

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Environment
SERVICE: Environmental & Regulatory
PERIOD: Quarter 4 to Year-end 31st March 2010

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Environment & Regulatory Services Department fourth quarter period up to 31st March 2010. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment. The final 2009 / 10 financial statements for the Department will be prepared and made available via the Council's Intranet once the Council's year-end accounts have been finalised. A notice will be provided within the Members' Weekly Bulletin as soon as they are available.

The way in which symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained in Appendix 5.

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Open Space Services

On the 1st of February 2010 the new Open Space Services division was launched. The new division was created as part of the Efficiency Programme Green Spaces service review. The new service is responsible for the Borough's parks, for its natural areas and general open spaces, for the cemeteries (excluding the Bereavement Service), for allotments and for large scale open space developments.

Waste and Recycling Services

During this quarter, the blue box multi-material recycling service was expanded to a further 500 properties, taking the total number of properties included in the pilot scheme to 3,700. The pilot was evaluated in April and the results used to inform the roll out of the service to other parts of the borough.

Approximately 400 properties were added to the garden waste collection service, taking the total number of properties receiving this service to 39,000

Regulatory Services

The Food Safety team and the Health & Safety team completed 100% inspection of all high risk premises for 2009-2010 within the Borough.

Loudsounds applied for and was granted a three year licence in January 2010 to manage the Creamfields music festival in each August Bank holiday from 2010-2012.

Remediation work commenced at St Michael's Golf course site following discussions with Major Projects in light of the loss of staff who had previously had input to the project. The Contaminated land team face a major challenge to work in partnership with the Major Projects team.

Development Management Summary Stats for Q4:

Applications Received – 140 (includes applications withdrawn and returned)

Applications Decided - 87

Applications on hand (undecided) - 168

Pre-applications Received – 79

Pre-applications Closed – 40

Pre-applications on hand - 76

N.B. There are certain applications (such as tree preservation orders) that are not counted in the statutory CLG speed of processing statistics (NI 157). This accounts for the difference between the figures reported above and the figures given for NI157.

Summary of major applications received (but not necessarily decided) over the last Quarter.:

10/00005/FUL - Proposed demolition of existing deck access flats and erection of 93 No. dwellings (comprising of 60 No. flats and 33 No. houses) with associated new access roads, footpaths and car parking at Woodland Walk, King Arthurs Walk & Merlin Close Castlefields Runcorn Cheshire

10/00013/FUL - Proposed residential development comprising 18 No. courtyard houses, detached garages, private access road and private open space at Former Dawsons Dance Centre Lunts Heath Road Widnes Cheshire WA8 5BG

10/00043/FUL - Proposed residential development comprising 22 No. two storey, 3/4 bedroom semi-detached dwellings and associated parking at Former Infant School Site Avondale Drive Widnes Cheshire WA8 7XE

10/00063/FUL - Proposed demolition of existing warehouse units and construction of new warehouse (9206 sq.m.) at Former Lion Foods Ltd Faraday Road Runcorn Cheshire WA7 1PE

10/00078/OUT - Outline application (with landscape matters reserved) for proposed erection of four storey development consisting of 24 No. apartments and ground floor retail space at 88a-92 Albert Road Widnes Cheshire

10/00094/FUL - Proposed demolition of existing shopping centre, creation of public square, erection 1 No. three storey block (containing 9 No. flats), erection of 1 No. three storey block (containing 4 No. ground floor retail units and 16 No. flats above) and associated busway works together with hard and soft landscaping at Castlefields Local Centre Kingshead Close Runcorn Cheshire

10/00104/FUL - Proposed residential development consisting of 18 No. two storey dwellings with car parking and a new access road (from Weates Close) on Land Bounded By Weates Close And Dans Road Widnes Cheshire

10/00120/S73 - Proposed variation of Condition No.2 of planning permission 06/00958/OUT to extend the period for approval of reserves matters by a further 3 years at 24 - 30 Farnworth Street Widnes Cheshire WA8 9LH

10/00124/FUL - Proposed residential development comprising 39 No. dwellings and associated works on Land To The Rear Of Lunts Heath Road And Norlands Lane Widnes Cheshire

