

Public Protection Service

Our Plans For 2012/13



Promoting a healthier, fairer and safer environment.
Supporting and promoting a thriving economy

Introduction



Cllr David Dixon

Cabinet Member for
Neighbourhoods

My role as Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods includes the responsibility for the Council's Public Protection Service and I know that everyone within this important Service provides a real and practical contribution to ensuring a safe and healthy environment for residents, visitors and businesses across the Bath and North East Somerset area.

Although its activities are largely unseen, the impact of the Public Protection Service is wide and I know their work is valued by local communities and businesses.

Here, as in the rest of the UK, we are wrestling with tough financial times which impacts on local government services

such as Public Protection, and on the communities and businesses and individuals we serve. I am reassured, however, by the increasingly targeted approach employed by the Service and the manner in which it strives to direct resources towards problem businesses, high risk industry sectors and upon protecting the most vulnerable. I am pleased to see the teams working together to identify and prioritise this work

All of the activities detailed in this plan help ensure that we deliver our new local vision and objectives through effective and efficient services for the benefit of our local communities.



Sue Green

Public Protection
Service Manager

Welcome to our new 2012/13 Service Plan for the Public Protection Service. With the help of a group of colleagues from across the Service we have again updated and improved the layout and contents. The plan gives a background to this diverse service, describes what we do and explains our key areas of work for the coming year. We aim to make a difference to people's lives by promoting a healthier, fairer and safer environment in their homes, their communities and their workplaces and to support and promote a thriving economy.

Informed by the Council's new vision and objectives our ambition is to reduce risks to the public through targeting our resources to deliver high quality, value for money services. This plan details how our committed staff will deliver services across Bath and North East Somerset in the coming year, focusing particularly on the vulnerable. I hope you find it interesting and informative.



The Public Protection Service comprises a number of teams who work to improve the safety and health of the residents, visitors and workers in Bath and North East Somerset. The service is one of six that together form Environmental Services within Bath & North East Somerset Council.

There are 45 staff within the Public Protection Service and between them they are responsible for education, prevention, enforcement, licensing and investigation across a range of public and environmental protection controls, which include:-

- Licencing - licencing and enforcement of alcohol sales, taxis, street trading, gambling establishments, skin piercing and tattoo studios, fireworks, etc issuing more than 3400 licences every year
- Animal Health & Welfare – policing farm livestock welfare and disease
- Environmental Monitoring – testing and monitoring of air quality, privet and public water supplies, investigation of pollution incidents.
- Public Safety – inspection and licencing of sports grounds and major events and the encouragement of safe night-time city centre
- Food Safety - inspect more than 600 restaurants, shops and other food businesses to ensure safe standards of hygiene are maintained, advice to children and young people and the general public to encourage healthy eating and home hygiene.
- Infectious disease- investigation of the source of food poisoning cases and outbreaks. Each year we receive more than 330 infectious disease notifications.
- Health improvement – advice, training and support to help reduce injuries in the home and garden, to reduce the harm caused by alcohol misuse, to highlight safety in food preparation and healthy eating.
- Health & Safety-inspection of shops, factories and other workplaces to ensure safe and healthy operating practices
- Trading standards-inspection and testing for fair trading, product safety, weights and measures, consumer credit, age restriction sales, counterfeit goods, and prevention/investigation of consumer fraud. In 2011/2012, trading standards dealt with over 800 customer complaints and queries.

“Throughout 2011/12 Environmental Health Officers conducted gas safety checks on restaurants, pubs, hotels and other businesses with commercial kitchens. Combined with Food Safety inspections these checks prevented around 100 repeat inspections to food businesses and improved the level of gas safety. A number of prohibition and improvement notices were served to ensure that safety problems were rectified.”

Promoting Independence and Positive Lives for Everyone

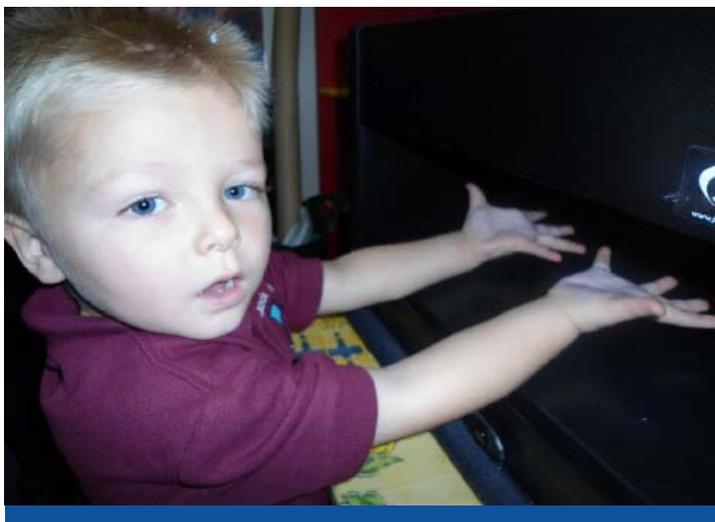
Bath and North East Somerset Council has committed to ensure that the people most in need are supported to live full and active lives, that our older residents are supported to live independently, that children and young people enjoy their childhood and are prepared for adult life and that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

During 2012/13 the Public Protection Service will contribute to these commitments through a number of specific programmes;

- We will publish a register of over 100 “Trading Standards Approved” businesses to enable our vulnerable residents to avoid rogue traders and dodgy tradesmen.
- We will provide information and advice on home safety to our older residents through accompanied visits to the Bristol Lifeskills Safety Education Centre.
- We will provide free electric blanket safety testing days.
- We will ensure that essential child home safety equipment is supplied and fitted for those families most in need.
- We will provide “Secret Agent” testing and information packs to primary school children under the “Mission:Possible” scheme to teach and encourage basic food hygiene in the home.
- We will undertake a programme of “test purchase” operations to ensure that children and young people are protected from age-restricted products and activities.



