

Item no.

Report to: **Resources Scrutiny Committee**
Date: **24 June 2008**
Report of: **Environmental Services Operations Manager**
Subject: **Value for Money Review of Horticultural Services**
Ward:

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report details the VFM review of the horticultural services and has been prepared to present recommendations from the findings.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 In preparation of this report I have consulted with the Director of Community Services, the Executive member for Livability, the Corporate support unit and the Project team.
- 2.2 A report was presented to Resources Scrutiny on the 20th November 2007 to advise Members on the review project plan and to update them on the VFM review progress. This committee was also given a verbal progress report on the 24th April 2008.
- 2.3 Extensive consultation has been undertaken with horticultural employees and Trade Unions involving presentations and feedback sessions on 18th and 19th December 2007, which allowed topical debate with the staff and some of their proposals to be included in the action plan.
- 2.4 An independent satisfaction survey (APSE/VMS Benchmarking Grounds Maintenance) has been conducted with residents throughout the district; this has helped to establish and respond to resident's views and to determine their rating of current service provision. It has also allowed us to compare against other councils and learn from what our customers have to say about the service giving us a better understanding of where to improve customer relationships.
- 2.5 The Corporate support unit has undertaken a satisfaction survey with external customers who pay for our horticultural services (Parish Councils, Schools, Businesses and Private Dwellings) this provided us with performance information on Satisfaction, Cost, Outputs and areas where consideration could be given to service improvements and efficiencies.
- 2.6 The council is currently a member of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and to establish performance in a number of key areas the project team submitted horticulture data to APSE. This benchmarking body is recognised by the Audit Commission for measuring performance between public service providers across the UK. Participating authorities are measured as part of a family group system comparing like authorities operating under similar circumstances to ensure a fair comparison can be made for various dimensions of performance, such as cost, productivity and quality. These areas are measured using key and secondary performance indicators, which provide details of service trends and areas where improvements could be considered. This performance information has also been benchmarked nationally across all APSE participating authorities, this has allowed assessment of family group data against national performance.
- 2.7 A benchmarking visit by the project team was carried out with Chester le Street District council to assess their current horticultural service, as their satisfaction performance was rated in the top quartile in the recent APSE report. This visit allowed us to compare and discuss our current horticultural services to see if we could recognize any areas of good practice that could improve our service delivery and identify any opportunities for efficiencies.

3. Background

- 3.1 Horticultural services was the first key service area to be selected to undergo a VFM review following the management team programme of priorities for VFM analysis. This process meets the council's aims to measure how services are performing within current budget allocation. Value for money is achieved when: -
- Costs are relatively low
 - Performance/output is high.
 - Outcomes are successful and satisfaction levels are high

- 3.2 The horticultural services are high on resident's priorities and the councils spend is approximately £1.7 million each year delivering this operation. The Management Teams initial assessment determined that our position could be high cost, average performance and average satisfaction. This assessment was based on information produced by the Audit Commission, which compared costs against population, and results from the BVPI 119e satisfaction survey carried out in the district in 2006/7.

Summary of initial assessment (Pre VFM study)

- **Costs** – Average expenditure per head of population for neighbouring authorities was £13.73. With the average for deprived authorities being £13.03. Easington costs were £19.49 which were categorised as high.
 - **Performance** – Limited data for comparisons led to our outputs being unclear. Easington were categorised as average.
 - **Satisfaction** - BVPI 119e Residents satisfaction survey was carried out 2006/7 to measure the percentage of residents satisfied with parks and open spaces in Easington. The audit commission rated authorities with 78% satisfaction as top quartile. Easington achieved 67%, which Management Team determined to be average performance.
- 3.3 The review has been focused on assessing the service currently provided, this has been achieved by a scoping exercise being carried out on the grounds maintenance service and the development of a project plan enabling work to be undertaken in a structured way. This work has involved examining Costs, Performance and Satisfaction, which has given us a better understanding of all these aspects enabling the development of an action plan which will deliver effective change improving the service to customers needs.
- 3.4 A project team consisting of representatives from the Community Services Operations, Personnel unit, Health and Safety unit, Corporate Support unit, along with the Trade Unions have developed and worked through the project plan to establish a project evidence file, which demonstrates the VFM position of the service. Appendix 1 reflects tasks identified and completed in the project plan.

4 Position Statement and Option Appraisal

- 4.1 This report outlines the broad approach that has been taken whilst carrying out this VFM review of horticultural services. It has given the review team a good understanding of all the functions within the operation and how these contribute to the corporate objectives of Clean and Tidy Communities, Keeping The District Safe and Quality Services For Our People. This review of the service was broken down into 3 categories **Costs, Performance and Satisfaction**, which were analysed, and the findings used to establish a programme of improvements, which are detailed in the action plan further in the report.
- 4.2 **Costs** (note: all cost data refer to the financial year 2006/7)
- 4.2.1 Costs for the service in relation to manpower, machines, material and central charges were checked and it was agreed by the project team members that they were accurate, however it was identified that occasionally horticultural operatives are working on street cleansing functions and are not been charged to this operation.
- 4.2.2 All the rechargeable contract works (grass cutting and hedge pruning) undertaken on behalf of a range of customers were evaluated to see if they were fully recovering costs for horticultural services provided.
- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| • Town and parish councils | £41,660 income - Fully recovering expenditure |
| • Businesses and factories | £16,350 income - Fully recovering expenditure |
| • Private properties | £2,350 income - Fully recovering expenditure |
| • Durham County Council (DCC) | £44,500 income - Not recovering full expenditure |

As seen above we fully recover all rechargeable expenditure with the exception of DCC.