10/00129/S73 - Proposed variation of condition No.2 of planning permission 04/01085/FUL to extend the time limit of commencement of development for a further 5 years at Land Opposite Lanark Gardens Queensbury Way Widnes Cheshire

10/00132/FUL - Proposed engineering works to facilitate the remediation of (part of) the site on Land Off Halton Road Runcorn Cheshire

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

By the summer of 2010, all properties will receive a multi-material recycling collection service. Work has continued on the planning of this service extension and will result in a combination of blue wheeled bins, recycling boxes and communal recycling containers being provided to a further 9,000 homes across the borough. Full details of the service extensions will be provided to members in the Q1 report for 2010/11.

DEFRA have issued a first stage consultation on the options under consideration for restricting wastes to landfill.

The Consultation on the introduction of restrictions on the landfilling of certain wastes and accompanying documents have now been published and are available to download on the DEFRA website (www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/landfill-restrictions/index.htm) If Government decides change is desirable a second stage consultation will follow on the preferred option(s) and the way any restriction or requirement would be introduced and who the onus would fall upon, accompanied by draft Regulations to implement these option(s).

The consultation closes on 10 June 2010. A joint response will be submitted on behalf of the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership.

Regulatory Services

The Health & Safety Executive have required the implementation of a new rating system for all businesses together with changes to current service standards which will pose a challenge for the Health & Safety team in the coming year.

The Food Standards Agency are about to launch their national *Scores on the Doors* campaign and Halton have volunteered to be a pilot authority for the new system. This will require modifications and adjustments to our current local system.

Dog Control Orders which will consolidate existing dog control legislation are about to be presented to Council Members. The legislation introduces an increase in the cost of the fixed penalty notices that may be served. A major campaign to raise awareness of the orders and for the need for responsible dog control will be launched following adoption by the Council.

2 Air Quality Management Areas are to be declared in Widnes Town centre. The Council are compelled by DEFRA to declare these AQ management areas following the recoding of air pollution levels in these areas. Stakeholders, such as the Primary Care Trust, other Council departments and local residents, are consulted so that we can find the best practical means of reducing levels in the form of an action plan.

PLANNING & POLICY

Waste DPD

The Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Development Plan Document (DPD) has reached the Preferred Options stage but public consultation has been delayed from March 2010, due to approvals process in some Councils. Consultation scheduled for after Elections.

Local Development Framework Policy Documents


The results of the six week public consultation on the Preferred Options for the Core Strategy Development Plan Document have been reported to Chief Officers and the LDF Working Party. The Preferred Options document and outstanding key issues have also been appraised during an Advisory Visit by a Senior Inspector, from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) who has provided very useful feedback including recommending a substantially slimmed down, more land use focused Plan. Officers are currently working on redrafting the document with the intention of progressing to public consultation in November / December 2010 on the 'Publication' version of the Core Strategy leading to submission to the Secretary of State in February 2011.

Evidence Base

A following technical documents have been finalised in the last quarter:

- Joint Employment Land Study – appraises the demand for and supply of land and premises for employment use. This was a jointly commissioned study with Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancs councils.
- Halton Retail and Leisure Study – An update of previous studies assessing the demand (capacity) for additional retail and commercial leisure floorspace within the three main retail centres. The study includes a 'health check' of the 3 main centres and makes recommendations as to the hierarchy of centres and suitable geographic boundaries for retail planning policy.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST MILESTONES/OBJECTIVES

Total	6		5		0		1
--------------	----------	---	----------	---	----------	---	----------

With the exception of the refurbishment of the play area at Town Park all objectives / milestones for the service have progressed as planned. Additional details are provided within appendix 1.

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW




There are no issues to report.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	6		5		0		1
--------------	----------	---	----------	---	----------	---	----------

With one exception the key performance indicators for the service have achieved target and additional details are provided within Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	1		1		0		0
--------------	----------	---	----------	---	----------	---	----------

Only one of the indicators relevant to this PPB can be reported at this time and additional details are provided within Appendix 3.

7.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2009-12 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

Please refer to Appendix 4.

8.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

During 2008/09 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.





There are no "High" priority equality actions for this Service.

9.0 DATA QUALITY

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.

