

Executive Annual Report 2015/16

Councillor Karen Leytham

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder with responsibility for
Housing and Environmental Health**

Executive Membership

- **Cabinet**
- **Canal Corridor Cabinet Liaison Group**
- **Council**
- **District Wide Tenants Cabinet Liaison Group**
- **Housing Regeneration Cabinet Liaison Group** (Chairman)

Executive Appointments to Outside Bodies etc

Health and Wellbeing Partnership

Overview of Portfolio Responsibilities

Housing
Environmental Health

Corporate Plan Key Outcomes/Success Measures

Enhanced quality of life of local residents through access to affordable, decent housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Increased number of improved homes <input type="checkbox"/> Improve access to housing <input type="checkbox"/> Increase number of affordable homes
Health and wellbeing of our citizens is improved	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining adequate supply to reduce demand led unsustainable price rises in the housing market

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ New build council social housing is energy efficient □ Improve the wellbeing of our residents through collaborative, preventative and reactive measures □ Increased number of people participating in sports and leisure activities □ Maximise opportunities for access to innovative leisure activities by working collaboratively with public and private sector partners □ Increased number of vulnerable households benefiting from Warm Homes Initiative □ Facilitate long term improvements in transportation to improve local air quality □ Maintain percentage of "broadly" compliant food businesses (category 3-5) □ Work in partnership to optimise access to welfare benefits and related support
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Progress made during 2015/16

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Public Health

Pest control

No-one wants to suffer a pest infestation and the health or property damage it can cause. The council's very popular Pest Control team continues to meet high levels of demand, servicing over 2,500 requests a year from the public to deal with a variety of pests. The team also continues to increase income through commercial (142 contracts are now in place) and undertaking new areas of work, for example bird proofing, generating almost £60K from such contract work in the past year. In March 2016 the team has delivered well-received best practice advice to other Lancashire councils' pest control officers and promoted our commercially focussed activities.. In line with new international

requirements, our pest control officers have completed accreditation to ensure that the council complies with the new Pest Control Stewardship Scheme which comes into force in 2016.

Dog wardens

The Dog Warden team have also been very busy throughout the previous 12 months.

Recognising public concern about dog fouling, we have piloted a part-time post of Dog Fouling Enforcement Officer. This highly flexible post worked non-standard hours and being free from operational distractions facing our regular dog wardens, was able to spend a lot more focussed time visiting open spaces and locations of reported concern, talking to residents and dog owners, identifying dog fouling hot spots, and targeting enforcement. This received a very positive reception and saw a real increase in public awareness about the council's enforcement activity. Some dog walkers undoubtedly changed their behaviour, perhaps paying closer attention to carrying poo bags or using them more consistently. However there remains a small percentage of brazen offenders who seem determined not to pick up after their dogs. During a survey period to July 2015 and based on 265 observations made by council enforcement officers we noted that 98.1% of the time dog fouling was cleared up. In every case where dog fouling offending is witnessed we pursue enforcement action. Typically we will issue a fixed penalty notice however we may prosecute instead if warranted by individual circumstances.

A Dog Warden Apprentice was appointed in September in conjunction with Runshaw College and the council's Modern Apprenticeship programme. Her training is now almost complete and she will assist in meeting the council's obligations around dog control. She will also be involved in the educational element in this area of work as well as dealing with noise nuisance from barking dogs. In 2015/16 the team worked with the Dogs Trust to microchip over 200 dogs in the borough. The team have also set up a Facebook page which is proving to be particularly useful in tracing the owners of stray dogs picked up by the team.

Public health

In November a new Public Health & Protection Manager was appointed. The former Public Health and Environmental Protection Teams have been brought together and in addition to overseeing their work the role will involve looking at ways the council can improve public health generally and reduce health inequalities. This will involve making a baseline assessment of public health in the Lancaster district, highlighting ward-level variations from expected averages and any specific areas of health inequality, and identifying what can be done to improve public health.

Poor public health places huge impacts and costs on families, employers and the NHS. Looking to the future, the nation's health is predicted to get even worse as a result of diet and lifestyle choices including low levels of exercise and recreation. Often there are common causes and solutions to a range of public health problems, whether diet / substance/ exercise-related or mental health-related. Officers will be working closely with our public health partners to tackle local health priorities, including supporting communities to help themselves.

