



Civic Centre,
Crook,
County Durham.
DL15 9ES
Tel: 01388 765555 Fax: 01388 766660
Minicom: 01388 761515 e-mail: m.laing@wearvalley.gov.uk

Michael Laing Chief Executive

28th August 2007

Dear Councillor,

I hereby give you Notice that a Meeting of the **HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC CENTRE, CROOK** on **WEDNESDAY, 5th SEPTEMBER 2007** at **6.00 P.M.**

AGENDA

	Page No.
1. Apologies for absence.	
2. To consider the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 th July 2007 as a true record.	Copies previously circulated
3. To consider the Durham Sub-Regional Housing Strategy 2007 – 2011.	1 - 5
4. To consider "The Cave Review".	6 – 7
5. To consider a Performance Management Framework.	8 – 10
6. To consider the Community Involvement Action Plan 2007 – 2008.	11 – 28
7. To consider the Community Department Service Standards.	29 – 60
8. To consider "Communities England" – a new housing and regeneration agency.	61 - 62
9. To consider such other items of business which, by reason of special circumstances so specified, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.	

Yours faithfully

Chief Executive

Members of this Committee: Councillors Bailey, Mrs Bolam, Mrs Burn, Mrs Carrick, Mrs Douthwaite, Ferguson, Gale, Mrs Hardaker, Henry, Kay, Murphy*, Mrs Seabury*, J Shuttleworth, Sinclair, Stonehouse, Ward and Yorke.

*Ex-officio, non-voting capacity

Chair: Councillor Gale

Deputy Chair: Councillor Sinclair

TO: All other Members of the Council for information
Management Team



HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community
DURHAM SUB REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2007-2011

purpose of the report

To inform Committee of the first housing strategy for the Durham sub-region.

background

- 1 The Durham Housing and Neighbourhood Group are a partnership of local authorities, housing organisations and other stakeholders, such as the PCT. The Group's joint vision was to "*make your home in Durham a great place to live*". From this vision the Group have produced a strategy that deals with sub regional housing issues and contributes towards regional policy development and local neighbourhood priorities.

four key aims

- 2 The strategy is based around four key aims that are all underpinned by the need to have a 'strong and supportive housing market' that:-
 - Supports the regeneration of existing communities and associated economic growth.
 - Offers a wide choice of affordable housing of the right quality.
 - Invests in its existing housing across all communities
 - Supports all sections of the community, especially older persons and other people with additional needs.
- 3 The strategy sets out the direction of travel and partnership/joint working arrangements for the next five years.

impact on wear valley

- 4 The sub-regional strategy has been developed with input from your officers. In Annex A consideration is given to each of the four strategic areas and associated objectives and what the potential impact could be for Wear Valley.

summary

- 5 Members are aware of the role accessible, affordable and acceptable housing has in promoting healthy safe and strong communities. The five year sub-regional strategy sets out the proposals for achieving this objective and should be welcomed in providing the five year strategy link between Wear Valley's housing strategy and that of the regional strategy produced by the Regional Housing Board.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 Committee notes the potential impact of the Durham sub regional housing strategy.
- 2 Committee requests that officers of the Council continue to be members of the Durham Housing & Neighbourhood Group.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Strategic Director for the Community
Ext 281

Author of the report
David Milburn
AD Policy & Resources
Ext 379

Aim 1 – supporting regeneration of existing communities and associated economic growth

Objective	Impact on Wear Valley
1A - Housing investment is co-ordinated in targeted communities to support housing market renewal in former coalfield communities	Work already well developed in coalfield communities of Coundon & Tow Law Wear Valley are working in a co-ordinated approach through the Coalfields Housing Renewal Partnership Board
1B – Economic performance in former coalfield and isolated rural communities is aligned to the regional average.	The Local Development Framework supports market renewal in both the coalfield and rural communities. Rural issues on isolation, engagement and affordability are being addressed and we will continue to work with relevant rural agencies.
1C – Both the built and the physical environment is enhanced through housing investment and Durham develops further as an ‘environmentally friendly’ place to live.	Neighbourhoods and estate regeneration, linked to ‘cleaner, safer, greener’ initiatives has commenced in areas such as Woodhouse Close. In addition the Council have also prioritised investment towards energy issues, street cleansing, refuse and reduction of anti-social behaviour

Aim 2 – offers a wide choice of affordable housing of the right quality

Objective	Impact on Wear Valley
2A – All households, particularly those in higher value rural areas, are able to access housing that meets these needs at a price they can afford.	Affordability issues are a problem in the Dales. The Council currently work with the Housing Corporation and RSL’s in delivering effective affordable housing, for example Wolsingham. Economic regeneration around Crook is also linked to housing development
2B – New housing schemes for sale include an agreed component of affordable housing to meet local needs.	This is promoted within Wear Valley from the initial development brief by outlining requirements for mixed communities and supply of affordable housing, for example the St Andrews Estate development.
2C – Affordable housing for rent and intermediate housing for sale is offered and managed on principles of choice for the customer.	Wear Valley and Dale & Valley Homes are progressing on the development of a sub-regional choice based letting scheme linking all social and private landlords.
2D – Affordable housing is managed in a cost effective and efficient manner.	The work of the Durham Housing and Neighbourhoods Group seeks to consider shared protocols to efficiencies. The Customer Panel contributes towards sub-regional and regional networking.

Aim 3 – investing its existing housing across all communities

<p>3A – Public sector tenants have homes that will be maintained and improved to decent homes standards and beyond.</p>	<p>Dale & Valley Homes, by achieving two stars, can now access £27 million additional decent homes funding target on the most vulnerable.</p>
<p>3B – Owner occupiers, especially those on limited incomes or limited savings, have the means to maintain and improve their homes to decent homes standards and beyond.</p>	<p>The Dales Home Improvement Agency promote and provide grants to the most needy of our community. We are aware of the condition of private sector stock and are targeting known ‘hotspots’ such as Coundon. Investment in other areas, such as Eldon Lane, has made a real difference to residents.</p>
<p>3C – Private tenants have homes that benefit from effective working with their landlords in order to improve and maintain their homes to decent homes standards and beyond and deliver improved management standards.</p>	<p>100% of all landlords within Wear Valley are now licensed and accredited ensuring private landlords are aware of their requirements and responsibilities.</p>
<p>3D – A range of interventions are developed and delivered in communities and neighbourhoods where housing conditions are significantly below the average for the country.</p>	<p>Group repair schemes, such as Eldon Lane, have ensured terraced housing has a sustainable future. The gap between the worst and the rest of private sector is narrowing through other agendas such as the coalfields work.</p>
<p>3E – Significant improvements to energy efficiency will be achieved across all tenures and areas.</p>	<p>Investment has been prioritised by members to address areas of fuel poverty. This has been supported through grants and partnership working. In addition works to improve decency standards across all tenures has achieved results.</p>

Aim 4 – supports all sections of the community, especially older people and people with additional needs

Objective	Wear Valley
4A – People, particularly older persons, can be given support to remain in the place they consider their home for as long as possible.	Wear Valley continue to invest in disabled grants on both private and public sectors. In addition schemes such as the Handyvan service will provide rapid response to minor repairs.
4B – People who cannot actively participate in the housing market by virtue of either their mental or physical capacity are given advice and support to secure the most appropriate accommodation for their needs.	Specialist needs are identified and addressed in partnership with Social Services, Supporting People and the PCT, DFGs and the work of the Home Improvement Agency continue to be a major factor in addressing this objective.
4C – People who are at risk of social exclusion are given appropriate advice and support which enables them to access and sustain their own housing.	The Council and Dale & Valley Homes seek to address these issues through agendas such as money advice service, community involvement, focus groups, supporting people links and our equalities and diversity work. Further work may be required on drug and substance misuse advice and the HARP protocol at a sub-regional level.
4D – People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are given immediate advice and support that helps them to get the alternative accommodation they need.	Currently the Council’s homelessness service can be seen as operating very effectively. Investment has been made for the provision of temporary, emergency accommodation at Dellside.



HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community
PUTTING TENANTS FIRST – THE CAVE REVIEW

purpose of the report

To inform committee of the publication of the review into options for reform of social housing regulation.

background

- 1 In December 2006 the DCLG commenced a review of housing regulation conducted by Professor Martin Cave of Warwick University.
- 2 The independent six month review has published its findings and recommendations in the document “Every Tenant Matters : a review of social housing regulation”. This document forms a major part of what has been described as the most wide-ranging review of social housing regulation in over 30 years.

key recommendations

- 3 The ‘Cave’ Review aims to protect tenants by giving tenants more power in having a real say in the management of their homes as well as reducing burdens on good landlords.
- 4 The key recommendations include:-
 - Introduction of a new social housing ‘watchdog’ with powers to obtain information and to inspect; power to cap rent increases due to poor performance; to set and issue fines or penalties; and, in cases of persistent poor performance, where landlords have failed to respond to previous interventions, the power to transfer management (including transfer to tenants) and/or ownership
 - Plans to publish ‘league table’ information on how landlords score on the standard of housing, tenant satisfaction, operating costs and rents. This will enable people to compare the quality of their landlords.
 - To establish a new national consumer champion body for tenants. This body will have a role in influencing local, regional and national government to ensure tenants voices are heard at all levels.

- Impose a duty on landlords to engage constructively with local authorities in place – shaping function.
- To establish a regulatory body, independent of Government, as the primary regular of ownership and management of all social housing. Government will still be entitled to issue strategic directions on rent levels and standards of housing provision.

effect on Wear Valley

- 5 The 'Cave' Review will impose a number of additional requirements on Dale & Valley Homes in terms of provision of management information. The introduction of a powerful 'watchdog' organisation should be welcomed as a wide range of penalties and sanctions can be placed on failing landlords.
- 6 The new 'consumer voice' again, should be welcomed. Within Wear Valley housing services have been designed, operated and evaluated in partnership with the Customer Panel. The 'consumer champion' can be seen as a national 'customer panel' and, hopefully, some representation from Wear Valley can be made on this new body.
- 7 Dale & Valley Homes should also be pleaded to see the proposal to relax regulation on good performing landlords. These freedoms will allow landlords to concentrate on getting services right and building more homes for customers.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 Committee notes the contents in the Cave Review 'Every Tenant Matters: a review of social housing regulation'.
- 2 Committee support any bid from the Customer Panel for representation on the national 'consumer' body.

