
REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	15TH NOVEMBER 2007	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	PETER McEVOY	DOC:
SUBJECT:	STREET CLEANSING PERFORMANCE 2005/06 & 2006/07 – BVPI 199.	REF: PE
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS 09

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 Members are asked to note the revisions required on the Council's BVPI 199 returns for 2005/06 and 2006/07.
- 1.2 Members' comments are invited in regard to the current performance of the street cleansing service, in particular, the suggestion of a community engagement campaign.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 BVPI 199 attempts to measure how clean and tidy our streets and public spaces are.
- 2.2 The indicator is split into four separate performance measures:
 - 199a.** Measures the level of detritus (dust, mud, soil, grit, etc.) and litter. The grading is an average of the scores for litter and detritus.
 - 199b.** Measures the level of graffiti.
 - 199c.** Measures the level of fly posting.
 - 199d.** Measures the effectiveness of the management of fly tipping (numbers of incidents and enforcement actions). This indicator is measured and reported by DEFRA (not the Council).
- 2.3 Councils are required to carry out 300 inspections in each of three periods spread throughout the financial year. Each inspection covers 50 metres of road (a total of 15 kilometres per period out of a total of 300 kilometres of road in the district). The inspections are spread evenly over ward areas and different land classes.

2.4 The inspections are graded as follows:

Grade A. Clean.

Grade B. Predominantly clean.

Grade C. Dirty.

Grade D. Very dirty.

There are three intermediate grades (**B+**, **B/C**, and **C-**) to score standards that fall in between the main grades.

2.5 The indicator score is the percentage of inspections that fall below Grade B.

3.0 Correction of Grading Results

3.1 A spreadsheet, provided by Defra, is used to calculate the BV199a scores. The 900 survey results completed during the year are entered and a secure, hidden section of the spreadsheet, that can only be accessed by Defra, makes the calculation of the results. The spreadsheet is submitted to Defra annually for them to check the results and endorse them.

3.2 At a best practice seminar, Defra and ENCAM's promoted the benefits of electronic data capture. In response to this our staff obtained one of the promoted products in 2005/6 and began to use hand held computers to enter the survey results on site and download to the spreadsheet automatically back at the office.

3.3 Upon submitting 2006/7 year-end data, staff at Defra observed a problem with the system that had led to inaccurate results both last year and 2005/6. The fault was caused by the format the hand held computer stored the information in but was not visible to our staff (it could only be detected by examining the secure part of the spreadsheet that Defra alone could access). The effect of the fault was to count some survey results that had just failed as if they were satisfactory.

3.4 The effects on the BV199 results are as shown in the following table:

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Indicator.</u>	<u>Original.</u>	<u>Revised Value</u>	<u>Litter alone</u>	<u>Detritus alone</u>	<u>Upper Quartile.</u>
2005/06.	199a	16%	22%	9	37	8.8%
	199b	2%	2%			1%
	199c	0%	0%			0%
2006/07	199a	8%	16.8%	7	27.5	Not available.
	199b	1%	2%			Not available.
	199c	1%	1.8%			Not available.
2007/08 (targets).	199a	8%	21% (see Para. 3.9).	16 part year	49 part year	
	199b	2%	2%			
	199c	1%	2%			

- 3.5 The Council has made enquiries with other authorities using the systems which have revealed that is not the only Authority to fall victim to the fault with the hand held computers. The Council is taking up the matter with the company that supplied the equipment. To prevent any reoccurrence BV199 inspections are now being recorded manually.
- 3.6 It is important to note that even the revised figures show year on year improvement against the overall indicator. Furthermore a significant improvement in tackling litter has been delivered over recent years and this has been noticed and appreciated by the public. The observation is often heard that South Derbyshire is cleaner than its neighbouring authorities both from external assessors such as the Chartermark Assessor, in Jan 07, and the public, 68 % of the public expressed satisfaction with the cleanliness of South Derbyshire in 2006/7, a 4% rise compared with the previous pole.
- 3.7 The improvements in the inaccurate BVPI coincided with significant improvements in litter control in the district and this was one reason that the improvements in score did not seem incongruous and were not detected sooner.

