

# TAMESIDE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP NEWSLINE



Issue 6

June 2004

## QUALITY OF LIFE REPORT FOR ALL

TAMESIDE'S Quality of Life report is to be adopted by all the strategic partnerships and used as a guide when drawing up new policies.

The report provides performance data for each of the key measures within the Community Strategy alongside the Government Floor Targets and Local Public Service Agreement targets and contains more than 100 separate measures.

It has been praised by Chief Executive Janet Orchard for the quality of the information it contains and the Board has agreed that the Quality of Life report should be disseminated to all partnerships for use as a guide when developing new policies and strategies.

The report identifies trends and highlights Tameside's performance in comparison with other local authorities and highlights inequalities within a number of subject



*Tameside Council Chief Executive, Janet Orchard, has praised the Quality of Life report*

groups including geographical areas, genders and ethnic groups that can be the subject of actions plans for improvement.

The measures that form a key part of the Quality of Life report also mean that the Strategic Partnership Board is able to monitor the progress being made on Partnership Agreements by the Strategic Partnerships.

The Board can also see where progress is being made in relation to the Community Strategy and will be able to communicate areas of good practice across the LSP.



## HEALTH MATTERS

TAMESIDERS have contributed to a Government White Paper on health that is due to be published in summer.

The local consultation for Choosing Health involved more than 200 people from all the Local Strategic Partnership joint strategy sub groups.

Their views will be co-ordinated by the Tameside and Glossop PCT who plan to present a summary report on the White Paper to the LSP Board in October.

## NEW GUIDE TO COMMUNITY COHESION

THE Community Cohesion Partnership is drawing up a new strategy that it hopes will become 'the bible' for other organisations and partnerships in the borough.

The new Community Cohesion Strategy will build on the community cohesion initiatives that already exist in the borough, as well as developing new plans, and is intended to be a guide to other partnership agencies and service managers to help them develop their own community cohesion planning.

The new strategy will incorporate many of the ideas and views that came to light at a consultation event that was held in September last year and was attended by 90 local people.

In the short-term, the Community Cohesion Partnership is focusing on several key areas:

- Asylum seekers and refugees
- English language support via the ESOL strategy
- Race-hate crime monitoring and the operation of the Tameside Racial harassment Multi-agency Panel
- Inter-faith activity in Tameside
- Re-educating the press and the media
- Joint working between local public authorities on Race Equality Schemes
- Measurement of community cohesion indicators
- Membership and operation of Community Cohesion Partnership

The partnership will carry out consultations with a wide range of community groups during the drafting of the strategy to ensure that all views are considered.

## STOP PRESS

### Board on tour

THE next meeting of the LSP will take place on July 9 at Hattersley Community Centre. It will be followed by a tour of the area to look at the results of work that has been funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

### New faces

TWO members have been voted into the positions of Deputy Chairs of the Tameside Strategic Partnership Board.

Stephen Wilson from Tameside Voice and Peter Martin from the Tame Valley partnership will take up their new positions with immediate effect. In addition, Ann Woods from Tameside Voice has resigned from the Board as she is planning to emigrate. Her replacement will be Ben Williams.

## KEY RESULTS UNLOCK POTENTIAL

TAMESIDE'S Bangladeshi students are out-performing many of their counterparts in neighbouring authorities at Key Stage 2 levels.

Of the 10 LEAs in Greater Manchester, only two achieve better results at Key Stage 2 level in English and four achieve better results in Maths.

At Key Stage 2 in English, 58% of

Bangladeshi heritage pupils achieve Level 4 plus and in Maths, 45% of Bangladeshi heritage pupils achieve level 4 plus.

Results have improved in Tameside over the last five years for pupils of Bangladeshi heritage, although they are still below the Tameside and national averages.

# MONEY ADVICE PROJECT PAYS OFF

AN EARLY warning system to help combat the levels of debt incurred by people in the borough is paying off.

The Community Legal Partnership has been working hard to reduce the level of debt through a series of innovative projects that focus, among other areas, on possession orders and council tax debts.

