

Report to: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **18 September 2007**
Report of: **Environmental Services Operations Manager and Environmental Health and Licensing Manager**
Subject: **Service Unit Performance Reporting - Environmental Services**
Ward: **All**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide information on the performance of the Operations Unit, Enforcement Unit and Strategy Unit of the Environmental Services Section for the period from April through to August 2007.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 This report is based on factual information and therefore no consultation has been necessary.

3. Background

- 3.1 This Committee will receive quarterly reports relating to the performance of a range of District Council environmental services, including horticulture, street cleansing, refuse collection, enforcement teams and Strategy Unit including Envirocall. The report gives a position statement regarding the performance of each team.
- 3.2 This report follows Members requirements of the performance of the unit in relation to the Best Value Performance Plan and the Environmental Services Unit Plan.

4. Performance Position Statement

4.1 Best Value Performance Indicators

Appendix 1 outlines Best Value Performance Indicator and Local Performance Indicator outcomes from the year 2006/2007. The colour system signifies performance against targets where green indicates success, yellow a borderline situation and red shows where targets were not met.

Appendix 2 outlines the performance for the first quarter of 2007/2008.

Performance is improving in most areas and there are some examples of top quartile performance. The Council's Best Value Performance Plan 2007 gives further details on comparisons with previous years, trends and future targets for BVPIs.

A number of local performance indicators have been adopted in addition to the statutory indicators to give a broader view of performance and comments are welcome as to whether other indicators should be adopted.

Appendix 3 details complaints received in relation to Environmental Operations Services

4.2 Refuse collection and recycling

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- 4.2.1 The refuse collection service has operated satisfactory to date however long term sickness by 2 employees has had to be covered by employing agency workers to enable service levels to be maintained.
- 4.2.2 The pilot Parc - it scheme was introduced on Friday 1st June 2007 for a 15 month period. This new recycling scheme operates in the west of the district servicing approximately 5000 properties for the collection of cardboard and plastic every week on a Friday. Early indications from premier waste are that it could deliver diversion rates of 90% from landfill. It has been estimated that this may increase the council's recycling performance by up to 10%. There are some operational teething troubles and on the down side it is costing premier waste 5 times more than originally estimated to process this waste. This scheme has only operated for a short period and needs to run till the end of the scheme to get a fair evaluation on the viability of introducing this scheme throughout the district.
- 4.2.3 On the 1st October 2007 the council will introduce a no side waste policy. All the refuse collection crews are going to be fully supported by the enforcement unit for the first 6 months to deal with any problems that may arise with residents. Prior to the policy being introduced there will be intense publicity and advisory stickers put onto bins that have side waste advising residents of the new side waste policy that is going to be introduced also our wardens will visit or deliver advisory letters to property. When the policy is introduced enforcement action will only be taken in the event of a resident placing side waste next to the bin on three occasions. This policy will hopefully encourage recycling as currently we only have 50% participation in the kerb-it scheme in the district.

The procedure that is to be followed will be -:

1. On the **First occasion** that a resident puts side waste next to the bin details of the property will be recorded and a yellow advisory sticker will be placed on the bin advising the resident of the new policy and all side waste will be taken.
2. If the resident puts out side waste on a **Second occasion** details will again be recorded and a red advisory sticker will be placed on the bin the waste will be taken and the resident will be sent a letter which will inform them that they are at risk of receiving a fixed penalty fine if they persist in placing side waste next to the bin.
3. If a resident places side waste next to their bin on a **Third occasion** details will be taken the side waste will not be taken and they will be issued with a fixed penalty.

This procedure will be reviewed after 6 months to evaluate what future enforcement requirements are needed. Included in this policy will be guidance on times when it is reasonable to present your bin for collection which will be not before 6 pm the night before collection and it should returned back to the curtilage of the property as soon as possible after collection as this will help to reduce the risk of arson. Also included will be the requirements necessary for to have 2 refuse bins.

We believe that a large number of residents that currently have a second bin and do not

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meet the criteria needed with this in mind we are going to have an amnesty to allow residents to contact the council to make arrangements to have any bins they should not have collected. Following this amnesty period we will review our position and if required implement an enforced collection programme. Extra recycling boxes will be offered to any resident who feels they have a need during this implementation period of this policy.