Detritus

- 3.8 The headline indicator in the series is 199a and this is sometimes thought of carelessly as measure of litter. In fact it is a measure of litter *and* detritus and the vast majority of our failures of this standard in South Derbyshire are in relation to detritus on rural roads. Unfortunately this aspect of the indicator is out of keeping with public perception, the public is concerned about litter and far less so with detritus.
- 3.9 The breakdown of litter versus detritus failures is shown in the 5th and 6th columns of table 3.4 above. Although the litter level for the first third of this year is also elevated (the surveys included the town centre and were unusually poor) the detritus can be seen to be the main issue on which substantial problems were in evidence.
- 3.10 Many of the roads in rural areas of the District do not have a kerb. Because there is no hard edge to sweep against, it is not possible for a mechanical sweeper to sweep these roads effectively. Instead the road edges are periodically 'dug out' by Derbyshire County when the soil and vegetation start to encroach on the highway or its drainage.
- 3.11 After a period of wet weather the verges tend to break down and silt up the edges of the road. When the road is inspected in this condition it is awarded a low detritus grading because of the silted verges.
- 3.12 During the first third of this financial year the weather was characterised by exceptionally intense and prolonged rainfall. A number of areas were flooded and powerful streams of surface run off carried debris and detritus onto the roads on a daily basis.
- 3.13 The survey methodology for collection of the BVPI data is rigid and the surveys allocated for survey during this period included a lot of the rural north-west of the district. Unsurprisingly the surveys found the roads were badly affected by detritus, which has lead to a very low grading and a BV199a score of 32% for the first four months of 2007/08.

3.14 The rural nature of the district and the sheer amount of country lanes without distinct kerb edging will always limit the score achievable under BVPI 199a due to higher detritus scores. It may therefore not be practical to aim for a top quartile performance in comparison with all England Authorities.

Future improvements

3.15 In the light of the revised calibration of our historic BV199 scores the targets for future achievement will need to be revised.

3.16 The targets for 2007/8 have been revised in the light of flood-affected score for the first four months of the year and the corrections to the 2005/06 and 2006/07 returns (as shown in the table in Paragraph 3.3).

3.17 DEFRA has commissioned ENCAMS (Environmental Campaigns formerly known as the Tidy Britain Group) to carry out independent street cleansing surveys across the country over the next two years. South Derbyshire has already been surveyed.

3.18 The findings of ENCAMS are in accordance generally with the revised BVPI returns outlined in the table above (within an accepted variance of plus or minus 10% to reflect the limited extent of the survey). Their survey identifies the same issues of detritus in rural areas and also in certain places with high-density housing or industry.

3.19 ENCAMS have discussed with our officers what more could be done to address the issues in the area and the essence of their advice is to try and find more street cleaning resources, apply this to the detritus affected areas and increase enforcement activity. ENCAM's advice has been considered in arriving at the following action plan.

Action Plan

3.20 An urgent review of the street cleaning regime will be undertaken focussing mainly on the mechanical sweeping with the aim of redirecting resources towards areas identified that have a high level of detritus that could be practically addressed.

3.21 Officers write to Derbyshire County Council and seek a programme of road improvements including increased frequency of digging back verges and the provision of hard edging where possible in appropriate rural areas.

3.22 That the drive towards higher levels of enforcement and greater publicity surrounding that work continues and is developed into a campaign to encourage pride in the cleanliness and appearance of the area in order to engage public support on litter prevention.

3.23 That in addition to BV199a, the levels of failure of the litter standard be reported separately to detritus, thus providing an indicator that more accurately mirrors the public's perception of the cleanliness of the area.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The proposed improvements will be delivered within existing resources.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Circumstances beyond the Council's control have led to the reporting of inaccurate BVPI 199 returns in 2005/06 and 2006/07.
- 5.2 Even the amended returns show a trend of improvement in performance in 2006/07 compared with 2005/06.
- 5.3 The score on BVPI 199a (detritus and litter) for 2006/07 is 16.8% compared against an all England average of 15.3% in 2006/7. Which also indicates a positive direction of travel comparing with lower third quartile performance in 2004/5.
- 5.4 Nevertheless the revisions of the indicator are a direct set back to the Council's ambitions and the inaccurate figures have interfered with effective performance management on this issue.
- 5.5 The Council has revised its street cleansing programme during the past two years and frequencies of litter picking, channel sweeping and weed control have been increased. Furthermore the work of the Safer Neighbourhood Wardens has helped increase the public consciousness of littering enforcement and with 30 fixed penalties served so far this year the trend continues.
- 5.6 Nevertheless further action is clearly needed to deliver higher levels of performance under BVPI 199 and, based on advice from our officers and ENCAMS, the action plan set out in sections 3.19-22 has been devised to carry us through the next 6 months until the routine performance management system picks up the issue.