



# A Clean Sweep

**Review of Street Cleaning in Bracknell Forest  
by a Working Group of the  
Environment, Culture & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel  
in partnership with**

**Pride in Binfield**



Binfield Parish Council



Crowthorne Parish Council



Sandhurst Town Council



October 2008

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## Acknowledgements

The Working Group would like to express its thanks to the following officers from Bracknell Forest Council for their co-operation and time. All those who have participated in the review have been thanked for their contribution and provided with a copy of this report.

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## 1. **Foreword by the Lead Member**

The cleanliness of our Borough streets is a matter of great concern to many of our residents. Unfortunately, much of the litter on our streets is the result of inconsideration by some of our residents. In carrying out this review, it has become very apparent the majority of our residents are proud of their Borough and want to live in a litter free community.

This review is the result of an investigation by Borough, Town and Parish Councillors associated with Bracknell Forest Borough and we have had excellent co-operation and assistance from Borough Officers and contractors working for the Borough. It was very beneficial to involve Town and Parish Councillors with their knowledge of their areas.

I hope that this review will illustrate the concern the Borough Council has for comments by residents with regard to litter. Unfortunately, we live in an age where control of local council expenditure has never been so great so we are restricted in what we can do. However by working together, I hope that we can achieve a community that we enjoy.

I am certain that there will be suggestions from many people as to how we can improve and I look forward to receiving these and can assure you that all comments will be carefully considered.

My grateful thanks to all who have assisted in this review.

### 1.1 The Working Group comprised:

Borough Councillor Finnie (Lead Member)  
Borough Councillor Finch  
Borough Councillor Mrs McCracken  
Sandhurst Town Councillor Mrs Cupper  
Binfield Parish Councillor Leake  
Crowthorne Parish Councillor Mrs Thompson

## 2. Background

- 2.1. Street cleansing is a very important part of making Bracknell Forest an attractive place to live. This is of relevance to everyone who lives, works and travels through the Borough. The need to keep our environment clean is a strong theme in the Council's long term vision for the Borough (to make Bracknell Forest a place where all people can thrive: living, learning and working in a clean, safe and healthy environment) and its supporting priorities (protecting and enhancing our environment) and Medium Term Objectives (to keep Bracknell Forest clean and green). The scale of the task is very large (see Appendix 1), for example the Borough has 447 kilometres of roads and 700 kilometres of footpaths and cycleways needing to be kept clean.
- 2.2. Bracknell Forest Council's (the Council's) former Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered a list of potential themes to be reviewed in detail by working groups of the Panel during 2007/08 to complement its ongoing work such as performance monitoring. Having considered the relative merits of seven suggested review topics, the Panel, which has subsequently been re-structured to form a large part of the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel, decided that its 2007/08 work programme would consist of reviews of the following topics by working groups:
  - Street cleaning
  - Strategic review of waste
  - Reviewing Road Traffic Casualties Rates
  - Contributing to the development of the Community Arts Development Plan

This report records the outcome of the Working Group established to undertake the review of street cleaning in the Borough of Bracknell Forest.

- 2.3. The Working Group welcomed undertaking a piece of work in respect of street cleaning as the visual features of the street scene and littering were often raised by Borough residents and neighbourhood action groups.
- 2.4. The main purpose of the Working Group has been to review the standard of street cleansing throughout the Borough with a view to identifying measures to reduce the amount of litter, detritus and graffiti etc. Consideration of the wider environmental aspects of the street scene in order to pursue possible improvements was identified as a possible second stage to the review and the Working Group has addressed this to a limited extent.
- 2.5. Key objectives of the review have been to establish the level of litter and detritus etc. in the Borough with reference to national standards and identify any problem areas; to become familiar with the provisions of the street cleansing and grounds maintenance contracts; to ensure that contracts have been sufficiently monitored and provide value for money; and to identify methods of improving street cleansing services within existing financial constraints.
- 2.6. The scope of the review has been the management and monitoring of the street cleansing and grounds maintenance contracts; the use of legislative powers; initiatives to educate and encourage the public and businesses to minimise littering; public expectation of the standard of street cleanliness; impact of the smoking ban; and identification of best practice at town and parish level.

- 2.7. An aspect largely excluded from the review has been Landscape Services other than where its contractual provisions impact on street cleansing e.g. litter in flower and shrub beds and on grass verges.

### **3. Investigation, Information Gathering and Analysis**

#### **Scoping Meeting with the Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection**

- 3.1 By way of briefing and to assist the Working Group to scope its review, the Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection gave a presentation in respect of street cleaning / scene in the Borough. This featured the conclusions of the Audit Commission inspection of Bracknell Forest's Streetcare Service in October 2004, the scale of the Borough's highway network, the scope of the Streetcare Service, relevant legislation, related budgets and possible questions which the Working Group might address. A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 3.2 The Working Group was advised that the Audit Commission's most recent inspection in 2004 had concluded that Bracknell Forest's Streetcare was a fair service with excellent prospects for improvement and its attention was drawn to sections of the Commission's report which highlighted positive features and weaknesses of the service.
- 3.3 The Chief Officer reported the positive results of a Best Value User Satisfaction Survey in 2006 of some 1,300 residents concerning the cleanliness of the Borough. Bracknell Forest's performance in relation to street cleaning was in the upper quartile nationally, at 66%.
- 3.4 The benefits of educating the public and businesses to reduce littering were highlighted and the Working Group was advised that a 'think tank' with the police in Great Hollands had revealed that children found litter picking demeaning.

