

# Follow-up Review of Violent Crime in Tameside

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## Resources and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel

**Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council**  
**SCRUTINY PANEL**  
**Follow-up Review of Violent Crime**

**C o n t e n t s**

	<b>Paragraph</b>	<b>Page No</b>
<b>Introduction by the Chair</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Membership of the Scrutiny Panel</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Terms of Reference</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Background to the Review</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2-3</b>
<b>Review Findings</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3-23</b>
<i>Town Centre Violence</i>	<i>6.1</i>	<i>3-14</i>
<i>Domestic Violence</i>	<i>6.2</i>	<i>14 -23</i>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23-25</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25-26</b>
<b>Borough Treasurer's Comments</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Borough Solicitor's Comments</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>26</b>

**Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council**  
**RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY**  
**PANEL**

**Follow-up Review of Violent Crime**

**1. Introduction by the Chair**

One of the early concerns about the fate of scrutiny review reports and their recommendations was that they would lie on a shelf ignored and forgotten. Follow-up reports that check out whether the recommendations that have been agreed and adopted by the executive overcome this concern by verifying the outcomes of recommendations.



This follow-up review is in respect of a report on violent crime published by the Resources and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel in November 2006. In support of the review of town centre violence and a number of my colleagues on the panel undertook a night patrol and visited the CCTV control room during a Friday night/Saturday morning. We witnessed both Ashton and Stalybridge town centres being well policed. We also interviewed the CCTV co-ordinator and several members of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. We especially welcomed the introduction of the airwave radio system that will give the CCTV room direct contact with police officers on the scene which should lead to more effective and quicker responses.

It is also clear that the licensing authority in partnership with the police have taken steps to address issues by taking action in respect of licensed premise.

With regard to domestic violence this is still a very difficult issue to address. It is encouraging to see the response of the Domestic Violence Unit who review every reported incidence. The Sanctuary Housing Scheme is a very encouraging development and again should be supported.

Tameside now has a special domestic violence court which provides a quicker and more effective judicial arrangement. Again however the case load is too great for one support worker and if possible this provision should be increased.

Scrutiny has recently been given statutory powers with regard to the police and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. I am very pleased that in Tameside we have had excellent co-operation from both the Partnership and the police and I am sure this constructive relationship will continue in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Smith'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Councillor Michael Smith

## **2. Membership of the Scrutiny Panel**

Councillor M Smith (Chair), Councillor Brelsford (Deputy Chair)  
Councillors Beeley, Buckley, W Downs, Sidebottom, Travis, White and Whitley

## **3. Terms of Reference**

3.1 The aims of this follow-up review are:

- To monitor the progress towards the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Executive Response to the Scrutiny Review of Violent Crime.
- To identify conclusions and any further recommendations

## **4. Methodology**

4.1 The Panel met with Chief Superintendent Hamilton, Greater Manchester Police; Head of Community Safety, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council; the District Probation Manager and Cabinet Deputy, Co-ordination Services who provided an overview of crime and initiatives to tackle crime in Tameside.

4.2 At a further meeting, the Panel met with Superintendent Finn, Greater Manchester Police with responsibility for town centre crime and disorder, Community Safety Violent Crime Lead Officer and Head of Environmental Enforcement.

4.3 Members of the Panel attended a night patrol with the police and licensing officers in order to witness the night time economy and policing in town centres in Tameside first hand. This also included a visit to the CCTV Operations Room.

## **5. Background to the Review**

5.1 A Best Value Review of Community Safety in April 2004, and subsequent report concluded that the Council's approach to tackling violent crime and domestic violence needed to be more focussed.

5.2 An Improvement Plan produced as a consequence of the Best Value Review identified what needed to improve and why, together with actions to show how improvements would be delivered. The Improvement Plan identified 8 priority areas, with key outcomes and actions intended to achieve those outcomes.

5.3 The Resources and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel agreed to monitor the implementation of the Improvement Plan, insofar as it applied to Town Centre and Domestic Violence and included this on its work programme 2005/06.

5.4 In November 2006, the Scrutiny Panel published its report on Violent Crime in Tameside. The report looked at the Council's approach to violent crime both to town centres and domestic violence, together with the role of partners in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

5.5 The report made 12 recommendations in relation to town centre violence and 11 relating to domestic violence.

5.6 As part of the work programme for 2008/09, Members of the Panel agreed to carry out a follow-up review of the progress made towards implementation of those recommendations.

- 5.7 This follow-up review is important as it provides the Scrutiny Panel with an opportunity to help ensure that approved recommendations are implemented in a way that has positive outcomes for residents of Tameside. It enables the Scrutiny Panel to consider the outcome of those recommendations that have been implemented and how effective they have been.

## **6. Review Findings**

### **6.1 Town Centre Violence**

#### **6.1.1 Original Recommendations 1 & 2**

- (1) That local Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport to empower Licensing Officers to request reviews of licences.
- (2) That procedures for requesting a premise licence review are publicised to relevant “responsible agencies”.

#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

Under the Licensing Act “responsible authorities and “interested parties” including the police, Trading Standards and members of the public are able to request a premise licence review. The Scrutiny Panel felt that these agencies did not seem to be exercising this power and the power to request a license review had not been extended to licensing Officers.

#### **Original Executive Response**

Action to be discussed with the Chair of Licensing Committee and information to be provided to local members to support lobbying for additional powers.

Procedures to be publicised locally using various media.

#### **Executive Response Update**

A meeting was held with James Purnell MP, in November 2008. The meeting was attended by Councillor Brenda Warrington (Chair of Speakers Panel (Alcohol Licensing)). Greater Manchester Police Local Authority Liaison Officer, Head of Environmental Enforcement and Team Leader Licensing. A review of current legislation is being undertaken.