Officer responsible for the report
 Michael Laing
 Strategic Director for the Community
 Ext 281

Author of the report
 David Milburn
 AD Policy & Resources
 Ext 379



HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

purpose of the report

To propose a Performance Management Framework for the management of information and improvement of services in the Strategic Communities Department.

background

- 1 Performance management is the appropriate use of qualitative and quantitative information to improve the delivery and quality of services and the work of individuals.
- 2 Performance management is an essential component of a corporate governance framework. It enables managers to lead, monitor and respond to how an organisation delivers against its goals, vision and the outcomes required by its customers and the government.
- 3 Effective performance management requires a framework that integrates organisational, service and individual planning and performance. It should involve:
 - An identification and definition of performance objectives and measures;
 - Periodic performance appraisal of services, individuals and teams against these objectives;
 - Feedback from appraisals; and
 - Recognition or reward for excellent performance and planning for remedial action in the case of poor performance.
- 4 This report addresses each of these issues. The report explores:
 - The identification of local performance indicators;
 - The systems we will put in place to monitor and appraise, improve and manage performance; and
 - How we will feedback to staff and elected members.

local performance indicators

- 5 Managers have identified a detailed set of local performance indicators, that they will use to manage and improve their services. The indicators will be reviewed in partnership with customers once a Citizens Panel is established.
- 6 These local performance indicators will be reported to Departmental Management Team on a monthly basis and include leisure, street cleansing, homelessness, refuse and recycling, street wardens and burials.
- 7 Indicators reports include –
 - Number of jobs/users/cases per month;
 - Satisfaction with the service (number of respondents and percentage of satisfaction);
 - Number of complaints, concerns, praise or recommendations (for trend analysis and service development);
 - Costs compared to budget;
 - Income; and
 - BVPIs.
- 8 The Repairs Service will report indicators on a monthly basis (until the service is transferred to another provider):

quarterly reporting

- 9 The following services will collect and report performance on a quarterly basis:-
 - Grounds maintenance
 - Home Improvement Agency and DFGs
 - Private Sector Housing
 - Arts Projects
 - Wellness on Wheels
 - CPACs
 - Walking Way to Health
 - Referrals and Cardiac Rehab
 - Sports Club Development
 - Street Wardens Service
 - Tenancy Enforcement
 - Community Safety
 - Refuse and Recycling

annual performance

- 10 BVPIs contained in the Council's Best Value Performance Plan will be reported annually.

- 11 An 'outcomes' section enables officers to highlight the positive affect the service has had on the community. This supports the Council's drive to achieve a "good" rating at a CPA recategorisation inspection, as the authority will be able to more easily demonstrate tangible outcomes.

systems to monitor, appraise, improve and manage performance

- 12 If performance is greatly improving or declining a report is to be given to DMT by the appropriate managers on a monthly basis.
- 13 Action plans for improvement are to be developed and are to be reported to DMT within three months. If an indicator is performing particularly poorly a dedicated Performance Improvement Team can be established in consultation with the Performance Officer and Corporate Development Unit.
- 14 A departmental Service Plan has also been developed. The Service Development Manager will meet with each team to develop work plans, in accordance with the Service Plan. Progress against the work plans (and therefore the Service Plan) will be reported to DMT on a quarterly basis and to both Committees every six months.
- 15 Staff will review PDPs in line with the newly developed work plans by October 2007.

how we will feedback to staff and elected members

- 16 Monthly performance reports will go to DMT and a report addressing BVPI and progress against the Service Plan will go to Committee on a six monthly basis.
- 17 Major outcomes or performance improvements will be acknowledged in Wear Valley Matters, Teamtalk and an opportunity for successful teams to discuss their achievements with the Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team and other Officers.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 Committee approves the proposed Performance Management Framework for the Community Department.
- 2 Committee receives reports regarding Performance information on a 6 monthly cycle.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Strategic Director for the Community
Ext 281

Author of the report



HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2007 - 2008

purpose of the report

To seek Committee approval for the implementation of the newly developed Community Involvement Action Plan 2007 – 2008.

background

1. In March 2007, the Communities Department advertised for the post of Community Involvement Manager to develop and lead on a Community Involvement Service for the department. In June 2007, a Community Involvement Manager was appointed and began in post on Monday 23rd July 2007. Subsequent to the successful appointment of the Community Involvement Manager, a Community Involvement Officer has also been appointed to the team and will commence employment with the department in August 2007.
2. Although Community Involvement is a new service within the department, the recently developed Communities Department - Service Improvement Plan 2007/2008 identifies a number of consultation methods and activities that have been implemented between 2006/2007. This demonstrates the department's commitment to involving the local community in the development, design and delivery of services.
3. The ultimate aims of the new Community Involvement Team are to ensure all consultation activities for all services provided by the department are co-ordinated, utilised fully to achieve service outcomes and improvements and are accessible and inclusive.

community involvement action plan (appendix 1)

4. In order to set up a new Community Involvement Service for the Communities Department, a strategic framework must exist in order to drive service development. The newly drafted Community Involvement Action Plan aims to provide a basic framework on which to develop.
5. The Community Involvement Action Plan consists of 7 fundamental action points which cover a variety of developmental activities including the following:

- **Development of a Consultation Guide** to co-ordinate all consultation activities and to provide customers with a 'user-friendly' guide on how they can become involved in the services provided by the Communities Department. This guide will link heavily to the departmental Consultation Plan and the Citizens Panel, both of which are to be developed as part of the larger Service Improvement Plan.
- **Development of an "Opportunity Menu"** to offer customers a wide variety of involvement methods. These methods will include Focus Groups, Working Groups, Mystery Shopping scheme, Citizens Panel, Website Polls, Discussion Forums and a Customer Publications Team.
- **Development of staff training sessions/workshops** to raise awareness amongst staff of the new Community Involvement Service and the available involvement options. The sessions will also provide staff with an opportunity to ask questions and evaluate their role in contributing to wider consultation across the district.
- **Development of a Community Involvement Leaflet, Service Standard and webpage** to promote and raise awareness of the Community Involvement Service within the district. The potential to develop a Community Involvement DVD and/or Audio Tape could also be researched.
- **Development of a Community Involvement Service Newsletter** which all service areas will be encouraged to contribute to. This newsletter will increase the provision of information to customers and will provide an opportunity to promote our good work and show service improvements as a result of customer feedback. The action plan ensures that no overlap occurs between the frequency of the Community Involvement Service Newsletter and the Wear Valley Matters/Dale Mail newsletters.
- **Development of Community Involvement Strategy** which will confirm our commitment as a department to the engagement of customers in service provision. The Strategy will contain a further action plan for implementation that will begin where this basic Action Plan ceases.
- **Development of partnership links with local Residents Associations and Community Groups along with local agencies** that represent our hard-to-reach groups (as determined by the Customer Profile information).

It must be noted that this action plan does not aim to be an exhaustive list of actions points. The Community Involvement Action Plan will focus on establishing a good foundation which will then lead to the development of further, more in-depth action plans stemming from the Community Involvement Strategy.

community department – service improvement plan 2007- 2008

6. The Community Involvement Action Plan detailed above will form a good starting point and is closely linked to and aims to complement the larger Communities Department Service Improvement Plan 2007-2008. The Service Improvement Plan contains a number of action points for which the Community Involvement Manager/Community Involvement Team are responsible. These action points include the following:
 - Development of a Citizens Panel for the department
 - Development of an Equality and Diversity Strategy
 - Development of a Customer Profile
7. The Community Involvement Manager will be the lead officer on these larger pieces of research and development and this work will be of priority over the coming months.
8. Action points 2.1 (development of Service Standards) and 2.3 (development of service leaflets and the website) have been incorporated into the Community Involvement Action Plan for implementation by the new Community Involvement Officer.

corporate links

9. The successful implementation of both the Community Involvement Action Plan and the Communities Department - Service Improvement Plan 2007-2008 relies on close partnership working with the corporate body. Links have already been established between the Community Involvement Manager and the Corporate Customer Care Officer, Corporate Equality and Diversity Officer and Policy and Partnership Manager.
10. All action plans also link to both the Key Lines of Enquiry and Council Plan.

proposal

11. It is proposed that Committee approves the immediate implementation of the Community Involvement Action Plan as a means of developing the service. Any additional comments and/or amendments offered will be incorporated in to the action plan.
12. It is also proposed that regular updates be provided to Committee on the progress of the implementation of the action plan and the development of the Community Involvement service as a whole.

financial implications

13. The implementation of the Community Involvement Action Plan will incur expenditure in relation to the development of a Community Involvement leaflet, Service Standard leaflet, Consultation Guide, Community Involvement Newsletter and Community Involvement Strategy.
14. The Community Involvement Team do have a budget to cover the costs of the aforesaid developments and the Service Development Budget also has the potential to support some of these activities including the production of the Service Standard leaflet and Community Involvement leaflet.
15. Quotations for all the above activities will be obtained and value for money principles will be adhered to when procuring services.

human resource implications

16. Currently the Community Involvement Manager is working in partnership with the corporate centre to develop the Community Involvement Service via the sharing of information and expertise. The Community Involvement Manager will begin work on the Community Involvement Action Plan immediately alongside those actions stemming for the larger Service Improvement Plan. Human resource capacity will increase however once the new Community Involvement Officer joins the team. This Officer will be responsible for many of the actions outlined in the Community Involvement Action Plan.

legal implications

17. There are no legal implications regarding the development of the Community Involvement Action Plan or its implementation.

