

Scrutiny Review of Community Engagement/Consultation Activity undertaken by Gravesham Borough Council

Engagement Activity and Contact Officer	Activity Description	Activity Purpose	Target Group(s)	When undertaken	How undertaken/Method Used	Rationale behind approach	Who involved (Officers/third parties)	Were Members involved?	How were Members involved? Who?	Cost of Engagement Activity (£ and officer time)	Response Rate Achieved
Neighbourhood Forums Jackie Denton (Run in partnership with Kent County Council)	Public meetings are held for three Neighbourhood Forums - Gravesham Rural, Gravesham East and Northfleet and Gravesend West.	To help create a partnership for the Borough where everyone feels they belong, knows how and where to make their voice heard, make a difference and create cohesive, active and sustainable communities. To enable locally elected representatives, as leaders of their communities, to engage with and respond to local community's needs.	The meetings are public meetings, fully open to anyone in the borough and will also be attended by county, borough council and parish council members for the locality.	Each Neighbourhood Forum meets four times a year.	The format of meetings is generally workshop style with facilitated round table discussions followed by a question and answer session on the chosen issues. However, this will depend on the topic and can sometimes be theatre style events for bigger topics such as the Airport or building on the Greenbelt.	This approach creates an opportunity for residents to gain a greater voice and influence over local services, to improve the quality of their lives, their neighbourhood and the Borough	Meetings co-ordinated by officers from GBC and KCC. Representatives from GBC, KCC, Kent Police, etc. dependent on topic for discussion.	Yes	County and Gravesham Members attend meetings for their relevant Wards.	GBC has a budget of £5,000 per annum to pay for the cost of venues, printing and publicity, refreshments etc. KCC also has a budget so the cost is shared.	Attendance varies depending on the topic. A meeting to discuss the airport had over 400 people in attendance. But generally attendance can be between 20 and 100 people.

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Gravesham Community Gateway Anita Tysoe	Ward-based projects.	Designed to involve the community with local decision-making and problem-solving; led by councillors and supported by representatives of key local government and other public services. Cross-cutting consultation from how satisfied residents are with the area they live in through to whether they are happy with their access to local GP's, transport and open spaces.	Initial focus 2011-12 was on ward areas where new communities were prevalent; further segmented by indices of deprivation. Focus for 2012-13 is to complete the initial focus areas and then wards not included in the initial focus for 2011-12.	6 October 2011 Northfleet North 13 October 2011 Coldharbour 8 December 2011 Central, Pelham and Riverside 22 March 2012 Chalk 27 July 2012 Northfleet South Future: September 2012 Westcourt & Whitehill October 2012 Woodlands November 2012 Shorne, Cobham & Luddesdown January 2013 Meopham North March 2013 Meopham South & Vigo.	Members call at resident's houses to explain the consultation and ask that they complete and return a paper based questionnaire, followed by a return visit to collect or encourage return of the questionnaire. This method has been most successful achieving approximately 20% return. For some events only 1 initial visit has been made with questionnaires being posted through letterboxes if there was no answer. The approximate return rate was 5%. On a further occasion questionnaires were posted through letterboxes with a stamped addressed return envelope. The approximate return rate was 8.5% The questionnaire is also available on the website and a link to this is included in the publicity. Further consultation is also undertaken on the day of the information and advice event usually held 2-3 weeks after the consultation.	The project was set up to enable Members to re-engage with the community and involve them with local decision-making and problem solving. The 2 visit approach was deemed most appropriate as it would enable Members to actively engage as well as seek feedback through the cross-cutting questions.	Anita Tysoe, Service Manager, Customer & Theatre Services Daniel Laws, Gateway Manager Customer Service Officers 18 Members (Attendance at the information advice event included officers from Gravesham Borough Council, Kent County Council, Kent Fire & Rescue, Kent Police and voluntary organisations).	Yes - 18 Members.	Members played an important role in conducting the consultation encouraging feedback and promoting the upcoming event. Members involved were: Cllr John Burden Cllr Susan Howes Cllr Valerie Ashenden Cllr Colin Dennis Cllr Brian Francis Cllr Tanmanjeet Singh-Dhesi Cllr Jean Averibou Cllr Bill Lambert Cllr Lyn Milner Cllr Senja Compton Cllr Richard Smith Cllr Jean Cribbon Cllr Les Howes Cllr Rob Halpin Cllr Colin Caller Cllr John Caller Cllr Peter Rayner Cllr John Loughlin.	Approximately £350 per event for printing. Mobile Gateway unit £450 per event, although initial events were funded by KCC Migrant Impact Fund. Staff time is covered by individual organisations.	Ranges from 5% to 20% as detailed in column 6. Actual response numbers range from 110 to 262.