- 4.2.3 We currently undertake highways verge maintenance (Grass Cutting) on behalf of DCC. Their specification is 5 cuts inside the 30 MPH signs (Urban) and 2 cuts outside 30 MPH (Rural).

All of the urban road verges have always been maintained in line with DOE cutting cycles (7/10 days) as a high proportion of DCC verges closely border district open spaced grassed areas. The horticultural unit provides a significant contribution to work towards achieving the Council's corporate objectives of Clean and Tidy Communities and keeping the District Safe, which is why maintenance of DCC areas is carried out to the same specification operated by the Council.

If the DOE service standards were not applied consistently we would end up with areas in the district where the length of grass would be significantly different giving an untidy appearance to the area, which would attract complaints. These areas are cut on 18 occasions 13 times more than the County Council specifies at an additional cost to the Council of £44,500.

Discussions with DCC take place on an annual basis to agree rates for this work during these discussions it has been highlighted that there is a need to cut the grass more than DCC specify and extra finance is required to cover the extra costs. DCC have always advised us that the highways verges are only cut for highways safety not environmental appearance and due to budget restrictions will not fund any additional cuts. These improved service standards and additional costs associated with verge cutting will need to be accounted for as part of LGR process to ensure the real cost for highways verge maintenance is accurately identified.

- 4.2.4 The horticultural unit currently provides a maintenance service to East Durham Homes (EDH). A soft market test was carried out by EDH on the horticultural services they currently require for OAP bungalows/houses and void properties to assess if the service provided from the District Council was value for money.

The prices that were submitted for horticultural requirements had a value of £326,785, this exercise established that DOE were very competitive against the outside market and demonstrated VFM. Following this process EDH have made the decision to continue with DOE as their preferred service provider after agreeing some small changes to the specification, this has increased the contract value to £353,650.

A service level agreement has been agreed for this work for 3 years commencing in April 2008. Comparative costs from the other service providers used in the EDH soft market test are currently unavailable for publication due to commercial sensitivity.

- 4.2.5 As part of the costing exercise we looked at pay rates within our family and national groups, it was identified that out of 14 authorities in our family group our horticultural workers were 2nd highest paid. In the national group we were 8th highest paid from 57 Councils.

We believe there are a number of factors that contribute to our workers being high on the pay scales. In 2005 this council completed the job evaluation process as part of the single status agreement and assimilated all members of staff on to a single pay spine. Horticultural wage costs have increased by 4.3% in addition to the national pay award due to this process. A high proportion of councils have not fully implemented single status, this we believe could be a factor contributing to our high pay levels.

Additional pension costs also contribute to very high employee costs for DOE employers, out of 71 authorities we were 4th highest pension contributor. These 2 areas of comparison tell us that our wage bill for this department is one of the highest in the country.

Savings of £12,000 will be achieved in the 2008/2009 financial year following consultation and agreement with the front line staff to move from weekly to monthly wage payments, this will help reduce costs.

- 4.2.6 Central establishment charges are below average as confirmed in a previous review of support services and the APSE performance report. Sickness was also identified as below average for this department. Both of these factors are not placing any undue costs or performance restrictions on the front line operations.

4.3 Performance /Outputs

- 4.3.1 As part of the review all horticultural key areas (open space land / flower shrub beds) subject to a maintenance programme needed to be quantified to get an accurate measurement of maintained land throughout the district. This could not be completed in time for our APSE submission we therefore used measurements that were established over 10 years ago along with other accurate service information. The review team felt that these areas of measurement were unreliable and that comprehensive re-measurement was required due to landscaped area changes following regeneration of the district. We felt that this was a vital exercise to establish our performance position.

- 4.3.2 Following the survey of the district being completed it was established that the measurements of maintained land had increased from those submitted to APSE.

Revised Measurements.

Grass	557.30	hectares
Shrubs	8.60	hectares
Beach	85.00	hectares
Highways	25.85	hectares

Appendix 2 (Graph from APSE report) shows the position, which would be achieved with our new accurate measurements this gives us an improved position towards the top performers.

- Costs per hectare of maintained land are below average.

Appendix 3 (Graph from APSE report) shows the number of hectares maintained per front line employee when the accurate information is applied to this performance indicator. This exercise has enabled us to create an Easington profile in terms of quantity, cost, and service standard per hectare.

- Hectares maintained per front line employee above average.

The above performance was measured from a family group of 17 authorities and from 73 authorities nationally.

The Audit Commission assessment indicated that initially our costs were high, which was based on cost per head of population, this does not demonstrate a true indication of VFM, as areas of maintained land are not taken into account. The APSE benchmarking report allows a more accurate assessment of the service as it takes into account actual service outputs rather than basing the calculation on a cost per head indicator. This exercise has clearly shown that we are achieving low costs per hectare of maintained land and above average for the hectares maintained per front line employee.

- 4.3.3 An area of concern within in this operation, which could affect outputs, is employees (6) suffering from the occupational disease vibration white finger (VWF), which creates restrictions in the use of vibrating equipment (Strimmers, Hedge cutters and Pedestrian mowers). These operatives have sustained their injuries using mechanical equipment on behalf of the Council, most of these operatives have been temporally redeployed undertaking duties more in line with the Street Cleaning Operations. This impacts slightly on the accuracy of the service data as the operatives are still charged to their substantive post until formal arrangements are put in place. This situation was starting to affect service standards within this operation and a review is currently ongoing looking at redeployment options between departments to overcome these operational health problems, this should result in improved value and performance with no increases to combined service costs.

