

To: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 8 December 2014
Report of: Streetscene Direct Services
Title of Report: Clean Streets

Summary

Purpose of report: To respond to specific issues raised by Scrutiny Committee members regarding Streetscene operations

Key decision No

Executive lead member: Councillor John Tanner

Report author: Doug Loveridge

Policy Framework: Cleaner Greener Oxford

Background

The Scrutiny Committee requested a report and discussion to address some specific issues that Members have raised. These are listed and addressed in the main body of the report below.

Body of the report

- 1. Members are concerned that the City Council was not meeting its detritus performance target for quarter 1, and have requested more information about why this is and which streets regularly fail to meet the Grade B standard.**
2. The Direct Services Streetscene Team were heavily involved in responding to flood prevention and more importantly the major clear up of flood affected areas across the City. Over 2000 hours of labour resource was diverted from their normal scheduled work of keeping the streets

clean in terms of litter and detritus during the deep cleaning of flood affected areas.

3. This necessary diversion of resource led to other areas falling below the high standards of street cleanliness that had previously been achieved by the Streetscene Team particularly around the levels of detritus.
4. This was evident following the first round of street inspections in April 2014 when the level of streets falling below a 'B' standard (predominantly free of detritus) was considerably above our target.
5. As with any 'year to date' (YTD) performance indicator, a 'bad' month, particularly at the beginning of the year can take several months to bring back into line. This has been the case with the detritus performance indicator.
6. The good news is that since April's performance of 9%, the monthly results have achieved target which has slowly reduced the effect of April's performance figure. The YTD performance has improved from 9% to October's YTD figure of 3.62%. This downward trend gives confidence that the year-end target of 3% will be achieved.

A Member commented that waste collection in the City Centre could be improved as it is unsightly and creates a bad impression when waste bags are piled outside of businesses on the High Street and Cornmarket Street etc., particularly during tourist season.

7. Members are advised that there are currently at least five waste collection companies, including Direct Services Commercial Waste Service, operating waste collection services to City Centre businesses. Therefore it is a question of being clear about when businesses should present their waste for collection and when Collection Service Providers should pick up that waste.
8. With that in mind Direct Services Commercial Waste Team have been working closely with Environmental Development's Enforcement Team to agree reasonable presenting and operational "windows" for both morning and evening bag collections for the City Centre. The proposed times are as follows:-
 - Waste can only be stored on the highway between 6.30am-9.30am and 5.00pm and 8.30pm.
 - Businesses should therefore present their recycling and waste for collection between 6.30am and 7.00am and 5pm and 5.30pm.
9. Collection Service Providers should complete their morning collections by 9.30am and their evening collections by 8.30pm. Businesses will be

obliged to remove any uncollected bags from the highway by the end of each collection window. It will be their duty to contact their waste collection contractor around any failed collection

10. Direct Services Commercial Team are therefore reviewing our own commercial collections to completely comply with the new time restrictions for central City locations.
11. Direct Services also have procedures in place to ensure that all bags from litter bin collections are removed when the litter bin is serviced.

Graffiti is an issue for Members in some parts of the City although none of the inspected streets fell below Grade B standard in quarter 1. Members would like to know what our policy is towards cleaning up graffiti on Council owned property, and on private property.

12. The Grade B standard is defined as 'some graffiti present, minor in extent, that many people passing through a transect (part of a street) would not notice.'
13. Our inspections are a snapshot of the cleanliness of a particular section of a street at the time of the inspection. At the time that the streets were inspected in quarter 1 the graffiti levels were considered to be at Grade B. If further graffiti appeared after the inspection had taken place it would not be reflected in that period's report.
14. Reports of graffiti on Council-owned buildings (including Council-owned commercial properties) are addressed by the Streetscene graffiti team. Our response times are clearly set out in our published Service Standards
15. Graffiti on private property (including commercial buildings) is not automatically removed by the Streetscene Team. As a matter of course we will contact the owners of the building to offer them the opportunity to use our service for the removal of graffiti and also remind them of their responsibility around the visual appearance of their premises. We price competitively to encourage removal but do require them to sign a waiver form should they accept.
16. The Streetscene Team have been working with Thames Valley Police to produce a Graffiti Removal Information Card which we and they can offer to victims of graffiti.

Littering performance is within target but some Members have raised this as an issue in the City Centre.

17. The City Centre will always face unique challenges regarding littering due to the high volume of visitors and its vibrant nightlife economy.
18. To combat and control littering, Direct Services manage a Streetscene service from 6.00am to 8.00pm, 364 days of the year.

19. The City Centre is mechanically swept first thing in the morning, litter bins are serviced before they are full, and litter pickers operate throughout the day through to 8.00pm.
20. All of the above service has resulted in the City Centre regularly achieving a Grade A (Free of Litter) result when inspections are carried out and as yet this year no street has fallen below Grade B (Predominantly Free of Litter).
21. We are also working with our colleagues in Environmental Development on Cleaner Greener campaigns and control and enforcement particularly around flyer hand-outs and businesses controlling their own waste.

Next steps

22. The committee is asked to note the report and be assured that Streetscene Services will continue to work closely with our colleagues in Environmental Development and Thames Valley Police around matters of littering and graffiti. Direct Services Recycling and Waste Operations Team will comply with commercial waste collections timings to remove our customers' bags off of the City Centre highway.

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