

Street Mangement Scrutiny Task Group



Final Report - July 2007

KEY

BVPI – Best Value Performance Indicator

ENCAMS – Environmental Campaigns (charity)

LPSA – Local Public Service Agreement

LSP – Local Strategic Partnership

OSC – Overview and Scrutiny Management
Committee

WiSB – Wiltshire Strategic Board

WTOG – Wiltshire Technical Officer Group

Chairman's Foreword

As all councillors will know, the condition of the street scene is a key local concern for the public. I was therefore delighted when asked to chair the Street Management Task Group.

The review has been a successful one. Through the hard work of the members and excellent officer support, we have captured how a project is delivered by a local strategic partnership.

WiSB is delivering on street management. Targets are being met and joint working has led to improvements for the public. However, the task group has recognised that for this to continue a longer term approach must be adopted.

As Chairman I wish to thank my fellow task group members for their support and commitment. Thanks also go to the witnesses for the open and positive way they approached evidence gathering.

Finally, I would like to commend this report to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for endorsement.

Ian West

PURPOSE

- (1) This report is a summary of the work undertaken by the Street Management Task Group February – June 2007.

MEMBERSHIP

Mr Ian West	Liberal Democrat member for Wilton and Wylde
Mr Ross Henning	Liberal Democrat member for Chippenham Central
Mr Tony Trotman	Conservative member for Calne
Mr Charles Winchcombe	Conservative member for Devizes South

WHY SCRUTINISE?

- (2) Feedback from canvassing during the May 2005 County Council election suggested that the local environment and street management was a real concern for the public. Improved street management was one of the objectives of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).
- (3) Research commissioned by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSC) in 2006 concluded that there was a positive role for the scrutiny of the LSP. Scrutiny could help hold the partnership to account, develop policy and address the perceived democratic deficit.
- (4) The White Paper – ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’ (Oct 2006) called for a wider and stronger role for scrutiny, including scrutiny of external bodies such as LSPs.

BACKGROUND

- (5) The Wiltshire Strategic Board (WiSB) was formed as the county’s Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Within its community strategy - “Creating a County Fit for our Children 2004-2014”, WiSB identified ‘improved public satisfaction with the street scene’ as one of its **four** priorities.
- (6) WiSB, through the Street Scene Project, called for its members to work together to ensure the street and lane scene of Wiltshire was of the highest possible quality to provide a clean, safe and healthy environment.
- (7) To deliver these objectives the Street Scene Project Board established three key elements of work:-

- (i) **Street Management**
 - (ii) Street Design and Regeneration
 - (iii) Street Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour
- (8) The OSC at its meeting of 9th November 2006 established the task group to review the **street management** element of the project, with the following **terms of reference**:

‘To review that the Wiltshire Strategic Board’s Street Management objectives are being met through policy, procurement, procedures and partnership, and delivering value for money for the residents of Wiltshire.’

STREET MANAGEMENT

- (9) To understand the concept of street management, the task group was introduced to the factors that contributed towards public satisfaction:
- (i) litter-free town centres
 - (ii) condition of road and pavement surface
 - (iii) weed killing and maintenance of grassed areas
 - (iv) enforcement of parking restrictions
 - (v) well-lit public spaces
 - (vi) quality and location of street furniture (e.g. benches, street lighting, signs, litter bins, railings)
 - (vii) removal of abandoned vehicles
- (10) To translate these into a series of project objectives, street management utilised the Local Public Service Agreement LPSA. Signed in 2006 and running to March 31 2008, the LPSA had 2 targets relating to street management – BVPI 199a and public satisfaction.
- (11) BVPI 199a is a measure of litter and detritus, where litter comprises of synthetic materials visible to people and detritus is grit, old leaf & blossom fall etc.

How is BVPI 199a measured?

- (12) The BVPI 199a data is collected by assessing 300 transects across the county three times a year. A transect on a highway is normally 50 metres long, extending the whole width of the street or highway from backline to backline. It will include footways, road channels, carriageways, pedestrian refuges, splitter islands, central reservations, and may also include landscaped areas.
- (13) The transect is then graded between A - D, where A is ‘no litter or detritus’. BVPI 199a is the percentage of sites surveyed that fall below a Grade B for cleanliness. The target for Wiltshire as a whole was to achieve a level of no more than 16.25% falling below Grade B.

