

**TO: ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13TH
JANUARY, 2004**

SUBJECT: SCRUTINY OF STREET CLEANSING

FROM: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of progress to date in the area of Street Cleansing and to suggest aspects of the service where Members may wish to carry out further, more detailed scrutiny of the service.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A Best Value Review of the service (along with other cleansing services relating to public open space) entitled “Cleansing of the Public Environment” was completed in November 2001. Audit Commission inspectors who completed the external review rated the service as “fair...with uncertain prospects for improvement”. The inspectors also listed a number of recommendations.
- 2.2 The inspector’s recommendations and those arising from the Council’s own review were incorporated (where practicable) into a new “Cleansing of the Environment” contract which was let on 1st October, 2002 to Ecovert Ltd which has since changed its company name to Verdant.
- 2.3 The main departures from the old Street Cleansing Contract include:
- Introduction of a continuous cleaning regime in town centres
 - Increasing the frequency of cleaning in many urban areas
 - Improved cleansing in hot-spot areas and routes to schools
 - A rapid response unit for one-off cleansing, identified problems and fly-tips

The method of operation has also changed from the last Contract with the introduction of barrowmen in the town centres and a greater reliance on smaller mechanical footway sweepers.

- 2.4 The Contractor’s performance to date has been poor and, although some of the new measures have led to a noticeable improvement, the poor levels of supervision, lack of control over the operatives and inadequate quality control have let the contract down badly as a whole. Discussions with the Contractor’s management team are ongoing and the recent appointment of a new Contract Manager has delivered slow but discernable progress.

- 2.5 There are a number of aspects of the Street Cleansing services operated by Warwick District Council which Members may wish to examine in greater detail, including:
- The effect of the introduction of continuous cleaning and the rapid response unit
 - The effectiveness and suitability of the equipment employed on the contract
 - The performance of the Contractor and the Council's Contract Management
 - The implementation of the recommendations arising from the Best Value Review
 - CPA diagnostic of Public Space and the contribution of Street Cleansing
 - Performance Indicators – BV199
 - Staffing and Resource issues
 - Partnership and joint working
 - Provision and maintenance of litter bins (litter bin policy)
 - Enforcement and Education
 - Customer satisfaction and Public Consultation
- 2.6 Members may also wish to consider how these various elements should best be investigated further. The available options include the scrutiny of discrete aspects of the street cleansing services by individual Members or small groups (as with the recent scrutiny of Recycling services), further detailed officer reports, public consultation , presentations by Contractors (including Question and Answer sessions) and benchmarking and comparison with other authorities. Members may also wish to examine areas where the Council does not provide a service at present, including graffiti removal on public and private property, fly-posting removal and street washing.

3. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 Cleansing of Public Space is a high priority area for the Council both under the Community Plan and the CPA.
- 3.2 Services currently delivered under the Street Cleansing Contract are in line with budgetary provisions, but any increase in the level of service provided or additional measures on enforcement or education could have significant cost implications

4. OUTCOME(S) REQUIRED

- 4.1 That Members note the contents of this report and decide on a framework for the full scrutiny investigation of Street Cleansing by this Committee.

Richard Dobbs
Waste Strategy Officer

BACKGROUND PAPERS

WDC Best Value Review – Cleansing of the Public Environment, Best Value Inspectors' full and summary reports on the review

Areas in District Affected:	All
Executive Portfolio Area and Holder:	Environmental Services - Margaret Begg

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