

Appendix 1 - Street Cleansing Operations and Performance Report

1. Introduction

The overall purpose of the street cleansing service is to sustain a city that is perceived as clean, safe and well-cared for by its residents, businesses and visitors. Perceptions of cleanliness and safety strongly contribute to residents' sense of well-being, and satisfaction with the neighbourhood in which they live. A clean and well-cared for city will also support the economy by influencing business decisions to remain in or re-locate to the area, help sustain and develop the city's tourism, and underpin a vibrant cultural life.

Following the service's best value review in 2001, the service was re-organised and re-equipped to deliver a cleaner and safer city through the following schedules and activities:

- **Daily** cleaning of City Centre, District Centres and known litter 'hot spots'
- **Weekly or bi-weekly** mechanical sweeping of city's main arteries and gateways
- **Monthly** 'zonal' clean through of residential and industrial districts by area-based cleansing teams supported by a new fleet of eight 'Compact Sweepers'
- **Educational and enforcement campaigns** aimed at increasing levels of citizen involvement and responsibility and reducing levels of enviro-crime in the city
- Regular (daily, twice weekly or weekly) emptying of 850 street litter bins, and an intelligence-led approach to provision of new and replacement bins
- Removal of fly-tipping (over 7,000 incidents per year recorded on Flycapture)
- Response within one working day to urgent public enquiries re. dog fouling, fly-tipping, fly-posting, hate crime graffiti, dangerous objects and substances (circa 7,500 cases per annum)
- District Teams supported by additional staff and specialist resources during autumn leaf-fall
- Weed control on highways, footpaths and hard standing
- Enhanced levels of 'out of hours' service to support major city events

In addition to improving actual levels of street cleanliness and customer satisfaction with the service, it was also considered that this more highly mechanised, responsive and district-based service delivery model provided the most effective and resource-efficient means of responding to the statutory provisions of the Environmental Protection Act (1990) and securing 'high' or acceptable' levels of cleanliness across the city.

2. Position of Southampton's street cleansing service in 2009

In 2009, eight years on from the service's Best Value Review in 2001, and despite year on year budget reductions (primarily through service efficiencies), the service was still essentially organised on the same basis as implemented at that time, and working to the

same schedules and service standards despite the population increasing to around 228,700.

64 front-line employees were deployed across the West District, East District, Central District and Citywide Reactive Teams.

Two large mechanical sweepers (load capacity 6 cu m) were deployed on city wide programmes, focussing on main arterial routes, city gateways, and primary residential roads. A second generation fleet of eight relatively new compact sweepers (procured with LPSA¹ money in 2007) were deployed across the East, West and Central District Teams, and City Centre Team. These smaller and more manoeuvrable units (load capacity 2 cu m) primarily focussed on the narrower and more densely parked residential roads and pavements, and pedestrian precincts and plazas in the city and district centres.

The mechanical sweeping fleet was supported by mobile District-based staff working out of twenty 3.5 or 7.5 tonne tipper trucks, carrying out bin emptying programmes, dealing with circa 7,000 customer requests for action per year, removing fly-tipping, and manually cleaning the more inaccessible streets and pavements.

The City Centre and Shirley, Bitterne and Portswood District Centres were also staffed with a permanent and visible presence of 'street orderlies' based on site and working with hand tools and barrow or mechanised pedestrian sweepers.

Customer satisfaction and National Indicator data demonstrate considerable advances in service quality and outputs over the period between the service's Best Value Review and associated service transformation initiated in 2001 and that point late in the decade at which Local Authorities began to be affected by sharp declines in central government funding and reduction in local income yields.