#### **Presentation from the Street Cleansing Manager**

- 3.5 The Street Cleansing Manager gave a presentation to the Working Group in respect of street cleansing services in Bracknell Forest. A copy of the presentation is attached at Appendix 2 to this report. The presentation gave an overview of required works and outlined service enquiries from April to October 2007, contract specification, scheduling requirements, benefits of sweeping and litter picking methodology, improvement areas, resource allocation and the way forward.
- 3.6 The Working Group was advised that, in the past, weed killing and street cleansing had been delivered through separate contracts. However, when these contracts expired, the Council reconsidered its approach and entered into a comprehensive contract with Ringway in April 2006 to provide all street cleansing services. This involved moving away from a cyclical approach where roads were cleansed in accordance with a set schedule to more reactive cleansing of variable frequency to match need. The problems associated with dumped rubbish and fly-tipping were of particular concern although compared to other councils the scale of the problem was relatively small. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 defined the cleansing standards to be achieved which varied according to the nature of the zone to be cleaned. The Act did not require cyclical cleansing and focused on standards of cleanliness. Cleansing scheduling requirements varied according to the nature of use of the different parts of the Borough.

- 3.7 The sweeping and litter picking methodology consisted of cleansing on a ward by ward basis with a scheduled resource in the area to be cleaned. Sweeping and litter picking teams worked together to maximise performance. A pragmatic approach was adopted and if a scheduled area did not require cleaning the resource would proceed to another locality that did. An early notification system to alert ward councillors and parish clerks of areas to be cleaned and obtain information relating to any associated issues had been introduced. Courtesy / activity notification boards had been used in the past but were abused.
- 3.8 The new contract featured a change in contract shift patterns to provide 7 day and extended period cover whilst reducing costs and affording the service greater visibility to the public. Revised work patterns also enabled a more flexible and pragmatic approach to cleaning. In addition to routine and random inspections, Masternaut tracking equipment in street cleansing vehicles recorded when and where cleaning took place and facilitated contract monitoring. Income from re-chargeable works for third parties was cost coded and utilised to support the street cleansing budget.
- 3.9 The Working Group was informed of the resource allocation in terms of the nature of crews and equipment undertaking the different types of street cleansing works. At the time of the meeting, the monthly street cleansing cost was £89,545 exclusive of some works.
- 3.10 Officers felt that the new methodology had positive results and further improvement was envisaged. Attention was drawn to ongoing operational reviews to maintain optimum productivity that had resulted in changes such as the fitting of steel brushes to all cleansing vehicles and thermal lancing of kerb channels on high speed roads to tackle weeds. Enforcement featured the recovering of costs associated with illegal advertising on the highway and two successful prosecutions for fly-tipping and rubbish dumping. Regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre would bring additional works and highway adoptions.
- 3.11 Sweeping and litter picking into green areas was carried out as far as reasonably practical by the Ringway staff as they undertook the cleansing of the highway land. Many complaints regarding littering / rubbish were received in respect of land outside the Council's ownership and control such as balancing ponds and ditches. There were cost and health and safety issues associated with the contractor cleaning such areas that were outside the scope of the Council's contract. Areas prone to littering were repeatedly cleaned within available resources as the presence of litter was found to encourage littering.
- 3.12 Performance was measured against Best Value Performance Indicators on three occasions per annum and at the time of the meeting Bracknell Forest was graded B+ on a scale from A to D. A litter pick some months previously in the Folders Lane area had found that litter was blown onto adjoining land from the nearby recycling area. Garage blocks often suffered from fly-tipping, rubbish dumping and graffiti and had been cleaned under the contract at an additional cost to the Council's Housing section prior to the transfer of the housing stock. Garage blocks were now the responsibility of Bracknell Forest Homes. Unadopted roads were outside the Council's contract.

### **Presentation from the Landscape Manager**

- 3.13 The Landscape Manager advised the Working Group that Landscape Services were responsible for maintaining 609 acres of grass areas, on a 14 day cycle

during the summer time, and 19 hectares of shrub border etc. The grounds maintenance contract had previously operated on a cyclical basis involving grass cutting every two weeks from March to October and, although this generally met acceptable standards, it was not always appropriate. The present contract concentrated on standards rather than the number of grass cuts.

- 3.14 The Service had one driver with a vehicle to collect litter who covered a route of fourteen days duration except in the case of areas prone to litter which were cleaned more frequently, often on a weekly basis. The associated cost was £25k per annum at the time of the meeting which included disposal costs. The number of enquiries / litter complaints dealt with during the year was 50 and represented a 50% reduction on the previous year. Shared software between Landscape and Street Cleansing Services informed each of the others' activities and enabled work to be allocated to the appropriate Service or a joint response in cases of excessive littering / rubbish. A pragmatic approach was adopted and Landscape Services' operatives would clean areas falling within the Street Cleansing contract if there was a need in the vicinity where they were working to avoid the need for another team to be called out. Drivers were instructed to pick up litter before grass cutting except where littering was severe and would take an hour or longer to clear, in which case they were instructed to cut another area and then return to the original area following cleansing. There was not a facility to store collected litter on the grass cutting vehicles. In the event that grass grew particularly rapidly, a resource would be transferred to the area for cutting, weather allowing. Littering trends showed a reduction during school holidays which enabled resources to be transferred from school routes to other areas.
- 3.15 Litter in flower beds, shrub borders and on grass could be an issue as, although litter on the edge of borders was easy to retrieve, that deeper within beds and borders was less accessible. Where planters were concerned there was a joined working arrangement between grounds maintenance and street cleansing. In Crowthorne the maintenance of planters requires investigation.
- 3.16 Since the introduction of changes in June 2007, it was felt that the Service had improved and was expected to continue to do so. A combined team of a grass trimmer, grass cutter and litter picker operated together to maximise efficiency. The Landscape Services contract was flexible and enabled a rapid response within existing resources.
- 3.17 It was explained to the Working Group that although Litter Notices could be served on those caught littering, the mechanics for service of the notices were complex. Changes in legislation resulted in more stringent traffic management requirements in the interests of health and safety which would increase costs associated with work on arterial roads. Those requirements varied according to the speed of traffic on roads. The teams therefore co-ordinated works to ensure that landscaping, street light works and cleansing took place at the same time as far as possible on such roads.
- 3.18 Litter initiatives such as the 'Britain in Bloom' competition in Bracknell town took account of environmental quality in the Borough such as litter, graffiti and the street scene etc. and the Council had achieved praise and a good score in the competition which included unannounced visits during the year. Public perception was identified as an issue as the public perception of littering was thought to be exaggerated.

