

# Using Data to Improve Services

**A toolkit for neighbourhood management initiatives**



Prepared for the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit as part of the National Evaluation of Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders

**CEA**

CAMBRIDGE ECONOMIC ASSOCIATES LIMITED

May 2006 • First Edition

## **National Evaluation of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme**

The National Evaluation of the Pathfinder Programme is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations, led by SQW Ltd:

- SQW Ltd
- GFA Consulting
- European Institute for Urban Affairs, Liverpool John Moores University
- Cities Research Centre, University of West of England, Bristol
- Cambridge Economic Associates
- Local Government Centre, Warwick Business School, Warwick University
- MORI
- NOP

The Evaluation has been commissioned by the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. If you would like more information about the Evaluation please see our website, or contact us directly:

<b>website</b>	<a href="http://www.sqw.co.uk/nme/">www.sqw.co.uk/nme/</a>
<b>address:</b>	<b>SQW, 53 Russell Square, London, WC1B 4HP</b>
<b>tel:</b>	<b>(020) 7307 7140</b>
<b>email:</b>	<a href="mailto:nm@sqw.co.uk">nm@sqw.co.uk</a>

*Front cover design by Garth Stewart*

*Front cover images courtesy of Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, Knutton Cross Heath Neighbourhood Management and Edee Conrad/Dreamstime.com*

## **CONTENTS**

Preface.....	1
Overview module: Why service data matters.....	2
Module 1: Street cleansing and refuse collection.....	8
Module 2: Uniformed policing.....	18
Acknowledgements.....	31



## **PREFACE**

*Using Data to Improve Services* is a toolkit that aims to give practical advice to neighbourhood management and other neighbourhood renewal initiatives on how to gather and use service data as part of their engagement with service providers. It sets out key indicators and explains how data can be used to facilitate negotiations about ways of improving service delivery in deprived neighbourhoods.

The publication of this toolkit is timely because it coincides with further guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on Local Area Agreements (LAAs) which focus on improving services and generating better outcomes for local people. The LAA Outcomes Framework contains a number of mandatory indicators which read across directly to the service quality and outcome indicators recommended in this toolkit. With such a strong emphasis on LAA Outcomes, now is a good time for neighbourhood renewal practitioners to be engaging with service providers, analysing data on service performance and outcomes, and discussing where and how services can be improved to benefit deprived neighbourhoods.

The key message promoted by the toolkit is to look widely for evidence on what works, and when doing so to look hard for information on the benefits and costs of new approaches to service delivery which can be used to make the case for change. Service providers are much more likely to take forward ideas which can demonstrate the potential to meet their own priority targets for quality and efficiency. While the initial evidence may not be sufficient to trigger immediate action, it may lead to a review or feasibility study which looks at different ways of delivering services or joining up with other service providers. The toolkit also emphasises the importance of gathering and using data as part of an ongoing process of monitoring and evaluation.

This first edition of the toolkit is presented in three modules:

- ❑ An Overview Module explaining why service data matters
- ❑ Module 1, relating to street cleansing and refuse collection services
- ❑ Module 2, relating to uniformed policing.

The research that informed the toolkit is an integral part of the National Evaluation of Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders. This work is ongoing and is expected to generate another module by March 2007, as well as data that will inform an assessment of the Programme's impact. Though the toolkit has its origins in the NMP programme, it is hoped that it will be a valuable aid to all neighbourhood renewal practitioners, including those involved in delivering the Neighbourhood Element of the Safer Stronger Communities Fund.

The aim is to make the toolkit as user-friendly as possible. Comments about the structure, content and style of the document are welcomed and these should be sent to [ceatyl@ntlworld.com](mailto:ceatyl@ntlworld.com)



## OVERVIEW MODULE: WHY SERVICE DATA MATTERS

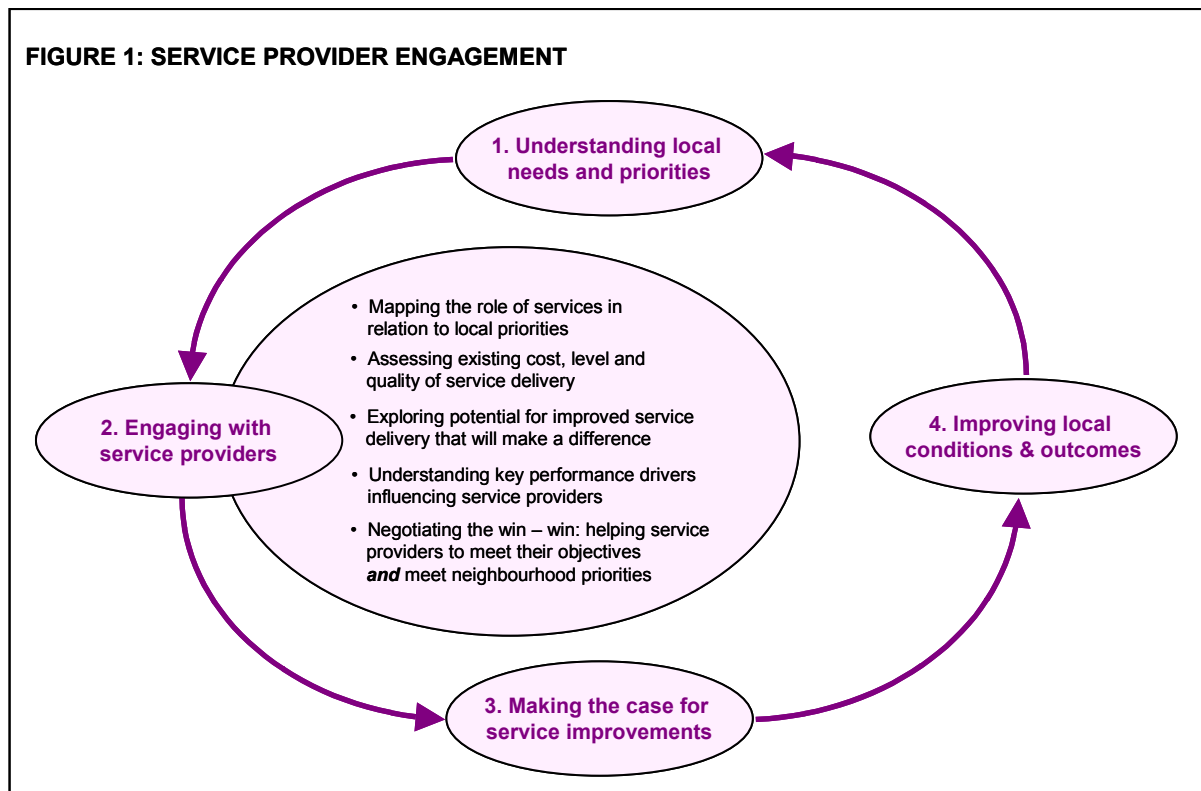
### 1. Understanding local needs and priorities

Neighbourhood management initiatives seek to turn around deprived neighbourhoods by tackling problems such as crime and anti-social behaviour, poor environmental quality, worklessness, ill health, and low levels of educational attainment. These problems are often deep-rooted: in many cases they have emerged over a long period of time and require painstaking effort to solve.

The best neighbourhood management initiatives have identified and prioritised the most important problems affecting the quality of life of their residents. They have done so by engaging with local residents and their communities. They have examined the root causes of deprivation in the area, including the complex inter-relationships between different problems. Critically, they have then gone on to identify the key service providers and other partners that the neighbourhood management initiative needs to work with to bring about lasting change in the area.

### 2. Engaging with service providers

The neighbourhood management approach to neighbourhood renewal revolves around the relationship between resident needs and aspirations and service provision. The primary goal of neighbourhood management initiatives is to negotiate improvements to service delivery which will have a positive impact on priority outcomes. So the initial steps of clearly identifying the key deprivation problems and their root causes, and of finding the right partners who can help to bring about change are crucial. Figure 1 shows how engagement with service providers is fundamental to the success of neighbourhood management initiatives.



Discussions with service providers are not always about increasing the level of a service and spending more on it. Often they concern more subtle changes in:

- ❑ corporate policies & practices
- ❑ the way mainstream resources are allocated
- ❑ how services are designed and how they can be better joined up
- ❑ improving access to increase take up.

