



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Draft

Street Cleaning

Scrutiny Inquiry Report

Introduction and Scope



1. Introduction

- 1.1 Disposing of litter inappropriately is not only antisocial and unpleasant, but is also illegal. Yet research by ENCAMS (Environmental Campaigns) reported an estimated cost of £547 million to local authorities in 2005-2006 to clean and clear streets of litter and refuse. More recently in March 2009, the joint report of the independent think tank, Policy Exchange, and the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) states that since the 1960s, the amount of litter dropped in the UK has increased by approximately 500%.
- 1.2 Whilst acknowledging that the Environmental Protection Act 1990 imposes a duty on land owners and duty bodies to keep specified land clear from litter and refuse, it is important to remember that we all play a part in the quality of the local environment and therefore have a responsibility to deal with litter in an acceptable way.
- 1.3 Whilst our report does acknowledge the need to educate individuals and influence behaviour towards littering, the primary focus of our inquiry has been around the statutory duty of the Council in keeping land clear from litter and refuse and exploring opportunities for further

improvements in the way that street cleaning services are delivered to the residents of Leeds.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The purpose of our inquiry was to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
- Legislation governing street cleaning services, including the National Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006;
 - Roles and responsibilities of the Council for street cleaning services in Leeds;
 - Common perceptions around street cleaning services and the measure of success used;
 - Comparative case studies of successful beacon authorities in relation to the 'better public places' theme;
 - Street cleaning enforcement powers of the Council and opportunities for joined up enforcement with other individuals, groups and organisations;
 - Frequency and monitoring of street cleaning services;

Introduction and Scope

- Resource pressures relating to street cleaning services;
- The methods of community engagement used to reflect local priorities for street cleaning in Leeds.

3. Witnesses

- 3.1 During our inquiry, we sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including ENCAMS who provided a professional and independent opinion based around their experiences of working with other local authorities in addressing issues around street cleaning.
- 3.2 As the focus of our inquiry was around delivering effective street cleaning services to the residents of Leeds, we also acknowledged a need to gather opinions of local residents about the current standards of street cleanliness and their experiences of street cleaning services.
- 3.3 Using the local media, we invited residents to write in and share their experiences and opinions with the Scrutiny Board. We received numerous letters during our inquiry, which formed part of our evidence base and helped us to identify common issues and potential hotspot areas across the city.
- 3.4 We would like to sincerely thank everyone for their contribution and commitment to our inquiry and hope that our report reflects the high level of importance placed upon this issue by all stakeholders, including the public, and also the demand for this issue to become a priority for the Council.

Conclusions and Recommendations



4. Delivering the statutory duties of the Council

4.1 It is the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) that imposes a duty under section 89 on land owners and duty bodies to keep specified land clear from litter and refuse. For local authorities, this includes all publicly maintained highways, housing estates, open spaces (including parks) for which they are responsible. We understand that this duty is not transferable, so where cleaning contractors are used to carry out the cleaning on behalf of local authorities, it is still the duty body that remains responsible.

4.2 The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006 accompanies the EPA. The main objective of the Code is to provide practical guidance on the discharge of the duties under section 89 of the EPA by establishing reasonable and acceptable standards of cleanliness. Leeds City Council therefore has to abide by, and fully understand the implications of, this Code of Practice.

4.3 Whilst Leeds City Council is the responsible body, as defined within the Code of Practice, historically this responsibility has been delegated to a number of different service areas who have been vested with the responsibility to look after

individual areas of land. For example, Parks and Countryside are responsible for all parks and open spaces over 0.2 hectares in size; Education Leeds is responsible for all school grounds and associated land; the ALMOs are responsible for all land forming part of Leeds City Council's housing stock; Highways Services have the statutory responsibility for maintaining the adopted highway across Leeds in a safe and clean condition; and Streetscene Services is responsible for keeping clean all adopted Highways as notified by Highway Services.

