

# Agenda Item 7

**Communities Overview and Scrutiny**

**16 September 2009**

**AE**



## Neighbourhood Assessments

### Summary

This report provides an overview of recent work on Neighbourhood Assessments. The initiative has provided new opportunities to consult and engage with residents, provide services and deliver outcomes that might otherwise not have arisen.

### Recommendation

**That the Committee considers the report and recommend actions to the Executive Board.**

#### a) Reasons for Recommendation

An innovative and successful initiative improving levels of consultation and engagement with communities.

#### b) Alternative Options

To provide our core services on demand and to stop carrying out neighbourhood assessments

#### c) Risk Considerations

None

#### d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The project is ongoing and can be met within existing budgets.

#### e) Date for Review of Decision

September 2011

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## 1 Main Body of the Report

### 1.1 Introduction

'Neighbourhood Assessments' were introduced by the Environmental Health service in 2007 as a means of moving from a service delivery based on reacting to service requests/complaints to one which was more proactive and outward-looking. The aim was that a multi-agency team would engage with local residents, not only to raise awareness of available services, but also to seek out what local issues were causing residents concern and collectively to seek to resolve them. The agencies working with Environmental Health have included the Police, Fire Service, Devon County Highways, British Red Cross, Devon Primary Care Trust and East Devon District Council Officers from Street Scene, Housing, Planning Enforcement and Building Control.

The scheme, highlighted as an area of 'best practice' by the Customer Service Excellence assessor, fulfils the Council's new statutory duty to engage with the community, and the commitments laid down in the Council's new Community Engagement Policy, and has been used as a key piece of evidence in our 'Use of Resources' assessment by the Audit Commission.

## 1.2 Methodology

Our neighbourhood assessments actively seek to engage with residents either at home or at a drop in surgery near to their home. Their essence is that they provide an opportunity for residents to have a confidential discussion about local issues and to draw attention to problems that the authorities might otherwise have overlooked or considered to be unimportant. Issues raised and action taken are in each case summarised in newsletters that are available online with a limited run of printed copies being made available to participants and within the study area in libraries, GP surgeries, town and parish council offices and at sports and leisure centres.

## 1.3 Phase 1 (2007 / 2008)

The first year's work targeted ***Axminster, Seaton, Honiton, Sidmouth, Budleigh Salterton, Ottery St Mary and Exmouth***. Neighbourhood assessments were completed for these seven towns by Spring 2008. The areas were selected to ensure representation from owner occupiers, people renting privately and the Council's own tenants. The surveys were followed by a drop-in surgery in the local town halls which were open to all residents to attend to discuss any problems or concerns, make complaints or obtain advice from Environmental Health staff.

Teams of EDDC staff, Police and Fire Officers visited approximately 1900 properties in total during the first phase. Packs of information literature were distributed providing information and advice and signposting residents to other sources of assistance including information about energy efficiency grants, how we deal with noise complaints, improving your home security, preventing fire in the home, how we investigate problems with unsatisfactory housing and local dog control information. An explanatory leaflet and calling card was left at properties where there was no reply. The leaflet invited follow-up contact (via email, telephone or post) to enable us to take into account the views of as many people as possible.

Residents were invited to comment generally and were prompted by officers to seek their views on a specific range of local issues. They were asked whether they enjoyed living in their neighbourhood and whether they were satisfied with the Council's services. Officer prompts included questions about litter, recycling and waste, noise control, crime & antisocial behaviour, housing problems, energy efficiency, traffic, pests and dogs etc.

The results of the surveys were collated and any Environmental Health issues were dealt with where appropriate. All other concerns raised were passed to the relevant authorities, which included; Devon County Council, South West Water, Police, Fire, Planning, Housing etc, with a request for feedback on the outcomes and responses.

A Community newsletter for each town was then produced and distributed. This highlighted which issues were raised, the action taken already, any future action planned and who to contact to bring any other matter to our attention. The newsletters also included practical advice concerning fire and security, HomeSafeguard, Care and Repair and other Council services.

