

Responsive Local Services (RLS)

Background

The Community Leadership Programme, which commenced in September 2008, is based upon the need to accelerate delivery of quality of life improvements for the people of Sunderland and to improve their satisfaction levels with the way the Council and its partners perform. The Responsive Local Services project is designed to satisfy the service delivery element of the programme ensuring that, in delivering its day to day services, the Council is more responsive to the needs and expectations of its customers and engages with citizens more effectively.

In summary Responsive Local Services is a 'method of area working' that was established via Cabinet 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.

Key Facts

- There are currently five services that fall within the scope of the RLS remit these are: Litter Removal, Refuse Collection, Grass Cutting, Graffiti and Dog Fouling
- The services included in the first wave have been chosen according to their relative importance and the ability to measure performance against the current service standards.
- It is necessary, in this respect, to publish the associated service standards to enable residents and Members to engage in service delivery performance updates, via Area Committees. This will enable Area Committees and residents to consider local priorities and service performance when tailoring service standards to match local need or to undertake local problem solving.
- The service scope of each subsequent wave of the Project is defined upon the basis of customer feedback through the Customer Services Network, feedback from Residents' Surveys, Area Committees, Ward visits and the analysis of service requests via the staff reporting line.

Current Interventions

- Performance reports were presented in January and March 2010 and will be presented to each area committee as required going forward.
- An RLS Issues Log is established and working to track local problem solving issues arising from Area Committee discussions and the service interventions to address issues raised.
- Communication activity is underway to ensure the Council and local members receive recognition for the improved services. The communication is also designed to encourage residents to engage with Area Committees regarding local issues.
- Partnership working is underway particularly in respect of Gentoo in order to align neighbourhood activity and service standards where possible.
- Work is underway to identify the next wave of services to be included within the project.
- Any resource implications are in the first instance managed within existing budget provision or as part of the Medium term Financial Planning Process. Area Committees are also able to call upon their Strategic Investment Plan allocations to respond to local issues arising from service demand or, as was the case for the previous cycle, to address any issues coming forward from ward visits and the staff reporting line.

Options

- A** Lead Agent: Mike Poulter City Services. Area Committee to continue to receive performance reports and information updates via the e-bulletin. Task and finish groups (including partners as required) set up to consider local problem solving as required. Align a percentage of the SIB budget to address local problem solving issues.
- B** Area Committee to continue to receive performance reports and information updates via the e-bulletin. Task and finish groups (including partners as required) set up to consider local problem solving as required.