

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING NEIGHBOURHOODS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

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PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
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NEIGHBOURHOODS

Ofsted inspection, October 2015 – Good judgement for Adult Learning Service

Following Ofsted inspection of the Adult Learning Service on 15th and 16th October 2015, inspectors judged the service to be good with effective safeguarding arrangements. This was the first short inspection carried out since the service was judged to be good in February 2010. The inspection focused on whether the service is sustaining its good quality provision, including whether safeguarding arrangements are effective. Inspectors also looked to highlight any significant changes (including improvements) in the quality of provision since the last inspection and to explore the extent to which the areas for development identified at the last inspection have been dealt with and strengths maintained. They followed 6 key lines of enquiry to arrive at their judgement including safeguarding arrangements, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, outcomes for learners, learner progression, whether provision is developed to meet local need and the effectiveness of quality improvement arrangements. The outcome of the short notice inspection resulted in Ofsted stating that 'This provider continues to be good...The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education and training in the service since the previous inspection.' A version of the full inspection report is due to be published imminently and available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

Troubled Family programme update

Progress towards achieving the target number of 348 by the end of March 2016 continues strongly. As at week ending 6th November 2015, there were 297 families attached to Phase 2 of the programme, with 90 cases closed. This programme continues to make a significant difference in engaging families with complex needs.

PUBLIC PROTECTION

Organised Crime Project

At the end of last year the Community Safety Team were successful (as the lead authority) in making a bid to the Transformation Challenge Award, securing just under £1 million for a project to tackle Organised Crime across East Lancashire, Preston and Blackpool. This was followed in March 2015 by confirmation of £900,000 in match funding agreed through the Police Innovation Fund.

The Project Team started work in August 2015 – and have since been working to implement the programme built around "The 4 P's" (that's Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare) mirroring the ambition of the national Serious and Organised Crime Strategy. The Team have developed a range of programmes aimed at;

- Preventing those at risk from becoming engaged in serious or organised criminal activity
- Protecting both offenders and victims who want to escape or being exploited by organised crime groups
- Pursuing organised crime groups by working together to enforce against and disrupt criminal activity
- Preparing communities to respond to organised criminality in their neighbourhoods

In Blackburn with Darwen people in need of additional support will be identified through the Transforming Lives pathway with directed support delivered by the local voluntary sector organisations (for both individuals and their families) with progress monitored against some

key areas of concern. This sits alongside an Enforcement Hub established for the East of the County, currently looking at its first test cases. The Enforcement Hub is made up of agencies and organisations who have the ability to enforce against and disrupt crime. They will share information, build intelligence and combine their resources to carry out targeted operations.

CUSTOMER SERVICES

Customer Services in the Town Hall

Plans are currently being considered for the relocation of the contact centre from the tower block to the old Town Hall. The move would co-locate both face to face and telephone based staff allowing for more flexibility in the use of resources and shared management. The move would clearly improve the efficiency of customer services and provide a sound basis for attaining the 2016/17 budget savings.

Contact Centre

The capacity of the contact centre telephony system will be increased over the next few months to allow additional departments to use the infrastructure and management information that is provided by the Netcall system.

Any department that uses the functionality contained in the Netcall system will be provided with extensive management information that allows analysis of the number and type of calls, answering times, and duration. The provision of this level of detail should allow for a fuller picture of customer contact and provide departments with invaluable information in the move to digital and self-service options.

Welfare Reform impact

The welfare changes announced by the Government will have a direct impact upon the administration of Housing Benefit and the Council Tax Support scheme. In addition to the increases in the Minimum Wage and introduction of the National Living Wage from April 2016, further adjustments to tax credits will be effective from the July renewal period. The increased number of amendments to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims will result in additional bills and letters being issued to customers. As a direct result of this, it is widely expected that the amount of customer contact will increase significantly for the period April 2016 to August 2016 compared to 2015 and increase the pressure on customer services.

Winter Resilience

Pressures on services increase as winter approaches and DASH (Decent And Safe Homes) is here to help residents by providing a wide range of effective and low cost winter warmth interventions. The handyman service can help to ensure that resident's homes are maintained, home safety advice and taking action around the home can help prevent a debilitating fall and energy advice and assistance with home insulation, boilers replacements and first time heating for qualifying residents. Additionally the hospital in-reach service is ensuring that vulnerable residents can be assisted as they leave the hospital. DASH works in conjunction with all the local agencies and third sector organisations to support residents over the winter period, for more information please contact DASH on 01254 588890.