4.2.4 The green waste service is continuing to run very successfully and is operating to maximum capacity. Tonnages have increased from the same period last year by 188 tonnes, which is very pleasing however if tonnages continue to increase consideration will have to be given to increase resources in this service area.

The service is very popular with residents and many requests are received from residents who do not get this service for it to be introduced into their area. It is proposed to carry out a feasibility study regarding extending the green waste collection service throughout the District. This will be reported in due course.

4.2.5 Discussions are ongoing with Create (furniture re-use charity) to develop a partnership for the white goods (fridges, washers, cookers etc) collection service, as they would like to start and offer white goods for re-use. Whilst options are being considered we are going to pilot delivering all our white good collections to their premises in Horden from Tuesday 4th September to enable them to start to increase their trainees and offer re-use items as soon as possible. There will be a loss of income to the council from the scrap sales however this will be compensated by a saving in fuel use and downtime for the operatives and vehicle due to not having to travel to the disposal site at Spennymoor.

4.3 **Clean & Green Teams**

4.3.1 The clean and green teams continue to operate successfully and will see the introduction of 2 new apprentices on 3rd September following recruitment early in the year. These 2 positions are going to be filled by a male and female who will be trained to a NVQ standard in horticultural and street cleansing functions.

4.3.2 A compact footpath sweeper/ washer has been demonstrated on paved areas and footpaths with very positive results all the team leaders feel that this machine will be an asset to deliver improvements to the service as it will address detritus on the back edges of the footpaths and staining on paved areas which is very important to maintaining improvements to BVPI 199. Consideration is to be given to introduce this machine in April 2008.

4.3.3 A value for money review has started on the horticultural service it is envisaged that this will be completed in early January to enable a report to be presented to resources scrutiny committee on 19th February 2008. A soft market test is being undertaken by EDH with the council and an external provider for all the horticultural services presently provided by the council to assess if we are providing value for money. Following the market testing, which will be completed on The 6th September 2007 EDH will evaluate and decide if they are going to subject this work to a formal tender process.

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- 4.3.4 Grass cutting operations overall have been consistent in maintaining the cutting cycles throughout the district. Some of the flower displays around the district planted with geraniums and marigolds have not been very satisfactory due to the excessive rainfall throughout the summer that has caused the flower heads to rot.
- 4.3.5 Based on the successful recent partnership working with the probation service on environmental projects throughout the district on a Sunday every week, which has seen 2,626 un-paid hours devoted by the probation service teams both partners have agreed to extend the current partnership to working an additional team of 6-8 offenders from Monday – Friday on pre selected projects. This new partnership commenced on Monday 13th august 2007 and was launched by Cllr Margaret Nugent chair of the district council following the probation services national initiative run with local authorities called the “Mayor’s Project ” details of which are provided in **Appendix 4**.
- 4.3.6 The graffiti removal machine continues to operate very successfully in the District and pathfinder area and receives regular support from the Probation Service and the Environment Agency. This service has now been mainstreamed and the temporary position has been filled permanently following a successful recruitment process. In addition to graffiti removal there has been 10 new bus shelters painted with anti graffiti wax and 100 lampposts in the Peterlee area coated on the bottom section with black anti graffiti paint.

Total of graffiti removed from 01.06.05 – 31.08.07

Pathfinder areas – 1404. Outlining areas in the district – 2484.

Pathfinder			Outlining		
April	2007	24	April	2007	42
May	2007	44	May	2007	93
June	2007	65	June	2007	71
July	2007	31	July	2007	95
August	2007	28	August	2007	86

4.4 Environmental Enforcement Team

The street wardens operate from Peterlee, Seaham and Easington Police Offices which is proving to have great benefits in promoting joint working with Police Beat Officers and Community Support Officers

- 4.4.1 A multi agency 4 day operation (Milkshake) took place in May 07 involving Police, Street & Environmental Wardens, Clean & Green Teams, Fire Brigade, Trading Standards, VOSA, East Durham Home, Community Safety, Education Welfare, DVLA, Environment Agency along with others. This is a targeted enforcement initiative in Horden and Blackhall with the agencies working together to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and the local environmental.