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Tenants Conference Chailean Dottin-John	A morning event held at the Woodville Halls Gravesend.	For residents to interact with the council, giving opportunities for them to come together and to hear about developments or changes which will impact on the housing service, welfare benefit reforms and their impacts on residents.	The council's social housing tenants and leaseholders.	September 2011 & September 2012.	A 4 hour session split roughly into half hour portions where both council officers and tenants groups are able to present a summary of a variety of different topics relating to council tenancies and experiences thereof.	An opportunity for residents to meet officers, to hear about initiatives and discuss matters on a face to face level.	Officers from Gravesham, Housing at all levels, various resident groups, other partners with housing related matters.	Yes	Housing Portfolio holder and shadow member, The Mayor.	Less than £6000 per annum.	In 2011 approx. 85 tenants attended - In 2012, more than 200 tenants attended.
Residents Associations Chailean Dottin-John	Groups established by residents.	Local issues can be discussed. Through such groups, community development projects can be delivered.	The council's social housing tenants and leaseholders.	As desired by residents. There are currently 17 resident associations established within the council housing stock.	As determined by residents. Usually through meetings arranged by residents.	Enables local people to come together to discuss and find solutions for issues their local area and develop projects to benefit their local area.	Support provided through Tenant Participation Team.	No	--	Minimal – TP Officers may provide advice/assistance but fundamentally resident-led.	17 groups currently established within the borough.

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Housing Forums Chailean Dottin-John	Formal meetings	Enables tenants to become involved in challenging and shaping housing services.	The council's 5800 social housing tenants,	Quarterly Quarterly As requested by Leaseholders As topics are identified Monthly	Borough Executive Forum (BEF) - umbrella organisation for all resident groups in Gravesham representing tenants and leaseholders at a strategic level. Area Housing Forums - made up of representatives from the Residents' Associations and serves as a scrutiny body, holding the Council accountable for service delivery. The Forum negotiates the Local Offers and monitors service standards. Leaseholders Forum - provides an opportunity for leaseholders to be involved in the consultation process. Information on changes and updates are communicated to leaseholders Consultation Bubble Meetings - meetings set up to deal with specific subject matters and once the objective of the Bubble is achieved, the group is disbanded. Delegates who indicate interest in being consulted on particular subjects are invited to discuss, comment or be simply to be informed about those subjects. Sheltered Housing Forum - made up of two tenant representatives from each of the 20 council run sheltered housing schemes. The forum aims to ensure that tenants in sheltered housing have a say in the way Housing services are provided.	The quarterly Area Housing Forums meet just prior to the Borough Executive Forum. Issues raised at these meetings and through other means are brought to the BEF for information/discussion/decision. The BEF represents the most senior tenant-management liaison group.	Borough Executive Forum members consist of Housing Portfolio Holder, Assistant Director, Tenant representation through the Chair and Vice Chair of Borough Executive Forum, Tenant Participation Manager and TP Officers as required.	Yes	Housing Portfolio Holder	£minimal plus circa 35 hours officer time	Meetings have been re-arranged where possible non-attendance has suggested low numbers