Environmental Protection

Nuisance and anti-social behaviour

The Environmental Health service responds to over 1,000 requests a year for assistance with problems of neighbour noise / nuisance or anti-social behaviour. Ultimately we pursue regulatory powers to intervene formally and take legal action where necessary to stop serious problems, however this can take time. The team is currently trialling a much quicker alternative intervention (which we call 'door-stepping') in suitable cases. This involves visiting the people accused of causing the problem and having a no-blame, grown-up conversation to find out if the hassles of longer-running formal investigation can be avoided. This is an innovative re-think of service delivery and the early indications are positive.

Air quality

Work on improving air quality continues to gather pace. We have been leading on an area of work in partnership with public health staff at County and planning colleagues to produce air quality planning guidance as well as making a significant contribution to the transport master plan for Lancaster with the aim of improving air quality across the borough. We have also been successful in securing a grant of almost £300K to fit clean emissions technology to 17 buses which travel through the Air Quality Management Area in central Lancaster.

The council continues to invest significant effort in addressing its responsibilities. Air pollution monitoring within the three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) shows little improvement and continued exceedance of air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide. Whilst a national assessment undertaken however indicates that compliance with air quality standards is anticipated within the Lancashire area by 2020, our current local air quality monitoring results suggests that is very unlikely to happen. Local action to address air quality based health impacts is essential. During the past year there has been substantial media coverage about revised estimates of how poor air will impact on people's health. New national research into the impact specifically of the pollutant nitrogen dioxide (the pollutant of issue in Lancaster) means that these estimates are likely to worsen significantly. After smoking, poor air quality is probably the most significant impactor on health in the UK.

Following the council's adoption of the Air Quality Strategy in 2013, we have been pursuing its implementation particularly through working with the County Council. The most important element of this is consultation on the Transport Master Plan for Lancaster, due for adoption in May 2016. Work on the detailed content of the plan will take place over the following years and air quality improvement will be a key consideration. As our outdoor air quality issues in Lancaster are all traffic related, the Transport Master Plan is the main air quality action delivery plan to address air quality issues in central Lancaster.

Three key actions in 2015/16 are worthy of specific note:

- The M6/Heysham link road under construction and due to open in 2016. Whilst public opinion on the road's transportation benefits may be divided, traffic alleviation once the new road opens together with associated planning

commitments may be sufficient to adequately overcome air quality concerns underpinning Carnforth's formal air quality management area. Also to reduce traffic impacts and resulting air pollution concentrations in both the Lancaster and Galgate air quality management areas.

- The council, with the support of other Lancashire authorities, is in the final stages of drafting new air quality planning guidance for Lancaster. The guidance presents standard requirements for new development, particularly the provision of charging infrastructure to support the use of electric vehicles. It also directs a better assessment methodology that allows better consideration of the impact of mitigating measures and residual impacts. This guidance is being produced in a template format suitable for ready adoption by other councils in Lancashire. A Lancashire launch event, working with the county council's Public Health service is planned for Spring/Summer 2016.
- The county council with the support of Lancaster City Council Environmental Health and Stagecoach buses applied for a grant to reduce emissions from the most frequent bus services passing through the Lancaster air quality management area. The grant bid was successful and a full grant award of £288,150 was awarded in January 2016 to retrofit 17 buses (the number 2,2A 2X and 3 bus services) to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions from these buses by over 90%. This is great news for people's health protection in central Lancaster and the project is due to be delivered in 2016/17.

Major projects

The Environmental Protection team has been busy assessing and dealing with the potential implications of new planning proposals including a number of high-profile projects. Much of this work takes place quietly and unseen at the planning stage, even before construction work commences, to prevent or minimise impacts on local communities, although the team will also monitor ongoing work to ensure any agreed controls and conditions are being complied with.

Food Safety

The council has entered into three new formal Primary Authority Partnerships with local multi-site businesses. This will offer effective regulation across all the premises in a multi-site business even if they are in another council's area, providing for regulatory consistency and closer regulatory working with and understanding the needs of businesses. Under the scope of each agreement our partnering business pays for the council's officer time carrying out agreed partnership activity. As a result these businesses and their customers can become more assured than ever that risks are well managed. Building on the three partnerships, we have provided additional food hygiene training for employees and plan to introduce pre-inspection audits at the requests of our partners. These additional services are all chargeable and help support the strategy of increasing service sustainability through income generation.

The success of the Primary Authority Partnerships helps to support local business growth and the Council is now exploring additional strategic partnerships with local businesses to expand the Primary Authority portfolio.

