

Derbyshire Dales Council

Bringing together grounds maintenance and street cleansing

Cost: £3,600

Benefits: Target savings of £200,000 identified

The Council wanted a review of its grounds maintenance and street cleansing service with a view to identifying efficiency savings and looking at the possibility of bringing them together to form a streetscene department.

Objectives:

- ♦ Budget savings: identification of around 20% savings per annum
- ♦ High level overview of services provided: to look at how street cleansing and grounds maintenance were organised and make recommendations for improvement
- ♦ Challenge: constructively challenge service managers through a diagnostic workshop

Outcomes:

- ♦ Efficiency savings of £263,000 identified

Derbyshire Dales is located in the Peak District and covers an area of 306 square miles, the geography of which has a significant impact on the level of service due to the travel time involved in the day to day maintenance of the area. Tourism was also identified as a pressure that the services needed to respond to in a positive manner to ensure the image and reputation of the Council is maintained and promoted and that the much needed external income generated by tourism is maximised. The service recognises the need to positively respond to the financial pressures the Council is facing.

APSE carried out a diagnostic workshop with managers from the service and followed this up with a high level report. Senior managers present were responsible for a broad range of services including: grounds maintenance, street cleansing, cemeteries, parks, public conveniences and workshops. During the six days allocated to this diagnostic piece of work key priorities were identified through facilitating a workshop with the team, conducting a series of interviews and undertaking a high level analysis of the present methods of service delivery.

Key recommendations:

- ♦ Create a green and clean service: merging the services will reduce travel time, maximise vehicle use and create synergy within the service. A more holistic multi skilled workforce would maximise flexibility of this significant resource and facilitate better use of fleet and equipment. The current structure and job descriptions would also need to be reviewed to reflect these changes. The formation of the service would be best managed through an area management structure with resources allocated accordingly.
- ♦ Implement seasonal working hours: increasing hours by five more a week in the summer would save around 6000 hours of agency staff time a year.
- ♦ Reduce spend on overtime: by ensuring resources are not duplicated between the two services
- ♦ Review vehicle and plant maintenance costs: target a saving of 5%. An audit of vehicles and plant and their utilisation could result in a reduction of the need to hire and the identification of surplus fleet. Maintenance costs are high as a result of poor quality equipment as well as ineffective and uneconomical operational standards needs to be tackled.
- ♦ Core standards: introduction of core minimum standards of service to ensure consistency across the borough.
- ♦ Management data: robust financial monitoring data to allow managers to effectively make decisions on where resources should be best targeted.
- ♦ Community leadership: the Council should introduce a 3Es framework of Education, Engagement and Enforcement to more proactively care for the local environment. Look to approach local businesses to adopt a voluntary code of conduct in relation to their responsibilities in caring for the environment.
- ♦ Enforcement: the Council adopts the powers available to it in relation to littering and dog fouling and delegate the responsibility for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) to a wider group of officers.
- ♦ Implement a service improvement plan: development of a plan to drive the service forward in its pursuit of continuous improvement.