

Review of Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Services Results of Public Consultation

1. Introduction & Background

The District Council faces a 22.7% reduction in funding from Government over the next two years (on top of a 15.6% cut in 2012/13 and 16.2% in 2011/12). To help deal with these cuts, potential savings have been identified within the Council's street cleansing and grounds maintenance services.

In 2012 the District Council commissioned an independent review of these services. Its aim was to deliver service improvements whilst at the same time making on-going savings. In Summer 2013, public consultation was carried out to seek views on proposed service changes and the recommended 'Core Standards' proposed for implementation from January 2014.

2. Scope of the Consultation

The consultation covered the main recommendations from the review i.e. to:

- merge the two services together into a single 'Clean and Green' service to create a more efficient and effective service
- establish two area-based teams to help reduce travel times, better utilise staff, use fewer vehicles and help deal with seasonal increases in workload
- improve the standards of services for the general public through more flexible working methods and scaling back the high level of service provided to some local sports clubs
- agree a new set of core standards defining what the street scene service will do and establishing consistent service standards across the district
- introduce a programme of education, community engagement and enforcement to help reduce littering, dog fouling and fly tipping

Together, these changes will help save an estimated £142,000 p.a.

3. Methodology

A range of methods were used to encourage views from different stakeholders including:

- On-line and paper survey (main method)
- Letters to stakeholder organisations, mainly Parish and Town Councils and sports clubs, inviting comments
- Comments were also invited by phone or in writing, and by email, Facebook or Twitter.

The proposals were also discussed at the July Area Community Forums: Northern Area on 8 July at the ABC, Southern Area on 10 July at Ashbourne Library and Central Area on 22 July 2013 at Matlock Town Hall. In total, 57 members of the public attended these events.

To provide a view from the 'general population', the survey questions were also sent to members of the Derbyshire Dales Citizens' Panel (1,000 Derbyshire Dales residents).

4. Response

The consultation was open for 9 weeks between 22 May and 24 July 2013. However, despite wide promotion, the response to the public survey was low, with just 99 responding to the survey. This compares with 943 responding to the Car Parking survey which coincided with the early part of this exercise (closed on 21 June). Of the 99 survey responses, 70 were from individuals and 29 from organisations. **The limited response needs to be taken into account when interpreting the results.** The findings are set out in the next section with comments received from respondents included in **Annex 1**.

Of the individuals providing information, 97% lived or worked in the Derbyshire Dales and 3% were visitors. 55% had visited a District Council park, recreation ground or play area in the last 12 months. 9% had used a sports pitch or bowling green maintained by the District Council.

Of the organisations responding, there were 15 Parish and Town Councils, seven sports clubs and seven others, as listed below:

Parish & Town Councils (15)	Sports Clubs (7)	Others (7)
Atlow Parish Council	Ashbourne Cricket Club	Bakewell in Bloom
Bakewell Town Council	Ashbourne Park Bowls Club	Heritage & Natural Environment Group - Bakewell Partnership
Beely Parish Council	Bakewell Croquet Club	Let's Lose litter
Bradwell Parish Council	Bakewell Town FC	Matlock Civic Association
Cubley Parish Council	Darley Dale juniors FC	Matlock in Bloom
Doveridge Parish Council	Matlock Park Bowls Club	Ridgeway Gallery
Mappleton Parish Council	Red Lion Football club	Local retail business Ashbourne
Matlock Bath Parish Council		
Matlock Town Council		
Outseats Parish Council		
Sheldon Parish Meeting		
Snelston Parish Meeting		
Winster Parish Council		
Two unnamed parish councils		

In addition, seven separate emails were received from Parish Councils and individuals. These are summarised in **Annex 2**. No comments were made via social media despite promotion and encouragement via press releases.

In addition, 499 Members of the Derbyshire Dales Citizens' Panel responded to the same questions in the survey conducted in June 2013 (50% response rate). These results are included to enable comparison alongside responses from the stakeholder groups. The main comments received from members of the Citizens' Panel are set out in **Annex 3**.

