

ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

‘STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT’ – Policy Review Final Report –December 2002

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The State of the Environment Policy Review initially started in June 2001.
- 1.2 The scope of the review including the Terms Of Reference are attached as **Appendix A**
- 1.3 A list of witnesses who have attended Panel meetings, the dates attended and topics they covered are attached as **Appendix B**.
- 1.4 The format of the review has included video inspections of wards within the borough and feedback from other relevant meetings held within the borough. There has been regular scheduled Panel meetings, which have included public attendance. The Panel also agreed a standard set of questions with regard to each issue covered in the Policy Review.
- 1.5 Since the review started a Best Value Review on Waste Management has been conducted and received favourable comments from external inspectors. A programme of ward surveys has also been implemented. Feedback from these surveys has covered many of the issues covered within this Policy Review. Departments have already taken action to respond to the concerns highlighted in the feedback received.

2. SUMMARY OF POLICY REVIEW AND PROGRESS TO DATE.

- 2.1 This Policy Review was selected by the Environment and Regeneration Panel as a result of serious concerns regarding the issues highlighted in the Terms of Reference. There are some topics that have not been covered within the Policy Review but these are now the responsibility of a new additional Overview and Scrutiny Street Management Panel. It would therefore be inappropriate for the Environment and Regeneration Panel to undertake work that comes within the jurisdiction of another Panel.
- 2.2 The Report format provides a summary of progress to date, including the factors that have influenced the need to conclude this particular Policy Review. There then follows a copy of the Terms of Reference for this Policy Review, including what progress the Authority has made since the commencement of the Policy Review. This is followed by a comprehensive summary of each of the topics covered in the Policy Review.

3. SUMMARY OF PROGRESS TO DATE

3.1 The recent report on “Environmental Quality – Streetscene **Appendix C** produced by the Environmental Services Department and approved by Cabinet on 29 July 2002 and the Best Value Review on Waste Management agreed by the Cabinet on 23rd September 2002 has embraced much of the work of the policy review. The Environmental Quality – Streetscene Report addresses each one of the Council’s priorities in relation to environment and regeneration. The successful response to Ward Surveys has also had a major impact on the issues identified in the Policy Review on “State of the Environment” and now reflected in the services being provided to address them.

3.2 The Capital Programme report to Cabinet on 17 June 2002 indicates that £400,000 (in 2002/2003) has been allocated for expenditure on many of the issues covered by the policy review.

3.3 The allocation of this expenditure in relation to the criteria of this Policy Review is as follows:

- Environmental measures to design out ‘hot spots’ of environmental nuisance, e.g. areas which trap litter, alleygates, recycling sites, putting street nameplates on buildings, etc. (£35k)
- Investment in additional street cleaning and graffiti equipment (£25k)
- Improvements to customer access at the Civic Amenity Site (£40k)

3.4 Aside from the above revenue allocation current expenditure within the department has also been focused. In the report on Environmental Quality – Streetscene paragraph 4.3 indicates clearly that there are some service enhancements, which reflect the long-term strategy. This includes;

- Enhanced cleaning for the worst affected residential streets and shopping parades through a new team of six staff and three vehicles (£63k from October this year, £126k full year)
- Retention of the second graffiti officer and enhanced removal capacity funded through the FLAG project which ended in June (£40k this year, £75k full year).
- Enhanced capacity for graffiti removal from shopping parades (£20k this year, £40k full year).

The report does indicate that under 5.1 “All proposals for revenue spending will be progressed in line with existing revenue provision, with the exception of those proposals, amounting to £123k, set out in paragraph 4.3 (bullet points above). It will therefore be necessary to identify funding for the additional expenditure from within savings elsewhere in the Council’s budget. Approval for proposed virements to fund this expenditure will be sought through the budgetary control process. It should be noted that these short-term measures will also have an implication for future years if retained beyond March 2003”.

POLICY REVIEW SCRUTINY PANEL ON THE STATE OF MERTON’S STREETS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To review those services provided by the Council in regard to the street scene and to make recommendations to the Scrutiny Commission as appropriate.

In particular:

1. To review service provision in the following areas:

Graffiti, Street Sweeping, LitterBins, Refuse Collection, Fly-tipping, Abandoned Vehicles, Vehicles for Sale, Pavement Parking, Bus Lanes and Enforcement (including CPZ) and any other areas as appropriate.

Since the commencement of this policy review the remit of this Panel has been amended and the last four issues are no longer the responsibility of this Panel and are now the responsibility of the Street Management Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

2. To consider performance against standards indicators targets and other monitoring arrangements for each of the services referred to, and make recommendations for local performance indicators as necessary.

The Corporate Performance Management Framework has already agreed that this information will be made regularly available to the Commission and be allocated to the appropriate Panel for review and comment as standard.

3. Assessment of the impact/benefit of each service.

Since the formulation of the terms of reference many if not all of the topics to be covered within this Policy Review have undergone some form of service review or improvement. The Best Value Review on Waste Management adds to this assessment and provides specific targets and action plans of each. The feedback from Ward Surveys has also helped focus the evaluation of services currently being provided. (A list of the main concerns generated from the Ward Surveys is available).

4. To gauge local service quality in comparison to that of other authorities, and understand both the reasons for differences and any lessons which might be learned.