Officers have investigated 316 cases of infectious diseases, to help determine the source of the infections and to help reduce the risk of further spread. Particular focus is directed at identifying outbreaks associated with food premises and to help ensure that those affected are not working with high risk individuals or within a food business. The Council completed its support to Public Health England with the investigation into the spread of an infectious disease known as Giardia. There have been numerous notified cases of this infection locally and the study will help to grow understanding and control of this debilitating infective agent.

We have responded to 386 service requests in 2015/16 relating to food standards, safety and quality. Appropriate investigation and improvement/enforcement action has been taken in every case and 2 food businesses have been prosecuted in 2015/16 for food hygiene offences and a third business has been issued a formal caution as an alternative to prosecution.

The Food and Safety manager took a regional lead role in preparations for Environmental Health participation in the International food fraud investigation "OPSON" co-ordinated by the Food Standards Agency and Intellectual Property Office. The Council's Food Safety team undertook a number of inspections during November to support OPSON, focussing on Traceability and over two days, working with the Police, carried out road side stops of over 200 commercial vehicles to check food transportation.

The Council has conducted a number of food seizures due to lack of traceability paperwork to provide sufficient evidence of the source of the products. This includes the seizure and destruction of a large quantity of frozen game with a wholesale value of over £40,000. In addition to the value of the game, the company concerned also had to pay the Council's legal costs, storage and disposal costs which increased the total loss to the business to around £60,000.

We have developed a new approach to tackling poor standards in our non-compliant food businesses by offering business coaching to the food business operator. This program of coaching uses a combination of behavioural change techniques and carefully crafted language to support long term change and improved standards of compliance. Although the project is new, we have had some very promising responses from the participants and is championed as national good practice.

The food team is actively exploring opportunities for generating income to help achieve a sustainable, fit for purpose food safety service. Potential income generation includes charging for specialist advice services for existing and new food businesses, expanding the training courses available, production of a food safety management pack for sale to new & existing businesses and the introduction of pre-inspection food safety audits.

514 food businesses have been inspected, unannounced, to check hygiene and food safety standards are being maintained. Consumers will now be familiar with the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme stickers displayed by many businesses rating the business from 0 (Urgent Improvement required) to 5 (Very Good). 96% of our food businesses were assessed as "broadly compliant" with food safety law at the time of unannounced inspection, receiving a rating of at least 3, which is slightly higher than the previous year. We now have 91% of businesses with a rating of 4 or 5, and 80% with the top rating of 5.

Food Hygiene training is now available direct from the Food Safety team, translating what our inspectors see every day into high quality learning for food business employees.

Health and safety at work (and for customers)

Whilst recent Government policy has reduced the number of workplaces inspected by Environmental Health Officers, we carry out alternative intervention projects in response to identified concerns, assessing compliance with reasonable safety standards and acting on the findings.

There is still a legal duty to report workplace accidents and the council appears to be receiving an increased number of serious workplace accidents for investigation, these have included hospitalisation and fatal accidents in care homes. A number of serious / fatal accident investigations have been carried out during the year and prosecutions taken.

The courts have taken health & safety at work offending seriously, as demonstrated in fines and prosecution costs being awarded. For example a Lancaster bar that served a cocktail containing Liquid Nitrogen to an 18 year old causing serious, life changing injuries, was fined £100,000 and £40,000 costs. The case sends important messages to duty-holders in the Lancaster district, and we will continue working to promote the benefits of positive compliance for protecting workers, businesses, and the people they come into contact with.

Emergency Planning and Response

The council's volunteer Duty Emergency Incident Officers and Senior Emergency Officers have continued to deal with a variety of emergency incidents throughout the year. A burglary causing internal damage at Morecambe Town Hall necessitated the Business Continuity plans being implemented so that essential functions could continue despite access to various offices being lost for several days.

Contingency plans have been updated during the year and the Emergency officers also participated in various emergency exercises and training events. This preparation was invaluable when Storm Desmond caused severe flooding, bridge closures and a power blackout in Lancaster in December. Business continuity arrangements enabled the Emergency Control Centre in the Town Hall to continue to have power and lighting and also the Emergency Rest Centre at Salt Ayre. Council employees voluntarily turned out to staff the room so that the Council could respond to the emergency. The debrief process will identify any areas where planning can be further improved but the workforce responded magnificently to an unprecedented emergency situation.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING AND CEMETERIES

Housing Standards

- The private rented sector continues to grow and play an important role within the housing sector, reflected by a number of new initiatives and regulations published

this year by Central Government directed at improving the quality of rental accommodation, and in particular dealing with so-called rogue landlords.

