

**BOLSOVER DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**QUALITY OF THE
CLEANLINESS OF THE
ENVIRONMENT
SCRUTINY REVIEW**

March 2011

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Foreword of Councillor Hazel Ward Chair of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee

The issue of cleanliness is certainly an issue that is close to every Member's heart and is always a topic for discussion.

I would like to thank all the officers who have been involved in the review for taking the time to attend meetings and talk to the Committee about their roles.

I would also like to thank Richard Tyndall, Programme Manager – Berkshire Improvement and Efficiency Partnership who has provided feedback on his findings from his work based on the REIP review carried out in March 2010 and for his comments on the Committee's recommendations. Thanks also to Ann Bedford, Support Officer – Customer Service and Performance, Richard Morley, User Engagement Officer and Lynne Cheong, Equality Improvement Officer for allowing the Committee to attend their meetings to consult with different groups and thanks to the Parish Councils who took the time to respond to our questionnaire.

Finally, my thanks to all the Members of the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee for attending the meetings and contributing to the review and to the Scrutiny Officer and Democratic Services Officer for their support.

1. Introduction

At its meeting on 30th June 2010, the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review on Quality of the Cleanliness of the Environment.

The Review was identified as a priority by elected Members at the Scrutiny Conference in May 2010.

After commencing the review, the Committee was asked by the Chief Executive to co-ordinate the work taking place following the REIP report in March 2010 which was being carried out by an independent consultant, employed by the authority to gather evidence on its behalf. It had initially been the Committee's intention to speak to a variety of officers involved in the delivery of the Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Services; however, it soon became apparent that this would be a duplication of the work being undertaken elsewhere.

Instead the Committee used the evidence it had gathered up to that point and received feedback from the Consultant of his findings and how that compared to those of the Scrutiny Committee. It was anticipated that the evidence provided from the REIP work, would support the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee comprised of the following Members,

Cllr Hazel Ward (Chair)

Cllr Susan Wallis (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Terry Cook

Cllr Malcolm Crane

Cllr Sally Gray

Cllr Ray Holmes

Cllr Joan Morley

Cllr Tom Rodda

Cllr George Webster

Support to the Committee was provided by the Scrutiny Officer and the Democratic Services Officer.

Details of the scope of the review is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The Committee met on seven occasions to consider the scope of the review, key issues they wanted to discuss and the people they wished to interview, including officers who were involved in the delivery of street cleansing and grounds maintenance. Attached as **Appendix 2** is a list of stakeholders interviewed and consulted.

Equalities and Diversity

The Equalities Officer at Bolsover District Council was consulted during the review. Within the process of the review the panel have taken into account the impact of equalities and have not identified any negative impact.

The Equalities Panel were also consulted as part of the evidence gathering for the review.

2. Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Council supports the reviews of the structures and procedures to address street cleanliness and improve efficiency to include:

- a) Considering a restructure involving the merger of the street cleansing and grounds maintenance sections. A merger of the street cleansing and grounds maintenance teams would provide a multi-skilled workforce where one team complete a job, rather than two.
- b) Developing a robust system of accurate information relating to the length of streets swept and amount of grass cut which can be updated regularly in addition to agreed and measured Standard Minute Values for tasks within the service.
- c) Reviewing the work patterns for grounds maintenance staff and looking at most appropriate ways of working throughout the summer and winter months.

Recommendation 2

2a The Council continues to use the scoring and grading methods of NI195 voluntarily to monitor performance.

The council, together with its neighbours undertakes cross authority monitoring in relation to performance against NI195 targets. The 2008-11 Corporate Plan identified a key target of 'improving street cleanliness to 95% by 2011'. The target was not directly measured by NI 195, but was based on the standards and outcomes from it. Bolsover District Council was part of the Derbyshire Partnership Forum which had established a common standard of cleansing and inspection criteria. It is proposed that this best practice is continued.

2b The Council involves Members in its work on standards of cleaning including agreeing the standards for grass and other areas.

It was thought that Member involvement would be more productive as there could be cost implications for setting over ambitious standards, although this was unlikely to be a major issue if a group of Members were involved in a workshop to agree the standards.

Recommendation 3

The Council reviews its services and resources to ensure that they reflect the current and differing resource needs of the district to include;

- a) The current stock of machinery and sweepers is old and repair bills are expensive. The teams have been up to four machines down at one time. Consideration should be given to alternative, efficient ways of working suitable for the needs of the District.