### **Educational / Promotional Activity to Discourage Littering**

- 3.19 The Head of Culture and Visual Environment advised the Working Group that, in addition to the need to educate children not to drop litter, action should be taken to discourage people from throwing litter from car windows. It was felt that people were more disciplined where there was a visible police presence and that many did not recognise their own failing and often only saw it in others. Encouraging shops to resist issuing merchandise in plastic bags was a means of reducing litter.
- 3.20 Although there had been little promotional work undertaken by the Head of Culture and Visual Environment's team during the past year other than the Eco-Schools project due to staff vacancies, the relevant post in the Community and Environmental Development Team had been filled and further work would be undertaken. The Working Group was advised that consistent culture-generating promotional work would be more effective than one-off initiatives.
- 3.21 The Community and Environmental Development Team Leader provided the Working Group with information on the promotional activity undertaken by the Environment, Culture and Communities Department in relation to environmental management relative to the street scene.
- 3.22 The Working Group was advised of the 'Big Green Spring Clean' initiative which had been held three years previously but had not attracted much participation and had not been repeated. The introduction of the neighbourhood forums and 'Take Pride', a campaign run jointly by the Council and Thames Valley Police to encourage and support voluntary groups to tackle issues of concern in their own neighbourhoods, had generated more public interest. The range of activities currently included in 'Take Pride' were crime awareness patrols, graffiti removal, litter picks, speed watch and watercourse clearance. Residents were able to organise themselves to litter pick in their own areas with support and health and safety advice from the Council which provided groups with litter picking equipment, graffiti packs and associated equipment funded through the Local Public Service Agreement 2. New groups were contacting the Council and providing feedback on their work. The graffiti packs were most effective on smooth non-porous surfaces which did not absorb paint. It was noted that subways in the Borough were finished with an easy to clean surface and that it was beneficial to decorate surfaces as graffiti artists tended to respect this and not treat them as a clean canvass on which to create 'art'. Arrangements for the removal of abusive graffiti were made without delay. Although graffiti packs were allocated to voluntary groups and not individuals, residents were able to make their own arrangements locally.
- 3.23 It was acknowledged that late night food outlets and sale of alcohol caused some littering and anti-social behaviour. Whilst there had been an increase in outdoor smoking owing to the smoking ban, this had not had an impact on the street scene as landlords had made provision.
- 3.24 The Social Care and Learning Department advised that educational / promotional activities to discourage pupils from littering varied between schools. As part of the curriculum pupils might undertake project work related to the school and local environment and discuss such issues as part of their work in citizenship and Personal and Social Education lessons. They might also include this as part of their work on sustainable development within geography.

As schools had flexibility in this area there was no common provision for all pupils.

- 3.25 Nineteen of the Borough's schools, mainly primaries, were registered with the Eco-Schools project which provided environmental education and an environmental management system for the school addressing energy, waste, water, litter etc. to improve the environment around the school. The project was of a long term nature and the impact on litter may not yet be apparent in the broader community.
- 3.26 The Working Group received a summary of litter research undertaken by ENCAMS, the Environmental Campaigns charity which sought to achieve a litter free sustainable environment. Research undertaken in 2001 segmented members of the public according to their attitudes towards litter and their litter dropping behaviour. This research was repeated in 2006 to update the information held on each of the littering groups to see if attitudes and litter trends had changed.
- 3.27 The key findings of the 2006 research revealed that 48% of the general population admitted to dropping litter and people felt that some forms of litter were more acceptable than others. Some teenagers had casual attitudes towards littering and a propensity to drop litter. This behaviour was strongly entrenched among teenagers and school culture made little difference.
- 3.28 Over the past six years there had been a significant change in people's attitudes and behaviour towards litter. There was more awareness of litter in 2006 than in 2001 and more people felt guilty about dropping litter. There had been a significant increase in the amount of dog owners who cleaned up after their pets had fouled in a public place and by 2006 it had become generally socially unacceptable for dog owners not to clean up such mess.
- 3.29 As the segmented groups of people found different excuses for their littering, many varying promotional activity approaches would be required to prevent littering. It was found that people were less likely to litter in clean streets / areas and there was a need for correct locations of bins and information about alternative disposal options in the event of a bin not being available. Education and awareness raising campaigns could challenge attitudes towards litter and needed to be backed up by effective enforcement.
- 3.30 ENCAMS had found that although smokers' materials and chewing gum were the two biggest components of litter, car and fast food litter levels were increasing.
- 3.31 Feedback from the Head of Communications and Marketing indicated that, other than the work of the Community and Environmental Development Team and the support offered to neighbourhood action groups and the 'Take Pride' campaign, Bracknell Forest did not run any anti-litter campaigns as such as a council. More recently, the Working Group noted that in September 2008, residents have been invited to take part in the 'Big Tidy Up' national campaign to keep the country clean.
- 3.32 It would be possible to include anti-litter information in the Borough's 'Town & Country' publication in the event that the Council was undertaking an anti-litter campaign and this would be at no additional cost. However, there was no budget for running a specific communications / information campaign that

involved posters, web information, press information, direct information to residents etc. A campaign that would change people's behaviour would take significant staff resource in addition to the cost of marketing materials and would need to be put forward as a priority in the next year's budget as growth. Such a campaign to capture the attention of local people was estimated to cost in the region of £20k.