- The Housing Standards Team continues to work across the district to improve standards of accommodation and management by reducing the worst hazards, tackling fuel poverty and improving fire safety. Over the past year the team has worked closely with Lancaster University to set up their approved property scheme, encouraging good student properties and landlords to self-regulate. This will allow resources to be concentrated on enforcement of the problematic landlords.
- Other partners the team works with include Environmental Health, Licensing, The Fire Service, and increasingly Health and Social care. Work on developing the private rented sector to help in the prevention of homelessness is ongoing. A new initiative this year has been work with Serco, who act on behalf of The Home Office, to provide Asylum Seekers with good quality accommodation.
- A successful bid for funding in 2014 is allowing the team to focus on addressing poor quality housing in parts of Morecambe and tackle the underlying social and health needs of residents.
- The Housing Standards Team were amongst the first to respond to residents' needs during the recent flooding, and that work will continue over the coming year with the administration of Flood Resilience Grants.

Home Improvement Agency

- The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) has continued to enable vulnerable residents to remain independent, safe, secure and warm in their homes. The HIA's aim is to provide a quality service, offering vulnerable residents independent advice and assistance to find solutions to their housing-related needs. The work of the HIA has a positive impact on mental health, quality of life, fear of accidents, fear of crime, prevention of hospital admissions and early admission to residential care. The HIA provides care and repair type services which includes advice and assistance to undertake repairs/maintenance as well as assistance in considering their housing options and ways to raise finance to undertake works. Handyperson services are also available to carry out minor works. The HIA is also responsible for delivering the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant programme.
- In 2015/16 the HIA successfully secured external funding under a new three year collaboration agreement with Lancashire County Council. This funding enabled the HIA service to continue to meet the needs of vulnerable residents. The new agreement provides funding to deliver core home improvement services including housing advice, support and handyperson services. Under the new agreement the HIA are also responsible for the delivery of minor disabled adaptations for residents throughout the district.
- In addition the HIA continues to provide a number of bolt on services for vulnerable residents including:

The delivery of the 'Sanctuary' and 'Haven' service, completing security works to the homes of 'at risk' clients suffering Anti-Social Behaviour and Domestic Violence in partnership with the Homeless team.

The Warm Homes Service has continued throughout the 2015/16 winter months. This service is delivered by Lancaster City Council with funding from Lancashire County Council's Public Health and the CCG. The aim of the service is to help vulnerable residents stay warm over the winter. The HIA provides practical solutions to help vulnerable residents keep their homes warm at an affordable level over the winter period. The HIA has also been actively involved in assisting vulnerable residents affected by the recent flooding caused by storms Desmond and Eva.

- Throughout 2015/16 the HIA has continued to promote the service extensively to residents in the district and maintain the close working relationships with key partners which have been developed to enable vulnerable clients to be referred to the agency. The agency continues to deliver essential outcomes for vulnerable residents, demonstrating excellent value for money with high levels of customer satisfaction.

Housing Options (Homelessness)

- Homeless acceptances have reduced to the lowest figure since the P1E data collection began. With the introduction of five new Homeless Prevention Officers (HPOs) the team are now working at an even earlier stage and this has resulted in an increase in the numbers of successful homeless prevention cases. This being said the service is still facing challenges with the welfare reforms, with the impacts of reductions in housing benefits for the under 35's, benefit cap remains one of the biggest challenges for assisting homeless under 35's. We are also still unsure of the impacts of the roll out of the new Universal Credit. The new proposals set out by Government to align Local Housing Allowance Rents in social housing and the possible impacts to temporary accommodation is also a real concern in terms of its potential impact on homelessness. We continue to manage the increase in presentations following the implementation of the single room rent rate for the under 35's with the assistance of the HPOs. The funding from the DCLG for single homeless provides pre-tenancy training, shared housing and a new accommodation finding service. The HPOs also support people to maintain their existing accommodation. The homeless prevention work continues to be delivered 'in house' with a substantial saving and an increased number of positive outcomes for single non priority need homeless and rough sleepers by offering outreach support through agency drop-ins such as probation, outreach support to rough sleepers and accommodation finding advice.
- The Refuge has been operational since April 2013. It provides 7 units for families fleeing domestic violence. The funding for this service is 'at risk' from March 2017 due to the cuts in the Lancashire County Council Supporting People Programme so unless the provider Safenet can source other funding the service may potentially close.