## 1.4 Phase 2 (2008/2009)

**In Summer 2008 we launched phase 2.** The strategy was again to target specific areas. We reviewed the data we hold on people who have previously made use of Environmental Health services and were able to identify seven areas – invariably more remote rural communities whose residents had previously had very little contact with our services. The intention was to challenge the assumption that people may not be users of our services because they simply

had no need of them. An important question was "...do the residents in these areas have issues that we ought to be involved with but they have not been able to access our services for other reasons...". This method selected the following communities: **All Saints/Smallridge, Offwell/Cotleigh, Upton Pyne, Aylesbears, Plymtree, Musbury and Woodbury Salterton.** This phase was carried out in partnership with local Police forces who provided PCSOs and Police Officers to assist. A door to door assessment was completed in each village enquiring whether residents had any concerns about their neighbourhood or the Council services they received. A number of promotional low energy light bulbs were supplied by Energy Companies which enabled us to distribute free low energy light bulbs to each property visited. Residents were offered further advice about grants available for home insulation. We also began promoting the services provided by Homesafeguard together with advice about the small repairs service available for disabled or vulnerable residents from Care and Repair. All residents were offered a free home security checks (including a free security marker) by the Police and a free fire safety check by Devon & Somerset Fire Service.

During these surveys around 1300 properties were visited and around 370 people were interviewed. 98% of residents said they enjoyed living in their village and 84% were satisfied with the Council services they received. Overall, the largest number of complaints received were concerning dog fouling, recycling, litter and waste.

Newsletters were produced in-house for each Parish giving feedback and have been very well received by residents and parish councils.

## 1.5 Discussion of Outcomes

Having established that the neighbourhood assessment format was proving to be successful mechanism for consultation and engagement, we set out to review in more detail the key outcomes of this second phase.

- **Dog fouling and dog bins**

The issue that came up again and again was of course dogs and dog fouling in particular. There is now a clearly stated intolerance of dog fouling in any public place. This has been important in influencing the Council's decision to make a Dog Control Order that will, from 1 autumn 2009, apply to all land to which the public are entitled or permitted to have access and will increase the fixed penalty notice charge to £80 (from £50) for anyone who fails to comply.

Despite the numbers, all persons who raised dog fouling as an issue have been contacted by our specialist enforcement officer. We no longer use uniformed wardens on general patrols as experience has shown us that this approach is no longer effective; the vast majority of dog owners clear up after their dogs but there are a minority who do not clear up when no-one else is around. This minority can have a significant impact on an area. Our enforcement officer now gathers intelligence and carries out a limited number of targeted monitoring exercises. Where offenders are caught or we have received statements from witnesses we issue fixed penalty notices. Where we have received information but insufficient evidence we write to the alleged offenders explaining potential fines and the law. We encourage any persons with information on offenders to call us to either offer to supply the necessary evidence to secure a conviction or to discuss that information in confidence with an officer.

Dog fouling was of course not the only issue. Our dog warden service is now primarily concerned with the promotion of responsible dog ownership and dealing with stray dogs. Where residents have told us that an owner is allowing their dog to stray, that owner has been contacted by the Dog Warden to advise of the law and seizure procedure and potential costs involved. Letters were sent to several dog owners whose dogs were reported staying around the villages of Musbury and Woodbury Salterton.

This Council now has well over 300 bins dedicated to dog waste. They are emptied three times each week by our contractor at an annual cost of over £40,000. There were requests for additional dog bins in Aylesbeare, Musbury, Upton Pyne but the Council has previously indicated that it is unable to fund any additional bins. The estimated costs of supplying, erecting and emptying new bins at the specified locations have been given to the respective Parish Councils to consider and in a few cases where the local council has been able to raise the necessary funding, additional bins have now been installed.

As requested, a number of additional “no fouling” signs have been erected in Musbury, Woodbury Salterton, Offwell and Upton Pyne to remind dog walkers of their responsibilities.

- **Improved recycling**

We noticed from residents’ responses in All Saints, Smallridge and Musbury, there were very few complaints about the Council’s recycling scheme and in fact a number of compliments about the system were received. The Council’s new recycling scheme had been in operation in these areas for around a year.

In contrast we noticed that there were a good many requests for more recycling in the west of the district, where the new recycling scheme had not yet been implemented. In Plymtree it emerged as the largest single issue and in Woodbury Salterton, Offwell/Cotleigh and Upton Pyne it was the second greatest concern.

Residents in the west of the district have been informed about the anticipated dates for their inclusion in the new service, and more recently it has been introduced in the Sidmouth and Ottery area.

Many residents said they were disappointed about the length of time being taken to introduce the new recycling system in all areas. The start dates for the new system have recently been brought forward by StreetScene. Across the district there was also a great desire to include cardboard in the collection as soon as possible.