All of these can bring about improvements in service delivery in ways that have a positive impact on the quality of life of local residents.

### *Why service data matters?*

Whatever the focus of discussions with service providers, the more relevant and robust the information about existing services, the more effective the negotiation will be about ways of improving service delivery.

With hundreds of thousands of pounds of public expenditure, and the performance and reputation of a service provider at stake, it would be unreasonable for them to change their approach without looking very carefully at:

- ❑ what services are delivered already and where
- ❑ how much they cost for a given level of service
- ❑ what the quality and accessibility issues are with existing services
- ❑ what the service provider's plans are for service improvements generally
- ❑ how specific improvements to individual services or groups of different services could help to meet their corporate aims and targets.

Getting to the point where this kind of information is available and capable of being analysed to assist in the negotiation is a critical part of the neighbourhood management process. Only then can there be a meaningful dialogue that focuses on the costs and benefits of changing the way services are delivered.

### *Opening the "black box"*

Many neighbourhood management initiatives find that they are the first "outsiders" to ask these kinds of questions of service providers and that the whole issue of obtaining service data can be a bit of a "black box". Getting hold of useful information on service performance can be difficult and time consuming because it isn't always clear from the outside:

- ❑ how services are organised and managed
- ❑ how service providers measure their performance
- ❑ what data on service costs, levels and quality is available at the neighbourhood level
- ❑ how a meaningful case can be made to change the way services are delivered.

Like most organisations, service providers only tend to publish information that is likely to be relevant to the concerns of key stakeholders (e.g. local residents, tenants). Naturally, they tend to emphasise high level performance rather than the detail of how services are delivered. And the focus is almost always at the organisational level (e.g. “how well are we doing in the Borough as a whole?”), rather than at the neighbourhood level.

Looking behind the glossy annual reports, CEA’s research suggests that, for whatever reason, most service providers tend not to measure service delivery at the neighbourhood level. The technical constraints are few, but service delivery geographies are often larger than neighbourhoods, and there are resource costs in collecting and analysing data at the neighbourhood level. Even so, in most cases it should be possible to gain a fairly accurate picture of the level, quality and cost of services at the neighbourhood level and compare these with borough or wider area performance.

It is the job of neighbourhood management initiatives to open this “black box” and engage in dialogue with service providers to understand how their service is delivered. It is also crucial to understand what is driving its performance, get hold of relevant data, and encourage service providers to discuss how services can be improved for the benefit of neighbourhood residents. Some explanation is needed about why service data matters, linked to persuasion regarding the potential mutual gains to be had (e.g. helping a local authority to find ways of meeting a key performance target) and, perhaps, some modest resources to meet the additional costs of non-routine measurement.

Neighbourhood management initiatives are also able to play the critical role of understanding whether and how certain services work together in practice, and if there might be benefits from a more joined-up approach.

There are also initiatives that neighbourhood management initiatives can take themselves, with little effort or interaction needed from service providers. The most important of these is ensuring that neighbourhood household surveys seek to mirror key customer satisfaction questions used by service providers. This will greatly assist in comparing service quality at the neighbourhood level with organisation-wide performance.

### ***3. Making the case for service improvements***

With the advent of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) there is an increasing emphasis on how local authorities and their partners in Local Strategic Partnerships can work together to improve services and generate better outcomes for local people. So it is more important than ever before for neighbourhood renewal practitioners to gather and use service data to inform the debate and show how sustained emphasis on service performance can improve outcomes in deprived neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood management resources are increasingly being allocated and prioritised through LAAs. Such initiatives need to be able to track clear changes in service delivery, attribute these to the influence of neighbourhood management, and show how they are having a positive effect on outcomes.

### *When is best to make the case?*

Service providers vary widely in terms of how and when they make and debate the case for service improvements. What follows is a simple list of things to find out about which will help in deciding tactically how to make the case for a service improvement.

**Understand the service provider's planning processes.** It's worth spending time finding out when it makes sense to introduce new ideas into the service planning process, and whether it's possible to do so between planning rounds. When a case is ready to be made, the best time to introduce it is most likely to be when preliminary discussions are taking place on the next year's service delivery plan, and, ideally, the next Corporate Plan. However, service planning can be a more fluid process than that. Neighbourhood management initiatives need to be alert to national, regional or local issues which may mean there could be an opportune moment for a case to be made – e.g. in the case of local authorities, an Audit Commission inspection which may have recommended improvements to a particular service, or a new policy initiative from DCLG or DEFRA (e.g. the new Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse), or a local service "crisis" which prompts calls for a new approach.

### *Who to target?*

**Understand who makes the decisions about changing services.** Decisions on altering the way services are delivered, and committing further resources to service delivery, are likely to be taken at senior management level. The case for service improvement – or even reviewing the way the service is delivered - will first need to be "sold" to that individual, who will then need to make the case internally within the organisation. For example, in the case of local authorities this will probably be at "head of service" level (e.g. management board), and – most likely – will need to be ratified by elected members, probably through some form of "scrutiny committee".

### *Make the time and prepare*

**Allow enough time to understand the problem and develop ideas for change.** It's essential to build in a sufficient lead-in period to look at the data together with the service provider, develop ideas and see whether they might work. All of this needs to be done before the formal case for change is prepared and it should ideally be developed in partnership with the service provider. The process can take several months – it certainly won't be done in a fortnight.

## ***4. Improving local conditions and outcomes***

After all the effort has been put in to bring about service improvement, it will be important for neighbourhood renewal practitioners and service providers to engage with service users to monitor progress in implementation, assess whether the changes are bringing about the desired improvements in local conditions, and apply lessons from experience going forward.

Therefore, it will be necessary to put in place relevant targets and milestones, monitoring arrangements and contingency provisions where things don't go according

to plan. It will be advisable to arrange for evaluation to learn what changes worked and those that didn't work so well.

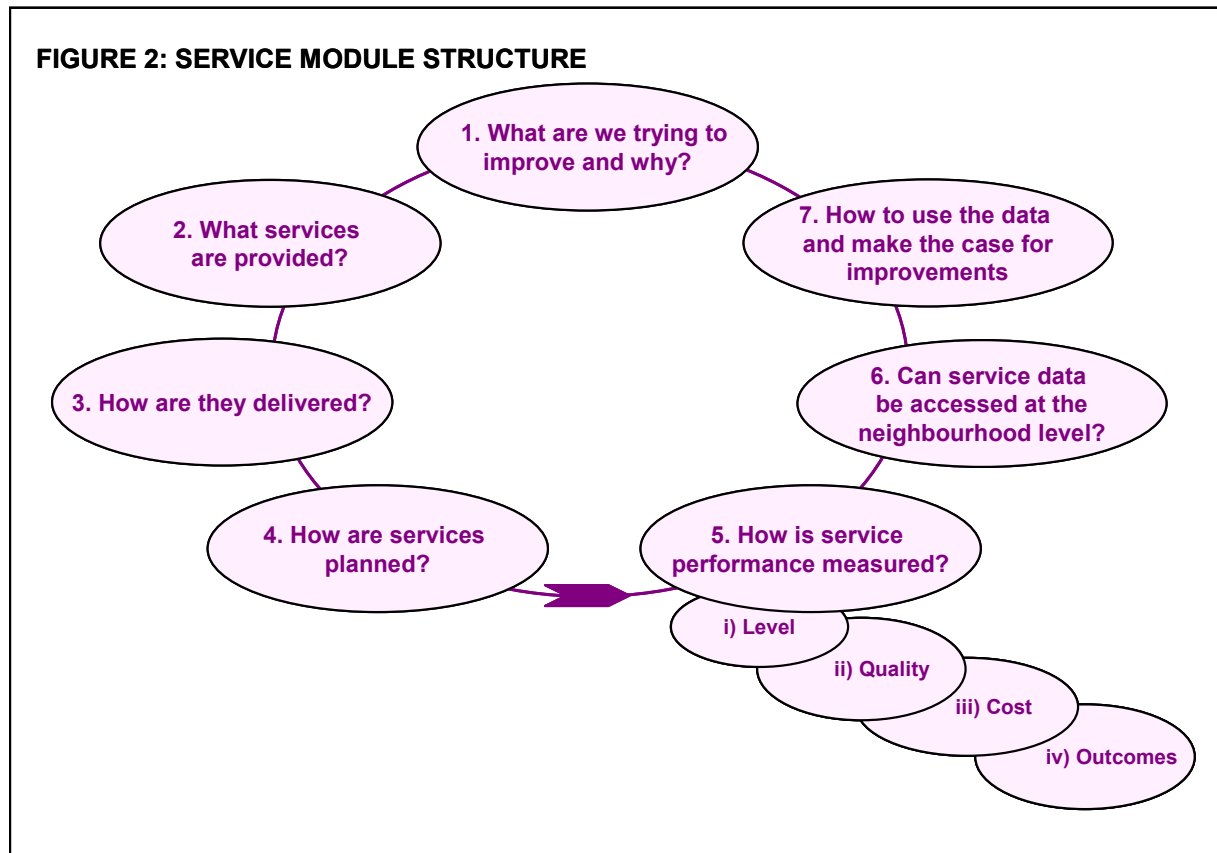
This is not just to ensure that the specific service changes bring about the intended improved outcomes. It is also to provide the basis for wider learning. It may, for example, suggest that the improvements could be rolled out to other neighbourhoods and/or to other services.