The Best Value Review on Waste Management has covered this concern in great detail, as it is one of the fundamental aspects of any Best Value evaluation. In addition to this, Merton has conducted an extremely well participated programme of Ward Surveys. Customer responses have already helped shape the frontline services being provided to the community and also increased the number of residents prepared to participate in the Residents Panel, which will allow Merton to continually engage the Community it represents and provide the services it requires. The Corporate Performance Management Framework also provides Performance Indicators on our performance in relation to other authorities.

5. Consideration of consultative arrangements with service users on current and future service provision.

This is covered by the ward surveys; the Community Plan and within the Best Value Review on Waste Management. The Environment and Regeneration Panel has also provided comprehensive recommendations regarding consultation when it discussed the pre-decision scrutiny of (a) pre-decision scrutiny of the Recycling Plan and the Kerbside recycling Plan.

6. To consider current mechanisms for partnership working with and involvement of external agencies in the promotion of service delivery.
There are comprehensive targets as part of the Best Value Review on Waste Management and also the Community Plan, both of which have been approved by the Merton.
7. To consider current arrangements for community engagement in support of service delivery.
In addition to the examples provided for the above criteria the feedback from the Ward Surveys has also been successful source of community engagement, not only for getting feedback to the existing concerns but encouraging members of the community to participate in consultation and the development of future services. There is also a pilot Street Leaders Scheme in the St Helier Ward, which is likely to be extended across the borough.
8. Where appropriate, to request and receive reports and submissions from members, officers, external agencies, and stakeholders including their attendance at Panel meetings. **The Panel has conducted this as standard within the policy review and pre-decision scrutiny has been a valuable tool in this process. The ward videos have also provided a visual insight.**
9. To consider the appointment of co-optees to the membership of the Panel. **The Panel has benefited from active involvement from a co-opted member.**

4. SUMMARY OF TOPICS COVERED

4.1 GRAFFITI

This topic was considered at four meetings and also highlighted in the ward videos taken by the Panel. Graffiti information was provided by the Head of Street Management as part of the agreed work program on 6 February 2002 but the Panel requested re-submission on 12 March 2002 to reflect standard agreed questions. However this meeting was not quorate so it was not possible to have a discussion or to agree recommendations.

Targets and objectives regarding graffiti have been included in the Departmental Action Plan for 2001/2002. It also covers what action is being taken to deal with the perpetrators and proactive initiatives to tackle the culprits or the possible reasons for graffiti this includes working with education officers and the youth services team as well as the Police. The implementation of the Community Warden Scheme has also been introduced to assist with this problem.

Recommendation from Panel discussion: - a) residents associations liaise with police, b) send a letter to the local press highlighting crime be reported, c) local schools and businesses look at ways to combat graffiti, d) use of community clean initiatives e) Hoarding boards to control graffiti, f) take youths swimming to avoid graffiti and g) other proactive work to discourage FLAG.

Action taken on recommendation – a) Merton has undertaken several initiatives to engage the public with the Police including Area Forums, Merton Environment and Safety Forum, Ward Surveys and the Tenant Participation initiatives within the Housing Department. b) The Environment Department has instigated a marketing campaign to illustrate their intention to seek penalty fines or prosecutions of known culprits. c) There is a comprehensive programme for involving schools and businesses in ways to combat graffiti and litter. d) The Flag Campaign has culminated in a community clean initiative which, will be continued periodically. e) The Housing Department has already undertaken this initiative, as have officers in the Pollards Hill area. f) The Youth Services Manager has attended the Panel meetings and confirmed this is one of the initiatives under consideration. g) The Environmental Quality Streetscene Report indicates some of the initiatives and proactive work being considered to combat fly-tipping, litter, abandoned vehicles, and graffiti.

4.2 LITTER BINS

Considered briefly by the Panel, but not yet discussed with Officers, as 12 March 2002 meeting was not quorate. Panel noted PI's in Environmental Action Plan 2001-2002.

The Panel had, as part of the Terms of Reference agreed criteria for discussion regarding LitterBins at beginning of Policy Review, the information requested included: -

- The Council's policy on litter bins. This was briefly covered during the discussion on the Recycling and Kerbside Plan in Pre-decision scrutiny. The Best Value Review on Waste Management and the Environmental Quality – Streetscene Report have

superceded much of the initial objectives within the Terms of Reference for this Policy Review. The Best Value Review on Waste Management (BVR) with the accompanying Action Implementation Plan and the Ward Surveys have successfully identified the concerns of local residents regarding the quality of service as well as the areas of most concern.

- The policy on siting of litterbins at bus stops – 9.21 of the Best Value Review on waste management confirms the street cleaning quality circle also agreed that litterbins should be placed at all bus stops and outside schools.
- Whether litter bins can be sited following a request from a local resident. Officers have confirmed that every request from local residents is investigated and a feasibility assessment carried out but priorities regarding the allocation of litterbins are clearly identified in the (BVR).
- The standards and performance for the emptying of litter bins. This was discussed briefly in the Recycling and Kerbside Plan in Pre-decision scrutiny. The Best Value Review Objective 3 – Improvement Plan Schedule “To achieve a more reliable waste collection service” – 1. Improve reliability of domestic waste collection (reducing missed bins to below 200 per 100000 during 2002/3 and aiming for below 100 per 100,000 by 2005/6)

Recommendation Community Clean initiatives to be encouraged and pro-active work to discourage “FLAG”

Action taken regarding recommendation – Merton has just completed a very successful FLAG campaign in association with the Metropolitan Police and all four issues have been given specific targets within the (BVR).