it implications

18. IT requirements will be met by the existing IT systems including Lotus Notes, Excel, Word and PowerPoint. The design of the promotional literature will be undertaken either in-house via Desk Top Publishing or via an external designer/printer.

crime and disorder implications

19. There are no crime and disorder implications regarding the development of the Community Involvement Action Plan or its implementation. However, involving local residents in the design and improvement of services will seek to reduce crime and disorder in the district.

equality and diversity implications

20. The Community Involvement Team and indeed the Communities Department as a whole is committed to ensuring all customers are treated equally and fairly and that all services are accessible. The development of an Equality and Diversity Strategy for the department will confirm this commitment. All activities developed by the Community Involvement Team will be accessible to all sectors of the community and any documentation will be available in alternative formats and languages.

timescale (appendix 2)

21. Timescales for the implementation of the individual milestones/targets are detailed within the action plan. The Action Plan commences in August 2007 and ceases in April 2008. A Project Plan to ensure a balanced workload for the Community Involvement Team has also been developed.
22. The timescales linked to those action points stemming from the Communities Department Service Improvement Plan 2007 - 2008 are based on those timescales detailed within the Council Plan where these action points feature.

summary

23. In light of the recent reviews and legislation published by the department for Communities and Local Government, it is essential that the Community Involvement service situated within the Communities Department becomes operational as soon as possible. The Community Involvement Action Plan will enable this to take place by providing a foundation on which to build an excellent service.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 Committee approves the Community Involvement Action Plan.
- 2 Committee approves the implementation of the Community Involvement Action Plan.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Strategic Director for the Community
Ext 281

Author of the report
Corinne Gardner
Community Involvement Manager
Ext 303

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
1.1 - Development of a 'Communities Consultation Guide' for the Communities Department	Increased resident involvement in the services provided by the Communities Department / Pros and Cons for many of the more common methods of consultation identified (leading to informed choices being made) / Ensures greater consultation, particularly involving those areas of the community whose views are less often considered / Links to the development of the Communities Citizen Panel	Research undertaken into Good Practice examples of Consultation Guides utilised by other Local Authorities	Aug-07	Community Involvement Officer / Community Involvement Manager			Nov-07	
		Development of Draft 1 of a new 'Consultation Guide' for the Communities Department based on research undertaken	Sep-07	Community Involvement Manager				
		Full consultation with staff / customers / DMT / SMT on draft 1 of Consultation Guide	Oct-07	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
		Comments based on above consultation fed in to Guide	Oct-07	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
		Consultation Guide to be sent to PLC to be approved and accredited	Oct-07	Community Involvement Officer / Service Development Officer				

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
		Report presented to Community Services Committee based on proposed adoption of and implementation of Guide for the Communities Department	Nov-07	Community Involvement Manager				
1.2 - Development of an 'Opportunity Menu' for the Communities Department	Increased number of involvement opportunities offered to local residents / Increased number of residents getting involved and having their say on the services provided by the Communities Department / Varying levels of participation offered and not limited / Provides a flexible involvement framework which can be utilised easily by staff from all service areas	Research undertaken into Good Practice examples of involvement opportunities	Aug-07	Community Involvement Officer / Community Involvement Manager			Oct-07	
		Identification of current consultation methods used by Communities Department and Gap Analysis produced (Staff requested to complete short survey based on identifying consultation methods currently utilised in their service area)	Sep-07	Community Involvement Officer				

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
		Development of Opportunity Menu based on research and Gap Analysis and then sent for consultation to staff / DMT / SMT	Sept 07-Oct 07	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
		Adoption of Opportunity Menu including its publicity and promotion (leaflets / posters / website)	Oct-07	Community Involvement Officer				
1.3 - Development of staff training sessions / workshops based on the Community Involvement Service	Increased staff awareness of the Community Involvement Service and its importance in the provision of services to customers / Increased staff awareness of	Arrange meeting between Community Involvement Team and Corporate Customer Care Officer to discuss the provision/content and schedule of the staff training on CI and A&CC	Oct-07	Community Involvement Officer			Dec-07	

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
provided by the Communities Department including a session on Access and Customer Care	access and customer care issues / Increased partnership working with the Corporate body in the provision of training	Book Council Chamber for the training sessions/workshops for the dates/times agreed at the initial meeting between CIT & CCC Officer	Oct-07-Nov 07	Community Involvement Officer				
		Develop the Training Session/Workshop based on the outcome of the meeting between the CIT & CCC Officer	Nov-07	Community Involvement Manager / Corporate Customer Care Officer				
		Send e-mail to all staff in the Communities Department inviting them to attend one of the training sessions/workshops as scheduled and set up databased to record response	Nov-07	Community Involvement Officer				
		Prepare handouts and flipcharts etc for the training sessions/workshops	Dec-07	Community Involvement Officer				

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
		Deliver training on Community Involvement and Access and Customer Care in partnership with the Corporate Customer Care Officer	Dec-07	Community Involvement Team / Corporate Customer Care Officer				
		Evaluation of training sessions/workshops	Dec-07	Community Involvement Team / Corporate Customer Care Officer				
1.4 - Development of a Community Involvement Service Standard Leaflet / Promotional Leaflet and dedicated Webpage Links to SIP 2.1 / 2.3	Increased promotion of the new Community Involvement Service and Team / Increased provision of information to customers on Community Involvement Service / Measured standards developed for the Community Involvement Service	Research Good Practice Webpages / Service Standards and Leaflets for Community Involvement Service	Sep-07	Community Involvement Officer			Nov-07	
		Liase with Service Development Officer in relation to the process of design and print of new leaflets and arrangements for design of webpage for Community Involvement	Sep-07	Community Involvement Officer / Service Development Officer				

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
		Begin design of Service Standard Leaflet / Promotional Leaflet and Webpage in consultation with staff and customers	Sept 07-Oct 07	Community Involvement Officer/ Community Involvement Manager				
		Receive drafts of leaflets which should then be PLC checked and approved	Oct-07	Community Involvement Officer				
		Obtain final copies of Service Standard and promotional leaflets from DTP and display in Mall of Civic ensuring all staff also have a copy	Nov-07	Community Involvement Officer				
		Once webpage for Community Involvement is established, monitor this on a monthly basis to ensure all information is kept up-to-date	On-going	Community Involvement Officer				

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
1.5 - Development of a Community Involvement Service Newsletter Schedule	Increased provision of information to both staff and customers on Community Involvement activities / Ensuring feedback is given to those customers who have participated / Good news stories and increased publicity for the Communities Department	Research examples of existing Community Involvement Newsletters including Good Practice	Dec-07	Community Involvement Officer			Feb-08	
		Identify timescales for other newsletters produced by WVDC so as not to duplicate information / frequency	Dec-07	Community Involvement Officer				
		Meet with SMT / DMT to determine articles to be placed in the newsletter and the format/frequency of the document	Jan-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
		Obtain quotations from x3 design and print companies such as Moor Graphics/ Inprint/ Hillprint/ DTP based on agreed size of newsletter and number of copies	Jan-08	Community Involvement Officer				

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
		Produce Timetable/Schedule for the production of a Communities Newsletter. Schedule to be based on agreed frequency of production	Feb-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
1.6 - Development of a Community Involvement Strategy for the Communities Department	Confirms our commitment as a department to the engagement of customers in service provision / Emphasises the links to and the importance of recent relevant legislation issued by the CLG / Places increased emphasis on delivering change and improved outcomes based on customer consultation and participation	Research Good Practice examples of Community Involvement Strategies from other Local Authorities	Jan-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
		Hold meeting with DMT / SMT re: content and production of a Community Involvement Strategy for the Communities Department	Jan-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer			Apr-07	

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
		Based on the above either a) Begin first draft of Strategy or b) Approach x3 consultants to request quotations for development of Strategy and action plan and choose most appropriate agency	Feb-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
		Arrange workshops with customers (and CIT or CIT and Consultant) to develop first draft including action plan to undergo full consultation with staff, customers, DMT, SMT, relevant committees	Mar-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer / Consultant (if applicable)				
		Comments based on above consultation fed in to Strategy	Mar 08 - Apr 08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer / Consultant (if applicable)				

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
		Report on development and implementation of Strategy	Apr-08	Community Involvement Manager				
1.7 - Engage with local Residents Associations / Community Groups / Local Agencies	Increased partnership working with established local agencies and groups / Increased promotion of Community Involvement Service / Established links to agencies in contact with local hard-to-reach groups / Wider community involvement	Meet with CDU to discuss partnership contacts as stored in database and add any additional contacts	Oct-07	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer			Mar-08	
		Write out to local agencies / community groups to arrange meetings to introduce new team and the opportunities available for involvement. This will involve the attendance at local RA meetings - obtain dates of meetings from secretary's of each RA	Nov 07 - Dec 07	Community Involvement Officer				

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/ Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
		Hold meetings / attend RA meetings to promote service and establish contacts / promotion of opportunities menu and membership to Citizens Panel	Jan 08 - Mar 08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
		Update partnership database and contacts based on above meetings	Mar-08	Community Involvement Officer				



HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community **COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT – SERVICE STANDARDS**

purpose of the report

To seek comments from Committee regarding the Community Department Service Standards.

background

- 1 Service standards provide 3 key functions:
 - they describe for customers the minimum standards they can expect from Council services
 - they provide a benchmark for staff, who will know what is expected of them through the services they deliver; and
 - they are a tool for measuring the quality of service delivery and can be used to drive service improvement.
- 2 The development of service standards is included in the Audit Commission's Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE's) for Culture, and Access and Customer Care.
- 3 The Community Department established a new performance management framework in July 2007, of which service standards are part.
- 4 The development of service standards is a key action in the Community Department's Service Plan 2007/08, and their implementation contributes to corporate objectives such as Population and Organisational Excellence.

service standards

- 5 Service standards have been produced for the following topics:
 - Abandoned Vehicles
 - Allotments
 - Anti Social Behaviour
 - Arts Development
 - Bulky Waste collections
 - Cemeteries / Burials
 - Community Safety
 - CPAC
 - Dog fouling
 - Domestic Violence

- Fly tipping
- Grounds Maintenance
- Health referrals
- Home Improvement Agency includes Aids and Adaptations / Disabled Facilities Grants
- Homelessness Service
- Hypodermic needles
- Parks
- Playgrounds
- Recycling
- Refuse collection
- Sports Club Development
- Sports Facilities
- Stanhope Town Hall
- Street Cleansing / Graffiti
- Street Wardens
- Tenancy Enforcement
- Wear Walking for Health
- WOW

6 In addition to the above, there are generic customer care standards, as follows:

- Customer Care Statement
- Making Appointments and Interviewing You
- Staff code of conduct
- Writing to You and Speaking with You

7 The standards will be publicised in an A5 booklet. A draft is available in Appendix 1.

consultation

8 Managers within the department drafted the standards for their respective services, in consultation with their staff and drawing on examples of best practice from other authorities.