- b) A variety of equipment would ensure that the Council had the flexibility to carry out jobs, for example, a large road sweeper would struggle to get down some narrow village roads and a small Swingo sweeper wouldn't sweep a busy main road effectively. Having a variety of different machines for the different types of job was seen as the preferred option.
- c) The Council to look into the possibility of an arrangement for all its vehicles to be registered to use Clover Nook waste facility. The CAN Rangers felt that their time could be used more efficiently if they were able to use a local waste facility this would ensure that less time was spent travelling to other sites to deposit any collected items.
- d) That consideration be given to whether existing litter/dog bins are appropriately placed or whether some could be relocated. If more bins are required, this would require a change to the Council's policy.

Recommendation 4

The Council reviews its processes for reporting and investigating incidents to improve efficiencies in dealing with issues and avoid duplication of work including;

- a) Ensuring that reporting becomes embedded as part of the day-to-day job for employees.
- b) There appears to be duplication when the public report incidents of fly tipping. Usually the Rangers are asked to go out first to follow up the report and then the problem is reported to the Grounds Maintenance and Cleansing Co-ordinator who then sends out a member of staff to collect it. Although it is appreciated that incidents of fly tipping have to be assessed, a review of the procedure may identify a more efficient way of carrying out this task.
- c) The way that the Council co-ordinates with other agencies, for example Derbyshire County Council and the Highways Agency be reviewed to ensure that effective communication channels are in place.

Procedures exist within the CRM system for referring issues to other agencies where they are responsible for action. Other suggestions received included using the Local Strategic Partnership to form a more co-ordinated approach to street services with Parish Councils which in turn could prompt joint council and public awareness measures.

Recommendation 5

The Council develops Parish Charters using the Charter Framework in order to improve service efficiencies by;

- a) The Council continues to contact all Parish Councils with a view to forming agreements, e.g. allowing staff to use skips and water locally instead of them having to return to the depot to empty the sweepers.
- b) Using existing channels of communication with Parish Councils and the Parish Council Liaison meetings to encourage reporting and solving of issues.

Parish Councils suggested that providing notification and rotas for street cleaning and litter/dog bin emptying would help them to plan in the work rotas of Parish employees and to ensure that duplication did not occur. It would also be helpful to Parishes to enable them to respond to queries from residents about the frequency of these activities.

Recommendation 6

The Council Enforcement Group review the current enforcement methods to ensure that they reflect and communicate the Council's commitment to providing and maintaining a clean, safe and healthy environment to include;

- a) The use of Fixed Penalty Notices be reviewed for effectiveness in terms of the area that is targeted, the payment rates, the message that they send and the appropriate staff to issue them.
- b) The Enforcement Group to use meetings to raise awareness on reporting issues to the correct officers and evidence required in order to successfully issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- c) That information provided at the application stage for both Planning and Licensing applications be reviewed to ensure that relevant information on responsibilities is provided at the earliest possible stage.
- d) Considering the use of Dog Exclusion Orders to protect certain public areas including children's play areas and the District's Green Flag Park. An example of good practice can be found from Newark and Sherwood District Council who have recently implemented Dog Control Orders to improve the local environment.
- e) On the last day of term, year 11 students finished school and caused a huge amount of litter by ripping up papers and throwing them around. It was the Council's policy not to prosecute anyone under the age of sixteen and therefore, no further action was taken.

Recommendation 7

The Council continues to use existing communication channels to inform the public of;

- a. **What the Council is doing**
 - b. **The costs of cleaning**
 - c. **All stakeholders' responsibilities in preserving a clean and safe environment, including;**
- a) Use the local press to show how much effort is going into keeping the District clean. Other groups such as Residents Associations could also be utilised to assist with communications where leaflets were already regularly sent to local people.
 - b) The Council continues to work with schools, head teachers and other local organisations to encourage the general public to take responsibility in creating a clean and safe environment to live in. Suggestions arising from the consultation carried out included, an exercise showing school children what their local communities would look like in fifty years time if they don't take any action – and what it could look like if they do keep it clean and tidy, it was suggested that this exercise could be incorporated into school assemblies or citizenship lessons. Other suggestions included more competitions with schools where the Council undertakes litter inspections and issues certificates and using the Youth Council to take activities back into their schools to help with awareness raising.
 - c) That business and other networks be used to reinforce the responsibility of businesses owners and other organisations around waste disposal and street cleaning. This will ensure that local businesses are aware of their waste duties and are appropriately supported in meeting them. An example of this would be waste from fast food establishments in the vicinity of the outlet.