A SAMPLE TRANSECT



The transect dimensions are illustrated by the border.

Litter Grade A - no litter



Litter Grade D - heavy litter with significant accumulations



Detritus Grade A - No detritus



Detritus Grade D - Heavy with significant accumulations



- (14) The LPSA second target related to public satisfaction with the street scene, to which opinions on street management would heavily contribute. The target was to achieve a 'street scene' public satisfaction level of 46.5%, an enhancement of 12.5% on current performance. The People's Voice survey of July 2008 would determine this result.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS

- (15) In addition to hosting a series of evidence gathering meetings with selected witnesses, the task group was given access to the project delivery team meetings. Here, members observed and contributed to the agenda, with items discussed including the forthcoming smoking ban and its potential impact on cigarette related litter.

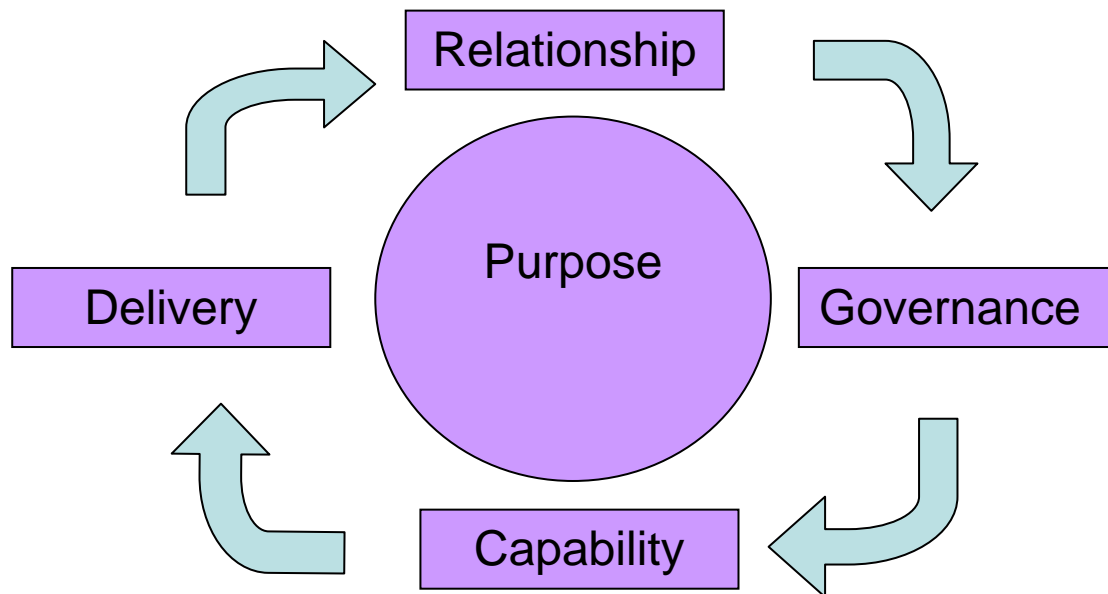
Date	Purpose
Feb 12 2007	Scoping Meeting
March 8 2007	Wiltshire Technical Officer Group
March 28 2007	Tracy Carter – Assistant Director for Operations, Environmental Services, Wiltshire County Council
April 25 2007	Tracy Carter - Assistant Director for Operations, Kevin Gibbs (Project Manager), Renate Malton (Project Officer), Judi Gardner (Communications Officer)
May 10 2007	Wiltshire Technical Officer Group
June 8 2007	Tracy Carter - Assistant Director for Operations, John Simmonds (Planning Officer- N. Wilts District Council) John Rogers - Customer First Project Manager
June 29 2007	Final report

RESULTS

- (16) John Rogers – Customer First Project Manager was invited as a witness because of his experience of delivering projects within local government partnerships. During this meeting the task group was introduced to the 5 elements required for successful partnership delivery.

