



## Oxford City Council - Streetscene

**Cost: £3,600**      **Length of review: 6 days**      **Benefits: optimised working arrangements**

Oxford City Council undertook a review of their streetscene service and required a diagnostic workshop to complement this process. The workshop utilised a number of established business planning tools to conduct a high level assessment of business processes and factors which influence current service outcomes. This included an evaluation of the external pressures affecting the service, internal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, thinking about the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the service, including the identification of who are the customers of the service, and a look at performance monitoring via APSE's Performance Networks benchmarking model.

Part of the analysis identified Oxford as having a high number of visitors to the city who probably would not have the same level of interest in the service as long as they find the area clean and tidy. The city is predominately urban, with a high population density and the largest student population of any local authority area in England. This presents an additional challenge to the service.

### **Objectives:**

- **Service improvements:** identify strengths, weaknesses and the scope for service improvements
- **Budget savings:** identification of possible areas of cost reductions

The review included analysis of performance data for the service. The main measure of quality for this service are the national indicators for cleanliness (NI 195) which record inspection results on a variety of different land classes to establish how many fall below an acceptable level (grade B). APSE used the combined score for litter and detritus as an on-going performance indicator within Performance Networks. For 2010/11 the Council has reported an incredible improvement to just 0.50% which will no doubt place it as the lowest or close to the lowest in the country. This means that of the 900 inspections required over the course of the year, some 895 would have been graded B or higher.

## Key recommendations:

- **Cost centres review:** several cost centres should be reviewed to establish if reductions could be made. In particular, the amount of off road time identified for the large mechanical sweepers needs to be significantly reduced to increase productivity as well as value for money.
- **Expectations:** need to be managed, widely publicising service standards would assist in achieving this aim. A score for customer satisfaction of 70% has been reported, just above APSE's 2009/10 average of 68.47%. Given the level of quality reported on NI 195 at the same time this would be a slightly disappointing result. Often, this comes down to public expectation as much as the standard of cleanliness being achieved. It is important to provide as much information as widely as possible about the aims of the service and how Streetscene go about achieving these objectives. Customers completing surveys will then be more inclined to measure the service against how well it performs in meeting those objectives rather than just how clean their street is that day.
- **Education and enforcement:** both areas were cited as requiring further focus, thus helping to avoid litter being dropped in the first place. This proves more challenging in Oxford with a large number of visitors and students to the city.
- **Multi-tasking:** the service could look at the potential for improving productivity through multi-tasking some of its non-specialist grounds maintenance and street cleansing tasks.
- **Work study:** would be useful to assess levels of productivity being achieved by different elements of the organisation through direct observation employing work study techniques.