### **About the toolkit**

The toolkit presents guidance on:

1. **What are we trying to improve and why?** What are local needs and priorities and what's the evidence to back them up?
2. **What services are provided?** The toolkit covers certain services and each one is defined.
3. **How are they delivered?** For example, are services delivered at larger or smaller units of geography than neighbourhoods?
4. **How are services planned?** For example, what timescale do corporate and service plans typically cover, how often are they updated and at what times of year are they typically prepared?
5. **How is service performance measured?** What indicators are typically used to measure service level, service quality, service cost and the outcomes from service delivery?
6. **Can service data be accessed at the neighbourhood level?** Is data on certain indicators available at the neighbourhood level and what constraints typically need to be overcome? Could these be overcome with some encouragement and modest resource input?
7. **How to use the data and make the case for improvements.** How should the data be stored and analysed to track performance over time and benchmark service performance? How can it be interpreted to highlight service-related issues? What changes might be made to service delivery that could have positive outcomes? When and how should the case for service improvements be made?

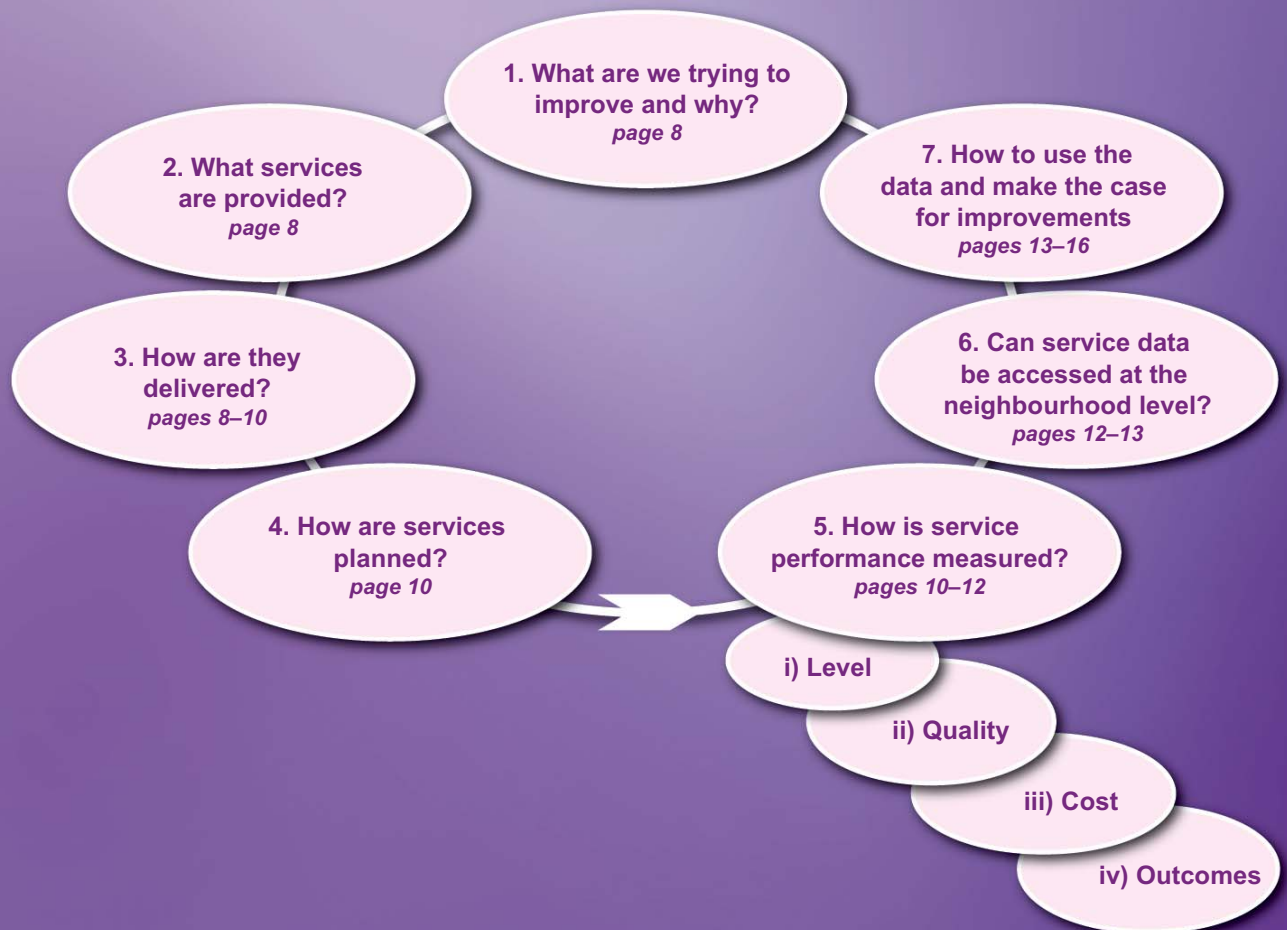
Each of the service modules is structured in the same way, following the cycle of key issues shown in Figure 2.



# Module 1

## Street cleansing and refuse collection

### Contents





## MODULE 1: STREET CLEANSING AND REFUSE COLLECTION

### Module coverage

The services covered by this module are domestic waste collection (but not recycling) and the cleansing of all streets and footways in residential and commercial areas.

#### 1. What are we trying to improve and why?

Research suggests that clean streets make for more satisfied residents. They signal pride in an area and make it more likely that people will want to live there and behave responsibly. Many neighbourhood management initiatives find that residents have negative perceptions of the state of their local environment. Common issues are dirty or littered streets and large items (e.g. old furniture) left outside houses for weeks on end. Different areas have different issues, and some initial questions need to be asked to establish what the specific problems are and how bad they really are:

- ❑ Compared with other areas, how bad is the problem: are the streets *measurably* dirtier or more littered in this neighbourhood?
- ❑ How often do the streets get cleaned and the litter picked?
- ❑ Is there a problem in this area with the way large household items are dealt with – either by households (who may not be aware of the services on offer) or because service providers are slow to collect?

Trying to establish the nature of the problem as precisely as possible will make it easier to improve service provision.

#### 2. What services are provided?

Having identified the problem, the next issue is to figure out which service providers are currently responsible for keeping the area clean and tidy.

All local authorities are bound by the 1990 Environmental Protection Act to “keep specified land clear of litter and refuse as far as is practicable... and...to keep public highways clean as far as is practicable”. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 also gives new powers to local authorities to deal with fly-tippers and litter droppers, including the greater use of fixed penalties.

Street cleansing and refuse collection services are delivered by local authorities or organisations contracted by them. It’s important to note that while the local authority may be responsible for specifying the service and procuring it, it may have contracted the delivery of the service out to another organisation, most likely a commercial operator.