The make-up of survey respondents (those providing information) was as follows:

Profile of survey respondents (% in each group)													
	Gender		Age						Disability		Race		
	M	F	<25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Y	N	White British	Other White Background	Other Ethnic Groups
2011 Census	49.3	50.7	25	8	13	16	16	22	18.5*	81.5	96.8	1.8	1.4
Individuals exc prefer not to say	50.7	49.3	3	3	12	18	23	41	3.0	92.4	98	2	0
Citizens' Panel	49.5	50.5	0	1	6	14	28	51	18.6	81.4	96.4	3.1	0.4

Points to note from the profile of respondents compared with the 2011 Census profile of the District are:

- **Age** – a low response from those aged under 35 as is typical of most surveys undertaken. A high proportion of respondents were of retirement age or older
- **Disability** – respondents to the general consultation reported low levels of disability (3%) compared with 18.6% responding to the Citizens' Panel survey which is similar to the district profile. Note: the 2011 Census measured 'people whose day to day activities are limited'.

Annex 4 summarises the comments received at the three Area Community Forums.

5. Main findings

Each section sets out the consultation question followed by a summary of the main findings from the consultation.

Points to note:

- Results exclude 'no answer'
- The low response to the public survey – for this survey the numbers agreeing or disagreeing with proposals have therefore been reported rather than percentages

5.1 Principle of directing more resources towards services benefitting the general public and therefore fewer resources toward services benefitting a small number of users

The majority of respondents supported this overarching proposal.

78 of the 99 responding to the public survey agreed. Support was higher from individuals (84%) and less from organisations (66%).

84% of the Citizens' Panel were also supportive.

5.2 That the new service should aim to improve the standard of street cleansing and grounds maintenance services which the District Council provides for the general public.

Again this approach was supported by the majority responding.

84 of the 99 responding to the public survey agreed with this proposal. As above, support was higher from individuals (87%) than from organisations (78%) although the variance was much less.

Members of the Citizens' Panel were particularly supportive (92% agreed).

5.3 To mow parks, children's play areas and public open spaces more often

Although there was less support for this proposal, more than half of those responding to the public survey (56 out of 98 respondents) agreed with it. Support was slightly higher from individuals (59%) than organisations (50%).

61% of the Citizens' Panel also agreed with this proposal.

21 of those responding to the public survey disagreed with the proposal. The response from the Citizens' Panel was similar i.e. 20% disagreed.

5.4 To mow highway verges in towns more often

Just over half of those responding to the public survey (51 out of 98) agreed with this proposal. There was little variance between individuals (53%) and organisations (48%).

Support was slightly higher from members of the Citizens' Panel (56% agreed).

Just over a quarter disagreed with the proposal (28 of those responding to the public survey) and 24% of the Citizens' Panel.

5.5 To respond to town centre litter problems more quickly

The majority of those responding supported this proposal.

80 out of 98 responding to the public survey agreed with it (86% of individuals and 72% of organisations).

Support was particularly high from the Citizens' Panel with 88% agreeing.

5.6 To maintain cemeteries and churchyards more often

This received the lowest level of support of all the proposals.

Less than half of those responding to the public survey agreed (46 out of 99 responding). 29 of those responding disagreed.

50% of the Citizens' Panel were in favour and 23% disagreed.

5.7 To increase enforcement of littering and dog fouling in children's play areas

This stands out as the most popular proposal.

93 of the 99 responding to the public survey agreed (94% of individuals and 93% of organisations).

Support was also high from the Citizens' Panel with 97% agreeing.

5.8 To maintain bowling greens less often

57 of the 99 respondents to the public survey supported this proposal. Support was slightly lower from individuals (56%) but slightly higher from organisations (62%). Several respondents had no opinion either way (32 of those responding).

10 of the 15 Parish and Town Councils responding to the survey agreed with the proposal (only 1 disagreed.) As expected, both bowling clubs responding disagreed with the proposal.

Support was slightly lower from the Citizens' Panel (54% agreed with the proposal).

5.9 The proposal to maintain cricket pitches less often

Overall, support for maintaining cricket pitches less often is similar to that for bowling greens.

57 of the 99 responding to the public survey agreed with this proposal. Again support was slightly lower from individuals (57%) but slightly higher from organisations (59% agreed). Several respondents had no opinion either way (27 of those responding).

Again 10 of the 15 Parish and Town Councils responding to the survey agreed with the proposals and only 1 disagreed. The only cricket club responding to the survey also agreed "*...provided the new proposal for cricket pitches is maintained...*" (Ashbourne Cricket Club).

53% of the Citizens' Panel agreed with this proposal.

5.10 To reduce the number of litter bins in locations visited less often by the public where more than one bin is available

Overall this proposal received the second lowest level of support.

47 of the 99 responding to the public survey agreed with it. Over a third (34) disagreed with the proposal.

Of those Parish and Town Council's responding to the survey, 7 agreed with the proposal and 5 disagreed.

