

North Area Committee

6 January 2011

Report of the Executive Director of City Services

Priority: Responsive Local Services (RLS)

1. Why has it come to Committee?

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 The current scope of RLS covers the service areas of Litter, Graffiti, Refuse, Grass Cutting, Dumping of Waste and Dog Fouling. It also provides the opportunity for a wider range of issues to be considered within a context of local problem solving.
- 1.3 The Street Lighting service requests – as noted within the November committee report are to be addressed via the Intelligence Group. The PFI Contract Monitoring Officer receives the Street Lighting issues and addresses them as required.
- 1.4 The Noise service requests – as noted within the November committee report are to be addressed via an Out of Hours Noise Service pilot. Details of which can be found within the body of this report.

2. Service Requests

- 2.1 The tables below provide a view of the volume of service requests for the services in scope for October and November 2010.

Service Area – Oct 2010	North	East	West	Washington	Coalfield
Animal Fouling	22	13	16	17	15
Grass Cutting	2	0	2	4	10
Graffiti	1	14	3	7	12
Rubbish and Litter	107	92	94	93	91
Refuse and recycling	201	218	247	223	208
Dumping of Waste	211	281	154	124	96

Service Area – Nov 2010	North	East	West	Washington	Coalfield
Animal Fouling	24	12	14	4	7
Grass Cutting	0	0	0	0	0
Graffiti	5	14	6	3	5
Rubbish and Litter	51	75	70	77	47
Refuse and recycling	189	233	265	257	262
Dumping of Waste	220	264	142	146	81

3. What does the analysis tell us and what action are we taking?

- 3.1 **Refuse and Recycling** - In relation to the number of refuse and recycling service requests – analysis has highlighted that the increase in service requests is linked to the transitional arrangements for the new dry recycling scheme. Increased monitoring of the new scheme during initial collections as they commence, will be applied by Refuse Managers to ensure service satisfaction increases.
- 3.2 **Animal fouling** – remains an issue in the rear lanes to terraces in Roker and Fulwell
- 3.3 **Rubbish and litter** – remains issue in some lanes at Roker and Fulwell as well as parts of Southwick
- 3.4 **Graffiti** - The Graffiti Service is addressing service requests more efficiently due to the introduction of mobile technology. Calls from residents asking the Council to carry out clean-ups have fallen over the last year since Sunderland City Council issued 250 frontline staff with mobile telephones and some with handheld computers. This new way of working means that in many cases staff able to nip problems in the bud, resulting in quicker and more efficient service for residents. In some cases graffiti is being removed within minutes of being identified.
- 3.6 **Dumping of Waste** - Some specific examples of enforcement activity in the North area to address the dumping of waste are detailed below:
- 3.7 **Station Road, Fulwell** - Fly-tipping commercial waste - enquiries ongoing. Documentation relating to waste disposal requested – formal action to follow.
- 3.8 **Roker Ave** – Waste on land. Landowner traced and requests to clear land have been made. Notice to be served if necessary.
- 3.9 **Church Street North** – excessive waste to rear of flats. Land owner working with team to rectify.
- 3.10 **Mitford Street** – storage of commercial waste receptacles. Matter resolved.
- 3.11 **Seafront** – dog fouling continues to be an issue. Officers patrol regularly issuing FPN's for failing to remove faeces.

4. INTELLIGENCE GROUP

- 4.1 The Intelligence Group which meets on a monthly basis – attended by Sunderland City Council, Gentoo and the Police, discussed local issues using various information tools including service requests, staff reporting line, estate walkabouts and councillor and community group enquiries. Voluntary and community sector (VCS) groups in the area have welcomed this opportunity to share information and intelligence. It was clear from the discussions that the current local issues within the North area relate to Allotments and Traffic and Highways Services.
- 4.2 **Allotments** – the service requests relating to Allotments continues to rise, as local people aspire to grow their own. A pilot is currently running within the North Area, working with Groundworks to deliver new community allotments and community gardens. The Sunderland.gov.uk website has also been updated, enabling residents to request an allotment online as well as post general enquiries.