#### 3. How are they delivered?

##### Waste collection

Many areas have a weekly kerbside refuse collection service using wheel bins or bin bags. This service is usually delivered through the operation of “rounds”. Generally a

“round” is larger than a neighbourhood management area. The research suggests that a neighbourhood management area is typically contained within one round, though it might straddle two rounds.

Local authorities also offer residents a special collection service for bulky items such as large furniture and household electrical goods like washing machines and fridges/freezers. There is usually a charge for this service. The collection of bulky items tends not to be organised on a geographical basis below the borough level. Households dispose of large items periodically, so local authorities or their contractors tend to arrange for such collections only when residents contact them.

### *Street cleansing*

Street cleansing services delivered by or for local authorities usually involve cleansing of streets, alleyways, litter zones, subways, car parks, public conveniences, removal of dead animals from roads and public land, market waste collection, installation and maintenance and emptying of litter bins, removal of fly tipping, and servicing of dog waste bins.

The delivery of street cleaning services is governed by a Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse which has recently been updated<sup>1</sup>. For example, the Code defines standards of cleanliness achievable in different types of location and differing circumstances, and also gives advice on the “zoning” of land as shown in the table below. Local authorities use these Zone classifications to set service standards about the frequency of cleaning activity. High intensity areas, such as shopping centres, tend to be cleaned most frequently. Periodic reviews of zones are usually undertaken to avoid sharp distinctions between zones swept on a daily basis and others swept only a few times a year.

<b>High intensity of use</b>	Areas which, through intense pedestrian and/or vehicular movements, are prone to fluctuations in litter and refuse and require both high levels of monitoring and frequent cleansing
<b>Medium intensity of use</b>	Areas affected by moderate levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity and therefore less prone to fluctuations in litter and refuse, usually situated outside centres of retail or commercial activity, but used regularly by members of the public (includes all housing areas that are not located in high intensity areas)
<b>Low intensity of use</b>	Areas subject to low or infrequent levels of pedestrian and vehicular activity and therefore less prone to fluctuations in litter and refuse, often located in more rural areas
<b>Areas with special circumstances</b>	Types of land where issues of health and safety and reasonableness and practicability are dominant considerations when undertaking environmental maintenance work.

<sup>1</sup> Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse, Department of the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra), 2006

The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse recommends the use of the Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE) developed by ENCAMS (Environmental Campaigns) for monitoring a range of local environmental quality issues. In summary, this involves surveying a sample of streets and grading the level of litter and detritus on a scale of A to D where A is clean, B is light, C is significant and D is heavy. This methodology allows local authorities to measure one of their Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), BVPI 199a. Full details of the survey and the measurement of BVPI 199a can be found at [www.leq-bvpi.com](http://www.leq-bvpi.com)

#### **4. How are services planned?**

Most local authorities produce Corporate Plans that will set the strategic direction for the organisation as a whole, including performance targets, over a three year period. Some organisations update their Corporate Plan annually. Preparation times will vary, but often tend to be in a three to six month period before the plan becomes effective (e.g. planning in October to March for the next financial year).

The detail of how specific services are to be delivered and their performance targets will often be contained within “service plans” or “service delivery plans”. These documents are typically produced or updated annually. However, as with the Corporate Plan, targets are usually set at the Borough level and not for lower geographical levels such as neighbourhoods.

#### **5. How is service performance measured?**

The main indicators used by local authorities tend to be Best Value Performance Indicators<sup>2</sup>. All local authorities should be using these mandatory indicators, defined by Government, to measure service levels, quality and cost on a consistent basis across their boroughs. In addition there are a number of local indicators many of which are suggested by the Audit Commission<sup>3</sup>.

##### ***i) What level of service is delivered?***

For **waste collection**, the key service level indicators are:

- ❑ Service standards (frequencies and response times) for:
  - Domestic refuse collection
  - Emptying missed bins
  - Removing bulky items
- ❑ Kilogrammes (kg) of household waste collected per head (BVPI 84, annual)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bvpi.gov.uk/pages/index.asp>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/>

For **street cleansing**, the key service level indicators are:

- Frequency of street cleansing (1 in x week cycle, or x times per annum) for different zones, e.g.
  - residential streets
  - main roads
  - shopping areas
- Frequency of litter picking
- Frequency of emptying of litter bins

*ii) What **quality** of service is delivered?*

For **waste collection**, the key service quality indicator is:

- Number of missed bins per 100,000 collections of household waste (NS88, local indicator)

For **street cleansing**, the key service quality indicator is:

- % of relevant land and highways assessed as falling below a Grade B in cleanliness (litter and detritus) (i.e. the % with Grade C (significant) or Grade D (heavy) levels of litter or detritus). (This is BVPI 199a using the LEQSE method)

*iii) At what **cost** are services delivered?*

For **waste collection**, the key service cost indicator is:

- Cost of waste collection per household (BVPI 86, annual)

For **street cleansing**, the key service cost indicator is:

- Cost per sq. km of keeping land and highways for which LA responsible clear of litter and detritus

*iv) What **outcomes** do services generate?*

For **waste collection**, the key outcome indicator is:

- % of people satisfied with household waste collection (BVPI 90a, 3 yearly survey, next due in 2006/07)

For **street cleansing**, the key outcome indicator is:

- % of residents satisfied with the cleanliness standards of the Borough's streets (BVPI 89, 3 yearly, next due in 2006/07).

## **6. Can service data be accessed at neighbourhood level?**

### *General observations*

For service data to be useful to neighbourhood managers it needs to be fine grained geographically. Only then can it be used to highlight whether performance at the neighbourhood level is better than, the same as, or worse than some wider area (e.g. the borough average). This process of comparing performance is called "benchmarking". Where neighbourhood performance is worse than some wider area, then it provides a focus for discussion with service providers about why that is and what might be done to improve the situation.

Our research suggests that there is nothing in principle which should prevent these waste collection and street cleansing indicators being measured at the neighbourhood level. The practical issues are another matter, however. Few local authorities set performance targets or service standards at lower levels of geography. While they do have to react to problems as they arise – for example at specific addresses or locations when reported by the public via "hotlines" or by crews when they are on the ground - this is different from a pro-active tracking of service performance across different neighbourhoods.

Although it's unlikely that neighbourhood data will be available "off the shelf", the measurement methods used, combined with the use of new technology, makes it increasingly possible to collect data at a finer grain that would be useful to neighbourhood managers. Some more detailed tips on the "art of the possible" are provided below.

### *Waste collection*

Routine performance reporting by local authorities on waste collection is undertaken for the borough as a whole, and certain indicators may be measured at the "round" level (e.g. kg of waste collected), but typically not for smaller levels of geography such as the neighbourhood.

However, it is increasingly possible to collect and analyse data at smaller levels of geography than the "round". Weighing facilities on some modern refuse collection vehicles mean that it is possible to collect data for a smaller specified area giving an average weight per bin measurement. Some authorities are also introducing "chipped bin" systems for recording a range of waste collection data.

The outcome indicator for waste collection is survey-based. Local authorities are unlikely to have sufficiently large survey samples to allow results by neighbourhood, but the fact that they are asking resident satisfaction questions in a consistent way means that neighbourhood management initiatives can include the same questions in

their own neighbourhood surveys. Neighbourhood management areas can then be benchmarked against the borough average.

### *Street cleansing*

All local authorities are obliged to follow a specific methodology for measuring how clean their streets and spaces are every year. This ENCAMS LEQSE methodology involves taking a sample of streets in the borough for staff to inspect and record three times a year.

While local authorities' priorities for reporting on street cleanliness will be at the borough level, it is quite straightforward to report on a smaller specified area such as a neighbourhood management area. The methodology is clear and it can be readily applied and analysed for different samples of streets using the same systems in place for the borough-wide sampling. The only constraint is likely to be the willingness of the local authority to provide the staff resources to undertake the necessary survey and analysis work.

In relation to resident satisfaction with the cleanliness of their streets, this will be available from local authorities from their best value performance resident surveys, but probably at borough level only. However, neighbourhood management initiatives can include the same standard questions in their own neighbourhood surveys and benchmark the results. Alternatively, neighbourhood management initiatives might want to encourage the local authority to increase the sample for the subject neighbourhood to enable some comparisons to be made directly.