10.0 APPENDICES

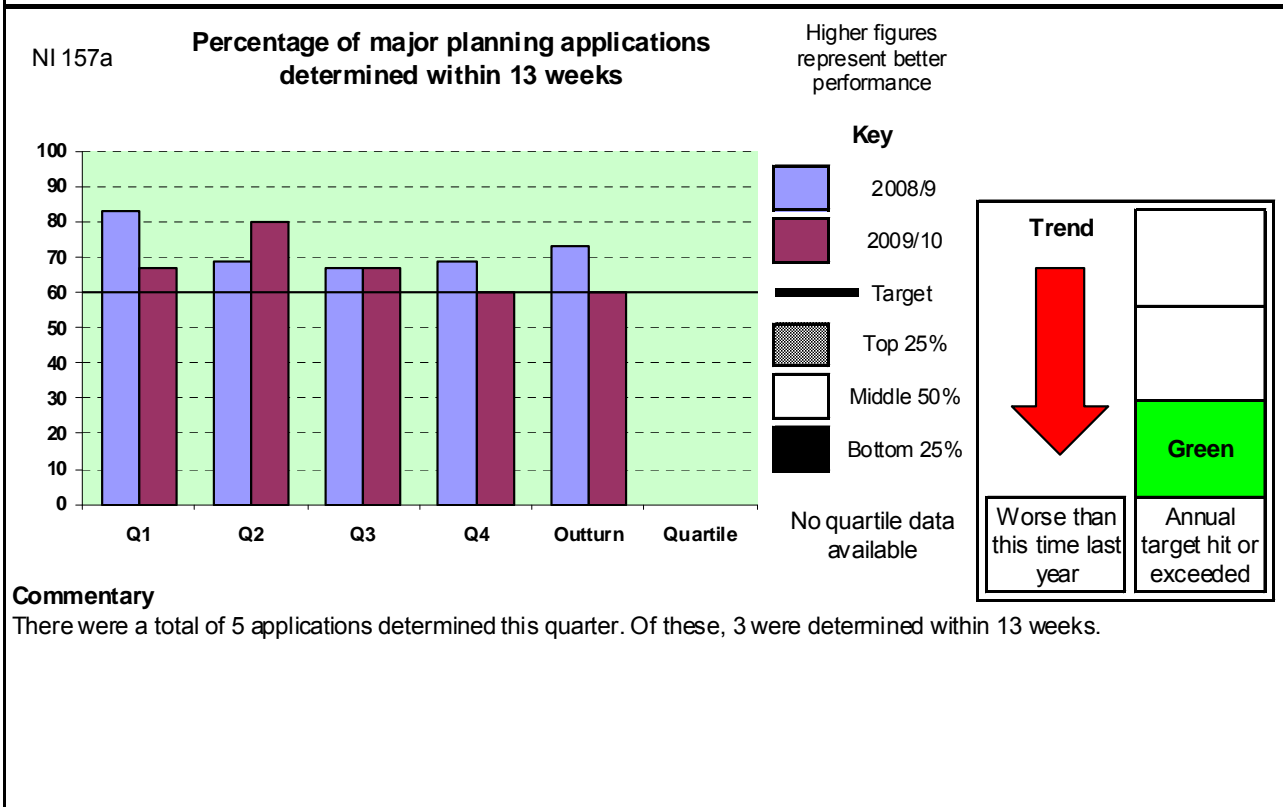
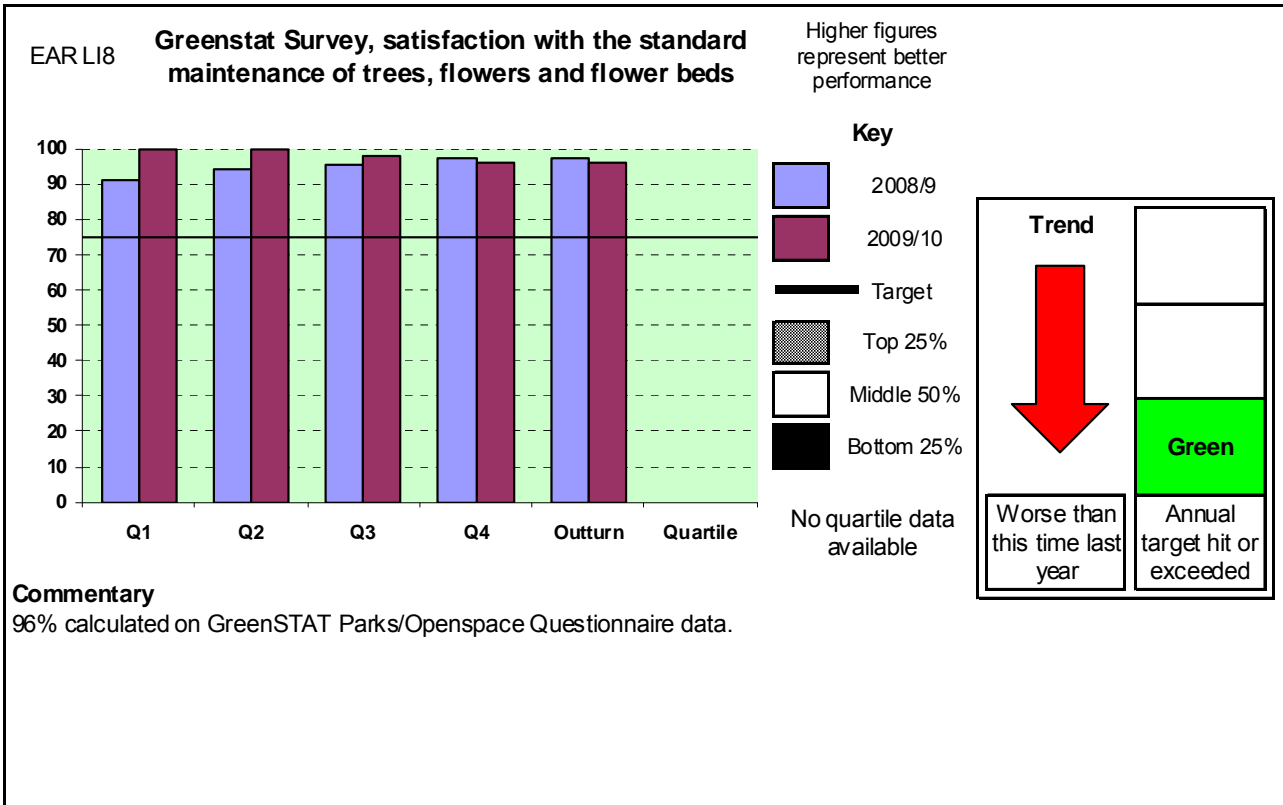
Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones
Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators
Appendix 3- Progress against Other Performance Indicators
Appendix 4- Progress against Risk Treatment Measures
Appendix 5- Explanation of traffic light symbols

