



Report of:	To:	Date	Item No.
Cllr. Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder	Council	20 October 2011	9(e)

EXECUTIVE REPORT: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Neighbourhood Services Portfolio.

2. Current and Future Issues

- 2.1 Summary information is included in Appendix 1 on the following issues:

- Commercial Safety - Food Safety Enforcement
- Commercial Safety - Health & Safety Enforcement
- Environmental Protection
- Rossall Coastal Defence Scheme
- Pride in Poulton
- Police and Crime Commissioners
- High Sheriff of Lancashire's Young Citizen Award 2011
- Lancashire Sustainable Energy Study
- Reduction in Crime and Fear of Crime
- Wyre Targeted Outreach (Housing Support) Project
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Care and Repair (Wyre and Fylde)

3. In accordance with Procedure Rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with procedure Rule 11.5.

**ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO HOLDER
UPDATE OCTOBER 2011**

1. Commercial Safety - Food Safety Enforcement.

1.1 In September two Cockle Shellfish beds were opened off the Fylde coast. In the weeks leading up to the opening of these two beds there was widespread concern that an incident similar to the Morecambe Bay cockle disaster could occur. A Multi Agency Team including the Police, Local Authorities, the Gangmaster Licensing Team & the Sea Fisheries Commission, worked together to try and ensure that only licensed gatherers fished the two beds, by enforcing all relevant legislation. The Commercial Safety team were involved in this process because, initially, it was thought that the gatherers may have landed the shellfish at Fleetwood. Following notification from the Sea Fisheries Commission, a late night visit was undertaken at Fleetwood Docks to assess activity. Fortunately, from a resource point of view, the gatherers decided to make use of Preston Docks.

2. Commercial Safety – Health & Safety Enforcement

2.2 At present, the Health & Safety Executive are undertaking a consultation on whether cost recovery for Health & Safety enforcement is possible at a Local Authority level. A Lancashire wide Health & Safety enforcement group (HASOG) with representatives from all district councils is collecting the views of local authority enforcement officers.

2.3 The views of Wyre enforcement officers are outlined in paragraphs 2.4-2.9 below and, have been forwarded to HASOG, to be included in the Lancashire response.

2.4 *The principles of a level playing field for Health and Safety compliance between one business and another have been established in our inspection framework. Competitive cost advantage by non-compliance is indeed an unfair advantage. The current extended economic down turn is having a significant effect in all sectors and as it continues could further generate the need for businesses to operate with cost advantage.*

2.5 *Businesses are reducing staffing levels, training and supervision. This usually results in increased duties and responsibilities for the staff that remain.*

2.6 *Local Authority sectors differ from HSE sectors. LA Inspectors will come under additional judgemental pressure. As individual businesses fall into the group to pay recovery costs generated by our intervention, their ability to pay is unknown and may lead to significant administration time spent to recover unpaid invoices. Consideration should therefore be given to the hourly recovery costs, which would apply to Local Authorities, as generally turnover and profit margins are generally lower in the small medium enterprise sector. Costings should perhaps be designated as a “ set fee” to avoid growth in time recording depth but maintaining openness and transparency.*

- 2.7** *Local Authority cost recovery for letter generation and formal notices over the period of non-compliance would indeed be a shock to many small to medium sized enterprises. Inspectors would have to manage their approach as 99% of A and B1 inspections generate a letter or email response.*
- 2.8** *The income generated by cost recovery would go to whom? Clarity is required. If all recovered funds go to Government this could be viewed as a back door tax on business and remain an actual cost to Local Authorities when formal action is taken.*
- 2.9** *In conclusion, Wyre Council are generally in favour of the principal of cost recovery if the funds recovered remain with the Local Authority and are set at an appropriate level for our business sectors.*

3. Environmental Protection

- 3.1** In June 2011 the Council received a complaint regarding the excessively loud playing of music by a neighbour. The Complainant was provided with the Council's noise pack and was requested to complete a diary. The completed diary was subsequently assessed and it was agreed that the activity recorded could represent a noise nuisance. The environmental protection team undertook a number of visits to the establishment in order to corroborate this evidence, finally witnessing the noise in August. As a result, the officer was able to serve an abatement notice. Unfortunately, the person responsible ignored the Notice and, following further evidence gathering, the officer successfully applied to the Magistrates Court for a warrant to seize noise-making equipment from the person responsible home. Noise is an extremely difficult statutory nuisance to investigate because people have different views as to what level of noise constitutes a nuisance. However where this Authority finds evidence of noise nuisance occurring and a lack of cooperation from the person responsible, the Council will take action.

4. Rossall Coastal Defence Scheme

- 4.1** Officers are continuing to develop the business case for the Rossall Coastal Defence Scheme, which is due to be presented to the Environment Agency Large Project Review Group in March 2012.
- 4.2** Works to progress the scheme are ongoing, with hydraulic modelling being undertaken at HR Wallingford in Oxfordshire. Tests to establish overtopping rates of the existing structures are complete and, models of the proposed design options are now being constructed in the test flume, ready for further assessment.
- 4.3** Landscape design works are also progressing well. The grassed area behind the seawall is designated a Local Biological Heritage Site (BHS). Officers have been working closely with representatives from Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Lancashire County Council Ecology team to ensure that the proposed designs and consequential management operations enhance the area whilst maintaining the BHS status.

