

Report of the *Director of Neighbourhood Services*

Street Scene Review

Summary

1. Members are asked to consider the recommendations in this report, which have been developed following a review of the Street Scene service during the summer. The review has assessed existing methods of delivering Street Scene services and considered national best practice in making recommendations to improve delivery.

Background

2. The review of Street Scene operations is one of the Council's 13 Improvement Statements (***Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces***). The review has been managed in three separate phases with the first phase considering existing Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance services. The second phase will consider the effectiveness of services that impact on Street Services such as gully cleaning. The third phase will consider how the Council can proactively reduce the amount of littering and enviro' crime within our City by developing education and enforcement activities whilst working with the community and partners.
3. The review and delivery of Street Scene Services is extremely important to the Council, as it is one of our residents' priorities whilst it can have a good or bad reputational impact depending upon the standard of service provided. The service was last reviewed in 2003 following a Best Value Review and following this several improvements to the service were made including the provision of a York Pride Action Line and Street Environment Officers to help manage local environmental issues of concern.
4. This report considers assesses the current service whilst making recommendations to improve delivery arrangements.

The Review Team

5. The review team included a mixture of frontline staff in addition to middle, senior managers and representatives from the Trade Unions and City Centre Management. The review team was chaired by the Director of Neighbourhood Services, whilst officers from different directorates of the Council assisted when necessary.

6. The Director of Neighbourhood Services has had meetings with representatives from ENCAMS (Environmental Campaigns) to discuss how best practice can be used to improve delivery whilst the Audit Commission have also been consulted.

What Has Been Considered?

7. As part of the review the team has considered the following to ensure that where possible the recommendations reflect national best practice:
 - 2003 Audit Commission Best Value Review of York's Street Scene service – specifically the recommendations from the review;
 - LGA/IDeA Reputation Campaigns;
 - ENCAMS research and best practice;
 - UK best practice by researching how top performing Council's deliver services;
 - Previous experience – the Director of Neighbourhood Services has successfully completed similar exercises in his previous roles at South Tyneside MBC and Darlington Borough Council;
 - Current practices;
 - The Government's Local Government White Paper titled 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'. The outcomes of this review will result in improved local services and will compliment the recently launched York Neighbourhoods Pride initiative that will encourage community participation and ownership of environmental issues.

Best Value Review

8. In 2003 the Audit Commission held a Best Value Review of Street Scene Services. The following are examples of some of the recommendations detailed in the Audit Commissions final report on the Street Scene service:
 - Customer Services standards should be set across the Street Scene service;
 - There should be improved customer access by telephone i.e. rationalising the number of hotlines that were in existence at the time of the review;
 - The street cleaning practices at the time of the review should be challenged to ensure that they are best practice;
 - Managers should gain understanding of the factors influencing the significant reduction in customer satisfaction at that time;
 - Performance monitoring arrangements should be reviewed and improved;
 - There should be integration of operations between all street-level services;
 - Client and contractor issues should be resolved to improve service delivery;

- HR issues such as the high levels of sickness within the service at the time should be reviewed;
 - There should be improved communication with staff.
9. Whilst some of the recommendations from the review have been implemented there are others that have not therefore these will be as part of this review.

LGA/IdeA Best Practice

10. The Local Government Association and the Improvement and Development Agency recently completed a review of environmental services to identify best practice so that this could be shared with local authorities. One of their first findings was that Street Scene services have a major impact on the reputation (good or bad) of local authorities. They commented:

“All Mori research shows that residents views on their Council are influenced by street cleaning and refuse collection than by services like social care and education that are used only by a minority. Seven core actions emerge as key to improving reputation”. (LGA/IdeA august 2006)

11. The seven core actions referred to by LGA/IdeA are as follows:
- Adopt a highly visible, strongly branded Council cleaning operation;
 - Ensure that there are no gaps or overlaps in Council cleaning and maintenance contracts;
 - Set up one phone number for the public to report local environmental problems;
 - Deal with ‘grot’ spots;
 - Remove abandoned vehicles within 24 hours;
 - Win a Green Flag award for at least one park;
 - Educate and enforce to protect the environment.
12. Whilst the Council has set up a dedicated phone number for the public to use, removes abandoned vehicles within 24 hours and has three Green Flag awards, there are areas of the business that need to be improved if the service is to deliver best practice and to meet the expectations of our customers.

