

Local Area Agreement Clean and Green Initiative

Local Area Agreements

The purpose of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) is to improve national outcomes through effective local delivery. The County Council is responsible in two-tier areas, but all agencies must be engaged in agreeing LAAs. They bring together different funding streams to maximise impact and reduce duplication and to focus on the most important issues.

As part of LAAs, partners agree long-term priorities and set stretch targets. Resources are pooled and delivery arrangements agreed. These targets and arrangements are then agreed with central government through GOSE, who are responsible for monitoring LAA performance quarterly.

Oxfordshire Clean and Green Group

The Oxfordshire Community Partnership has established a Public Service Board (PSB) to oversee the development of Oxfordshire's LAAs. The Board brings together the key public service decision makers to improve partnership working and to deliver improvements to public services in the county.

An LAA Programme Board has also been established with the remit to undertake the detailed development work and a lead officer has been given responsibility for co-ordinating proposals with partners.

One of the LAA priorities is 'Cleaner and Greener Environment' – a strategy to improve the street scene and create a cleaner environment. In order to progress the LAA work the PSB created an officer working group - the Clean and Green Group. It is this group that now needs to be brought under the governance of an already existing body to be responsible for taking on the delivery of the LAA targets. It makes sense for that body to be the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership.

Funding

As part of this LAA, pump priming of £120,000 is available to be spent on Clean and Green initiatives by the end of 2008/09. A proportion of this is already committed to undertake a street cleansing audit and market research, these projects are detailed below. There is a potential reward grant of over £1million payable on delivery of the agreed stretch targets. 50 per cent of this grant can be held for further work to deliver the targets of OWP.

The remainder of the £120,000 grant has yet to be committed to any projects and we need to consider what we want to spend the remainder of this grant on. We are currently focusing on improving cleanliness and customer satisfaction, for discussion is whether we should continue to focus on these areas or if there is scope for other work in relation to cleanliness. What sort of projects could be developed and what would OWP like to achieve through the Clean and Green Initiative.

LAA Targets

The Clean and Green stretch targets, which have been signed off by the PSB, are to reduce by 9 per cent the proportion of relevant land and highways assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus falling below acceptable standards. From 2004/05 data the Oxfordshire average was 20 per cent. In other words, the Oxfordshire councils collectively wish to achieve a figure of no more than 11 per cent against BVPI 199a by the end of the financial year 2008/09.

For 2005/06 the Oxfordshire average was 16 per cent, so we are already moving towards the target of 11 per cent.

BVPI 89 is the percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness standards in their area and a target has also been set to increase this from the 2003/04 average across the county of 62.6 per cent to 69.58 per cent in 2009/10. The measure of BVPI 89 is a survey that takes place every three years. The 2006/07 results are now coming in and we will be able to report on these shortly.

Current Projects

1. Street Cleansing Audit

Encams are undertaking an audit of street cleansing practice across the county, in order to assess performance in relation to BVPI 199a (litter and detritus) to achieve the figure of no more than 11 per cent. The cost of this project is £20,637 and the timescale for completion is the end of January 2007.

Background

- To establish current street cleansing practice in each of the five Oxfordshire Districts and to highlight examples of good practice.
- To identify how each council assesses its performance in relation to BVPI 199a and catalogue significant variations in practice.
- To review the liaison arrangements with the County Council, principally when it is carrying out highway verge maintenance.
- To make recommendations for a common assessment methodology.
- To make any other recommendations in the light of the audit work undertaken to improve performance.

Methodology

- Survey validation of each authority's data collection techniques.
- Detailed desktop analysis of each district's BV199 surveys.
- Grading exercises with relevant staff to ensure standard approach across the County.
- Observational assessments of equipment, usage and performance of operatives in their role.
- Review liaison agreement with County Council, in particular regarding verge maintenance for each District.
- Examine impact of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and make recommendations regarding their impact on BV199a.
- Benchmark each district against others within the county.

Results

- All five local authorities have followed the BV199 methodology very closely and no major errors have been identified.
- The standard of grading has generally been quite consistent and accurate across the group.
- Meetings with the cleansing managers have identified some variations in the approaches taken to cleansing, but ENCAMS have already identified a number of examples of good practice for sharing across the group.
- The final report will be complete by the end of January.

2. Market Research on Attitudes to Cleanliness

A further piece of work currently underway is a market research project on attitudes to cleanliness in relation to the target to increase the percentage of people satisfied with cleanliness to 69.58 per cent. The cost of this project is £20-£25,000 and the deadline for completion is March 2007.

Methodology

Marketing Works have been contracted to undertake this research. They will run a series of focus groups throughout the County during January. The aim of the focus groups is to explore people's perceptions of the cleanliness of their local environment, and their ideas about solutions to problems concerning cleanliness.

Focus Group Discussion

- What does a 'clean' environment mean to you?
- How would you define an 'unclean' environment?
- What is an 'acceptable'/realistic level of uncleanliness?
- Do you think we have different standards of cleanliness for different types of location (eg city centres, towns, villages, roadsides, etc.)?
- Is there any point when 'acceptable' litter becomes 'unacceptable'? (e.g. when on a beach, in the countryside, with children)
- Is there any point when 'unacceptable' litter becomes 'acceptable'? (e.g. when everyone else is doing it, with friends, when drunk, at the pop concert etc)
- Where does the responsibility lie for the cleanliness of our surroundings?
 - General public
 - Business/other organisations
 - Local authority
- What can be done about these problems? Can you think of possible solutions?
- What can the local authority do?

Clean and Green Group Membership

South Oxfordshire	David Buckle – Chair Gina Coupar Sally Warner
Cherwell	Eileen Edwards and Ed Potter
Oxford City	Sharon Cosgrove
Oxfordshire County	Richard Dudding and Brian Fell
West Oxfordshire	Cath James and Phil Page
Vale of White Horse	David Stevens

Conclusion

This paper introduces the OWP to the Clean and Green agenda. It identifies the relevant stretch targets incorporated into the LAA and the work already in hand to deliver these. The key issue for the OWP is the extent to which it wishes to develop an agenda on this subject that goes beyond meeting the stretch targets. This paper invites an initial discussion on that subject.