4.4 The individual functions carried out by Streetscene Services include gully cleansing; litter bins; street sweeping; manual litter picking; street washing; fly tipping removal; graffiti removal; needle picking; public convenience cleaning; and leaf clearing.

4.5 However, despite such delegations in place, we acknowledged that most services continue to receive complaints about the environmental cleanliness of land that does not fall within their particular service area.

4.6 Whilst the Council's call centre acts as the single point of contact for the public when dealing with

Conclusions and Recommendations



street cleaning complaints, there was a general acknowledgment from all stakeholders that the current fragmented approach makes it more difficult to establish lines of accountability and can therefore cause delays when referring and dealing with such complaints.

4.7 Whilst we acknowledge that the development of a shared digital mapping system could assist in determining lines of accountability, this still does not address the underlying problem of having different service areas handling complaints disjointedly, which consequently can lead to confusion and sometimes duplication of work.

4.8 The current fragmented approach towards street cleaning services is very complex and confusing to the public, particularly when trying to establish the boundaries between private and ALMO land. In view of the fact that the duty placed upon local authorities is not transferable (i.e. the Council as a whole remains accountable despite such delegation arrangements in place), we did question whether it would be more sensible to simplify the process and allow for one service area to have the budget for street cleaning and become the responsible lead to undertake

the Council's duty to keep the city clean.

4.9 However, there were some reservations expressed to the Scrutiny Board by the different service areas and particularly from ALMOs. These are summarised below.

4.10 Firstly, we learned that apart from the grounds maintenance budget, there is no core funding source for street cleaning activities carried out by the ALMOs and that such activities are incorporated within their wider estate management role. This would therefore make it difficult to identify and separate out a specific budget in which to transfer to another service area. It was highlighted that in terms of any resources being transferred, this would be in the form of existing staff that carry out such activities, such as the Estate Caretaking Teams, and that any reduction in estate management resources would put further pressure on the ALMOs in delivering other service standards.

4.11 It was also highlighted that a lot of time and effort had been invested in working with local tenants in terms of carrying out estate walkabouts and inspections to help identify particular environmental hotspots.

Conclusions and Recommendations



- 4.12 We noted that each ALMO has in place its own service standards, some of which have been agreed with tenants to reflect local priorities, and therefore a question was raised about whether the transfer of ALMO staff to another service area would detract from the local service standards already achieved by the ALMOs. It was felt that this would very much depend on any new management processes put in place and the level of influence that the ALMOs would have in terms of services provided within their specific areas.
- 4.13 Concerns were also raised about whether a single service area would be able to replicate the innovative approaches adopted by the ALMOs to address local needs. For example, the use of ALMO staff and also commissioned staff from local social enterprises to provide an enhanced garden maintenance service for their more vulnerable tenants, which has received recognition as part of the audit inspection process and is deemed invaluable to those residents that receive this service.
- 4.14 Whilst we do acknowledge the importance of maintaining such local services, these are deemed to be enhanced services. In view of this, it prompted a need to clarify a baseline service for street cleaning in order to establish what would constitute as an enhanced service and who would be responsible for managing and funding such services if street cleaning was to be transferred to a single service area.
- 4.15 The wider issues around minimum cleanliness standards and baseline service data are addressed further within our report.
- 4.16 In relation to Parks and Countryside, we learned that staff are generally employed to carry out site based horticultural duties, primarily within parks, and that cleansing responsibilities were just a small element of this work. In employing such a multi-skilled workforce, it was therefore considered very difficult to identify a specific budget and staff resource for such cleansing responsibilities.
- 4.17 In relation to the cleansing of school grounds and other associated education land, we noted that where school grounds are clearly defined with parameter fencing then the cleansing responsibilities lie with the school.
- 4.18 Each of the 249 schools within Leeds is allocated a budget, which includes an amount for maintenance work. Such

Conclusions and Recommendations



maintenance work would involve cleansing responsibilities and it was explained that these responsibilities would generally form part of the school caretaker's role. We

acknowledge that where the responsibility for education land is clearly vested with the schools themselves, it would be very difficult for this responsibility to be transferred to the Council, particularly when trying to access the land, and therefore this responsibility should remain with the schools' governing bodies.