The Findings From The Review

13. The review team considered what was good and bad about the current service and agreed what needs to change whilst also considering what barriers were experienced that currently prevented the service from performing better. A selection of the responses received are as follows:

What Is Good About the Current Service?

- Floral displays in the city centre
- City centre cleaning – generally okay
- Street Environment Officers
- The service is lowest quartile for spend
- Parks and Open Spaces are generally well maintained and attractive
- Public area graffiti removal is generally efficient
- York Business Pride – 150 hanging baskets purchased for the city centre in 2006

What's Not So Good About the Current Service?

- There is currently no plan to manage detritus particularly in terraced streets although a programme of 'deep cleanses' has been introduced which are popular with our customers.
- Client and Contractor arrangements still remain in some areas between different Directorates
- There could be more enforcement activity
- There are cultural issues and sickness is high
- The service has a variable reputation and isn't truly integrated
- The service needs to be more visible and the image could be improved

What Needs to Change

- Move to zone working as different areas of the city require different cleaning arrangements
- Improved performance monitoring, supervision, staff communication and morale
- Environmental initiatives need to be developed to support the new service
- Improved customer focus and a continual review of what we do.
- More education and enforcement.

Performance and Key Data

14. The operational cost of Street Scene services including labour costs is currently £3.2m (Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleaning). The Council is in the lowest quartile for spend, and satisfaction with the service was 61% in 2005/06 compared with a target of 65%. Street Cleaning is measured by BVPI

199a (which measures the percentage of streets with litter and detritus below an acceptable level) and the Council's current performance is 23%.

Proposed Changes to the Service

15. Following the research of UK best practice as part of this review, consideration of the information contained in the LGA/IdeA Reputation Campaigns and the recommendations from the 2003 Best Value Review of Street Scene services a number of changes are proposed to improve the service provided to our customers. A summary of these is as follows:

Operational Changes

16. A summary of the proposed key changes to the service is as follows:
- ***The new service will be managed within 5 zones (4 outer and a city zone).***
 - ***Each zone will have its own Customer Champion who will manage resources, monitor the environmental quality of the area and liaise with businesses and our customers to discuss and take action about any concerns they may have about the environment.***
 - ***There will be different methods of cleaning within the zones i.e. hand sweeping and staff will patrol terraced areas with barrows.***
 - ***The new service will have a visible brand so that our customers can be made aware of the work the Council is doing in their area to improve the condition of the environment.***
 - ***A dedicated enforcement team will be created to deter 'enviro' crime whilst education will also be an important feature of the new service to promote a proactive approach to 'enviro' crime prevention.***
 - ***Existing client/contractor arrangements will be resolved with budgets being transferred to the service Directorate so that efficiency can be maximised.***
 - ***The new easy@york service will compliment the new street cleaning arrangements by making it easier for our customers to contact the Council.***
 - ***Customer standards have been produced so that our customers can be made aware of the service they will expect to receive.***
 - ***The new service will be performance managed to ensure that targets are being achieved whilst there will be a plan to manage 'grot' spots.***
 - ***The new service will operate working closely with the York Pride Initiatives that will be delivered over a 12 month period to improve the condition of the local environment at a neighbourhood level. This will involve working with our customers to develop ownership of environmental related issues so that collectively we can make a difference.***