The Council website has been updated to include information about procedures for requesting a licence review. Articles have been prepared for ‘The Citizen’ and ‘Get Protected’ newsletters

#### **Panel Findings**

Licensing Managers raised concern about the current Licensing Act at the meeting with James Purnell MP, in his capacity as the Licensing Minister and local MP. However, shortly after this meeting, changes were made within the Cabinet and James Purnell was moved from the role of Licensing Minister. Since this meeting took place the licensing managers have met members of the Alcohol Strategy Team from the Home Office and outlined concerns and where legislation could be improved.

The conclusions of the review of legislation currently being undertaken are not yet known. It is the view of the Licensing Authority and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities Licensing Group that Licensing Authorities should be included as a “responsible agency” which would therefore give power to request a review of a licence. The Panel heard however that there was a clear indication that there will be no major changes to the legislation as it is felt that the existing powers are not being used to their full potential.

A Joint Licensing Enforcement Group has been established comprising of representation from all “responsible authorities”. The group meets on a monthly basis in order to share intelligence about specific premises to enable a joint approach to dealing with problems.

The Licensing Authority publicises information on how responsible agencies and interested parties can trigger a review of a licence is published via a link from the Council’s website to the website of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

The four objectives of the Licensing Act 2003 are to: prevent crime and disorder; promote public safety; prevent public nuisance and protect children from harm. It is noted that effects of alcohol on public health was not currently a licensing objective in England.

The Panel heard that the Licensing Authority would already be aware of any existing problems.

### **Conclusion**

- 1. In Tameside it appears that the four objectives of the Licensing Act 2003 are widely used. It is a concern however, that the effects of alcohol on health are not a licensing objective.**

### **Recommendation**

- 1. That further attempts be made to pressure the Government to include the effects of alcohol on health to the four objectives of the Licensing Act.**

## **6.1.2 Original Recommendation 3**

That the Panel is updated on the development and impact the new Violent Crime Group and revised Action Plan, 3 months from the publication of this report.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

The Town Centre Safety Group was formed in order to raise the profile of town centre safety. The Group produced an Action Plan for improving town centre safety; however, a steady increase in reported incidents of violent crime in Tameside during 2005 – 2006 prompted the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to review its approach in tackling this crime. It was proposed that a new Violent Crime Group would be formed to lead on a revised action plan.

### **Original Executive Response**

The first meeting of the Tackling Violent Crime Steering Group has taken place.

## **Executive Response Update**

Tameside has in place a Serious Violent Crime Strategy 2008. This Strategy is supported by three action plans developed by the three theme groups which dealt with violent crime for the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Action plans are in place for Domestic Abuse, Tackling Sexual Violence and Public Space Violence. Plans are to be refreshed for 2009/10.

## **Panel Findings**

A multi agency 'Tackling Violent Crime Group' has been established to undertake joint operations and commissioning. An action planning session is to take place to identify actions for the forthcoming year.

## **Recommendation**

- 2. That the refreshed Action Plans for Domestic Abuse, Tackling Sexual Violence and Public Violence be discussed with the Scrutiny Panel when published.**

### **6.1.3 Original Recommendation 4**

That consideration be given to main stream finding of licensing enforcement schemes

## **Reasons for Recommendation**

A number of key public safety initiatives such as the Best Bar None Scheme were funded through grants and was not mainstreamed. The unstable funding streams made it difficult to sustain activities.

## **Original Executive Response**

Some mainstream funding is already provided for licensing enforcement activities, however consideration is to be given to development of joint enforcement plan with Greater Manchester Police. (linked to recommendation 5)

## **Executive Response Update**

Joint enforcement action is currently undertaken with officers from TMBC Licensing and Greater Manchester Police on an operation by operation basis.

## **Panel Findings**

Although mainstreamed funding was available for some operations, an example of which is the Safer Tameside Against Night-time Disorder (STAND), it was suggested to the Panel that the establishment of a Joint Enforcement Team would create a better use of existing resources overall.

## **Recommendation**

- 3. That in the interest of efficiency and more effective delivery of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership consideration be given to the establishment of a Joint Enforcement Team.**

#### **6.1.4 Original Recommendation 5 and 6**

- (5) That Greater Manchester Police give greater consideration to the resources available to enable enforcement activities to take place.
- (6) That the organisation of Police staffing shifts is reviewed in light of new licensing arrangements.

##### **Reason for Recommendations**

Licensing officers were only able to make evening enforcement visits to licensed premises when accompanied by Police Officers. Conflicting priorities within Greater Manchester Police often made it difficult for the Licensing Unit to secure enough police support to carry out such enforcement work.

At the time of the review, police staffing shifts changed at 3am, thus removing officers from operational duties. The organisation of Police staffing shifts had not adapted to meet the needs of the new licensing arrangements.

##### **Original Executive Response**

Consideration of identifying resources to enhance enforcement activity has and remains an ongoing activity. Measures such as the formation of Neighbourhood Policing teams with Neighbourhood Response elements to cover peak periods evidencing this. In addition, Force resources are deployed when and where appropriate whilst spend profiles are planned to provide additionality in terms of enforcement activity at identified period of high demand such as Christmas and other events known to witness a rise in violent crime.

Greater Manchester Police at Tameside currently bases its shift system on a variable shift arrangement agreed locally with the Police Federation and designed to provide maximum resources at peak demand times such as weekend evenings. Analysis of the impact of the change in licensing hours on incidents and implications on demand has shown no significant change which would require re-alignment of current shift patters.

##### **Executive Response Update**

Policing resources have been informed by the Safer Tameside Against Night-time Disorder (STAND) initiatives resulting in enhanced policing.

However, the Tackling Violent Crime Steering Group recognises that our local definition of the night-time economy requires a review in order to fully understand what is happening in all Tameside's town centres – not only Stalybridge and Ashton. This review should enable a smarter deployment of resources to where they are needed.

Policing resources will increasingly reflect local people's priorities as part of the development of neighbourhood policing.

##### **Panel Findings**

Operations, such as STAND take place on predicted challenging weekends, 'red weekends', such as bank holidays. Operation STAND provides enhanced policing provision which can comprise of an additional 16 officers being present in town centres. Officers would be deployed from town centres however, if a serious incident occurred elsewhere.