4.3 REFUSE COLLECTION

This was briefly discussed in the pre-decision scrutiny of the Draft Recycling and Kerbside Recycling Plan. The Panel did not indicate specific requirements for this topic, unlike some of the other issues however, Best Value Review on waste management Objective 3 – “To achieve a more reliable waste collection service” has defined actions with target dates to be attained to improve reliability.

Recommendation: SMART targets for 5-year improvement plan as part of the Best Value Review. Information on departmental indicators be made available as and when ready.

Action taken regarding recommendation – The (BVR) does have a very comprehensive set of targets for improvement over the next 5 years and departmental indicators have been included within the Corporate Performance Management Framework.

4.4 FLY-TIPPING

The Panel has not discussed the topic of fly tipping as a specific issue within the policy review. This topic was covered by the information that was received for refuse; litter etc and covered by the Recycling Plan and Kerbside Recycling Plan discussed in pre-decision scrutiny and also as part of the ward videos. Best Value Review on Waste Management Objective 4 (Improvement Plan Schedule) – “To improve the cleanliness of our streets” (3) provides a number of targets and actions to combat and tackle this nuisance issue. It has also been highlighted as a major concern for residents through

their responses in Ward Surveys. Feedback ward meetings have been well attended and officers have been able to confirm that policies are now under way to monitor 'hotspots', eradicating 'hotspots' and prioritising the prosecution of culprits where possible.

4.5 STREET SWEEPING

This topic has not been covered separately within the work program. However, many of the other topics within the policy review have covered some of the concerns regarding street sweeping, in particular the videos taken of the wards and pre-decision scrutiny.

STREET SWEEPING (General Issues)

- A number of roads don't appear to be covered by a street cleaning contract – The Best Value Review on Waste Management Objective 4 – (Improvement Plan Schedule) "To improve the cleanliness of our streets" (1) Improve Street Sweeping Operations includes specific targets to address this.
- Possibility of community wardens being supplied with a questionnaire in order to monitor street cleaning (no guarantees to be given to there being a resolution to reported problems) – the Best Value Review on Waste Management Objective 4 (Improvement Plan Schedule) – "To improve the cleanliness of our streets" (6 and 7) Improve Street Sweeping Operations tackle this issue. At the time this Policy Review was being set up the ward surveys had not been implemented, however since the responses have been so successful many of the comments regarding this issue have already been incorporated into action plans as reflected in the (BVR).
- A question as to whether the Council actually knows or not that road is being swept twice a week the Best Value Review on Waste Management considered these issues specifically. Objective 4 (Improvement Plan Schedule) – "To improve the cleanliness of our streets" (1) *Implement new staffing structure to achieve enhanced monitoring will enable the authority to address this issue.*

STREET SWEEPING (WORK PROGRAMME)

- The contracts currently in place: when were they agreed; what are the contractual requirements; when does the contract expire; and how are the contracts monitored. – Best Value Review on Waste Management Objective 4 (Improvement Plan Schedule) – "To improve the cleanliness of our streets" (9.4,9.5,9.6,9.11and 9.12) and covers many of the concerns raised by the residents regarding the quality of service they desire.
- Details to be provided as to any special arrangements for sweeping around schools and shopping areas and any other areas deemed as 'hot spots' – Best Value Review on waste management Objective 4 (Improvement Plan Schedule) – "To improve the cleanliness of our streets" (9.5, 9.25, 9.26 and 9.27) addresses these concerns.
- Any concerns experienced in regard to the contracts monitoring process. – The allocation and monitoring of contracts-**This information will have been assessed as part of the Best Value Review on Waste Management within the core framework of the (BVR).**
- The monitoring of street cleaning equipment maintenance – **This information has been assessed as part of the Best Value Review within the core framework of the (BVR).**

- Presentation of complaints received – **this information is already collated and presented in other documentation for the authority. It was extracted by the department specifically for the (BVR) – however much of the feedback from the community plan consultation and the ward surveys has already been fed back to the department and is reflected in the Action Plan of the (BVR).**
- Details of response times relating to the acknowledgement of and response made to residents' letters. – **There are standard guidelines within the Authority for this Objective 3 (Implementation Plan Schedule) – “To achieve a more reliable waste collection service” (1) on the improvement plan indicates: - “*Improve Monitoring Systems. Set up CONFIRM to enable direct logging of queries and complaints about collection services.*”**

In addition the Council is establishing a Corporate Call Centre due to be in operation in the New Year. This should further improve the quality of service to residents.

STREET SWEEPING – (ISSUES PROPOSED FOR CONSIDERATION)

A suggested questionnaire for use by community wardens – This issue has been addressed as part of the Best Value Review on Waste Management regarding consultation in general and improving the public perception of the services being delivered. Objective 4(Improvement Plan Schedule) – To improve the cleanliness of our streets – improvement plan schedule (2) Litter control zones; -

- Consult with traders, town centre partnership boards and the chamber of commerce.

- Introduce litter control zones if consultation is positive.

Are two of the actions proposed?