There was a similar response from the Citizens' Panel 48% agreed and 35% disagreed.

6. Summary & Conclusions

- Both key proposals are supported by the majority i.e. (i) the principle of directing more resources towards the general public and fewer resources towards services benefitting a small number of users and (ii) to improve the standard of street cleansing and grounds maintenance services
- Increased enforcement of littering and dog fouling in children's play areas received most support amongst those responding
- All respondents identified responding to town centre litter problems more quickly as the second priority
- Proposals to maintain bowling greens and cricket pitches less often received less support although more than half of those responding supported these proposals, including the majority of Parish and Town Councils
- Maintaining cemeteries more often and reducing the number of bins in locations less visited by the public received the lowest levels of support.

Summary of comments received from survey respondents:

Litter Bins

- Not emptied enough – Cromford, Bakewell by the river, Bakewell Recreation Ground
- Emptying needs to be proportionate to usage
- Not enough bins because of more packaging
- Suggestion to double bins up for recycling

Litter

- Concern that the steps between Lime Grove Walk to Firs Parade and alcove used as a toilet
- Fly tipping incident in Wirksworth not responded to

Dog fouling

- Need more dog litter bins and more near footpaths
- Please enforce bylaws, enforcement really needed
- Putting dog waste in normal litter bins is not appropriate, especially if near seating, dog bins should be in strategic spots
- Need bins at entrances and exits from parks
- Smedley Street, Matlock is bad

Street Cleansing

- Bad at The Fairways, Clifton – street cleaning vehicle turns around before it gets to bottom of cul de sac
- Concern about reduction – needs to be monitored and some flexibility retained
- Cigarette butts and weeds in pavements, under seats, old bus station bad
- Shops should sweep and wet brush pavements (several comments)

Leaf collection

- Could be done more in autumn on town centre streets
- Monitor it so well timed with leaf fall

Verges – most comments

- Sow wild flowers in some verges and mow only once or twice a year
- Develop wild flower areas – less maintenance and encourage wildlife
- Too much pruning on rotational basis at wrong time of year with little knowledge of species or habitat
- Leave some open areas as wildlife
- Standard is high – can cut less
- Increase hedge cutting when growth is high
- Remove the clippings or else unsightly – could send to Vital Earth

Parks

- A few more ground cover plants to prevent weeds, flower beds are attractive for locals and visitors

Towns and Villages

- Bakewell should be immaculate as it is in Peak District National Park, isn't at present
- Villages are being left out (number of comments)
- Bradwell - verges are particularly bad
- Helpful if Parish Councils advised of schedule for regular maintenance for their area

Sports clubs

- Pest control(worm management) at some sport pitches is needed once a year
- Willingness from Bakewell Town Football Club to assist
- Bakewell clubs already pay the District Council for mowing
- Should do more for themselves

Mowing

- Winster Parish Council supports but does the District Council expect Parish Councils to maintain same standard and will it reimburse it?

Citizenship

- Matlock Civic Association has volunteered to help e.g. on Sunday mornings, Bank Road, Town Square, Bakewell Road etc.

General

- Should maintain rather than improve
- Any changes should be monitored and there should be the capacity to adjust
- Need to be more flexible rather than have rigid targets so react to actual need, weather etc.
- Great to see careful consideration being given
- The District Council is doing a great job

Other comments received by email:

- Further to the Northern Area Forum, Bakewell Croquet Club considered the District Council's approach as positive and acknowledged the need for more cooperation from community groups
- Common sense and discretion will be essential in enforcement of litter fines. Asking people to pick up litter is preferable.
- Support for fines for littering in Ashbourne (as elsewhere in the country). This is a particular problem on A52 with bottles and food cartons
- Positive feedback from Stanton in Peak Parish Council for the District Council's response to 2 requests for additional clean ups in the last 6 months but concern that these were the only cleans undertaken. Concern about the specific nature of the village due to large trees overhanging roads used by quarry traffic, so it is essential to clear leaves to prevent skidding on mulch. Advance notification would enable villages to relocate parked cars, sweeping one side on one day and one on another was suggested. Consulting the village on its requirements was suggested to minimise additional call outs.
- Youlgrave Parish Council thinks the service it receives is poor. It is disappointed by a potential town bias, and believes the Peak District National Park should receive the same service as towns. It considers verges in rural areas are more important due to visibility issues on narrow roads and current verge cutting 2 x per year is inadequate. Vegetation can force pedestrians into the road from pavements and so need cutting in a more programmed way. Litter and dog bins in walking centres need emptying at least bi-weekly in the summer. Also concern over areas where parking congestion results in the need for more pavement sweepers. Not happy about road sweeping being reduced to 2 x per year. Four times should be a minimum and needs to be scheduled to coincide with final leaf fall to prevent hazards from frozen mulch. Also concerned that no action to requests for special events.
- Middleton Smerril Parish Council acknowledged the proposed reduction in street and pavement cleaning but requested that cleaning is done when it wants it. It looks forward to a guaranteed service as it has been let down in Wells week and there was no sweep last autumn which left muck and debris on the road until the pavements were repaired.
- Chelmorton Parish concerned that no services are being proposed for villages. It seeks leaf clearance and gully cleaning several times per year and pavement and road sweeps.

