

6 January 2011

Report of the Executive Director of City Services**Priority: 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, 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.

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.

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.

Service Requests

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

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

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.

Rubbish and litter –Sulgrave area - flats at Collingwood and Marlborough courts and Barmston. Streetscene Services are working with relevant agencies to address the issues.

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.

Dumping of Waste - Some specific examples of enforcement activity in the Washington area to address the dumping of waste are detailed below:

Barmston Way - fly-tip – household waste. Evidence traced to resident who states that a person known to them tipped the waste but the resident refuses to provide details. Police assistance to be sought and use of powers regarding failure to supply relevant information.

James Steel Park – fly-tip – household items from house clearance. Evidence currently being compiled for prosecution, having obtained witness statements from owner, estate agent and solicitor. Court date to follow

Washington Road – fly-tip, builders waste. Witness provided Car Registration No. Checks reveal no current owner. Insurance checks led back to suspect who is failing to engage with officers. Police assistance to be sought.

Northern Area Playing fields – fly-tip. Evidence regarding possible offender obtained. Copies of relevant documentation currently being requested.

Donvale Road – Garden and builders waste deposited illegally. Suspect has failed to attend an interview and therefore a further interview to be arranged. Police assistance to be sought if necessary.

Wellington Walk – Builders rubble fly-tip. Private CCTV possibly overlooking area – enquiries to be made with owner.

Cox Green – fly-tip Commercial Waste. Enquiries reveal that business owner paid an unknown male to remove waste. Enquiries ongoing.

Fatfield - fly-tip, bathroom & kitchen waste. Resident claims that kitchen fitters arranged waste removal. Enquiries ongoing.

Swan Industrial Estate – Commercial Leaflets fly-tipped. Enquiries ongoing.

High Row – fly-tipping. Household bulky items. Investigations ongoing.

Sedling Road – fly-tip – household items. Resident claims that an unknown male was paid £80 to remove waste. Attempts to trace waste removal company ongoing.

Washington Road – fly-tip, kitchen waste from a property on Stockley Road. Investigations reveal unknown males paid to remove waste. Investigations ongoing.

INTELLIGENCE GROUP

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 highlight local concerns. It was clear from the discussions that the current local issues within the Washington area relate to Traffic and Highways Services.

Dumping of Waste (particularly supermarket shopping trolleys) – as previously reported to Area Committee in November 2010, is an area of focus and the Householder Duty of Care legislation is being investigated as a way forward to address the issues as well as the appointment of the Area Response Manager

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.

Issues identified by the VCS – Barmston Forum highlighted the ongoing issue of graffiti in the Avery Drive underpass. The Washington Area Community Coordinator is engaging with community groups in the area to establish an art project similar to that piloted in Glebe.

CITY SERVICES – AREA RESPONSE MANAGERS

All of the new Area Response Managers for Streetscene should be appointed by the date of the Area Committee.

The Area Response Manager for the Washington Area will attend each Area Committee.

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.

LOCALLY TARGETED COMMUNICATION MESSAGES

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.

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.

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.

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.

SUPERMARKET SHOPPING TROLLEYS – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

The committee considered the position of abandoned shopping trolleys at its meeting on 4th November 2010 and powers available to the Council to adopt under the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

A working group has been established with supermarkets in the Washington area to develop a joint approach to tackling the problem of dumped shopping trolleys. The success of this approach will inform any decision to adopt available powers.

OUT OF HOURS NOISE SERVICE – PILOT APPROACH

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.

The pilot is 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.

The results of the pilot are forming a mandate to propose a permanent out of hours noise service is available within Sunderland.

WORKING TOGETHER WITH GENTOO

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.

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.

STRATEGIC LAND MANAGEMENT

Phase 2 of the Strategic Land Management (SLM) 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.

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

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