4.4 Satisfaction.

- 4.4.1 The BVPI 119e national Satisfaction survey is undertaken independently every 3 years, our result in 2003/4 was 67% of residents satisfied with parks and open spaces and in 2006/7 residents satisfaction remained the same at 67% against a target of 70%.

This service is also rated as average against other authorities in our APSE family group thus indicating that the service has stood still over this 3-year period. The Horticultural Service and the Street Cleansing Service were integrated in 2006 to form 4 combined teams dedicated to particular zones responsible for grounds maintenance and street cleansing functions. This integration has worked very well with these teams also contributing to the improved BVPI 89, which indicates residents satisfied with the cleanliness standard in their area. BVPI 89 improved from 50% in 2003/4 to 69% in 2006/7.

Improvements have been achieved by the establishment of Clean and Green Teams, enabling the horticultural operation to make a significant contribution to the enhancement of the environmental appearance throughout the district however this information tells us that further improvements in customer satisfaction is required in the horticultural service.

- 4.4.2 Also as part of further examining satisfaction amongst residents and customers we carried out two satisfaction surveys focused on our current service provision. A) Customer Survey. B) Residents Survey. The corporate support unit undertook a survey with our customers (Parish Councils Businesses and Residents) who are charged for the horticultural services we provide to them. The survey results from our customer satisfaction questionnaires are set out below and give an indication of how the service is performing. Not all of the benchmarking results are detailed in this report, other areas consulted upon can be viewed in the project evidence file.

A) Customer survey key results.

Out of 53 questionnaires sent out we had 24 returned which gave us a return rate of 45.28%, which is well above average response. The survey asked a number of questions in relation to services provided which are detailed below along with responses.

Costs.

Q – As a customer, are you satisfied with the level of service that you receive and how much you pay for that service?

Service	Yes	No
Grass cutting	100%	-
Flower displays	100%	-
Hedge pruning	60%	40%
Tree pruning	100%	-
Tree felling	100%	-
Verge Cutting	100%	-

Performance - Outputs.

Q – Do the horticultural services deliver your needs in the agreed time?

Service	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never
Grass cutting	45.5%	40.9%	4.5%	9.1%
Flower displays	-	100%	-	-
Hedge pruning	-	50%	50%	-
Tree pruning	-	100%	-	-
Tree felling	-	100%	-	-
Verge Cutting	-	100%	-	-

Overall satisfaction.

Q – How you rate each of the horticultural services you receive?

Service	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Grass cutting	33%	58%	8.3%	-
Flower displays	-	100%	-	-
Hedge pruning	20%	40%	20%	20%
Tree pruning	-	100%	-	-
Tree felling	-	100%	-	-
Verge Cutting	-	100%	-	-

Q – Have you ever considered using an alternative service provider for your horticultural service?

Yes – 17.6% No – 82.4%

This evidence clearly demonstrates a good to excellent service is being delivered to our customers and will only need minor improvements in particular to the hedge pruning aspect of this operation. This is supported by a high percentage of customers who have never considered using alternative service providers.

4.4.3 B) Residents survey key results.

Vision Management Systems (VMS) were engaged to consult with our residents and carried out an independent survey in the district contacting residents who are part of a database willing to be consulted in relation to Council services.

There were initially 299 surveys sent out to residents throughout the district to which 116 (39%) replied which was seen as an above average response and an indication of the importance attached to this service.

The survey asked 10 questions covering grounds maintenance with provision to give further comments. The service achieved a rating of 6.04 out of 10 as seen in **Appendix 4**.

This information was benchmarked with 6 other councils by APSE and our score was just below average. All the survey information has been used to prepare rectification notices referenced in **Appendix 5**.

This information has allowed us to identify potential service improvements along with some quick wins that have been put into practice immediately. This process allows us to understand and act upon customer's feedback, which helps to drive our continuous improvement and demonstrates that we are proactively using and learning from customer feedback.

4.4.4 Group sessions were held with the workforce to present to them some of the findings of the review and examine areas where they felt service improvements could be made. Some of the key issues and improvement proposals were already identified in the project plan however there were some good additional suggestions put forward some of which can be implemented very quickly and others need further discussions via team meetings. Below are some of the key areas that the workforce identified for improvement.

- Clean and green teams to further develop integration with enforcement units.
- Consultation with the workforce via regular team meetings
- Best practices to be shared across zones.
- Review flower and shrub beds and consider improvements.
- Workforce with occupational disease to swap roles within their team.
- Carry out a machine and equipment audit and dispose of surplus items.
- Review partnerships with Parish Councils.
- Additional employees to be trained to carry out hedge pruning works.

4.4.5 A benchmarking visit was carried out with Chester-le-Street Council as their performance in the APSE customer satisfaction for open spaced areas was in the top quartile. During this visit we found that their operations are very similar to our Council. They carry out grounds maintenance functions to the same frequencies using the same type of associated machines and equipment. The highways verges are also cut above specification on behalf of DCC at an additional cost to their operation.

The following areas of good practice were noted and will be considered for future operational improvements.

- All grass cutting machines fitted with grass blowers to address grass on paths.
- An annual customer satisfaction survey to better understand customer requirements.
- A local performance indicator measuring response to complaints and service requests.
- Use of seasonal employees during the cutting season.

The lack of prestige parks and open spaced area in our district may be a contributing factor to our average rating for customer satisfaction. Chester-le-Street who obtained an excellent rating have the popular Riverside Development that may influence survey results.

4.4.6 The main findings of the review are set out below -:

Our assessment of costs revealed.

- Cutting of DCC roadside verges cost the council £44,500 annually.
- Soft market test carried out by EDH confirmed that we are competitive against outside service providers.
- Wages for the front line employees are 8th highest nationally.
- Pension contributions costs are amongst the highest nationally.
- Central establishment charges are below average.
- Sickness costs are below average.
- Costs per hectare of maintained land are below average.