Advisors from the Partnership have been working with the health services to identify people suffering from poor mental health that is being made worse by the levels of debt they have incurred.

The advisors have been working with these and other people in Tameside who have a long history of debt problems to try to arrange for their debts to be written off or reduced and to advise them on better ways to manage their debt.

The Mental Health Money Advice Project has helped 253 clients resolve £900,000 worth of debt problems and written off more than £148,000 of debts.

The Partnership has also instigated an early intervention strategy for those people who have fallen into arrears with housing payments. It has ensured that professional advisors have been available in court on the days when possession orders are being sought to deliver advice to debtors.

As a result of the scheme, since 2002, there has been a substantial decrease in possession summonses for rent arrears. Two years ago, possession summonses for rent arrears in the borough were running at 82.6 per month. The figure now stands at 66.2 per month. The figures for mortgage arrears stood at 38 per month two years ago. Now the figure has reduced to 33.3 per month.

In addition, the work being done around early intervention by the Partnership means that fewer people are relying on the advice of professionals in court on the day of their hearing and, instead, contacting a range of advisors belonging to the Partnership for help before their debt has reached crisis point.

## CREDITABLE PERFORMANCE

TAMESIDE'S Community Legal Services Partnership is celebrating the early completion of a PSA target aimed at increasing take-up of pension credit in the borough.

The PSA had set a target for take-up of people over the age of 60 who were receiving pension credit of 85% by March 2004.

The figure was reached 16 months early – in November 2002 – and now stands at 88.5% with more than 1,000 additional people now claiming pension credit, as a result of the work of the team, compared with three years ago.

## UNITED FRONT

THE results of the Tameside Citizens Panel survey in March 2004 show encouraging results for the Community Cohesion Partnership.

More than half – 53% - of respondents feel that local ethnic differences are respected and 56% believe their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get along with each other.

A massive 83% feel that their local neighbourhood is safe and respondents have identified their key priority areas for improving their area as; activities for teenagers – 43%; reducing the level of crime – 35%; carrying out road and pavement repairs – 29%; keeping the streets clean – 26%; reducing the levels of traffic congestion – 25%.

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## FAITH IN THE FUTURE

PLANS are being made for the first ever inter-faith conference in Tameside.

Tameside Racial Equality Council and the Third Sector Coalition are working to establish an Inter-faith network for the borough with the first step being an inter-faith conference.

The format and content of the conference will be decided in the coming months with a view to holding the conference in September in Hyde.

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## CHANGES TO PSAs

MINOR amendments have been made to round two of the Public Service Agreements.

The PSA focuses on Community Strategy objectives and has community cohesion as one of its main themes.

Two changes have been made to the measures within the agreement. Under the education attainment measures, Post-16 staying on rates will be replaced by special educational needs attainment, and in the crime reduction measures, distraction burglaries have been dropped.

The next stage in the second round of the LPSA will be target setting.

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## LEARNING CURVE

FIGURES are currently being compiled by the Learning and Skills Council for the educational performance of 16 to 24 year-olds in Tameside.

A summary of the educational performance of 16-24 year olds will be included in the report of the Lifelong Learning Partnership in July.

## STRATEGY DEVELOPED FOR T3SC

A NEW development strategy has now been produced for the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The strategy was put out to consultation by the T3SC – Tameside Third Sector Coalition – to Board members who were given until May 28 to make any comments.

It outlines the work of the VCS in Tameside and demonstrates the contribution the sector can make to service delivery in the borough.

Tameside's VCS is made up mainly of community groups and provides a broad range of services and activities for a wide range of groups.

There are 800 groups registered with the VCS of which 272 are registered charities, 60 voluntary organisations with the rest being community groups.

The sector attracts around £2.8M in grants and the financial input of volunteers is worth at least £0.94M to the local economy. It has identified six priority areas for the sector that will feature prominently in the new strategy.

- Sustainable funding
- Competent and effective management by officers
- Community facilities and ICT
- Volunteer brokerage and development
- Community transport
- Central resource centre and information

The T3SC has been asked to draw up and action plan alongside the strategy which is likely to be presented to either the July or October meeting of the TSP.