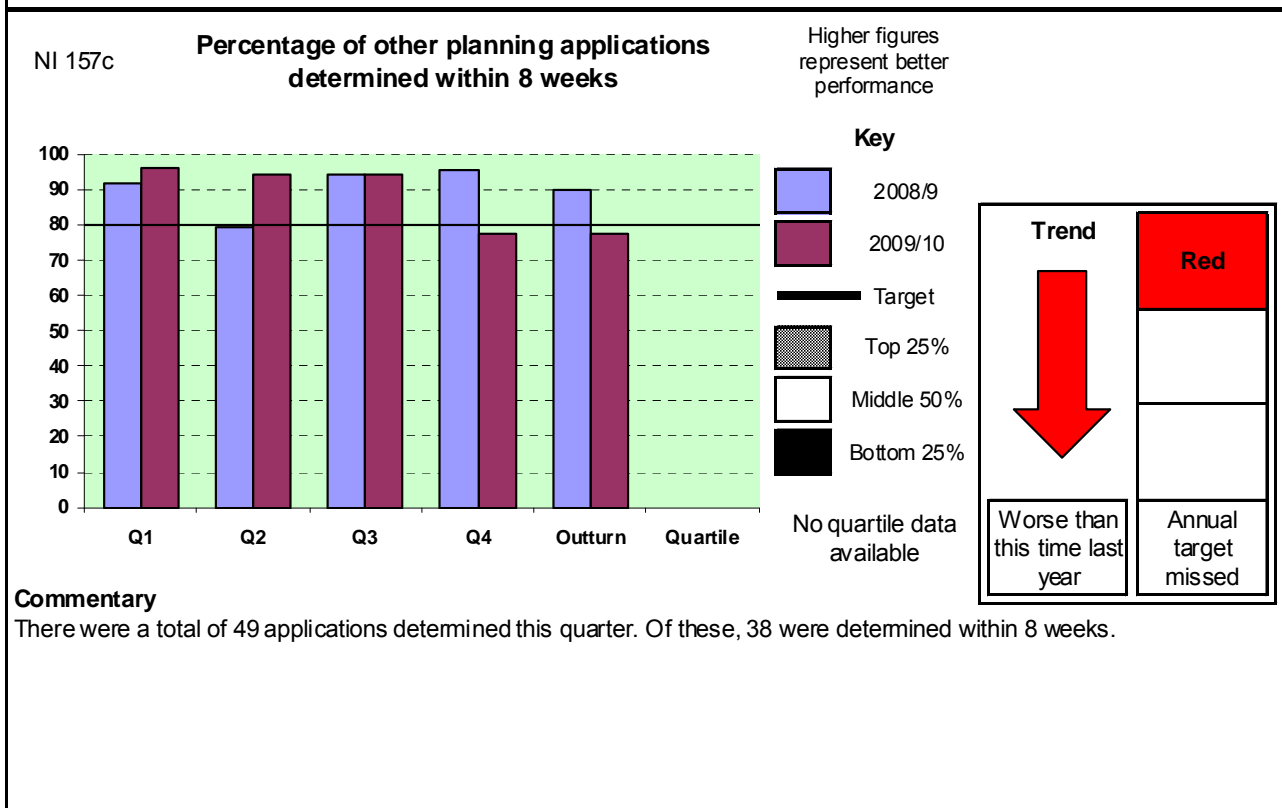
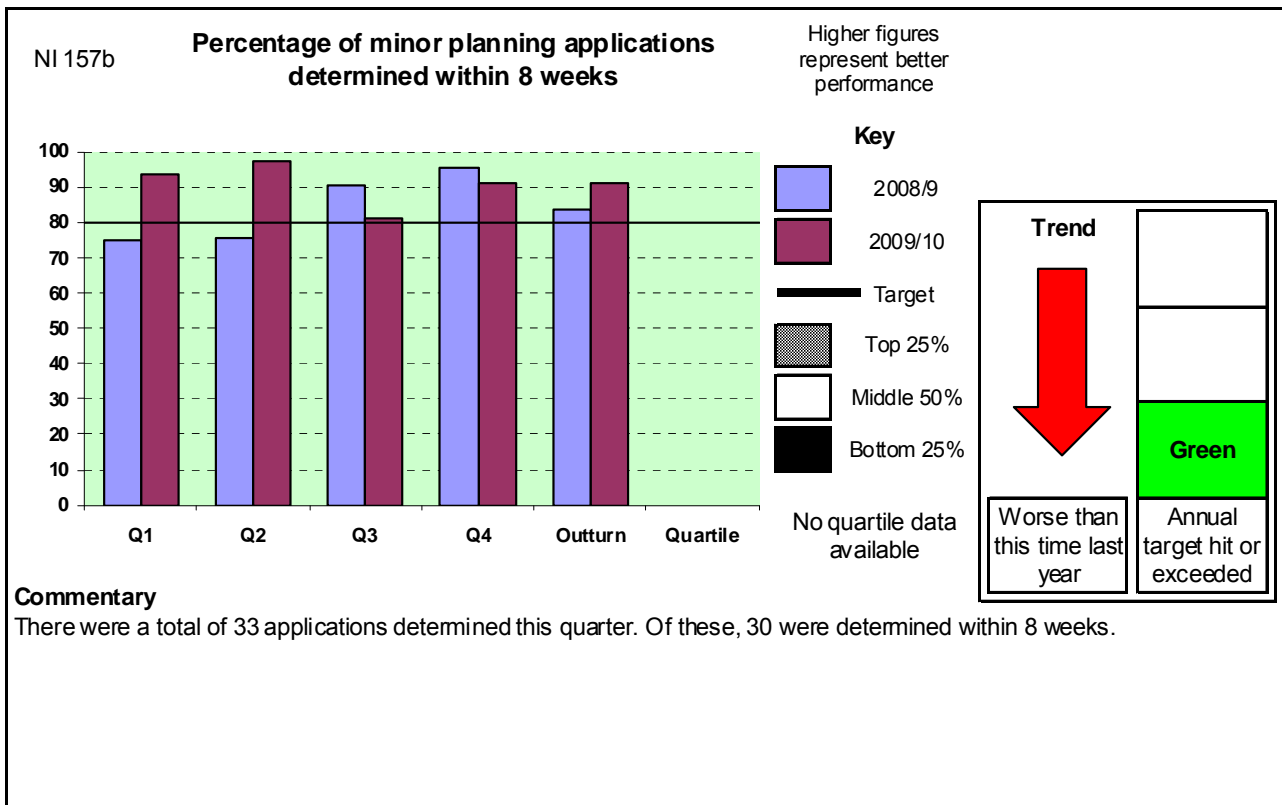
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2009/10 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
EAR 1	Continue to improve Parks, Sports Grounds, Open Spaces and Local Nature Reserves (LNR's).	<p>Undertake refurbishment and improvements at Runcorn Town Hall Park including additional imaginative play facilities for all age groups. March 2010</p> <p>Construct an imaginative new play area as part of the Playbuilder and Big Lottery programme at Spike Island and secure additional funding for refurbishment of the park and St Helen's Canal (links with South Widnes SPD), March 2010</p> <p>Deliver key elements, including the construction of a new Play Area, improvement to paths and entrance features, of the Hale Park 'Parks for People' project. Commence year 1 events programme. March 2010</p> <p>Refurbish and enhance the play area at Town Park (Stockham Lane), September 2009.</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p>The refurbishment and improvements were completed in Q4.</p> <p>Construction of the play area was completed on the 31st March 2010. Other improvements also completed at the same time.</p> <p>Year 1 events have run throughout all quarters.</p> <p>Play area was substantially completed on the 31st March 2010 but a delay in the delivery of safety surfacing means that it will not be ready for handover to HBC until Q1 of 2010/11.</p>