Our assessment of performance - outputs revealed.

- High levels of occupational /industrial disease are currently incurring no performance issues.
- Numbers of hectares of land maintained per front line employee are above average.

Our assessment of satisfaction revealed.

- High levels of satisfaction for paying customers on cost and performance (excluding hedge pruning)

- 82% of our current paying customers are not considering using an alternative service provider.
- Residents rated the service as average (6.04 out of 10)
- Residents attach high levels of importance to this service as show by the response to the customer survey (39%)
- Residents were least satisfied with strimming and litter removal operations however Chester - le - Street who have a high customer satisfaction rating carry out weed killing by chemical spraying and do not undertake strimming operations due to the risk of occupational disease (vibration white finger).
- Residents rated our employee's appearance and attitude well above average.
- Clean and Green teams have improved cleanliness satisfaction (BVPI 89) from 50% - 69%.
- Residents welcomed being consulted and the visits to rectify service issues raised via survey.

Conclusions from the review.

Costs.

Some of the associated costs with providing the service to residents and paying customers varied between high cost and low cost but our overall cost position when benchmarked against other Authorities is good. Our current position could further improve when our saving £12,000 due to monthly wage payments is applied in 2008/2009 this is the only area, which could be identified where savings could be made.

Outputs.

Outputs for the service are rated good as it is performing above average on the number of hectares of land maintained per front line employee. Initial findings led us to believe that industrial disease (VWF) could affect performance of the service but successful redeployment across the clean and green teams gave us the confidence that performance would remain unaffected.

Satisfaction.

Residents rated the horticultural service as average and gave some constructive comments of where the service could be improved. We have now addressed most of these comments and logged all actions in the rectification notices as seen in the report. Employee's appearance and attitude towards residents rated very well, which tells us that, currently this area needs no attention.

High levels of satisfaction where achieved for cost and performance for paying customers but improvements are required to reduce the time taken to respond to hedge maintenance requests from the service.

There is also a need to continue engaging with residents and customers to understand their views and make service improvements jointly, to help improve resident's satisfaction of this service.

All the evidence on Cost, Performance and Satisfaction in this report demonstrates that overall this is a Value for Money Service however to continue to improve the service we will undertake the following actions.

Actions.

1. Review and redeploy the manpower with occupational disease (VWF) into jobs within the Clean and Green teams where they are not at risk from any further occupational damage (vibrating machinery) whilst maintaining current service standards for both the Horticulture and Street Cleansing functions. There is a requirement to use more chemical spraying instead of strimming for weed control in the district this may affect satisfaction levels amongst residents. This switch to chemical control is due to the health risk associated with strimming. (VWF)
2. Continue to submit data to APSE to monitor our performance against other authorities whilst learning to use this performance data to make service efficiencies and improvements where possible.
3. To engage VSM to undertake further customer surveys to allow us to objectively measure the service through the eyes of the public. This will enable us to gather service information identifying any opportunities to improve service delivery and track these improvements year on year. This customer satisfaction system represents a rigorous and transparent process for improving the quality of services and residents satisfaction.
4. Team Leaders will visit all residents who have commented on the service via the VMS survey to discuss and initiate service requests where possible. These requests and outcomes are recorded in the rectification notices helping to inform future priorities for improvement and demonstrate responsiveness through action in the eyes of the public. This process will further improve our consultation and help gain customer confidence and determine the future design of the service.

5. To purchase and introduce an additional eight Grass Blowers improving the removal of grass cuttings from footpaths and therefore improving customer satisfaction with the service. (Action completed)
6. Monthly meetings are to be programmed with Clean and Green teams and Enforcement staff to further develop and improve employee involvement. These meetings will recognise and implement instances of good practice within the service and consider feedback from the team members for service improvements.
7. A machine and equipment user group will be set up with staff from the vehicle workshop and horticultural unit. This group will evaluate current and new developments in horticultural machinery that may be introduced into the service giving us further efficiencies and service improvements.
8. Additional employees are to be trained in the use of chain saws for minor tree/hedge works, this will allow the designated tree squad to concentrate on the larger arboricultural works. Work order backlogs will be reduced and customer satisfaction with this part of the service will be improved.
9. All Parish Council partnerships are to be reviewed to establish if there are any elements where service improvements could be made.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial

Costs for the VSM survey (£3000) will be met from current revenue budgets.

Overall cost for the Clean and Green teams operations will not change. However Street Cleansing costs will increase with a corresponding decrease in Horticultural costs when employee costs are more accurately identified.

5.2 Legal

There are no legal implications.

5.3 Policy

The proposals are consistent with council's policy on value for money.

5.4 Risk

A risk assessment has been carried out on the proposals and all significant risks assessed and any actions required will be implemented.

5.5 Communication

These proposals do not have any communication implications.

5.6 Corporate

The proposed finding and actions within this report will help to sustain our corporate objectives of Quality Services for our People, Clean and Tidy Communities and Keeping the District Safe. This VFM review will also help in the development of horticultural services within the ongoing LGR.

5.7 Equality & Diversity

No implications.

5.8 E-Government

No implications

5.9 Procurement

No implications

6. Recommendations

Members are recommended to note the findings of the review.

Background documents referred to:

Final Financial Accounts 2006/7
APSE Benchmarking Reports 2006/7
VMS Resident Satisfaction Survey Report
Employee Group Feedback Sessions
Corporate Support Customer Satisfaction Report
Soft Market Test Document
Project Plan
Data Base of Maintained Land

Project Reference: VFM Review of Horticulture

Version No: v 0.3

Background

This area has been identified as high cost, average performance, average customer satisfaction and high importance to customers.