9 A customer focus group was held on 3 August 2007, facilitated by the Department's Service Development Officer, along with the Department's two Assistant Directors.

10 Customers in the group praised the development of the standards, as it was generally felt that more publicity of the Department's services was needed.

11 The focus group participants were given an additional week to provide further comments.

12 The draft standards were also publicised on the Council's website. This consultation period was for a period of one week.

- 13 All customer comments were discussed with relevant staff. In the majority of cases, comments were accepted and the standards were amended accordingly.
- 14 All participants in the focus group have been sent a copy of the revised standards, including details of which comments were accepted and explanations where comments were not included.

publication

- 15 The standards will undergo the accreditation process for use of plain language, and at the time of writing, a quotation has been requested for this work to be completed.
- 16 The standards will be published in an A5 booklet and officers are working closely with colleagues within the Desktop Publishing section of the corporate centre to ensure corporate requirements in terms of accessibility, equality and design are met.
- 17 It is proposed that the final document will be printed by external sources, and quotations for this work will be sought in the near future.
- 18 The final document is expected to be available for customers in October 2007.

monitoring

- 19 It is proposed that 3 main methods of performance management are used to monitor the service standards:
 - Satisfaction surveys
 - Performance targets
 - Customer engagement tools
- 20 The service standards will be used as a basis for developing satisfaction survey questions, so that feedback can be analysed to demonstrate the level of adherence to the standards.
- 21 Satisfaction information will be collected across the Department from September 2007.
- 22 Within the service standards, there are a number of performance targets. The monitoring of these will be integrated into the Department's performance management system and reported quarterly, from September 2007, to the Department's Departmental Management Team.
- 23 Work is ongoing to develop a 'Menu of Involvement Opportunities', due to be completed in January 2008.
- 24 This tool will detail a variety of engagement methods for customers, and is likely to include focus groups, on-line polls and mystery shopping.

- 25 These engagement methods will provide opportunities for officers to:
- supplement the feedback received from surveys and performance targets;
 - explore in detail the issues identified by the experiences of customers; and
 - identify quick wins and longer term service improvements.

human resource implications

- 26 For some services, staff may need to implement new systems to record performance information but they are confident that this will not cause capacity problems.

legal implications

- 27 For services such as Homelessness, there is Government legislation that directs the actions of officers. This is detailed within the standards.

community safety implications

- 28 There are no community safety implications.

equalities implications

- 29 The standards contain the corporate equality statement, which publicises the availability of the document in alternative formats. There are arrangements in place for meeting such requests, when received.

financial implications

- 30 Costs are estimated as follows:
- Plain language accreditation: £600; and
 - Printing through external sources: £650
- 31 There are sufficient funds within the Service Development budget to cover these costs.

IT implications

- 32 There are no significant IT implications.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 Committee considers the Community Department Service Standards and provides comments to the Strategic Director.
- 2 Committee instructs the Strategic Director to monitor performance against the Service Standards and reports back 6 monthly (March 2008), as per the department's performance management framework.

Officer responsible for the report	Author of the report
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Michael Laing

Strategic Director for the Community

Ext 281

Alex Smith

Service Development Officer

Ext 461

COMMUNITY DEPARTMENT

SERVICE STANDARDS

OUR VISION IS

**"INSPIRING OUR PEOPLE
IMPROVING OUR PLACES"**

The standards in this booklet are the minimum standards by which we work. We will monitor the standards regularly to ensure our services are meeting the needs of our customers.

2007

Removing barriers to communication

We believe everyone should have equal opportunities to play a full part in their community, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, geographic location, special needs, language differences, learning difficulties, sexual orientation, gender, age or disability.

We can produce this booklet in other formats, such as Braille; large print, on audio tape; on CD Rom: and in other languages. You can get a copy by calling our Corporate Customer Care Officer on (01388) 765 555.

This booklet can be produced in the following languages:
Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Mandarin, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu and Welsh.

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Customer care statement

Our staff and projects will:

- provide a friendly, efficient service.
- offer a service that recognises we are dealing with a mixture of customers and one that meets the different needs of all.
- offer a service that is clear, open and honest
- involve customers and all who play an important part locally in planning, checking, designing and delivering services.
- give customers opportunities to have their say on changes, developments and improvements to services.
- evaluate our standards by encouraging and monitoring feedback from customers and using the information to proactively develop our service.

Making appointments and interviewing You

- If you have an appointment, we will try to make sure we keep it and apologise if we are late.
- If we have to cancel your appointment, we will let you know as soon as we can. We will explain why we are cancelling the appointment and will make another appointment with you. We will contact you within 1 working day to re-arrange your appointment.
- We will try, wherever we can, to offer a choice of appointment times and to meet any needs you tell us you have.
- If we need to visit you, we will give you a choice of appointment times.
- If you do not have an appointment, our reception areas will operate on a first-come, first-served basis.
- We will make sure your privacy is respected. When we think it is right to do so, we will offer you a private interview room. When you ask for a private interview room, we will make it available.
- We will make sure you know you can bring someone to an interview with you to help you.
- We will make sure you know that, if you wish to, you can ask for an interview with a person of the same sex as yourself.
- We will confirm any action we agree with you, in writing or in other form if you ask for this.

Staff code of conduct

In order to respect and champion the rights of every individual to participate in sport and physical activity, we will:

- provide choices for customers
- provide an environment in which young people are free from fear of harassment and bullying
- recognise the rights of young people and adults to be treated as individuals
- treat all customers with respect
- not discriminate on the grounds of gender, race, colour, disability, sexuality, age, occupation, marital status, religion or political opinion
- not condone any form of discrimination
- communicate with and provide feedback to performers in a manner which reflects respect and care
- be fair, honest and considerate to participants
- project an image of health and cleanliness
- be a positive role model for performers at all times

Writing to you and speaking with you

Our staff and projects will:

- try to answer all letters and requests for information within five working days. If we cannot answer your question within that time, we will let you know that we have your enquiry and explain the delay
- write to you in plain English
- make sure the addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of those dealing with your question are clear on any correspondence we send you
- reply to messages left by e-mail within one working day, answering your question in full. If we cannot answer your question in full within that time, we will reply to your e-mail saying we have received it and telling you when we will have an answer for you
- put an "out of office" message on e-mail addresses, which will give the date of the officer's return and details of other officers to contact in an emergency
- answer the telephone within 20 seconds
- give our name and tell you which section we work in when we answer the telephone
- direct you to an answering machine or a voicemail if we cannot take your call. You will be able to leave a message. The message on the machine will tell you when the officer you are trying to contact may be able to take your call and give details of others you can contact in an emergency
- reply to any messages left on answering machines or voicemail within one working day of the officer returning to work

- remove barriers to communication, provide literature in other formats, such as Braille, large print, on CD Rom, on Audio tape and in other languages, on request. This service is available for every document we produce.

Monitoring our service standards

We will check our performance against the standards in this booklet every 3 months and publish the results in our offices and leisure centres, our newsletter and on our website, www.wearvalley.gov.uk

Introduction - What we do

This booklet contains the service standards for the Community Department.

The Community Department consists of two sections. These are 'Policy and Resources' and 'Neighbourhood Management'.

Policy and Resources

This section includes:

- **the Active Communities Team; and**
- **the Housing Strategy Team**

Active Communities Team

The team is made up of projects and programmes, which contribute to the Council's priorities of health and community safety. These are:

- Arts development
- CPAC
- Health referrals
- Sports club development
- Wear walking for health
- WOW (Wellness On Wheels)

Our service standards for these services are described below.

Arts Development

This service supports creative practices and encourages participation in and access to positive arts activities.

Safeguarding participants

To ensure that all our participants and staff carry out activities in a safe manner, we will:

- ensure facilities / areas are fit for purpose for all events and projects staged or supported by Wear Valley District Council. Where we support projects or activities managed by another organisation, we will ask them to ensure that the facilities/areas used are fit for purpose.
- contact appropriately qualified services to deliver activities for all events and projects staged by Wear Valley District Council
- ensure services contracted carry appropriate Criminal Records Bureau clearance for all participatory activities staged by Wear Valley District Council targeted at children, young people and vulnerable adults
- when supporting projects or activities managed by other partners, ask them to confirm they will use appropriately qualified services to deliver activities before committing any support.
- Wear Valley District Council takes full liability for the protection of users during events organised exclusively by Wear Valley District Council.

How to contact us

- If you wish to speak with the Arts Development service, please contact the Cultural Services Manager on (01388) 761 544, or e-mail arts@wearvalley.gov.uk
- We are happy to negotiate a private meeting with you if required. The Cultural Services Manager will be identifiable through a Wear Valley District Council name badge.
- If you cannot make an appointment, alternative arrangements will be negotiated.

CPAC (Community Physical Activity Co-ordinator Programme)

This programme provides regular physical activities for young people in several areas of the district.