# NEW FOCUS ON YOUNG HOMELESS

AGENCIES in the borough are drawing up a new Public Service Agreement that will focus on providing suitable, long-term accommodation for young, homeless people.



Under the terms of the new agreement, the second to cover young people and homelessness, a key target will be to have no young, homeless people spending more than three nights in bed and breakfast accommodation.

The Housing Options Centre has seen a significant growth in the number of young people being presented to them as either homeless or having significant housing needs.

And the increase in presentations has seen the Centre relying, in the short term, on bed and breakfast accommodation to remove young people from the streets.

Now the service has recognised that a more effective, long-term solution will be to increase the number of supported housing schemes in the borough available to young, homeless people.

New Charter has identified suitable properties for the schemes and tenders have been invited from organisations that are interested in providing the support service needed to run the schemes. A multi-agency panel is evaluating the tenders and it's expected that the service will be operational by the end of June.

In addition, the Housing Partnership has applied for £50,000 as part of the PSA to pay for a Homelessness Prevention Officer to work with young people and their families with a view to helping them avoid homelessness, and to ensure that by 2007 no young person is placed in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than a week.

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

THE performance of the Local Strategic Partnership will come under the Government microscope in the coming months.

The LSP has received substantial support from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and has now submitted a report – a Performance Management Framework - to Government Office on how it will use the money and, more importantly, how it will measure the success of the spend.

This Performance Management Framework (PMF) will focus on delivery against an agreed set of targets within the Community Strategy and will also form the basis of Tameside's Local Strategic Partnership Improvement Plan.

The annual review of the LSP performance

will take place on July 7 and will be chaired by Peter Styche from Government Office and GO staff.

Eight representatives from Tameside Local Strategic Partnership will be involved in the review for which an agenda will be agreed in advance.

Following the Annual Review and validation of the PMF, Government Office will assess the performance of the LSP via a traffic light system and report to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit by September 9.

LSPs showing poor performance will be likely to receive additional support from the Government Office although early indications are that Tameside LSP should receive a favourable assessment.

## Easy as A, B, E-tameside

THE Board's approval of the E-tameside Strategy has now resulted in a successful bid for funding.

The Innovation Fund has made £350,000 available to the borough so that knowledge management and information sharing system can be developed.

The system will initially be piloted by New Charter and Tameside College and then rolled out to other partners.

## Truancy rates drop

TRUANCY rates in Tameside paint a positive picture for the borough.

The April meeting of the TSP asked for data on the levels of absenteeism in the borough.

Those figures were reported at the May TSP and revealed that truancy levels have reduced to 0.42% in 2002/03. This performance compares favourably against a national average of 1.1%.

## Children and young people

At a recent conference members of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) joined representatives from across the spectrum of children and young people's services in discussing the implications of the recent Children Bill for Tameside.

Workforce reform issues were discussed, and input received from Brighton and Hove council on the structure they have adopted for children's services. Discussion will continue on these issues, but initial rationalisation of partnerships for children and young people is nearing completion, following consultation with partner agencies over the last six months.

A work group is looking into developing the joint commissioning role of the CYPSP. It is anticipated that an interim Joint Commissioning group, with responsibility to the board, will be set up by autumn 2004, which will pilot joint commissioning with the Neighbourhood Renewal bids for the Tame Valley and the Ashton Youth Inclusion Project.

Work to implement the Common Assessment Framework is moving forward. A series of workshops to identify the requirements of a Common Assessment Framework are planned for June and July.

A user friendly booklet on the CYPSP preventative strategy has been produced. 4000 are to be distributed through local community venues, to promote awareness of the services available to children and young people and to encourage user involvement in development of these.



*Egerton Park Samba Band, Next Steps Conference on May 12*

**Next meetings: 24th June, 18th August**

**Children and Young People**

**Contact Ameena Ahmed  
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## Health Partnership and Modernisation Board

The partnership has agreed a Partnership Agreement with the Tameside Strategic Partnership Board in relation to the delivery of a number of health-related Community Strategy outcomes.

