

**BOLSOVER DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

**SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

**STREET CLEANLINESS
SCRUTINY REVIEW**

January 2015

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Foreword of Councillor Keith Bowman Chair of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee

The reason for conducting the review was the continuing failure of Corporate Plan Target E06. At the time of deciding that the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee would undertake this particular review it seemed a fairly straightforward task. It goes without saying that this was anything but straightforward.

We quickly established that in looking at Street Cleanliness, we were coming across other problems such as fly tipping. This has been the subject of a review by the Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee this year and therefore we did not want to duplicate the work of our colleagues.

On the site visits, members commented on such things as Patch Management and lack of contact with local Members regarding their 'patch' and these issues are discussed under the key findings section of this report.

I would like to thank the Members of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee for their contributions to this review and also to Lynne Cheong, Acting Scrutiny Officer, Claire Millington, Scrutiny Officer and Alison Bluff, Governance Officer for their support throughout.

1. Introduction

The reason for the scrutiny review was that performance against the Corporate Plan Target E06 had fallen from 92.31% of streets/land meeting cleanliness standards in March 2013 to 81% of streets/land meeting the standard in March 2014. The current figure reported in November 2014, Quarter 2 performance reporting was 91.5%.

The Corporate Plan Priority E06 states – Increase the Standard of Cleanliness, so that 96% of streets each year meet the criteria of an acceptable standard, established by Keep Britain Tidy Group – Local Environmental Quality Standards (LEQS).

During the course of the review, a number of concerns and queries were raised regarding fly tipping – however, as a review on enforcement had recently been completed by the Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee, the Chair was keen to ensure that the review remained focused on the Scope, agreed at the commencement of the review.

2. Recommendation

There are no recommendations to make as a result of this review. The Committee are satisfied that the issues and concerns surrounding corporate plan target E06 have already been addressed within the draft corporate plan 2015 – 2019 which is due to be adopted next year.

3. Scope of the review

The aim of the review was to identify and highlight good practice areas for improvement. The objectives of the review were;

- To consider current levels of action
- To consider current levels of concern with regard to performance against the Corporate Plan Target
- To identify potential changes/improvement

The Committee comprised the following Members,

Councillor Keith Bowman (Chair)	Councillor Steve Fritchley (Vice Chair)
Councillor Andrew Anderson	Councillor Graham Parkin
Councillor Clare Munks	Councillor Sue Wallis
Councillor Deborah Watson	Councillor George Webster
Councillor Jennifer Wilson	

Support to the Committee was provided by the Acting Scrutiny Officer, Scrutiny Officer and the Governance.

4. Method of review

The Committee met on 5 occasions to consider the scope of the review, key issues they wanted to discuss and the people they wished to interview.

The Committee sought evidence by way of quarterly performance reports and discussions with the Assistant Director, Streetscene and Portfolio Holder, Environment. Information on the role and remit of the Patch Management Group

was sought from the Assistant Director of Community Safety and Housing (Chair of the Patch Management Group) and the Principal Solicitor.

Equality and Diversity

Within the process of the review, the committee has taken into account the impact of equalities.

No adverse impacts have been identified.

5. Key findings

It was explained to the Scrutiny Committee that the current criteria used to assess the cleanliness of the streets was based on the Encams/Keep Britain Tidy Group NI195 Manual. A copy of which had been provided for Members' information.

It was explained that the Corporate Plan Target E06 was based on a combined scoring of litter and detritus and reflected the former BV199 indicator which was replaced by NI195 in 2006. Members noted that the NI195 manual separated litter and detritus measurements and that the method of calculating E06 was outdated at the time of its inclusion in the current Corporate Plan.

Since 2013, inspections had been carried out in-house and litter levels were reportedly higher, however this was not reflected in complaints levels. Standards of Cleanliness had improved but again, this was not reflected in the reporting. It was felt that the inspections carried out were being done so harshly against the set standard. It was understood that winter and early spring cleanliness inspections may have included road salt and grit deposits as detritus and should have been excluded due to material being placed on the highway for a specific purpose (i.e. ice treatment). This had identified a further training need for staff. Inspections were carried out quarterly and there were 255 inspections made each quarter. Over the past three quarters, no grade A's had been given. The Assistant Director, Streetscene explained that each grade (A-D) had plus or minus marks and so grading could be out as much as 40% and this had identified a training issue. A joint training session with North East Derbyshire District Council staff was also proposed in order to check that grading was consistent across the two authorities.