To ensure the safety of our customers in our care, we will:

- make sure the facility/area is clean, safe and free from debris
- make sure the facility/area is fit for purpose
- complete a risk assessment for each activity/session
- complete incident and accident report forms
- get parental consent for a young person to attend an off site visit / trip
- keep up to date records for young people in case of emergency
- always ask for parental consent before using photographs of young people
- make sure we have access to telephone/mobile phone in the case of an emergency
- make sure staff are appropriately qualified and receive ongoing training (including CRB checks)
- make sure our staff are aware of child protection issues and how to deal with them
- make sure young people feel safe and free from harm in our care.

We will publicise this programme in the areas we are working, e.g. through community groups.

How to contact us

Contact the Events & Activities Officer on (01388) 765 555 ext 259 or mobile 07766 133 490, or the Cultural Services Officer on (01388) 761 606 or mobile 07802 534 440.

Email: k.peart@wearvalley.gov.uk

Email: j.wynn@wearvalley.gov.uk

Health Referrals

We run health improvement programmes for clients referred by health professionals.

Exercise Referral Programme

- Upon receipt of a completed referral form you will be contacted by the service manager within 5 working days in order to arrange an initial appointment with a member of the referral team
- At this appointment you will receive an individual risk and needs assessment carried out by a qualified fitness instructor.
- You will be shown around the leisure centre and have the opportunity to talk to the instructor about any concerns you may have.
- Following the assessment, a personal exercise programme will be devised for you.
- Referral staff will be available at each visit to offer guidance and help with your programme.

- Exercise instructors delivering the programme will hold nationally recognised qualifications, be qualified in CPR/First Aid and have Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.
- You will be offered a six-week review appointment and end of course appraisal.
- You will be offered the opportunity to receive support for a period of 12 months.

Cardiac Rehabilitation Course

- Patients referred to the cardiac rehabilitation programme will have received the necessary medical assessments by medical staff prior to being invited to attend the course.
- Patients attending this course will be supervised by trained medical staff and fitness instructors qualified to the standards required by the British Association for Cardiac Rehabilitation (BACR).
- The course consists of twice weekly sessions for a period of 6 weeks consisting of exercise and health education. Upon successful completion of the course, clients may transfer to the exercise referral programme to continue their exercise programme and will be supported by the referral team.
- We will publicise these programmes within medical practices, leisure centres, local press, at Council offices and through local groups, as well as at any appropriate community events.

How to contact us

Contact the Community Fitness Manager on (01388) 761 607.

Email: j.cooper@wearvalley.gov.uk

Sports Club Development

This project aims to develop new clubs and increase capacity in existing clubs to extend sports participation.

Our Commitment to You

We will:

- encourage the establishment of new voluntary sports clubs
- publicise the service through leisure centres and community groups
- further develop existing voluntary sports clubs by providing advice, guidance and support to individuals and groups
- investigate further, consult others, or refer you to others that might help, as may be appropriate.

Consulting with You

We will:

- survey clubs on an annual basis to identify any requirements
- respond to any club development suggestions you provide
- provide customers with the opportunity to say what they think of our service standards through questionnaires

Working with Partners

We will:

- will work on your behalf with staff in other projects, clubs and organisations at local and national level, where appropriate

- work with local voluntary sector organisations, community groups and individuals to bring sports club opportunities to as wide a range of Wear Valley residents as possible.

How to contact us

Contact the Community Sports Club Development Officer on:
(01388) 765 555 x 403.
Email: n.douthwaite@wearvalley.gov.uk

Wear Walking for Health

We provide support for individuals and groups interested in the promotion and provision or participation in walking in Wear Valley including a regular programme of led walks.

We will ensure the safety of participants in our care by:

- carrying out a route and risk assessment before each walk
- completing a register of all participants at the start of each walk
- completing Incident and accident report forms
- keeping up to date records for participants in case of emergency
- always asking for consent before using any photographs
- having access to a telephone / mobile phone in the case of an emergency
- ensuring staff and volunteers are appropriately qualified and receive ongoing training.

We will advertise walks through resident and community groups, Council offices, leisure centres and other public places, such as libraries, resource centres and any appropriate community events.

How to contact us

Contact the Community Fitness Officer (Wear Walking for Health) on
(01388) 765 555 x 217.

Email l.wilson@wearvalley.gov.uk

WOW (Wellness on Wheels)

The WOW programme provides a mobile fitness trailer, which delivers free fitness opportunities to encourage active participation and improve fitness.

When you visit us, our staff will;

- be aware of the customer care procedures and know how to deal with you to help meet and / or exceed your expectations
- be identifiable by their uniforms and will display their names either by wearing a badge or named clothing
- be accessible to you and be welcoming, courteous and helpful at all times
- listen to your requirements and clarify any queries
- ask for assistance if your request cannot be dealt with adequately
- project an image of health and cleanliness
- be a positive role model for performers at all times
- be fair, honest and considerate to participants
- communicate with and provide feedback to performers in a manner which reflects respect and care
- take account of individual abilities. The trailer is also equipped with a lift and internal ramp for disabled access

- make sure that the equipment is safe and fit for purpose.
- Our opening hours will be displayed and you will be notified of any changes
- A leaflet drop, detailing the location and opening hours of the WOW facility is carried out one week prior to Wellness on Wheels arriving in an area.

How to contact us

Contact the WOW project manager on (01388) 765 555 x 404 or mobile 07768 040 191

Email: n.drew@wearvalley.gov.uk

Contact the WOW trailer directly on 07768 553217.

Housing Strategy Team

The team is made up of services, which work to give residents of Wear Valley opportunities to improve their housing situation. These are:

- **Home Improvement Agency; and**
- **Homelessness service**

Our service standards for these services are described below.

Home Improvement Agency – includes Aids and Adaptations / Disabled Facilities Grants

We are committed to delivering a high standard of service to our clients. Our aim is to provide a quality, caring, efficient and responsive service to our clients.

Throughout the time you are involved with the Home Improvement Agency you can expect:

- to be visited at your home and receive advice and assistance in relation to your housing conditions
- to be given all relevant information to enable you to make a decision about the services you require
- to be assisted in the completion of all necessary paperwork
- to be included in all decisions in the process of completing the identified works
- to be treated with courtesy and respect by Agency staff who will be sensitive to your needs and offer support throughout your time with us
- that all works will be carried out in accordance with all current regulations and all certificates approvals and guarantees will be provided
- that your home will be left clean and tidy at the end of each day as work proceeds

- that your home and garden will be left in a clean, tidy and hazard free condition upon completion of the works
- to have your opinions and suggestions about the service listened to
- to have any complaint you may wish to make fully investigated in accordance with our complaints procedure

We expect you:

- to treat all Agency Officers and contractors with courtesy and respect
- provide all necessary documentation regarding your financial situation to enable us to help with funding arrangements
- provide all personal information as requested to enable any grant application to be made
- to allow contractors access to the site at agreed times and always have an adult present as work proceeds
- to pay any contribution you may have when requested to allow the specified works to proceed
- to pay Agency fee when requested on completion of the works.

How to contact us

Contact the Home Improvement Team on (01388) 602 200
E-mail: c.meggesson@wearvalley.gov.uk

Homelessness service

The Council recognises that people with housing problems can not always solve them on their own. The service will try to help you if you find yourself homeless or are threatened with homelessness or you show that you have a housing need that has not been dealt with. In doing this, the Council will obey the Housing Act 1996 amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

We will:

- offer confidential interviews within 3 working days during normal office hours, or try to make other arrangements
- arrange an interview for you with an officer of the same sex if you ask for this
- give you information and advice on benefits and welfare rights, your tenancy rights, short-term housing and rent arrears. We can also make recommendations for help with tenancies, both with Dale & Valley Homes and with others
- after an investigation of your needs, tell you our decision by writing to you within 33 working days of your first interview
- make sure you are aware of your rights to have a decision reviewed
- carry out a review when a request is received and the decision given in writing, within eight weeks
- try to give you emergency lodgings, if you have nowhere to sleep and this is suitable in your case
- consult with all local housing providers, including Dale and Valley Homes, to ensure that the correct priority is given to any application
- in all circumstances, try to give the best advice on how to solve your housing problems.

How to contact us

Contact the Homelessness Service on
(01388) 742 101 or 742 102
E-mail: homelessness@wearvalley.gov.uk

Outside of normal office hours, you can
contact us on our emergency number,
(01388) 721 822.

Neighbourhood Management

This section includes:

- **the District Services Team**
- **the Community Safety Team; and**
- **the Leisure and Recreation Team**

District Services Team

The team includes:

- **Allotments**
- **Bulky waste collections**
- **Cemeteries**
- **Dog fouling**
- **Fly tipping**
- **Parks**
- **Recycling collections**
- **Refuse collections**
- **Street cleansing / graffiti; and**
- **Street wardens**

Our service standards for these services are described below.

Allotments

If you ask us if we have any allotment gardens available, we will:

- place your name on a waiting list if no allotment gardens are immediately available; We will update the waiting list when you make your enquiry
- send you a Form of Agreement for you to complete and return if there are gardens available. We will send this form to you within 5 working days.

When we receive your application, we will:

- check the Form of Agreement to make sure it has been completed correctly
- sign the document and send you a copy for your records within 5 working days
- send you a copy of the key, if the allotment site is secured by a padlock, within 5 working days.

For all our allotment holders, we will:

- provide clear policies on use of allotments
- enforce rules and regulations as appropriate
- provide clear bills and fee charging

How to contact us

Contact our Allotments senior administrative officer on
(01388) 761 604
E-mail: s.hocking@wearvalley.gov.uk

Bulky Waste Collections

We will:

- take your request for a bulky waste collection before 11.30 on the day prior to your collection day in the following ways:
 - over the phone on (01388) 765 555
 - in person at the cash offices at Proudfoot Drive or Market Place, Bishop Auckland or at the Civic Centre, Crook
 - on line at www.wearvalley.gov.uk
- take payment from you in the following ways:
 - by debit or credit card over the phone, in person or online
 - by cheque, made payable to Wear Valley District Council
 - by cash at the cash offices (see above) or at the Civic Centre, Crook
- collect your bulky household items from your property on a specified day
- tell you in advance which day we will make the collection
- collect between the hours of 7am and 3pm
- not enter your property to remove items; they must be placed at the edge of your property ready for collection. If you are unable to do this, we will ask you to sign a disclaimer form when we come to your property to allow us to remove the items

We expect:

- you to pay in advance for your bulky waste collection, at a charge of £5 per collection
- you to place your bulky waste at the edge of your property by 7am on the morning of your collection
- there to be no additional items placed out for collection, other than what you have arranged to be collected
- the items to be easily accessible.

