

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING, PUBLIC SAFETY AND ENFORCEMENT – COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL

Transience

The Council has been successful in bidding for £1.54m of additional revenue funding to support a Transience Programme for three years from April 2015. The funding comes from the Government's Transformation Challenge Award and is part of a wider agenda of putting in place more joined up ways of working that prevent future demands on public services.

The bid showed how investing in holistic and preventative services in particular neighbourhoods would help reduce costs to the Council, health services, police and fire service.

The funding will pay for the teams of transience support workers to work across inner Blackpool reaching out to vulnerable people and helping them to become more stable.

The work builds on the pilot in South Beach where support workers accompanied housing enforcement teams as they inspected privately rented properties following the introduction of selective licensing.

At first, the funding will pay for transience work in the Claremont ward and put more capacity back into South Beach. It is anticipated that a further roll out to other parts of inner Blackpool such as Talbot, Brunswick, Revoe and St Heliers will take place from early 2016.

The funding will also help support more community development activities in these areas, to provide opportunities for people to make new contacts and develop their skills alongside support from statutory services.

Trading Standards, Food Hygiene and all Enforcement activities

Environmental Protection Team

Following the break-up of the Neighbourhoods Division, a centralised Environmental Protection team has been established within the Public Protection Division. Working practices have been amended with the intention of launching an out of hour's noise / Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team early in the New Year.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act

Following this legislation being enacted, the Directorate Enforcement Policy has been amended to reflect this and officers authorised as appropriate. The first Community Protection Notices have already been issued by officers to address antisocial behaviour, which spoils the community's quality of life.

Scam Alerts

Officers of the Advice and Education team have started issuing scams alerts via social media for the first time via Public Relations. This proved to be the most popular use ever by the Authority of social media, with the first alert being shared over 400 times and reaching over 20,000 people.

Claremont Selective Licensing

The inspections phase of the scheme is now well underway. Of the 1,284 properties to which the scheme applies, licence applications have now been received for 911 premises, with more arriving daily.

Gambling Test Purchasing

Operations have been performed by officers along with the Gambling Commission, using underage volunteers. Of the premises visited, four have been submitted for Licence Review following repeat failures, whereas six more have been put on notice by written warning following the failure of one incident.

Proceeds of Crime

Following a joint investigation involving Planning Enforcement and Trading Standards a conviction was obtained regarding an unlawful conversion of a premise. Both defendants were fined £6,000 each with £7,000 costs and both were ordered to pay £50,000 each of Proceeds of Crime, with a penalty of 18 months imprisonment for failure to do so, upon completion of which the monies would still be owed.

Police Joint Working

Officers are now working every day in the Town Centre paired up with Police Officers to reduce crime/ Anti-social behaviour and to tackle street crimes ranging from begging, street trading, thefts and commercial waste. A number of miscreants have already been apprehended and reported for prosecution. These include one beggar who was apprehended 13 times in a single weekend. All appropriate prosecutions will be accompanied by applications to the Courts for Criminal Behaviour Orders.

Problematic Street Trader

As part of the ongoing joint working operations with the Police to tackle problems in the town centre and Promenade areas, an individual has been successfully prosecuted twice resulting in two suspended jail sentences for 70 days to run consecutively. He has been selling fake vodka and whisky on the streets. Upon being analysed these were found to contain urine and faecal contaminants.

Public Space Protection Order

These orders recently became available to the Authority as part of the ASB, Crime and Policing Act. A report has been drafted on this subject recommending a 12 week public consultation to be undertaken after the Parliamentary and Local Elections, relating firstly to the Town Centre and Promenade and secondly to Public Parks.

Such an Order would implement new rules relating to behaviour that the Authority expects and stop individuals or groups committing certain types of antisocial behaviour in public spaces, which has a detrimental effect on the quality of life. The Orders can subsequently be varied and amendments or additions can be made to the prohibitions and/ or requirements. It is an offence to breach such an Order.