There had been a lot of improvement work carried out operationally and the Assistant Director, Streetscene was disappointed that the results of the inspections did not reflect the work carried out. Members were asked to comment

on their own wards and positive comments were received on the cleanliness of streets, particularly in South Normanton and Whitwell.

A project was underway to create full time litter picker posts (currently part time contracts) which would be coordinated from the Depot and have established schedules to follow, in order to manage their time more efficiently. This would happen as and when opportunities arose.

It was suggested to Members of the Committee that the new Corporate Plan – 2015 onwards would only measure litter and not detritus, which was what mattered most to members of the public; *Sustain standards of litter cleanliness to ensure 96% and dog fouling 98% of streets each year meet an acceptable level as assessed by Local Environmental Quality Surveys (LEQS).*

Fly tipping

Although it was made clear to the Committee that the fly tipping concerns raised during the review related to enforcement issues (which had previously been the subject of a review by the Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee) it is relevant to mention in this report that it is a general perception that since bulk collection charges were brought in, incidents of fly tipping have increased.

From information provided by the Assistant Director, Streetscene to the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee (information from the general ledger) and information on reported incidents of fly tipping provided as evidence to the Review of Enforcement, it is clear that the reported figures do not support these perceptions.

Year	Bulk Income	Reported fly-tipping incidents
2009/10	£29,912	-----
2010/11	£27,888	746
2011/12	£21,457	640
2012/13	£19,175	526
2013/14	£23,159	861
2014/15 (end of Q3)	£18,934	599

It is noted that from 2012/13 the bulk income figures reduce considerably which reflects residents taking their own waste to recycling centres; in particular, given Buttermilk Lane Household Waste Recycling Centre opened in 2008.

Patch Management

Following the site visits carried out with the Chair and local ward Members and some of the issues raised during the discussions and photographs at the Committee meeting, Members queried the role and membership of the Patch

Management Group and in order to gain a better understanding of the remit covered by the group, Councillor Dennis Kelly, Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Patch Management Group Member Representative attended a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to outline the role.

Members discussed the Terms of Reference which included Eyes and Ears monitoring, reporting and publicity. Members felt that there was a lack of information coming from the Patch Management Group back to local ward Members on issues raised at meetings.

Councillor Kelly advised that information was provided to all elected Members through the Members Reporting System and perhaps the issue was that Members are not accessing this electronic information.

There is an issue in that Members who access the Members Reporting System are not seeing the live data. Because of the technicalities involved in loading the PERFORM data onto the system that Members can access through their I-pads, the information is only loaded up monthly. Members can access the most up to date information using the PC's in the Members rooms.

After discussing these concerns with the Performance and Quality Officer, with immediate effect, information will now be updated on a weekly basis in order to provide as much assistance to elected Members as possible in accessing relevant and up to date information.

The Assistant Director of Community Safety and Head of Housing attended a meeting to explain the purpose and remit of the Patch Management Development Group. There were some misconceptions that Patch Management looked at case work in specific wards. The group is responsible for the co-ordination of policies and the Council's approach to issues which impact on local communities to ensure joint working and high quality service provision. The Terms of Reference have recently been revised and agreed by Strategic Alliance Management Team. Changes have been made to the name (previously Patch Management Group), Member representation now includes Councillor Murray-Carr – Cabinet Member for Community Safety and the frequency of meetings has changed from monthly to every three months to reflect the fact that policies have now been developed and the Group now have a role in reviewing those policies.

6. Conclusions

The original reason for carrying out a review was because of the failing Corporate Plan Target E06. The Assistant Director, Streetscene provided an explanation and reasons for the failing Corporate Plan Target and the Committee were satisfied this reason has been addressed and performance will be markedly improved when monitoring against the target in 2015-2019 Corporate Plan.