## ***7. How to use the data and make the case for improvements***

Getting good quality data at the neighbourhood level is a critical ingredient for negotiations, but how it is used to build a case for improvements in service delivery is just as important.

This last section of the module provides some practical guidance on how to use the data as the basis for negotiations with service providers. The guidance is structured in the following way:

- How can the data be analysed?
- What does the data tell us we should focus on?
- What kinds of service improvement will make a difference?

### *How can the data be analysed?*

Having explored the issues of data accessibility, and come to some agreement about data sharing and analysis at the neighbourhood level, neighbourhood managers should establish their own service database probably using spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel. The graphic opposite gives a flavour of how the data could be stored and analysed to take snapshots at particular points in time, as well as track changing performance over a number of years.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	<b>SERVICE DATA FOR: STREET CLEANSING &amp; WASTE COLLECTION</b>					
2						
3		<b>Base year</b>	<b>Latest year</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Borough av.</b>	
4				<b>Base year to latest year</b>	<b>Base year</b>	<b>Latest year</b>
5	<b>i) Service level indicators</b>					
6	<b>Street cleansing</b>					
7	Actual frequency of street cleansing (times per annum, e.g. 13 for a 1 in 3 week cycle):					
8	- residential streets					
9	- main roads					
10	- shopping areas					
11	Frequency of litter picking					
12	Frequency of emptying litter bins					
13	<b>Waste collection</b>					
14	Domestic refuse collection - times per annum (e.g. 52 = weekly)					
15	Emptying missed bins - response time after notification					
16	Removing bulky items - response time after notification, or by appointment					
17	Kilogrammes (kg) of household waste collected per head					
18	<b>ii) Service quality indicators</b>					
19	<b>Street cleansing</b>					
20	% of relevant land and highways (controlled by local authority), assessed as falling below a Grade B in cleanliness (litter and detritus) (i.e. the % with Grade C (significant) or Grade D (heavy) levels of litter and detritus) using the LEQES method					
21	<b>Waste collection</b>					
22	Number of missed bins per 100,000 collections of household waste					
23	<b>iii) Service cost indicators</b>					
24	<b>Street cleansing</b>					

*What does the data tell us we need to focus on?*

The key to understanding service data is benchmarking, the process of comparing performance for a target neighbourhood against some wider area (often, in this context, the local authority district). The following example demonstrates how benchmarking can be used to highlight a problem, and measure how severe it is compared with other areas.

If the performance data suggests that the neighbourhood is receiving services at a lower level or lower quality than necessary, these conclusions can provide some focus for discussions with service providers about why that's the case, and what steps might be taken to improve the service.

### **What's the problem?**

A neighbourhood management initiative has done a household survey to inform its delivery plan. The survey found that only 24% of local residents were satisfied with the cleanliness of the neighbourhood. Some focus groups identified a problem particularly with the residential estates rather than the main roads. When the neighbourhood management team benchmarked this result with the most recent Best Value Survey done for the borough as a whole, it found a striking difference: 54% of the population at the Borough level were happy with cleanliness.

It found out that the borough as a whole was performing fairly well in terms of Best Value Performance Indicator 199a – 28% of the land and highways for which the Council was responsible had levels of litter or detritus at Grades C (significant) or Grade D (heavy), but there was no information at the neighbourhood level.

After initial discussion, the neighbourhood management initiative and the Council agreed to share the costs of conducting the LEQSE survey in the neighbourhood. This found that only 19% of streets in the sample met Grade A or B – i.e. that 81% had significant or heavy levels of litter and detritus, significantly worse than the borough average for similar types of residential area. The situation was found to be bad throughout the neighbourhood, but particularly acute in and around a block of flats - an area of social housing outside of the local authority's control and managed by an RSL.

However, raw data on its own is unlikely to tell the full story. Other information – including feedback from residents and discussions with service provider managers – is often needed to reveal the key underlying problems and what can be done about them.

### **What are the reasons for this performance gap?**

In this case, the neighbourhood manager asked to see the Council's service standards and found out who had been contracted to deliver the services. She found that the street cleansing and refuse services had been contracted out to a single company who, in addition to the weekly refuse collection and bulky item disposal service, were required to sweep the residential streets in the area once every 17 weeks, and that litter picking should take place once every 3 weeks.

Discussions with the Council showed that the contractor was meeting the standards, but several issues came to light. The Council had not yet moved to a wheeled bin service, and local residents reported that bin bags were being ripped open the night before collection by pets and vermin. A new mobile take-away had also moved to the area, but the area had not been re-classified and so the frequency of the litter picking service was for an area with no retail or commercial activity.

Having taken the process this far, the neighbourhood manager was now in a position to work with the service provider to see if any solutions could be found.

### **What kinds of service provision will make a difference?**

Some service improvements may be very straightforward and cheap to deliver. However, others may be more complex, requiring detailed analysis into how existing services are delivered and options for improving service delivery. Neighbourhood

management initiatives can and should be proactive in looking for evidence on what works from other areas and sharing it with local service providers. There is an increasingly body of useful information from sources such as the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), ENCAMS and the Audit Commission as well as the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit. The box below explores some of the improvements that were considered in the context of the specific example used here.

***What service changes will make a difference?***

Having got to the root of the problem, some of the solutions were fairly obvious and could be taken forward at little cost:

- ❑ The take-away operator agreed to erect some new litter bins in the immediate vicinity of the take-away, and put up signs on the vehicle reminding customers to use them and of the new fines for littering.
- ❑ Promotional work in the neighbourhood about when to put bin bags out, to make use of the new litter bins, and to advise them of the new powers of local authorities to levy fines on those leaving litter
- ❑ Getting the Council to agree to re-zone the area around the mobile take-away so that it was monitored more often, with litter picking also more frequent
- ❑ Facilitating discussions between the Council and the RSL over inconsistencies in service standards for litter picking and street sweeping around the flats managed by the RSL. These were brought into line.

The issues raised by the neighbourhood management initiative about ripped bin bags, combined with the experiences of other local authorities, led to the neighbourhood management initiative and the Council sharing the costs of a feasibility study into whether to adopt wheeled bins. The neighbourhood management initiative played a key role by assembling and highlighting some preliminary evidence from local authorities elsewhere. This demonstrated that the move to wheeled bins could help to reduce street cleansing costs and lead to a marked improvement in the Borough's performance in terms of overall litter and detritus. This was enough for the Council to commit resources to the feasibility study.

Following the study, the Council was persuaded of the merits of moving to wheeled bins and initiated a pilot covering a number of waste collection rounds including the target neighbourhood. The pilot evaluation showed significant improvements in street cleanliness as a result of the change in approach. Within a year the proportion of streets achieving Grade A or B under the LEQSE measurement was up to 96%, and resident satisfaction increased to 60%.

## Useful links

The box below provides some useful websites for further information about these services and how they can be measured.

- ❑ [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localenv/litter/code/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localenv/litter/code/index.htm) - for the 2006 Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse
- ❑ [www.encams.org](http://www.encams.org) - for the ENCAMS website
- ❑ [www.leq-bvpi.com](http://www.leq-bvpi.com) - for details about measuring BVPI 199a on litter and detritus
- ❑ [www.dclg.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1136106](http://www.dclg.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1136106) - for guidance on Best Value Performance Indicators
- ❑ [www.bvpi.gov.uk/pages/Index.asp](http://www.bvpi.gov.uk/pages/Index.asp) - for the local government performance measurement website
- ❑ [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance/](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance/) - for the Audit Commission's website on performance indicators and performance measurement
- ❑ [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/statistics/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/statistics/index.htm) - for statistics on waste management
- ❑ [www.cleanersaferegreener.gov.uk/](http://www.cleanersaferegreener.gov.uk/) - for best practice examples relating to street cleansing and refuse collection
- ❑ [www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net) - for a range of good practice relating to local environments and the liveability agenda
- ❑ [www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge](http://www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge) - for the Improvement & Development Agency's website, which offers good practice, guidance and other practical tools
- ❑ [www.sgw.co.uk/nme/](http://www.sgw.co.uk/nme/) - for the National Evaluation of Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders.