- **Waste collections – StreetScene**

Requests for assistance with their refuse collections were received from several vulnerable residents in each village... Each one has been contacted and an assisted collection service has been put in place for a number of blind, disabled and elderly householders. Some have also been provided with gull proof sacks following reports that they were struggling with the large wheeled bin.

As requested, large volume wheeled bins have now been provided for some households with 5 or more residents, following concerns about overflowing bins.

A number of incidents of fly tipping were reported and all incidents were promptly investigated by Enforcement Officers.

A number of residents requested replacement bins and in each case, these have been provided.

A small number of residents complained about missed recycling collections for several consecutive weeks. StreetScene promptly looked into the matter, wrote an apology to each affected resident and contacted the contractor. A supervisor has been tasked with monitoring the situation and the situation improved.

There were a number of complaints about litter falling from our recycling vehicles during collections. Officers from StreetScene have been in discussion with the contractor SITA to ensure operatives clear up all waste and leave the area in a clean condition.

Residents have been informed about their responsibilities and asked to report large spillages, which StreetScene will clear.

There were concerns about the safety of operatives sorting recycling in slippery vehicles, whilst driving with the doors open. StreetScene have instructed SITA to ensure their employees do not sort recycling materials in moving vehicles. These residents' comments have drawn our attention to what appears to have been an ongoing problem.

- **Speeding and speed limits**

In Upton Pyne a number of residents felt strongly that a 20 mph speed restriction through the village ought to be imposed and enforced. These comments were passed to the Police and Devon County Council Highways who were in discussions with the Parish Council to introduce this in 2009. This was at first agreed, but there are now further discussions between the partner agencies.

Calls for a reduction in the 40 mph speed limit in Musbury were also discussed with Devon County Council Highways and the Police. The Police confirmed they had carried out additional speed checks in this area and Devon County Council Highways confirmed this area will now be included in their forthcoming countywide speed limit review for consideration.

Many residents appear to have an issue with speeding motorists. Excessive speed was reported in every neighbourhood assessment. A list of complainants has been passed to the local police who have been carrying out speed checks in many locations.

Offwell residents were also concerned about the amount of traffic travelling through the village to Sutton Recycling Centre. It appears that the Parish Council had requested Devon County Council Highways to erect alternative signs two years ago. Following our assessment we passed formal requests to Devon County Council Highways and the Highways Agency. A new sign has now been installed on the A35 directing traffic away from the village.

- **Rats and pests**

Perhaps not too surprising in such rural areas but a number of residents expressed concerns about rats in their area. This gave us an opportunity to provide information about the Council's own pest control service (provided by Rentokil for residents at preferential contract rates. For several years now we have directly subsidised the cost of treatment for rat infestations to such an extent that infestations on domestic property should never need to go untreated.

We also took the opportunity to raise awareness with advice about signs of rat infestations. Several households have subsequently requested pest control treatments.

A number of residents in Offwell & Cotleigh were concerned about badgers. Because badgers have a level of protection under the Protection of Badgers Act they are of course not covered by our domestic pest control service. We simply supplied these people with a leaflet outlining government (DEFRA) advice on what can and can't be done.

- **Housing EDDC**

A request to downsize to a smaller Council property was forwarded to Housing who are attempting to find suitable alternative accommodation.

Numerous requests for repairs to Council properties have been investigated, considered and repairs carried out where necessary by Housing Repairs.

A number of requests were made for replacement double glazed front doors to Council properties. Although there is an ongoing programme of replacement, several residents complained about poor insulation and draughty doors. The programme is expected to take over 3 years, some residents have been informed that their doors will not be replaced for some time.

One family requested assistance with housing due to overcrowding following the birth of their twins, and have since been assessed for the housing register.

An elderly tenant has been referred to Social Services for an assessment of needs after saying she was struggling to cope with bathing. She has now being assessed with a view to provide alternative arrangements within her property.

A request to cut back high hedges by a tenant in Woodbury Salterton was investigated. Loss of light caused by high hedges can be a problem but unfortunately the particular circumstances of the case meant that no action was appropriate.

A tenant who requested disabled access path to be installed in their property has been referred to Care and Repair for assessment by an occupational therapist.

- **Litter, waste, street cleaning and fly tipping**

Residents have consistently told us that litter in hedges and on roads should be a high priority. In fact it was the joint number one complaint in Upton Pyne. All such comments were forwarded to StreetScene who had already made plans to carry out deep cleans and litter picks in the areas to coincide with the Neighbourhood Assessments where possible.