- 3.33 Identified alternatives were to promote anti-littering via the Council's website, which would have limited impact, or to rejuvenate and consolidate work carried out under the 'Take Pride' campaign umbrella.

### **Town and Parish Council Approach to Tackling Litter**

- 3.34 The Working Group was advised that Sandhurst Town Council had a graffiti pack and litter pick equipment and had organised a litter pick in the Greenway project / Sandhurst School site area in November 2007. The Town Council also had its own Sandhurst Pride team that litter picked around the area and this extra effort helped keep the vicinity clean. Members of the Town Council visited schools and addressed pupils of all ages on the subject of littering and promoted its work locally. The Town Council sought sponsorship for litter picks.
- 3.35 Although the majority of residents did not litter and it was not a particular problem in Binfield, there was ongoing work to tackle litter. The Parish Council employed a part time handy man / ranger who did some work of this nature. Residents were reported to have commented on the untidiness of the street scene, particularly in the spring and autumn. Binfield also benefited from the efforts of the local horticultural clubs who planted and maintained a number of borders and planters.
- 3.36 The standard of cleanliness in Crowthorne was felt to have deteriorated in recent years and more regular cleansing was sought in place of spot cleaning. Local litter picks were organised in the area and the Parish Council had a graffiti pack to use as it wished.
- 3.37 Winkfield Parish Council had been given a graffiti pack by the Council to use in its own area as required.

### **Further Information from the Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection**

- 3.38 High speed roads attracted litter thrown from car windows and presented a challenge to cleaning owing to the high cost associated with the necessary safety measures. The 2008/09 budget included a sum of £100k for an environmental improvement programme, some of which could be utilised for cleaning such roads that often made the first impression on those visiting or passing through the Borough. Whilst fly tipping was not currently a major problem, the temporary closure of Longshot Lane civic amenity site could have an impact that would be monitored. The Working Group was advised that the forthcoming re-structuring of the Council provided the opportunity to consolidate some of the key related areas and to enable the Chief Officer to direct an increased resource towards tackling littering and rubbish dumping etc. Bracknell Forest had ordered two sets of surveillance equipment to be used to gain the evidence to prosecute those who were dumping rubbish. It was acknowledged, however, that the cost of pursuing action against offenders

could sometimes be disproportionately high compared to the amount of the fine paid although the benefit of securing the conviction made the effort worthwhile.

- 3.39 The Chief Officer advised that half of the one-off environmental improvement programme in the neighbourhood centres, funded by the additional £100k in the 2008/09 budget, had been delivered to date and it was anticipated that it would be completed before the end of the summer. Details of all the neighbourhood centres to be cleansed had been circulated and included the main paved areas in the retail regions of Sandhurst and Crowthorne. A collective approach was being adopted which featured power washing of paving and painting of street furniture where necessary. Additional funding had been identified to enable the replacement of some litter bins as part of the programme. Compartmentalised litter bins to cater for recycling were being considered where appropriate.
- 3.40 The object of the programme was to improve the appearance and perceptions of the street scene of the treated areas and feedback from retailers and the public had been very positive.
- 3.41 It was likely that future bids for funding would focus on cleaning high speed roads in the spring and autumn when they were most affected by litter and debris such as fallen leaves. More extensive cutting back of grass verges in the spring and creating verge areas wide enough to accommodate litter pickers would facilitate litter picking without the need for road closures. The Chief Officer would be seeking the further release of funds to allow for such work in the spring as the next phase of the programme.

#### **Departmental Environmental Amenity Action Plan 2008-2011**

- 3.42 Part of the Working Group's role has been to contribute towards the Environmental Amenity Action Plan which has been developed by the Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection, as an operational tool to help meet two of the Council's five priorities and new national performance indicators. The two priorities are 'Protecting and enhancing our environment' and 'Creating a Borough where people are, and feel safe'. The new national performance indicators seek improved street and environmental cleanliness in terms of reducing levels of litter, detritus, graffiti, fly-posting and fly tipping.
- 3.43 The development of the Action Plan has taken account of the Working Group's deliberations and is regarded as a 'living' document for on-going refinement and updating.
- 3.44 The Working Group felt that the Plan would need to cover littering by school children outside school grounds. Members were advised that intelligence-led data drawn from Council and police computer systems via the Community Nuisance and Disorder Information System (known as CADIS) supported by the increase in the number and training of Police Community Support Officers would assist in this area.
- 3.45 Littering from vehicles on fast roads required particular measures to allow for safe clearance and new clearance technology was to be considered to see if it would assist in that regard. Many of the problems had been made worse by the reduction in the amount of vegetation cut back each year along such roads.
- 3.46 Officers had asked fast food retailers and street traders to discourage their customers from littering and warned them of the need to clear away litter. The

Council did not shrink from using its enforcement powers as appropriate and had recently taken legal action against someone to successfully recover the costs of removing their rubbish, together with the Council's costs. Increasing use was to be made of surveillance cameras, though there were legal restrictions which had to be complied with. Equipment had been ordered in order to deal with fly tipping and would be utilised in 'hot spots' to collect evidence of unlawful rubbish dumping to facilitate prosecution and to educate through enforcement.

- 3.47 Residents' perception of street cleanliness took into account the wider visual appearance of the environment which had been affected by the curtailment of bulb and flower planting in recent years due to budget pressures. Funding sources such as 'Keep Britain Tidy' were identified and accessed as far as possible. Joint working with partners was an important dimension to the street care service. For example, the work by Environmental Health over the years in respect of abandoned vehicles had greatly reduced the incidence of car fires, saving cost to the fire service.
- 3.48 A review of the organisational structure was included in the Action Plan and an outcome of a review of the street cleansing contract had been to transfer the management of the contract from the Highways Section to the Waste and Recycling Team. The transfer was already showing early benefits and the head of section was developing a good working relationship with the contractor and all would be taking steps towards securing contractual enhancements as added value.