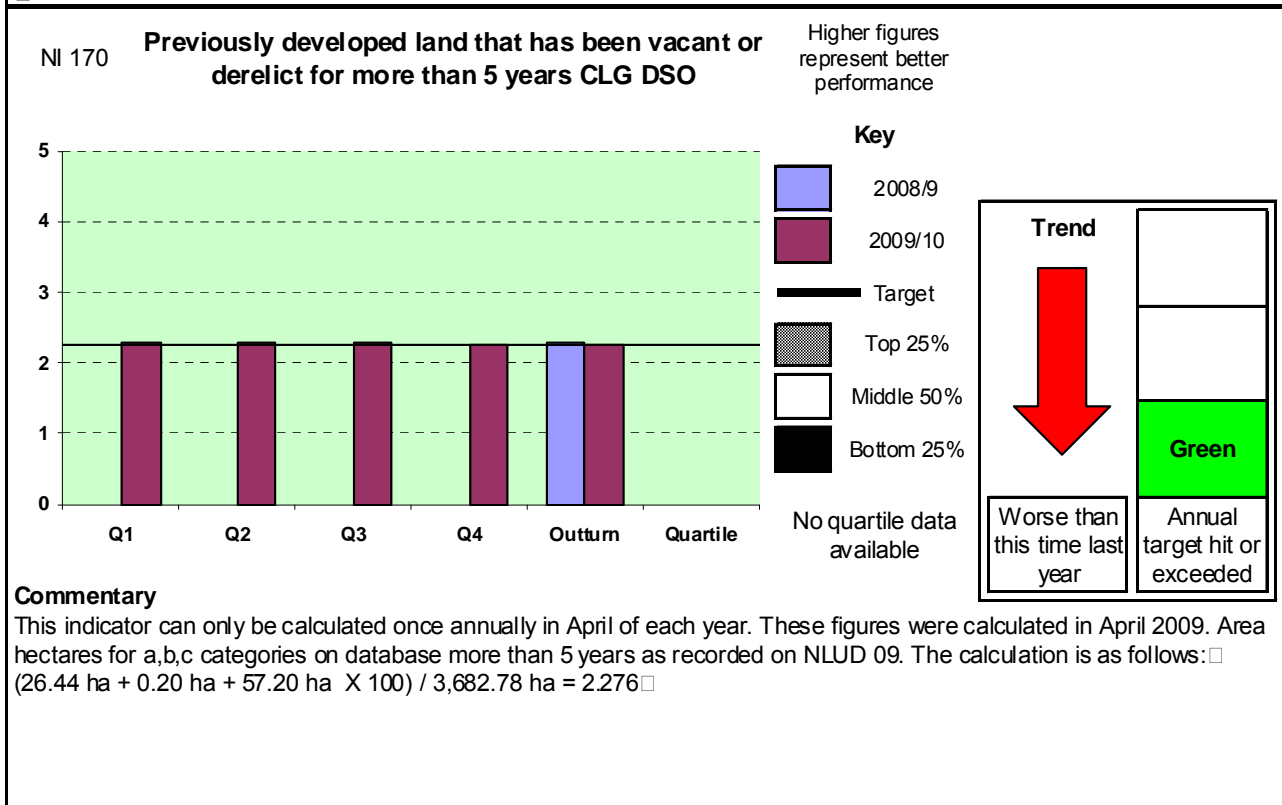
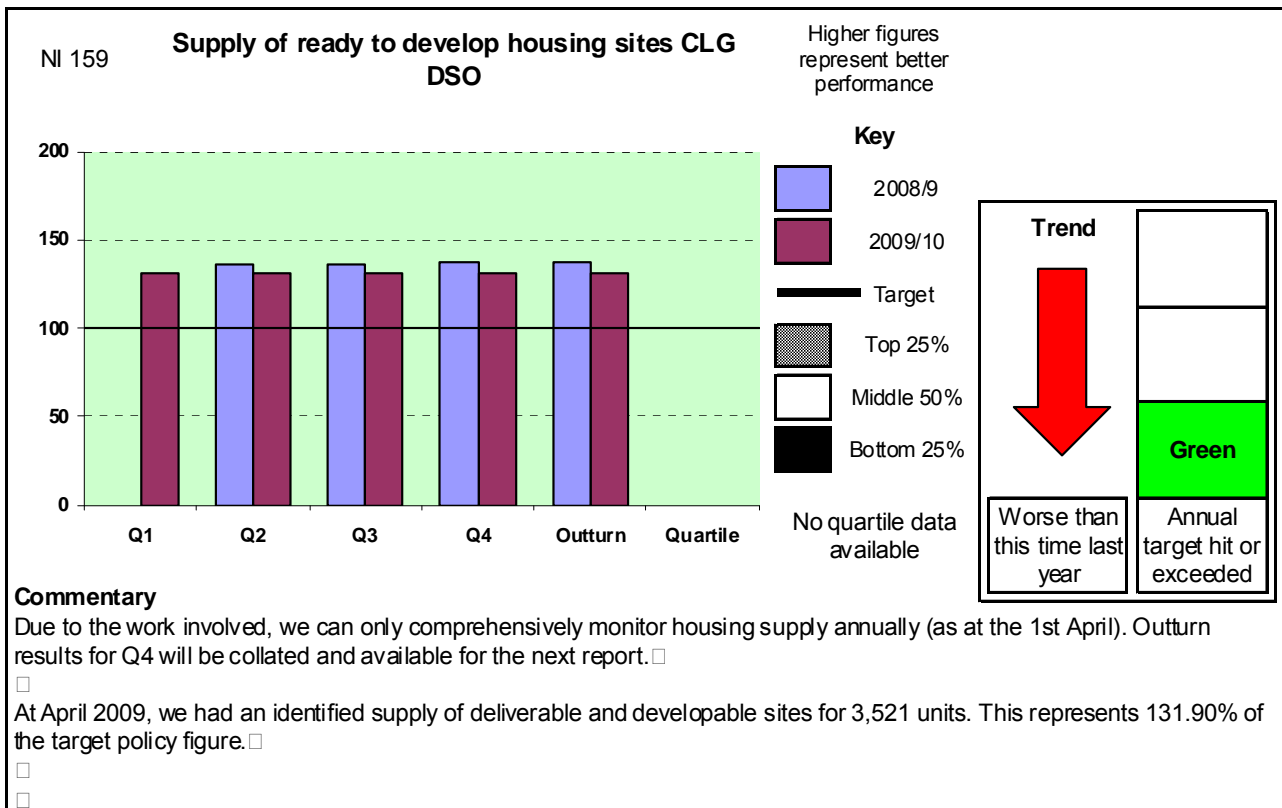
APPENDIX ONE - PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES/MILESTONES
Environmental & Regulatory


Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2009/10 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
EAR 2	To prepare and adopt a local development framework (LDF) and to review the LDF on a regular basis ensuring that an up to date development plan is available (statutory requirement). To achieve this by producing the following targets set out in the LDS 2009	Preferred Options for the Core Strategy placed on public consultation Sep 2009	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Core Strategy Preferred Options was placed on public consultation from 24th Sept until 5th November.
EAR 4	Carry out local Streetscene environmental improvements. (Street Scene is part of the Council's Environment Directorate that incorporates a number of services that have an important impact on the "street" and public open spaces in terms of their appearance and condition. It is one of the few services that in some way affects everyone using the Borough. Keeping our streets and our open spaces looking clean and tidy and well maintained	Undertake 20 small scale environmental improvements. Will include items such as installation of new street furniture, repair of existing street furniture and improvements to soft landscape. Dec 2008	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Streetscene teams have undertaken 20 improvements in each quarter.

APPENDIX ONE - PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES/MILESTONES
Environmental & Regulatory










Ref.	Description	Actual 2008/09	Target 2009/10	Quarter 4 Year-end	Progress	Commentary
Quality						
EAR LI2	Greenstat Survey, satisfaction with the standard of cleanliness and maintenance of parks and green spaces	94.28	88	94%		94% calculated on GreenSTAT Parks/Openspace Questionnaire data.
Service Delivery						
NI 195a	Improved street and environmental cleanliness - levels of graffiti	9	8			Figure not yet available
NI 195b	Improved street and environmental cleanliness - levels of litter	5	5			
NI 195c	Improved street and environmental cleanliness - levels of detritus	1	1			
NI 195d	Improved street and environmental cleanliness - levels of fly posting	0	1			
NI 196	Improved street and environmental cleanliness – fly tipping	3	1			

Key Objective	Risk Identified	Risk Treatment Measures	Target	Progress	Commentary
EAR 2 To prepare and adopt a local development framework (LDF) and to review the LDF on a regular basis ensuring that an up to date development plan is available (statutory requirement). To achieve this by producing the following targets set out in the LDS 2009	Failure to produce strategy could jeopardise future government funding e.g. Housing and Planning Delivery Grant. Control Measure: Ensure delivery of strategies in line with government requirements	Publication of Local Development Scheme, agreed by Government Office North West	01/03/2010		
	Production of unsound plans resulting in abortive costs and repetition of work. Control Measure: Consultation with relevant internal officers and external experts to ensure proper evaluation of requirements to pass tests of soundness	Biannual Local Development Working Party Meetings	01/03/2010		

**APPENDIX FOUR – PROGRESS AGAINST RISK TREATMENT MEASURES
Environmental & Regulatory**

Application of Red, Amber, Green symbols:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<u>Green</u>	 Indicates that the milestone/objective <u>will</u> be achieved within the identified timeframe.	Indicates that the annual target <u>will</u> , or has, been achieved or exceeded.
<u>Amber</u>	 Indicates that at this stage it is <u>uncertain</u> as to whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the identified timeframe.	Indicates that at this stage it is either <u>uncertain</u> as to whether the annual target will be achieved.
<u>Red</u>	 Indicates that the milestone/objective <u>will not</u> , or has not, been achieved within the identified timeframe.	Indicates that the annual target <u>will not</u> , or has not, been achieved.