A complaint about a slippery pavement caused by a build up of moss has been responded to by StreetScene. The path has been cleared and a programme for maintaining it and thereby preventing a recurrence has been put in place.

A number of residents called for more frequent street cleaning in most areas, and for the return of walking street sweepers in the villages rather than mechanical sweepers. Although to the best of our knowledge there have never been 'walking street sweepers' around the rural villages within East Devon, Devon County Council did previously employ 'lengths men' who were assigned various villages to maintain ditches and channels and to keep the place generally tidy (often being directed by the Parish clerks). Over the last 20 years EDDC has used mechanical sweepers wherever possible and presently our newly formed REACT workforce (5 members of staff) aim to undertake village 'clean up's' twice annually. In addition REACT hand litter pick primary roads and lay-byes throughout East Devon along with the clearance of dead animals and fly tips. Turning specifically to the request for walking street sweepers, this would be costly to the local authority, is possibly something that individual Parishes may wish to introduce themselves.

A pattern of requests for the Council to provide a service to collect green (garden) waste has begun to emerge. Our contractor (SITA) does provide such a collection service for an additional charge but despite this, many people expressed the opinion that this should be included in general collections without additional charges. These residents are being advised that at present there are no plans to introduce this service.

- **Anti social behaviour, crime & vandalism**

Residents in all of these areas conveyed a general feeling of safety and a good community spirit in their village. Levels of reported crime and fear of crime are both reassuringly very low. There were some reported incidents of theft from sheds and gardens and some residents did comment that there ought to be more Police Officers

“on the beat”. These comments were of course forwarded to the Police. Many households in these areas took the opportunity to have their property security marked by the Police and many residents have taken up the police’s free home security check.

In Musbury residents were invited to sign up to the Axminster Police community messaging service. The scheme is run by Axminster police and provides an early warning (e-mails and telephone calls) to residents about criminals or criminal activity locally. It is free of charge and many residents signed up to the service during the neighbourhood assessment.

In one case a number of residents took the opportunity of the assessment to report a suspected benefit fraud that was allegedly being perpetrated by a neighbour. A criminal investigation followed.

In Upton Pyne residents reported a small number of minor incidents of crime and antisocial behaviour. These were all passed to the Police.

- **Noise & pollution**

In spite of the rural character of the area, a number of residents raised the issues of noise, flies and smells arising from the keeping of animals and poultry, particularly in domestic gardens. A number of cases including the keeping of ducks and ferrets were raised and in due course, investigations were made by Environmental Health Officers. The cases were resolved informally and the key element of advice in these circumstances is invariably to strictly control numbers to levels suited to the size of the property in question.

Residents took the opportunity presented by the assessment days to report a few noisy and dangerous dogs. These cases have now been opened by the dog warden and in most cases having discussed the problems and possible implications with the owners, the cases have been resolved informally with advice offered to the owners.

- **Devon County Council transport and street lights**

Some residents voiced their requests for additional public transport in Upton Pyne. These requests were forwarded to Devon County Council who have confirmed they would re-consider this again when future funding allowed but would not be taking any further action for the time being. Similar requests for additional public transport in Aylesbeare were also turned down by Devon County Council.

We sent details of the Community Transport scheme to the Parish Council to consult directly with residents. We were told that this service could be extended to include Aylesbeare if sufficient requests were received from the residents.

A number of reports of faulty street lights in Aylesbeare were reported to Devon County Council who investigated promptly and carried out the necessary repairs.

- **Pot holes & roads**

Interestingly in Plymtree pot holes and the general surface of the roads generated the second highest level of complaints. These were forwarded to Devon County Council who carried out inspections in the area. They subsequently confirmed that repairs were necessary in certain places and have agreed to carry out the repairs.

In Aylesbeare storm water had exposed cables outside a property. Devon County Council carried out an inspection and confirmed that the utility company responsible would be made to repair the damage.

Surface water which was freezing on the road was reported in Aylesbeare. Devon County Council investigated and have agreed to carry out substantial repairs to defects on the road.

A request to cut back an overgrown hedge restricting the view in Aylesbeare was logged with Devon County Council who in response inspected the area and promptly cut back the hedge.

- **Flooding**

Residents raised a particular concern about the ongoing problem of flooding and overflowing sewers in Musbury. We responded and brought these concerns to the attention of South West Water. They then carried out their own investigations revealing a build up of fat and debris in the public sewer. Contractors have now cleaned the pipes out and installed non return valves. They have since agreed a six monthly maintenance programme to jet clean this sewer in an effort to avoid further problems in this area.