An 'Operation Demand Model' has recently been introduced to determine what resources are required based on demand and response time. The outcome from this new measure will be available in approximately 9 months.

As part of this follow-up review members of the Panel undertook a night patrol to witness the night time economy and policing in town centres first hand. Members were accompanied by an officer from the police and Licensing Authority. Members observed a very well policed environment in the centre of Stalybridge although it was recognised it was untypically quiet. The centre of Ashton was, however, very quiet.

### **Conclusion**

**2. The policing of Ashton and Stalybridge Town Centres are in the main well developed but the Panel has been informed that a clearer understanding is required of the night time economy of other town centres in Tameside.**

### **Recommendation**

**4. That better understanding be gained about other town centres and whether a developing plan is required for policing changing patterns of behaviour.**

## **6.1.5 Original Recommendation 7**

That the recently introduced practice of giving greater consideration to CCTV footage be encouraged.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

Although a very sophisticated CCTV recording system was in operation in town centres, evidence gathered had not been properly considered. However, regular viewing appeared to have some success.

### **Original Executive Response**

A CCTV meeting takes place each month and will include other issues such as the stand alone cameras. The Police and Licensing attend these meetings.

In addition, every 2 days a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) will collect footage from the CCTV unit that may be of interest to the Police. In other words, events that could not wait until the monthly meeting. The PCSO will ensure the footage gets to the most appropriate Police Officer. This process will be reviewed at the monthly meetings.

### **Executive Response update**

Licensing Enforcement Officers attend a weekly meeting with partners to discuss incidents that have occurred particularly over the weekend and to review CCTV footage.

Tameside has been selected for the second year by the Government Office North West to be part of the Tackling Violent Crime Programme. Some of the funding that comes with being part of this programme will be used on new CCTV cameras, signage and "talking cameras" for use in town centres.

## **Panel Findings**

The Tackling Violent Crime Programme (TVCP) was launched in November 2004 and is jointly run by the Partnership Development Unit (PDU) and the Violent Crime Unit (VCU) in the Home Office.

Tackling Violent Crime Programme activity focuses on alcohol related crime and domestic violence. The main aim of the TVCP is to develop good practice through its work with a small number of areas, which can be disseminated and embedded nationally in order to support and guide the efforts of all crime reduction agencies in the fight against violence.

## **CCTV Provision**

At the time of this follow-up review there were 69 monitored cameras in the borough. A further 3 cameras are to be commissioned and will be located in Stalybridge town centre. Audio equipment (referred to in 7.5) is to be fitted, to enable pre-recorded messages to be transmitted to the public with a view of preventing minor problems escalating.

Sixty stand alone cameras are located in residential areas in the borough. This type of camera records footage within the base of the unit and therefore not monitored centrally. A recent £450k capital bid will enable a conversion of stand alone cameras to be linked to the central monitoring facility through the installation of radio IP. Although images will not be received by the provider the signal can be monitored. A conversion was anticipated for completion within the next 3 years. It is the intention that in the future, all cameras would be monitored centrally, however to accommodate this, the current central control room will need to be expanded. It is acknowledged that some locations of stand alone cameras are no longer suitable. The Tameside Patroller Service has been asked to advise if a camera needs to be relocated.

Eleven rapid response wireless cameras are also operational in the borough. Rapid response cameras are monitored and controlled through seven laptop computers. The decision on the deployment of the cameras is made by the Partnership Business Group in liaison with local PACTs and elected members. However, the deployment of CCTV cameras should only be considered if all other methods of crime prevention have failed. The Panel was made aware of the need to retain public support for CCTV and were informed that concern has been expressed by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) regarding the proliferation of cameras.

At present, a number of organisations provide CCTV in the borough. These organisations include, the Foundation Trust, Primary Care Trust and Registered Social Landlords. Investigation into the purchase of a geographical information system has commenced. This system would enable access to a wide number of cameras provided by other organisations. Initially, however, there is a need to map the location of all cameras in the borough and organisations providing them.

## **Conclusion**

- 3. The Tackling Violent Crime Programme is a very positive directed programme to focus on efforts and resources to address crime in specific areas.**
- 4. There are a wide range of CCTV cameras operated by several organisations, most of which are partners of the Council.**

## **Recommendation**

- 5. That the Tackling Violent Crime Programme be supported and this Panel receive, as part of its monitoring of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, updated reports on the development of good practice.**
- 6. That a survey of all CCTV cameras be undertaken and more effective use of these resources be sought.**

### **6.1.6 Original Recommendation 8**

That communication between the CCTV and the Police Operational Control Room be reviewed and peak time difficulties addressed.

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

CCTV Operators reported having difficulty in communicating with the Police Operational Control Room at peak times which meant that some incidents shown on CCTV were not always followed up. As a consequence persistent offenders were avoiding arrest and there was a risk of the CCTV system losing credibility.

#### **Original Executive Response**

This is ongoing and further practices to fill communication gaps and identify practices to improve communication are ongoing such as the deployment of Police officers in the CCTV room at peak times.

#### **Executive Response Update**

Tameside is one of 6 authorities that have been chosen as a pilot for the Police air wave license. Work is currently underway that will enable staff in CCTV to have direct communication with Police Officers.

#### **Panel Findings**

A six month trial of the 'airwave radio system' is to commence in May 2009. The system will provide CCTV operators in the central control room with two radios which will be tuned into police frequency. This will enable operators to speak directly to on-duty police officers.

## **Conclusion**

- 5. The Panel welcome the introduction of the 'airwave radio system' which will enable quicker and therefore more effective responses to incidents identified through the CCTV system.**

## **Recommendation**

- 7. That, as part of the Scrutiny Panel's ongoing monitoring of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Panel receive a report on the outcome of the 6 month trial of the 'airwave radio system'.**

## 6.1.7 Original Recommendations 9 and 10

That the Council proactively encourages licensees to become active members of Pub and Club Watch Scheme, and where financially possible, subscribe to Nitenet.