- **The guidance issued to residents by the Environmental Services Department – The Best Value Review on Waste Management addresses this issue under each of the issues covered. The Ward Surveys have also helped focus the departments in this matter.**
- **The specifications of the current street sweeping contract – This will have been reviewed as part of the Best Value Review on Waste Management. There have been changes to criteria of some contracts.**
- **Information on service delivery – The Best Value Review provides baseline information on current service delivery at the initiation of the review, enhancements already achieved as well as a list of future targets with action plans and the lead officers responsible for achievement.**
- **Details of the contract/operational monitoring system – This has been analysed as part of the Best Value Review and improvements to the monitoring of contracts and complaints have been highlighted as targets for achievements.**
- **Information on operational problems – The Best Value Review on Waste Management not only provided a baseline position on each of the topics covered in the review but also do a comprehensive SWOT analysis of each service area. The feedback from Ward Surveys has also influenced the targets set for Merton.**
- **Service performance statistics – These are now regularly supplied as part of the Performance Management Framework and include, Key Performance Indicators and departmental performance indicators that are presented to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Commission Panel regularly.**

- Performance information as a comparison with that of other London Boroughs – **This was done extensively as part of the Best Value Review but is now done as part of the monitoring provided to the Panels within the corporate performance management framework.**

APPENDIX A

POLICY REVIEW SCRUTINY PANEL ON THE STATE OF MERTON'S STREETS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To review those services provided by the Council in regard to the street scene and to make recommendations to the Scrutiny Commission as appropriate.

In particular:

1. To review service provision in the following areas:

Graffiti, Street Sweeping, LitterBins, Refuse Collection, Fly-tipping, Abandoned Vehicles, Vehicles for Sale, Pavement Parking, Bus Lanes and Enforcement (including CPZ) and any other areas as appropriate

2. To consider performance against standards indicators targets and other monitoring arrangements for each of the services referred to, and make recommendations for local performance indicators as necessary.
3. Assessment of the impact/benefit of each service.
4. To gauge local service quality in comparison to that of other authorities, and understand both the reasons for differences and any lessons which might be learned.
5. Consideration of consultative arrangements with service users on current and future service provision
6. To consider current mechanisms for partnership working with and involvement of external agencies in the promotion of service delivery
7. To consider current arrangements for community engagement in support of service delivery
8. Where appropriate, to request and receive reports and submissions from members, offices, external agencies, and stakeholders including their attendance at Panel meetings.
9. To consider the appointment of co-optees to the membership of the Panel.

STATE OF ENVIRONMENT:

APPENDIX B

List of attendees and topics discussed

25th July 2001

Attendees:

Councillors:	Linda Kirby Barbara Bampton Paul Barasi Malcolm Searle Russell Makin Iain Dysart
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Officers:	Diane Bailey Richard Rawes Irfan Malik Barbara Jarvis
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Topics discussed

- Notes of Minutes held on 21 June 2001
- Proposed Terms of Reference
- Lessons learnt from Macpherson
- Membership

27th September 2001

Attendees:

Councillors:	Linda Kirby Barbara Bampton Ian Munn Malcolm Searle Dennis Pearce Mickey Spacey Brian White
Co-optees:	Dennis Waite

Officers:	Irfan Malik David Dunford
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Topics discussed

- Notes of meeting held on 25 July 2001
- Issue of Co-option and invitees to Panel meetings – further discussion
- Discussion on the setting up of local performance indicators
- Examination of performance indicators on street cleaning, with examples of complaints received
- Performance indicators used for monitoring standards
- Minutes of Quality circle meetings
- Service provision for abandoned vehicles

20 November 2001

Attendees:

Councillors:	Linda Kirby Malcolm Searle Ian Munn Philip Jones Su Assinen Russell Makin
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Officers:	Barbara Jarvis Penny Collins Chris Mountford Christine Parsloe Alison Broom Irfan Malik
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Topics discussed

- Video of Lavender Ward & other 'hotspots'
- Tamworth Farm Recreation Ground
- Sadler Close
- Eveline Road
- Graffiti
- Ravensbury Park
- Liaison with police
- Next steps in the policy review
- Outcomes/feedback from last policy review meeting
- Policy Review work programme/issues update

10 January 2002 - Attendees

Councillors:	Linda Kirby Philip Jones Barbara Bampton Richard Harwood Gilli Lewis-Lavender Russell Makin
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Officers:	Alison Broom Sue Tanton Cormac Stokes Diane Bailey Fauzia Ashraf-Malik
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REPORT TO OSC

Topics discussed

- Best Value Review and Audit Commission performance indicators
- Ward Surveys Feedback
- Policy Review as part of the work programme

6th February 2002 - Attendees:

Councillors:	Linda Kirby Philip Jones Barbara Bampton Paul Barasi Ian Munn Malcolm Searle Gilli Lewis- Lavender Russell Makin
Co-optee:	Dennis Waite

Officers:	Steve Clark Kevin McCullagh Eli Anderson Diane Bailey Fauzia Ashraf-Malik
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Topics discussed:

- Video of Pollards Hill Ward
- Graffiti issues report
- Policy Review as part of work programme

10th July 2002- Attendees:

Councillors:	Chair John Nelson-Jones Nick Draper Andrew Shellhorn Richard Harwood David Simpson Judy Saunders Leighton Veale John Dehaney
Co-optee:	Dennis Waite

Cabinet Member:	Sue Assinen
Officers:	Rob Moran John Pateman Diane Bailey Fauzia Ashraf-Malik

Topics discussed:

- Appointment of Vice Chair
- Community Plan
- Annual Library Plan
- Performance Management – Panel’s Monitoring Role
- Co-optees
- Forward Plan
- Panel Work Programme – Including position statement on current Policy Review “State of the Environment”

16th October 2002- Attendees:

Councillors:	John Nelson-Jones Nick Draper Andrew Shellhorn David Simpson Leighton Veale John Dehaney
Co-optee:	Dennis Waite

Officers:	Steve Clark Alison Broom Karl Murdoch Diane Bailey Fauzia Ashraf-Malik
Cabinet Members:	Sue Assinen Linda Kirby

Topics discussed:

- Contents of draft final report on state of the environment policy review

APPENDIX C

CABINET 29 July 2002	Agenda Item Public Session Ward:
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SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY – STREETSCENE

LEAD OFFICER: Richard Rawes, Director of Environmental Services

LEAD MEMBER: Councillor Linda Kirby – Lead Member Environmental Quality
Councillor Russell Makin – Lead Member Transport and Planning

KEY DECISION REFERENCE NUMBER:

REASON FOR URGENCY:

There is a need for member approval to this approach to the street scene in the light of the Corporate Governance report just received and the three year budget strategy being developed. To await the next committee cycle could prejudice the longer term strategy and delay the implementation of necessary enhancements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet:-

1. notes the improvements already made as set out in Appendix 1.
2. agrees the broad aspirations for 2005/6 and request officers to develop these into fully costed proposals to be submitted as part of the 2003/4 budget process - proposals may include options for alternative funding such as income generation, use of S106 monies and Public Service Agreements
3. agrees to progress the short term options set out in paragraph 5.1 for improvements during 2002/3 and request the Directors of Environmental Services and Financial services to identify the necessary funding
4. agrees that the £400,000 capital funding allocated to environmental infrastructure is used to progress the options set out in paragraph 5.2
5. requests officers to report back progress on these issues to Cabinet on 2nd December 2002.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Recent surveys have shown either a static or declining public perception of street scene issues, despite indicators which suggest progressive improvements in standards of service. The recent Corporate Governance Review of Council services also commented on this “gap between service delivery and user experience” and recommended a review of “the targeting of street scene services to improve overall standards”.
- 1.2 This report proposes that these problems are addressed by setting clear targets for where the Council aspires to be in 2005/6. Work will then be carried out to establish the resource implications of different levels of service so that a fully costed plan and programme of action is reported back to Cabinet on 2nd December 2002. This timescale also enables street scene issues to be considered against other priorities as part of the Council’s 3 year budget strategy. In

addition, the report proposes some short term improvements within the current financial year as a step towards these longer term aspirations.

- 1.3 This report focuses mainly on day to day maintenance issues. For the long term improvement of the street environment, this approach will be developed to incorporate the urban design of our streets, buildings and open spaces.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Matters to do with the physical environment of the borough have recently had an increasing profile as community and Council priorities and contribute directly to the achievement of the strategic objective of a Safe, Clean and Green Merton. Public expectations of being able to experience a clean and attractive local environment continue to rise at the same time as the incidence of anti-social behaviour, such as littering, abandoned vehicles and graffiti is also on the increase. The recent political focus on the quality and cleanliness of the street environment is welcome after the lower priority afforded during the 1990s when funding levels were substantially reduced. During the last 18 months, there have been some enhancements to residential and town centre cleaning frequencies, the introduction of some dedicated funding for graffiti removal and capital funding for footway and carriageway renewal.

2.2 Consistently, published statutory performance indicators show our spending levels to be very low compared to other London boroughs. For example, in 2000/2001, Merton's spending on refuse collection was 32/33, street cleaning was 28/31, highway maintenance was 17/33 and street lighting was 27/33 London boroughs. Equivalent performance figures are generally significantly higher than these comparative levels.

- 2.3 The Appendix to this report sets out the current position, recent initiatives and possible enhancement options for each of four service areas: Cleanliness, Refuse Collection and Recycling, Graffiti, Nuisance Vehicles and Street Condition.

- 2.4 In addition to these specific initiatives, significant progress has also been made in the following broad areas of work:-

- A comprehensive system of performance monitoring, circulated to all members on a quarterly basis
- The final stages of a Best Value Review of waste management, including a detailed Implementation Plan
- Work with the London-wide Capital Standards programme, delivered through ENCAMS, to ensure independent standards and monitoring across a range of services
- The successful completion of the FLAG project with the police, covering fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and graffiti removal
- The setting up of a neighbourhood warden scheme in Mitcham and Wimbledon town centres
- An integrated approach with leisure services for dealing with ground maintenance contracts
- Ward Survey analysis and feedback meetings for Lower Morden, Dundonald, Abbey, St. Helier, Trinity, Phipps Bridge, West Barnes, Colliers Wood and Longthornton
- The introduction of an interactive web page to enable environmental nuisance issues to be reported directly to the responsible officers or external organisations.

