

Appendix III

District Enforcement Limited
In Partnership with
Denbighshire County Council

Performance report
April – September 2022

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

District Enforcement Limited went through a period of change in the year starting 1st April 2021. The management structure changed which also resulted in a reconsideration of how the service should be delivered going forward and how we align that to our strategic aims, and that of our partners.

We looked at key areas.

- Our people, reputation & client relationships
- Our process
- Our back-office functions, support systems and quality

Post covid Denbighshire was relaunched with a new team, followed by a period of building new relationships with the Waste & Recycling Manager, after this area of the service was transferred over to that team.

The relationship between DE and DCC is critical to the partnership working. A greater emphasis has been placed on communications with the introduction of monthly reports, monthly meetings, and timely responses to emails. Key stakeholders are invited to various meetings to ensure that there is the connection necessary to build effective communication.

The WRM has clear ideas on how the service should be delivered and developed using an outsourced provider and is happy to support open discussion around the role of District at DCC. She has a wealth of experience and enthusiasm for this area of work and imparts that to members of the team whom she interacts with. This enables district to align our core values with that of the client and work towards a much higher standard of end-to-end delivery of the service.

Key achievements in the past year:

DE have an open recruitment policy which enables us to give local people with the right transferrable skills sets, around customer and front facing roles, the opportunity to join us, and receive dedicated support and classroom training around legislation as well as on site mentoring. We advertise to the areas surrounding Denbighshire also in the hope of attracting people from a wider pool.

A training programme has been introduced to all officers, which involves Theory, Education and Law, followed by on the ground mentoring and support.

A 100% quality check of all Fixed Penalty Notices issued to ensure that officers follow the correct procedure, in line with the Standard Operating Procedures. This came into effect fully from 4th January 2022.

Improvement in recovery work has resulted in an increase in the payment rate of 18% in year. The payment rate has moved from 2020/2021 - 65% to 2021/2022 - 83%. For the period April to September 2021 the payment rate is 81%, for the same period in 2022 there has been an improvement on this by 2% to 83%. The recovery cycle has not finished for those FPN's issued during August and September. The reminder cycles have been updated to add a third reminder letter to encourage customers to pay their Fixed penalty notice and discharge their liability, so it is anticipated that this will increase the overall performance on recovery.

The volume of FPN's issued has reduced and there has been evidence of behavioural changes within the community, officers have observed people behaving positively and responsibly around litter.

Back-office support has improved, after a period of recruitment and training delivered in all aspects of the service.

A team has been set up to work purely on the preparation of cases for prosecution. This is over and above the contract specification, but DE feel that this is a necessary addition to maintain quality.

Officers have participated in local litter picks and have spent several days on education and education within the community.

We have participated in a national clean-up campaign, as well as day to day engagement with the issuing of stub pouches and dog waste bags.

Patrol plans have been introduced which are moving documents and adjusted as new intelligence comes forward or complaints are received. Better understanding of coverage and what is required helps officers to spend more time out on the ground and to be effective in their roles.

We are in Phase 1 of our roll out of a school's project workbook around education aimed at Primary School age was passed out to the Council.

Further educational development and campaigns to be scheduled throughout the year will happen as stand-alone events or linking in with wider initiatives that are being promoted by Keep Wales Tidy.

DE have engaged with the DCC to assume extra services, in and around Business Duty of Care, and thus free up officer time in house for other matters. We are still awaiting the variation to signed. This will permit further engagement and encourage business owners to understand and be committed to disposing of business waste correctly through external contractors or by signing up to the Business Waste collection service provided by DCC.

DE continue to work on recovery and quality to drive up the payment rate and reduce the number of cases that DCC must process through to prosecution.

DE have undergone rebranding in 2021 and a new website has launched with stronger representation around Enviro crime. FAQ sections and advice and guidance for offenders and Local Authority call handlers to direct queries to.

Michelle Bradbury

Head of Operations, District Enforcement Limited

September 2022

2. Financial Highlights

2.1 Recovery activity

Payment rates have increased by 18% for the first half of the year 2022, against the previous year. This is attributed to the work that DE have conducted on letter templates, first and second reminders and applying a controlled recovery process. The payment rate from April 2022 is sitting at 83% but the recovery cycle is not yet over. In the previous year this was as 65%.

2.2 Volume of Fixed Penalty Notices

The number of Fixed penalties has decreased since the inception of the contract. Officers have observed positive behaviours with people using portable ashtrays that have been given out over time and more people behaving correctly around dog control. The team have given more focus to the activities around engagement and education as part of their day-to-day patrols, as requested by the client. The number of FPN's issued is consistent throughout the period of the PSPO restrictions between May and September. The quality of the FPN's issued remains high with less being cancelled. This also contributes to the high payment rate.

