

RESPONSIVE LOCAL SERVICES

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CITY SERVICES AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present current Service Standards to Washington Area Committee for the services currently being reviewed as part of the Responsive Local Services (RLS) project and to ascertain present service performance for the Washington Area.

2. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Area Committee agreed at their meeting in November 2009, to move forward with the Responsive Local Services project, focussing initially important high volume neighbourhood services - graffiti removal, refuse collection, litter, dog fouling and grass cutting services.
- 2.2 In essence the Responsive Local Services project provides each Area Committee with the tools required to tailor services in the locality and communicate the improvements effectively to residents to improve satisfaction and resident understanding of the elected Member's community leadership role.

3. CONTEXT OF AREA

- 3.1 Washington has 47,001 residents, 24% of the City's population. According to figures and categories used in the Census 2001, the area has a predominantly White Ethnic Group. Older People (women over 60 and men over 65) in Washington make up 12.3% of the population less than the City average of 19.2% and children under 16 make up 15.5% of the population also less than the City average of 18.06%.
- 3.2 In relation to housing tenure the percentage of owner occupied property is 64%, which is higher than the City average of 60.2%. Levels are considerably lower in North Washington at 52.3%. Gentoo stock accounts for 22.9% of property compared to a city average of 23.2%. Levels are higher in North Washington at 31.4%.
- 3.3 The Washington Area is made up of Washington North, Central, East, South and West wards. In accordance with the Place Survey 2008, residents are generally satisfied with the services provided with 52% stating that rubbish or litter lying around was not a problem. 63% of residents do not see Graffiti as a problem and 84% are satisfied with refuse collection. 81% satisfied with grass cutting of open spaces however, only 47% are satisfied with keeping public land clear of litter and refuse.

4. CURRENT SERVICE STANDARDS

4.1 Refuse Collection and recycling

- carry out a weekly collection of waste from households in a green wheeled bin;
- carry out fortnightly collections of green waste (brown wheeled bin) and other recyclable materials (black kerb-it box)

- collect, free of charge, bulky items of household waste or sacks of garden refuse or other waste which cannot be accommodated in the wheeled bin. 3 collections (of 8 items or less) in any one financial year (1st April to 31st March).

4.2 Graffiti removal – Graffiti is removed from highways and public buildings. The council also removes graffiti from private property subject to owners' authorisation. The target in 2009/2010 is to remove graffiti within 2 working days from the time it is reported.

4.3 Grass Cutting – General Standards

- Grass is maintained within the city on varied frequencies from 1 occasion per year to up to 30 occasions per year, depending on the site and growing conditions. The majority of grass is cut 18 occasions per year at 2 to 3 weekly intervals, depending on weather conditions.

4.4 Dog Fouling – Sunderland City Council has actively been promoting responsible dog ownership in the City through a rolling programme of education and awareness. However, in order to further the campaign against dog fouling the Council has now adopted the provisions of the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996.

Under the Act it is an offence for anyone in charge of a dog to fail to clear up after it has fouled in a designated area. The majority of land in Sunderland open to the public is designated land. Sunderland City Council is enforcing the law and offenders may receive an on the spot fine of £50.00 or up to £1000 if the matter goes before the Court.

The service standard that applies to the removal of dog fouling is 24 hours or immediately if an operative is at the location.

4.5 Litter removal - Sunderland City Council carry out regular and routine cleaning and litter-picking of pavements, footpaths, carriageways and verges throughout the City.

The service standard for litter removal is 24 hours for a standard response or 2 hours for an emergency response e.g. broken glass.

5. SERVICE PERFORMANCE – SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 2009

5.1 Refuse Collection – Each month we empty on average 98,740 wheeled bins within the Washington Area and provide 1,063 assisted collections per week. At present we have an average of 31 missed bin collections reported each month (0.0003%) and 1 missed assisted collection per week (0.0009%).

5.2 Graffiti removal – The speed at which graffiti reported to the council is removed is monitored. The target in 2009/2010 is to remove graffiti within 2 working days from the time it is reported. Across the city we are presently averaging removal within 0.29 working days.

5.3 Grass Cutting – 0 requests for service were received to remove grass from paths.

5.4 Dog Fouling – 37 incidents of dog fouling were reported.

5.5 Litter removal – 124 reports of litter or debris were received, 84 of which were reported via the Staff Reporting Line.

5.6 An officer will attend the area committee in January to highlight the work being undertaken in this area.

5.7 It is intended that the Committee receives further updates relating to service performance at future meetings. The detail provided, including service responsiveness and levels of satisfaction, will also be improved to build a more detailed picture of environmental service issues in the area. Analysis of this data, including geographical distribution of incidents and service requests, will assist in allocating resources to solve local problems and tailoring services to meet local needs.

6. LOCAL AREA PLANNING

6.1 The priorities within the Washington Local Area Plan for the Attractive and Inclusive Theme are to 'Make streets and the environment more attractive'.

6.2 The local objectives, related to the Responsive Local Services project are:

- improve green spaces, recycling, underpasses and unlit walkways
- take enforcement action against flytipping, where relevant poor private landlords and tenants

7. LOCAL PROBLEM SOLVING

7.1 The current service standards coupled with current performance information provides committee with a sound platform to discuss area issues in relation to the five services noted. An issue log will be completed to ensure all discussions are recorded.

7.2 It is important to note that, at this time, the project can only consider any service tailoring on an area basis, not community or neighbourhood. As the project develops and becomes more sophisticated the potential for more localised tailoring can be considered.

7.3 Should the committee feel that the information provided highlights a local problem that should be addressed they can bring partners together via an existing group or sub group of the committee to undertake joint working to address the problem. Progress in this respect will be reported to the committee at the next meeting.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 The Washington Area Committee are requested to note this report for information and to accept further updates from the committee sub group.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Staff Reporting Line information statistics – September to October 2009

9.2 Customer Services Requests for Service – September to October 2009

9.3 Place Survey 2008

9.4 Washington Local Area Plan