### **Street Cleansing Performance**

- 3.49 Bracknell Forest's Street Cleaning Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) outturns relating to performance for 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 are set out in Appendix 3 to this report. The performance indicators concern incidents and enforcement actions associated with fly-tipping and the percentage of relevant land and highways that are affected by combined deposits of litter and detritus, graffiti and fly-posting of unacceptable levels, as well as residents' satisfaction with the area. The overall picture from these Performance Indicators is positive for the Borough, both in absolute terms and in comparison to the average performance of other councils across England.
- 3.50 In its latest Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Council, published in February 2008, the Audit Commission rated the Council's Environmental Services as '3' out of a maximum of '4', i.e. a service consistently above minimum requirements. The Audit Commission also commented that the Council's Standards of Street Cleanliness compare with those of the best councils.

## 4. Conclusions

From its investigations, the Working Group's overall conclusion is that the standard of street cleaning in the Borough is good and the service is well run, and improving.

- 4.1 There is a natural tendency for anecdotal feedback to concentrate on problem areas, and for the many positive aspects of street cleaning to be under-recognised. Nonetheless, it is clear from both the Performance Indicators – particularly residents' high level of satisfaction overall – comments from the Audit Commission, and from direct observation that the Borough enjoys a high standard of cleanliness, better than many others around the country.
- 4.2 The Council has made innovative and productive changes to contractual and other operational arrangements to create a more integrated, efficient and effective street cleaning service.
- 4.3 Measuring and comparing performance against national indicators and benchmarking figures will enable monitoring of the Borough's achievements in improving street and environmental cleanliness in terms of levels of litter, detritus, graffiti, fly-posting and fly-tipping.
- 4.4 The Departmental Environmental Amenity Action Plan 2008-2011 will assist in achieving environmental cleanliness and improvements in the Borough.
- 4.5 As the presence of litter encourages more littering, continued focus should be given to those areas prone to littering which should be cleaned regularly.
- 4.6 School routes are prone to litter, the amount of which significantly reduces during school holidays. Although schools encourage pupils to litter pick in school grounds, children tend to find litter picking demeaning and some still drop litter once outside the grounds. As a lot of littering is caused by children, it is important to educate them to desist from littering. There may be merit in exploring activities undertaken by secondary schools in the Borough to discourage littering.
- 4.7 The Working Group concludes that educational and promotional work should focus on teenagers, who have a propensity to drop litter, and car drivers, however, extended or focused and intense campaigns will be costly. As people tend not to recognise their own littering and only see it in others, promotional activity will raise awareness and needs to be backed up by enforcement action.
- 4.8 Although a pro-active balanced approach between education and prosecution is considered appropriate, more resources could be put into catching those that litter and some high profile prosecutions would highlight the consequences of littering.
- 4.9 There is no overall anti-litter campaign (paragraph 3.31). More effort can be made across the Borough to educate and promote against littering such as regular inclusion of anti-littering promotional material in the Borough's 'Town and Country' publication.
- 4.10 The role of uniformed regulatory officers such as parking attendants and the dog warden could be reviewed with a view to expanding their roles where practical to include wider environmental enforcement duties.

- 4.11 The increase in outdoor smoking since the smoking ban has not had the anticipated adverse impact on the street scene as landlords have made provision on site by way of smoking shelters / areas in appropriate places.
- 4.12 The Environmental Protection Act places a litter duty of care on manufacturers and retailers and the Council should look to explore working with them to encourage them to help minimise littering.
- 4.13 Street trading consent powers enable a means of regulation over local litter-related problems. The powers in the legislation enable conditions to be included and enforced by the licensing in respect of litter picking and the provision of litter bins for customers. Officers are encouraged to continue to use these powers and to ensure that there is effective ongoing liaison between the respective service areas to ensure the early resolution of problems.
- 4.14 The 'Take Pride' initiative is currently fragmented and there is potential for better co-ordination to strengthen and unify the campaign to encourage more voluntary litter picking to improve the street scene. Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action has indicated that it has a role in some of the co-ordinated elements of 'Take Pride'. A church group has undertaken litter picking with the assistance of the Council and this could be co-ordinated to extend to further groups.
- 4.15 All town and parish councils could be encouraged to tackle littering and fly-tipping etc. at a co-ordinated local level involving communities. Sandhurst Town Council's 'Clean Team' is a prime example of best practice in tackling littering. The 'Clean Team' operates under the umbrella of 'Sandhurst Pride' which has been in existence for eight years.
- 4.16 This review has benefited from the active and willing involvement of Town and Parish Councillors. This underlines the value of partnership working and a similar joint approach should be considered for future Overview and Scrutiny reviews, as appropriate.

## 5. Recommendations

**It is recommended to the Executive Members for the Environment and Education & Libraries that:-**

- 5.1. The balance of resources deployed between preventing littering occurring and dealing with littering after the event should be reviewed, as the presence of litter generates more littering, and prevention is generally better than cure.
- 5.2. Implementation of the Departmental Environmental Amenity Action Plan 2008-2011 be the subject of report to the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel at each year end; (paragraph 3.42)
- 5.3. The additional funding of £100k for the environmental improvement programme continue to be included in the consideration of the general revenue budget provision in future years as such an annual programme will facilitate consistent improvements to key areas each year;
- 5.4. The measuring and comparing performance against national indicators and benchmarking figures relating to street and environmental cleanliness in terms of levels of litter, detritus, graffiti, fly-posting and fly-tipping continue to be reviewed through the Performance Monitoring Reports;
- 5.5. 'Take Pride' and similar local campaigns be rejuvenated and co-ordinated to encourage more voluntary litter picking to improve the street scene;
- 5.6. Regular articles appear in 'Town and Country' to promote anti-littering and advertise related campaigns;
- 5.7. Consideration be given to identifying effective methods of educating and encouraging against littering, particularly in relation to teenagers, other secondary school pupils and drivers on fast roads;
- 5.8. More severe cutting back of grass verges in the spring and creation of verge areas wide enough to accommodate litter pickers be undertaken to facilitate litter picking without the need for road closures;
- 5.9. Ward Members be provided with information concerning waste dumping 'hot spots' in their wards to facilitate monitoring of dumping;
- 5.10. In due course, the Environment, Culture and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel be consulted on the Supplementary Planning Guidance seeking to bring the three strands of street scene, planning policy and highway engineering together and featuring a departmental multi-disciplinary approach involving planning and asset management etc;
- 5.11. Thames Valley Police be asked to encourage their officers to use their powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices in respect of littering more vigorously; and
- 5.12. Consideration be given to equipping grass cutting vehicles with a facility to store collected litter (paragraph 3.14).