If items are in working order and/or in good condition, please consider donating them to charity or one of the reuse projects operating in the area. These organisations offer a free collection service and can often find a new home for your unwanted items.

- Butterwick Hospice, Bishop Auckland: (01388) 603 003
- Woodhouse Close Furniture Project (Tuesdays and Thursdays): (01388) 450 838
- County Durham Furniture Help Scheme: (01388) 721 509

Alternatively, you could advertise good quality items in the free paper or in local shops or supermarkets free of charge. You could even make yourself some cash and sell your items at a local car boot sale or donate them to friends and family.

Cemeteries / Burials

The Council will:

- dig all graves prior to a burial and reinstate after burial
- re-turf a grave within six months of burial
- carry out a programme of grave maintenance - memorial testing, levelling and turfing in all Council cemeteries
- carry out maintenance of cemetery grounds, including grass cutting, hedge trimming and waste removal.
- remove all floral tributes, 2 weeks after the burial unless otherwise requested by the family. Christmas wreathes will be removed in March
- keep accurate records of all interments
- provide historical information on previous burials when requested, within 5 working days of receipt of payment
- make cemeteries available to pedestrians at all times. Vehicular access is available at most cemeteries. At West Auckland, visitors requiring vehicular access should make an appointment at least 24 hours prior to their visit.

How to contact us:

Contact our senior administrative officer on (01388) 761 604
E-mail: s.hocking@wearvalley.gov.uk

Dog fouling

- If you report a regular offender and request dog fouling surveillance, this will be carried out within 5 working days of the request.
- If an authorised officer or Street Warden catches someone not cleaning up after their dog, they will be issued a fixed penalty of £50 on the spot.
- Someone who has been issued with a fixed penalty has 14 days to pay the full amount, if they fail to do so, Court proceedings will be instigated, within the next 6 months and they may be fined up to £1000.
- If you report dog fouling to be cleaned up i.e. if it is on a public footpath, this will be carried out within 24 hours. Horse fouling will also be cleaned up within 24 hours.

How to contact us

To report dog fouling, please contact our Street Warden Supervisors, on (01388) 761 960
E-mail: d.hibbitts@wearvalley.gov.uk or j.bevila@wearvalley.gov.uk

Please note, to report horse fouling, please contact the Street Cleansing team on (01388) 765 555 x 226.

E-mail: g.thompson@wearvalley.gov.uk

Fly tipping

Fly tipping is the illegal deposit of waste.

- If you report a fly tip, it will be recorded immediately and investigated within 48 hours.
- After investigation of the fly tip, it will then be removed if on relevant council land within 48 hours.
- If fly tipping has occurred on private land, you can report it to The Environment Agency on 0800 807 060 to be investigated. If you are unsure, we can advise if land is private, or you can report the fly tip to us and we will pass the information onto the relevant authority. Please contact our Street Warden Supervisors on (01388) 761 960 or 761 601.
- Street Wardens investigating fly tipped waste will take photographs of the waste and any evidence within it, record details of how it was dealt with and Street Warden Supervisors ensure that the incident is recorded in official statistics.
- If a fly tip of hazardous waste is reported or any other reason, which may be urgent, such as obstructing a highway or posing a danger to the public, the Emergency Response vehicle, which operates out of hours, will remove the waste, as soon as possible on the same day.

We ask you to:

- try to obtain the registration number, colour, make and model of a vehicle seen involved in fly tipping. **Do not** put yourself at risk by approaching the culprits or trying to remove the waste
- report incidents to us.

How to contact us

Please contact our Street Warden Supervisors on (01388) 761 960 or 761 601
E-mail: d.hibbitts@wearvalley.gov.uk or j.bevils@wearvalley.gov.uk

Grounds maintenance

We are committed to providing the very best service to residents and visitors to Wear Valley. To do this, we will:

- work between 7.30am and 6pm, Monday to Friday
- keep disruption and noise to a minimum around your home
- carry out all work safely and efficiently
- make sure all work is done to a good standard
- employ staff who are clean, tidy, polite and courteous
- ensure staff have uniforms to help identify them and name badges
- work with partners and residents to identify better uses for our land, such as wild flower areas
- develop plans and strategies towards achieving national recognised standards for our parks
- deal quickly and effectively with any concerns or problems you may have
- regularly check with a sample of residents to make sure we are delivering quality services.

How to contact us

Contact our grounds maintenance manager on (01388) 761 595
E-mail: b.featherstone@wearvalley.gov.uk

Parks

We are committed to providing the very best service to residents and visitors to Wear Valley. To do this we will:

- keep parks and playing fields well maintained, accessible, safe and secure for people to use
- provide seating for older people where requested
- provide a range of outdoor recreational, leisure and sporting pursuits and facilities that encourage a healthy lifestyle all year round
- ensure playgrounds are safe, well maintained and secure and suitable for their purpose
- work with the community in developing future plans for parks towards achieving nationally recognised standards
- aim towards adopting practices that protect and encourage wildlife and provide bio-diversity
- keep all areas clean and tidy by providing sufficient litter and dog bins and carrying out regular cleansing
- respond appropriately to comments and complaints
- check with a sample of residents every 4 months to make sure we are delivering quality services.

How to contact us

Contact our Grounds Maintenance Manager on (01388) 761 595

E-mail: b.featherstone@wearvalley.gov.uk

Recycling Collections

We will:

- provide you with a green box for your household recycling
- collect and empty your green box from the edge of your property, once a fortnight
- seek to minimise noise as much as possible
- return your empty box to the edge of your property after collection
- notify you of any changes to your collections via a wheeled bin sticker, a notice in our council newsletter, Wear Valley Matters and on our website
- replace your green box free of charge should it be lost or damaged, within ten working days
- return within 48 hours to empty your green box, should there be a missed collection
- provide an assisted service, depending on your needs

We expect:

- your green box to be placed at the edge of your property by 7am on the morning of your collection
- your box to only contain materials we are able to collect, which are glass bottles and jars, paper and card, drink cans, food tins and aerosols, textiles and shoes
- the materials to be sorted, as much as possible, to aid collection and that paper and card is placed in carrier bags

- your green box to not contain materials, which we are unable to collect or any items which pose a health and safety risk, such as broken glass
- you to take your green box back into your property as soon as possible, after collection
- you to look after your box. It is your responsibility.

How to contact us

For information about collections, contact the Street Cleansing team on (01388) 765 555 x 226
E-mail: g.thompson@wearvalley.gov.uk

For general advice about recycling, contact the Waste Minimisation and Recycling Officer on (01388) 765 555 x 372
E-mail: p.george@wearvalley.gov.uk

Refuse collection

We will:

- provide you with a wheeled bin for your household refuse
- collect and empty your wheeled bin from the edge of your property once a week
- seek to minimise noise as much as possible
- return your empty bin to the edge of your property after collection
- notify you of any changes to your collections via a wheeled bin sticker, a notice in our council newsletter, Wear Valley Matters and on our website
- replace your wheeled bin free of charge if it is damaged, within ten working days
- return within 48 hours to empty your wheeled bin, should there be a missed collection
- assess your needs for a larger bin only if you have four or more adults or five or more persons in your family and your current bin and green box are not adequate
- provide an assisted service, depending on your needs.

We expect:

- your wheeled bin to be placed at the edge of your property by 7am on the morning of your collection, with the handle facing towards the road
- all waste to be inside your wheeled bin and the lid to be closed with no side waste. Please note, side waste will not be removed.
- there are no recyclable materials in your wheeled bin, such as glass bottles and jars, paper and card, drink cans, food tins and aerosols, textiles and shoes. Please use your green box for these items.

- there are no heavy materials in your wheeled bin, which will overload and damage your bin
- you to take your bin back into your property, as soon as possible after collection
- you to look after your bin. It is your responsibility.

How to contact us

Contact the Street Cleansing team on (01388) 765 555 x 226

E-mail: g.thompson@wearvalley.gov.uk

Street cleansing / graffiti

We will:

- aim to keep Wear Valley free from litter, rubbish and animal faeces
- use the standards within the code of practice on litter and refuse to monitor our work
- aim to empty litter and dog waste bins at a frequency that prevents them from overflowing. On main streets, this is done daily.
- regularly assess and review litter/dog waste bin locations for maximum impact within key areas
- aim to keep public land free of illegally deposited waste
- work alongside the enforcement section to identify problem areas to eradicate future illegally deposited waste
- aim to remove illegally deposited waste within 48 hours
- aim to keep public property free of graffiti or fly posting and to assist owners of private property in the removal process. We will aim to remove offensive graffiti within 24 hours and non-offensive and fly posting within 48 hours

- attend road traffic accidents and give assistance to the relevant emergency services
- investigate and remove dead animals from public highways and verges within 24 hours of it being reported
- investigate and safely remove any drug-related litter within 24 hours of it being reported
- provide an efficient and reliable service to all our customers within Wear Valley.

