

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES****Neighbourhoods and Learning service**

There will be a fresh impetus in taking forward a programme of work to enhance the community governance engagement and consultation at local level. The work will involve reinvigorating the role of community groups at ward level and enhancing ward and neighbourhood governance structures and member involvement.

Key stakeholders will be contacted shortly as part of a consultation and the best way forward to increase the communities' contribution to what is happening in their area.

**Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) and Nextstep Contract**

WNF enables the Neighbourhoods and Learning service to target those in the most deprived communities, particularly people who are claiming incapacity benefit. To September this year, 19 local jobs fares and complementary work through the Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) service has resulted in 220 people gaining permanent employment. Working in partnership with colleagues in Customer Services, 296 of those engaged have received 'Better off Calculations' to enable them to make informed choices about their employment options. WNF is part of the council's Area Based Grant and has been withdrawn from March 2011. Through the contract with Nextstep, 1519 people have accessed the IAG service and have been supported with a range of employment advice and guidance. This contract is secured until December 2010. It is anticipated that future funding of employability support will be directed through the DWP's new 'Work Programme'. The service is currently expressing interest in new sub-contracts due to commence in January 2011, detailed below.

**Commissioning opportunities under the DWP's Work Programme**

In May this year the Government set out a number of proposed contractual arrangements and measures designed to support people to find employment. Contracts will be awarded between £0.3-3 billion per year with average individual contract values estimated to be between £10-50 million. Expressions of interest have been invited to 'super prime contractors' who will then commission more locally. It is anticipated that the Work Programme contracts will be awarded in January 2011. Currently, potential prime contractors are inviting organisations to complete framework questionnaires and express their interest as potential sub contractors, with a requirement to demonstrate 'end-to-end' provision showing that they can deliver a full customer journey from initial engagement to sustainable employment. Working with its established 'Workroutes' partner network, the Neighbourhoods and Learning service is well placed to deliver all aspects of Work Programme activity using existing resources. The service is in the process of completing expressions of interest for a range of prime contractors and aligning its current offer more closely with the 'Get Britain Working' measures. In collaboration with Jobcentreplus and other 'Workroutes' colleagues, the service has set up local 'Work Clubs' in each of the five neighbourhood areas. Due to begin piloting week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> September, the clubs will provide informal, 'drop in' sessions for unemployed people to share their experiences and provide support to each other. The clubs will be supported by the neighbourhood teams and staff from Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) who will provide information on courses and support available for unemployed people.

**Skills Funding Agency (SFA, previously LSC) outputs to end August 2010**

The Neighbourhoods and Learning service's target of 3051 learners for August 2009 – July 2010 has been achieved. Of these, approximately a third of learners achieved a qualification. An advertised programme for the new academic year 10-11 has been produced and promoted, with course enrolments beginning from the end of August. The

programme represents a small part of the service's overall delivery but continues to be an effective mechanism to encourage citizens and learners into further learning and employment.

### **Community Safety**

We propose to refresh our approach to tackle domestic violence. A voluntary programme has begun with perpetrators of domestic violence to help them address their behaviour, and 7 offenders aged from 22 to 40+ are currently on the course. The voluntary scheme aims to help people who want to change their behaviour without requiring it to be a sentence of the court. Repeat offences of domestic violence have recently begun to fall, and a new multi-agency approach will be agreed shortly.

In the next few months we will conduct a Strategic Assessment of crime, disorder and drug and alcohol misuse across Blackburn with Darwen, will agree a new multi-agency approach to domestic violence issues, and will assess and respond to the forthcoming Spending Review to continue to tackle crime and disorder across the Borough.

### **Public Protection Service**

#### **Rogue Motor Trader**

Motor Trader Abid Hussain, who trades as AP Sports and Prestige Car Sales, from premises in Newton Street, Blackburn pleaded guilty to 7 counts of fraud and 2 counts of misleading practices in respect of sales of motor vehicles at Preston Crown Court in August. The six vehicles in question had "lost" over 300,000 miles from their odometers. A false service record and a forged MOT certificate were also used in the transactions.

The offences came to light following a lengthy investigation by trading standards officers. The defendant was sentenced in total to 4 months imprisonment (suspended for 12 months) 260 hours unpaid community service and £1200 costs.

Judge HHJ Lancaster described Hussain as a rogue trader, who was actively and dishonestly defrauding the public. The Judge found the defendant's three concerted efforts to sell the same car to three people, as an aggravating factor.

#### **Illicit Tobacco products**

Illicit tobacco products cost the taxpayer around £2.5 billion per year in lost revenue and it is believed 1 in 6 cigarettes consumed in this country are illicit. Illicit tobacco falls into one of three categories smuggled, bootlegged or counterfeit. Illicit tobacco discourages smokers from quitting due to the low price incentive and encourages them to smoke more. Illicit tobacco targets the young, vulnerable and those living in poor and disadvantaged communities. BwD Public Protection Service is committed to the "Tackling Illicit Tobacco for Better Health" programme which will reduce the supply and demand for illicit tobacco across the North of England. Our officers work with the HMRC Inland Detection Team, UK Border Agency and the Police to tackle the supply chain.

In July our officers seized 21Kg of tobacco and 26220 cigarettes. An additional 40kg of illicit shisha tobacco has also been confiscated.

#### **Underage Tobacco Sales**

The Public Protection Service continues to receive intelligence from the community regarding retail outlets which are believed to be selling cigarettes to children. As a result of this intelligence, and despite advice and guidance being given, 5 premises have been caught selling cigarettes to a 14 year old child. Two premises have received formal warnings and a further 3 are being reported for prosecution.