The evidence collected within the review has been interpreted and structured around these 5 elements:

THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF PARTNERSHIP



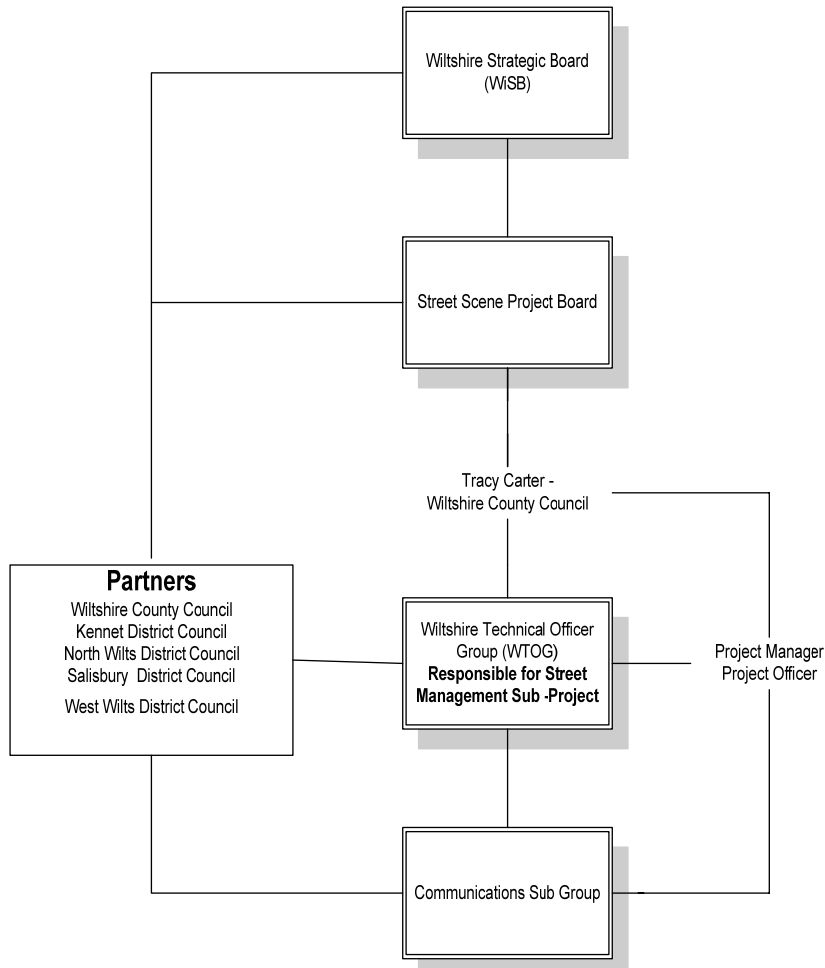
PURPOSE

- (17) To be successful the task group learnt that a project must have a common purpose to which each of the partners has 'buy in'. The review established a strong purpose associated with the project, which was to improve public satisfaction with Wiltshire's street scene.
- (18) For Street Management, the lower level 'purpose' came through the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA), and the targets surrounding litter and detritus.
- (19) All 5 councils through their respective policies and individual budgets demonstrated a commitment to street management within Wiltshire.

GOVERNANCE

- (20) The role of governance in a project is critical when defining targets, agreeing strategy, managing resource and controlling delivery.
- (21) The task group found delivery was driven through by the consensus of partners, rather than a more formal project management approach, where a project board delegates through its project manager.
- (22) The task group invested a significant amount of its time in attempting to understand the governance structure for the project. The structure chart below represents the results:

Street Scene Project Structure



- (23) The Street Scene Project Board was chaired by the Chief Executive of Kennet District Council – Mark Boden and its membership consisted of generally chief officer and assistant director level from the 5 councils. Tracy Carter – Assistant Director for Operations, Wiltshire County Council represented the Project Board during the task group’s evidence gathering.
- (24) Beneath the Project Board was the Wiltshire Technical Officer Group (WTOG). Meeting approximately every 6 weeks WTOG was very much the project delivery team. Acting as an interface between the Project Board and WTOG was Tracy Carter. Tracy was the lead officer within WTOG, with the other officers consisting of district council operations managers.
- (25) WTOG was supported by a project manager (part time) and a project officer (full time), who both reported to Tracy Carter.