The value for money equation of low cost x high performance x high satisfaction leads us in this case to examine why costs are high and performance and satisfaction is average.

We will do this through understanding our costs and comparing those against relevant comparators and do likewise regarding performance and satisfaction. We will use the appropriate tools contained within the council's toolkit to help us with this exercise.

The service is of high importance to customers and contributes significantly to the councils overall aims .A clean and tidy environment is essential if we are to attract further investment and development helping to sustain our communities. Our corporate objective number five is *clean and tidy communities*.

Document Purpose

This document is to define the project plan/s, to form a basis for its management, identify the risks and explain the project reporting structure and frequency. This is a living document that will be updated throughout the duration of the project and used to record project progress, risks and issues.

Project Objectives

To examine the councils horticultural operation determining costs, performance and satisfaction against relevant comparators

Project Scope

Grass cutting, shrub bed maintenance, tree maintenance, general landscape works, play areas, walkways, footpaths across open spaces, unadopted roads, drainage works in open spaces, Seaham leisure centre maintenance of grounds, works for parish councils grass cutting etc, works for other organisations grass cutting etc, works for private residents, landscaping after demolitions, maintenance of closed churchyards, garage site maintenance, beach cleaning, default works garden tidies, bonfire removal/fencing/clean up work, council office complex grass cutting shrub bed maintenance, contribution to Castle Eden Dene maintenance, verge maintenance on behalf of the county council, Snow clearing of OAP bungalows, Crimdon Park, Allotments, Inspection of Playground Equipment and General Sundry Rents and Wayleaves

Out of Scope

The elements of the former street cleansing operation now included in the clean and green teams. Litter picking, street sweeping, emptying litterbins.

Project Deliverables

Identification of improvements in service effectiveness, potential policy options for political consideration in the delivery of these services.

Communications Plan

Role	Responsibility	Name
Review lead	Accountable for the success of the review	Paul Penman
Review support	Responsible for co-ordinating the review activity under the direction of the review lead	Mick Devine
Team member	Responsible for the delivery of relevant tasks to aid the review	Tony Bleasdale John Lowes Roy Todd Lisa Mason David Walker Mike Lavender Mary Readman Tom Scott Peter Bennet

Frequency and Method of Communication

Meeting	Target Audience(s)	Delivery Method	Delivery Frequency	Comment
Project Management Board	MR, TB, OS, JB	Project plan General discussion	Six weekly	
Resources Scrutiny Committee	Elected members	Project plan General discussion	Two visits, preview and review	

Quality Plan

To ensure that this project is delivered within the time identified and that our thinking is challenged we will report progress in two ways. Route one will be via the Resources Scrutiny Committee and route two will be via Mary Readman Principle Corporate Development Officer, Tom Bell Director of Finance and Corporate Services, Joy Brindle Assistant Chief Executive and Oliver Sherratt Director of Community Services. Mary, Tom, Joy and Oliver will act as a project management board whilst the scrutiny committee will provide a political input. The resources scrutiny committee will preview and review the objectives.

Project Contacts

Names, email, telephone numbers for each member of the project

Name	Email	Phone	Responsibility
Paul Penman	Paul.Penman@easington.gov.uk	5876118	Review lead
Mick Devine	Mick.Devine@easington.gov.uk	5274567	Review support
Tony Bleasdale	Tony.Bleasdale@easington.gov.uk	5274357	Team Member
John Lowes	John.Lowes@easington.gov.uk	5876130	Team Member
Roy Todd	Roy.Todd@easington.gov.uk	5876128	Team Member
Lisa Mason	Lisa.Mason@easington.gov.uk	5274345	Team Member
David Walker	david.walker@easington.gov.uk	5274327	Team Member
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Mary Readman	mary.readman@easington.gov.uk	5274615	Team Member
Tom Scott	Tom.Scott@easington.gov.uk	5274489	Team Member
Peter Bennet	Peter.Bennett@easington.gov.uk	5274581	Team Member

Project Plan

Summary project plan to:

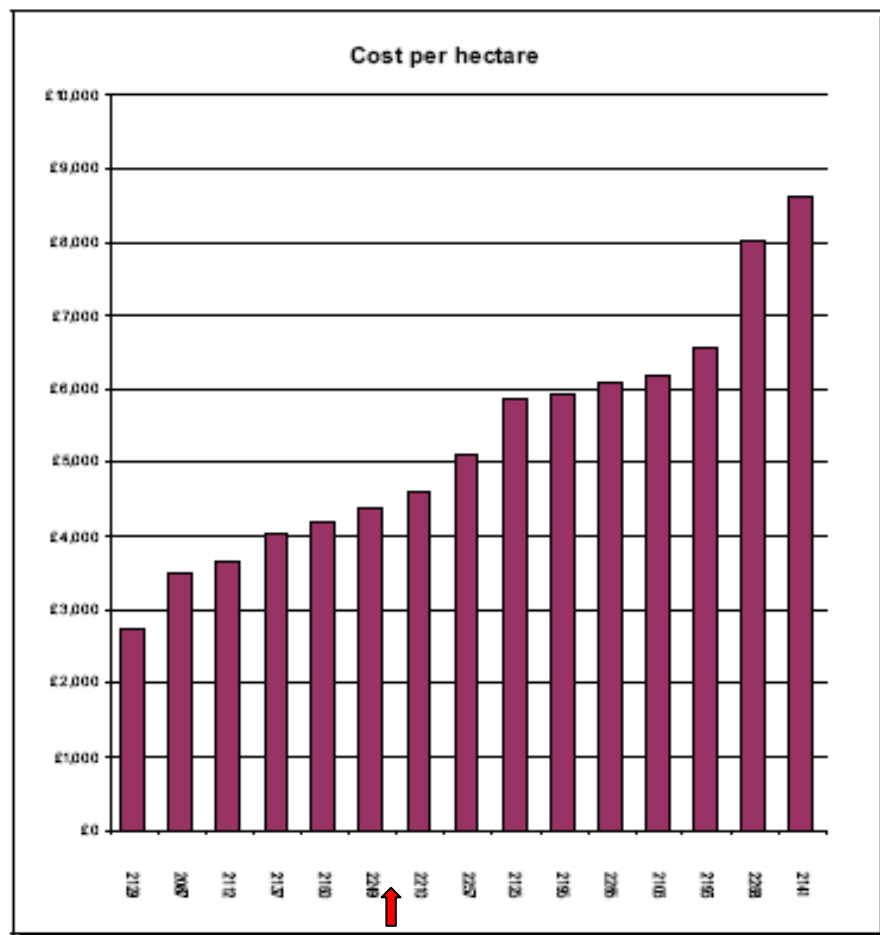
Tasks	Start	Complete	Who
Carry out preparatory work	06.07.07	06.07.07	PP/MD
Circulate preparatory work for comment/ observations and amend as appropriate	10.07.07	14.07.07	MD
Complete all project plan documentation circulate for approval/amendments	16.08.07	31.08.07	MD
Costs			
Break costs down into cost headings e.g. operatives, machines, materials, oncosts	06.08.07	17.08.07	TB
Break down costs into areas of operation e.g. grass cutting, tree maint, landscape	17.08.07	31.08.07	TB/PP/MD
To analyse budgets and make sure all the budget headings are correctly allocated	03.09.07	7.11.07	TB/PP/MD
To analyse whether or not any rechargeable works are fully recovering costs	28.08.07	21.09.07	PP/JL
Submit tender for East Durham Homes grounds maintenance soft market testing exercise	20.8.07	6.9.07	PP
Evaluate the learning form East Durham Homes grounds maintenance soft market testing exercise	18.9.07	7.11.07	PP/MD/TB/JL
Performance			
Quantify horticultural functions throughout the District	06.08.07	31.10.07	PB & Team leaders
Man power analysis (sickness levels, accidents, training, occupational disease)	03.09.07	03.10.07	JL/DW/LM
Create an Easington profile in terms of quantity/costs/service standards per hectare	31.10.07	14.11.07	PP/TB/MD
Take part in the APSE performance network	19.09.07	05.10.07	PP/TB
Identify suitable comparators to benchmark with (three)	14.11.07	31.11.07	PP/MD/MR
Compile benchmarking questionnaire	14.11.07	31.11.07	MD/PP/MR
Undertake benchmarking exercise	2.12.07	23.12.12	PP/MD/JL/TB
Evaluate findings of benchmarking exercise including results of APSE performance networking.	7.1.08	21.1.08	PP/MD/TB
Satisfaction			
Analyse complaints	20.08.07	12.10.07	PP
Commission Vision Management Systems to undertake a customer satisfaction survey	01.09.07	12.10.08	ML/PP
Undertake a satisfaction survey of external customers.	20.08.07	26.10.07	PP
Analyse results of the above survey	28.10.07	6.11.07	DE
Evaluation and recommendations			
Present verbal report to Resources Scrutiny Committee	n/a	22.04.08	PP/TB
Present report to Management Team	4.2.08	05.08	PP/MD
Present report to Working Executive	12.2.08	05.08	PP/MD
Present a report to Resources Scrutiny Committee	1.4.08		PP/MD

APPENDIX 2

PI 02 Cost of service per hectare of maintained land (including CEC)

Family group H6

	Maintained area (excl low maintenance)	Total net cost (incl CEC)	Cost per hectare
Average			£5,296
Lowest			£2,741
Highest			£8,633
Lowest in range	151.90	£900,688	
Highest in range	663.00	£2,896,144	



Source data

$(([NCOSI] - [NCSTF] - [NHOTH]) - [CHLOW]) / [TALAM]$

Note: This performance indicator should not be viewed in isolation - but in the context of the 'Family Group Profile' and other performance indicator reports.