- The county council alongside the district council are undertaking a review of the Lancashire wide Homeless 16/17 year olds protocol.
- Temporary Accommodation (TA) targets remain below government targets - currently there are 6 available TA properties available within the district.
- In October 2012 the council, in partnership with Methodist Action North West (MANW), launched the new 'Social Lettings Agency'. The Social Lettings Development Coordinator is situated within the Housing Options Team with the aim of increasing access to good quality private rented sector accommodation for homeless households. 38 properties have now been leased from private sector landlords with further properties in the pipeline as part of the empty homes programme. This scheme will give the local authority access to a sustainable supply of good quality housing with 2-10 year lease arrangements. This year, and in 2016/17, MANW are delivering more empty homes with additional funding from Lancaster City Council to bring more properties into the Social Lettings Agency.
- Lancaster City Council along with Blackpool, Preston, Fylde & Wyre have been successful in a bid to secure £250k to commission new services for single non-priority need homeless people. The service will provide an accommodation finding, shared housing and pre-tenancy training package.
- Choice Based Lettings are now well established within the Housing Options Team to support the delivery of choice based lettings and the team also have responsibility for the allocation of social housing within the district. Customers have now fully embraced the new on-line application procedure with limited disruption or complaint. This is down to officer commitment within the team and the superb support from customer services teams in Lancaster & Morecambe and the local voluntary and faith sector. A review of the Housing Allocations Policy was taken to Cabinet and approved in October 2014. The main changes to the existing Allocations Policy will focus on Local Connection, Armed Forces applicants and the effective allocation to those most in need.
- The DCLG have made a small amount of funding available to roll out the governments 'No Second Night Out' (NSNO) initiative across Lancashire. Lancaster City Council joined the national scheme in December 2012 which aims to make it easier for people sleeping rough to get the help they need. Street Link is a new simple scheme that will help members of the public to quickly connect rough sleepers to local services. Eliminating Rough Sleeping remains a key corporate priority for the council.

Anyone who sees a rough sleeper can report it in the following ways:

- By telephoning the 24/7 StreetLink phone line 0300 500 0914
- By using the StreetLink website www.streetlink.org.uk
- By downloading the StreetLink App from the iTunes or Google Market store free of charge

For further information please visit -

http://homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/SWEP%20&%20CWP%20effective%20action%202012_0.pdf

- Following a successful bid to the Homes and Communities Agency in 2011 the new homeless hostel for rough sleepers/entrenched homeless opened in April 2015. The new 23 bed supported housing scheme provides 6 crisis beds, 12 move on beds and 5 self-contained semi-independent flats for the over 25's. The scheme also delivers a wide range of on-site services including health, drug, alcohol, training, education and in work support. The county council cuts to supporting people funding now threatens the long term viability of this centre.
- An interim review of the Homeless Strategy is planned to take place in 2016/17 given all the impending SP budget cuts and changes in legislation.

Cemeteries

- The Cemeteries Team has continued to provide a caring, sensitive and professional service to the bereaved throughout 2015/16. This year has seen a complete change in the office based staff. The Cemeteries Officer and the Cemeteries Support Assistant are both new to their respective posts. Both of these members of staff are exceptional officers and their presence will only serve to enhance the level of service provided by the Cemeteries Team.

COUNCIL HOUSING

- 2015/2016 has been a challenging year for the service with a wealth of proposals and changes, stemming from Government, affecting future financing and future service delivery. These issues were added to with the December floods wiping out the council housing office base at 38 Cable Street. Over the last few months the service has been temporarily operating from Lancaster Town Hall.

Our council housing continues to make an important contribution to the provision of affordable and decent homes within the district. This year has seen a continuing commitment to delivering a service which is valued by residents. The council currently provides 3740 homes to rent with just over 29% of the housing stock being sheltered or bungalow accommodation.

Despite these issues over the last year the council carried out a tenant satisfaction survey which found that overall tenant satisfaction with the service remains at 84%, and this is in line with the 2013 survey findings.

Repairs and maintenance is the service most likely to be mentioned as a priority by tenants, analysis also shows this to be a service aspect found to be important in influencing a tenant's overall satisfaction. There is an indication that tenant

satisfaction for the repairs and maintenance service has improved slightly since 2013 (82% compared to 79%).

