

TO: Executive - 14 June 2004

SUBJECT: Street Cleansing

FROM: Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 To agree the recommendations of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee following their scrutiny of Street Cleansing as detailed below:

- To pursue a policy of education and awareness to dissuade the public from depositing litter on the highway which the Council then has a duty to collect;
- To welcome the employment of an enforcement/contract monitoring officer within the Waste Management Team to ensure improvement from littering of the street scene;
- To investigate the provision of a comprehensive cleansing contract covering all aspects of land which the Council has a duty to cleanse to ensure consistency of approach for the next round of contract provision in 2008;
- To acknowledge the excellent joint working and liaison between the Council, its Contractor Verdant, adjoining authorities and other agencies and to press for its continuation in dealing with specific issues such as the A46; and
- To note Verdant's efforts in the provision of an efficient service in an area where expectations are very high and staffing levels difficult to maintain.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To ensure an improvement in the cleanliness of the public environment within Warwick District.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Environment Overview & Scrutiny has undertaken a thorough review of the Council's approach to Street Cleansing. Members have challenged current practices and activities and have watched the Cleansing Contractor's operatives in action.
- 3.2 The recommendations in this report represent the considered and collective view of members of the Committee to be those that will enable the Council to meet the requirements of its Key Strategies and National Performance Indicators and to fit within the Council's budgetary and policy framework.

4. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK

4.1 Revenue

- The Council is currently a partner in ENCAMS' (formerly the Tidy Britain Group) People and Places Programme which gives access to promotional material for litter campaigns. The current subscription expires on 31st March 2005.
- Funding has been made available for an additional post in the Waste Management team for an enforcement/contract monitoring officer.

4.2 This service helps the Council to achieve one of the seven key themes within the Corporate Strategy to 'improve our services to provide a cleaner and greener environment'.

Jose Compton
Chairman of Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda & Minutes of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee 13 January, 2 March and 30 March 2004

Areas in District Affected All
Executive Portfolio Area and holder: Councillor Mrs. Begg (Portfolio Holder For Environmental Services)
Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Environment
Key Decision: No
Included in Forward plan: No

For further information about this report please contact:

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BACKGROUND

- 5.1 As part of its work for 2003/04 the Committee agreed to scrutinise Street Cleansing within the District. At its meeting in January 2004, the Committee agreed the following areas it wanted to investigate further. These were:
- 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

- 5.2 Following consideration of the above areas it was agreed that pairs of Councillors would be charged with scrutinising different areas and would report back to the Committee in March. The areas were as follows:

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| • Contract Operation | Councillors Copping & Smith |
| • Performance Assessment | Councillors Gill & Sandhar |
| • Enforcement/Education | Councillors Mrs Blacklock & Davies |
| • Customer Liaison & Joint Working Councillor | Councillors Mrs. Compton & Hatfield. |

In addition staffing and resource issues would be considered as part of each of the areas investigated by Councillors along with the implementation of the recommendations arising from the Best value Review of cleansing of the Environment.

- 5.3 After these mini reports were submitted to the Committee in March it was agreed that officers should use them and the content of the discussions at the meeting to form the basis of a report for submission to the Executive, following the approval of the report by the Committee.
- 5.4 Following consideration of the information researched by the sub groups of the Committee, it was agreed that to date that there were many positive aspects which had been achieved by the Council and its Street Cleansing contractor which should be noted. These included the ENCAMS Cleansing Validation Survey which assessed the cleanliness of the District at 72%, which at the time of the survey was slightly above the National Average and placed the Council amongst the best in the West Midlands area.

- 5.5 However Members felt that there was still room for improvement and that there was a need for the Contractor to ensure by his own quality control process that the specification was fully met at the time of cleanse. This may help to improve the Customer satisfaction rate which was around 65% and lower than the national average.
- 5.6 The Council has currently in place a Waste Enforcement Policy which summarises the Council's powers, its legal duty in respect of litter and refuse and sets out the enforcement procedures. Members felt that a more proactive role on enforcement could be enabled with an additional member of staff and welcomed the employment of an enforcement/contract monitoring officer.
- 5.7 The Council is currently a partner in ENCAMS People and Places Programme which offers training and information on good practice, updates on legislation and Government initiatives and participation in local and national litter campaigns. ENCAMS is also instrumental in promoting the ECO-Schools programme which includes measures and initiatives to encourage and involve young people in environmental issues including the effect of litter on their local surroundings. The need for additional resources has been identified but is constrained by the current financial situation.
- 5.8 The Committee recognised that littering is caused by people and that the Council has a legal duty to clean it up. The provision of litter bins is fundamental in encouraging the public not to drop litter. A draft policy has been produced setting out the parameters for siting and provision and will be presented for approval shortly. Leaflets are planned for distribution to all households setting out the Council's commitment to cleansing of the environment and advising on such issues as fly tipping, abandoned vehicles and disposal of waste as well as the Council's cleansing regime.
- 5.9 The Best Value Review carried out in 2000 considered that there would be substantial merit in bringing all the elements of cleansing, currently in a myriad of contracts, together to ensure uniformity in the cleansing of the public environment in its totality. This has not happened and the Committee considered that to ensure a consistency of approach the provision of a comprehensive cleansing contract should be fully investigated prior to the next round of contract provision in 2008. Such areas to be covered would include: car parks; open spaces; public highways; housing areas and council owned land.
- 5.10 The Committee were encouraged to learn of the many instances of joint working and liaison between the Council, its contractor Verdant, adjoining authorities and other agencies in sharing good practice and seeking advice and experiences on issues such as the cleansing of the A46; fly tipping and community clean ups.

- 5.11 The Committee received a presentation from the Cleansing Contractor Verdant Ltd. The presentation team was led by the Chairman: Jon Miles, the Managing Director: Simon Miles, the Contract Portfolio Manager: David Maidman and the local Contract Manager; Liam Baker. They explained in detail the background of the Company and the services they provide for Warwick District. They explained that the majority of their workforce had transferred from the previous contractor under the TUPE regulations and that there was a need to retrain and reinforce the Company's commitment and vision with regard to the work carried out in Warwick District.
- 5.12 The Committee noted that the Contractor was making considerable effort to provide an efficient service in an area where the expectations of local residents and visitors are very high and staffing levels difficult to maintain.
- 5.13 The Committee commended the Council's officers for their swift response to the many and varied issues which arise on street cleansing issues.