

Street Cleaning

Report By: The Director of Environment and Culture

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider performance and priorities in relation to street cleaning issues.

Background

2. The Committee, through the regular general performance reports, has carefully monitored performance of street cleaning. As a result of concerns expressed and also highlighted by the Strategic Monitoring Committee, a report was requested to highlight the approach currently taken to delivering the service and how performance is monitored.
3. The following report has been prepared in consultation with the Council's Strategic Delivery Partner, Amey, which is responsible for the delivery of street cleaning services on the ground.

Target Setting and Performance Management

4. The targets for improving street and environmental cleanliness are related to separate measures of the levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly posting. These are part of the National Indicators. Improved street and environmental cleanliness is covered by NI 195, which has replaced BVPI 199. A number of changes have been introduced in this revision, including the methodology for calculating and reporting the figures, which makes direct comparisons with previous years difficult.
5. Annual targets are set as part of the service planning process, based on improving previous performance with consideration also given to how Herefordshire compares with the other authorities across England.

The actual results from previous years, the targets for 2008/09 and the latest results for 2008/09 are shown below.

Local street and environmental cleanliness -	Actual 2005/06	Actual 2006/07	Actual 2007/08	Target 2008/09	2008/9 to date*
- litter	18%	17%	15%	10%	3%
- detritus				12%	14%
- graffiti	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%
- flyposting	2%	1%	1%	1%	0%

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Stewart Barton, Streetscene Manager
01432 383214 sbarton@herefordshire.gov.uk

Notes:

- * Average of first two of the three surveys carried out during the year. Third survey carried during December to March results currently being collated at time of writing. In previous years, litter and detritus were combined as a single figure for the reports.
3. The annual results are an average of fifteen scores collected through the year. They are taken in three tranches during the year, that is, once every four months, and each tranche is a group of five scores. This approach can result in a variation during the year but the annual average provides a representative sample for comparison between years. Each score is taken in one of the forty wards of the county, and the choice of location of each measurement is in a three year schedule from a matrix based on areas of social deprivation set by central government. Every ward is included at least once every three years. The overall indicators represent a score marked as a percentage failure rate, with 0% meaning everything passes, and 100%, everything fails. Hence a lower percentage score represents better performance.
 4. It is possible to compare performance with other authorities by reference to the annual report on Local Environmental Quality published by the Department for Marine, Landscape and Rural Affairs. ENCAMS, an environmental charity, is commissioned by central government to survey the environmental cleanliness of all English local authorities and they also audit the assessments made by the Council's own team of assessors for NI 195. The latest Local Environmental Quality report covering April 2007 to March 2008 shows that the Overall Quality Standard for Herefordshire for Good and Satisfactory was 48% against a National average of 47%. There were variations across the categories, and detritus for All Areas was graded unsatisfactory. In particular, areas of Low Density Social Housing, Rural Roads, Other Highways and Public Open Space were in the lowest grade.
 5. It is apparent from the complaints and requests for service received by the Council that litter is a concern but that detritus is rarely reported. Litter however is graded as Good, and is only slightly worse than the Current National Benchmark in three out of the twelve categories. Performance for litter is ahead of target.
 6. Monitoring indicates that there is a very low level of graffiti and fly posting. The Council continues to work closely with the police on their anti-graffiti operations, and has provided witness statements and helped with successful prosecutions. The Council is working with the probation service so that offenders' work on community service orders fits their crimes and they are cleaning up graffiti and litter picking.

Current Street Cleaning Practice

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7. Amey undertake street cleaning activities on behalf of the Council. Resources are applied flexibly to target the areas of most need and provide a responsive service. As a result actual sweeping regimes vary greatly between areas. It is planned that villages are swept every 6 months, although this schedule has not been maintained across the county. The schedules for sweeping of all roads and footways in Hereford city have recently been revised. The main shopping areas are swept daily with the bins being emptied twice a day. The main roads are scheduled for sweeping twice a week and the residential roads once a fortnight. All footways are swept once a fortnight, whether they are adjacent to roads or are link footpaths.
8. All litterbins in Hereford City are emptied daily with the city centre bins being emptied at least twice a day. Records are kept to monitor the usage of litter bins and to identify hot-spots such as bins that are frequently full and to correlate usage with activities such as public events and school terms.

Improving Service Delivery

9. Working with Amey, the Council has sought to adopt the best practices set out in central government's Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse. This has resulted in changes to working practices such as considering not just how often areas are cleaned but how to manage consistently and appropriately to keep an area clean. This means for example that a relatively clean street is not swept just because it is that street's turn, but allowing the flexibility to move on to another that requires cleaning.
10. In the coming months, Amey plan to further improve the reporting systems and the supervision of the operations to improve delivery of street cleaning activities. Sweeper vehicles can be diverted to deal with incidents such as Road Traffic Collisions, flooding relief works, clearing mud on roads. Having been diverted to clear debris from Road Traffic Collisions, the machines have to be thoroughly cleaned of contaminated waste before returning to their scheduled works. Amey are currently investigating ways to overcome this operational issue and ensure that resources are always available for day-to-day street cleaning activities.
11. The Service Delivery Review of the Council's Strategic Service Delivery Partnership is intended to include a new performance management regime to drive improved outcomes in relation to services provided by Amey. This will include specific performance targets in relation to street cleaning. It is recommended that a further report be presented in relation to this matter once the new arrangements for service delivery have been implemented.

Recommendation

THAT the contents of the report be noted and that a further report be submitted once the changes to the Service Delivery Partnership with Amey have been implemented.

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