

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PREVENTION

COUNCILLOR
ARSHID MAHMOOD

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR:
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DATE: January 2018

Community Safety

Crime And Anti-Social Behaviour Survey - Blackburn with Darwen Council as part of the Pennine Lancashire Community Safety Partnership is asking residents and local businesses to respond to their crime and anti-social behaviour survey. The results will help set the priorities. The link to the survey is here <https://www.snapsurveys.com/wh/s.asp?k=151275266058> with paper copies are available from the town hall and libraries in Blackburn and Darwen.

Older Driver Safety - Blackburn with Darwen Council are hosting an older driver road safety event on the 13th - 14th March of this year on behalf of Pennine Lancashire Road Safety Partnership. As part of their 'driving safer for longer' campaign the event will cover health, prescribed medication, public transport developments, car safety checks, and safer driving amongst their themes.

Housing

Extension Of Mandatory HMO Licensing Rules -The Department for Communities and Local Government have confirmed that during 2018 they are to extend mandatory HMO licensing to all HMO's occupied by 5 or more people living in two or more separate households. They also intend to clarify the minimum room size for rooms used for sleeping accommodation in HMO's.

This is likely to result in a significant increase in the number of licensed HMO's in the Borough.

Selective Licensing - The cost of a licence in the Darwen Selective Licensing Area will increase to the normal rate for all full applications received after 16th February 2018. This is due to the Early bird period having lapsed.

Homeless Reduction Act

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) received Royal Assent on 27 April 2017 and Government has formally announced that it is their intention to commence the Act in April 2018. The Act significantly reforms England's homelessness legislation, ensuring that more people get the help they need to prevent them from becoming homeless in the first place. It will provide more help to single homeless people, it extends the period of 'threatened

with homelessness' from 28 to 56 days giving local authorities a 56 day duty to prevent homelessness and a subsequent 56 day duty to relieve homelessness for all households, irrespective of any priority need or local connection.

The new Act is the most significant change in legislation governing homelessness since 1996 and it is the first time that homelessness prevention becomes a statutory duty. It will require a substantial change in the way that the Housing Needs and Homelessness services respond to requests for housing assistance and homeless applications and how they work with other services and partner agencies to do this. We could see an expected increase in 'footfall' of around 50%.

Neighbourhoods

Employability- A series of workshops are being delivered to prepare residents for Universal Credit. This is part of a wider drive across all our services to support people to understand the implications of Universal Credit and to minimise any negative impact. We are working closely with DWP to ensure the offer compliments the support they are providing. The council's Adult Learning Team have joined forces with Lancashire Adult Learning and Blackpool Adult Learning to ensure there is a consistent offer to DWP customers across the county. The work dovetails with our ESIF project, Strengthening Communities, Volunteering in Lancashire (SCVL). SCVL currently has 93 people signed up and receiving a range of support to move them closer to employment.

Talk English - The Talk English programme which was due to end in March 2017 received funding for a further year and has won a national award at the Festival of Learning Awards 2017. We deliver Talk English in BwD as part of a North West collaboration - follow this link to read all about it, see photos and a short video about the project.

<https://www.festivaloflearning.org.uk/award-winners/talk-english-project/>

Adult Learning Brochure - Our new Adult Learning brochure is now available at www.bwdlearning.org . The brochure can also be downloaded from our Facebook page. Brochures will be delivered to venues next week. If you require any copies please contact Gulnaz Usman –

gulnaz.usman@blackburn.gov.uk

Brian Mercer Trust Fund Pot – Your Call - Round two of the small grants fund was advertised just before Christmas with a closing date of 26th January 2018. Up to £500 per grant is available for BwD community groups to access. The criteria for successful applications includes the recruiting and supporting of volunteers. A further £10K of the fund is earmarked for equipment which groups may need to support their activity. Groups can apply for both pots of cash and the application form [is available for download here](#).