A pool of surface water in Plymtree was reported and this was passed on to Devon County Council to investigate and they have agreed to carry out the necessary repairs

- **Private sector housing**

A large number of Devon Warm Zones' reply cards were distributed in each village for residents to request grant assistance for home insulation. The properties current insulation and heating was discussed with every resident and where appropriate advice given on how to apply for additional insulation.

A resident who said she was struggling to use the bath, was referred to Devon Care and Repair for assistance. She is now being assessed by social services to provide alternative arrangements within her property.

A few elderly residents, living alone who were concerned about their security were referred to Care and Repair who have now received a number of requests for chains on doors to be installed by their small repairs scheme.

- **Parking**

Dangerous parking was highlighted by residents at school collection times in Plymtree, Woodbury Salterton, All Saints and Musbury. The head teacher was contacted in Plymtree and she has asked staff to consider alternative parking. PCSOs carried out patrols outside schools, speaking to parents, discussing alternative arrangements, installing no parking cones and encouraging walking buses. This is an ongoing problem for many areas as many children attend village schools outside their locality and are unable to walk there or use a bus.

The owner of a garage who parked hire vehicles close to the main road junction has been asked to move the vehicles back following complaints from several concerned nearby residents. He has since moved the vehicles and is considering alternative arrangements.

- **Miscellaneous**

When the lack of equipment for younger children in the play park was highlighted in Upton Pyne there were discussions with StreetScene and the Parish Council. Two new additional toddler swings have now been agreed and installed in the park.

Following a request for more financial assistance from the Offwell Woodland & Wildlife Trust, from a resident in Offwell. Information was supplied highlighting future grants

available of up to £10,000 from the National Environment Awareness Grant Fund, enabling the Trust to submit a bid for future funding.

One resident who was concerned that they may be paying too much Council Tax was contacted by a revenues officer and has had her contribution reassessed.

In response to bonfire complaints, advice leaflets and log sheets have been provided to complainants and letters have been sent to offenders warning of the law and restrictions. A report of burning tyres has also been investigated.

A man reported for spray painting commercial vehicles on the road was visited by our Enforcement Officer and told to cease.

Dangerous dogs reported in Cotleigh and Musbury were investigated by the Dog Warden.

A number of residents who smoke, had declined from installing a smoke detector in their properties for fear of false alarms. They were given advice about modern alternative detectors which would be suitable for their properties. Several people since agreed to install a smoke detector including the occupiers of two thatched properties.

- **Planning & affordable homes**

Additional affordable homes for local people and their children were requested in several areas and these requests have been passed to Planning. An additional affordable home has since been approved in Aylesbeare.

The owner of a Grade II listed property requested advice and assistance before carrying out renovations. They were put in touch with the Council's Listed Building Officer who has contacted them to offer given advice and information about the requirements.

There were several strong requests from residents of Woodbury Salterton to restrict the development of Greendale Barton, due to noise, heavy vehicles and the rural location of the site. Planning gave a statement stating reasons for expansions, but has confirmed they will further consult local residents and the Parish Council about future developments

Complaints about a structure in Smallridge were received and planning enforcement confirmed action was being taken to remove the structure.

## **1.6 Phase 3 Neighbourhood Assessments**

We began our third phase of neighbourhood assessments in Honiton in the summer of 2009. We began with the theme of encouraging healthy lifestyles and neighbourhoods. Environmental Health staff worked in partnership with the Primary Care Trust. Their aim was to highlight the risks and symptoms of Type 2 Diabetes, which is on the increase partially due to obesity and lifestyle and frequently remains undiagnosed. Residents were also offered a free swim voucher for Honiton Sports Centre when they visited the centre for a free guided tour of the gym, to thank them for completing the questionnaire. A pack of information was given out showing classes available and opening times at the Sports Centre. Information was again distributed concerning Care and Repair, HomeSafeguard and Energy Efficiency grants.

There was a disappointing response to the health questionnaire and it quickly became clear that residents did not want to talk to us about Type 2 Diabetes. There was also a lack of feedback from the general practitioners and the PCT were not able to offer a great deal of assistance with the survey due to work pressure.

Residents informed us that most of their concerns were directed at EDDC or the Police. Issues such as parking, speeding and vandalism were raised by many together with litter, dog fouling and waste and recycling concerns.