# Module 2

# Uniformed policing

## Contents





## MODULE 2: UNIFORMED POLICING

### Module coverage

The services covered by this module are<sup>4</sup>:

- ❑ Uniformed community policing, including community beat officers and community support officers and crime prevention activities
- ❑ Uniformed responsive policing, including call-outs to 999 calls or follow-up calls to reported crimes.

### 1. What are we trying to improve and why?

Research by the NRU<sup>5</sup> notes that crime tends to be heavily concentrated in deprived areas and that drug use is significantly higher in poor neighbourhoods than elsewhere. Racially motivated attacks can also be important problems faced by ethnic minority residents in low income areas.

Crime and disorder matter a great deal to local people: they cause economic, physical and emotional distress for victims and have wider social and economic impacts for an area. For example, fear of crime might frighten people going out after dark and stop them from meeting their friends and relatives and engaging in other social activities. There is a strong relationship between crime and substance misuse, causing related problems for health as well as discarded needles; youth crime is sometimes linked to school truancy and exclusion and poor educational attainment, as well as the provision of out of school youth activities; the poor reputation of high crime areas can make properties more difficult to sell and let, which can lead to problems of vandalism and environmental deterioration. If employers have a choice, why would they choose an area with a reputation of having high levels of property crime?

Different areas have different patterns of crime and anti-social behaviour, and these will interact in different ways with other neighbourhood renewal problems. Some initial questions need to be asked to establish what the specific problems are, how bad they really are and where they are:

- ❑ Compared with other areas, how bad is the problem: what specific types of crimes and anti-social behaviour are measurably worse in this neighbourhood?
- ❑ Is there any evidence about who is causing the problem? For example, is it thought to be carried out by people living in the area, or those coming in from outside? Is there a disproportionate amount of crime and disorder caused by a small number of individuals or in particular “hot spots”?
- ❑ What level of uniformed policing does the area receive already, both in terms of community policing and responsive policing?
- ❑ Does feedback from residents suggest there are problems with the level of services or the ways they are delivered?

---

<sup>4</sup> **Services excluded** are scenes of crime, forensic or other scientific support, CID, plain clothes intelligence gathering/surveillance, traffic and other policing services.

<sup>5</sup> [www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net) - crime overview

Trying to establish the nature of the problem as precisely as possible will make it easier to find solutions.

## 2. What services are provided?

Having identified the problem, the next issue is to establish how services aimed at tackling crime and anti-social behaviour are organised and where within those structures neighbourhood management initiatives can sensibly engage.

Front-line delivery of uniformed policing services is carried out by police forces. At the time of writing there are 43 forces<sup>6</sup> in England & Wales which will typically have responsibility for the following activities:

- ❑ reducing crime and the fear of crime
- ❑ increasing public reassurance
- ❑ reducing public disorder, anti-social behaviour and nuisance behaviour
- ❑ providing effective call handling, incident response and assistance
- ❑ increasing public confidence in the justice system.

## 3. How are they delivered?

Each police force is sub-divided into a number of Basic Command Units (BCUs, sometimes known as divisions or districts) which have responsibility for both community and responsive policing. BCUs are the key structural building blocks in every force, and they are currently the lowest level of geography used by the Home Office to measure policing performance. BCUs are typically commanded by a Chief Superintendent.

Basic Command Unit geographies may be larger or smaller than local authority districts, depending on the size of the district and its character. For example, in metropolitan areas, a BCU may be the same as a large unitary authority. In other areas, such as shire counties, there will be a number of BCUs, each covering maybe three or more local authority districts.

### *Community policing*

Community policing is delivered by Basic Command Units through Local Policing Units (LPUs). Local Policing Units may be the same size as a local authority district, but in some areas two or three LPUs might cover a local authority district. Each Local Policing Unit is typically commanded by an Inspector with responsibility for the line management of a number of Sergeants, Police Constables and Community Support Officers (CSOs) across a given geographical area.

The LPU's police officers are deployed across the LPU area at the discretion of the LPU commander. With the increasing emphasis on neighbourhood-based policing, it

---

<sup>6</sup> The number of Police Forces is likely to reduce as a result of a force restructuring process which is currently underway

is not unusual to find that officers are focused on particular neighbourhoods or council wards. Some police forces have created safer neighbourhood teams, where police officers work alongside neighbourhood wardens and other service providers within defined boundaries. The actual relationship between officer deployment and neighbourhoods will vary depending on the level of crime and disorder and the nature of the policing requirement, and also the force's policy on neighbourhood policing.

### *Responsive policing*

Responsive policing is usually managed across the Basic Command Unit as a whole. This dimension of the BCU's work is mostly concerned with handling incoming 999 calls requiring an immediate response and responses within short timescales. Officers will be deployed from a dedicated pool as incidents come in, and they have their own vehicles and infrastructure which is separate from community policing.

As calls come in to an incident management call centre, incidents will be categorised according to the urgency of the response needed. The categories and response times vary force by force. The boxed example below provides an indication of how one police force classifies incidents and the required response times.

<b>Responsive policing – example of incident categories and response times</b>	
Level 1	Immediate response urban (within 10 minutes)
Level 2	Immediate response rural (within 20 minutes)
Level 3	Priority response (within 30 minutes)
Level 4	Standard response (within 24 hours)
Level 5	Scheduled response (by appointment)
Level 6	Screened response by telephone
Level 7	No response

### *4. How are services planned?*

Police forces work closely with their Police Authorities to produce Corporate Plans covering a three year period (e.g. 2005-2008), and these also tie in with the timescales used for the Home Office's National Policing Plan.

Corporate plans will usually be prepared and refreshed during the period December to March prior to the new plan coming into effect.

Below the force level, formal service planning takes place at the Basic Command Unit level. Each BCU will produce a three year plan covering the same timescale as the force plan. The objectives and targets in the BCU Plan (which may be called a divisional plan or district plan) are guided from the top-down by the force plan, and from the bottom-up by the local priorities that emerge from Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). CDRPs have broadly the same boundaries as local authority districts and also set three yearly plans.

Although there may not be formal three yearly plans for community policing via LPU's, or for responsive policing, CEA's research found that the performance of these parts

of the police structure is guided by BCUs through “control strategies”. These are operational plans which are updated over a 3 to 6 month period depending on the force. Control strategies set out how LPUs and units responsible for responsive policing are expected to contribute to the BCU’s objectives and targets. While BCU plans may be published (even if only in summary form), control strategies are rarely published.

### 5. How is service performance measured?

In the last few years the Police Standards Unit (PSU), Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC), the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA) have worked together on the development of the Police Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) to measure and compare policing performance across the country.

The PPAF culminated in the first Police Performance Assessments (PPA) for 2004/05. These were based on Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) set by the Home Secretary each year and HMIC Baseline Assessments (annual reviews of police force performance derived from a self-evaluation by each force of key areas of policing).

All police forces are using the same SPIs to measure service levels, quality and cost on a consistent basis for the force as a whole and, for some indicators, at the Basic Command Unit level. In addition to setting SPI targets, each Police Authority will also set targets for its force using a range of local performance indicators.

The SPIs are particularly focused on indicators relating to service quality (e.g. resident and victim satisfaction with police services) and service outcomes (i.e. levels of crime and disorder and fear of crime), with few indicators relating to the level of service and the cost of service. However, there are a number of SPIs which are particularly relevant to neighbourhood management initiatives.

#### i) What level of service is delivered?

For *community policing*, the key service level indicators are:

- Number of officers directly engaged in community policing:
  - Chief Inspectors
  - Inspectors
  - Sergeants
  - Police Constables
  - Community safety officers
- Percentage of officer time spent on frontline duties (SPI 11)

For **responsive policing**, the key service level indicators are:

- ❑ Number of staff directly engaged in responsive policing
  - Chief Inspectors
  - Inspectors
  - Sergeants
  - Police Constables
  - Other staff (e.g. civilian call handling staff)
- ❑ Target or predicted<sup>7</sup> level of response by incident category in minutes (e.g. immediate response urban, immediate response rural, etc.)