4.19 However, we noted that difficulties have arisen in the past where the land is vested with education but outside of any defined parameters. As the cleansing responsibilities for this land remains with Education Leeds, they have previously commissioned agencies to deal with fly tipping problems when required. In view of the fact that the maintenance of such land is being undertaken by Education Leeds on an ad hoc basis, there was a general agreement that there would be merits in transferring the responsibility of this land to a single service area within the Council.

4.20 We would also apply this same principle to formal parks given that there are also clear boundaries and clear responsibilities in place for the

maintenance of such parks. However, the responsibility for other associated land vested with Parks and Countryside could be transferred more easily.

4.21 In recognising the aspirations of Leeds to become a 'one Council', it is clear that the current arrangements in place for street cleaning are not providing a seamless service from the initial contact and referral stage through to service delivery.

4.22 Whilst acknowledging some of the implications of transferring all responsibility for street cleaning to a single service area, we believe that in principle this is the most appropriate approach in terms of establishing clear lines of accountability.

4.23 Obviously with such responsibility comes the need for adequate resources to be put into place too. However, our inquiry has highlighted that the complexity of the current arrangements has made it very difficult to identify and separate out specific resources in which to simply transfer to a single service area.

4.24 In view of this, we recommend that Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods conducts a piece of research over the next 6 months to determine the wider implications, including any

Conclusions and Recommendations



consequential management arrangements, and potential costs involved in bringing the Council's street cleaning responsibilities into one single service area and that the findings of this research is brought back to Scrutiny for consideration.

a more co-ordinated and coherent service across the city. We therefore recommend that the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods produces an action plan within the next 6 months aimed at improving such communication links.

Recommendation 1

That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods conducts a piece of research over the next 6 months to determine the wider implications, including any consequential management arrangements, and potential costs involved in bringing the Council's street cleaning responsibilities into one single service area.

That the findings of this research is brought back to Scrutiny for consideration.

Recommendation 3

That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods produces an action plan within the next 6 months aimed at strengthening communication links between the different street cleaning service areas.

Recommendation 2

That unless the research findings from recommendation 1 identifies clear reasons not to, then the Executive Board supports the principle of having one single service area responsible for undertaking the Council's duty to keep the city clean.

5. Standards of cleanliness across the City

5.1 ENCAMS highlighted that whilst street cleaning standards within Leeds have improved over recent years, there still remain areas across the city that require further improvement.

5.2 We noted that Leeds was not alone, as other Metropolitan Authorities have also struggled to try to address problems around street cleanliness standards. It was also recognised that the legacy of Competitive Compulsory Tendering had contributed towards the complexity of the arrangements now in place for delivering street cleaning services.

4.25 With regard to the existing arrangements in place, there is a clear need for communication links between the different street cleaning service areas to be strengthened in order to achieve

Conclusions and Recommendations



5.3 In terms of performance measures, we learned that National Indicator 195, which was introduced in April 2008, had replaced the Best Value Performance Indicator BV199, used for measuring environmental cleanliness.

5.4 The data for this indicator is based on surveys carried out three times per year covering five electoral wards on each visit and assessing twelve land use areas.

5.5 The following table shows how Leeds was performing against other comparable Core Cities in terms of the previous Best Value Performance Indicator (BV199) in relation to litter and detritus and also the spend per head of population.

2007/08	Spend per head of population	BVPI 199a (litter and detritus)
Liverpool	£26.31	7%
Manchester	£23.31	8%
Nottingham	£16.98	8%
Birmingham	£17.96	10%
Bristol	£13.14	13%
Leeds	£14.24	13%
Newcastle	£28.94	16%
Sheffield	£12.55	16%

5.6 The BV199a result states the percentage of streets across Leeds that were found to be in an unsatisfactory condition, therefore the lower the result the better the performance. Leeds' performance was considered average when compared to the other Core Cities, yet Leeds has one of the lowest spends per head of population.