**It is recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission that:**

- 5.13. The involvement of Town and Parish Councils should be considered for future Overview and Scrutiny reviews, as appropriate, (paragraph 4.16)

Presentation by Chief Officer, Environment and Public Protection

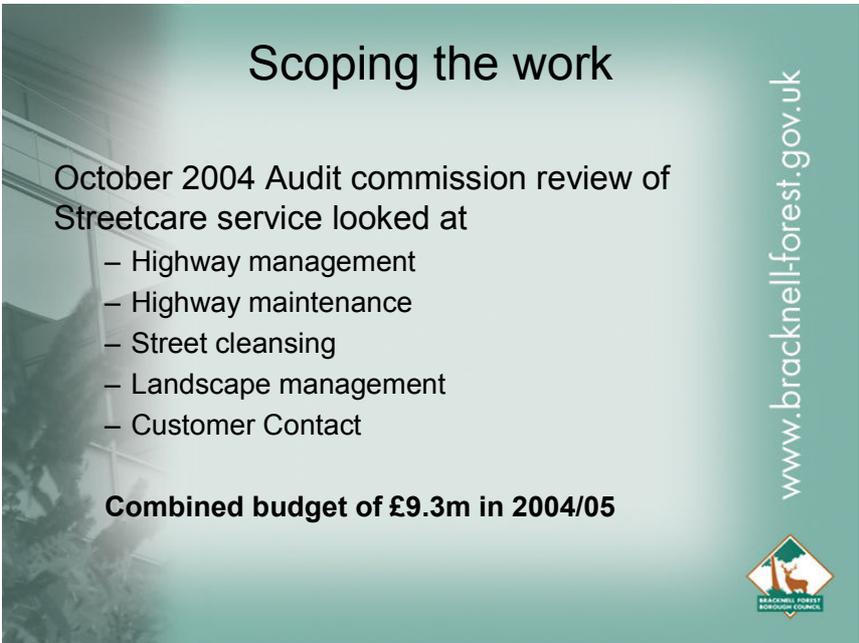


Overview and Scrutiny  
29 October 2007

Street cleansing/street scene

Steve Loudoun

[www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk)



Scoping the work

October 2004 Audit commission review of Streetcare service looked at

- Highway management
- Highway maintenance
- Street cleansing
- Landscape management
- Customer Contact

**Combined budget of £9.3m in 2004/05**

[www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk)



## Audit Commission conclusion

“The Council faces many challenges because of its new town inheritance. These adversely affect the streetcare service because of the borough's ageing infrastructure. However, the council is now committed to delivering improvements, it has allocated additional financial and human resources, and plans are in place to drive improvement”

A ‘fair’ service with ‘excellent’ prospects for improvement – audit commission Oct 2004

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## Legislation

Duty e.g.

- Environmental Protection Act

Powers e.g.

- Cleaner Neighbourhoods Act
- Refuse Disposal Amenity Act
- Environmental Protection Act

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## Scale

The highway network comprises some

- 447 kilometres of roads
  - 700 kilometres of footpaths and cycleways
  - 75 Subways,
  - Bridges and pedestrian ramps
  - Town and local shopping centres
  - Empty 700+ public rubbish bins
- plus
- fly-posting/ graffiti/ dumped rubbish/ cars

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## Budgets

• Street cleansing	£939k
• Highway repairs	£599k
• Footway repairs	£313k
• Bridges	£86k
• Gully emptying	£143k
• Drainage	£42k
• Winter maintenance	£264k
• Lighting (inc electricity)	£1.1m
• Weed killing	£60k
• Landscape	£126k
• Trees	£16k
Highway maintenance via LTP	£2m

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## Questions

- Have we improved since 2004?
- What are the expectations - how can we measure?
- Are we targeting the right priorities?
- Where are our weaknesses?
- Where are the next pressures?
- How might we address them within the constraints?

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## Presentation by Street Cleansing Manager



**BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**RINGWAY**

**Overview of Required Works**

- Roads: 472.5 km of roads to cleanse and 945 km of kerb line.
- Footpaths: Similar length, probably more
- Cycle lanes
- Subways: 80
- Town Centre
- Neighbourhood Shopping centres and adjacent recycling areas:18
- Public Litter Bins: over 700
- Public Conveniences:4, daily requirements to each
- Areas prone to litter and high frequency areas:
- Parks and playgrounds 16,168 Sq Metres
- Dead Animals.
- Dog fouling.
- Reactive works, Fly tipping, dumped rubbish and extra litter bin emptying (increase since ABC), graffiti, from horse legs to Hazardous waste
- Other 3<sup>rd</sup> party works
- Supermarket trolleys



## Service enquires Apr 07 Oct 07

- Dead Animals 143
- Dog Fouling 57
- Dumped Rubbish 518
- Fly-Tipping 336
- General Sweeping 409
- Graffiti / Fly-posting 74
- Hypodermics 22
- Litter Collection 95
- Overflowing Bins 87
- Public Conveniences 14
- Service Provision 31
- Supermarket Trolleys 21
- **Total = 1807 or approximately 12 per day.**