FIG.1 Month on Month FPN's issued - Denbighshire Borough Council



2.3 PSPO problem

Extra effort has been dedicated to signage by DCC to ensure that the signage issues of the past do not continue. In 2022, DE were able to enforce from the start of May around the PSPO. Only in one area was there a delay of 2 weeks, but this was quickly remedied, and new signage installed along the promenade.

3. Operations

3.1 Patrol Planning

Although the District360 system enables us to view patrol by Ward, it does not necessarily give us the patrol hours that areas require depending on local intelligence. We have introduced the idea of creating a patrol plan. This allows the Team Leader to first breakdown all areas within DCC into categories based on the frequency that officers should deploy to that area. Areas may require patrols multi-times per week for example, and others once per week/month. A patrol plan has been developed and is a moving document that is changeable according to information and complaints around hot spot areas etc. The team endeavor to be a visible presence across all areas, even those parts of the Borough that are more remote and require long travel time are being patrolled.

This will assist officers going forward with more foot patrol and to ensure that the areas get the right coverage depending on the need for that area. This will include hot spot areas, and open/green spaces. The team will also continue to provide a reactive patrol. Officers have extended their patrols already to sports pitches and play areas to evaluate the enforcement of the PSPO. There has been discussion around applying discretion when patrolling in cemeteries and encountering potential offenders.

3.2 Resource Planning

Deployment of staff has changed to maximise the operational days and provide full coverage on weekends. Team Leaders have been supported to make decisions on deployment. New work patterns have been introduced that provide flexibility of patrol at various times of the day. This ensures that exposure to enforcement is noticeable and enables engagement with the community through a range of shifts throughout the day. The team have been providing enforcement on a rolling Rota, basis to include Saturday and Sunday patrols as well as varying the shift start and end times to ensure coverage at various times of the day.

3.3 Prosecutions

DE have added an extra team to deal solely with the preparations of SJP (Single Justice Procedure) packs. We have introduced changes to the pack and the quality has improved following feedback from DCC. This extra team are over and above the contract requirements, but we feel that it is beneficial to have this team in place. Numbers have reduced in this area due to the increased recovery rate.

3.4. Challenges to the contract

There have been occasions where the client has requested that an FPN is cancelled. But it has not always been the case that the FPN has been issued incorrectly. Whilst we acknowledge that this happens and respect the decision of the client, this can have a detrimental effect. DE face strong opposition and abuse from the on-line community, who are anti-enforcement. This also results in a loss of income to DE and the contract must be self-financing.

Every case is reviewed, and feedback passed to officers in the case where learning has been identified.

There was a marked improvement in getting the signage in place for the PSPO starting in May. There was a slight delay in enforcing along the Marina area, but the Waste Manager worked very quickly to ensure that these problems were remedied quickly. Enforcing started approximately two weeks late in this area.

During this period officers continued to patrol, engage, and educate as they encountered people.

Officers continue to experience a higher level of abuse from dog owners walking their dogs in the exclusion zones. People feel that it is their right to walk their dogs off leads and on the beaches and officers have encountered difficulty as they try to explain and educate offenders as to the anti-social aspect of this behaviour and how it impacts on others and the environment.

During the winter months, the contract is hard to sustain based on it being a self-financing model. Low footfall is apparent in most areas of Denbighshire and numbers reduce significantly out of season. Experience of Autumn/Winter 2021/2022 has provided evidence of this. On a site where numbers have already reduced significantly, any further reduction would be hard to maintain. Discussions have taken place to secure the ability to extend the contract around extra services which will expand the skills of the enforcement officers and sustain the enforcement team through the winter months. This will also support the inhouse team and free up time for higher level enforcement.

DE have also submitted evidence as requested by the client from our other sites to demonstrate that a higher payment rate can be achieved when the Fixed Penalty Notice is set at a higher amount with the opportunity to reduce if paid early. This is not a decision for DE, but merely to note that information has been provided to support any discussions around this. Should an increase to the FPN amount get approval, it would contribute to the cost of providing the resource to support this contract.

4. Our People – what we have done to build your team

4.1. Recruitment

Our open recruitment policy has enabled DE to recruit from within the local area. The team previously had Welsh speaking officers, which enabled the team to be able to converse in Welsh or English depending upon what the customer wishes and issue the FPN in Welsh or English also. The Customer Support Team at Denbighshire are always helpful should we need to ask for their assistance with translation. Adverts are currently out to continue to add to the team having lost one officer to the DWP and another to the Waste Team at Denbighshire.

4.2. Induction

We have introduced a full on-site induction and training programme, this is also supported by a self-assessment tool, which enables new starters to identify any further skills gaps and for managers to review performance. It is beneficial to new people to be able to identify their own learning needs so that the appropriate support and training can be provided.