Evidence

The review panel collected evidence in a variety of ways;

- Presentation on Environmental Cleansing from the Head of Community Services and Street Services.
- Interviews with relevant personnel (**Appendix 2**)
- Comments and feedback from Richard Tyndall, Programme Manager, Berkshire Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.
- Consultation with - Youth Council (**Appendix 3**)
- Equality Panel (**Appendix 4**)
- National guidelines and legislation
- Good practice examples
- Community & Street Services – Service Request Data (formerly MSRP Report)

3. Conclusion

It is clear to see that a tremendous amount of work and effort has gone into addressing the issues raised in the REIP report dated March 2010 and Managers and staff are committed to improving performance.

When considering how the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee would address the review, Members were aware that the task in hand was to try to identify greater efficiencies of scale whilst bearing in mind the current budget situation. It appears that cost levels are high and productivity could be increased, in the position the Council finds itself facing with regards to budgets, there is a need to do the same for less.

Throughout the review process, two main points became apparent, enforcement and responsibilities. Consultation carried out has focused on perception of the public, what they see as their responsibilities and what are the Councils. The recommendations made in this report reflect the issues raised throughout the Committee's evidence gathering.

It was clear that Bolsover District Council does very well at maintaining clean streets and dealing with incidents of fly tipping. This was reflected in the consultation carried out as part of the review where the general opinion was that Bolsover is clean and tidy. However, detritus is not handled to the same standard and needs to be looked at. Consideration should be given to what is stopping the authority doing a good job, which could be a number of factors including resources, equipment or the mindset of the workforce.

It is important to recognise that work has already begun to address some of the issues and there are many dedicated people working within the service, striving to achieve good results.

It is hoped that the recommendations will assist the Council in developing the service so that it becomes more proactive in its approach to Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance and less reactive.

Appendix 1

BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL
SCRUTINY PROJECT MANAGEMENT

SCRUTINY REVIEW SCOPE

<p><u>NAME OF COMMITTEE:</u> Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p><u>SCRUTINY OFFICER:</u> Claire Millington</p>
<p>SUBJECT TO BE REVIEWED</p>	<p>Quality of cleanliness of the environment</p>
<p>MEMBERSHIP</p>	<p>Cllrs H Ward (Chair), S Wallis (V-Chair), T Cook, M Crane, S Gray, R Holmes, J Morley, T Rodda and G Webster</p>
<p>DIRECTOR</p>	<p>Director of Development – Kevin Hopkinson</p>
<p>REASON(S) FOR THE REVIEW</p>	<p>Raised as a topic by elected members at the Scrutiny Conference</p>
<p>IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE CORPORATE PLAN AIMS, PRIORITIES AND TARGETS</p>	<p>Priority – Protect, enhance and improve the natural and built environment in a sustainable way.</p> <p>Target – Increase the standard of street cleanliness (litter and detritus) to 95% by March 2011.</p>
<p>TERMS OF REFERENCE</p>	<p>To review the current situation, processes and the condition of the street scene.</p>
<p>AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF REVIEW</p>	<p>AIM – To identify and highlight good practice and areas for improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider current levels of action • To consider current levels of concern – what are the major issues? • To consider how Parish Councils contribute to street cleansing • To identify potential changes/improvements • To consider the two reviews currently being undertaken (REIP Tribal Review and the Internal Review of Street Cleaning) and ensure that the Scrutiny Review co-ordinates the outcomes of the three.
<p>KEY ISSUES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog fouling • Litter and detritus (street scene) • Fly Tipping • 80:20 – public perception/enforcement/engagement/responsibility • Eyes and Ears reports(effectiveness of CRM reporting) • Good practice examples • Benchmarking

TIMESCALE	ESTIMATED	REVISED	ACTUAL
Commencement	25 th August 2010		25 th August 2010
Interim Report/ Recommendations	7 th January 2011	3 rd March 2011	3 rd March 2011

Finish	January 2011	February 2011	February 2011
Report	3 rd March 2011		3 rd March 2011

