

Appendix 2

Response from Streetscene Services in relation to questions raised by the February Inner North East Area Committee

NI 195 is the national indicator which the Council is required to use to measure environmental quality. The methodology and structure of the measuring is clearly identified by the government and intended to give a city wide measure of cleanliness. Using the guidance given it will take just over two years to survey the whole of the city on the basis of three surveys per year each covering 5 wards. This NI is not intended to provide information at a local level.

What we are proposing is the extended use of DLEQS, District Local Environmental Quality Surveys, developed as a practical approach to measuring and tackling local environmental quality issues. The survey methodology used in DLEQS has been based on a number of years of national and international studies carried out by ENCAMS. It is largely based on the national Local Environmental Quality Surveys carried out by ENCAMS on behalf of DEFRA and is now being adopted by a number of authorities across the country. The survey has been developed with advice from the Audit Commission, the Local Government Association, DEFRA and the ODPM. The survey looks at the 'whole street environmental scene' and includes a minimum of 15 environmental factors including,

- Litter
- Detritus
- Weed growth
- Leaf and blossom fall
- Staining
- Graffiti
- Fly-tipping
- Fly-posting
- Dog fouling
- Litter bin condition/fill/cleaning
- Drug related litter
- Landscaping maintenance/ cleaning - this would pick up on green and open spaces

The drawback with DLEQS is that it requires allot of surveying time for it to be useful. Once an area is surveyed the results are presented on a gauge chart which graphically shows changes in the standards of each of the individual environmental issues ranging through good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory and poor. The information is further sub-divided into 'standard quality interval' showing how the standard of each environmental issue is performing.

The definitions and criteria for each category are heavily based on what the public perception would be of an area i.e. how a resident, visitor or worker would view the changes in the standard. This hopefully would address the issue raised about public

perception versus a measure that does not reflect public perception. For example, a site deemed to be satisfactory for graffiti would have graffiti present that would be unlikely to be noticed by most people walking or travelling through the area, or be regarded as having a significant affect on the quality of the local environment. Unsatisfactory, in this measure would deem a site to have graffiti present to such an extent that most people would notice it and some regard it as worthy of criticism.

The other major benefit of DLEQS is that the survey information can be used to identify significant environmental issues at a local level and consequently can be used as a diagnostic tool to assist with deployment of resources to ensure the optimum use. DLEQS also helps to diagnose the source and causes of existing problems which can help with developing action plans and delivering improvements.

The main issue for Streetscene is having the surveying capacity which currently does not exist to enable meaningful performance information to be provided at local level.

One suggestion would be to use resources in other services to carry out the surveys which would to an extent provide some independence to the survey work. The aim of the recommendation to introduce DLEQS was not necessarily to secure additional funding or resources for Streetscene Services, it was more about agreeing the usefulness of this methodology and looking at ways to provide the surveying resource working with other services through the Area Committee.

In terms of timescales that depends on surveying resources and someone to collate the information. Should that be done within the service or is it a task better carried out by say Area Management? The aim of the report was to raise these issues and have the discussion about how we go forward. Of course the Area Committee may have a different view completely and a different set of requirements.

The suggestion from Area Management is to look at how customer satisfaction on the cleanliness of streets and open spaces could be measured and used as a performance monitoring tool for this outcome. There may be scope to build on successful examples of how neighbourhood surveys in Intensive Neighbourhood Management clusters, undertaken through help from partners involved in local tasking teams, could be introduced in priority neighbourhoods.