### Reason for Recommendations

The Panel felt that Nite-net and Pub and Club Watch provided an effective means of crime prevention and support for licensees.

### Original Executive Response

- (9) Training events are to be run in conjunction with local licensees who will promote benefits of pub and club watch schemes. Licensees to be encouraged to join pub and club watch schemes as part of routine enforcement visits. Funding options for Nite Net radio to be considered especially in relation to take-aways and those premises not traditionally supported by radio links.
- (10) That the Council encourage late night take-aways to subscribe to support schemes such as "Nitenet" and that the 'ring around' system be extended to include take-aways and other late night venues currently not included in the scheme.

### Executive Response Update

Licensing Enforcement Officers regularly encourage Licensees to attend these meetings. Particular success has been achieved with the formation of the Stalybridge Town Centre Watch. This group includes the majority of town centre premises, who are working to introduce a Behave or be Banned scheme (BOBB) and are committed to using Pub-watch on line.

The provider of Nite Net Radio has delivered a presentation to the Stalybridge Town centre watch group. Licensing Enforcement Officers encourage premises operating predominantly within the night time economy to use nite net radio.

It should be noted that night time trade in Ashton Town Centre has declined significantly in the past year.

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has agreed to fund a Night-time Safety Manager (dependent on resources available). One of the responsibilities of this role will be to look at these issues alongside the Police Licensing Officer and the Council's Licensing team.

Tameside has purchased arches and wands to encourage licensees to detect knives and other weapons and make a search a condition of entry.

### Panel Findings

It is acknowledged that due to the current economic climate licensees may be unable to join schemes due to the costs which may be incurred in attending meetings and Nite Net radio subscription.

### Conclusion

**6. The Council has clearly taken steps to encourage licensees to create a safer environment in their premises and this should continue to be supported.**

### 6.1.8 Original Recommendation 11

That measures to tackle violent crime in and around late night take-aways be included in the revised Violent Crime Action Plan.

#### Reason for Recommendation

The Panel felt that there was very little support and training available for owners and staff of late night takeaways.

#### Original Executive Response

Actions concerning takeaways and restaurants are included in the draft plan. However, on consideration, some may prove difficult. It would be too complicated to audit existing private CCTV cameras in takeaways. The Council can encourage the use of cameras but not insist on it. Whenever an incident takes place involving a takeaway, the Police would enquire if a camera was operating. However, the Tackling Violent Crime Steering Groups will keep takeaways under consideration.

Consideration would be given to reviewing licences at late night takeaways where violent crime has been committed, conditions would be attached to licences where evidence is available to support the case. Police to consider calling for a review where appropriate.

#### Executive Response Update

A joint training session on the Licensing Act attended by officers from Licensing, Trading Standards and Greater Manchester Police has taken place.

There have been no reports received from GMP on violent incidents occurring outside late night takeaways.

Incidents of this nature may be picked up through Operation Vanguard where robberies of commercial premises are reported to Environmental Health. Officers from this section use Health and Safety powers to ensure improvements recommended by Crime Reduction Officers are implemented.

#### Panel Findings

Late night take aways were now licensed premises and part of the night time economy and are now therefore subject to licensing laws.

#### Conclusion

**7. The inclusion of late night take-aways as licensed premises and therefore being subject to licensing laws should enable licensing officers to be able to treat these premises as any other licensed premise in town centres.**

### 6.1.9 Original Recommendation 12

That the Council continue to encourage drivers of Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles to collect customers directly at the doors of pubs and clubs.

#### Reason for Recommendation

Initiatives were in place to encourage Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles to collect customers directly at the doors of pubs and clubs. A survey was scheduled to be carried out in early 2007 to assess whether provision needed adapting in light of the extended hours introduced by the Licensing Act.

### **Original Executive Response**

This is recognised as good practice – although the location of some pubs and clubs may prohibit this. This action was in a previous Town Centre Safety Group and Alcohol action plan. Taxi cards have been given to venues to encourage customers to plan their journeys home. Some venues will phone taxis on behalf of customers.

It is encouraged, but customers cannot be forced to order taxis in this way. This message could be reinforced during communications with the taxi trade by licensing enforcement staff.

### **Executive Response Update**

The Hackney Carriage ranks in Stalybridge are located in close proximity to late night venues. There are also Private Hire offices in this area.

### **Panel Findings**

An annual review is undertaken by Licensing to determine if the number of taxis available meets projected demand by customers.

### **Conclusion**

**8. The Scrutiny Panel is pleased that the level of demand for taxis operating in the borough, both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, is subject to an annual review and expects that the necessary action will be taken to ensure that the appropriate number of licences are available to meet that demand.**

### **Recommendation**

**8. That following the annual review of taxi provision, consideration be given to the number of licences necessary to satisfactorily meet demand.**

## **6.1.10 Original Recommendation 13**

That all bar staff and door supervisors be fully aware of Anti-Social Behaviour Order cases, including the terms and conditions of Orders and the procedures for reporting any breaches.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

At the time of the review 3 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) had been issued for town centre violence. Tameside's policy was to apply for a lower number of ASBOs in order to ensure they are effectively monitored and policed. Strict enforcement enhanced the value of ASBOs as a form of deterrent to other potential offenders.

### **Original Executive Response**

Copies of the ASBOs are disseminated to pubs, clubs and retail outlets within the town centres as a matter of course.

## **Executive Response Update**

The introduction of the Behave or be Banned scheme will support this initiative.

## **Panel Findings**

In addition to the Behave or be Banned Scheme, pub-watch on-line will also provide licensees with information about anti-social behaviour order cases. Funding was being provided to licensees to cover necessary insurance costs relating to Pub Watch On-line.

## **Recommendation**

**9. That as part of the Scrutiny Panel's ongoing monitoring of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Panel receive a report on the success of the 'Behave or be Banned Scheme and pub-watch on-line in reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour in town centres.**

### **6.1.11 Original Recommendations 14 & 15**

**(14)** That the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership explore the possibility of establishing a protocol for the referral of cases, in order to deal with underlying causes of offending behaviour.

