

ENVIRONMENTAL CAPITAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 6
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Report of the Director of Operations

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ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE

To provide members with an overview of our environmental enforcement and related activity and to identify opportunities and challenges in order to enable an informed debate about future service delivery

2. LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

The work of the Environmental Enforcement teams contributes to the 'Creating the UK's Environmental Capital' outcome of the Local Area Agreement. National Indicators 195 & 196 has a direct impact on making Peterborough Cleaner and Greener.

3. BACKGROUND

As part of the restructure of the Operations Directorate a new Neighbourhoods & Community Empowerment Team will bring the Environmental Enforcement and Neighbourhood Enforcement Teams together. This will enable a focussed delivery of services within localities using a neighbourhood management approach.

The current activity of these teams is

- Recruitment, promotion, training and management of the Street Leaders Scheme (178 street leaders across the city to date)
- Direct community contact within a locality and participation in Community groups and associations
- Public environmental education in recycling and the use of bins.
- Building and sustaining relationships with partners
- Fly tipping (on public land) – Intervention and investigation, arranging removal of waste (through City Services). Interviewing and preparation of documentation for evidence.
- Fly tipping (on private land) – First stage intervention, investigation and preparation of documentation for evidence
- Littering and Fly Posting – Investigation and issuing the relevant Notices, preparation of documentation for evidence
- Duty of Care Offences – Investigation and issuing the relevant Notices, preparation of documentation for evidence
- Court Attendances in prosecution cases
- Active participation in regional and national groups contributing to Peterborough's Environmental Capital aspirations
- Ownership of National Indicator 196 which measures the local authorities performance based on a combination of calculating its year on year change in total incidents of fly-tipping dealt with, compared with its year on year change in enforcement actions taken against fly-tipping.

- Make a main contribution towards National Indicator 195 Improved Street and Environmental Cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting)
- Active participants in project work and campaigns across the Council and with partners

4. KEY ISSUES

- There has previously been some duplication of work across teams
- Economies of scale are often not realised because teams can work in isolation of each other
- Gaps in service delivery have not been easily identified
- Enforcement and education balance could be more effective.

5. OPPORTUNITIES

- Integration of teams will facilitate targeted service delivery eliminating any duplication of work and bridging gaps
- Expanding the role of XFOR to include late night enforcement within the city centre with police partners and/or acting as professional witnesses to aid and increase prosecutions
- An opportunity to increase the level of education work with those who have committed environmental offences instead of imposing a fixed penalty notice or fine

6. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Services currently receive in the region of 100 – 160 new environmental enforcement cases per month. The cases take a minimum of one hour each to process ready for court. To meet the objective of all clients legal services are only able to effectively process approximately 50% of these cases resulting in a backlog. Any increase in the number of cases brought to prosecution will increase the demand on legal services further. A variety of options to address this are being considered including

- Out sourcing the cases to a 3rd party which would cost approximately £21K per annum
- A new post (for example Legal Executive or suitably experienced paralegal) is created solely for the purpose of processing environmental enforcement cases.

7. CONSULTATION

None

8. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Recommendations for future service delivery

9. NEXT STEPS

Next steps are dependant on the recommendations of the scrutiny committee on service delivery.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

None attached

10. APPENDICES

Enforcement Analysis for 2009/10