Listening to tenants' views and acting on them also emerges as a key driver of satisfaction with the council's housing services. Looking at the way the council handles council housing enquiries amongst those who have contacted the council in the last 12 months perceptions of the helpfulness of staff remain very positive (82% satisfied), with a significant increase since 2013 in the satisfaction with the final outcome of enquiries (72% compared to 65%).

We want to ensure that involving residents in service development, delivery and improvement remains important, and that the council is approachable, more accountable, more attuned to residents' views; and continues to provide a value for money service.

- Last year I reported that the council had adopted a policy that for 2016/17 onwards target rent increases be set at 3% per annum, and that this should ensure that the future funding needs of council housing are met both in the medium term, and the long term. It was intended that over the coming year the council would undertake a review to establish a rent setting policy that would support the development of an on-going council housing building programme meeting identified housing needs and taking into account the impact on the long term management and investment needs of the council's housing stock. However, due to dramatic changes in the Government's policy on the future financing of social housing it has not been possible to move forward with the council's ambitions to build new council housing or even think of acquiring properties. Members will be aware that the Government is imposing a 1% reduction in social housing rents, each year, over the next four years, and are introducing a number of other proposals that will have a significant impact on the funds available to deliver its council housing service, including the proposals to enforce the sale of high value council homes when they become vacant. The restrictions on rent setting brought about by the change in Government policy are estimated to cost around £90M over the life of the council's Housing Revenue Account 30-year business plan. This raised significant questions over the viability of any new-build plans and requires further efficiency-drives from the service.
- The Government is introducing many changes over the coming year which will affect the way the council can deliver its council housing services. These include a requirement for the council to charge up to market rent levels for households with a joint income more than £30,000 with the additional revenue paid to central government, the introduction of further caps on the amount of housing benefit tenants can receive with these proposals particular affecting single 36 year olds and under, and potentially older tenants in sheltered housing. The Government is also ending 'lifetime tenancies' with the proposal that all new tenants will be given short term tenancies of up to 5 years term which will then be reviewed at the end of that period to see if the household still has a social housing need. All these issues will need to be explored and appraised over the coming year as the details become known.
- Despite this situation, 2015/2016 has seen continuing investment in the council's housing stock to ensure that it meets the needs and expectations of existing and future tenants. The council will have again invested £4.8 million over the last year in its homes. The capital and planned maintenance programmes have been successfully

delivered by the council's in-house repairs and maintenance service, and through a number of external partnerships and contracts.

- It is projected that over 350 households will have been rehoused by the council over the year. The demand for council housing has fallen to 1906 applicants on the council's housing register; a significant reduction over the year mainly due to household with low housing priority not renewing their applications. Those in greatest need in Band A and Band B form 8.5% of the register (162 households). The number of applicants in Band C Medium Housing Need form 37.6% of the housing register (716 households). However the greatest proportion of applicants are in Band D Low Housing Need and Band E Very Low Housing Need; together forming just over 53.9% of the register (1028 households). The highest demand for accommodation remain for one and two bedroom properties forming 87% of the households on the housing register but the council's ability to meet this demand has been constrained.
- Preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour, working together with residents and other agencies, on the council's estates remains a high priority. The housing management team have again dealt with over 160 new cases during 2015/2016 but a reduction on previous years. Again the greatest number of complaints, related to noise nuisance (35). Other areas of main complaints continue to verbal abuse, pets, and untidy gardens. Over 2016 responding to the feedback we have received through the Tenant Satisfaction Survey we are looking to improve the support we give to victims of these issues, and also how we can intensively work with a small number of households to prevent issues arising in the first place.
- The District-wide Tenants' Forum and the various Tenant Quality Groups have worked with the council and have looked at a number of aspects of the service; including a joint inspection with councillors of the services provide. Every year the District-wide Tenants' Forum is allocated funding to support community projects to improve the environment of the council housing estates and neighbourhoods. 2015/2016 saw over £66,000 funding a variety of projects supported across the district. This is an important programme and engages tenants and residents in the work of the council, and is central to the way the council engages with residents, supporting them to help improve their neighbourhoods. All tenants have been recently asked for projects to be put forward for the 2016/2017 programme. Projects can include play areas, improving community spaces, up-grading neglected areas, improved communal lighting, new signs, and landscaping work.

Again over this next year we want to review the arrangements with the District-wide Tenants Forum to ensure that all tenants can be involved, and the work of the Forum is relevant to tenants, and the council.