4.3. Training

Denbighshire was the first team to benefit from a newly introduced training programme. We have developed a programme for all new and inexperienced staff and refresher training for existing staff which covers:

- Standard operating procedures for the issue of fixed penalty notices
- The regulations under which we operated and how delegated powers work
- Environmental crime background and education to assist our officers to engage with members of the public and provide more education.
- CPD training from an external provider around the other areas of environmental crime such as Business Duty of Care, and Fly tipping.
- An online training platform for officers to undertake refresher training, for example courses around safeguarding, mental health awareness, and conflict management.

4.4. Staff retention

Staff retention is a key factor in developing our teams. We recognise that the role of an Environmental Crime Officer is challenging, with a traditionally high turnover of staff. We have just finalised the introduction of a package of remuneration, to encourage staff to stay with the company. This includes such things as additional annual for every year of service and sick pay and annual incremental pay increases, aligned to similar schemes within Local Authorities.

5. Client Relationships

5.1. Communication

With the relaunch of Denbighshire and a new team we were also able to build new relationships with the incoming service lead, due to DCC internal restructure. The importance of a strong relationship with open communication channels enables us to continually improve on the service that we deliver. We are constantly reviewing what we do to see that it aligns with the expectations placed upon us.

Tara has a wealth of knowledge and experience and is happy to impart that which can only benefit everyone on this contract. Monthly meetings and regular contact have improved as well as the introduction of a new monthly report to review performance.

District take on board all feedback and where necessary update our processes to lead to improvements.

5.2. Contact Centre DCC

The contact Centre has not had so many issues to pass to DE since April and DE have experienced only one outage on phone lines for an afternoon. Work has carried out with the letter templates also to direct customers to the DE support lines. The FPN has also been made clearer around how and who to contact, which hopefully has routed people correctly and minimized the number of touchpoints a customer must make to get through to DE. People can also log a representation online very quickly or by email which is also made clear on the FPN.

Email contact to DE has an auto reply set to confirm that a response will be received within ten working days. More often is the case that emails will be responded to before this deadline expires.

We monitor email responses, representation responses and phone calls to ensure that we can respond in a timely manner and manage customer expectation.

6. Our process

6.1. Complaints Handling

DE have a clearly defined process for the handling of complaints which has been shared with the Customer Services Team at DCC. We recognise the need to form timely responses, especially if the complaint has been escalated by the client at DCC.

By putting in measures to track complaints the process has improved. There is a clear understanding and expectation now with the back-office team to deliver a responsive service.

6.2. Prosecutions and the Single Justice Procedure

Historically the standard of cases referred to prosecution was not always where it needed to be. The Waste Services Manager at DCC, had a different approach to these cases and as such identified weaknesses in the statement and standard. DE conducted a review and as a result took measures to increase the accuracy and quality end to end.

DE have added an extra team to the back-office support, over and above the contract requirement. This team have improved the standards of evidence, witness statements and the SJP process to ensure that the Local Authority is furnished with the files in sufficient time to process through the courts. We have reduced our recovery timeline to 61 days also to allow the Local Authority a 4-month window to process cases. DE welcome the recent appointment of a new Senior Environmental Crime Officer to DCC's team and intend to work closely with him for the remainder of the contract period to ensure witness statements and evidence are of a higher standard. There has been a reduction in cases referred as the payment rate increases and FPN numbers have reduced.

6.3. Quality Assurance

DE have introduced a 100% quality check against all FPN's issued. Quality sheets are completed and referred to officers and managers, to ensure that remedial action is taken. Officers also receive a monthly 1:1 with their line manager during which performance and behaviors at site are discussed.

We are the only outsourced provider who deliver this level of control to ensure the quality of Fixed penalty notices remains at a high standard.

6.4. Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information Requests

In response to a recent end of year influx of Freedom of Information requests, a dedicated resource has been identified to deal solely with these compliance enquiries.

This will ensure a timely and consistent response and acts as a single point of contact for the client.

There is a clear process in place in response to Subject Access Requests, a copy of this document has also been issued to DCC, for clarification. Office staff have had recent refresher training around these matters to ensure understanding and obligation around this.

7. Education & Engagement

7.1. Activity

As well as the day-to-day engagement and issuing out of dog waste bags and stubby pouches, the team has been involved in local voluntary litter picks. They have spent two full days as part of the love parks campaign, engaging and educating within the community. These may take the form of engagement days, joint working with partner agencies. Time spent on this activity will be quantified for the monthly report going forward.

7.2. Schools project work

DE has collaborated with an external provider to create a project pack that can be used within Primary schools. The project contains a PowerPoint display which is presented in an age-appropriate language to reach its audience. Worksheets are provided to deliver interactive classroom activity. Roll out of the project has begun with Heads of Service or Lead officers who engage with Schools, to introduce this to them. This project can be updated and added to as time goes on and we gather sufficient feedback.

