

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

COUNCILLOR JAN-VIRMANI

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
CHIEF OFFICER: SAYYED
OSMAN**

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CUSTOMER SERVICES

Customer services have been working closely with Resources on the Welfare Reform Act, Council Tax benefit replacement and localisation of the social fund. There is more detail on these areas under the Executive Member Resources report.

SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

INFORMATION JOB POINTS

The Neighbourhood Learning Centres in Darwen, Bank Top and Audley will be installing Information Job Points during April and May. The Job Points will enhance and complement the work already undertaken by the service's IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) Officers.

Key features of Job Points are:

- a stand alone touch screen kiosk which is linked directly to Jobcentreplus' job search facility
- each kiosk is post-coded to its specific location and therefore displays and gives access to local jobs
- the kiosk provides local labour market information and is updated daily

SHADSWORTH WITH WHITEBIRK BIG LOCAL

Community Business Partners have been running a series of events for stakeholders and residents in March aimed at shaping the roles and responsibilities of the Community Board. Following these events a Terms of Reference for Community Board members will be drafted and a process for recruitment of board members will be produced. Recruitment to the Board will start in April 2012.

COMMUNITY FIRST ('SUDELL ACTION')

Due to the high number of people out of work in Sudell, grant funding of £50,800 has been allocated to the Ward for small scale community grants. Ward Councillors and members of the Sudellside Community Association have formed a small group that will be responsible for delivering the grant scheme over the next four financial years. This group is called Sudell Action, and is supported by the area's Neighbourhood Manager and the CVS. The first grant meeting of Sudell Action takes place on 20 April. Applications for grants up to a maximum of £2,500 must come from groups or individuals that live in Sudell.

PUBLIC PROTECTION

FORTHCOMING CHANGES TO THE CONSUMER PROTECTION LANDSCAPE

The Government has been consulting on the way consumer protection strategy is handled within the UK.

The Government is proposing to divide the OFT's responsibilities up among existing consumer protection bodies; it is proposing to give responsibility for consumer protection enforcement to the trading standards profession, which has formed a national Trading Standards Policy Board in preparation; it is proposing to pass consumer research and advocacy to the Citizens Advice Bureaux; and it is proposing that the OFT should retain its responsibility for enforcing competition law.

An announcement is expected some time after April 2012. It is not anticipated that the changes will affect enforcement at a local level, but they are likely to affect the way funding for regional and national enforcement teams.

CHANGES TO TOBACCO DISPLAY LEGISLATION

The Public Protection Service is preparing for changes to tobacco display legislation which come into force in April 2012.

Large retailers (such as supermarkets) will no longer be permitted to display tobacco products to persons under 18 from 6 April 2012, meaning that tobacco products will have to be kept out of sight behind a closed door unless specifically asked for by a person who is over 18.

Similar provisions for other shops and licensed premises come into force in 2015.