3. ASPIRATIONS FOR FUTURE SERVICE LEVELS

- 3.1 In line with best value principles, the Council should aspire to be in the top quartile of London boroughs. Work will be carried out over the next two months to establish the specific performance targets which this would entail and the necessary funding to enable these levels to be met. Funding sources will also be explored in detail, including available capital funding, measures to

increase income levels, the potential for S106 funding of one-off enhancements and the scope for Public Service Agreements associated with enhanced service targets.

3.2 For most service areas, the expectation will be to aspire to top quartile performance levels by 2005/6, subject to appropriate funding being available and prioritised as part of the Council's three year budget strategy. However, for footway and carriageway maintenance, timescales are likely to be significantly longer. At current spending levels, resurfacing of roads can be carried out every 100 years and reconstruction every 250 to 300 years, compared to a design life for roads of approximately 40 years, with planned maintenance at 20 years. The estimated cost of repairing the backlog of defective carriageways is between £10.5 and £14 million, while the estimated backlog for footway repairs is £4 million.

3.3 To address the issues of both service performance and residents' perceptions, it is suggested that targets are set for both categories across a range of services. Monitoring systems will also be extended to provide a better breakdown by area of the borough so that any inequalities in service delivery can be picked up and addressed. Examples of targets to be developed could include:-

Cleanliness

- Higher Cleanliness Index as independently assessed by ENCAMS
- Higher percentage of fly tips removed within 24 hours
- Higher percentage of residents' satisfaction on street cleaning

Refuse Collection and Recycling

- Reduced number of missed bin collections
- Meet government target of 27% recycling/composting of household waste
- Higher percentage of residents' satisfaction on refuse collection
- Higher percentage of residents' satisfaction on recycling

Graffiti

- Higher percentage of reported graffiti removed within target times
- Graffiti found in a lower percentage of sites

Nuisance Vehicles

- Higher percentage of all nuisance vehicles removed from the street
- Higher percentage of nuisance vehicles inspected within target time
- Higher percentage of dangerous vehicles removed within target time
- Increase in use of free vehicle surrender scheme

Street Condition

- Lower percentage of roads and streetlights requiring repair
- Higher percentage of road/footway repairs made safe within 24 hours
- Higher percentage of residents' satisfaction on repair of roads
- Higher percentage of residents' satisfaction on street lighting.

4. PROGRESS DURING 2002/3

4.1 In addition to the specific service initiatives identified in the Appendix, several other more general service enhancements are being progressed:-

- Further extensions to the CONFIRM system for reporting environmental nuisance issues, including direct links to third parties such as the police and the Council's contractors
- The introduction of Call/Contact Centre technology and back up IT systems to enhance our interface with the public
- The introduction of cross-service responsibility for dealing with derelict sites
- The examination of different approaches and structures for dealing with inspection and enforcement functions on-street

- The transfer of Merton Cleaning Services from Housing to Environmental Services department to enable a cross-service approach to graffiti removal
- Continuing publicity and education initiatives to reduce the incidence of anti social behaviour
- Regular information on current performance/initiatives being publicised via media and community networks.

4.2 A report on the Capital Programme to the Cabinet meeting on 17th June identified a sum of £400,000 specifically to address the early prioritisation of street scene issues. It is suggested that this allocation is prioritised as follows:-

- Environmental measures to design out 'hot spots' of environmental nuisance, e.g. areas which trap litter, alleygates, recycling sites, putting street nameplates on buildings, etc. (£35k)
- Investment in additional street cleaning and graffiti equipment (£25k)
- Improvements to customer access at the Civic Amenity Site (£40k)
- Improved reactive maintenance on footways to include appearance as well as safety (estimate £50k)
- Refurbishment of footways and street furniture where carriageway repairs are being undertaken (estimate £170k)
- Inventory and Condition Survey for all non-illuminated street furniture to enable better prioritisation of planned maintenance work (£30k)
- Extension of condition surveys of carriageways and footways, including detailed inspection of all roads and management reports for prioritising investment (£50k).

4.3 Current revenue budgets are tightly set this year including the requirement for 1% savings to be found during the financial year. However, there is a need to demonstrate some additional service enhancements as a step towards the longer term strategy. Based on the recent ENCAMS surveys and the perceptions of residents, the following enhancements to our street cleaning and graffiti services are proposed during this financial year:-

- Enhanced cleaning for the worst affected residential streets and shopping parades through a new team of six staff and three vehicles (£63k from October this year, £126k full year)
- Retention of the second graffiti officer and enhanced removal capacity funded through the FLAG project which ended in June (£40k this year, £75k full year)
- Enhanced capacity for graffiti removal from shopping parades (£20k this year, £40k full year).

4.4 In identifying the worst affected areas, priorities will be identified through a combination of public complaints, the findings of recent ENCAMS surveys and officer inspections.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 All proposals for revenue spending will be progressed in line with existing revenue provision, with the exception of those proposals, amounting to £123k, set out in paragraph 4.3. It will therefore be necessary to identify funding for the additional expenditure from within savings elsewhere in the Council's budget. Approval for proposed virements to fund this expenditure will be sought through the budgetary control process. It should be noted that these short term measures will also have an implication for future years if retained beyond March 2003.

5.2 The longer term proposals are likely to have significant implications for budget provision in future years and will be specifically addressed as part of the three year budget plan to be prepared later this year.