DE will assign the lead on Education and co-ordination of the project to a site Ambassador. This should help to plan in themed activities and school contact etc. throughout the year. DCC to update DE on any new appointment to this role on their side for contact and liaison.

7.3. Positive behaviour campaign DCC/DE joint initiative

DE are awaiting sign off from DCC to promote the positive behaviour campaign. DE had agreed in early 2021 to fund the printing of entry cards and the cover a monthly prize fund for the remaining months of the contract. We have engaged with a small business located by DCC, to arrange to have pet portraits produced for the winner each month. Cards will be given out to members of the public when officers observe positive behaviour in relation to the PSPO in force. DE believe that a simplified process for this is near to completion and will shortly be advised that printing can start.

8. Takeaways

District Enforcement are committed to bringing about behavioural changes through working with Denbighshire County Council, and the communities where we patrol. We strive to provide a valuable service as well as to bring the added social values that come with our presence on the streets. We are an open and transparent contractor.

Our intention is to continue to protect the reputation of DCC and our own reputation by focusing on high quality and delivery of our service. We have introduced measures over the past year to address, control and manage people and process which all supports our aims. This is starting to reflect in the results that are now coming through.

We would welcome the opportunity to extend our work to other areas, to support and sustain a valuable service.

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1- Fixed Penalty Notices issued data totals for year.

Fixed Penalty Notice data 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022

Fig.1 Total number of Fixed Penalty Notices Issued

OUTCOME SUMMARY		
Description	Count	Total
FPN ISSUED	<u>473</u>	£0.00
CANCELLED	<u>1</u>	£0.00
FPN ISSUED AFTER CANCELLATION	<u>472</u>	£0.00

Fig .2 Breakdown of FPN's issued by Offence 1st April 2022 - 30th September 2022

OFFENCE TYPE		
Offence Type	Offence Type Count	Percentage
Littering	299	<u>63%</u>
PSPO-Dog Fouling (PSPO)	8	<u>2%</u>
PSPO-Dogs Exclusion Zones	133	<u>28%</u>
PSPO-Dogs on Leads	28	<u>6%</u>
Smoke Free (Vehicle)-Cigarette (V) - Company Vehicle	3	<u>1%</u>
Total:	472	100%

Fig.3 Prosecution activity get figures from Steve

12 cases have been referred to DCC for prosecution.

Fig.4 - Locations Issued by Ward

ISSUED BY WARD		
Ward	Ward Count	Percentage
Dee Valley	2	0.42%
Elwy	172	36.44%
Prestatyn	175	37.08%
Rhyl	121	25.64%
Ruthin	2	0.42%
Total:	472	

Fig.5 - Patrol Hours by Ward

PATROL HOURS BY WARD		
Ward	Hours Count	Percentage
Dee Valley	15 hr 18 mins	0.56%
Denbigh	38 hr 11 mins	1.40%
Elwy	1407 hr 29 mins	51.73%
Prestatyn	719 hr 50 mins	26.46%
Rhyl	505 hr 45 mins	18.59%
Ruthin	34 hr 23 mins	1.26%
Total:	2720 hr 56 mins	

Fig.6 Warnings

WARNINGS BY TITLE		
Warning Title	Warning Count	Percentage
Compliant on Request	1	7.14%
Minor	1	7.14%
Non-UK resident	4	28.57%
Vulnerable Person	8	57.14%
Total:	14	

Fig.7 Walk-off's

WALK OFFS		
Walk Off Title	Walk Off Count	Percentage
Not known	42	100.00%
Total:	42	

Fig.8 On the spot/Postal FPN's issued.

ENVIRO. ISSUED		
Enviro.	Enviro. Count	Percentage
FPN issued By Post	48	10.17%
FPN issued on the Spot	424	89.83%
Total:	472	

Sample of a DE routine patrol plan (in addition to hot spot monitoring)

DISTRICT DENBIGHSHIRE DEPLOYMENT PLAN							
DAILY	MULTIPLE WEEKLY		WEEKLY	MULTIPLE MONTHLY	MONTHLY	WEEKENDS HOLIDAYS EVENTS	
Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4	Category 5	Category 6	KEY	FREQUENCY
Rhyl	Dyserth	Ruthin	Llangollen	Henllan	Rhyl	CAT 1	Daily
Prestatyn	St Asaph	Denbigh	Trefnant	Rhewl	Prestatyn	CAT 2	Multiple Weekly
Rhuddlan	Meliden		Corwen	Cynwyd	Llangollen	CAT 3	Weekly
Bodelwyddan			Llandyrnog	Carrog	Ruthin	CAT 4	Multiple Monthly
				Moel Famau	Moel Famau	CAT 5	Monthly
				Loggerheads		CAT 6	Weekend/Events
				Gwyddelwern			
				Bodfari			