METHOD(S) OF REVIEW:	Interviews Focus Groups Questionnaires Research (Centre for Public Scrutiny, case studies, policies/guidelines)
IMPLICATIONS: (legislative, regulatory, etc)	
DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE: (Internal/External)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Policies: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Graffiti Policy ○ Bus Shelters Policy ○ Litter bin and Dog Bin Policy (Patch Management) ○ Nuisance vehicle Policy ○ Untidy land and buildings policy • Previous PPMG report (2009/10) • Report to SMT dated 20/05/2010 addressing under performance in Street Cleansing • 2009/10 National Indicator Performance Spreadsheet • Fly tipping report (broken down into wards) • CRM reports through the Contact Centre • Customer Service Standards – booklet • Information on Council Website • Dog Fouling and the Law; a guide for the public • Dog Fouling Scrutiny Review – Leeds City Council 2009 (from Centre for Public Scrutiny website) and any other relevant reviews/information.
STAKEHOLDERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Dennis Kelly – Cabinet Member for the Environment • Director of Development • John Ritchie – Head of Community Safety and Street Services • Peter Campbell – Head of Housing • Lee Hickin – Head of Leisure • Adrian Lowery – Street Service Manager • Sharon Gillott – Environmental Health Commercial Manager • Jessamine Gilchrist – Grounds Maintenance and Cleansing Manager • Martin Hunter – Grounds Maintenance and Cleansing coordinator • Andrew Green – Dog warden • Anthony Tyson – Playgrounds and open spaces warden • CAN Rangers • Parish Councils • Local people • Expert Witnesses to be called as appropriate (best practice from other Local Authorities)

CONSULTATION/ RESEARCH:	Youth Council Equality Panel Best Practice from other authorities
SITE VISITS	
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS OF REVIEW:	

SCRUTINY REVIEW OUTCOMES

CONCLUSIONS:
RECOMMENDATIONS:
CABINET CONSIDERED:
OUTCOME:
FOLLOW UP:
REVIEW OF PROCESS/COMMENTS:
SIGNED OFF BY CHAIR:
SIGNED OFF BY SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD:
DATE:

Appendix 2

Stakeholders

Cllr Dennis Kelly -

Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Stuart Tomlinson -

Director of Neighbourhoods

John Ritchie -

Head of Community Services and Street Services

Jessamine Gilchrist -	Grounds Maintenance and Cleansing Manager
Martin Hunter -	Grounds Maintenance and Cleansing Co-ordinator
Kevin Revell -	Environmental Enforcement Officer
Julian Handley –	CAN Ranger
Chris Lindley -	CAN Ranger
Kevin Shillito -	Principal Solicitor
Richard Tyndall -	Programme Manager – Berkshire Improvement and Efficiency Partnership
The Young Voice -	Bolsover Youth Council
Bolsover District Council Equality Panel	
Old Bolsover Town Council	
Shirebrook Parish Council	
Tibshelf Parish Council	
Anonymous responses from Parish Councils	

Appendix 3

Dear Parish Clerk

The Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee of Bolsover District Council is currently undertaking a review of the quality of cleanliness of the environment scrutiny review.

We would like to incorporate the comments and suggestions of the Parish Councils in the review and therefore would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire and return it to me at your earliest convenience.

If you have any queries or require a copy of the questionnaire by e-mail please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Claire Millington
Scrutiny Officer

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QUALITY OF CLEANLINESS OF THE ENVIRONMENT
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Questions to Parish Councils

1. How do you contribute towards street cleansing within your Parish?
2. What are the problems/concerns within your Parish? How could these be dealt with?
3. How do you work with the District Council to ensure that your Parish is kept clean and tidy?
4. What changes/improvements could be made?
5. Anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 4

Quality of Cleanliness of the Environment Scrutiny Review

Consultation with the Youth Council

Tuesday 18th January 2011

What are the issues relating to your local environment?

- Litter
- Vandalism – parks/buildings
- Not feeling safe
- Yobs
- Bins not emptied regularly
- Anti-social behaviour
- Theft
- Drinking/safety
- Nothing to do
- Green bins seen around and about fore frequently (at school)
- More/bigger recycling bins needed

What do you think are your responsibilities in looking after the local environment?

- Not spitting and not throwing chewing gum on pavements
- Recycle – paper/plastic
- Do not dump rubbish
- Take your takeaway box home – recycle!
- Pick up after your dog
- Put more bins around the community
- Don't damage local parks or shops
- No littering
- Put rubbish in bins
- No vandalism
- Use bins provided
- Spreading the word about protecting the environment
- Energy saving – turn light and computers off!
- Sponsored litter pick
- Look after your own rubbish
- In 50 years time – this is what things will look like if we don't look after the environment.....this is how things could look if we do look after it.