The response from the vast majority of residents visited has been overwhelmingly positive. People have expressed their pleasant surprise that someone has actively gone to them not only to seek out their views but to report back what action had been taken. This has been particularly the case in the more outlying areas which, in other surveys, have indicated that they feel detached and remote from the Council. There has also been a positive response to the information given to people about a range of other services of which they were unaware.

## 1.7 What next?

There have been requests from a number of Councillors and Parish Clerks to carry out neighbourhood assessments in their areas. In particular there has been interest in us taking a closer look at some of our larger villages or smaller towns in this next phase. We have developed a programme for the coming year and there will be six further assessments to be carried out in ***Uplyme, Newton Poppleford, Whimble, Lympstone, Dunkeswell and Beer***. These will be carried out in partnership with Police and began in August 2009 in the village of Uplyme.

Having heard about the partnership work we had been doing, the Red Cross approached us and have specifically requested to work with us and are offering a free life saving course to residents in each area giving advice about first responses and first aid.

Building Control have requested to be included in this next phase and a question has been incorporated in the questionnaire concerning dangerous structures and new building work. Issues raised will be brought to their attention and appropriate investigations and enforcement as necessary will follow.

HomeSafeguard and Care and Repair services will again be promoted, together with details of grants available for home insulation for home owners and tenants.

Tenant participation Officers will join this phase and intend to visit the Council properties in the areas to carry out the survey, whilst offering advice and information where required and feeding back any requests for service or complaints to Tenant Liaison and Estate Management.

Details of Devon & Somerset Fire Service's free fire prevention service will also be distributed.

Phase 3 is expected to be completed by Spring 2010.

Neighbourhood Assessments have been extremely well received in all areas to date and as mentioned above great interest in other areas for a similar approach.

The particular benefits they bring are:

- Raising awareness of Council services of which there is a surprising ignorance in some areas particularly the more remote
- Providing a positive image for, and increasing confidence in, the Council which will hopefully break down barriers and forge a closer relationship between the Council and local communities.
- Providing an opportunity to explain Council policies and the constraints within which it has to work.
- Making services more accessible particularly to harder- to- reach groups

- Obtaining a more balanced view on issues/concerns from the wider community rather than relying on feedback from more traditional means from those who are more inclined to ,or have the confidence to, 'speak up'.
- More imaginative and effective solutions to problems through inter-agency working.
- A formalised process for reporting back progress to residents has tended to concentrate minds and galvanise agencies into action.
- Resolving problems at an early stage before they escalate.

The process could be extended to other areas of service delivery:

- Planning -consultations with the community on strategic planning issues
- Housing benefits-raising awareness amongst harder to reach groups
- Streetscene-determining local priorities
- Community Safety-more effective multi agency working
- Youth issues

As a result of neighbourhood assessments, a number of changes to the way in which services are delivered have already been implemented:

- Whilst the response from the vast majority of residents visited has been overwhelmingly positive, the level of concern about dog fouling has informed our current intelligence based investigation and enforcement approach. We now focus on information known to (and supplied by) the community instead of sending uniformed patrols out to act as a deterrent. One example is that acting on intelligence received, the Council's enforcement officer has been working with Police and PCSOs to target specific dog fouling hot spots in Seaton. It has also been possible, following additional funding identified by a few parish councils, for our contractors to install a small number of additional dog bins in strategic locations that had been identified during neighbourhood assessments.
  - Street Scene officers have now developed a clear understanding with the Council's contractor over the level of clearing and tidying-up expected during refuse and recycling collections. The contractor now ensures that bins are returned in a tidy manner and that any dropped litter is promptly picked up.
  - In response to the demand identified in a Neighbourhood Assessment the Council has been able to fund the installation of additional children's play equipment in a village.
  - The REACT team has re-prioritised its work programme to conduct a timely comprehensive litter pick in each assessment area.
  - The police and Devon County Council Highways have in a number of cases been able to re-order their priorities to respond to local issues. Examples include additional warning signs at the roadside to deter speeding motorists in certain areas and there have been a couple of cases where a significant presence of PCSOs around school gates is discouraging unsafe parking on the school-run. In Woodbury Salterton traffic cones have been put out and parents encouraged to park in a nearby pub car park and to continue their journey to school on foot.
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**Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications set out within the report.

**Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications in the attached progress report.

**Background Papers**

- None

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Andrew Ennis ext 1583  
Environmental Health Manager

Communities Overview and Scrutiny  
16 September 2009