Acceptable parameters: >£1,100 and <£13,000

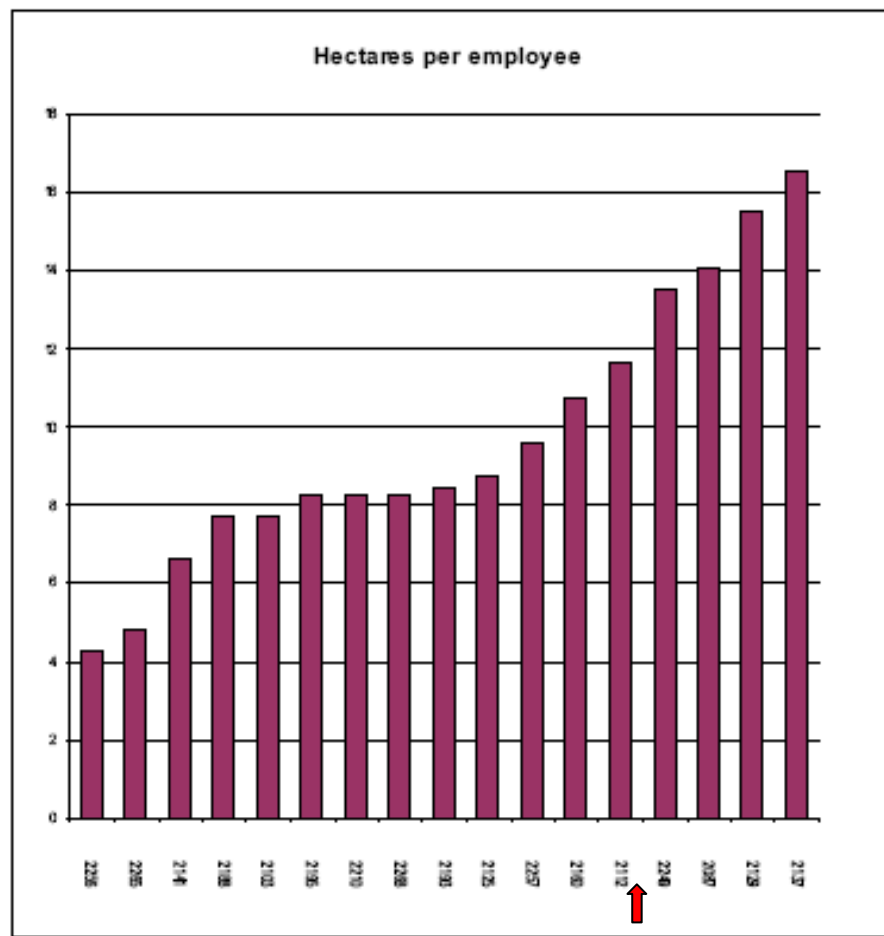
£4,452. → = District of Easington position with accurate quantified

APPENDIX 3

PI 12 No of hectares maintained per FTE front line employee

Family group H6

	Maintained area (excl low maintenance)	Front line employees (FTE)	Hectares maintained per FTE
Average			9.69
Lowest			4.29
Highest			16.55
Lowest in range	107.29	17.00	
Highest in range	663.00	75.85	



Source data

$$([TALAM] - [TALAE]) / [FTFLE]$$

Acceptable parameters: >2 and <20 hectares

12.66 hectares → = District of Easington position with accurate quantified information.

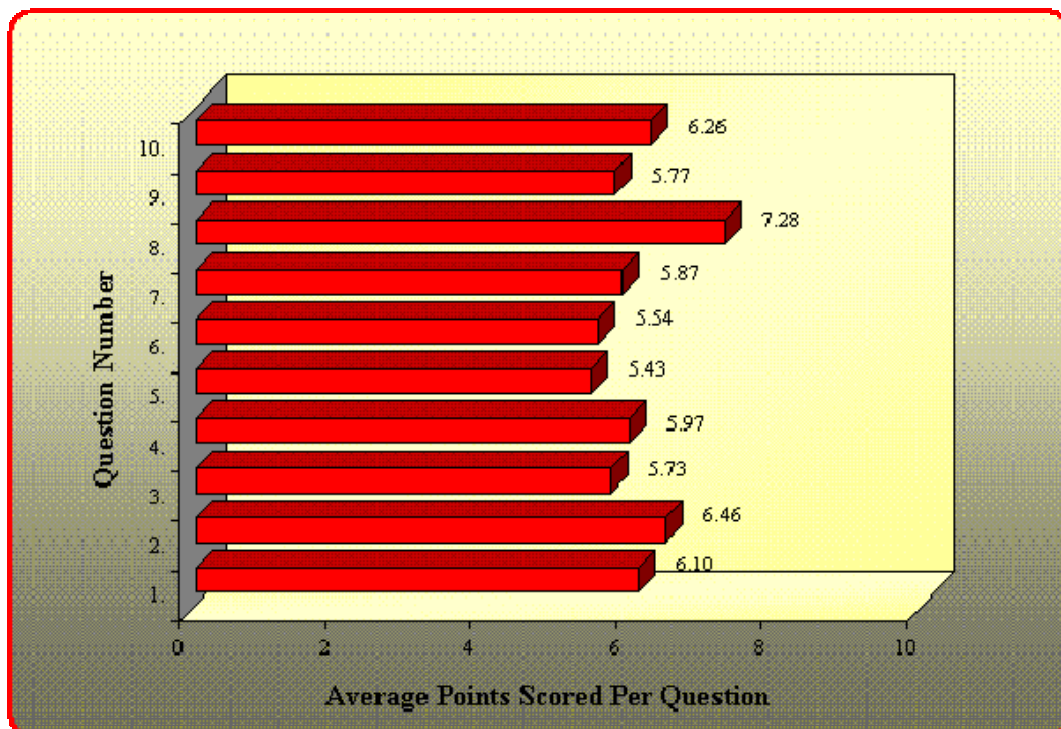
APPENDIX 4

District of Easington Grounds Maintenance

November-07

From an initial issue of 299 surveys, the following scores out of 10 have been achieved from 116 replies (38.80% return)

Statements	Average Score
1. How do you rate the finished quality of grass cutting in your area?	6.10
2. How do you rate the summer bedding displays your area?	6.46
3. How do you rate the tidiness of shrubberies and hedges?	5.73
4. How do you rate the standard of maintenance in shrub and rose beds?	5.97
5. How do you rate the strimming and edging around grass areas?	5.43
6. How do you rate the litter removal from ground maintenance areas?	5.54
7. How do you rate the response to requests for service, e.g. fallen trees, overhanging vegetation?	5.87
8. How do you rate the conduct of the employees, e.g. appearance, attitude?	7.28
9. How well do we control weeds in your area?	5.77
10. Overall, how do you rate grounds maintenance service in Easington?	6.26
OVERALL AVERAGE	6.04



APPENDIX 5

District of Easington Grounds Maintenance

Rectification Notice

For the attention of

Scorecard Date: **November 2007**

Scorecard ID: **001**

Grounds Maintenance

Input Date: 19/11/07

Reply ID: 5

Date of 27/11/07

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Property ID 10005

Scores	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q1	Avg
	5	4	5	7	7	8	8	8	5	6	6.3

Customer's

After grass cutting it would help if the grass cuttings were picked up.