What we expect from you:

- to use litter bins provided or take litter home, and do not drop litter on the streets
- to ensure the appropriate use of your refuse and recycling containers
- educate family members about the importance of litter avoidance
- to report any damaged or over-flowing bins
- please clean up after your dog
- to report any fly tipping, and if possible noting the time, date and the vehicle registration. **Do not** put yourself at risk by approaching the culprits or trying to remove the waste. Please contact our Street Warden Supervisors on (01388) 761 960 or 761 601.
- graffiti and fly posting is criminal damage. If you see someone defacing a property, call the police
- report any spillage of oil, sand, glass or other substances that may pose danger to the public on the highways
- report any dead animals with the exact location in order for us to provide a prompt response

- report any syringes or drug related waste with the exact location in order for us to provide a prompt response. **Do not** pick up syringes or drug related waste for your own safety
- help us take pride in Wear Valley.

How to contact us

Contact the Street Cleansing team on (01388) 765 555 x 226
E-mail: g.thompson@wearvalley.gov.uk

Street Wardens

The Street Wardens work to tackle the following issues:

- Abandoned vehicles
- ASB – youth nuisance
- Dog fouling
- Fly tipping
- Littering – including removal of needles

Abandoned Vehicles

We will:

- investigate abandoned vehicles within 48 hours of it being reported
- remove an abandoned vehicle within 7 days
- carry out urgent removals of dangerous vehicles, e.g. the vehicle is obstructing a highway or posing a risk to the public, such as a burnt out vehicle, within a couple of hours

We ask you to:

- to contact the Street Wardens, if you think you know of an abandoned vehicle, on 07881 518 324
- Out of council hours, report an abandoned vehicle to the Police on 0845 60 60 365.

Anti Social Behaviour

We will:

- deal with and follow up complaints of Anti Social Behaviour, and will carry out high visibility patrols within an area when requested by residents, within 48 hours.

Dog fouling - see page 16

Fly tipping - see page 17

Hypodermic needles

We will:

- arrange for hypodermic needles to be removed within a couple of hours

We ask you to:

- not touch a hypodermic needle when found
- report where you have found it to us on (01388) 761 960 (Monday to Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm) or Bishop / Crook Police on 0845 60 60 365.

How to contact us

- Contact our Street Warden Supervisors on (01388) 761 960 or 761 601 or on the universal mobile number, 07881 518 324
E-mail: d.hibbitts@wearvalley.gov.uk or j.bevils@wearvalley.gov.uk

Community Safety Team

The team includes:

- **Anti-social behaviour**
- **Community safety; and**
- **Domestic violence**

Our service standards for these services are described below.

Anti-social behaviour

Talking to the staff at the neighbourhood office

- We will discuss your problems with you impartially and in confidence.
- We will not identify you to your neighbour, or anybody else, unless you agree we should.
- All staff have been trained, and work to a code of good practice.
- You can bring someone with you when you come to the office, including witnesses to any incidents.

What we will do to support you

We recognise that it is very demanding for anyone to have to give evidence against someone. We aim to give practical support and protection for complainants and witnesses.

An officer will discuss with you the type of support that you feel you need and will refer you to support services as necessary. These might include:

- **Victim Support** – emotional and practical support to victims of crime, including anti-social behaviour
- **the Specialist Tenancy Enforcement Team**, which provides a service for Dale & Valley Homes tenants.

How to contact us

Contact the Community Safety team on (01388) 660 950
E-mail: p.shaw@wearvalley.gov.uk

Community Safety

The Wear and Tees Community Safety Partnership has a strategy which looks at crime prevention, enforcement and support and this has been signed up to by all partners. For 2007/08, the partners have agreed to prioritise:

- criminal damage, including deliberate secondary fires
- violent crime
- public reassurance
- anti-social behaviour and respect, including reducing the number of first time entrants into the criminal justice system; and
- reducing re-offending.

Resources will be targeted towards these priorities.

Wear Valley Council takes its responsibility very seriously and has a dedicated community safety team based at 75 Proudfoot Drive, Woodhouse Close Estate who will deal with general community safety issues, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse.

There is also an outreach domestic abuse service based at Willington.

How to contact us

Contact the Community Safety team on (01388) 660 950
E-mail: e.baker@wearvalley.gov.uk

Domestic Violence

We can provide you with emotional support by offering:

- access to Counsellors
- confidentiality
- someone to talk to
- options
- non judgmental guidance
- access to support in discreet places
- access to Female/Male support workers
- access to Support Groups/Programmes

Practical Support

We can help you with:

- housing issues
- claims for benefits
- contacting other agencies
- accessing the services you require
- providing access to a support worker, who is available to talk to 24 hours a day

Children and Young People

Children and young people workers provide the following:

- assessments, either in the family home or at an outreach centre, with the parent present
- support through further sessions. These sessions can be carried out at schools, with the permission of the parent. All sessions are on a one to one basis
- observations through different interactions using play therapy in each session
- support/counselling (parental permission may be needed)

Awareness

We provide:

- awareness talks to statutory and voluntary agencies around the services that we provide
- a two-day training package to agencies and individuals on the subject of Domestic Violence & Abuse.

Referrals

- We accept self-referrals from individuals and referrals from both statutory and voluntary organisations. Please contact the service on the numbers provided to make a referral.

Refuge facilities

- Safe accommodation for women and children escaping domestic violence/abuse can be provided through Wear Valley's Women's Aid.
- Women fleeing domestic violence can also access refuge support in other areas.

How to contact us

Please contact the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator on (01388) 742 103 / (01325) 320 111 for further details
E-mail: tolley@sedgefield.gov.uk

Leisure and Recreation Team

The team includes:

- **Playgrounds**
- **Sports facilities; and**
- **Stanhope Town Hall**

Our service standards for these services are described below.

Playgrounds

We will make sure that:

- all playgrounds comply with European Standards EN1176 (Equipment), and EN1176 (Safety surfacing).
- routine inspections are undertaken by a qualified Register Of Playground Inspectors on a regular basis to ensure the safety of equipment, safety surfacing, and cleanliness of the site.
- annual independent inspections are undertaken by ROSPA, to ensure the structural integrity of the equipment and safety of the site.
- where necessary vandalised or damaged equipment will be taken out of commission and repaired as soon as practically possible or immediately removed from the site until replacements are available.
- wearing parts are monitored and replaced when necessary.
- the playground is checked for litter/glass etc on a daily basis and litter bins checked and emptied on a daily basis.
- where possible we provide disabled access and appropriate seating.
- grass is cut every 18 days during season.

How to contact us

Contact our Grounds Maintenance Manager on (01388) 761 595

E-mail: b.featherstone@wearvalley.gov.uk

Sports Facilities (includes Glenholme Leisure Centre and Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex)

Activity areas will be:

- clean and safe
- designed to governing body specifications.
- checked regularly that they are fit for use.
- equipment where provided is safe and fit for purpose.
- Where facilities are booked they will be ready for use within 5 minutes of the commencement of the period booked where equipment set up is necessary (except where otherwise agreed in advance with the customer)

Changing rooms, showers and toilets (where provided) will be:

- clean, hygienic and in good working order
- checked by staff on a regular basis and remedial action taken where necessary.

Staff will be:

- trained and appropriately qualified
- easily identifiable by wearing uniform and display their name on either a badge or their clothing
- polite, helpful and informative at all times to ensure that your activity session is safe and enjoyable
- able to listen to your requirements and clarify any queries.

We will have a clear policy behind fees and charges.

How to contact us

For Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex,
telephone (01388) 761 634
E-mail: b.dunn@wearvalley.gov.uk

For Glenholme Leisure Centre, telephone
(01388) 763 204
E-mail: c.rooney@wearvalley.gov.uk

Stanhope Town Hall

We will:

- agree with you the time and availability of services when you make a booking
- duly notify you of any foreseen change in writing, or in the case of short notice changes, by telephone.
- refund bookings and / or offer alternative services, in the case of any unforeseen (emergency) interruptions affecting services

Meeting Rooms/Activity Spaces and ancillary areas will be:

- clean and Safe
- furnished with equipment that is in good working order and checked and maintained regularly
- set up in accordance with your requirements
- ready to use within 5 minutes of the commencement of the period booked, where equipment changeovers are necessary, (except when otherwise agreed in advance with the customer).
- sufficiently warm and light to ensure comfortable and safe conditions
- checked by staff on a regular basis, with remedial action taken where necessary.

Our staff will be:

- trained and appropriately qualified
- easily identifiable by wearing uniform and display their name on a badge or their clothing.
- polite, helpful and informative at all times to ensure that your visit is safe and enjoyable
- listen to your requirements and clarify any queries.

How to contact us

Bookings can be made by phoning (01388) 765 555 x292 or 07879 867 117.
E-mail: m.alderon@wearvalley.gov.uk

What to do if you are not happy with us

We are committed to providing high quality services to our customers. However, we accept that sometimes this may not happen. We hope that you will tell us when mistakes have been made or you have not received the quality of service you expected, so we can improve. You may want to do this by making a complaint.

If you would like to complain, you can write to:

Corporate Customer Care Officer
Wear Valley District Council
Civic Centre
Crook
County Durham
DL15 9ES
Tel: (01388) 765 555
E-mail: complaints@wearvalley.gov.uk

Complaint forms are available at our reception areas. You can give your completed form to a member of staff, post it to us or ask a member of staff to help you to complete the form.

Comments and suggestions

If you would like to make any comments about our services, please complete a suggestion card and post it in the suggestion boxes available at the Civic Centre in Crook and leisure centres.