Progress on these outcomes was discussed at the May meeting and will be reported to the Strategic Partnership October meeting.

The Health Partnership has also undertaken more detailed analysis of work in key areas including diabetes, smoking cessation and improved support for older

people. Amongst other things the intention is to encourage an evidence-based approach to action.

### **Health Improvement & Health Inequalities Strategy**

A new strategic group has been created under the leadership of the Director of Public Health with a focus on developing a strategy for health improvement and tackling health inequalities.

Initial indications suggest this is likely to propose a limited number of key priorities such as smoking, exercise, diet and social

networks. These issues are key determinants of poor health (in particular heart disease and cancer) but also provide opportunities to progress work on a preventative and multi-agency basis.

As the strategy unfolds it will provide a clear focus for co-ordinating related activity, including improving linkages with other thematic partnerships where appropriate. It will also become the key strand for delivering the partnership agreement.

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## Community Cohesion Partnership

The Community Cohesion Partnership met in May and agreed a second draft of a community cohesion strategy for the borough. The strategy is going out for consultation before preparation of the final version.

The March Citizen 2000 Panel survey contained questions on people's views of community cohesion. The results have given the Community Cohesion Partnership baseline information for their survey based performance indicators.

Tameside Racial Equality Council and The Third Sector Coalition are supporting the development of a Tameside Inter-Faith Network. The Network's first conference will be held in September, for 100 people.

The Community Cohesion Partnership commissioned a review of access to English Language support last year which helped in the development of a Tameside ESOL Strategy in March.

GM Police and education staff will provide data on racist incidents at each Community Cohesion Partnership meeting. Tameside Racial Harassment Panel which supports the Community Cohesion Partnership have agreed an Action Plan.

One focus of the Panel's work will be to increase the number of places where the public can report hate crimes and to ensure existing "reporting stations" are kept up-to-date.

The LSP Joint Race Equality Scheme

working group has now met four times and has developed a series of recommendations around joint working on race and wider equality issues.

The report will be taken to the LSP Board meeting in July for consideration.

The public sector partners involved in this work have included the Council, New Charter Housing Association, Tameside and Glossop PCT, Job Centre Plus, GMPTE, GMP, Pennine Care NHS Trust, GM Fire Service, Tameside Acute Trust and Tameside Race Equality Council.

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## Community and Legal Services

The Mental Health Project continues its work advising people using mental health services in managing their debts.

They have recently carried out a survey targeting staff within mental health services to assess the value of the project. The results show clearly that this project has an extremely positive impact on people's mental health and also enables social workers and community psychiatric nurses to spend more time dealing with the mental health issues of their clients.

Following the signing of an Accord with the Pension Service, the joint home visiting team will become operational on 8th June 2004. Their role will be to contact vulnerable older people to ensure they receive all

the benefits they are entitled to and where appropriate, refer on to other services. Increasing benefit take up is now a new local PSA target for Tameside.

Welfare benefits advice was the subject of discussion at the March meeting of the CLS provider group and the Greater Manchester Low Pay Unit will be giving a presentation to the June meeting on the service it provides in Tameside.

**Next meeting August 12**

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*An Accord has been signed with the Pension Service to ensure vulnerable, older people receive the benefits to which they are entitled*

## Economic Forum

The Economic Forum met in March, chaired by Cllr K Quinn, with an agenda that focused on the Economic Development Plan aim of Ensuring The Best Transition To Working Life For All Our Young People.

Sheila Piazza, Connexions Partnership Manager, gave an update on the work of this unique service that provides information, advice, support and guidance for all 13-19 year olds in the borough. Michael Jones from Groundwork Tameside highlighted their youth, community and education activity and looked to the future. The meeting agreed that there was a need to train more advisers in this specialist area of work, as there was an increase in demand for support for young people who had become excluded from employment, education and training.

Amanda Wrigley from Ashton Regeneration outlined the Spy Vision project in the St Peter's area and painted a real picture of the skills, support and dedication required to motivate young people, and involve them more fully with their communities. The project has been very successful to date.