5.7 ENCAMS placed particular importance on utilising resources effectively and achieving a minimum standard of cleanliness across the city. Examples were given of where other local authorities had prioritised resources within city centre areas, which consequently led to a reduced service being provided to residential areas.

5.8 Examples of street cleanliness standards across the city were also shared with the Scrutiny Board by all witnesses, including members of the public who had written to the Chair of the Board.

5.9 We recognise that even within neighbouring areas there can be significant differences in terms of cleanliness standards.

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.10 As part of our inquiry, we queried the street cleanliness standards set across the city and sought clarification on who was responsible for setting these standards.

5.11 We acknowledged that the main objective of the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006 is to provide reasonable and acceptable standards of cleanliness. It therefore sets out grades of cleanliness, along with accompanying illustrations.

5.12 We learned that such definitions are included within the Council's Strategic Summary of the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006 and are as follows:



5.13 The Code recognises that a grade A cannot be maintained at all times and that it is generally accepted by the public that a grade B is an acceptable level of

Conclusions and Recommendations



cleansing for short periods of time. However, a grade A must be achieved on a regular basis after cleansing.

people most of the time. This is to be responded to within one day (this means by 6 pm the following evening).

5.14 Litter accumulation and deposition is dependent on numerous factors, with levels of pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic being the most obvious. Other factors include the time of year, time of day, the natural and physical features of the location and the presence of structural and physical items that could affect the area to be cleansed.

- *Low intensity* of use are lightly trafficked areas that do not impact upon most people's lives most of the time such as rural roads. This is responded to within 14 days.

5.15 It was highlighted that the most important factors are the intensity of activity in an area and health and safety limitations. The Code of Practice reflects these factors and highlights four main intensity zones (High, Medium, Low and Special Circumstances) with corresponding maximum response times. These are set out below:

5.16 Areas with special circumstances include situations where issues of health and safety and reasonableness and practicality are dominant considerations when undertaking environmental maintenance work. For example, carriageways, verges and central reservations of motorways and operational rail land within urban areas. This is to be responded to within 28 days or as soon as reasonably practical.

- *High Intensity of use* are busy public areas such as the city centre. This is to be responded to within ½ day (this means by 6 pm if reported by 1 pm or by 1 pm the next duty day if reported between 1 pm and 6 pm the previous day)
- *Medium Intensity of use* are everyday areas such as all housing land occupied by

5.17 The above response times are set from the time the duty body becomes aware of an issue (for example, through a complaint from the public). The duty body then has a set time limit to restore the area to a Grade A. Duty bodies that allow their land to fall below acceptable standards for longer than the allowed response time may be subject to a Litter Abatement Order or a Litter Abatement Notice under sections 91 and 92 of the EPA.

Conclusions and Recommendations



- 5.18 In view of this, we queried whether the different service areas were aware of the duties and implications of the Code of Practice in terms of cleanliness standards and response times.
- 5.19 We had already established that the ALMOs had introduced their own service standards to reflect local priorities. Whilst they are still aware of the Code of Practice, it was explained that, generally, the ALMOs have found it difficult to achieve the grade A cleanliness standard set out within the Code and have also found difficulties in meeting the specified response times when dealing with referrals or complaints.
- 5.20 In relation to Parks and Countryside, we noted that the standards in place for the maintenance of parks go beyond the statutory EPA cleanliness standards as other charter marks such as the Green Flag Award, which is a national standard, and the Leeds Quality Parks Standard require wider conservation and horticultural standards too. However, the EPA standards would be applied to other associated land vested with Parks and Countryside.
- 5.21 We learned that Education Leeds was also aware of the Code of Practice and that a handbook had been produced for all schools setting out the standards expected of them in line with the Code. With PFI schools, it was also highlighted that as part of the contract, there would be clear performance standards in relation to the school site and that penalties would often apply when such standards are not maintained.
- 5.22 In view of the current fragmented approach towards street cleaning services, it is vital that each of the different service areas continue to remind the relevant staff of the minimum standards of cleanliness expected from the Council in line with the Code of Practice.
- 5.23 However, as the accountable body, we believe that all employees and Members of the Council should also be made aware of these standards and encouraged to report any street cleaning or other environmental problems across the city.
- 5.24 There is also a clear need for the Council to communicate better with the public about such standards in order to address differing views of the public in terms of their expectations of services.
- 5.25 We therefore recommend that the Council uses the Code of Practice to produce a Charter for Leeds that clearly sets out the