“The 2011 Food Safety week saw Year Five pupils from Westfield Primary School taking on the role of secret agents on a mission to track down food bugs and stamp them out, whilst 40 children at Radstock Nursery, aged two to five, took part in a hand washing exercise using an ultraviolet light box to make sure they had properly washed off any traces of harmful bacteria.”



Creating Neighbourhoods Where People are Proud to Live

Crime in Bath and North East Somerset is low in comparison to many other areas, however, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime continues to have a significant impact on our communities and individuals. In response, the Council has committed to deliver communities where people feel safe, with clean streets and open spaces and with a reduced inequality between communities across Bath and North East Somerset.

During 2012/13 the Public Protection Service will contribute to these efforts through a range of programmes and activities;

- We will work with community groups to create further “No Cold Calling Zones” to protect residents from unwanted and unsafe doorstep salesmen, rogue traders and other doorstep criminals and we will respond to and investigate all reports of rogue trader incidents.
- We will support the Bath Night Watch scheme and will introduce “Best Bar None” accreditation to encourage model standards of management for pubs and clubs.
- We will provide and enforce an effective licensing system for pubs, clubs and other night-time businesses.
- We will test the willingness of pubs, off-licenses and other retailers to sell alcohol to under 18s.
- We will investigate any reports of smoke nuisance associated with industrial or domestic premises.
- We will provide advice and support to all local communities looking to run street parties and other community-based celebrations.



“Whilst out on a routine patrol last July, Bath and North East Somerset Trading Standards spoke to a 70 year old home owner, who had fallen victim to a frequent cold caller. The 70 year old home owner told us that the trader came round regularly to carry out work on the garden and the previous January the trader had tried to charge the home owner £14,000 for some work on the roof. Luckily the home owner managed to stop the cheque on the work being carried out, but still was cold called every few weeks for gardening jobs. The police and trading standards were able to serve a harassment order on the trader to prevent him being able to come back to this house and carry out work in the future.”



Building a Stronger Economy



“In early 2012 Bath and North East Somerset Council’s “Buy with Confidence” scheme celebrated the successful accreditation of more than 100 local businesses since the scheme started. This rare Trading Standards approval for businesses such as plumbers, builders and car repairers helps to prevent consumer disputes and helps consumers choose a business they can trust.”

Bath and North East Somerset Council has committed to making a positive difference to local communities by encouraging a broad range of job and employment opportunities and by encouraging and supporting a strong local business sector including tourism and new local enterprise. The Council is also committed to maintaining or enhancing the quality of the local environment and encouraging a diverse, low carbon economy with growth in the knowledge creative, sustainable energy and ICT industries.

The Public Protection Service plays a key role in supporting new and existing local businesses and in protecting the environment. During 2012/13 the Service will provide a range of advice, assistance and protection;

- We will provide accreditation and approval schemes (such as “Buy with Confidence”, “Food Hygiene Rating Scheme” and “Best Bar None”) to help improve the appeal of local businesses and to provide greater protection for consumers.
- We will undertake a programme of risk-based inspections and interactions with local businesses to help them comply with Public Protection legislation.
- We will take firm action against illegal businesses and those selling counterfeits and other illegal products.
- We will inspect restaurants and other food businesses and help them to achieve high standards of food hygiene.
- We will conduct targeted inspections of workplaces to safeguard the protection of employees and visitors.



Achievements from 2011/12:

“During September and October 2011 the Public Protection Service conducted more than 272 electric blanket safety checks. More than a third were found to be unsafe and were removed from use or replaced”

“February 2012 saw the successful adoption of the newly created national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). Bath and North East Somerset has more than 1900 food businesses and the new scheme will now enable customers to readily choose where they can safely eat out and shop for food”

“In 2011 a harmless looking step in a local shop - newly created to assist less mobile customers, became a tripping hazard resulting in 4 elderly people being taken to hospital.

However after discussions with Bath and North East Somerset Council health and safety team a solution was found that made for easier access to the shop and the step was replaced with a gentle slope which also allows for disabled access. No further accidents have occurred since the slope was introduced.”

“In 2011 a local taxi driver had his licence revoked by the licensing committee as a result of a number of complaints made by members of the public”

“In March 2012 Bath and North East Somerset Council’s Public Protection Service obtained its first ever Prohibition Order against a food business that had repeatedly failed to follow advise and improve its standards of hygiene. The conditions found in the kitchen and behind the bar at the Packhorse Inn were described as ‘some of the worst I have ever seen’ by the investigating officer”

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Carol
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PROTECTION

Sue Green

SERVICE
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NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES

John Crowther

Contact Us:

A wide range of advice, information and self-help is available at www.bathnes.gov.uk

For Consumer advice telephone: 08454 040506

For confidential help and support with loan sharks and illegal money lenders telephone: 0300 555 2222

To report concerns or an incident about a rogue trader (doorstep fraudster), workplace/public safety, food hygiene/food poisoning, sales of counterfeit products or illegal sales of alcohol/tobacco to children, or to report any other consumer frauds telephone: 01225 396759

For business advice about food hygiene, health & safety at work, trading standards or animal health & welfare telephone: 01225 396759

For all enquiries concerning taxis and premises licensing telephone: 01225 477531

Email us at: public_protection@bathnes.gov.uk

Please visit us at: Bath & North East Somerset Council, Lewis House, Manvers Street, Bath

Look for our seal of approval



Trading Standards checked and approved businesses and tradespeople



Environmental Health assessment and rating of restaurants, take-aways and other food businesses



Only use a taxi or private hire vehicles displaying the proper authorisation



The mark of high standards of pub safety management