

Appendix 2

LAA1 STREET CLEANLINESS TARGET – VALE

Introduction

The first Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement ('LAA1') ran from 2006/07 – 2008/09. It included a performance target for street cleanliness which the Vale and two other districts failed to achieve. The cumulative performance across the county failed to meet the target and as a result the partnership received no performance reward grant ('PRG'). This note explains the factors contributing to the Vale failing to achieve its target.

Factors Affecting Vale Performance

Main factor – Focus on Litter not Detritus

Due to historic problems there was an over-emphasis on resolving issues around litter. Locally the district was under pressure to concentrate on keeping areas litter free. Vale managers believed LAA1 targets were similar to LAA2 targets in that the PRG-related target excluded detritus – which was not the case.

Proposed action: None for LAA2 (which excludes detritus). But general action for Vale LAA lead officers to confirm definitions for all PIs and avoid further misunderstandings.

Other factors:

Poor performance management

There has also been a reliance on monitoring principally through the 4-monthly NI195 surveys, this does not pick up decline in standards early enough and corrective action therefore happens too late in the day. (This PI was still 'green' in the January PSB report).

There was also a misunderstanding about whether BVPI 199 or NI 195 should have been used for monitoring this target in 2008/09. The incorrect use of NI 195 over-stated performance during the year.

Proposed action: The PSB should review its performance management and reporting arrangements, making it more robust at detecting and resolving any PIs with off-track performance.

Harsher grading

As with all the monitoring officers, Vale staff attended the ENCAMS training day hosted at SODC. The gradings carried out during 2008/09 were carried out in accordance with the training. The first tranche of gradings was undertaken by a SODC monitoring officer who had also received the same training.

It has become apparent that an inconsistent approach to the surveys was taken across the five districts, and it seems that the Vale officers graded most harshly.

Proposed action: Urgently, the OWP needs to ensure the grading inspectors of the various districts adopt the same consistent approach.

Inadequate weed control

Whilst OCC's failure to treat weeds detracts from the street-scene, the definition of detritus does not include live weeds, so this should not be a major contributing factor. However, Veolia has stated to us that the presence of weeds makes detritus removal more difficult, so it has been a contributory factor.

Proposed action: OWP district members to petition the County Member to undertake increased weed-treatment in the rural areas.

Imperfect street cleaning performance

Veolia's performance on litter removal remains good, although the manual sweeping of footpaths tends to be neglected in some areas

Proposed action: This is being addressed through operator training and robust contract management.