Conclusions and Recommendations



statutory duties of the Council and other duty bodies for keeping land free of litter and refuse and, in particular, sets out the minimum standard of street cleanliness that the public can expect to see across the city. This Charter could then be referred to whenever it was felt that this minimum standard was not being met.

Recommendation 4

That the Council uses the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse 2006 to produce a Charter for Leeds that clearly sets out the statutory duties of the Council and other duty bodies for keeping land free of litter and refuse and also the minimum standard of street cleanliness that the public can expect to see across the city.

6. Gathering more local baseline data around street cleanliness needs

6.1 Whilst the performance data gathered as part of the National Indicator 195 is considered a robust measure of performance from a city-wide perspective, we recognise the value of gathering baseline data on a more local level too.

6.2 During our inquiry, references were made to the successes behind local Environmental

Action Teams, Local Area Management Plans (LAMPs) and Intensive Neighbourhood Management (INM) programmes in terms of focusing on the needs of a local area and thus making marked improvements in terms of the street cleaning services provided.

6.3 We also learned that the Council had adopted the District Local Environmental Quality Survey (DLEQS) within areas of Intensive Neighbourhood Management (INM), where the focus is on improving services in the most deprived communities in the city.

6.4 The DLEQS is adapted from a national survey and reports factually on selected environmental standards prevailing within a particular area. It monitors cleansing issues (litter, detritus, leaf fall); cleansing related issues (weeds and staining of roads); environmental crime (flytipping, flyposting and graffiti); litter bins and waste placed out for collection; landscaped areas (litter and maintenance); grading of environmental elements; and the location of problems within the transect.

6.5 Within the INM areas, every street had been surveyed and monitored. Whilst this proved to be a very complex and resource

Conclusions and Recommendations



intensive exercise, such detailed survey data had meant that more accurate information was provided to enforcement and Streetscene services, enabling them to identify any need for targeted resources and education campaigns.

6.6 Whilst we welcome the Council's intentions to roll out DLEQS across the city, we learned that the level of resources required to carry out such detailed survey work has had a significant impact on the level of progress made.

6.7 In recognising that such detailed survey data would provide more accurate information and therefore enhance services in the long term, we do recommend that a detailed assessment of the full costs required to roll out DLEQS across the city is carried out within the next 6 months and brought back to Scrutiny for consideration.

Recommendation 5
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods commissions a detailed assessment of the full costs required to roll out DLEQS across the city and reports the findings back to Scrutiny within the next 6 months.

7. Developing robust monitoring mechanisms

7.1 As well as achieving more accurate baseline data at a local level, we also identified a need for more robust monitoring of street cleaning services.

7.2 ENCAMS explained that the key element to success is to establish a robust monitoring system that everyone can link into.

7.3 As street cleaning services are judged purely on outcomes in terms of performance measures and not inputs, we understand that officers and operatives are now encouraged to exercise their discretion to determine levels of street cleanliness to allow for greater flexibility within the service to be responsive to specific areas of need.