- (26) Sitting under WTOG was a communications sub –group represented by communication officers from the 5 councils.
- (27) The task group established that WTOG was relatively autonomous, in that it was given responsibility for driving the project forward. The Project Board met infrequently with the last meeting held in May 2007; the first for over 12 months.
- (28) The task group was concerned that the Project Board had delegated too much responsibility to WTOG and has addressed this within the recommendations.

DELIVERY

- (29) The evidence highlighted that in terms of the street management targets the project **was** delivering. This may partially explain the level of interaction between the Street Scene Project Board and WTOG, as the Board was satisfied that the project was on track.
- (30) The table below illustrates that already in 06/07 each of the four districts were ahead of their March 2008 BVPI 199a targets. The average performance improved from 26.25% to 13.33%, representing an overall improvement of 12.92 percentage points. The improvements came about largely because of a focus on the service. Operationally, additional road sweepers were hired in and a greater emphasis was placed on cleansing. Also, through joint working and workshops it emerged that the authorities had previously been too harsh when assessing BVPI 199a.

2006/07	NWDC	Kennet	Salisbury	West Wilts	County Average
Target	17.25	15	15	17.25	16.25
April - July	15	9.65	17.2	20	15.46
Aug - Nov	18	5.27	11.64	16	12.73
Dec - March	15	7.19	10.98	14	11.79
District council performance	16	7.37	13.27	16.67	13.33

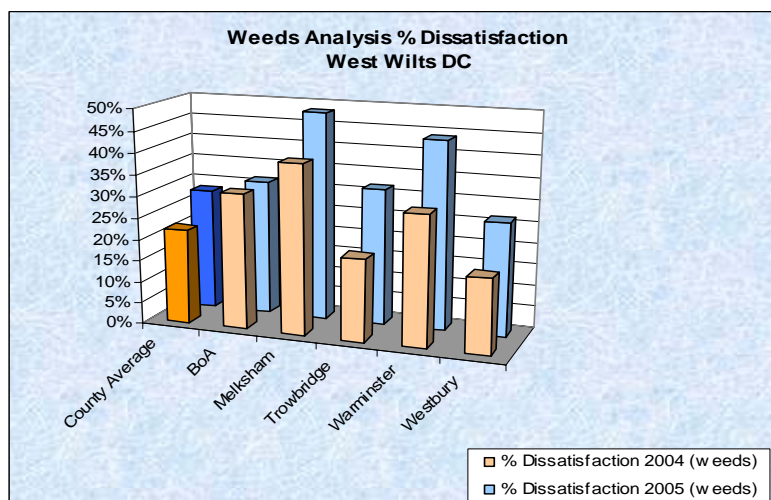
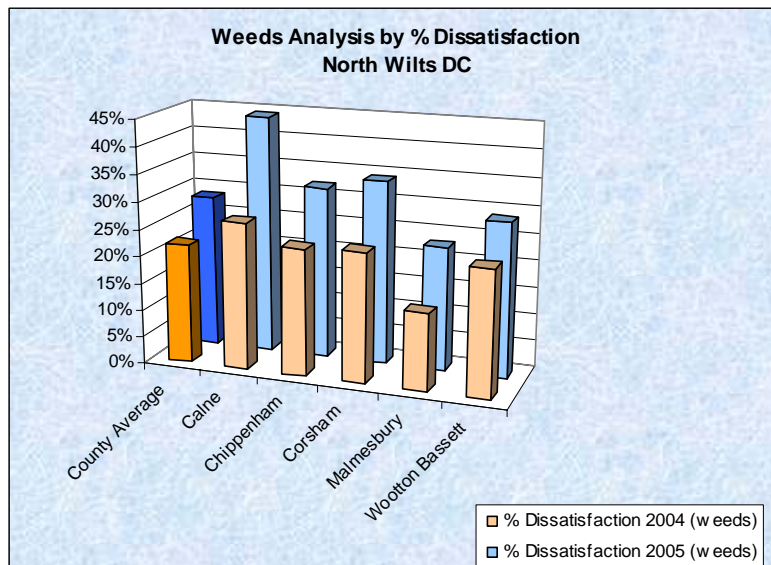
- (31) The July 1st smoking ban was a concern for the project team, as experiences in Ireland and Wales suggested cigarette related waste increased by 20% following their respective bans. WTOG worried that this may affect performance against BVPI 199a, although it was noted that the majority of 300 transects would not be outside public houses, so these fears may be unfounded. Concern was also raised by WTOG that planning law would inhibit the erection of cigarette bins, especially outside listed buildings. Evidence received by the task group suggested that as long as the bin was free standing it would not require planning permission. Although, it was recommended that the local conservation officer be consulted in this process.