The table above includes engagement activity undertaken since 1 April 2011

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People Bank Chailean Dottin-John	A database of Gravesham tenants who have expressed an interest in engaging with the council, though not through attendance at formal meetings.	Intended to widen engagement opportunities with tenants.	All council tenants in Gravesham	People Bank is open to new members all the time; the Bank is used as required.	Various, depending on nature of consultation/resident input required. May be questionnaire, focus group, or formal group that meets on a regular basis.	Enables tenants to select how they would like to engage with the council based on their interests/availability.	Officers	--	--	--	--
Voluntary & Community Sector Forum John Britt and Marilyn Keating Council for Voluntary Services, North West Kent (CVSNWK)	Forum setting	To bring together Voluntary / Community groups in Gravesham to explore and develop collaborative working models i.e. sharing of good practice, resources, staff etc. Help raise awareness of what each organisation is doing in order to try to reduce duplication of services and create an avenue for groups to come together to apply for joint funding etc. Also helps raise awareness of the GBC Corporate Business Plan which the intention of the voluntary sector being able to help feed into its delivery.	All voluntary and community groups operating in the Gravesham Area.	Four Forums per annum held at different venues around the borough.	All Voluntary / Community groups made aware of Forum meetings and can attend as and when they want. Feedback sheets at all events asking what they would like as topics for future meetings. CVSNWK also making suggestions	Creates an open and informative setting for the local voluntary and community sector to explore and develop collaborative working models in Gravesham i.e. sharing of good practice, resources, staff etc.	Facilitated by CVSNWK, the forums are attended by Service Manager (Communities) With the open invitation to voluntary and community Groups in the borough. Any other Statutory or Private Sector representatives as and when invited.	Yes	In one of the formative forums, the Leader of the Council offered a Question and Answer session for the voluntary and community sector on how GBC were going to support them.	Officer time/basic stationary.	The Forums usually attract approx. 30 – 50 attendees.

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50+ Forum Jackie Denton	Forum setting	To inform older people about the services available in the area and to also act as an opportunity for people who are often isolated to socialise in a very informal setting.	Residents of the borough who are over 50 years of age,	Four forums a year.	Member of the forum are involved in setting topics for the forum to consider.	To inform older people about the services available in the area and to also act as an opportunity for people who are often isolated to socialise in a very informal setting.	Officers & Members	Yes	A number of Members regularly in attendance which have included The Mayor and Cllr Snelling.	Minimal £. Officer time.	Around 100/120 people attending.
Local Plan Consultation Tony Chadwick	Regulation 25 Consultation on development quantities, development options and possible release of land from the Green Belt	To give residents and others an opportunity to comment on and influence the content of the future land use plan for the Borough	All Borough residents All land owners and developers Neighbouring planning authorities, parishes, statutory bodies	October to December 2011 (6 weeks as required by regulations)	Statutory notices and formal publication backed up with leaflets, letters to Borough residents, public meetings etc.	Statutory requirement	Officers & Members	Yes	Leader / Lead Member spoke at public meetings Views of all Members relevant	Officer time, printing, postage, hire of halls etc.	Approx. 5,000 written responses
Rural Housing Needs Surveys Sharon Donald	Housing Needs Surveys carried out in rural parishes by Action with Communities in Rural Kent.	Rural Housing Needs Surveys aim to establish how many people who live and/or work or have close ties to a parish are in need of affordable housing. Survey results help to inform Local Planning Authorities.	People who live and/or work in the borough's rural parishes, or who have close ties to a parish.	Rolling programme of surveys. Each parish is surveyed approximately every 5 years.	Surveys are undertaken by Action with Communities in Rural Kent who collate responses and provide an independent report detailing results of affordable housing need.	Developments in rural parishes to meet an established need can provide affordable housing for local people, enabling them to stay in their community and contribute to village life and help maintain village services.	Housing Strategy and Development Manager/Planning Policy/Action with Communities in Rural Kent	Yes	Cllr Burden/Howes/Croxtan were involved in determining a revised survey.	Approximately £2-2.5k per survey.	The most recent surveys carried out in Istead Rise and Vigo achieved a 42% and 40% response rate respectively.
Planning applications Clive Gilbert	Processing, advertising and determining planning applications	To determine planning applications having regard to national and local policy, material planning considerations, including the views and comments of third parties.	All residential and business premises in the Borough, and some in adjoining districts.	Continuing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Press and site notice; 2. 2 Web-site; 3. 3 letter to adjoining properties; 4. 4 E mail or letter to Parish Councils, and other agencies and groups. 	Statutory requirement	Officers, members (when residents and business seek support or feedback), members of the public, businesses, and other agencies	Yes, particularly ward councillors	By receiving contact from constituents, directly from planning officers, or on their own initiative from perusal of the list of new planning applications. Regulatory Board for a minority of cases.	Officer time, and postage, printing.	Typically a low (less than 105) response to publicity. Exceptions such as Heritage Quarter can generate thousands of letter, e mails and visits etc.