Chart 1 – Satisfaction with street cleansing service trend data 1996 - 2008

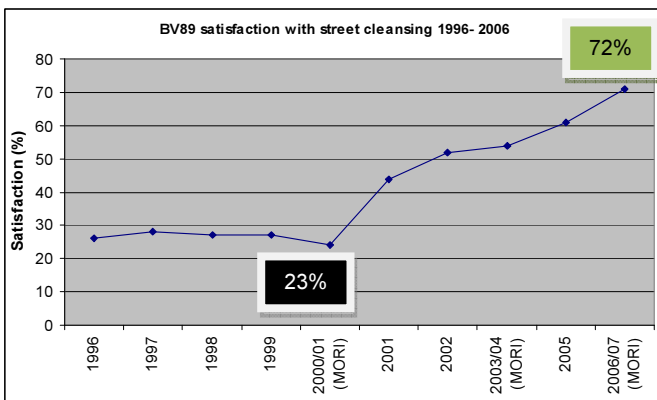
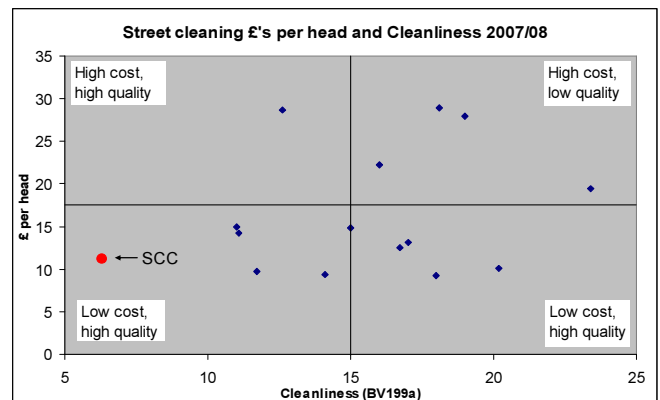


Chart 2 - Audit Commission Use of Resources figures comparing SCC to similar authorities in 'family group'



3. Position of street cleansing service in 2013/14

Over the four years since 2009/10 reductions in local government funding have resulted in a cumulative 36% reduction in the street cleansing service's net controllable costs. In 2013/14, the street cleansing net service budget stands at £1,646k.

¹ Local Public Service Award grant for achieving stretch targets on cleanliness

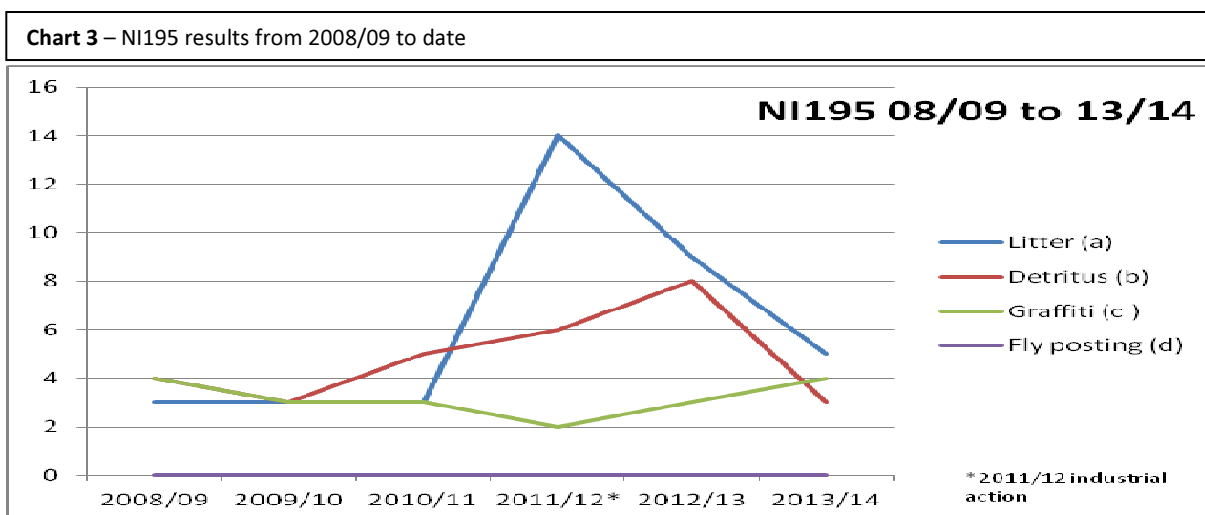
Front-line staffing levels have reduced correspondingly by 28%, from 64 staff in 2009 to 46 staff currently. The Compact Sweeper fleet has reduced from eight to five units, and the number of street sweeping trucks operational across the city has reduced from 20 to 13.

The number of 'urgent' customer requests for action (e.g. litter, 'sharps', fly-tipping, dog fouling, dead animals, 'hate crime' graffiti) has remained remarkably consistent over this period from (5,125 cases reported Apr – Nov 2009, and 5,134 cases reported over same period in 2013). The introduction of mobile technology has allowed the 'reactive' element of the service to improve the clear up levels to 79% of urgent cases responded to within one working day of report compared to 2009 out-turn of 77%.