- (32) The second target surrounding Street Management was to increase public satisfaction with street scene to 46.5% (to be determined through People’s Voice survey, July 2008). There was a belief that by delivering on BVPI 199a, public satisfaction would increase accordingly. To compliment this work WTOG formed a communications sub group. Achievements to date included web site improvements, a communication strategy and the development of smoking ban posters.

Wiltshire County Council Web Page

The screenshot shows the Wiltshire County Council website. At the top left is the council's logo with the text 'Wiltshire COUNTY COUNCIL is rated "Excellent" by Audit Commission' and five stars. To the right is a navigation menu with links: 'About Us', 'Council', 'What's new', 'News', 'Whats On', and 'U'. Below the logo is a search bar with the text 'Search the site' and 'Type your search her'. A vertical sidebar on the left lists various services: 'A to Z of Services', 'Advice and Benefits', 'Business', 'Community and Living', 'Council and Democracy', 'Education and Learning', 'Environment and Planning', 'Health and Social Care', 'Jobs and Careers', 'Leisure and Culture', and 'Transport and Streets'. At the bottom of the sidebar is the 'Customer Contact Centre' information, including an email link 'Customer Care', a telephone number '01225 713000', and a link to 'View Out of hours numbers'. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: 'You are here: Wiltshire County Council > Home > Environment and Planning > Wiltshire street scene'. The title of the page is 'Wiltshire street scene A - Z'. Below the title is a paragraph explaining that Street Scene is one of the four key priority projects adopted by the Wiltshire Strategic Board (WSB) and incorporates a number of services that have an important impact on the 'street' and public open spaces in terms of their appearance and condition. Street Scene aims to improve the attractiveness, safety, cleanliness and usability of Wiltshire's Street and lane scene. Below this text is a photograph of a person pushing a green street cleaning machine. Below the photograph is the text 'Wiltshire street scene is made up of the following group:' followed by a bulleted list of five district councils: Kennet District Council, North Wilts District Council, Salisbury District Council, West Wilts District Council, and Wiltshire County Council.

- (33) The Project officer and manager, as shown on the project structure diagram, had also supported this objective by interpreting data extracted from the People’s Voice surveys and producing graphical information to illustrate hot spot areas (see below). This was used by the district councils to help identify their programmes of work.



- (34) A further factor to affect satisfaction is the way that calls are responded to when the public report a street management problem. At the time of scrutinising WTOG was looking to develop a consistent approach to handling customer contact, from the initial call through to resolution. The task group has recognised the importance of this work within the recommendations.
- (35) The members also reviewed in more detail the project structure and how this helped delivery.

WTOG worked on informal rule by consensus i.e. an issue would be discussed by WTOG. The group then agreed that implementation would assist the project. The respective officer then returned to their council and attempted to deliver.

- (36) WTOG did not have a dedicated budget. The only additional funding for the project was £95k sourced through the LPSA. This funded the Project Manager and Project Officer roles. WTOG therefore to move

things forward had to work within the budgets and policies of their respective councils.

- (37) WTOG also delivered improvements at operational level. For instance WTOG, with support from ENCAMS (the environmental charity who run the Keep Britain Tidy campaign), held a workshop to develop best practice. This helped to develop a more consistent approach towards the categorising of grades of litter and detritus.