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Gravesham Youth Council Danielle Lock	Forum for local young people who have an interest in having engaging with the council and having their opinions heard	To enable Young people to be involved in the decision making process of Gravesham Borough Council and to voice young people's issues and concerns	Gravesham residents aged 11 to 19 years	Monthly / weekly	Monthly meetings / weekly sub groups meetings	To represent the views of all young people who live within the borough	Jackie Holder (KCC) Danielle Lock and Chris Blanc (GBC)	Yes - attend one meeting annually but may meet with young council elected members outside monthly meeting format	Leader of the council. Lead member for young people	20 hours a month secondment of KCC Youth Worker to support Youth Council plus nominal GBC officer time	Over 30 member currently attending meetings regularly
Residents Panel Jackie Denton	A database of Gravesham residents who have expressed an interest in engaging with the council.	Intended to widen engagement opportunities with residents.	All Gravesham residents whether they are council tenants or private owners.	The Residents Panel is open to new members all the time; the Panel is used as required when the council wished to consult on issues. Members are made aware of council-organised meetings such as the 50+ Forum and Neighbourhood Forums.	Various, depending on nature of consultation/resident input required. May be questionnaire, focus group, or formal group that meets on a regular basis.	The intention was that the panel would provide a representative panel of borough residents and be equivalent to 1% of the total population of the borough.	--	--	--	--	589 residents currently registered

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Big Local : Northfleet North	<p>Meetings - currently led by the Rainbow Centre on behalf of the Northfleet North Local Partnership.</p> <p>In the process of trying to recruit a new chair and vice chair (must be a local resident).</p>	<p>Northfleet North has been allocated £1m funding from Big Local for a 10 year community driven project. Whilst there will be some strategic aspirations to be met such as improving health, increasing employment, reducing crime, it should also meet local aspirations. These meetings are to draw out how local people want to spend the funds.</p>	Residents of all ages, local schools, local businesses	Regular daytime meetings but changing to alternate between daytime and evening meetings to ensure everyone can be involved.	<p>Meetings held at the Rainbow Centre. Sub-groups have also been set up for those with specific skills/interests such as the environment group.</p> <p>Meetings currently chaired by Rainbow Centre. Fairly formal meeting in that it is agenda led but there is a community feel in that anyone is welcome and made to feel involved and no-one is excluded so children of all ages are also welcome.</p>	To ensure as many residents and businesses get to have their say on how the area will be regenerated and how the lottery funding will be spent.	Residents, local businesses, schools, Action for Rural Communities in Kent, Gravesham Borough Council (John Britt and the Corporate Working Group), Kent Police, Community Safety Partnership, Big Lottery.	Yes	Members are kept up to date on progress through Member briefings and are welcome to attend meetings.	<p>Nominal officer time.</p> <p>Big Lottery funding £1m.</p> <p>Pre-fund grants allocated: Getting People Involved 1 £10k "Planning for Real" exercise (including one day per week of dedicated time from external community development worker) and Getting People Involved 2 £20k (two days a week for CD worker). £5k for a small grants pot.</p>	<p>Meetings have regular attendance and are increasing in size. The group is quite representative of the area with a variety of age groups but work is being done to get more local business involvement.</p> <p>Local residents are taking a keen interest in how to spend the funds.</p> <p>The "Planning for Real" exercise was very successful and many schools were involved in drawing up their plan for the area.</p> <p>A Christmas event is being planned to try and reach more residents.</p>