Representing High Schools, Brian Parker, Headteacher at Longdendale Community Language College, and adviser Phil Taylor, explained the Leadership Incentive Grant, that has been awarded to a project involving eight high schools in Tameside with the aims of keeping potential 14/19 year old disengaged pupils in the education process.

All agreed that the themed meeting had given the Forum members an insight into the issues and services around delivery of this aim and that links between the service providers should continue to be forged and supported.

At the next meeting the Forum will consider the future Economic Development Plan and the impact of the possible Greater Manchester Economic Development Strategy, currently being discussed in the sub-region.

**Next meeting July 14**

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## Housing Partnership

A follow-up report went to the Board on how we are addressing the issue of housing action for young people:

- Seven units of semi-independent accommodation is being developed in conjunction with New Charter and these will have support attached to help young people succeed in their tenancy
- Nightstop, a voluntary project are trying to recruit volunteers willing to provide accommodation in their homes for young people for up to a week. They have been

operating in Stockport and Trafford for 10 years.

- We employed a Young Person's Tenancy Support Worker to work with young people placed in Bed and Breakfasts to support and move people into more appropriate accommodation.
- Since the Young Person's Accommodation Development Co-ordinator has been in post, we have seen a dedicated service developed at the Housing Options Centre for young people. This has enabled us

to reduce the number of young people placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation, as well as reducing the amount of young people who repeatedly seek help from the centre.

The priorities for the future are to develop more accommodation options for young people, as well as focusing on prevention work.

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## Lifelong Learning

The Lifelong Learning Partnership has achieved a number of positive results that have included:

### 14 – 19 Strategy

- Report from KPMG considered by the 14 – 19 Strategy Group
- A vision statement has been prepared by the Strategy Group and the strategy will evolve over the next few months.
- The strategy will be consulted upon and disseminated to all partners
- Contributing to the LSC Strategic Area Review for Tameside
- The Strategy group have also discussed the implications of the

national roll out of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

### Basic Skills

- The Partnership has commissioned a borough-wide basic skills survey from Opinion Research Bureau who undertook the original survey in 1999
- Survey will take place throughout the Borough in June.

### ESOL

- Esol Strategy launched to partners and learners in March.
- Basic Skills Coordinator overseeing action plan developed with partners through the ESOL Forum

- Themes for action within the strategy include building better networks for sharing information, better coordination of provision, better access to staff training and better access to information on funding.

### General

- The structure of the Partnership has been considered and amended to include thematic sub-groups to increase accountability for the Partnership action plan.

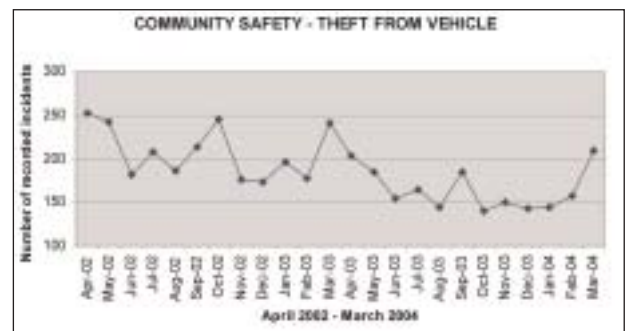
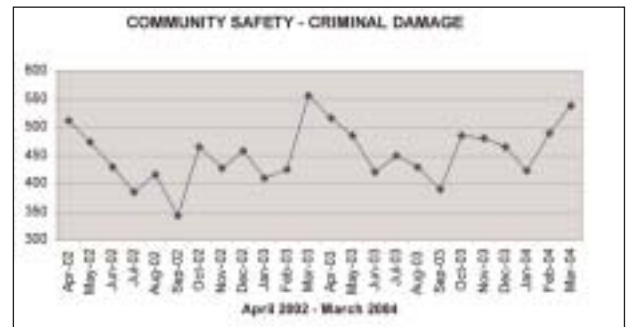
**Next meeting June 17**

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## Crime and Disorder Reduction

An Audit Commission inspection of community safety functions says Tameside Council is providing a two-star service that has promising prospects for improvement. It said priorities in the crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) strategy tackle key national and local issues and contain clear and challenging targets. The council's community safety unit has developed and co-ordinated intelligence on crime and disorder across the partnership, directing investment and targeting resources to high crime areas. A wide range of initiatives are making an impact on reducing crime in priority areas and there have been notable improvements in performance in most categories of crime between April and December 2003 compared with the same period in 2002. Overall, key recorded crimes in the borough have reduced by 4% between 2002/3 and 2003/4.