Operations

17. It is proposed that in the future the new service will be managed within 5 zones, 4 outer and a city zone. (See Annex A) The zones have been developed taking into consideration the different types of areas within our city that require cleaning. In each zone there will be a Customer Champion appointed who will be responsible for managing operational staff whilst being the link person with our customers and members. The Champions will patrol their area monitoring the performance of the workforce and the condition of the environment whilst also managing operational areas of concern. The title of the position will be confirmed pending the approval of service branding.
18. It is proposed that the existing Street Environment Officers (SEO's) are considered for the Customer Champion roles. At the current time, SEO's work within neighbourhoods to identify problems that impact on the liveability of areas although they have no direct control of staff who can remedy problems. By giving them overall responsibility for the zone they will be able to direct resources to manage issues promptly meeting or hopefully exceeding the expectations of our customers. They also understand the local characteristics of their areas therefore by harnessing this knowledge along with their excellent communication skills the delivery of the service should be more efficient and effective.
19. The Customer Champion will be expected to be active within their zone, monitoring the condition of the environment, responding to and resolving customer complaints, liaising and communicating with customers, members, schools, businesses and working with Police colleagues to assist with relevant issues. Current areas of concern such as the condition of lay-by's, back lanes and terraced areas etc will be managed more effectively in the future.
20. Resources will be allocated to each zone depending upon the type of cleaning required. In terraced/urban areas staff will patrol the streets working with barrows and brushes and there will be hand sweeping of pavements and gutters, which will help to reduce detritus. The staff will have a schedule of areas to patrol (see Annex B) although the Customer Champion may allocate them to alternate areas if immediate cleaning is required. The zone will be supported by one 'reactive team' who will also be responsible for managing 'grot' spots' where there could be multiple daily cleans. These will include shopping centres and areas outside of schools. There will also be programmed mechanical sweeping of roads and back lanes.
21. Information regarding zone 'hot spots' will be gathered by cleansing personnel, the Customer Champion and from data gathered by the easy@york customer contact centre. Where problems are identified, staff will visit areas regularly and they will be supported by a proposed Enforcement Team. This team would take action using powers contained in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act to prevent 'enviro' crime from occurring where practicable.
22. Eventually customers living in the zone will get to know their neighbourhood team who will be much more 'visible' than the current service.

The Zones

23. As detailed above the city will be divided into 5 zones (North, South, East and West plus a city zone). When considering the wards to be included in each zone, attention was given to the types of work required in relation to the land types included in the BVPI 199 audits and the frequencies of cleaning as prescribed DEFRA in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006. This in turn gave us a guide as to the resources required. It has been identified that the East and West Zones will be highly labour intensive whilst the North and South zones less labour intensive. The City Zone has fixed resources based around current codes of practice. Working patterns will be reviewed to fit in with issues such as the night time economy.

The following is a description of the wards included in each zone:

➤ **North Zone**

Skelton, Rawcliffe & Clifton Without Haxby and Wigginton

Huntington & New Earswick Strensall

➤ **South Zone**

Rural West York Bishopthorpe Wheldrake

Derwent Osbaldwick Heworth Without

➤ **East Zone**

Heworth Clifton Guildhall (outside Bar Walls)

Hull Road Fishergate Heslington

Fulford

➤ **West Zone**

Acomb Holgate Micklegate (Outside Bar Walls)

Westfield Dringhouses & Woodthorpe

➤ **City Zone**

The City Zone will consist of the areas of the following wards, which are inside the Bar Walls:

Guildhall Micklegate

Education and Enforcement

24. As part of the York Neighbourhood Pride initiative schools will be visited so that officers can talk to the children about the benefits of protecting the environment. A litter plan will also be developed at each school visited. Officers will also work with local businesses including takeaways to prevent litter from being dropped onto the street, whilst using the powers included in

the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act to take action against frequent offenders.

25. It is proposed that a small Enforcement Team will also be formed as part of the Neighbourhood Services re-structure. The team will consist of three officers and one administration officer (to manage court cases and the relevant paperwork), whilst they will be supported by the Customer Champions who will also use enforcement powers within their zone. The team will support the new service by proactively deterring 'enviro' crime whilst working with the community to identify frequent offenders. The team will also assist with the York Neighbourhood Pride initiative.

Client/Contractor Issues

26. As part of this work, discussions have been held on bringing all budget heads into one service area to increase efficiency. Where services are managed outside of Neighbourhood Services, Mature Partnership Arrangements will be developed between Directorates, which will be twice yearly reviewed. This arrangement will ensure that budgets relating to street cleaning (including car park cleaning), highway grass maintenance, arboriculture and parks and open space maintenance are retained within one area.