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CBP Areas of Focus 1, 2 and 4 Kath Donald	My Place Matters (MPM) Project 'before' surveys and promotion of Street Champions (SC) pilot.	To sample perceptions and priorities of residents regarding community safety issues in the MPM project area and recruit residents to become Street Champions.	Residents from key roads within the project area.	Mar-Apr 2011.	Face-to-face surveys carried out with residents by CSU officers through door knocking at premises in key roads. Delivery of Street Champions leaflets at the same time to encourage resident participation in the project.	Aim was to establish baselines for the work to be completed in the area as part of the MPM project and to identify key community safety priorities for local residents.	Public Engagement Officer, CSU Officers (2) and KCC Warden helped to complete 46 surveys.	Partly.	Members were not involved in the survey exercise but Ward Councillors were made aware of the project and Cllr Lyn Milner was very supportive in encouraging people to consider becoming Street Champions.	Nominal cost of photocopying surveys. Approx. 16 hours officer time (surveys and recruitment of SCs).	11 people I expressed an interest in becoming Street Champions much later in the year and were subsequently contacted.
CBP Area of Focus 11 Kath Donald	Visit to the CSU by members of the Youth Council	To raise awareness of the work of the CSU; identify potential areas of joint work with young people to encourage more positive perceptions of them and to identify potential intergenerational work.	Young people already expressing an interest in citizenship/local democracy.	21 April 2011	Young Council members visited the CSU (most of whom were unaware of the work that we do). Face-to-face discussion with managers/officers and tour of the CCTV Control Room.	Education/awareness-raising; establishing links with a group of young people to take forward work to improve public perception.	CSU Managers, officers and CCTV staff.	No.	N/a.	Officer meeting time (2 hours).	4 representatives of the Youth Council attended and are now developing a project (I'm Not Scary Campaign) with a view to also carrying out an intergenerational initiative.
CBP Area of Focus 1 Kath Donald	Police Surgery	To support Kent Police in the delivery of a Police Surgery at Quarry Close to provide advice and improve access to services, particularly to address ASB issues.	Residents of the immediate area in and around Quarry Close.	21 June 2011	Face-to-face contact with local residents.	Education/public reassurance/ taking of reports and referrals for ASB related matters.	CSU ASB officers (1)	Unknown	N/a	Officer time (2-3 hours)	Those attending provided with relevant information to assist them with their community safety/ASB issues.
CBP Area of Focus 1 Kath Donald	Kent Police Emergency Services Day	To support Kent Police/ Emergency Services in raising awareness of community safety issues and services available.	Targeted all local people.	25 June 2011	Large-scale multi-agency event held at North Kent Police Station at which the CSU had a stall and was staffed by CSU staff to interact with the public, raise awareness of the work we do and advise accordingly.	Education, making people aware of services available and how to access them, public reassurance.	2 members of CSU staff.	Members were informed of the event and invited to attend.	Unable to confirm which/whether Councillors attended the event.	Officer time (standard working day, 2 officers)	Event extremely well-attended – several 100 local people – who would all have benefited.

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CBP Area of Focus 1 Kath Donald	Big Day Out	To raise awareness of community safety issues and services available.	Targeted all local people and visitors.	23 July 2011	Face-to-face engagement with the public; distribution of materials/crime prevention items e.g. property marking kits and information regarding the work of the CSU.	Education/awareness raising and public reassurance.	2 members of CSU staff.	All members aware of the event.	Unable to confirm which/whether Councillors attended the event.	Officer time (standard working day, 2 officers)	Event extremely well-attended – who would all have benefited from advice received.
CBP Areas of Focus 1, 2 and 4 Kath Donald	Bluewater Safety Store Events	To raise awareness of crime prevention measures and improve personal safety.	Local residents (during the school summer holidays in particular, significant numbers of local residents (especially young people) visiting Bluewater.	5,12,19 and 26 August 2011	Face-to-face engagement with the public; distribution of materials/crime prevention items e.g. property marking kits and information regarding the work of the CSU.	Education/awareness raising.	1 CSU officer attended each of the days.	CS Portfolio holder informed.	Unable to confirm which Councillors attended the event.	Officer time (standard working day x 4)	Each event was very well-attended; approximately min. of 400-500 people visited the store during each of these days.
CBP Area of Focus 1 Kath Donald	Gravesham Tenants Forum	CSU involvement was in order to raise awareness of the work of the Unit and in particular, the service provided by our Community Wardens.	Council tenants.	Sept. 2011	Face-to-face engagement with local tenants informing them of the services provided.	Education/public reassurance.	2 Council Wardens (CSU) attended the event.	Local Members informed.	Unable to confirm which Councillors attended the event.	Warden time (standard working shift x 2)	Event extremely well-attended; information and advice distributed by the Wardens.
CBP Area of Focus 1 Kath Donald	New Communities Gateway Events	CSU involvement was to raise awareness of services of the CSU particularly in relation to ASB/personal responsibilities and how to seek advice if the victim of ASB.	Local residents, particularly members of new settling communities. 2 events were attended by CSU officers: Perry Street, Northfleet South and Aldi, London Road, Northfleet.	October 2011	Face-to-face engagement with local people; provision of advice and information.	Education/public reassurance.	1 CSU officer provided to support each event.	Ward Members informed.	Unable to confirm which Councillors attended the event.	CSU Officer time (standard working day x 2)	Attendance was reasonable although not as high as expected. Information and advice provided accordingly.