## Contract Specification

- **In line with EPA (Litter Code of Practice).**
- **Legal obligation on BFBC to maintain EPA standards.**
- **Defined response times.**
- **Frequency based schedules.**
- **Resource concentration in areas likely to experience high levels of littering.**



## Scheduling Requirements

- **Daily presence/continual cleanse – Town Centre**
- **Daily cleanse – e.g. Neighbourhood shops**
- **Weekly cleanse – e.g. other high amenity areas (parks, playgrounds, public litter bins, subways, cycle lanes etc.)**
- **Variable frequency Cleanse – e.g. Housing estates and third party requirements.**
- **Daily Responsive works & 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Requirements**



## Benefits of Sweeping & Litter Picking Methodology

- **Operational support, sweeping & litter picking teams working together in wards, on a ward by ward basis.**
- **Effective use of resources.**
- **Scheduled Method and neighbourhood cooperation including advance notice of works.**
- **High Profile Presence in Wards during cleansing operations.**
- **Positive, high impact & measurable results**



## Improvement areas

- **Shift Patterns adjusted to provide 7 day cover and extended periods.**  
Reduction in costs and improved visibility & public perception.
- **Management control procedures.**  
Engineer & contractor monitor jointly. Daily whereabouts, routine and random inspections, Masternaut in vehicles.
- **Work patterns.**  
Revised methodology with more flexibility built in within crews and works, a more pragmatic approach is being used.
- **Rechargeable works income**  
To support Borough Street Cleansing Budget.



## Resource Allocation

### Crew

- Town Centre Crew
- Crew 1-Cage Tipper
- Crew 2-Cage Tipper
- Crew 3-Cage Tipper & Trailer Jetter
- Crew 4-7-Cage Tipper
- Large Sweeper
- Compact Sweeper 1-3

### Work Type

- Town Centre and adjacent Subways.
- Neighbourhood Centres.
- Parks, Playgrounds and Public Litter Bins.
- Emergency Response, Graffiti & Areas Prone to Litter.
- Scheduled works and Prone Areas.
- Primary/Secondary Routes as per schedule.
- Scheduled Works and emergencies.



**£89,545 per month**

- **Schedule cost for Standard Specified Cleanse (subject to RPI adjustment) .**
- **Not including extra works for 3<sup>rd</sup> Parties or non standard works road closures on arterial routes.**



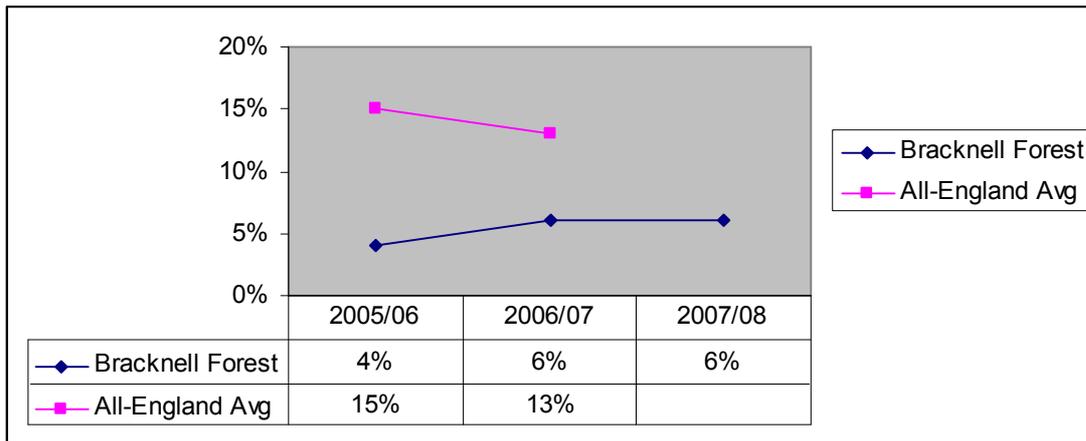
## The way Forward.....

- **New methodology appears to have had positive results.** Long term positive effect and further improvement is envisaged.
- **Continual operational review to maintain optimum productivity and results.** Examples of this have been steel brushes fitted to sweepers and thermal lancing of kerb channels on high speed roads to assist with the weed control operation which is now encompassed in the works.
- **Employees have been taken on at new rates, and with revised shift patterns.** TUPE conditions accepted by majority of team , improved productivity and morale.
- **Enforcement** Improvements have been made in relation to enforcement and education activities, although greater focus on both is required to further assist.
- **Regeneration, additional works & adoptions of roads.** Needs to be monitored with respect to extra resource requirements.

## BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – STREET CLEANING

### BVPI 199a

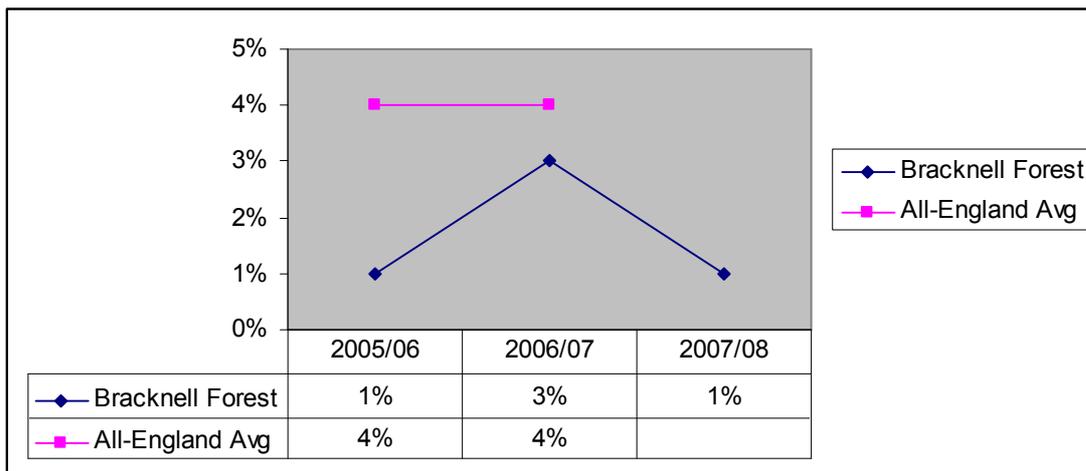
*The percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus that fall below an acceptable level*



The graph shows that Bracknell Forest's levels of litter and detritus are at a consistently low level and significantly better than the average for all councils across England. (National comparator data is not yet available for 2007/08.)