7.4 Whilst we acknowledge the cost effective benefits of adopting a more responsive approach to street cleaning that is based around outputs and targeting particular hotspots, we are concerned that such an approach does not appear to be backed up with a robust monitoring and recording mechanism.

7.5 Whilst Area Managers are responsible for carrying out their

Conclusions and Recommendations



own quality checks in relation to street cleaning services, which would involve visiting staff and conducting spot checks, they are covering large areas of the city and street cleaning supervision is just one of a number of their duties.

- 7.6 We believe that many residents judge the effectiveness of street cleaning services on what they see on the streets and not necessarily on the outcomes achieved. In view of this, if decisions about cleansing needs are not being monitored and recorded systematically, this causes difficulties for services to provide categorical evidence of when a particular street or area had last been assessed and cleaned. We believe that such an audit trail is vital to demonstrate where best value is being achieved by services.

Recommendation 6
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that robust monitoring and recording mechanisms are put in place for all street cleaning services to link into in order to produce a audit trail of when a particular street or area had last been assessed and cleaned.

- 7.7 In view of such discretionary responsibilities, we learned that managers and operatives have taken part in a training course to

make them aware of minimum cleanliness standards.

- 7.8 However, we recommend that such training forms part of the formal induction programme for all operatives.

Recommendation 7
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that training around minimum cleanliness standards is included as part of the formal induction programme for all street cleaning operatives.

8. Review of cleansing schedules

- 8.1 In adopting a more responsive approach to street cleaning, we learned that cleansing schedules are only used as a guideline to determine minimum cleansing frequencies.
- 8.2 However, in acknowledging that the Council's current cleansing schedule was formulated using historical data, we do recommend that a review of the schedule is conducted to ensure that correct minimum cleansing frequencies are being set across the city and also reflects areas of priority in terms of cleanliness needs.

Conclusions and Recommendations



Recommendation 8

That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods conducts a review of the current cleansing schedule to ensure that correct minimum cleansing frequencies are being set across the city and also reflects areas of priority in terms of cleanliness needs.

9. Dealing with obstructions to street sweeping operations.

- 9.1 We recognised that one of the most common problems raised by the public during our inquiry was around on-street parked cars obstructing street sweeping operations.
- 9.2 The gutters of most kerbed roads are mechanically swept using a road sweeping vehicle. This removes any grit, litter and general dirt that has accumulated in the gutter. We therefore understand the frustrations of street cleaning operatives and also residents when the effectiveness of this mechanical sweeping is limited by on-street parked cars.
- 9.3 However, unless these cars are parked illegally, we understand that both the Council and the Police have limited enforcement powers to restrict such parking. We therefore noted that such problems would need to be

addressed by working with residents and gaining their co-operation to minimise obstructions during street cleaning operations.

- 9.4 In view of this, we recommend that the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods explores all possible routes of addressing the problem of on-street parked cars to help minimise obstructions to effective street cleaning operations. In addition, we would advise that the Director also brings this matter to the attention of the Transport Minister and requests that consideration be given to introducing enforcement powers that will enable local authorities to minimise the obstructions caused by on-street parked cars.
- 9.5 We would like an update report on this issue to be brought back to Scrutiny within 6 months.

Recommendation 9

(i) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods explores all possible routes of addressing the problem of on-street parked cars to help minimise obstructions to effective street cleaning operations.

Conclusions and Recommendations



Recommendation 9 (continued)

- (ii) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods writes to the Transport Minister requesting that consideration be given to introducing enforcement powers that will enable local authorities to minimise obstructions to street cleaning operations caused by on-street parked cars.
- (iii) That an update report on this issue is brought back to Scrutiny within 6 months.

10. Changing public behaviour towards littering

- 10.1 As part of our inquiry, particular emphasis was made around changing public behaviour and educating people not to drop litter by making them aware of the penalties that can be incurred as a result.
- 10.2 We noted that enforcement services do link in closely with Streetscene services and acknowledge the successful work of the enforcement team, particularly in terms of enforcing matters relating to transient groups across the city and also the numbers of successful prosecutions in relation to flytipping.