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CBP Area of Focus 1 Kath Donald	Probation Diversity Showcase Event	CSU supported the event to raise awareness of the availability of services such as Community Payback and encourage greater take-up of these services, particularly by BME community groups.	Local community representatives, particularly those from BME organisations/community groups.	8 December 2011	Multi-agency event with a number of presentations provided to the attendees including one by the CSU.	Education/improving access to services/public reassurance	CSU Manager attended the event; CSU assisted with the administration and organising of the event; CSU also made a financial contribution towards the room hire.	All Members informed and invited to attend.	Event was attended and addressed by the Mayor of Gravesham.	CSU officers x 2. 1 day administrative tasks and attendance on the evening (4 hours officer time x 2)	The event was well-attended although turnout was not as high as expected. Take up of Community payback Services by BME Community Groups remains very low.
CBP Areas of Focus 1,2 and 4 Kath Donald	Community Briefing – Street Champions	To invite residents in the MPM Project area who had expressed an interest in possibly becoming Street Champions to a briefing session to provide more information about the scheme.	Local residents already expressing an interest in the Scheme.	22 February 2012	Multi-agency/multi-department event to provide full briefing and question/answer session to those residents who were potential Street Champions.	Information provision regarding the SC scheme with a view to recruitment.	Of CSU staff: Strategic Manager, Warden Supervisor and Safer Place Officer; CSU-based KCC Warden. Planning and administration of the event was carried out by GBC's Public Engagement Officer and the KCC Warden.	CS Portfolio Holder informed.	N/a	CSU officers time on the day (event itself 3 hours).	Attended by 11 local residents. Event was very successful and all signed up to become Street Champions in the area.
CBP Areas of Focus 1 Kath Donald	Community Safety Survey	To invite residents to offer their views on local community safety priorities in their area and to express a view on the recommended priorities for inclusion in the annually revised Community Safety Plan.	All local residents/those working in the Borough.	February-March 2012	Survey available for completion on line on the Council's website and also distributed to all members of the Residents' Panel and Council employees.	To establish local opinion in respect of community safety priorities, gain intelligence about particular crime types/ASB issues and measure public support for the suggested priorities for the new Community Safety Plan 2012-13 following the completion of the annual crime and disorder audit (Strategic Assessment)	Strategic Manager CSU devised the survey in consultation with CSP partners; GBC Communications Team Officer prepared the hard-copy format of the survey; GBC Public Engagement Officer input the responses and produced an analysis of the findings.	CS Portfolio holder/CS P Chair informed.	N/a	CSU Officer time in production of the survey (2 hours). (Unable to specify time of Communications Team Officer and Public Engagement Officer)	Fair response – over 300 responses were received and CS Plan priorities for the year were confirmed.

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CBP Area of Focus 1 Kath Donald	Environmental Health-led Dog Chipping Events	To provide local residents with the opportunity to have their dogs chipped free of charge as a means of tackling dog theft and dog abandonment.	Residents within the Lawrence Square and Kings Farm areas.	27 and 28 September 2012	Events were led by Environmental Health and assisted by colleagues from other departments including the Safer Place Officer from the CSU.	Taking the service out into the community was seen as the best method of encouraging uptake of the free service.	Safer Place Officer (CSU)	Ward Cllrs informed.	Unable to confirm if Councillors attended this event.	Safer Place Officer (2 x 0.5 of standard working days)	Both events were well-attended (details of numbers would be available from Env. Health).

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