

**THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**CAITHNESS COMMITTEE – 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

Agenda Item	5
Report No	CC/42/07

**Community Safety**

**Report by Caithness Area Manager**

**Summary**

This report provides members with a review of the current and recent activity of the Caithness Community Safety Action Team.

**1. Background**

1.1 The Community Safety Action Team in Caithness meets quarterly. Its membership is drawn from Highland Council members and officers, Northern Constabulary, Highlands & Islands Fire & Rescue Service, Caithness Voluntary Group, Caithness Partnership, and community representatives. It is chaired by myself, but relies on a good deal of commitment from a number of colleagues, including the Area Commander of Northern Constabulary, who is effectively the co-chair of the group. Councillors Jackson and MacDonald represent the Area Committee.

**2. Activities and Achievements in 2006**

2.1 There are four standing sub-groups, described below, and two additional topics have developed during the last year.

2.2 The **Vandalism Sub-Group** is chaired by Northern Constabulary. An environmental scanning exercise has been carried out in the Pulteneytown area, and a number of issues have already been addressed. The Community Regeneration Fund has reserved a portion of funding to assist with some slightly larger initiatives. The overall aim is to reduce vandalism by removing the opportunities, eg by tarring areas of gravel or stony ground. CCTV was identified as a particular priority, and a new group was formed to take this forward (see below).

2.3 The **Home Safety Sub-Group** is led by the Fire & Rescue Service. The current priority remains focussed on promoting home fire safety checks. The local senior officer has recently commended his Lybster team for their work in this area. Joint working with other community groups will be explored.

2.4 The **Road Safety Sub-Group** is convened by the Council's Roads & Community Works Manager. Good progress is being made in the programme to roll out 20 mph limits near schools. Some improvements have been made in the area around Wick

High School, but further attention is being given to this. The Head Teacher and the Northern Constabulary are considering the best way forward.

- 2.5 The **Promoting Equalities and Valuing Diversity Sub-Group** is organised by the Caithness Voluntary Group, whose Secretary is active in various Highland-wide initiatives. It has been reported recently that a Polish Association may be formed in the area.
- 2.6 A **CCTV Sub-Group** was formed under the chairmanship of Richard Guest. Members will be aware, from a report which was presented to their meeting last month, that agreement has been reached for the installation of a further eight cameras in the Wick area. This is a real success story, because the initial aim was to proceed in phases of four cameras each. Richard will be leading a small implementation group.
- 2.7 **Domestic abuse** has recently become a standing item on the Team's agenda. This is intended to provide a connection between the Domestic Abuse Link Group (chaired by Councillor MacNab) and the general community safety agenda. Awareness raising is a current priority.
- 2.8 **Safe Highlander 2006** took place at Dounreay last September. All primary schools in Caithness & North Sutherland participated in the event, which was supported by the Area Discretionary Fund. This is now very much a fixture in the calendar, and planning for the 2007 event is under way.
- 2.9 For the first time last year, the **Community Safety Partnership Local Action Fund** was administered at the local level. A total of approximately £13,000 was distributed across 9 projects in Wick, Thurso, Castletown, and Lybster which all aim in various ways to provide diversionary activities for young people.
- 2.10 Community Safety has been given a separate entry (text by Chief Inspector MacDonald) on the **Caithness Partnership website**. It has also recently been decided that the work of the Community Safety Action Team should be further publicised by the production of regular press releases.

### 3. **Future Arrangements**

- 3.1 It is not clear at present how the current changes to the Council's management arrangements will impact on the Community Safety Action Team. A further factor which will shape future arrangements are the discussions which are taking place at the Well Being Alliance level on a variety of related topics. In the meantime, a provisional calendar of meetings has been set for the remainder of 2007.

#### Recommendation

Members are invited to note the progress made on various aspects of the Community Safety agenda.

Signature:

Designation: Caithness Area Manager

Date: 08 February 2007