5.2 The capital cost implications are contained within the capital measures agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 17th June 2002.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND STATUTORY PROVISION

6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 All the services described are universal services in terms of provision. However, there may be a link between the worst affected areas at present in terms of graffiti and litter and wider issues of social deprivation. All highway maintenance works will incorporate dropped kerbs to assist people with disabilities. In addition, access and other equalities issues are addressed in greater detail in the waste management best value review referred to in the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS –

The papers use to compile this report were:

Draft Waste Management Best value Review

IDeA Performance Indicator Tables

ENCAMS Surveys

2000/1-2001/2 Residents Panel and Residents Surveys

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CLEANLINESS

CURRENT POSITION

- **Spending 28th out of 31 London Boroughs**
- *ENCAMS Cleanliness Index of 66 in March 2002 and 67 in May 2002 - London average 66*
- *Average time to remove fly tips 0.95 days in 2001/2, 1.4 days in 2000/1 - London median 1.0*
- *3203 fly tips reported in 2001/2, 92% removed within 24 hours (2784 and 78% in 2000/1)*
- *52% residents were very/fairly satisfied that the Council kept public land free of litter and refuse – BVPI survey 2001*
- *36% said street cleaning was good/excellent compared to 37% for Outer London – Residents survey 2001*
- *Litter reported as residents' 4th greatest concern after traffic, crime and Council tax – Residents Survey 2001*

ENHANCEMENTS ALREADY INTRODUCED

- Hit squads targeting town centres and heavily littered areas
- Weekly sweeping introduced in all residential areas the day after refuse collection
- Weekend evening cleaning introduced for Wimbledon and Mitcham town centres
- Mechanical sweepers rescheduled to cover a greater proportion of main roads;
- Small mechanical sweepers introduced for town centres and residential pavements
- Weed clearance programme increased from one to three sprays each year
- In-house operation introduced to provide immediate removal of fly tips
- 300 new style, larger litter bins introduced in all town centres and shopping parades
- Major publicity initiative progressed to reduce sources of littering
- Designated under Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act and installed 75 dog-waste bins on street
- Module developed for use by schools on litter, graffiti and waste minimisation
- 15 prosecutions for illegal dumping of waste
- Installing a further 150 litterbins including sites outside schools and bus stops
- Enforcement programme being set up against fly tippers, working with town centre managers, CCTV and the Environment Agency

FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS 2005/6 TARGETS

- Increase cleaning frequencies for most heavily littered residential streets
- Provide evening cleaning for all 8 town centres
- Provide additional cleaning for all 30 shopping parades and adjacent streets
- Remove fly tips from all alleyways
- Fund and publicise the alleygates scheme
- Provide capital funding for designing out 'hot spots'

- Patch system of cleaning to achieve a holistic approach and improve local accountability
- Better publicity to encourage residents to put out good quality bags on the day of collection
- Develop further partnerships with local businesses who are causing litter
- Introduce Litter Abatement Notices in town centres and consult on Litter Control Zones
- Achieve 100m distance between litterbins in town centres - provide bins at all schools and bus stops

REFUSE COLLECTION AND RECYCLING

CURRENT POSITION

- *Spending 32nd out of 33 London Boroughs - £815k below London median*
- *392 missed bins in 2001/2, 592 in 2000/1 - London median 114.9*
- *Recycled or composted 17.2% household waste, 16.28% in 2000/1 - London median 9.8%*
- *65% residents said they were very/fairly satisfied with refuse collection compared to 66% for Outer London*
- *Oct 2001 52% residents were very/fairly satisfied with recycling facilities compared to 51% for Outer London*

ENHANCEMENTS ALREADY INTRODUCED

- Six new refuse collection vehicles purchased and in operation
- Fundamental review of refuse collection rounds and beats carried out
- Pink bag scheme introduced as pilot scheme for 7500 properties across the borough
- Paper recycling scheme extended throughout the borough and tonnage doubled
- Green waste scheme introduced for removing garden waste on request
- Trials carried out on alternative methods of collection of green waste
- Introduced composting of Christmas trees and leaves picked up by street cleaners
- New contract let borough-wide for removal of dog waste
- 76 new recycling sites in housing estates and schools - 50% of containers repainted
- Commercial skip scheme extended borough wide
- New clinical waste collection service introduced
- Waste disposal and recycling contracts being retendered, including possible partnership
- Innovative waste disposal solutions being examined to achieve reduction in land filling
- Leaflets promoting composting and environmental gardening planned for all households
- Improved layout and operation of civic amenity site, including improved gates and security
- Improved staff facilities including new portakabin

FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS 2005/6 TARGETS

- Disposal of all fridges to meet EU regulations
- Establish a ring fenced self-financing account for waste reduction activities
- Employ a Waste Minimisation Officer
- Develop borough wide collection of recyclables following trials for pink bags and kerbside collections of glass and paper
- Fully fund and advertise garden waste collection scheme

- Provide 9000 home composting bins to residents, associated publicity/information campaign and increase participation to 40% of residents with gardens
- Forge partnerships with voluntary sector for them to recycle waste
- Examine community clearance/bulky waste scheme options and implement
- Identify a clear position on residents' views on wheelie bins for forward planning
- Achieve 95% separation of commercial & domestic waste