What should the Council do to help look after the local environment, given the spending cuts that Councils are facing?

- Get the community more involved – voluntary work
- Keeping parks clean
- High fines!!
- Rubbish bins/street bins
- Put up signs – don't leave rubbish – look after your own rubbish

- Your rubbish is your responsibility
- Stop graffiti
- Fences over flower beds so no one dumps rubbish
- Are there any police in Bolsover patrolling after dark (9pm – 9am?)
- Monitoring
- CCTV – with a megaphone so if you drop litter – someone can shout you to pick it up!!

Key messages

The Youth Council came up with some good discussion points and suggestions – in particular, suggestions on what local people’s responsibilities are/should be in looking after their environment.

1. Building on a suggestion, an exercise could be developed – showing school children what their local communities could look like in 50 years time if they don’t take any action – Council staff already have a programme to go into schools, this could be incorporated into this programme. (School assemblies or citizenship, etc).
2. Encouraging schools to do a sponsored litter pick/competitions with other schools, etc to help promote awareness.

Getting out into the schools will encourage children and young people to be responsible, and in turn, the messages will be passed on to parents and family members. This could be done in a variety of ways and not necessarily from the same department/with varying levels of support required. The Youth Council could be encouraged to take activities back into their schools to help with awareness raising, requiring a minimum amount of support/resources from the Council.

Appendix 5

Quality of Cleanliness of the Environment Scrutiny Review

Consultation with the Equality Panel

Friday 28th January 2011

What are the issues relating to your local environment?

- Litter Bins – not enough around schools, main routes and local shops, e.g. takeaways, etc.
- Litter bins not emptied often enough
- Refuse collection vehicles – leaving waste/litter after a collection
- Dog fouling – the facilities are there, it is down to the time of year.
- Our area is quite good – clean and tidy
- The amenity site staff are always very helpful and willing (coalite)
- Generally Bolsover is neat and tidy
- Empty properties attract fly tipping – charging – does the money brought in through charges outweigh the cost of clearing fly tipping?
- The new bins might help alleviate some of the problems around litter.

What do you think are your responsibilities in looking after the local environment?

- Parish Councils have in the past issued bags to dog owners
- Education – people being more involved and schools educations children who in turn pass it on to their parents
- Businesses should be responsible for the immediate area around the premises.
- Schools should be responsible for litter in and around the school.
- Action – Dog fouling – being prepared to report it
- Restriction on dogs in parks and open spaces – zones, including children’s play areas
- Dog licences – but there are responsible dog owners

What should the Council do to help look after the local environment, given the spending cuts that Councils are facing?

- Deal with key issues – fly tipping/dog fouling
- Education is the key!
- Some Parishes have a maintenance team or litter pickers, work closer with these partners.
- Relationship between Parish, District and County Councils

- Are we making the most of the resources we've got?
- What can we share with other authorities?

Key messages

- 1. Consider whether litter/dog bins are appropriately placed, whether more are needed or some could be relocated (Dog and Litter Bin Policy – Nov. 2009 covers these issues).**
- 2. Education and making sure that schools and local businesses are doing their part in keeping Bolsover clean and tidy.**
- 3. Consider whether it would be appropriate to have dog free zones in public/open spaces, e.g. children's play areas.**
- 4. Consider whether dog licences are appropriate.**
- 5. Calculating the cost of clearing fly tipping to see if it is actually costing the council more than it was to clear items for disposal in the first place.**
- 6. Some people felt that the new burgundy bin might help alleviate some of the problems, more household waste could be recycled, three different bins per household for rubbish and waste.**

Appendix 6

Bibliography

- East Midlands Regional Efficiency Improvement Partnership – Regional Benchmarking Analysis
- East Midlands Regional Efficiency Improvement Partnership - Priorities for Action
- East Midlands Regional Efficiency Improvement Partnership – Efficiency Challenge
- ENCAMS Report

- Derbyshire District & Borough Principal Litter Authority NI195 Data Collection Matrix
- Derbyshire Partnership Forum – NI195 Delivery Plan
- Enforcement of Dog Fouling – Leeds City Council
- A Review of Clean and Tidy Streets and Open Spaces – Sandwell MBC
- Scrutiny Review of Litter and Dog Fouling – Pendle Borough Council
- Waste Management and Recycling – Centre for Public Scrutiny Report
- Community & Street Services – Service Request Data (formerly MSRP Report) – up to date third quarter information.
- Newark & Sherwood District Council Website – Dog Control Orders.