Branding

27. The new Street Service will commence in December 2006. A decision is required as to the name of the new service so that it can be marketed to our customers.
28. In developing a brand that will assist the new service to maximise its public impact, the overriding principle has to be to ensure that the new service is easily recognised and associated with the City of York Council. This will involve the gradual change of livery, vehicles and uniforms although this may take a couple of years to achieve as vehicles reach the end of their current leases.
29. Since a key aspect of the service is to encourage the public to recognise the services are being provided on their behalf and to engage with them wherever possible, it is vital to ensure high visibility.
30. The Review Team have worked with the Council's Marketing and Communications section to develop proposals for the new branding. The following are suggested options for the name of the new service that the Executive are asked to consider:
 - **City Action Team – keeping York clean** - this is a direct call to action;
 - **Neighbourhood Pride Services – Keeping York Cleaner, Greener and Safer** – this would be linked to the York Neighbourhood Pride initiative;
 - **Neighbourhood Action Team – keeping York Clean, Green and Safe** – demonstrating that we care about our environment.
 - **City Pride Services** – promoting pride within our neighbourhoods.

31. Examples of how this branding would look on Council uniforms and livery are attached as Annex C.

Communications with Our Customers

32. It is important that our customers notice a visible improvement to their environment whilst they feel ownership and engaged with the new service. Communication will be a key factor in delivering this aim.
33. It is intended to utilise the opportunities offered by the Council's new York Customer Centre. All operational services will be advertised in the forthcoming A-Z document and customers will be asked to contact the dedicated 551551 number. It is intended in the future for complaints/requests for service to be routed by the York Customer Centre to the frontline service for action. This will increase the speed and efficiency of the service provided.
34. Customer Standards have been developed for the new service based on UK best practice and realistically what can be delivered (see Annex D). The Contact Centre's Customer Relationship Management System will have the service standards embedded within it therefore customers will be given an indication of when they will receive the service when calling whilst any tasks that breach the standards will be escalated for immediate attention. This will result in an active focus on delivering customer standards as well as providing clarity for our customers who will know what to expect when contacting the Council to request a service.
35. Customers living in the zones will receive information about the new service. The information will include details of what will be provided, a copy of the service standards and details of how to contact the Council to report concerns/request action. Details will also be included in Ward newsletters and the Council's website will also be kept updated regarding service developments. As part of the York Neighbourhoods Pride initiative Street Champions will be appointed to monitor their local environment and report to the Council issues of concern to their local Customer Champion. The service standards will be published on the Council's website and will be available within Council offices along with information regarding the service so that customers can be informed of the service they should expect to receive.
36. Members will be briefed on the new service before it commences whilst they will also be kept updated regarding operational and developmental issues. There should be shorter response times through direct engagement with the teams. Ward members will have the direct contact details of the Customer Champions so that local issues can be discussed and resolved.
37. Customer Champions will attend ward meetings to provide updates on progress, receive information and to discuss the performance of the new service.

Staff Communication and Training

38. Monthly focus group meetings will be held with a selection of staff from across the new service to discuss operational issues. These meetings will be important, as they will enable managers and front line staff to discuss issues

that impact negatively on front line performance as well as discuss what works well. The workforce will choose the staff to attend the meetings whilst the Unions will also be invited to attend.

39. In addition to the focus group meetings full staff meetings will be held twice each year whilst staff will receive a monthly 'team brief' from their line managers.
40. Additional training will be provided for staff working as part of the new service as new skills will be required such as BVPI 199 audits. Staff will also receive customer service training from service managers and regular appraisals.

Performance Management

41. The service currently has a number of high level indicators such as BVPI's and annual satisfaction ratings. Whilst these will remain important they will be supplemented by more relevant management information to enable timely interventions where necessary to improve customer service.

Implementation Plan

42. It is intended that the first zone will go 'live' in December 2006. This will be the **West Zone** which has been chosen due to its mixture of housing stock therefore it will be possible to evaluate the success of the new system before rolling this out to other areas. A review of the pilot zone will be held at the end of January to establish if the new service is effective. If successful the next Zone will go 'live' in March 2007 with the remaining zones then being launched in stages afterwards. Officers working on the easy@york programme are supporting the pilot and operators have been made aware of the changes to the service during this period.
43. A communications plan is attached as Annex E. An implementation plan is attached at Annex F.