The operation was a great success with some shown in Appendix 8. The enforcement

teams contribution to these were:

- Large number of high visibility patrol hours conducted by Street & Environmental Wardens,
- 73 enforcement actions against nuisance vehicles helps make the District safer and included the removal of untaxed and uninsured vehicles.
- 3 Fixed penalty notices issued for littering and dog fouling by Street & Environmental Wardens.
- Arranging a large amount of rubbish removed by Council Clean and Green Teams preventing illegal fires.
- 5 warning and 5 pending prosecutions for 'waste carrier license' contraventions helping make the district cleaner through reduced flytipping.

The success of this operation has also lead to a further 4 day operation in Sept 07.

4.4.2 Secondary deliberate fires (arson) and incidents of criminal damage

The Audit Commission has expressed concern about the level of secondary deliberate fires and incidents of criminal damage occurring within the district. The numbers of these incidents are higher than elsewhere within the county and are rising. In response to this the police, fire brigade and community services directorate have been holding working group meetings to identify potential causes and to develop action plans to reduce the problem.

Analysis of the statistics regarding secondary fires shows that refuse and refuse containers is the most significant cause.

Service improvements to control the problem include

- Adopting a policy limiting the times bins can be left in the street and banning side waste,
- Securing funding from the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder to create a dedicated post to tackle the problem.
- Improve partnership working with the probation service to remove refuse etc from disused sites,
- Seeking to streamline our procedures for securing void buildings, and removing rubbish from yards.

It is anticipated that these actions will prevent some incidents of secondary fires and it is hoped that this will help reverse the trend.

4.4.3 Nuisance Vehicles

Joint patrols with the DVLA enforcement team has resulted in 25 untaxed vehicles being removed from the streets between April and August 2007, many of these were approaching end of life and would have potentially ended up abandoned or burned out.

A scheme has also been initiated in partnership with the police to remove uninsured vehicles from the roads. There have been 33 vehicles removed under this scheme from April to August 2007.

In addition to the new BVPIs in the appendix, a local performance indicator has been developed to monitor the success of these actions by assessing the number of burned out abandoned vehicles occurring in the District as follows:-

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Indicator	Total 2002/03	Total 2003/04	Total 2004/05	Total 2005/06	Total 2006/07	01 April – 31 August 2007
Total reports received including all untaxed and uninsured vehicles	691	587	774	778	462	150
No removed immediately	0	117	122	101	37	13
No. served with 24 hour notice.	0	132	163	108	71	22

This reduction in reports reflects the work that continues to tackle nuisance along with other factors. In January 07 the Government made producers of vehicles responsible for the disposal of them through a network of authorised treatment facilities (ATF's) which is **free** to the public. The Clean Neighbourhood Act 2005 has also provided local authorities with the ability to issue fixed penalty notices for 'abandoning a vehicle', the enforcement team is currently tracing some of the owners to issue or prosecute some of these owners.

4.4.4 Dogs, Litter and Graffiti

In April a two week 'good dog ownership' campaign was run in conjunction with the Pride in Easington Team, this included:

- Educational activities in schools
- 100,000 poop a scoop bags given away to residents through town/parish councils
- Blitz bus in many villages around the district promoting good dog ownership, providing advice and offering FREE vouchers for dogs to be neutered and microchipped
- Surveys of 200 transects and 200 people across the district showed that:
 - 36% was found free from dog dirt with 50% lightly fouled, 11% moderately fouled and 3% heavily fouled.
 - 98% confirmed that they know it was an offence not to clean up after their dogs and 84% knew it was harmful to health.
- Increased patrols of known dog fouling hotspots
- Appendices 5 and 6 are leaflets and posters from the campaign

This survey work will be carried out annually to benchmark progress in reducing the levels of dog dirt. Continuing publicity of enforcement activities is being acknowledged by community groups and area forums as encouraging more and more people to clean up after their dogs.