5. Pride in Poulton

5.1 Taking Pride in Poulton will commence on the 17th October 2011. It is a week-long multi agency programme of tackling community issues - such as illegal fly-tipping, graffiti, litter, vandalism, car crime and anti social behaviour. 'Taking Pride' is supported by the Wyre Community Safety Partnership, which aims to reduce crime and fear of crime across the borough. Visual audits are carried out with the help of the community to identify street level problems and these are resolved by the agency responsible. Agencies across Wyre are all striving to tackle the issues that are important to residents - such as street cleanliness and environmental crime. The project tackles identified hotspot areas and the aim is to develop longer-term, sustainable measures to prevent future environmental crime by targeting offenders and providing additional community reassurance. On-street perception surveys will be done during a community reassurance event, to assess how people perceive the neighbourhood they live. This assists service providers to target the issues that communities see as their priorities in future service delivery plans, bringing stakeholders and service providers together working to help improve the quality of services delivered in Poulton and to reduce incidents of crime and environmental crime.

6. Police and Crime Commissioners

6.1 The government is replacing Police Authorities with directly elected Police & Crime Commissioners (PCCs). These elections are due to take place in November 2012.

6.2 The introduction of PCCs will have a considerable impact on local authorities. There will be a mutual duty on PCCs and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to co-operate. Both will also have to have regard to each other's priorities when drawing up the police and crime plan (in the case of the Commissioner) and their strategic assessments (in the case of CSPs). More fundamentally perhaps funding (which has until now been given to CSPs by the Home Office) will, at the start of April 2013, be in the hands of PCCs.

6.3 Councillors will also play a vital role in holding PCCs to account. All Councils in a force area will have to appoint a Member to serve on the Police & Crime Panel for the area. The Panel's role will be to scrutinise PCC's decisions and actions and also assist them in carrying out their functions. Panels will have the power to veto PCC's precepts and nominees for Chief Constable and also, to summon the PCC to answer questions and to review the Commissioners police and crime plans.

7. The High Sheriff of Lancashire's Young Citizens Award 2011

7.1 This award takes place every year and involves the current High Sheriff inviting applications to a competition to find a young person, ideally aged 21 or under, who has helped either the local neighbourhood, an individual, family member or local organisation.

- 7.2** The High Sheriff, Peter Mileham, wants to hear about all kinds of initiatives. Projects that help make local communities safer and better places to live, those which help to regenerate deprived areas or those which help people to build confidence and unlock their true potential are especially welcomed.
- 7.3** The award scheme is run by the Lancashire Partnership Against Crime Ltd and sponsored by BAE Systems. Nominations can be completed online via the LANPAC website – www.lanpac.co.uk or I can supply a nomination form.
- 7.4** The first prize is £250 plus a specially commissioned Young Citizen trophy and certificate signed by the High Sheriff and the Chief Constable. As an added benefit to the local community, £250 will also be awarded to the project or charity of the winner's choice.

8. Lancashire Sustainable Energy Study

- 8.1** A recent study (the Lancashire Sustainable Energy Study) assessing the potential for the deployment of renewable energy in Lancashire is expected to be presented to Cabinet on 26 October 2011.
- 8.2** The study identifies the potential amount of onshore renewable energy (from wind, biomass, hydropower and micro generation) that could be deployed within each local authority area in Lancashire. The study was undertaken for Lancashire County Council with funding from the Climate Change Fund.
- 8.3** Of particular note is that the study has identified a potential deployment capability of 91Mega Watts (MW) in Wyre by 2020. This is 12% of Lancashire's capacity and the second highest District deployment potential (after West Lancashire).
- 8.4** Commercial scale wind (i.e. installations over 100kilo Watts (kW)), energy from waste and micro generation have been proposed as having the greatest potential for deployment.
- 8.5** The study will be considered as part of the evidence base for the development of the Council's Core Strategy. A presentation, by the Authors of the report, will be made to Members on the results and implications of the study at 6.30pm on 19 October 2011 in the Council Chamber.

9. Reduction in Crime and the Fear of Crime

- 9.1** Between April and August, 2011 there were 763 incidents of Domestic Abuse, an 11% reduction with 94 less incidents. There were 54 repeat victims.
- 9.2** In the same period there were 213 domestic related crimes, a reduction of 17%, with 43 less crimes.
- 9.3** There were 466 offences of violent crime, a 17% reduction, with 48 less crimes. Of these offences, 41% (191) involved alcohol.

- 9.4 There were 260 crimes relating to burglary of a dwelling or vehicle crime, a 19% reduction, with 62 less crimes.

10. Wyre Targeted Outreach (Housing Support) Project

- 10.1 A new Targeted Outreach (Housing Support) Project, funded by Supporting People, has been established to provide a housing support service to single adults and families with complex needs in Fleetwood.
- 10.2 The new service, operational from 3 October 2011, has been established following a successful bid for funding from Wyre Council to Supporting People and will be delivered by Fylde Coast YMCA. The project will help prevent homelessness. People often lose their tenancies for a number of reasons including; rent arrears, illegal eviction, a lack of independent living skills or anti social behaviour and intensive targeted outreach support can help ensure that people can avoid eviction and remain in their homes.
- 10.3 Following a referral from the Councils Housing Options Team the YMCA will work with clients on an individual support plan, coordinating the support of other specialist agencies as necessary, ensuring that clients develop the skills necessary to avoid further crisis situations. The project supports the Councils homelessness prevention agenda and will deliver against wider North Fleetwood Neighbourhood Management objectives.

11. Disabled Facilities Grants

- 11.1 70 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) have now been completed to a value of £467,000 - our DFG programme is ahead of schedule.

12. Care and Repair (Wyre and Fylde)

- 12.1 On 10 November 2011, from 1 to 4pm in the Members Lounge, our Care and Repair service will be holding a drop in session for Members and staff to come and find out about the many services the agency offers to older or disabled residents. Members and staff are very welcome to drop in and find out about the many ways the service helps to support independence and wellbeing at home.