenders who commenced the programme

8.3.11 At the Burglary Project review meeting in March, representatives from GMP evaluated the project's success so far. They agreed that the project was justified and discussed ways in which it could be developed further in order to meet their March 2007 target.

8.3.12 They identified the following recommendations for improvement;

- Doubts were raised about the efficacy of the victim awareness programme. It was felt that some form of one-to-one work should be undertaken and a more challenging programme should be developed.
- It was a common view that offenders tend to resort back to crime if they relapse on drugs regardless of whether they had a good level of victim empathy or not. Therefore it was agreed that the current fast tracking of Burglary Project cases into drug treatment was essential. They agreed to explore the possibility of merging the Burglary Project with Operation Rhodes (drug offenders' programme).
- There was agreement that the project should be more intensive. Offenders should be subject to more surveillance and possibly police/probation home visits.

8.3.13 In addition, at a meeting with the Scrutiny Panel, convicted burglars said they felt lack of support in securing paid employment was a weakness of the Burglary Project. The offenders stated that their criminal records were preventing them from securing paid employment despite the vocational qualifications and training they had achieved as part of the programme. They expressed concern that long term unemployment increased the likelihood of re-offending. They felt that stronger links between the Probation Service and businesses willing to employ convicted offenders were required.

8.3.14 In addition the offenders stated that more effective early intervention at a young age may have controlled and halted their offending behaviour. They identified the following areas, that in their experience, they felt could be improved;

- Absence of mentoring figures for young people identified at risk of offending;
- Lack of structured support to provide routine and purpose for young people identified at risk of offending (e.g. education and training support in schools; and maybe a form of community service).

8.3.15 Consideration of the progress of the Young Offenders' Programme will be undertaken by the Scrutiny Panel as a later part of the overall review of community safety.

### Conclusions

7. The Panel acknowledges the challenges facing the Prolific Offenders Programme which does however seem to be meeting the targets that it has been set, although it is too early to make any final judgment. The Programme, especially targeting convicted burglars, is a pilot and there is scope for improvement. Burglary Project Workers and representatives from GMP have identified means by which improvements may be achieved and the Panel believe the Programme should be encouraged.
8. One of the main obstacles facing prolific offenders is the difficulty in obtaining legitimate employment. Consideration should be given to encouraging employers to make job opportunities available in consultation and close co-operation with the Probation Service.

### Recommendations

4. That consideration be given to forging closer links between the Partnership and local employers' organisation to facilitate greater job opportunities for ex-offenders.
5. That the important and innovative work of the Prolific Offenders Programme continue to be supported and adapted as necessary in the light of operational experience.

## **9. Budget Growth – Value For Money**

- 9.1 The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership received a number of additional grants from the Capital Programme during 2003/04 and 2004/05.
- 9.2 All additional funding for 2003/4 and 2004/5 is accounted for and there was no under-spending.
- 9.3 The following additional funding relates to domestic burglary;

### **2003/04**

£26,000 – Alleygating  
Used to fund 50 gating schemes.

## **2004/05**

£70,000 – Alleygating

This additional funding was used to finance 39 gating schemes and the Assistant Co-ordinators' post. The Assistant Co-ordinators' post has subsequently been mainstreamed.

£25,000 – Target Hardening

£15,000 – Young Offenders' Programme

This additional funding was used to contribute to College course fees and to fund a Co-ordinators' post

- 9.4 A further £143,000 has been secured as part of the 2005/6 Capital Programme. This funding will be used to enable further development of the existing target hardening and alley-gating schemes and to enhance current publicity campaigns. In addition the Community Safety Service have submitted capital bids for £100,000 in 2006/7 and £162,000 in 2007/8.

### **Conclusions**

- 9. Consideration of additional funding for community safety in 2003/04 and 2004/05 indicates that it has been used to support key elements of the programme and provide sustainable improvements. The Panel therefore conclude that the Service has provided good value for money.**

## **10. Borough Treasurer's Comments**

The review of the use of growth monies from previous years' budgets is a welcome development in the role of Scrutiny Panels. The overview of the use of such development budgets is a feature of corporate governance which the Use of Resources judgement in the CPA is based upon. The fact that the resources devoted to this activity is felt by the Panel to be providing value for money is also welcome.

The report identifies the maintenance of alleygating schemes once introduced as an issue. Clearly the sustainability of existing schemes should be a priority call on the Community Safety budget, unless alternatives can be found e.g. community ownership of maintenance.

The Burglary Project appears to have only a 27% non-re-offending rate. Consideration should be given as to whether this is regarded as successful and how it can be improved.

## **11. Borough Solicitor's Comments**

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 imposes a duty on the 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.

## **12. Recommendations**

- 12.1 That consideration be given to the long-term maintenance of target hardening measures and alley-gating schemes.
- 12.2 That further consideration be given to ways that Homewatch Schemes can be supported, including a higher profile at District Assembly meetings; increased opportunities for information sharing between Homewatch Co-ordinators and members of the Partnership – especially the police; and low level funding.
- 12.3 That greater publicity be given to the mobile video unit and other witness friendly measures.
- 12.4 That consideration be given to forging closer links between the Partnership and local employers' organisations to facilitate greater job opportunities for ex-offenders.
- 12.5 That the important and innovative work of the Prolific Offenders Programme continue to be supported and adapted as necessary in the light of operational experience.