10.3 However, research by ENCAMS (2006) showed that littering was deemed to be acceptable when an individual's sense of personal responsibility had been taken away because everyone else was doing it. It was considered most acceptable to drop litter when an area was already dirty and run-down, but not when it was tidy and presentable. It was considered most excusable to drop litter when everyone else was doing it, but not when in respectable company.

10.4 During our inquiry, particular reference was made to a number of known hotspot areas across the city, such as Headingley, Hyde Park and Holbeck, which are densely populated and also often include temporary residents such as students.

10.5 Due to the intensive nature of the work experienced in hotspot areas across the city, there is a clear need for more targeted enforcement and education campaigns to be carried out in these areas.

10.6 However, where particular hotspot areas are targeted with more intensive resources, it is important to ensure that other areas across the city do not receive a reduced service as a consequence of this and that they too are receiving sufficient

Conclusions and Recommendations



enforcement and education resources.

10.7 Importance was also placed on targeting certain types of businesses, such as 'food on the go' establishments, where litter problems can clearly be traced back to those establishments.

10.8 We therefore recommend that the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods produces an action plan within the next 6 months for delivering street cleaning enforcement and education campaigns across the city and particularly within known hotspot areas.

Recommendation 10
That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods produces an action plan within the next 6 months for delivering street cleaning enforcement and education campaigns across the city and particularly within known hotspot areas.

10.9 We would hope that a Charter for Leeds will help towards educating people more generally about expected standards of cleanliness across the city and promote a sense of responsibility amongst communities.

10.10 However, we believe that communication links with the public could also be improved by

services linking into the community engagement plans of the Area Committees and also their joint tasking arrangements, which also encourages closer working with key partners.

Recommendation 11
That all street cleaning services link into the community engagement plans of the Area Committees to help improve their communication links with the public.

10.11 Area Committees generally would benefit from receiving more information in relation to the street cleaning services provided in their respective areas. Such information should include clarification of the different street cleansing services they could expect to receive within their areas along with details of work schedules indicating at least the minimum frequencies for service provisions.

10.12 Whilst acknowledging that the service has adopted a more responsive approach which encourages officers and operatives to exercise their discretion to determine levels of street cleanliness and service need, Area Committees would also benefit from understanding how such decisions are made and subsequently monitored.

Conclusions and Recommendations



10.13 We believe that Area Committees should also be receiving performance data on a regular basis to demonstrate how services are performing. This should include information about their respective Community Action Services Teams (CAST) or Community Pride Teams to ensure that these are being utilised effectively and are responsive to the needs of the Area Committees.

10.14 We also suggest that where Area Committees are currently holding themed debates as part of their meeting cycles, one of the themes could be around environmental cleanliness and could be used as an opportunity to open up a dialogue with other key stakeholders, in particular with local Town and Parish Councils.

10.15 In developing closer working links with local Town and Parish Councils, this would help existing services to further engage with local residents and maximise on such a valuable resource, particularly as some Town and Parish Councils have previous experience of the inspection regimes for street cleanliness.

10.16 Taking on board the above issues we have raised, we

recommend that the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods works with Area Committees and local Town and Parish Councils to produce an action plan within the next 6 months aimed at strengthening their links with the Council's street cleaning services and also maximising resources in terms of engaging with the public.

Recommendation 12

That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods works with Area Committees and local Town and Parish Councils to produce an action plan within the next 6 months aimed at strengthening their links with the Council's street cleaning services and also maximising resources in terms of engaging with the public.

Recommendation 13

That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods ensures that Area Committees receive regular street cleaning performance data. This should include information about their respective Community Action Services Teams (CAST) or Community Pride Teams to ensure that these are being utilised effectively and are responsive to the needs of the Area Committees.