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	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	01 April 07 – 31 Aug 07
Dog Fouling Fines Issued	50	25	25	110	117	96	74	39
Complaints of stray dogs and fouling	845	892	896	797	930	1235	1325	669
Litter fines issued	0	0	0	45	69	82	130	37

Graffiti is a blight on the community and along with the work carried out by the operational teams for removing the enforcement team has been able to assist with reducing this problem.

Under the Clean Neighbourhood Act 2005 local authorities were given powers to serve 'defacement removal' notices on private property owners to remove graffiti and fly posting. Defra guidance is specific that prior to notices being served that sustained attempt at partnership working must be taken. The enforcement team through this work has agreed two partnership arrangements and working on others. Where this has not been possible we have served 9 'defacement removal' notices to tackle sites that had long term graffiti on. Issuing these notices resulted in the graffiti being removed within one week of receiving the notices. In working with the Pride in Easington team educational activities have occurred in a number of secondary schools in the district with the aim to reduce this blight.

4.4.5 **Wembley Estate, Easington Colliery – Anti Social Behaviour, Void Properties and Accumulations.**

In August 06 a coordinated approach started in an effort to make it a safer and cleaner place to live and including local members, residents, environmental enforcement, housing strategy, planning and Police.

The Street Wardens, are conducting weekly surveys identifying problem properties e.g. Voids, properties falling into disrepair and those owned by absent landlords, etc. Action is then taken by various officers to encourage those responsible for the properties to carry out the necessary work to upgrade the properties and bring them back into use. This uses powers from various sections across the council along with the Police.

The Street Wardens, the Police and the ASBU are working together to identify prolific offenders and take the action necessary to curb their behaviour. This had lead to both a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour and an improvement in the physical environment with accumulations being removed, walls being rebuilt and properties secured.

Residents and Landlords in the main have entered into the spirit of the project improving the area through clearing yards and gardens, rebuilding walls, removing accumulations and reducing crime and ASB. Much of this collaboration has been through discussions

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and assistance, where this has not lead to improvements enforcement action has been taken.

In August a week in action was took place in conjunction with the Pride in Easington and other partner agencies offering a variety of services, **Appendices 7 and 8** are posters and leaflet from the event. The event was a success and in particular engaged with the young people. PC Malcolm Pugh, and the colliery crime busters (CCB) carried out 3 litter picks with the latter being filmed by Tyne Tees TV and photographed by local press. In total 8 CCB's took part with a further 11 young people from the area collecting over 80 bags of litter. Skips were available for residents to get rid of their rubbish and these were full each day.

The services offered included vouchers for chipping and neutering, Fire service offered free home safety checks and smoke alarms, Police, PCSO's and Street Wardens were on hand for advice on problems as were the dog wardens.

Youth workers were on the Blitz bus both days between 5-tpm and this was a very popular service with more than 30 youth people attending daily. 10 young people also signed up for the 'Free the Way – We Live Here 2' project which support children affected by problems in their area and in particular drugs.

4.4.6 Flytipping

During the 2006/7 we achieve a grade 1 BVPI 199 rating for our efforts to tackle fly tipping. This is the highest score and an improvement from a score of 4 from 2005/6. To achieve this there must be a reduction in fly tipping incidents and an increase in enforcement activities.

Enforcement activities are through areas such as prosecutions, fixed penalty notices, formal cautions, and warning letters along with other means. There are two new areas of enforcement that have improved the level and variety of enforcement, 'stop and search' operations and duty of care inspections. Stop and searches taken place during Police organised multi agency operations to date and involve the inspection of licenses of vehicles who are carrying waste, the result of the operation carried out to date has been 5 warnings a 5 pending prosecutions for not having a 'waste carriers license'. 'Duty of care' inspections are happening, through working with our commercial enforcement colleagues. During food hygiene visits officers are checking where waste from the premises is being disposed.

In addition to the council staff dealing on a day to day basis with fly tipping criminals this year we are part of a partnership with other councils across Durham and the Environment Agency to employ a specialist to assist with expert advice, interviews of suspects, prosecution and training for staff. The officer has recently provided training to all clean and green teams on how to gather evidence when they come across flytipping.