**(15)** That the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership consider exploring the possibility of increasing resources for the Town Centre Case Intervention Group.

#### **Reason for Recommendations**

The Scrutiny Panel felt that the Town Centre Case Intervention Group provided a good example of multi-agency working and information sharing. However, the Panel acknowledged that the main role of the Group is to provide public protection and not deal with underlying causes of offending behaviour.

The Panel acknowledged the increasing workload of the Group which was administered by 2 officers.

#### **Original Executive Response**

There is an agreed protocol in place for referrals and support agencies to attend the Case Intervention Group.

The capacity within the Anti-Social Behaviour team has increased with a dedicated officer for each of the four police neighbourhood areas

#### **Executive Response Update**

The Case Intervention Group is still operational.

There is one officer in the Anti-Social Behaviour Team dedicated to dealing with individuals causing disorder in the town centres.

## **Panel Findings**

Good practice around ways in which intelligence can be shared is being sought from other areas.

### **Conclusion**

**9. Strategies for addressing early intervention and to prevent re-offending will be key elements of the Comprehensive Area Assessment in respect of Crime and Disorder Reduction and this will form part of the Scrutiny Panel's work programme for 2009/10.**

## **6.2 Domestic Violence**

### **6.2.1 Original Recommendation 1**

That a protocol be developed in order to ensure all relevant agencies nominate a lead representative to attend Domestic Violence Forum meetings and report back to their service area.

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

The Domestic Violence Forum provided a good example of multi-agency working through information exchange and through raising the profile of domestic violence within a wide range of services. The Forum also had an important role in raising awareness of domestic violence within the community and promoting the support services available.

#### **Original Executive Response**

The Tameside Domestic Violence Forum is multi-agency and representatives do report back to their services. Terms of Reference have been agreed but no agency can be forced to attend every meeting.

#### **Executive Response Update**

The situation remains the same.

#### **Panel Findings**

The Domestic Violence Forum which comprises of membership from most agencies met on a quarterly basis. A number of active sub-groups now exist and it is therefore felt that there is a need to define the purpose of the Forum and its membership in order for it to be more effective.

Although efforts are made to encourage agencies to attend the Forum, attendance is not compulsory.

### **Conclusion**

**10. It is noted that there are a number of active sub-groups, however, it is essential that the work of the sub-groups is co-ordinated. It appears that steps are being taken to ensure that the Domestic Violence Forum has an effective purpose.**

## 6.2.2 Original Recommendations 2 & 3

- (2) There should be closer working relationships between the PCT and Acute Trust in relation to procedures and initiatives to identify cases of domestic violence and refer to appropriate support services.
- (3) That GP's, health visitors and community midwives be encouraged to attend multi agency training sessions run by the Domestic Violence Forum, including specific issues affecting male victims and victims from BME communities.

### Reason for Recommendation

The Panel acknowledged that guidelines had been produced for health visitors and children's centre staff to assist health professionals identify and deal with cases of domestic violence. However, though some initiatives were in place within the Antenatal Services to identify domestic violence, there was a need to develop a standardised approach across the health services. In addition, there was a need for training to complement guidelines.

There were no formal guidelines to support GP's in identifying and dealing with cases of domestic violence.

GP's, Health Visitors and Community Midwives are encouraged to attend the multi-agency domestic abuse training and do attend. Diversity issues are addressed in the training.

### Original Executive Response

This issue will be raised at the next meeting of the Tameside Domestic Violence Forum on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April.

### Executive Response Update

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership has nominated the Director for Public Health as Strategic Lead for Violent Crime.

The Partnership has agreed to fund a MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) Co-ordinator. Working with the Health Services on risk assessment, referral mechanisms and responses to high risk victims of domestic violence will be a priority for this new role.

### Panel Findings

The Domestic Violence Forum includes representation from the Primary Care Trust and Midwifery.

Arrangements have been put in place for the Partnership to receive intelligence regarding the number of hospital admissions due to domestic abuse from the Foundation Trust. This data was due to be received in November 2008 but has not been received to date.

The Panel heard that Victim Support are represented on the Safeguarding Adults Partnership, along with health services, from whom the Service receives referrals.

Funding for the role of the MARAC Co-ordinator will be determined on an annual basis.

Agencies are encouraged to participate in multi-agency domestic abuse training programmes, but attendance is not insisted upon. Health services do attend but it is felt that General Practitioners (GPs) need more encouragement as it is necessary that health

professionals are aware of the most appropriate questions to ask a patient in order to identify cases of domestic abuse. To date, one referral to MARAC has been received from a GP. It is suggested that some GPs may not be aware of referral mechanisms.

#### **Conclusion**

**11. It is clear that the primary health sector have an essential role in identifying and helping combat domestic violence. In order to do this, it is essential that the Partnership is satisfied that primary health providers, doctors, nurses etc are aware of their responsibilities regarding domestic violence and the appropriate mechanisms for referral to MARAC.**

#### **Recommendation**

**10. That the Partnership ensure training and information is available to all primary health providers with regard to identification and referral of cases of domestic violence.**

### **6.2.3 Original Recommendation 4**

That the Panel receive an update on progress made towards implementing the actions contained in the Best Value Improvement Strategy 2005 – 2008 produced by the police authority.

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

A Best Value Improvement Strategy 2005-2008 was produced by the Police Authority to address identified areas of weakness relating to domestic violence.

#### **Original Executive Response**

The GMP Policy Officer to obtain an update on the Best Value Review to establish the current position.

#### **Executive Response Update**

A response from GMPA is not available.

#### **Panel Findings**

Work on implementation of actions contained in the Best Value Improvement Strategy 2005-2008, produced by the police authority, has not been progressed.