- Incidents of Domestic Burglary show a 13% reduction between 2002/3 and 2003/4. The lower figures reflect the impact of a number of partnership actions such as dealing with prolific offenders, alleygating projects, distraction burglary initiatives and improved levels of detection.
- Criminal Damage figures increased by around 5% between 2002/3 and 2003/4. A major contributing factor for this increase is the way in which the police now encourage and place a greater emphasis on the reporting of racially motivated crime and youth nuisance many of which result in criminal damage.
- Minor woundings show an increase of about 20% in reported incidents between 2002/3 and 2003/4. However, a contributing factor towards the increase in violent crimes relates to the change in police recording practices - people are now encouraged to report violent crimes (such as hate crime and domestic violence) – many of which in the past would have gone unreported.
- Theft of and theft from vehicles are down by 21% over the period. It's a reflection, in part, of the work by the police and the council in relation to secured by design car parks and "valuables on view" initiatives.
- Thefts from shops have reduced by 21%. Much of this reduction can be attributed to the many town centre initiatives which are now in place such as radio link, CCTV, increased presence of patrollers and targeted police initiatives on shoplifting in the run up to Christmas.
- Reported incidents of youth annoyance have reduced by 3%.



### Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (2005-2008)

A new, three-year crime and disorder reduction strategy will be launched next April and based on:

**1 Effectiveness of crime reduction initiatives that have been put in place over the last three years.**

**1A detailed consultation exercise aimed at listening to the views of as many people as possible in terms of their perception of crime levels and the fear of crime.**

**1A new set of key priorities (together with detailed action plans for achieving those priorities) based on the crime audit and consultation.**

**Next meeting June 24**

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# New Home for New Charter

New Charter Housing Trust Group has completed work on Cavendish 249, its new Headquarters in Ashton-under-Lyne.

The environmentally friendly 48,000sq ft office occupies a gateway site to AMEC's Ashton Moss development, is next to the proposed Metrolink extension from Manchester and only 600 yards away from the M60 Manchester Orbital motorway.

The £5.4m building houses 375 staff, who previously worked in 16 different places, and will support the Group's four 'one stop' shops in high street locations, as well as its building depot in Dukinfield.

The building makes a real impact. It boasts a striking design, featuring a curved roofline and a 25metre high central glazed atrium. In addition, Cavendish 249 is passively ventilated and boasts a range of environmentally friendly features that were key to its design. Windows and lighting are computer controlled; there's a high standard of insulation; and heat and power are generated from a roof-mounted Combined Heat



The New Charter building - Cavendish 249

and Power Unit. Even rainwater is collected to help flush the toilets!

Group Chief Executive Ian Munro said: "This is largest office development in Tameside for over 20 years and we are very proud of it. We have regenerated a neglected part of the Ashton Renewal Area and brought a brownfield site back into use. I am confident the move to this office will bring further improvement to the services we give to our tenants."

# ALL CHANGE FOR POLICE DIVISION

Tameside Police Division restructured the way it delivers policing across the borough in April.

It has moved away from a purely reactive policing strategy to placing a greater emphasis on Community policing. To achieve this it has replaced the traditional two sub-divisional structure with a unitary division containing four neighbourhoods:

Ashton; Droylsden, Denton and Audenshaw; Dukinfield, Stalybridge and Mossley; Hyde,

Longdendale and Hattersley.

Each neighbourhood has an inspector in charge supported by a number of sergeants and a significant number of constables. The concept is that those officers will have local responsibility for, and ownership of, their areas. They are forging solid

community links and, together with an intelligence-led ethos, are able to deal with emerging crime issues before they take hold.