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This support has helped the ongoing operations against flytipping which include such things as:

- Investigation into each and every report
- Warning signage at hotspots
- Covert cameras at hotspots have captured evidence of some flytipping perpetrators
- Joint stop and search operations with the Environment Agency
- Extensive media coverage, including highlighting house holders responsibilities and our actions to prevent flytipping.

4.5 Environmental Strategy Team

Recycling performance has improved dramatically the last year as a result of a number of initiatives. This improvement has continued into this financial year, however there has been a decline during the second and third quarters largely because other Durham District are now sending their waste to the aerobic digester. The apportionment of waste going to the aerobic digester is beyond our control and if our apportionment were to reduce significantly this may have a significant impact on our ability to hit targets.

Tonnage of material collected via the kerb-it scheme has increased by 14% on the same period last year and we have attained some of highest rates of kerb-it recycling this summer. Our participation rate has increased to around 40 to 45% however we are not closing the gap on the other Durham Districts who are part of the kerb-it scheme as their participation rates have increased by a greater degree. The County Durham partnership recycling promotion team were back in the District during November promoting the kerb-it scheme and analysing reasons for low participation so that promotional campaigns can be better targeted. Resource Futures were also in the district during October carrying out a waste composition study at approximately one hundred households. Further studies are to be undertaken throughout the year by which time the data may be used to identify further recycling streams.

Complaints are received regarding the operation of the kerb-it scheme including for example missed collections, littering by crews, not replacing boxes etc. Each complaint is investigated and regular meetings are held with Premier Waste Management to monitor contract delivery and to resolve operation difficulties. The numbers of complaints regarding delivery of boxes has drastically reduced since we took over our own deliveries.

DEFRA have set new recycling targets to be introduced from 1/4/07 which for Easington will mean the target is increased from 18% to 20%.

During the first five months of 2007/08 18279 special collections were processed. During the first nine months of the year 2006/2007, income from special collections was £7500.

879 trade refuse contracts have been administered by the Envirocall team.

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Envirocall	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	01 April 07 – 31 Aug 07
Telephone Calls handled	61,136	103,896	125,957	117,854	111,943	59,408
Special Collection Requests processed	35,199	40,625	45,775	33,102	29,818	18,279
Environmental Cleanup requests processed	3,125	3,044	2,909	3,641	3,124	1,293
Other Service Requests processed	12,041	14,104	20,519	26,637	29,890	12,703

New Procedure for addressing complaints regarding the Kerb-it service

Following the complaint to a previous service delivery scrutiny committee by a resident of Peterlee a meeting was held with Durham County Council and Premier Waste Management and the procedure for dealing with complaints against the Kerb-it service has been introduced. The procedure now involves;

- Monthly meetings will be held between the district of Easington's Environmental Co-ordinator for waste management and David Carpenter General Manager with Premier Waste. The County Council's Authorised Officer for the Kerb-it contract will attend as appropriate.
These meetings will discuss operational problems and discuss performance generally. One off service problems such as missed collection and behaviour of the collection crews will be dealt with at these meetings. Performance of Premier Waste will be compared against the Council's performance in collecting residual waste.
- Repeat complaints will be referred the County Council's Authorised Officer for the contract who will assess whether there has been any failure on behalf of the contractor and whether it is appropriate to serve a default notice and default points will be awarded. A brief report of the findings of her assessment will be returned to the District Council.
- In the event of very serious one off incidents or repeat incidents causing significant disruption to residents the Nominated Representative of the District Council may serve a Rectification Notice on Premier Waste detailing the action required to remedy a breach of contract. Any failure by the contractor to conform with the requirement of a Rectification Notice would be referred to the County Council's Authorised Officer who would assess whether a Default Notice should be served and whether default points would be awarded. The District Council's Nominated Officer also has the option to take this action directly.

Since the last meeting we have had two serious complaints regarding the kerb-it service that have resulted in Rectification Notices being served. One resulted in the problem being rectified and the other was not rectified and has been referred to the Council to use the Default procedure.

6. Recommendations

6.1 Members views are welcomed on the contents of the report.

Paul Penman; Operations Manager

Keith Parkinson; Environmental Health and Licensing Manager

Background documents referred to:

- i) Best Value Performance Plan 2007
- ii) Unit Service Plans