#### **Conclusion**

**12. The Panel is surprised and disappointed that the Best Value Improvement Strategy 2005-08 which was to be produced by the Police Authority to address areas of weakness relating to domestic violence appears not to have been progressed.**

## **Recommendation**

**11. That Greater Manchester Police Authority be requested to confirm whether the Best Value Improvement Strategy has been implemented and if not the reasons for lack of progress.**

### **6.2.4 Original Recommendation 5**

Where cases are not dealt with by the attending on-duty police officer in accordance with the GMP Domestic Violence Unit policies and procedures, refresher training including issues affecting male victims of domestic violence should be provided.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

Scrutiny Panel consultation revealed mixed views of victims experiences of police involvement in their individual cases. For the majority of victims, the first point of contact with the police was with the on-duty police officers responding to a reported incident. Therefore, an appropriate level of specialist domestic violence training for all police officers is essential.

#### **Original Executive Response**

Daily meetings take place between the relevant Chief Inspector and Sergeant of the Domestic Violence Unit to discuss all domestic abuse reports. As a result of these meetings, if it is decided that any Police Officer has not responded appropriately – s/he is spoken to. In this way, professional practice is continually improved.

#### **Executive Response Update**

The process of review continues. All police in the Domestic Violence Unit are NPIA (National Policing Improvement Agency) trained (this replaced the Centrex training). Plans are in place for refresher and further training for any new personnel joining the unit.

#### **Panel Findings**

Police officers continue to receive an appropriate amount of training to respond to reported incidents of domestic violence. The Domestic Violence Unit provides specialist advice and specialist officers attend pre-arranged meetings with victims.

Reported incidents of domestic abuse should be recorded in accordance with the National Crime Recording Standard (NCIS). Checks on the accuracy of records are made each day by the Domestic Violence Unit during daily consideration of incidents which have involved domestic violence abuse. Where it is felt incidents have not been recorded correctly, the Domestic Violence Unit is able to refer reports back to the Command Unit either for reassessment, or if it is felt appropriate, for an arrest to be carried out. Approximately 15 recorded incidents per week are referred back to the Command Unit. Checking records does identify any areas for development of individual officers.

Co-ordinated Action Against Domestic Violence (CAADA) offers a professional and accredited training programme for independent domestic violence advisors or advocates together with training and implementation support for MARACs in the new Specialist Domestic Violence Court areas to help create a consistent, professional and effective response to all survivors of domestic violence in the UK.

## **Conclusion**

**13. The Panel is pleased that the Domestic Violence Unit undertake such comprehensive monitoring of reported incidents of Domestic Violence and how they are dealt with.**

### **6.2.5 Original Recommendation 6**

That greater publicity is given to the GMP Domestic Violence Unit and the role of specialist domestic violence officers and that Greater Manchester Police explore ways to improve communication with victims of domestic violence.

#### **Reason for Recommendation**

Consultation revealed that a significant proportion of victims were not aware of the specialist GMP Domestic Violence Unit.

#### **Original Executive Response**

Articles about local policing of domestic abuse have featured in the local press, particularly around initiatives to visit the most high risk perpetrators.

Officers from the Domestic Violence Unit make contact with victims in ongoing cases on a daily basis.

The Police refer cases to the new multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) to inform other agencies of the grave risks facing a victim and to facilitate support from other services.

#### **Executive Response Update**

GMP continues to promote how it will respond to reports of Domestic Abuse. Currently, GMP has a week long Valentine's campaign to improve the reporting of domestic abuse where there are children at home. This campaign also stresses how officers and staff should approach victims.

The new MARAC Co-ordinator will be promoting the role of the Domestic Violence Unit in relation to risk assessment and protection for victims with a range of relevant agencies.

#### **Panel Findings**

Operation Mistletoe involved visits made by Police Officers to the homes of the most serious domestic abuse offenders and to the victims regarded as under the greatest threat in Tameside. The aim of the operation was to reduce the rate of repeat victimisation particularly at times of the year when there is an increase in reports of domestic abuse such as the summer months and Christmas period.

More recently funding of £10,000 received from the Children and Young People Strategic Partnership enabled the Domestic Violence Unit to build on Operation Mistletoe and run a targeted operation over the Christmas period. This campaign involved the Domestic Violence Unit carrying out repeat reassurance visits to approximately 28 high risk victims of domestic violence, where there were children at home. The Panel heard that during this period, reported incidents of domestic violence had reduced.

All victims of reported incidents of domestic violence automatically receive a letter from the Domestic Violence Unit.

## **Conclusion**

**14. The Panel notes the innovative methods being used by the Partnership to target repeat offenders of domestic violence and feels that such initiatives should be fully supported.**

## **Recommendation**

**12. That similar campaigns to those highlighted above should be regarded as a priority when funding is available.**

### **6.2.6 Original Recommendation 7**

That the Council assists the Tameside Women's Project in exploring opportunities for mainstream funding for Children's Workers before the current means of funding expires.

The Children's Worker provided a valuable source of support to children living in the Refuge and the funding for this provision should be an ongoing concern.

#### **Original Executive Response**

The Domestic Violence Co-ordinator endorses this recommendation.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board is currently looking at local provision of domestic abuse services.

This recommendation needs to be presented to the Children and Young People's Partnership.

#### **Executive Response Update**

Tameside Safeguarding Children Board has a short life working group which aims to shape services for children (and their families) affected by domestic abuse.

As a charity, Tameside Women's Project continues to source funding from a range of sources in order to provide all its services.

Services for Children and Young People will decide if it is appropriate to fund the projects for services for children and whether this fits with the commissioning plan.

#### **Panel Findings**

Funding for Children's Workers at the Tameside Women's Project continues to be a significant problem.

This year, Tameside Women's Project has applied for lottery funding of £25,000 to provide two Children's Workers.

This provision is not duplicated within the borough.

## **Conclusion**

**15. In order for funding to be mainstreamed for the provision of Children’s Workers at the Tameside Women’s Project, it has to be determined that there is a need for this provision within the Children’s Plan.**

## **Recommendation**

**13. That the Panel would again support the mainstream funding for the provision of Children’s Workers at the Tameside Women’s Project.**

### **6.2.7 Original Recommendation 8**

That all registered social landlords develop more flexible policies to meet the specific needs of victims of domestic violence.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

Issues associated with being a victim of domestic violence often made it difficult for victims to secure permanent housing. For example, previous rent arrears and multiple previous addresses. Difficulty in securing permanent housing was one of the main reasons which deterred victims from leaving an abusive relationship.