Note: the same person is the clerk for Stanton in Peak, Youlgrave, Middleton Smerril and Chelmorton

Main comments received from members of the Derbyshire Dales Citizens' Panel:

Litter Bins

- Should be retained in hot-spots (tourist areas and residential areas where litter is a problem) and emptied more regularly (most comments). Some suggested increasing the number of bins in key locations or providing larger bins
- If the number of bins is reduced littering will increase

Litter

- Increase educational and promotional activity to help reduce littering and enforcement of littering
- Problems identified around fast food outlets – some suggested making the business responsible for cleaning up
- A constant barrowman (current arrangement) seems better than two visits a day in town centres
- Some identified a lack of litter clearance on key routes into towns e.g. Ashbourne

Dog fouling

- Increasing problem / should increase enforcement (some felt this should not be limited to play areas) (most comments)
- Could existing staff be used to increase enforcement e.g. those cleaning the streets / maintaining parks?
- Need more dog litter bins / empty those available more often

Leaf collection

- May need to be more regular in some areas where build up on pavements can be high

Mowing Verges

- Mow / maintain less frequently to encourage wildlife (most comments)
- Increase mowing around road junctions in rural areas
- Some rural areas not always mown twice a year now

Towns and Villages

- Tourism important to local economy – need well maintained town centres and public spaces

Sports clubs

- Maintenance should be handed over to clubs
- Club members should help with maintenance
- Services should be provided but at a cost to the clubs
- Proposals must allow sport to continue

General

- Support for more efficient management of resources
- Already clean and well maintained district / current standards pretty good

**Area Community Forums July 2013
Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance Review Consultation
Main findings**

1. Introduction

This report summarises the main findings from the July round of Area Community Forums. The Forums were conducted during the consultation on the future of the District Council's Street Cleansing and Ground Maintenance service.

2. Aims and Objectives

To seek views on key aspects of the review including:

- Merging the two services into a single 'Clean & Green' service
- Establishing two area-based teams so that we are more efficient
- Agreeing a new set of 'core standards' of service
- Improving standards of key services for the general public, but scaling back the high level of service to some local sports clubs
- Improving education and carrying out enforcement to help reduce litter and dog fouling

3. Methodology

The street cleansing and grounds maintenance review was discussed at the Northern Forum on 8 July (ABC), Southern Forum on 10 July (Ashbourne Library) and Central Area Forum on 22 July 2013 (Town Hall, Matlock). In total, 57 members of the public attended the forums (27 North, 10, South, 20 Central). A presentation was given setting out the context for and scope of the review. Forms were circulated summarising the new proposals. The notes (in full) from each forum are available on the District Councils' website.

4. Main Findings

4.1 The principle of directing more resources towards services benefitting the general public and therefore fewer resources towards services benefitting a small number of users

Those in the Northern area expressed more concern about this proposal and how it would impact on sports clubs and communities. The detail was more important than the principle. There should be some caution before reducing services to sports clubs as they were of great social and community value, particularly those which provide activities for young people which should be looked upon more favourably. A check was suggested to compare savings versus benefits.

The majority in the Central area agreed with the principle.

Representatives in the Southern area believed parishes could have a more proactive role in the delivery of local services. Groups should be encouraged to be self-sufficient. Voluntary services could also be encouraged to be involved.

4.2 Views on the new proposals to improve the standard of street cleansing and grounds maintenance

Northern

Concern was raised about whether litter in villages as well as towns would be responded to more quickly. The response provided was that resources could not be stretched to do this. There are not the resources to match residents' expectations and desires but the Environmental Protection Act is adhered to. More cost effective ways of working were being looked at, rather than withdrawing services. The comment was made that bowling greens boost tourism and aid the local economy. A suggestion was made that grass cutting could be delayed until the first week in July.