### *ii) What **quality** of service is delivered?*

Service levels should be capable of being tracked for community and responsive policing. However, in terms of quality indicators, the PPAF and SPIs make no distinction between the policing activities that contribute to performance. It is also true that the service quality of other policing activities – including CID, scientific/forensic and other support not covered by this toolkit - will also make a significant contribution to the quality performance. The box below sets out the service quality indicators which are considered to be particularly relevant for uniformed policing overall, whether this is community or responsive policing:

- ❑ Actual level of response by incident category in minutes (e.g. immediate response, etc.)
- ❑ Percentage of notifiable/recorded offences resulting in conviction, caution or taken into consideration at court (SPI 6b)
- ❑ Percentage of notifiable offences resulting in a sanction detection (SPI 7a)
- ❑ Percentage of domestic violence incidents where an arrest was made related to the incident (SPI 8a)
- ❑ Satisfaction (% satisfied, and % very/completely satisfied) of victims of domestic burglary, violent crime, vehicle crime and road traffic collisions with respect to:
  - Making contact with the police (SPI 1a)
  - Action taken by the police (SPI 1b)
  - Being kept informed of progress (SPI 1c)
  - Their treatment by staff (SPI 1d)
  - The overall service provided (SPI 1e)

### *iii) At what **cost** are services delivered?*

Even though it may be very difficult to relate the contribution of specific policing activities to overall performance in terms of quality and outcomes, it is still recommended that the costs of community and responsive policing should be tracked separately, as these can then be compared with service levels and provide a much clearer basis for discussion on budgets and resources.

<sup>7</sup> Some Forces no longer set formal targets for response times, due to concerns about the impact of such targets on road safety/fast driving speeds. However, Forces are likely to have predicted response times for different categories so that performance can be monitored.

For **community policing**, the key service cost indicators are:

- ❑ Overall LPU budget per 1000 resident population
- ❑ Overall LPU budget per 1000 “at risk” population (i.e. resident population plus workplace population)
- ❑ Overall LPU budget per 1000 “at risk” properties (i.e. residential properties and commercial properties)

For **responsive policing**, the key service cost indicators are:

- ❑ Overall responsive policing budget per 1000 resident population
- ❑ Overall responsive policing budget per 1000 “at risk” population (i.e. resident population plus workplace population)
- ❑ Overall responsive policing budget per 1000 “at risk” properties (i.e. resident properties plus commercial properties)

#### *iv) What **outcomes** do services generate?*

For both **community and responsive policing**, the key outcome indicators are shown in the box below.

- ❑ Number of crimes by type (expressed as per 1000 population/households as appropriate):
  - Burglaries
  - Criminal damage
  - Drug offences
  - Fraud & forgery
  - Robbery
  - Sexual offences
  - Vehicle and other theft
  - Violence against the person
  - Other offences
- ❑ Life threatening crime and gun crime per 1000 population (SPI 5e)
- ❑ Acquisitive crime per 1000 population (SPI 5f)
- ❑ Risk of personal crime (SPI 4a) (based on survey evidence regarding the % of adult respondents who were victims of a range of personal offences)
- ❑ Risk of household crime (SPI 4b) (based on survey evidence regarding the % of responding households that were the victim of household offences)
- ❑ Fear of crime (SPI 10a)
- ❑ Perceptions of anti-social behaviour (SPI 10b)
- ❑ Perceptions of local drug use/drug dealing (SPI 10c)
- ❑ Percentage of respondents who think their local police are doing a good or excellent job (SPI 2a)

There are two important points to make about the outcome indicators, and particularly the SPIs.

The first is that the Statutory Performance Indicators change every year (those included in this toolkit are indicators for 2006/07 which were published in February 2006). Two of the latest SPIs – 5e and 5f represent amalgamations of crimes that were previously recorded as separate SPIs. Although police forces will only be reporting to the Home Office against the latest SPIs, this toolkit recommends that neighbourhood management initiatives should seek to extract the finest possible grained analysis of all types of crime, as this will provide a more precise view on the nature of the problem.

Second, the crime outcome SPIs are currently constructed mostly on a per 1000 population basis. Recent work by the Social Disadvantage Research Centre at Oxford University for the NRU suggests that there is merit in looking at crimes per 1000 “at risk” population. This is considered to be a more appropriate denominator because it includes employees and workplaces that may also be victims of crime.

### **6. Can service data be accessed at neighbourhood level?**

For service data to be useful to neighbourhood managers it needs to be fine grained geographically. Only then can it be used to highlight whether performance at the neighbourhood level is better than, the same as, or worse than some wider area (e.g. the CDRP or BCU average). This process of comparing performance is called “benchmarking”. Where neighbourhood performance is worse than some wider area, then it provides a focus for discussion with service providers about why that is and what might be done to improve the situation.

CEA’s research suggests that there is nothing in principle which should prevent these policing indicators being measured at the neighbourhood level. The practical issues are another matter, however. Few police forces set formal performance targets or service standards at levels of geography below the Basic Command Unit level, and the Home Office only requires the customer satisfaction indicators listed on the previous page to be collected at force level.

Local Policing Unit commanders will be tracking crime and disorder activity on a very fine grained basis every day, and this helps them to deploy their officers according to need on both a short-term and longer-term basis (e.g. if there is an immediate problem, or a persistent hot-spot). However, while this involves looking at evidence on the location, type and level of crime and disorder, it is not the same thing as proactive tracking of service levels and service quality neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood.

Although it’s unlikely that neighbourhood data will be available “off the shelf”, the measurement methods used by police forces mean that it should be possible to collect data at a finer grain that would be useful to neighbourhood managers. Some more detailed tips on the “art of the possible” are provided below.

### *Service level data at neighbourhood level*

Service level data may not be systematically tracked at the neighbourhood level, but all LPUs should be able to provide a staffing breakdown in the way this toolkit suggests, and should also be able to identify the number and grade of staff who are tied to, or focused on, particular neighbourhoods.

Establishing the proportion of time spent on front-line duties may be more difficult, but all forces undertake annual “activity based costing” exercises, involving diary keeping by officers over a two week period. This information may help to establish whether front-line presence in particular neighbourhoods differs from BCU averages and the reasons why.

Finding out about target or predicted response times for different categories of incident should be very straightforward, even if the force does not publish or wish to be held accountable to formal targets because of the road safety reasons mentioned earlier.

### *Service quality data at neighbourhood level*

Data on quality of service includes actual data recorded by the police using their crime recording and incident handling systems, as well as survey-based data asking residents and victims about their perceptions of the service offered by the police.

Data on detection rates, arrests, cautions etc. is available but, as explained above, is unlikely to be routinely measured at the neighbourhood level. This is an area where neighbourhood management initiatives need to establish a good dialogue with those responsible for data and analysis – normally there is a performance management team within each BCU – and discuss what data can be extracted, and whether there any cost implications.

For survey-based indicators, it’s essential that neighbourhood management initiatives design their own household surveys with a close eye on the key questions in the British Crime Survey that are used by the Home Office and police forces to measure police performance. The questions that need to be asked, and how the data should be reported, are detailed in the guidance on SPIs (see link at end of this module).

### *Service costs at the neighbourhood level*

It is highly unlikely that the costs of uniformed policing – whether community policing or responsive policing – have been tracked historically at the neighbourhood level. However, the recent emphasis on neighbourhood policing means that most forces and BCUs will have devoted considerable attention to the issue of how to structure community policing at the neighbourhood level. This may have involved analysis of historical resourcing patterns and perhaps even costs.

The toolkit prompts for information on the LPU budget per 1000 population, and per 1000 at risk population and at risk properties. At the neighbourhood level this means establishing the share of the LPU’s budget spent on services delivered to the

neighbourhood. This is unlikely to be straightforward, but there is no “rocket science” involved either. It will involve looking at the level of police resources devoted to a neighbourhood, the share of other resources in terms of time spent in that neighbourhood, and some apportionment of overhead costs. For responsive policing, it may be possible to apportion the BCU’s total costs of responsive policing to the neighbourhood based on the number and type of incidents that neighbourhood generated over a given period.

### *Service outcomes at neighbourhood level*

For outcome measures such as fear of crime and perceptions of particular crime and disorder issues then the survey-related points made earlier apply here.