#### **Original Executive Response**

This could be proposed to the Tameside Registered Landlord Forum.

#### **Executive Response Update**

New Charter has a Domestic Abuse policy. However, there is no consistency in policies across all the Registered Social Landlords operating in Tameside – and many do not have such policies in place. This is particularly the case for RSL’s operating across a number of regions.

## **Recommendation**

**14. That New Charter Housing Trust be requested to offer its Domestic Violence Policy as a model for other registered social landlords operating in Tameside, who are urged to adopt the policy for their own operations.**

### **6.2.8 Original Recommendation 9**

That the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership continue to support the Sanctuary Housing Scheme.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

The Sanctuary Housing Project supported victims who, in appropriate cases, wish to remain in their own homes, by providing security improvements and advice. The scheme has a valuable role in contributing to the reduction in homelessness in Tameside.

#### **Original Executive Response**

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership are continuing to support the Sanctuary Housing Scheme. Tameside Housing Strategy also provide financial support.

### **Executive Response Update**

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership continues to award £10k per annum to help deliver the Sanctuary Housing Scheme. However, running costs are now approaching £100k per year. The local authority awarded capital funds of £34k. The bid was made as a means of preventing homelessness due to domestic abuse. An application is being made to the Charities Commission in order to allow for more freedom to source funding.

### **Panel Findings**

Since the Sanctuary Housing Scheme has been established 300 properties have been made safe – approximately 6 properties per week. There has been an 86% rise in referrals to the scheme within 1year.

The application to the charities commission in order for the Sanctuary Housing Scheme to obtain charitable status has been successful, therefore giving more freedom to source funding. This also gives the Scheme scope to widen its service provision to include family support. The Panel has been informed about the creation of a Sanctuary Housing self support group that aimed to provide peer support to survivors of domestic abuse in the scheme.

Although one of the key questions in Best Value Performance Indicator 225, introduced by the government in April 2005, is whether a local authority has developed a Sanctuary Housing Scheme to enable victims of domestic violence to choose whether to remain in their home with professionally installed security measures, where it safe to do so; the Scheme does not receive any funding from government grants. In order to score 100% against this indicator a Sanctuary Housing Scheme would have to be in place.

### **Conclusions**

**16. The Panel recognises the valuable work undertaken by the Sanctuary Housing Scheme and acknowledges its continued need.**

**17. The Panel especially welcomes the formation of a self support group and would like to follow its progress with interest.**

**18. The Panel is concerned about the level of funding required to support the Scheme especially in view of the increasing number of referrals.**

### **Recommendation**

**15. That the Council continue to support the Sanctuary Housing Scheme at an appropriate level and supports wherever possible the development of self support groups.**

## **6.2.9 Original Recommendation 10**

That Victim Support be encouraged to explore alternative means of promoting the service amongst young people. For example, by distributing promotional material through the Youth Service and in schools.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

Victim Support provides a valuable source of information and support for victims of domestic violence. However, many victims did not seem to be accessing this service, particular younger victims.

### **Original Executive Response**

Victim Support and Witness Service consider accessibility to out service a priority and are keen to work with various youth and education establishments to promote the service to young people. I would also highlight that as a charity, adequate funding is essential. Any work in addition to core services may require supplementary funding.

### **Executive Response Update**

The situation remained the same.

### **Panel Findings**

Since Victim Support became a national body local initiatives have been put on hold. Therefore promotional material has not been disseminated within local schools. There is however, a website [www.are-you-ok.org.uk](http://www.are-you-ok.org.uk), which provides information about Victim Support and what support is available to young people.

A scheme working with schools is currently being piloted in Salford.

### **Conclusion**

**19. The Panel is concerned that national schemes seem to be outweighing local initiatives which could be detrimental to victims of domestic violence in Tameside.**

### **Recommendation**

**16. That national policies for the Victim and Witness Service should not outweigh local policies and initiatives that would be of benefit in Tameside.**

## **6.2.10 Original Recommendation 11**

That the Scrutiny Panel be updated on the progress relating to the development of a specialist Court system in Tameside for victims of domestic violence 3 months from the publication of this report.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

A piloted Specialist Court system for victims of domestic violence appeared to be a more effective way of dealing with cases of domestic violence and the initiatives in relation to the protection of victims was welcomed. The Panel felt that the introduction of this system in Tameside would be of significant benefit to the community and early introduction of this system was encouraged.

## **Original Executive Response**

Inspector Callaghan from GM Police has set up a multi-agency group to drive the establishment of a specialist Domestic Violence Court in Tameside and work is underway to achieve this. The Scrutiny Panel can be up-dated on progress.

## **Executive Response Update**

The Tameside Domestic Violence Court group met with the Domestic Violence Court assessment panel last week (Home Office, Her Majesty's Court Service and the CPS). We will find out in mid-March if we have been successful in achieving accreditation for the Domestic Violence Court.

## **Panel Findings**

In March 2009, Tameside Magistrates Court was accredited as a Domestic Violence Court. The Scrutiny Panel heard that by 2011, 128 accredited Domestic Violence Courts will exist.

Being accredited a Domestic Violence Court means that cases can be clustered and heard on a particular day to enable all agencies to focus their specialist resources. In addition, there will be a facility to fast track cases and a specialist advisor will be available at the court.