Encourage people not to discard litter.

Regular dog warden visits to encourage dog owners to pick up their dog mess up.

Tel - [REDACTED]

Action Taken – Cleaned up cigarette ends from outside the Golden Calf Public house and informed the enforcement unit of these issues.

Home Visit – Visited the resident and explained why grass cuttings are not removed and advised on the enforcement issues resident found that this visit was very worthwhile and was happy with actions taken.

Rectification Notice

For the attention of

Scorecard Date: **November 2007**

Grounds Maintenance

Scorecard ID: **001**

Input Date: 20/11/07

Reply ID: 50

Date of 27/11/07

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Property ID 10050

Scores	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Avg
	7	7	6	7	7	4	5	5	5	6	5.9

Customer's Comments

In general I feel that the grounds maintenance section in Shotton Colliery is quite good. I would however like to point out an area of concern which I feel should be addressed. The area around the industrial estate and premier waste management off salters lane to the south of shotton colliery is always covered with litter and debris. The walkway behind the industrial estate is not only an eyesore but also possesses a hazard to wildlife and to many people who walk their dogs in what should be a beauty spot. I would assume the rubbish is either being illegally dumped or is being blown over from the industrial estate and waste management center. Further more there is often rubbish blowing about along salters lane in the same area. I believe this may be coming from traffic going to and from the disposal site. Although I think it is good to have a resource I do feel that something should be done to address this problem, which is not only a hazard to wildlife but also a hazard to traffic.

I am not sure if your department deals with the above but if not maybe you could bring it to the attention of the relevant department for further investigation.


Tel - [REDACTED]

Action Taken – The picnic area, and the rear of the waste paper mill has been litter-picked, and a large amount of rubble removed near the entrance to the transfer station, this work was implemented on Wednesday 5th December 2007. Enforcement staff is going to monitor this problem and take the necessary action if required.

Home Visit – I spoke to Miss Scott on Tuesday 18th December 2007 at 1.55pm, and she is quite pleased with the improvements works carried out.

The lady agreed that we as a council have a thankless task when it comes to the litter spillage from the haulage vehicles using the Transfer Station.

Miss Scott is willing to complete further questionnaires.

DISTRICT OF EASINGTON RISK ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND SHEET													
Report to: *		RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX (GREY SHADED AREA DENOTES APPETITE FOR RISK)						SHEET OF					
Date: *								ISSUED BY					
Report of: *								*					
Subject: * Value for money project for horticulture								ISSUED TO					
		LIKELIHOOD OF RISK HAPPENING	A	VERY HIGH			1		*				
			B	HIGH					DATE ISSUED				
			C	SIGNIFICANT			2		*				
			D	LOW			1, 2		APPROVED BY				
			E	VERY LOW			3		*				
			F	ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE					DATE APPROVED				
		1. WRITE DOWN THE RISKS BELOW AND SCORE THEM. 2. ENTER THE RISK NUMBER FROM THE LEFT HAND COLUMN BELOW INTO THE RELEVANT BOX IN THE MATRIX ABOVE. 3. IDENTIFY THE TARGET SCORE, ENTER IN THE MATRIX ABOVE AND NOTE THE APPROPRIATE ACTIONS TO DEAL WITH THE RISK IN THE RIGHT HAND COLUMN BELOW.			4	NEGLIGIBLE	3	MARGINAL	2	CRITICAL	1	CATASTROPHIC	*
					IMPACT ON ACTIVITY OR PROJECT						RISK ASSESSMENT ACCEPTED BY		
											*		
		No	DESCRIPTION OF RISK	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	OVERALL SCORE	TARGET SCORE	ACTIONS REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE THE TARGET SCORE	ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER	COMP DATE	LINKS TO		
1	Unable to quantify horticultural functions within the timescales set out in the project plan	A	2	A2	D2	Re-prioritise the work of the team member responsible for delivering this action. Extra resource to complete the task Alter the project timescales to suit the workload of the team member responsible for delivering this action,	PP, KP, OS	29/08/07					
2	Lack of compatible bench marking partners	C	2	C2	D2	To thoroughly research for a compatible authority through compiling an accurate picture of Easington's position	PP, MD, MR						
3	Loss of focus by project team during the review	E	2	E2	N/A								

ANY RISKS WITH A FINAL ASSESSMENT ABOVE THE "APPETITE" MUST BE REFERRED TO THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ACCEPTANCE AND REFERENCE TO THE RISK INCLUDED IN THE REPORT TOGETHER WITH DETAILS OF THE ACTION REQUIRED									

DISTRICT OF EASINGTON RISK ASSESSMENT CONTINUATION SHEET								SHEET OF	
No	DESCRIPTION OF RISK (WHAT CAN GO WRONG)	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	OVERALL SCORE	TARGET SCORE	ACTIONS REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE THE TARGET SCORE	ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER	COMP DATE	LINKS TO
ANY RISKS WITH A FINAL ASSESSMENT ABOVE THE "APPETITE" MUST BE REFERRED TO THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ACCEPTANCE AND REFERENCE TO THE RISK INCLUDED IN THE REPORT TOGETHER WITH DETAILS OF THE ACTION REQUIRED									