Crime levels and rates are not currently published below CDRP level, although some data is expected to emerge in 2006 based on both the location of offenders and the location of offences. However, most police forces are readily able to monitor and extract data on levels of crime by type at very fine grains of geography using their crime recording systems. The use of such systems to identify hot spots of activity is routine, and neighbourhood management initiatives should approach their LPU commander or local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to discuss access to data.

## ***7. How to use the data and make the case for improvements***

Getting good quality data at the neighbourhood level is a critical ingredient for negotiations, but how it is used to build a case for improvements in service delivery is just as important. This last section of the module provides some practical guidance on how to use the data as the basis for negotiations with service providers. The guidance is structured in the following way:

- ❑ How can the data be analysed?
- ❑ What does the data tell us we should focus on?
- ❑ What kinds of service improvement will make a difference?

### *How can the data be analysed?*

Having explored issues of data accessibility, and come to some agreement about data sharing and analysis at the neighbourhood level, neighbourhood managers should establish their own service database probably using spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel. The graphic on the following page gives a flavour of how the data could be stored and analysed to take snapshots at particular points in time, as well as track changing performance over a number of years.

SERVICE DATA FOR: UNIFORMED POLICING							
	Neighbourhood		Change Base to latest year	Comparator area	Comparator area average		Change Base to latest year
	Base year	Latest year		area	Base year	Latest year	
<b>i) Service level indicators</b>							
6	Number of officers engaged in community policing:			LPU			
7	- Chief Inspectors			"			
8	- Inspectors			"			
9	- Sergeants			"			
10	- Police Constables			"			
11	- Community Support Officers			"			
12							
13	Number of staff directly engaged in responsive policing:			BCU			
14	- Chief Inspectors			"			
15	- Inspectors			"			
16	- Sergeants			"			
17	- Police Constables			"			
18	- Other staff (e.g. civilian call handling staff)			"			
19							
20	Target or predicted level of response by incident category (minutes)			BCU			
21	- category (to be defined)			"			
22	- category (to be defined)			"			
23	- category (to be defined)			"			
24	etc.			"			
25							
<b>ii) Service quality indicators</b>							
27	Actual level of response by incident category (minutes)			BCU			

*What does the data tell us we need to focus on?*

The key to understanding service data is benchmarking, the process of comparing performance for a target neighbourhood against some wider area (often, in this context, the Local Policing Unit, or Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership area, or Basic Command Unit). The following example demonstrates how benchmarking can be used to highlight a problem, and measure how severe it is compared with other areas.

If the performance data suggests that the neighbourhood is receiving services at a lower level or lower quality than necessary, these conclusions can provide some focus for discussions with service providers about why that's the case, and what steps might be taken to improve the service.

### **What's the problem?**

A neighbourhood management initiative accessed comparative crime statistics showing the rates of different crimes in its neighbourhood, and those in the local authority district (CDRP area) as a whole. This showed that the neighbourhood had a rate of burglary (22.6 offences per 1000 population) that was 80% higher than the district rate (12.5 offences per 1000 population).

Feedback from the neighbourhood's own household surveys revealed a high fear of crime compared to the force average, particularly amongst the elderly population. Data from surveys, focus groups and one to one conversations with the neighbourhood manager, also revealed dissatisfaction with the level of visible police presence in the area in terms of the limited number of patrols in car and on foot during the day and at night.

However, raw data on its own is unlikely to tell the full story. Other information – including feedback from residents and discussions with service provider managers – is often needed to reveal the real underlying problems and what can be done about them.

### **What are the reasons for this performance gap?**

Discussions with the LPU commander and the CDRP found that the local police force was also aware of these issues and they agreed to undertake and share a more detailed analysis of the problem, as well as facilitating some open meetings in the neighbourhood on crime and disorder issues. This revealed that the burglaries were being a) disproportionately focused on households occupied by elderly people; and b) seasonally biased towards the summer months (when windows are left open). Local intelligence gathered by the police suggested that many of the crimes were being conducted by a relatively small number of local drug users who were stealing cash and other valuables to fund their drug habit.

### **What kinds of service provision will make a difference?**

Some service improvements may be very straightforward and cheap to deliver. However, others may be more complex, requiring detailed analysis into how existing services are delivered and options for improving service delivery. Neighbourhood management initiatives can and should be proactive in looking for evidence on what works from other areas and sharing it with local service providers. There is an increasingly body of useful information from the Home Office and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, including national evaluations of neighbourhood renewal programmes. The box below explores some of the improvements that were considered in the context of the specific example used here.

### **What service changes will make a difference?**

Having got to the root of the problem, some of the solutions were fairly obvious and could be taken forward at little cost:

- ❑ A crime prevention pack was prepared, which included pens to mark property and encouragement to pensioners not to keep large quantities of cash at home.
- ❑ This pack was hand-delivered by police constables to all houses occupied by elderly people and posted to all other households. This provided an opportunity for the police to become immediately visible in the area, provide reassurance, and also offer some immediate, practical advice on home security.
- ❑ A programme of target-hardening commenced, funded by the CDRP and the neighbourhood management initiative. This fitted window locks to all windows and shutters and bars to some properties.

At the same time as these low-cost measures were taken, the local force was in the very early stages of thinking about neighbourhood policing, but it didn't have the budget necessary at that stage to resource a full neighbourhood policing team in the area. The neighbourhood management initiative and the police eventually agreed to share the costs of an additional 2 police constables and 2 community support officers together with the additional supervisory time and create a neighbourhood policing team on a pilot basis. This had clear objectives in terms of reducing priority crimes, as well as operational targets related to time spent on front-line duties, visible patrolling times and patterns. Targets, monitoring methods and performance reporting were clearly specified in a service level agreement (SLA). This also obliged the police to consult and report back regularly to local people, as well as to agree to mainstream the service improvement if it was judged to be successful.

Within three years the rate of burglary in the neighbourhood had fallen by 45%, compared with a district level reduction of 24%. At this point, the neighbourhood's rate of burglary crime was still 31% above the district average, but the police were pleased with the significant fall in crime, as well as a marked improvement on their relationship with this community. These results were sufficient to persuade the police to maintain their neighbourhood policing team in the area following the pilot period and meet the costs directly. Lessons from this pilot are now being rolled out to other priority neighbourhoods in the district.

## Useful links

The box below provides some useful websites for further information about these services and how they can be measured. Particularly helpful, and recommended reading, is a recent (May 2006) report by the Audit Commission which encourages the police and other community safety service providers to work with local people to improve services at the neighbourhood level. It provides an in-depth analysis of many of the measurement-related issues covered in this module.

- ❑ [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk) - for information on police forces in the UK and links to individual force websites
- ❑ <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/cpindex.htm> - for information on crime reduction initiatives, and links to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
- ❑ <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/> - for the Home Office's police website, including links to publications and guidance about performance measurement and SPIs
- ❑ <http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/community-policing/neighbourhood-police> - for guidance on neighbourhood policing
- ❑ [www.together.gov.uk](http://www.together.gov.uk) - for guidance on ways of tackling anti-social behaviour
- ❑ [www.apa.police.uk](http://www.apa.police.uk) - for information on the role played by local Police Authorities
- ❑ [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/index.asp](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/reports/index.asp) - for the Audit Commission's recent report "*Neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour: making places safer through improved local working*"
- ❑ [www.renewal.net](http://www.renewal.net) - for a range of good practice relating to tackling crime and disorder



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The toolkit was prepared by Peter Tyler, Colin Warnock, Angela Brennan and Steve Stevens of Cambridge Economic Associates Limited (CEA). It is based on research into a number of service areas in three local authority districts with neighbourhood management areas:

- ❑ Newcastle-under-Lyme (Knutton Cross Heath)
- ❑ East Staffordshire (Heart of Burton)
- ❑ Rotherham (Eastwood and Springwell Gardens).

The research is an integral part of the national evaluation of Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders. The objective of this work has been to see whether there is consistency across different areas in terms of the way services are delivered on the ground, how they are planned, the performance indicators used, and how organisations make the case for service improvements.

CEA would like to thank the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, the three Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders and all of the service providers who have participated in the research for their valuable inputs to this work.