The police will still maintain its traditional emergency response function but the number of officers engaged in that has been reduced to accommodate staffing of the new areas.

The new structure has been complemented by a rigorous performance management regime driven by new Divisional Commander, Chief Superintendent Kevin Mulligan. Fully adopting the National Intelligence Model, the division now has a robust, intelligence-led stance to effectively co-ordinate and tackle crime. Daily tasking meetings review overnight intelligence, and officers are then deployed to arrest offenders. Monthly arrest figures of approximately 600 per month rose in April to 800.

## New policy for drugs

The Division has also introduced a programme of mandatory drug testing of prisoners. It's part of the Criminal Justice Intervention Programme which involves partner agencies such as the Probation Service and tackles offenders' drug usage using a systematic referral process to treatment programmes. The evidence is that such work reduces offending by those individuals. Sgt Peter Johnson has been appointed as Tameside CJIP Manager.

## Council leads on purchasing power

Tameside Council is to lead the new government North West Centre of Excellence for local council purchasing.

The government has announced a major new programme to encourage best practice in local authority purchasing and has chosen nine councils to be regional leaders. These new centres will drive change in purchasing by providing expertise to other councils and building on existing good practice.

Tameside will be working with the nine other Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and Liverpool City Council who will share £3.6m of funding for each of the next two years.

## Trust news in brief

### Crack-down on bad tenants

The Trust has been getting tough with nuisance tenants. A series of cases have been before the courts and the landlord was the first in the country to use new powers to tackle anti social behaviour, through the 2003 Act, to add another person or people to existing court proceedings for the purposes of getting an Anti Social Behaviour Order.

### Spring clean for New Charter

The Trust's annual Spring Clean started at the beginning of May in Ashton where New Charter removed 39 tonnes of waste and rubbish in one weekend. In Audenshaw and Denton over 28 tonnes were shifted from 30 collection points across the estates.

### Loan increased to £270million

Four years in, New Charter Group has refinanced its loan facility by over 26% to £270m. Refinancing provides New Charter with the capacity to respond to customer demand to accelerate the investment programme and to address issues surrounding the environment in general.

### Fund boost for homeless

A £35,200 Children's Fund grant will support the homeless play and learning project, based at New Charter's Homeless Families Unit until March 2005. It will also continue to offer support to the 5-13 year old children who live in the landlord's supported Housing Schemes and will run in partnership with Tameside Council's libraries.

## Learning centre relaunched

The newly refurbished Union Street Learning Centre in Hyde will have its official opening this Friday, April 30 by Cllr Joe Kitchen, Cabinet Deputy for Lifelong Learning and James Purnell, Hyde and Stalybridge MP.

The refurbishment has been funded from a combination of sources with a large contribution from the Learning and Skills Council.

The centre replaces Morningside in Droylsden that was inaccessible to learners with mobility impairment. The new centre is fully accessible and has been equipped with state of the art resources from computers with larger screens to interactive whiteboards. Every room has furniture that can be height adjusted to accommodate learners who are wheelchair users and with other mobility needs.

The new centre offers learning primarily for adults with learning disabilities in subjects as diverse as art, IT, independent living skills, performing arts, literacy and numeracy. At present 116 learners are enrolled on courses. However, other courses available at the centre include ESOL language provision, ICT courses and there are plans to extend the opening hours to include evening provision.

# Fire safety partnership is launched

THE Fire Service has launched a brand new scheme that will involve a variety of partners from the public and private sector and is aimed at reducing the number of fires in the home.

The service has recruited 50 new members of staff to form 25 Home Fire Risk Assessment Teams who will advise homeowners on reducing fire risks in the home.

The teams will be targeting 44 out of 214 wards in Greater Manchester that fall in the top 20% of areas recording the most incidents of fires.

Only one of those wards is in Tameside – Ashton St Peters – but the new HFRA teams will be working towards raising awareness of fire risk with the result that fire incidents should decrease.