### BVPI 199b

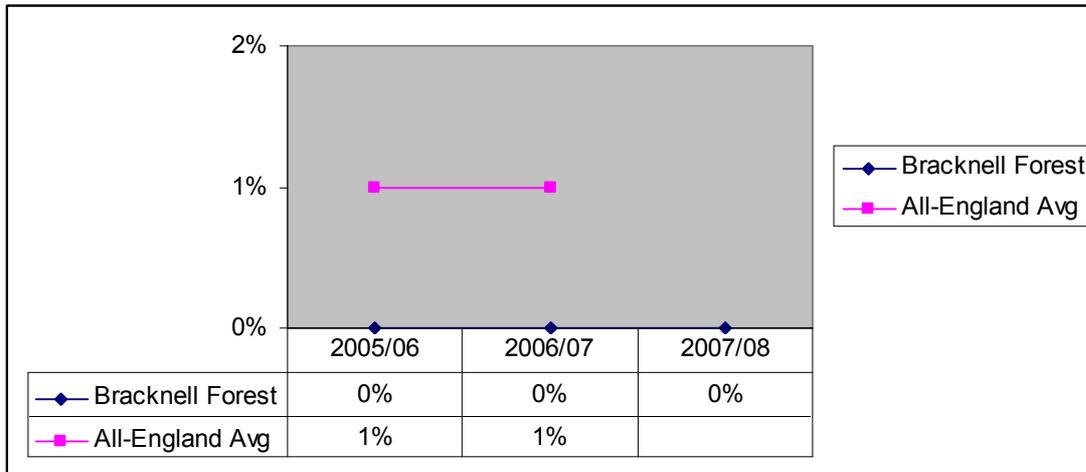
*The percentage of relevant land and highways from which unacceptable levels of graffiti are visible*



The graph shows that despite a rise in graffiti in 2006/07 which was corrected by 2007/08, graffiti in Bracknell Forest is consistently at a lower level than the average for all councils across England. (National comparator data is not yet available for 2007/08.)

### BVPI 199c

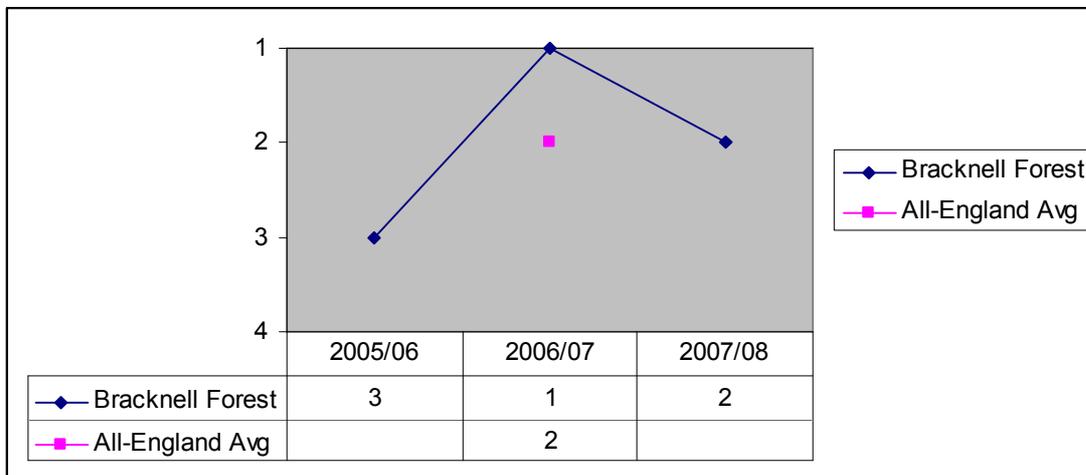
*The percentage of relevant land and highways from which unacceptable levels of fly-posting are visible*



The graph shows that since 2005/06 fly-posting has been visible from less than 0.5% of Bracknell Forest land and highways, better than a consistent national figure of around 1.0%. (National comparator data is not yet available for 2007/08.)

### BVPI 199d

*The year-on-year reduction in total number of incidents and increase in total number of enforcement actions taken to deal with 'fly-tipping'*



The graph, which shows grade assessments for effectiveness of actions to combat fly-tipping, indicates that Bracknell Forest's performance in this regard has been changeable, rising between 2005/06 and 2006/07 from Grade 3 ("Good") to Grade 1 ("Very Effective"), and then falling back to Grade 2 ("Effective") in 2007/08. (An all-England average figure is only available for 2006/07 as data was not reported nationally in 2005/06 and no data is yet available for 2007/08; the average in 2006/07 was Grade 2 – "Effective".)

**BVPI 89*****The percentage of people satisfied with the cleanliness standard in their area***

This indicator is measured every three years through a survey last undertaken in 2006. In the last survey, 66% of Bracknell Forest residents were either “very satisfied” or “fairly satisfied” with cleanliness in the area, compared to averages of 67% for all English local authorities and 64% for all English unitary authorities.

Source for all data: Audit Commission.