

Public Spaces Diagnostic Assessment

Appendix 1

Summary of strengths / weaknesses

Area of focus	Strengths	Weaknesses	Notes	Update
<p>How well does the council contribute to the management of the physical environment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly adopted local plan • Invested in environmental framework & proactive approach to conservation • Guidance used to influence good quality design & management of public space • Many town improvements to enhance street scene • Use of developer contributions (S106) • Enforcements made in variety of areas • Un-audited figures show improvement in speed of planning decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audited planning PIs below average • Staff shortages led to service failures and missed targets • Some customer care issues eg: poor and not improving customer satisfaction rates for planning • Some gaps in partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the Inspector noted the strengths of the planning service our comparative performance in terms of the Best Value Performance Indicators, including customer satisfaction, was seen as a weakness. • The Inspector cited specifically work with local businesses and work on promoting green travel plans. On the other hand our work with voluntary sector groups and the recent waterside development are cited as good examples of successful partnership working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets for improved performance against statutory indicators are included in the Best Vale Performance Plan, and the Planning service plan. • Work in partnership with local business includes: support for the Corporate Environmental Advisory Centre - providing direct support to local business on environmental management and a quarterly newsletter; SAVE (Support Aylesbury Vale's Environment) involving small business in the local agenda 21 group; Support provided through routine links eg: licensing, food, health & Safety and pollution matters often leads to advice & support on other issues • A report on the Green Travel plan to be considered by the Environment Scrutiny Committee on 26 November 2004

Area of focus	Strengths	Weaknesses	Notes	Update
Does the council help keep the locality clean?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste collected in the best 25 per cent and improving • Good & improving customer satisfaction rates • Fast response to fly tipping • Generally clean and tidy public spaces • Prosecutions and enforcements made • High composting take up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No improvement to recycling rates for four years – lack of firm strategy to increase recycling above 18 per cent • Will not meet government recycling targets • Little joint working on initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The inspector noted the council’s plans to increase recycling, although not to Government targets • The inspector cited specifically work with local business, parish councils, utility companies and the railway authority. On the other hand our work with the Bucks Joint Waste Committee and Bucks Glass Consortium are cited as good examples of successful partnership working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans are underway to increase our recycling rates by 4% with the introduction of a kerbside collection of glass. Included in the Medium Term Work Programme • Our Contracts Management team has been working closely with these organisations on litter, abandoned vehicles and fly-tipping in particular.