10.17 We also recognise the value of working more closely with local community groups involved in

Conclusions and Recommendations



championing environmental cleanliness issues as they too are a valuable resource in terms of monitoring cleanliness standards across communities.

10.18 We understand that in the past, the Council has commissioned ENCAMS to conduct training with community groups to enable them to make assessments and work with ENCAMS to come back to Leeds City Council with outcomes and actions. Whilst we acknowledge that at that time there was little interest expressed by community groups for such training, we would recommend that the Council remains proactive in engaging with local community groups and continues to offer such assessment training to these groups. We would also recommend that such training opportunities are offered to local Town and Parish Councils too.

Recommendation 14

(i) That the Council remains proactive in engaging with local community groups and continues to offer training which will enable such groups to carry out street cleanliness assessments.

(ii) That such training opportunities are offered to local Town and Parish Councils too.

11. Making street cleaning a priority for Leeds

11.1 We know that Leeds' performance in terms of street cleanliness is considered average when compared to other comparable core cities, yet Leeds has one of the lowest spends per head of population.

11.2 We fully appreciate that existing street cleaning services do the best job they can with the resources available. However, it is clear that significant additional resources are required in order to deliver a standard of service that meets with the expectations of all residents in Leeds.

11.3 We also recognise that in order for Leeds to compete with other core cities in attracting new developers and investors to the city, particularly within the current economic climate, then it needs to demonstrate to such developers and investors that Leeds is a clean and vibrant city for which they and their staff would wish to come and work and live.

11.4 Street cleaning therefore needs to be regarded as a priority for further improvement and investment.

Evidence



Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

Reports and Publications Submitted

- Report of the Chief Officer for Environmental Services presenting evidence in line with session one of the Board's Inquiry – September 2008
- Strategic Summary of the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006
- Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presenting a summary report of the working group – 13th October 2008
- Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presenting a summary report of the working group – 8th December 2008
- Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development presenting a summary report of the working group – 9th February 2009
- Summary report of the working group meeting held on 14th March 2009
- Summary table of the issues raised within the public letters
- Litter and the Law. A guide for the public. ENCAMS.
- Litterbugs. How to deal with the problem of littering. Policy Exchange. March 2009.

Evidence



Witnesses Heard

- Councillor David Blackburn, Chair of the West (Outer) Area Committee
- Dave Richmond, Area Manager, South East Leeds
- Steve Crocker, Area Manager, West and North West Leeds
- Rory Barke, Area Manager, North East Leeds
- Stephen Smith, Head of Environmental Services
- Claire Warren, Chief Executive, West North West Homes Leeds
- Phil Hirst, Housing Services Development Manager, Aire Valley Homes Leeds
- Mike Holdsworth, Operations Manager, Aire Valley Homes Leeds
- Tony Saynor, Head of Estate and Support Services, East North East Homes Leeds
- Brian Johnson, Director of Strategic Projects, ENCAMS
- James Holmes, ENCAMS
- Andrew Mason, Chief Environmental Services Officer
- Graham Wilson, Head of Environmental Action & Parking
- Phillip Turpin, Principal Projects Officer, Environmental Services
- Graham Little, Principal Manager (Environmental Services), West North West Homes Leeds
- Sean Flesher, Acting Head of Parks and Countryside
- Alex MacLeod, Programme Manager, Education Leeds

Dates of Scrutiny

- 8th September 2008 – Scrutiny Board meeting (agree inquiry terms of reference)
- 24th September 2008 – Scrutiny Working Group Meeting
- 13th October 2008 – Scrutiny Board Meeting
- 24th November 2008 – Scrutiny Working Group Meeting
- 8th December 2008 – Scrutiny Board Meeting
- 14th January 2009 – Scrutiny Working Group Meeting
- 9th February 2009 – Scrutiny Board Meeting
- 12th March 2009 – Scrutiny Working Group Meeting
- 11th May 2009 – Scrutiny Board Meeting (agree final inquiry report)