In the delivery of scheduled street sweeping services within the context of reducing resources has to be targeted on priority areas and some service schedules necessarily reduced.

The city centre and district centres continue to be cleaned daily in line with the prescriptions of the Environmental Protection Act (1990), and the frequencies in place in 2009 still apply to the cleaning of the city's main arteries and gateways, and emptying the city's 850 street litter bins. However, the 'zonal' street cleansing programme through the city's residential areas has moved from a target frequency of monthly visits, to a current frequency that is now closer to bi-monthly. There are also now fewer resources available to deal with sudden surges of demand, such as the very late and intensive leaf-fall that occurred this autumn.

Chart 3 shows the percentage of surveyed land with unacceptable levels of cleanliness, therefore the lower the figure, the better the performance. In 2011/12 performance was affected by long-term industrial action which distorted the figures. However, the trend since this low point in the core indicators of litter and street detritus suggests performance is moving back closer to previously reported out-turns and Section 4 of this report suggests a number of means through which this progress can be sustained through 2014/15.



The most recent available comparison data from the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) in 2010/11 showed that our costs per household for the street cleansing service were about average when compared to our family group. Given the reductions in budget since that time, it is proposed to submit new data returns to APSE in 2014/15 to compare the current cost of the service to Southampton's 'family group' of Authorities, and to gain a clearer picture of where the service now stands within the price / quality matrix. The Council has not recently commissioned customer satisfaction surveys

including questions to capture current public perceptions of the street cleansing service, so it is not possible to report where the service currently stand in comparison with the data set out in Chart 1.

4. Improvement opportunities for the street cleansing service in the year ahead:

Budget proposals currently under consultation for the street cleaning service in 2014/15 focus entirely on efficiency savings in waste disposal and fleet maintenance, made possible by more integrated working with the Waste & Recycling and Fleet Maintenance teams within the wider City Services Division. For the first time in a number of years there are no proposals for reductions in levels of front-line staff or operational fleet / machinery.

In this relatively stable context, the opportunity exists to work with front-line staff within Service Improvement Groups (SIG's) on a range of initiatives to re-shape the overall service delivery model within the street cleansing operation. The aims of these SIG's are to optimise the impact and productivity of currently affordable levels of staff and resources.

Improvement actions currently being developed within the City Services Division include:

- Link street cleansing schedules to the new 'Big Team Sweep' approach to waste collection being adopted across the city as part of the introduction of household glass recycling.
- Use £350k capital bid funding to replace current 7 year old fleet of five compact sweepers with four new, effective and reliable units and one larger capacity mechanical sweeper. Allied with existing two-unit mechanical sweeper fleet, this will allow deployment of one mechanical sweeper (larger roads) and one compact sweeper (smaller and more densely parked roads) working in tandem to sweep through the East District, West District and Central District cleansing zones, while also providing for one Compact Sweeper dedicated to keeping clean the city centre, and central estates.
- Re-draw District street cleansing schedules to take account of new configuration of mechanical street sweeping fleet and 'Big Team Sweep' itinerary through city, to ensure most effective deployment of resources and effective linkages between the Waste and Recycling and Street Cleansing service areas.
- Apply Bartec technology already used within Waste & Recycling fleet to help with effective work programming, and report progress of teams working on their new street cleaning schedules.
- Complete implementation of mobile technology throughout entire service, to ensure customer requests for action are managed promptly and effectively, with minimal disruption to core cleansing schedules.
- Work with Tidy Britain group to develop 'in-house' capacity within City Services Division to fully utilise existing legislative powers to more effectively combat serious cases of enviro-crime e.g. littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling.
- Increase flexibility of staffing structures, to allow improved responsiveness to large-scale work fluctuations such as autumn leaf fall or supporting major city events.

As these transformational initiatives are developed and implemented, service managers will need to assess their impact on cleaning standards and efficiency. By the close of 2014, the street cleansing service proposes to consult on an updated set of 'Service Promises' that recognises the hugely changed service delivery landscape developing over the next three years and clearly communicates the service standards the city's residents can expect in the future.