Central

Concern was raised about the reduction of services to small villages. It was stressed that verge cutting for highway safety would be maintained but verges in villages where safety is not such a concern may be reduced. There was also concern that bowling greens and cricket pitches may be less usable if less maintained. Reassurance was given that consultation with clubs is taking place.

Southern

Key concern was about increasing churchyard maintenance. If a churchyard has been closed the District Council has a legal responsibility to maintain it. We do not have the same obligation to maintain open churchyards. Other churchyard had been legally passed to the District Council to maintain and some are mown at a commercial rate. There was concern about where there are no relatives to maintain a grave and also the incentive to keep cemeteries well maintained due to the potential tourist interest in ancestry.

The other concern was emptying litter bins. The District Council used to empty over 2,500 bins provided by Town and Parish Councils but has stopped due to resource implications. Bins were being diverted to where they are most needed. Also some concern that there are fewer bins.

4.3 Proposal to increase enforcement against people littering and allowing dogs to foul

Northern

Strong views that people should have more respect for the environment. Suggestion to ask perpetrators not to leave dog bags as harmful to wildlife but equally it is difficult to come forward as a witness and so need someone in authority to enforce. Also some concern that more dog litter bins were not being installed.

Central

There is strong support for increased enforcement and also for education. But there was concern about the increased costs to carry out enforcement and whether additional staff might be needed. The response provided was that existing staff would have it incorporated

into their job with the hope that eventually there would be little need for it. A comment was made that the public have a role to play in taking evidence and notifying the District Council.

Dog free areas and keeping dogs on a lead are other enforcement measures.

Southern

Some concern over how enforcement would take place especially in small villages.

Hotspots in areas such as town centres and parks are being targeted. The service must be cost effective and aim for long term effects through educating, raising awareness and changing culture by encouraging communities to help themselves. A number of suggestions were made regarding increasing community involvement including getting schools involved, naming and shaming litter offenders (although some concern was also raised about potential safety issues), and sponsorship of litter bins.

4.4 Other comments, suggestions and questions (and responses where appropriate)

Northern

- More natural looking approaches to mowing were suggested, including introducing wild flowers, mowing less severely – though visibility is critical
- More permanent planting was suggested
- Concern was raised about weeds from gullies and general dirt at Enthovens, Darley Bridge
- Concern about any changes in frequency of gully emptying - this is set by DCC
- Problems with dog dirt in Bakewell
- Compliment for clearing up Bakewell after markets and question regarding who is responsible for taking rubbish left by stall holders – a vehicle is on site for disposal of waste
- Concern about rubbish blowing around on market days – everything is cleared by 7pm
- Understanding that Bakewell bowling green is maintained by the District Council but leased by the club.

Central

- Concern about inadequate street cleansing in Darley Dale – in the current contract there is a flexible approach but some planned sweeps have been missed so a return to a more systematic approach is being suggested
- Suggestion that people need educating to respect their area
- Query about reporting hotspots – the Environmental Hotline can be used
- Satisfaction with the frequency of mowing but concern about one part of Matlock Bath churchyard not being mown but knows that memorials are responsibility of the owner. Also concern about a dead tree in car park adjacent to churchyard – This will be looked into
- Concern about dangerous gravestones at closed churchyard at Tansley Methodist Church - the Council can only help if maintenance has been passed to it but we can provide advice on memorial safety
- Concern about potential flooding due to blocked gullies which sometimes are not emptied due to poor access. Reference was made to particular problems at Cromford - Gully emptying schedules are to be more sophisticated

- Suggestion was made that traders take some responsibility for drains in front of premises
- Concern re: chewing gum on pavements in Matlock Bath - Enforcement would hopefully prevent in future but machines to remove are costly

Southern

- Concern about reduction in frequency of services in areas like Shirley – monitoring of standards of service would be part of supervisors' new role
- Query about repair of roads and pavements after utility company undertakes work - utility's responsibility and DCC can now check and ensure satisfactorily reinstated.
- Request for inspectors to be more proactive in removing expired street signs – Government is encouraging reduction in street signs – this is a DCC matter
- Concern over quality of grass cutting in Shirley and Thorpe
- Query about frequency of gully emptying on A52 - should be once a year but hard to achieve due to resources, when service back in house should be more responsive and scheduled.
- Concern re: gullies at Shirley - better monitoring to ensure satisfactory work
- Also at Thorpe where flooding due to blocked gullies
- Increased enforcement welcomed