- (38) One area of concern around delivery was that the focus was almost all towards the LPSA assessment in 2008. There was no visible plan for post-2008. This linked into the problem that there did not appear to be a project plan, detailing the various project milestones. Funding for the Project Manager and Officer ran until March 2008, following which without any identified funding this staff resource would also be lost. At the time of the review the future of these posts was uncertain.
- (39) Reporting between WTOG and the Street Scene Project Board was limited to the performance information around the LPSA targets, which was the same information provided to WiSB. The task group was concerned that the detail of reporting did not keep the Project Board members updated on issues and developments, and this has been addressed within the recommendations.

CAPABILITY

- (40) 'Resource management' and 'degree of control' are critical in determining the capability of a project.

WTOG acted as the project delivery team for Street Management. However, WTOG's capability was made more challenging because of the lack of a dedicated budget and working within the parameters of 5 different councils.

RELATIONSHIP

- (41) The task group appreciated that it is relationship which holds partnerships together until the project is delivered.
- (42) Since project commencement all of the district council officers represented in WTOG had changed. This presented a challenge as relationship building is a long term process. Another issue to affect

relationship was the lack of a dedicated budget for the project. Officers, who had joined the project team with initial enthusiasm, found this dampened with the realisation that they had to achieve targets within their existing budget and policies.

- (43) The evidence suggested the one council for Wiltshire debate had not affected the relationship at WTOG level, with district and county council officers meeting regularly and attempting positively to address the predominant issue of the July 1 smoking ban.
- (44) However, the project team had been unable to agree a logo for Street Scene, partly due to the partners wishing to retain their own identities.

(45) CONCLUSIONS

The review of street management introduced the OSC to the work of the Wiltshire LSP. Through this early scrutiny the task group has discovered how a strategic project is delivered, governed, resourced and reported. The evidence gathered has also enabled the task group to make the following informed conclusions:

- The project was currently over-achieving on its targets, although the July 1st smoking ban had caused a degree of uncertainty in relation to the level of litter this would generate
- The project had encouraged shared working and consistency, allowing officers from the district councils to adopt the same techniques towards the assessment of BVPI 199a
- WTOG was delegated responsibility to deliver the project by the Project Board
- WTOG did not have a dedicated project budget. Delivery was funded through the existing budgets of the 5 councils.
- Communication between Board & WTOG was limited to performance information around LPSA targets
- The project was heavily focussed towards the LPSA and the 2008 assessment. There was little evidence for post 2008 planning

(46) RECOMMENDATIONS

The task group recommendations are geared to developing a longer term approach to project delivery, reinforcement of the role of the project board and the proposal for further scrutiny of both the Street Scene Project and the wider work of WiSB:

- (1) WTOG is asked to produce quarterly reports for the Street Scene Project Board, updating performance, key project issues, developments and outlining key milestones for the next quarter (para – 41).
- (2) Post 2008 plan – WTOG and the Street Scene Project Board should formally prepare for post LPSA, including the key issue of identifying funding for the Project Manager and Officer roles.
- (3) Project Plan - the task group recommends that a more formal project plan is adopted. This will support recommendation 1's proposed reporting mechanism.
- (4) Continued scrutiny - the task group recommends further scrutiny of the project. The format suggested is for an individual member to meet periodically with Tracy Carter to review progress.
- (5) Continued scrutiny of the Wiltshire Strategic Board projects – the experiences of the task group suggest that further scrutiny of WiSB would be valuable (paras 5-7).
- (6) The task group recommends that the operation managers within WTOG liaise with their respective conservation officers on the issue of cigarette bins in conservation areas.
- (7) WTOG to continue to develop a consistent approach towards the handling and response to public 'street management' enquiries (para 34).

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- (47) This task group report will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the 6 September 2007 for endorsement, following which it will be submitted to the Street Scene Project Board for consideration and decision. A copy will also be sent to the relevant Cabinet member and shared with the district councils.
- (48) The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will monitor implementation of the recommendations with a review to be undertaken in 12 months

Report Author: Ceri Williams – Scrutiny Officer