Performance Management

44. The Council has some challenging environmental maintenance targets that have been agreed as part of the LPSA 2 agreement whilst these have also been included in the Local Area Agreement. The relevant targets for this service are as follows:

Indicators	Baseline 2005/6	Target 2007/8	Target 2008/9	Target 2009/10
The percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level	22.55%	17%	17%	16%
The percentage of people satisfied with local cleanliness	61%	70%	70%	72%

45. Whilst the above targets are relevant to the LAA is proposed that zone targets are established and that these are regularly monitored and presented to Ward committee's. Additional targets will be developed including staff satisfaction which is also key to the successful delivery of the new service.

Market Testing

46. The service will be market tested in line with the Council's Competition Strategy, which will be submitted to the Executive later this year.

Consultation

47. Consultation has been held with ENCAMS (environmental campaigns), Audit Commission, various local authorities, members of the Council and staff who will be involved with delivering the service. It is also planned to hold a consultation roadshow for residents during the implementation of the new service. Trade Unions have also been consulted.

Options

48. Members could decide not to progress with the implementation of the new service.

Analysis

49. It would not be beneficial to continue with the existing service, as the proposed improvements would represent improved value for money.

Corporate Priorities

50. The new service and its revised delivery arrangements have been developed in direct response to the Council's Corporate Strategy and in particular to the Improvement Statement titled '***Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces***'.

Implications

51. The following implications have been noted:

Financial

52. Whilst there are no immediate financial implications it is proposed that as new livery is purchased the new branding will be used. In the short-term barrows, brushes and relevant equipment will need to be purchased although it is considered that this can be funded from existing budgets.

Human Resources (HR)

53. Street Scene employees and the Street Environment Officers have been briefed on the Review. Full time Trade Union officers have also been informed of the Review and have received a copy of the presentation made to employees.

54. There will be on-going consultation with employees and their representatives about the proposed operational changes for the pilot zone and planned rollout across the other zones. Any operational, contractual changes will be implemented following Council policies and procedures and will be subject to full consultation with Trade Union officers and individual employees. If any significant issues arise from consultation then a subsequent report will be bought back to the Executive.
55. For the duration of the pilot (3 months), it is not proposed to make any changes to current pay arrangements as these are subject to on-going negotiations under the Council's job evaluation pay and grading review.

As part of the Street Scene Review current operational working practices will be reviewed. The alignment of start and finish times will be considered across the services.

56. Consideration will also be given to a 7-day working arrangement within the City Zone, which is likely to increase staffing levels. The 5-day working arrangement in the four outer zones will remain unchanged.
57. Grounds Maintenance team currently work an annualised hours system and the requirement to continue with this type of arrangement will be reviewed.
58. The longer-term aspiration is to move to developing integrated contracts of employment across Refuse, Recycling, Street Cleaning and the Grounds Maintenance service so that employees can work across all service areas. In the future core skills will dictate the main area of work, whilst flexibility will be required.

Equalities

59. The only issue with equalities implications is regarding communicating the changes with customers. The customer will be able to request written information in alternative formats. This will be clearly stated on any standard leaflets or stickers on bins/newsletters.

Legal

60. The only potential legal implications would be the need to allocate resources from our internal legal team to support the enforcement action proposed at paragraph 24 of the report.

Crime and Disorder

61. The proposals within this report to improve education and enforcement activity, including the expanded use of powers granted under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, appear progressive and effective means for reducing the incident of environmental crimes such as fly-tipping. Visits to the city's schools will improve children's awareness of their responsibilities to the environment and the impact their behaviour has upon it, whilst improved intelligence and relationships within the city zones will ensure that hot-spots and repeat offenders are more effectively targeted.

Information Technology (IT)

62. There are no IT implications.

Risk Management

63. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score has been assessed at less than 16. This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

Recommendations

64. Members are asked to approve the implementation of the new service commencing with a pilot Zone in December 2006. Members are also asked to agree a name for the new service which will be marketed on uniforms, literature and on the vehicle livery.

Reason: To improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible services.

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Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes (separate document)

Annex A: Zone Map

Annex B: Examples of Beat Round

Annex C: Examples of New Branding

Annex D: Customer Standards

Annex E: Communications Plan

Annex F: Implementation Plan