Alternatively, you can contact the Service Development team with your comments on:

Tel: (01388) 761 136
Email: a.smith@wearvalley.gov.uk

Copies of all our service leaflets are available at the Civic Centre in Crook and are also available to download from our website: www.wearvalley.gov.uk



**WEAR
VALLEY**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Wear Valley District Council
Community Department
Civic Centre
Crook
Co. Durham
DL15 9ES**

**Tel: (01388) 765 555
Fax: (01388) 766 660**

Opening hours:

**Monday to Thursday
8.30am to 5pm**

**Friday
8.30am to 4.30pm**



HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE

5 SEPTEMBER 2007

Report of the Strategic Director for the Community
“COMMUNITIES ENGLAND” – A NEW HOUSING & REGENERATION AGENCY

purpose of the report

- 1 To inform committee of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) proposals to create a new housing and regeneration agency called Communities England.

background

- 2 Currently housing and regeneration strategies and policies are delivered separately by the Housing Corporation and English Partnership. These are supported by the DCLG and are responsible for a number of agencies including decent homes, housing market renewal, housing PFI, housing growth and regeneration.
- 3 In April 2006 the DCLG launched the Housing and Regeneration Review to assess the structures and delivery mechanisms of the Housing Corporation and English partnerships that support investment, use of assets, delivery of new homes and sustainable communities
- 4 In addition, the DCLG are looking to devolve delivery functions in the areas of decent homes, housing growth, housing PFI, Housing Market Renewal and urban regeneration to a single streamlined organisation.

dclg proposals

- 5 The DCLG propose to create a new agency to support the delivery of new houses and develops mixed, sustainable communities in England. The agency, Communities England, is expected to have an annual budget of £4 billion and, subject to legislation, the aim is to have the agency in operation by April 2009.
- 6 Prior to the establishment of Communities England, the DCLG are consulting with organisations. The consultation period ends on 11 September 2007.

how these proposals will effect the Council

- 7 Communities England will be a new delivery partner for local authorities to consult when preparing the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement, the strategic vision and delivery plan for the area.
- 8 Communities England will work with Council's on a range of core outcomes including:-
 - Increasing supply of housing – including affordable housing and shared ownership
 - Promote mixed communities and estate transformation in disadvantaged estates
 - Create substantial strong and stable existing communities promoting a mix of tenure, income and housing type
 - Regenerate deprived town centres
 - Promote use of brownfill sites and surplus public sector land, and
 - Drive toward rising environmental standards across the whole market

council's response

- 9 The DCLG's proposals should be supported by this Council. Members have recognised clear links between housing and regeneration in establishing sustainable communities.
- 10 Streamlining the work of English Partnerships, Housing Corporation and aspects of the DCLG work will ensure greater value for money as well as increase quality, design, energy efficiency and sustainability standards.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 Committee notes the DCLGs proposals to create a new agency - Communities England for housing and regeneration.
- 2 Committee supports the proposed creation of the agency and asks the Director to respond to the DCLG within the timescales.

Officer responsible for the report
Michael Laing
Strategic Director for the Community
Ext 281

Author of the report
David Milburn
AD Policy & Resources
Ext 379

Community Involvement Action Plan 2007 - 2008 - Communities Department

Action	Outcome/Measure	Key Milestones & Targets	Target Date	Responsible Officer/Organisation	On Target Y/N	Comments	Comp Date	Action plan for recovery
1.1 - Development of a 'Communities Consultation Guide' for the Communities Department	Increased resident involvement in the services provided by the Communities Department / Pros and Cons for many of the more common methods of consultation identified (leading to informed choices being made) / Ensures greater consultation, particularly involving those areas of the community whose views are less often considered / Links to the development of the Communities Citizen Panel	Research undertaken into Good Practice examples of Consultation Guides utilised by other Local Authorities	Aug-07	Community Involvement Officer / Community Involvement Manager			Nov-07	
		Development of Draft 1 of a new 'Consultation Guide' for the Communities Department based on research undertaken	Sep-07	Community Involvement Manager				
		Full consultation with staff / customers / DMT / SMT on draft 1 of Consultation Guide	Oct-07	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
		Comments based on above consultation fed in to Guide	Oct-07	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
		Consultation Guide to be sent to PLC to be approved and accredited	Oct-07	Community Involvement Officer / Service Development Officer				
		Report presented to Community Services Committee based on proposed adoption of and implementation of Guide for the Communities Department	Nov-07	Community Involvement Manager				
		1.2 - Development of an 'Opportunity Menu' for the Communities Department	Increased number of involvement opportunities offered to local residents / Increased number of residents getting involved and having their say on the services provided by	Research undertaken into Good Practice examples of involvement opportunities	Aug-07	Community Involvement Officer / Community Involvement Manager		

	the Communities Department / Varying levels of participation offered and not limited / Provides a flexible involvement framework which can be utilised easily by staff from all service areas	Identification of current consultation methods used by Communities Department and Gap Analysis produced (Staff requested to complete short survey based on identifying consultation methods currently utilised in their service area)	Sep-07	Community Involvement Officer			
		Development of Opportunity Menu based on research and Gap Analysis and then sent for consultation to staff / DMT / SMT	Sept 07-Oct 07	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer			
		Adoption of Opportunity Menu including its publicity and promotion (leaflets / posters / website)	Oct-07	Community Involvement Officer			
1.3 - Development of staff training sessions / workshops based on the Community Involvement Service provided by the Communities Department including a session on Access and Customer Care	Increased staff awareness of the Community Involvement Service and its importance in the provision of services to customers / Increased staff awareness of access and customer care issues / Increased partnership working with the Corporate body in the provision of training	Arrange meeting between Community Involvement Team and Corporate Customer Care Officer to discuss the provision/content and schedule of the staff training on CI and A&CC	Oct-07	Community Involvement Officer			Dec-07
		Book Council Chamber for the training sessions/workshops for the dates/times agreed at the initial meeting between CIT & CCC Officer	Oct-07-Nov 07	Community Involvement Officer			
		Develop the Training Session/Workshop based on the outcome of the meeting between the CIT & CCC Officer	Nov-07	Community Involvement Manager / Corporate Customer Care Officer			

		Send e-mail to all staff in the Communities Department inviting them to attend one of the training sessions/workshops as scheduled and set up databased to record response	Nov-07	Community Involvement Officer			
		Prepare handouts and flipcharts etc for the training sessions/workshops	Dec-07	Community Involvement Officer			
		Deliver training on Community Involvement and Access and Customer Care in partnership with the Corporate Customer Care Officer	Dec-07	Community Involvement Team / Corporate Customer Care Officer			
		Evaluation of training sessions/workshops	Dec-07	Community Involvement Team / Corporate Customer Care Officer			
1.4 - Development of a Community Involvement Service Standard Leaflet / Promotional Leaflet and dedicated Webpage Links to SIP 2.1 / 2.3	Increased promotion of the new Community Involvement Service and Team / Increased provision of information to customers on Community Involvement Service / Measured standards developed for the Community Involvement Service	Research Good Practice Webpages / Service Standards and Leaflets for Community Involvement Service	Sep-07	Community Involvement Officer			Nov-07
		Liase with Service Development Officer in relation to the process of design and print of new leaflets and arrangements for design of webpage for Community Involvement	Sep-07	Community Involvement Officer / Service Development Officer			
		Begin design of Service Standard Leaflet / Promotional Leaflet and Webpage in consultation with staff and customers	Sept 07-Oct 07	Community Involvement Officer/ Community Involvement Manager			
		Receive drafts of leaflets which should then be PLC checked and approved	Oct-07	Community Involvement Officer			

		Obtain final copies of Service Standard and promotional leaflets from DTP and display in Mall of Civic ensuring all staff also have a copy	Nov-07	Community Involvement Officer				
		Once webpage for Community Involvement is established, monitor this on a monthly basis to ensure all information is kept up-to-date	On-going	Community Involvement Officer				
1.5 - Development of a Community Involvement Service Newsletter Schedule	Increased provision of information to both staff and customers on Community Involvement activities / Ensuring feedback is given to those customers who have participated / Good news stories and increased publicity for the Communities Department	Research examples of existing Community Involvement Newsletters including Good Practice	Dec-07	Community Involvement Officer			Feb-08	
		Identify timescales for other newsletters produced by WVDC so as not to duplicate information / frequency	Dec-07	Community Involvement Officer				
		Meet with SMT / DMT to determine articles to be placed in the newsletter and the format/frequency of the document	Jan-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
		Obtain quotations from x3 design and print companies such as Moor Graphics/ Inprint/ Hillprint/ DTP based on agreed size of newsletter and number of copies	Jan-08	Community Involvement Officer				
		Produce Timetable/Schedule for the production of a Communities Newsletter. Schedule to be based on agreed frequency of production	Feb-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				
1.6 - Development of a Community Involvement Strategy for the Communities Department	Confirms our commitment as a department to the engagement of customers in service provision / Emphasises the links to and the	Research Good Practice examples of Community Involvement Strategies from other Local Authorities	Jan-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer				

	importance of recent relevant legislation issued by the CLG / Places increased emphasis on delivering change and improved outcomes based on	Hold meeting with DMT / SMT re: content and production of a Community Involvement Strategy for the Communities Department	Jan-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer			Apr-07
		Based on the above either a) Begin first draft of Strategy or b) Approach x3 consultants to request quotations for development of Strategy and action plan and choose most appropriate agency	Feb-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer			
		Arrange workshops with customers (and CIT or CIT and Consultant) to develop first draft including action plan to undergo full consultation with staff, customers, DMT, SMT, relevant committees	Mar-08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer / Consultant (if applicable)			
		Comments based on above consultation fed in to Strategy	Mar 08 - Apr 08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer / Consultant (if applicable)			
		Report on development and implementation of Strategy	Apr-08	Community Involvement Manager			
1.7 - Engage with local Residents Associations / Community Groups / Local Agencies	Increased partnership working with established local agencies and groups / Increased promotion of Community Involvement Service / Established links to	Meet with CDU to discuss partnership contacts as stored in database and add any additional contacts	Oct-07	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer			Mar-08

agencies in contact with local hard-to-reach groups / Wider community involvement	Write out to local agencies / community groups to arrange meetings to introduce new team and the opportunities available for involvement. This will involve the attendance at local RA meetings - obtain dates of meetings from secretary's of each RA	Nov 07 - Dec 07	Community Involvement Officer			
	Hold meetings / attend RA meetings to promote service and establish contacts / promotion of opportunities menu and membership to Citizens Panel	Jan 08 - Mar 08	Community Involvement Manager / Community Involvement Officer			
	Update partnership database and contacts based on above meetings	Mar-08	Community Involvement Officer			