- 4.3 **Traffic and Highways** – Large number of service requests have been received in relation to traffic and highway issues. Streetscene are currently restructuring and improving processes to ensure a more timely response to service requests. The service is also developing a system to prioritise service requests, which will be of increased importance in light of anticipated further reductions in LTP funding.
- 4.4 **Issues identified by the VCS** – Southwick Community Association members and service users have expressed concern over graffiti and litter in the surrounding area. Removal of graffiti and provision of bins outside the Community Association has been suggested as a response.

5. CITY SERVICES – AREA RESPONSE MANAGERS

- 5.1 All of the new Area Response Managers for Streetscene should be appointed by the date of the Area Committee.
- 5.2 The Area Response Manager for the North Area will attend each Area Committee.
- 5.3 The Area Response Manager will make them self known to each of the Committee members and will also promote their role within each ward, holding drop-in sessions for local residents to talk to them about any issues they may have. The Area Response Manager will ensure local councillors are aware of any issues raised and address issues as appropriate, directing resources and coordinating activity, as required within the local area.

6. LOCALLY TARGETED COMMUNICATION MESSAGES

- 6.1 It is important that feedback is given to residents to ensure they understand what services have been delivered within their area and how Sunderland Council is developing its service offer to ensure value for money.
- 6.2 The Area Response Managers and Area Regeneration Officer, alongside the area Communications Team representative, who attend each Area Committee, will work together to ensure local news stories, relating to services delivered, are shared with the media and within the Area Newsletters – which will have a dedicated Responsive Local Services page within each issue.
- 6.3 This approach will be supported by a targeted campaign to promote the appointment of the Area Response Manager and the local response team. Postcards will also be used to promote local activity, encouraging residents to get involved in the improvement of their city.
- 6.4 Due to the number of service requests relating to the dumping of waste, it is proposed to develop a campaign to promote the services available from the council to remove white goods for free throughout the year, the bulky collection service as well as the recycling sites across the city.

7. OUT OF HOURS NOISE SERVICE – PILOT APPROACH

- 7.1 Evidence suggests that noise nuisance affects all areas of the city to some degree and as such it is proposed to provide a pilot Out of Hours Noise Response Team to all areas of the City.

- 7.2 The pilot involves collaborative working with Northumbria Police in support of the Noisy Party Pilot Scheme. The scheme was in place from 25th October and continued until December 19th, across the City as an initial response to noise complaints.
- 7.3 The results of the pilot are being used to consider how the noise service should operate in future in terms of the most effective means to deliver the service and improve customer satisfaction.

8. WORKING TOGETHER WITH GENTOO

- 8.1 The Area Response Managers are now meeting with their counterpart within Gentoo on a bi-monthly basis to share information and to ensure close working arrangements. The purpose of the meeting is to address day-to-day service issues and to work together to support service delivery alignment where possible – sharing work programmes in particular. Training has been delivered to Gentoo front line staff explaining Sunderland City Council's service delivery methodology and to communicate staffing structures.
- 8.2 The Customer Services section from Sunderland City Council is also working together with their counterparts at Gentoo to share customer intelligence to support service delivery – particularly sharing messages and improving response times to address service requests.

9. STRATEGIC LAND MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 Phase 2 of the Strategic Land Management Project is well underway. All council owned land has now been inspected and work has begun with Land & Property Services to carry out the data cleansing with help of 2 Officers from the SWITCH Team.
- 9.2 The next step is to use the gathered data to prepare the GIS information layers that will populate the initial SLM viewer. This will include layers showing land maintenance costs, Gentoo land ownership, leasehold and Customer Service data. The completed SLM viewer will be tested and then presented to area committees in March 2011.

Recommendation

Area Committee are requested to:

- Note the report and receive further updates regarding any issues arising from the intelligence group.

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