Amongst the issues suggested for consultation in the Town Centre/ Promenade Order are:

- Street Drinking
- Loitering around cash machines/ shop doorways (an extension of begging)
- Rag Mag Sellers/ Charity Collections
- Using legal highs
- Lucky charms/ heather sellers.

Licensing Services

The Licensing Committee in December 2014, agreed to go out to formal consultation on a revised statement of Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003. The consultation will end on the 12 March 2015. The Committee also considered an interim report from the Night Time Economy Working Group.

“BSafe” – Blackpool Community Safety Partnership

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Performance

All crime in Blackpool showed a 6% decrease in October to November 2014 when compared to the same period the previous year. This equates to 150 fewer crimes.

Individual breakdown of other crime categories include:

- Anti-social behaviour has remained at the same level
- Vehicle crime has decreased by 9% (equivalent to 18 fewer crimes)
- Domestic Burglary has decreased by 14% (19 fewer crimes)
- Domestic Abuse has decreased by 1% (two fewer crimes)
- Sexual Offences (not including rape) have remained at the same level
- Assaults have increased by 5% (28 more crimes)

Crime reduction and substance misuse initiatives

Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Week

A Lancashire-wide campaign to raise awareness around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) was held between 10 and 14 November 2014. The week of action focused on operational activity and awareness raising around five main themes, Internet safety and offending, missing from home and care, street grooming, groups and gangs CSE and trafficking.

It is hoped that the campaign will provide advice and information around prevention of child sexual exploitation, increased awareness of the issues and to send out a warning to potential offenders.

Domestic Abuse

White Ribbon Campaign

On 25 November 2014, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the White Ribbon Campaign was launched, resulting in 16 days of action across the country. The campaign focuses on encouraging men and boys to take responsibility for eliminating violence against women by asking them to wear a white ribbon and sign a pledge ‘never to condone or remain silent about violence against women’.

In Lancashire, a performance of ‘Lady in Red’ was shown at Police Headquarters to highlight the plight of women who are in abusive relationships and for professionals to discuss their experiences with victims of domestic abuse. In Blackpool, a social media campaign was launched featuring photographs of staff, partners and the public wearing the white ribbons and an event was held in the Town Centre to obtain pledge signatures on 5 December 2014.

Funding boost for domestic abuse refuges

A £10m fund has recently been developed to support specialist domestic violence refuges in England. The provision of specific refuges for victims of domestic abuse is vital in making a difference to the lives of thousands of women and children each year.

The funding is available for 2014/ 2015 and 2015/ 2016 and will allow local housing authorities to strengthen their existing refuge services. It is hoped that this will provide effective national coverage to keep victims of domestic abuse safe.

Early intervention

The Stakeholder Group has been established and initiated the planning for the UCLAN pilot 'Step Up – Building the Evidence Base for Early Intervention Responses for Children Living with Domestic Abuse'. Step Up research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and will focus on strengthening the response provided to families identified as standard risk domestic abuse cases.

Domestic Abuse Commissioning Review

The next stage of the review is to hold a stakeholder event utilising, 'Positive Transitions' to facilitate a customer journey through Domestic Abuse pathways, this will determine the work that is currently undertaken and what the identified need is moving forward. Service User participation will be included to capture real experiences.

Coordinate Response against Domestic Abuse (CAADA)

Empowerment to present CAADA insights, reviewing the outcomes measured over the past 12 months, the report will be fed back to the Steering Group. Empowerment have won a national 'Children and Young People Award' 2014 for the work the Children's IDVA's deliver in Blackpool to children and young people affected by Domestic Abuse. CAADA Self-Assessment for Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) was also undertaken, facilitated with a CAADA representative and the MARAC partnership. The results will inform the delivery of MARAC.

Domestic Abuse Pan Lancashire Steering Group

Work with perpetrators is considered within this group, alongside the MARAC Steering Group, Honour Based Abuse and Workforce Development Group. A sub group has been created to look at Domestic Homicide Reviews and Mental Health, the first meeting will be held in January.