

North Area Committee

8 November 2010

Report of the Executive Director of City Services

Community Action in Sunderland North – Progress Review Workplan 2010/11: Responsive Local Services (RLS)

RLS is a method of area working designed to:

- Increase levels of resident satisfaction through providing services that are responsive to community needs and effectively communicating improvements
- Tailor services in recognition of differing area/locality circumstances either through local problem solving or adapting service standards
- Recognise and enhance the community leadership role of elected members.

The current scope of RLS covers the service areas of Litter, Graffiti, Refuse, Grass Cutting and Dog Fouling. It also provides the opportunity for a wider range of issues to be considered within a context of local problem solving.

Service Requests

The tables below provide a view of the volume of service requests for the services in scope for August and September 2010.

Service Area – August 2010	North	East	West	Washington	Coalfield
Animal Fouling	14	14	13	5	8
Grass Cutting	1	0	6	2	4
Graffiti	3	5	6	12	9
Rubbish and Litter	93	81	94	98	68
Refuse and recycling	184	223	157	197	170

Service Area – Sept 2010	North	East	West	Washington	Coalfield
Animal Fouling	17	6	4	1	14
Grass Cutting	1	2	0	1	8
Graffiti	3	6	8	7	13
Rubbish and Litter	48	37	48	79	79
Refuse and recycling	116	189	129	102	98

What does the analysis tell us?

- The most significant numbers of requests relate to both 'refuse and recycling' and 'rubbish and litter' which is reflected across all areas. This pattern is consistent with previous months and although the numbers regarding refuse are higher than others, when represented as a percentage of total bins collected (less than 0.01%), the service standard is being consistently applied.
- The analysis regarding rubbish and litter relates to individual service requests. A further analysis has been undertaken to identify any specific areas to consider. In this respect the area identified relates to litter around the riverside which is being addressed by the Street Scene service.

- The volume of requests has reduced in the highlighted areas from August to September. In respect of refuse this relates to the introduction of the blue bin scheme and the expected increase in customer queries during the transitional period. The high levels of garden refuse have also impacted upon service requests although this is a seasonal issue with an expected decrease in requests.
- It is also clear that from the requests received a high percentage of the requests are staff reported, demonstrating that our frontline staff are reporting and addressing these key issues before they become a problem for residents.

EXTENDING THE RLS SERVICE SCOPE

An analysis of all service requests and staff reported intelligence, not limited to the scope of RLS, has shown that service requests for enforcement (dumping of waste), noise and street lighting are also relatively high – refer to the tables below. In this respect it is recommended the scope of RLS be widened to include the three additional service areas.

Service Area – August 2010	North	East	West	Washington	Coalfield
Dumping of Waste	170	173	108	111	80
Noise	38	27	27	27	31
Street Lighting	18	34	10	20	28

Service Area – Sept 2010	North	East	West	Washington	Coalfield
Dumping of Waste	58	58	34	101	26
Noise	17	38	20	23	21
Street Lighting	27	25	13	19	32

The highlighted areas of the analysis are demonstrating a trend showing a reduction in service requests for the ‘dumping of waste’ from August – September. Although this is a positive trend the reasons for it occurring are not immediately apparent and further analysis is being undertaken in this respect.

Some specific examples of enforcement activity in the North area to address the dumping of waste are detailed below:

Westburn Tce – numerous bin bags left in rear lane. Police assistance is being sought using available evidence.

Resorts & Promenades Enforcement – Specialist enforcement for sea front now concluded. End of season report will follow in due course.

INTELLIGENCE GROUP

A partnership group has been established to share information and intelligence relative to each area committee’s geographical boundaries with a view to identify any service issues and interventions. The group consists of representatives from the Council, the Police and Gentoo who will meet prior to each area committee cycle. The first meeting of the group occurred in early October and some of the issues regarding the ‘dumping of waste’ are highlighted above.

Any significant issues identified by the group will be brought forward to area committees in a report that will explain the issue/s and also provide options for a service response. Members can then debate options and provide recommendations.

The main issue relating to the North Area, as discussed at the October Intelligence Group was the cleansing of land areas not owned by the Council. A task and finish group led by City Services has been developed to specifically deal with the issues and an update report will be presented at the Area committee meeting on 8 November 2010 to agree the way forward.

CITY SERVICES – AREA RESPONSE MANAGERS

The new structure for Streetscene includes six Area Response Managers, one for each area of the City and one for the City Centre. It is anticipated that these will be appointed by December 2010.

These Area Response Managers will lead locality based teams delivering Responsive Local Services that are aligned to local conditions and priorities. The Area Response Managers will work with the Area Committees, Area Regeneration Officers, partners and residents to identify and tackle key issues.

RECOGNITION FOR ACTION

There is now a dedicated section on the council's intranet to enable staff to post good news stories which can be publicised to demonstrate that the council and partners are addressing local issues.

The RLS intranet URL is below.

<http://cityweb/directorates/chief-executive/corporate-communications/responsivelocalservices/default.shtm>

There is also a dedicated email address which is responsivelocalservices@sunderland.gov.uk, enabling staff to post stories for the media team to respond too and publicise as appropriate.

The Staff Reporting Line is also being used to report good news stories and the Communications Team are collating the stories to share with the media and include within the Community Newsletters.

WINTER MAINTENANCE

Following the severe weather experienced during the winter of 2009/2010 all area committees requested some additional information to be made available, for residents and members, regarding the approach to winter maintenance.

In response additional information has been prepared and is now available on the Sunderland.gov website via a dedicated 'Winter Maintenance' page which highlights the gritting routes and the location of salt/grit bins.

In addition an article on Winter Maintenance will be included within the November issue of Sunrise.

Also additional training has been delivered to employees working in the Contact Centre in relation to winter maintenance services enquiries and the Street Scene winter maintenance teams are now able to communicate more effectively via mobile phones to coordinate activity and report any service issues.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to note the report and receive further updates regarding any issues arising from the intelligence group.