GRAFFITI

CURRENT POSITION

- *All racist/offensive graffiti removed within 24 hours.*
- *Current budget £105k compared to £0.5m to £1.0m for some adjoining boroughs*
- *Consultation showed Graffiti to be 3rd highest concern under 'Safe Green and Healthy' after Crime and Public Transport – Draft Community Plan 2001*
- *Visible graffiti found in 37% of surveyed sites by ENCAMS in May 2002 - London Average 19%*

ENHANCEMENTS ALREADY INTRODUCED

- **Removal programme for all graffiti from highway equipment on the Council's main roads.**
- Dedicated graffiti officer appointed.
- Second graffiti officer funded through FLAG from January to June 2002.
- Completion and Exit strategy to continue best practice from FLAG partnership.
- Surveillance activities carried out in partnership with Metropolitan Police
- 30 arrests achieved by the Police as part of FLAG project
- Young offenders now carrying out removal in partnership with Youth Offending Team
- Some liaison with private property owners to enable / require graffiti removal at cost
- Pilot removal of graffiti by street cleaners from street nameplates
- Agreement sought from Transport for London on removal from red routes and subways
- Agreement sought from Railtrack on graffiti removal from bridges
- 28 community clean-ups carried out so far, including training of community groups - further clean ups and training sessions being organised on the basis of 2 per month
- Voluntary protocol agreed with local retail outlets for responsible storage and display of marker pens and spray paints to be extended across SW London.
- Established new system of removals by British Telecom, the Post Office and 24/7
- Participating in joint initiative with 10 SW London boroughs and other partners to share information and experience

FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS 2005/6 TARGETS

- Develop a lead Council-wide role for all non-housing properties.
- Pilot removal with private owners, e.g. first two removals free then for cost
- Further work with detached youth and related services to reduce graffiti at source
- Environmental/infrastructure projects to reduce risk of recurrence, e.g. planting, trellis, height of nameplates, repainting and cleaning street furniture
- Partnerships with utilities/businesses/Housing Associations etc to reduce incidence of graffiti and enable speedy clearance

NUISANCE VEHICLES

CURRENT POSITION

- *5353 abandoned vehicles reported in 2001/2, 90% inspected within 3 days (4423 and 80% in 2000/1)*
- *Of those vehicles alleged to be abandoned, 40% require removal*
- *650 dangerous vehicles were abandoned in 2001/2, 86% were removed within 2 days (467 and 80% in 2000/1)*
- *593 vehicles surrendered in 2001/2 using the Councils free removal scheme.*
- *Untaxed vehicles reported to DVLA*

ENHANCEMENTS ALREADY INTRODUCED

- Introduced dedicated abandoned vehicles officer and administrative support
- Introduced residents' surrender scheme for unwanted vehicles.
- Provided support to private property owners for removal of abandoned vehicles
- Provided regular reports to DVLA of untaxed vehicles
- Four joint operations so far with Police for removal of vehicles for sale, initiation of two prosecutions and increasing use of warning notices
- Prioritising removals from areas with the highest incidence of vehicle fires
- Currently investigating options for vehicle removal, including car pound
- Seeking DVLA position on Council taking responsibility for untaxed vehicles

FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS 2005/6 TARGETS

- Proactive removal of vehicles for sale and prosecutions for illegal street trading.
- Removal and storage of vehicles suspected as abandoned
- Taking over DVLA functions on tackling untaxed vehicles, e.g. clamping, removal

STREET CONDITION

CURRENT POSITION

- *Spending 17th out of 33 London boroughs for highway maintenance*
- *Spending 27th out of 33 London boroughs for street lighting*
- *18.36% of principal roads requiring repair in 2001/2 - London median 5.2% for 2000/1*
- *17.93% of non-Principal classified roads requiring repair in 2000/1 - London median 8.8%*
- *97.68% repairs made safe within 24 hours in 2001/2, 98.52% in 2000/1 - London median 96.75% (slight change in definition between 2000/1& 2001/2)*
- *0.34% streetlights were not working in 2000/1 - London median 0.71%*
- *24% said repair of roads was good/excellent compared to 22% for Outer London – Residents Survey 2001*
- *54% said street lighting was good/excellent compared to 57% for Outer London – Residents Survey 2001*

ENHANCEMENTS ALREADY INTRODUCED

- Identified necessary allocation for planned maintenance in Capital Strategy
- Participated in London Technical Advisors Group and Transport for London Best Value consultation on highways maintenance
- Energy procurement achieved through membership of consortium, with significant cost reductions over the last four years
- Extension of recycling techniques for planned footway and carriageway maintenance
- Pilot project underway with Friends in St Helier (FISH) to act as “eyes and ears” reporting and feedback
- Currently assessing financial impact of adopting standards recommended in new national code of practice for highway maintenance management

FURTHER STEPS TOWARDS 2005/6 TARGETS

- Carry out asset inventory to establish location and condition of all street furniture, special surfaces and carriageway markings
- Improve the quality and appropriateness of materials used for highway and footway repair and street furniture
- Bring forward schemes for planned maintenance for slab footways
- Increase inspection of footways and repair damaged areas in addition to unsafe areas to improve appearance
- Bring forward schemes for carriageway surface overlays
- Bring forward schemes for carriageway resurfacing/strengthening