## **Conclusion**

**20. That the level of cases at the Tameside Domestic Violence Court justify three specialist advisors rather than the current single post.**

## **Recommendation**

**17. That in view of the value of the specialist advisor service and the level of casework, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership should give consideration as a matter of priority to increasing the number of specialist advisor posts, subject to available funding.**

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 In Tameside, it appears that the four objectives of the Licensing Act 2003 are widely used. It is a concern however, that the effects of alcohol on health are not a licensing objective.**
- 7.2 The policing of Ashton and Stalybridge Town Centres are in the main well developed but the Panel has been informed that a clearer understanding is required of the night time economy of other town centres in Tameside.**
- 7.3 The Tackling Violent Crime Programme is a very positive directed programme to focus on efforts and resources to address crime in specific areas.**
- 7.4 There are a wide range of CCTV cameras operated by several organisations, most of which are partners of the Council.**

- 7.5 The Panel welcome the introduction of the 'airwave radio system' which will enable quicker and therefore more effective responses to incidents identified through the CCTV system.
- 7.6 The Council has clearly taken steps to encourage licensees to create a safer environment in their premises and this should continue to be supported.
- 7.7 The inclusion of late night take-aways as licensed premises and therefore being subject to licensing laws should enable licensing officers to be able to treat these premises as any other licensed premise in town centres.
- 7.8 The Scrutiny Panel is pleased that the level of demand for taxis operating in the borough, both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, is subject to an annual review and expects that the necessary action will be taken to ensure that the appropriate number of licences are available to meet that demand.
- 7.9 Strategies for addressing early intervention and to prevent re-offending will be key elements of the Comprehensive Area Assessment in respect of Crime and Disorder Reduction and this will form part of the Scrutiny Panel's work programme for 2009/10.
- 7.10 It is noted that there are a number of active sub-groups, however, it is essential that the work of the sub-groups is co-ordinated. It appears that steps are being taken to ensure that the Domestic Violence Forum has an effective purpose.
- 7.11 It is clear that the primary health sector have an essential role in identifying and helping combat domestic violence. In order to do this, it is essential that the Partnership is satisfied that primary health providers, doctors, nurses are aware of their responsibilities regarding domestic violence and the appropriate mechanisms for referral to MARAC.
- 7.12 The Panel is surprised and disappointed that the Best Value Improvement Strategy 2005-08, which was to be produced by the Police Authority to address areas of weakness relating to domestic violence appears not to have been progressed.
- 7.13 The Panel is pleased that the Domestic Violence Unit undertake such comprehensive monitoring of reported incidents of Domestic Violence and how they are dealt with.
- 7.14 The Panel notes the innovative methods being used by the Partnership to target repeat offenders of domestic violence and feels that such initiatives should be fully supported.
- 7.15 In order for funding to be mainstreamed for the provision of Children's Workers at the Tameside Women's Project, it has to be determined that there is a need for this provision within the Children's Plan.
- 7.16 The Panel recognises the valuable work undertaken by the Sanctuary Housing Scheme and acknowledges its continued need.
- 7.17 The Panel especially welcomes the formation of a self support group and would like to follow its progress with interest.
- 7.18 The Panel is concerned about the level of funding required to support the Scheme especially in view of the increasing number of referrals.

- 7.19 The Panel is concerned that national schemes seem to be outweighing local initiatives which could be detrimental to victims of domestic violence in Tameside.
- 7.20 That the level of cases at the Tameside Domestic Violence Court justify three specialist advisors rather than the current single post.

## 8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That further attempts be made to pressure the Government to include the effects of alcohol on health to the four objectives of the Licensing Act.
- 8.2 That the refreshed Action Plans for Domestic Abuse, Tackling Sexual Violence and Public Violence be discussed with the Scrutiny Panel when published.
- 8.3 That in the interest of efficiency and more effective delivery of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership consideration be given to the establishment of a Joint Enforcement Team.
- 8.4 That better understanding be gained about other town centres and whether a developing plan is required for policing changing patterns of behaviour.
- 8.5 That the Tackling Violent Crime Programme be supported and this Panel receive, as part of its monitoring of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, updated reports on the development of good practice.
- 8.6 That a survey of all CCTV cameras be undertaken and more effective use of these resources be sought.
- 8.7 That, as part of the Scrutiny Panel's ongoing monitoring of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Panel receive a report on the outcome of the 6 month trial of the 'airwave radio system'.
- 8.8 That following the annual review of taxi provision, consideration be given to the number of licences necessary to satisfactorily meet demand.
- 8.9 That as part of the Scrutiny Panel's ongoing monitoring of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, the Panel receive a report on the success of the 'Behave or be Banned Scheme and Pub-Watch Online in reducing incidents of anti-social behaviour in town centres.
- 8.10 That the Partnership ensure training and information is available to all primary health providers with regard to identification and referral of cases of domestic violence.
- 8.11 That Greater Manchester Police Authority be requested to confirm whether the Best Value Improvement Strategy has been implemented and if not the reasons for lack of progress.
- 8.12 That similar campaigns to those highlighted above should be regarded as a priority when funding is available.
- 8.13 That the Panel would again support the mainstream funding for the provision of Children's Workers at the Tameside Women's Project.
- 8.14 That New Charter Housing Trust be requested to offer its Domestic Violence Policy as a model for other registered social landlords operating in Tameside, who are urged to adopt the policy for their own operation.

- 8.15 That the Council continue to support the Sanctuary Housing Scheme at an appropriate level and supports wherever possible the development of self support groups.**
- 8.16 That national policies for the Victim and Witness Service should not outweigh local policies and initiatives that would be of benefit in Tameside.**
- 8.17 That in view of the value of the specialist advisor service and the level of casework, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership should give consideration, as a matter of priority to increasing the number of specialist advisor posts, subject to available funding.**

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

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report however some of the recommendations may lead to finance being required, this will have to be considered within the constraints of the current finances available to the service area.

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

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council 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. This report sets out some ways in which the Council contributes towards the prevention of crime and disorder and suggests some ways in which this could be improved.

Some of the recommendations in this report relate to the implementation of Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which means that under section 19(8B) of the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Council, the Police, the Fire Authority, the Primary Care Trust and the Probation Board must be sent a copy of this report and are required to respond to the committee to say what action they intend to take in response (if any). Those bodies must also have regard to this report when exercising their functions.