A special hotline number has been established that homeowners can call for advice on reducing fire risks in their property.

Trained operators will either deliver the advice over the phone, or if requested will book an appointment for a member of one of the HFRA

teams to make a visit to the caller's home.

As a matter of course, the operators will also ask the caller a series of questions aimed at establishing the level of risk at the caller's home. Various indicators in the homeowner's answers will flag up the level of risk in their homes to the operators who may suggest that an HFRA officer carries out a home visit.

Although the HFRA teams will be targeting the areas in the top 20% they will still respond to requests from homeowners anywhere in the county to carry out home visits to deliver a risk assessment.

They are also hoping to work with a variety of agencies such as the police and social services who can alert them to any premises where they consider there to be a serious fire risk.

The project has been funded by both the Innovation Fund and Transitional Funding for three years and the work of the team plus fire incident figures for the priority areas will be monitored and a monthly report prepared.

# MASTERPLAN UNVEILED FOR HATTERSLEY AND MOTTRAM

People in Hattersley and Mottram have had their say on the new master plan for the area.

A series of consultations resulted in 86% of people approving it.

The process started in 2000 when Hattersley Development Trust commissioned the first Hattersley and Mottram Master Plan.

Informed by local people the Master Plan set out to develop a 'blue print' for long term plans to improve the area and provide a framework to guide future developments and investment.

Led by Tameside Council, working in partnership with Manchester City Council, Portico Housing

and local residents, further work to firm up and shape the early ideas and concepts has been ongoing and this resulted in an updated version of the Master Plan 'vision' being produced.

According to a survey on the plan, the community puts top priority on the need traffic calming to combat speed, new fences and driveways to existing homes and the creation of new jobs.

The issues of new parks and play areas and new shops at key locations generated the second and third highest responses of all.

Issues that people were most divided over were improved pedestrian and cycle links and the downgrading of Stockport Road.

- 77% of residents felt positive about new housing provision
- Food retail and bank / building society were top of the list for the new District Centre followed by library, new housing, Post Office, health centre and chemist.
- 76% of residents felt positive about the location of the shops in the proposed new District Centre?
- 58% of people said improved lighting and security would encourage more people to use the railway station.

## £670,000 funding boost

A unique partnership spearheaded by Connexions is bringing new opportunities to hard-to-reach young people in Tameside.

Better Choices' Tameside Connexions service has joined forces with agencies in the borough to stage a successful bid for over £670,000 funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) operating the co-financed European Social Fund (ESF).

The funding will enable the partnership – called Tameside Collegiate - to develop a range of activities for local 14 to 19-year-olds who are self-excluded or at risk of dropping out of learning.

The partnership will also provide projects for those 'not in employment, education or training' – or NEET – that are designed to re-engage them and encourage involvement in post-16 programmes of positive activity.

The collaboration brings together local projects and services from both the voluntary and statutory sectors, such as Tameside Sports Development Unit, Groundwork Tameside and Tameside College. It will offer young people alternative activities including basic skills, arts sessions, sports, work placements and college courses.

Connexions Tameside Manager Sheila Piazza said: "Our delivery partners for the project will offer activities to re-engage young people and get them back into learning, using things such as music and media, sporting activities, a bike project, healthy living and community-based projects.

"In addition the young person will also be able to access specialist help to address issues such as substance abuse, mental health issues, housing and benefits advice."

The project is aiming to have worked with 398 young people by December 2004 – and almost double that number the following year. It is hoped there will be a 10% reduction in the NEET figures by the end of 2004 and a 10% increase in those in education, employment and training in the six most deprived wards in Tameside.



## ONE-STOP COP SHOP

Tameside police have taken delivery of a new mobile police station – the first of its kind in the country. The unique 7.5 tonne British custom-built vehicle has been funded through the police's partnership with Tameside Council.

Similar in size to a mobile library, the station is kitted out with the latest technological equipment and computer links, giving police officers full access to the resources of the service.

It also has a public counter, so people can use it exactly as a police station.

It will be used at crime hot spots, at major events that attract thousands of people or as a forward command post during police operations.