

**Decision Maker:** Environment PDS Committee

**Date:** 29th January 2014

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** THE STREET ENVIRONMENT CONTRACT REVIEW 2012-13

**Contact Officer:** Peter McCready, Head of Area Management  
Tel: 020 8313 4942 E-mail: peter.mccready@bromley.gov.uk

**Chief Officer:** Nigel Davies, Executive Director of Environment & Community Services

**Ward:** All

---

1. Reason for report

A contract for frontline street environment services (incorporating street cleansing, graffiti removal, cleansing of public conveniences, and highway drainage cleaning) was let on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012 for a period of five years with an option of a two year extension. The specifications for each service were revised in order to achieve a significant budget saving. The PDS Committee received a report on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2013 (Report ES13001 Item 41) reviewing the progress of the street cleaning contract and the impact of the service changes since the contract commencement, and requested a further update of progress. This report outlines progress made against the key issues raised by Members, taking into account residents' perceptions of street cleanliness and their satisfaction with this service.

---

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That Members note and comment on this report, in particular:

- 2.1 The positive results of the independent resident satisfaction survey of street cleansing standards, and attention that will be given to the highlighted areas of concern;
- 2.2 The reduced levels of enquiries from the public regarding street environment contracts since the last report to Environment PDS Committee; and
- 2.3 That the frequency of sweeping will continue to be monitored and adjusted where required to ensure cleanliness standards are achieved; and that additional programmes of work, including deep cleaning of streets and weekend road cleaning, will continue.

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
  2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment:
- 

### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable:
  2. Ongoing costs: Recurring Cost : £3.946m
  3. Budget head/performance centre: Streetscene & Greenspace
  4. Total current budget for this head: £3.946m
  5. Source of funding: Existing Revenue Budget 2013/14
- 

### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 8
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 7.5 fte
- 

### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement: Environment Protection Act 1990
  2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
- 

### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Borough wide impact on residents, businesses and visitors
- 

### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: n/a

### 3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The contract to provide street cleansing and other associated environmental services was let on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012 for a five year period, with the option to extend the contracts by two years if the Council is satisfied with the contractors' performance.
- 3.2 The Street Environment Contract was tendered in 2011, with a combined value of work of almost £5M per annum, in accordance with European Union Procurement Directives. It was awarded as separate lots to the following contractors:
- Kier Environmental Service, for street cleaning (Lot 1)
  - Community Clean, for graffiti removal (Lot 2)
  - Kier Environmental Services, for cleaning of public conveniences (Lot 3)
  - Veolia, for cleaning of highway drainage assets (Lot 4)
- 3.3 The range of services provided by the Street Environment contract was considered by a Working Group of the Environmental Services PDS Committee, following a study undertaken between July 2010 and October 2010. The recommendations of the Working Group covered service requirements, the procurement strategy and contractual arrangements. Several key changes were made to the previous contract specification to provide the best fit for the particular circumstances of Bromley's environment and financial situation. The contract allowed for potential changes to be made to frequencies and standards of cleaning at the tender award stage or during the term of the contract. A revised frequency of cleaning enabled a saving of £800k per annum to be achieved, predominantly by rescheduling the frequency of cleaning residential streets to fortnightly for pavements and four weekly for carriageways.
- 3.4 The Working Group made a number of recommendations on how services should be improved. These included: enforcement activity; voluntary support from residents and businesses; and how the successful contractor would be responsible for the impact of its activities on the environment, employees, and the public through its approach to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Account was taken of the success of the Street Friends initiative, and examples in other boroughs of the use of volunteers to assist with monitoring contractors' performance and reporting problems. The contract therefore included obligations towards developing community engagement, including support for Street Friends. An example of this support includes the provision of the 'Purple Sack' Hotline – a dedicated service for Street Friends whereby the contractor provides purple coloured waste sacks to volunteers who carry out litter picking on an ad hoc basis in their local neighbourhood. When completed they would inform the contractor directly, via a telephone answerphone service, that the bagged waste was ready for collection.
- 3.5 The Environment Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee received a report on 15th January 2013 (ES 13001 Item 41) which reviewed the contractors' performance during the first nine months of the street environment contracts. In discussion Members queried the working practices adopted by the street cleaning contractor and expressed the need for continual review of the frequency of cleaning, especially where there were heavily parked areas where the frequency should be based on demand and need. Suggestions were made to introduce less frequent but more effective 'deep cleaning' in certain areas, in conjunction with the option for weekend cleaning where there was less on-street parking. Members suggested it was necessary to develop a process of engaging with residents where they would be prepared to move cars for cleaning purposes. The interaction between residents, officers and the contractor's operatives was felt to be a key part of sharing intelligence and assisting with the identification of local 'hot spots'. The development of revised schedules and displaying the information on the Councils website was also a requirement when the contract had bedded down.

- 3.6 The previous report outlined options for further service improvements within budgetary constraints, including changes in working practices to address the issues of: cleaning heavily parked streets; cleaning roads at weekends; additional litter bin emptying; and gathering intelligence through engagement with residents to identify local hot spots and monitor progress.
- 3.7 It was agreed that another review of the street cleaning contract should be reported to Members following a further year of operation, to review progress and the impact of changes to street cleaning frequencies.
- 3.8 The focus of this report is therefore on the street cleansing contract operated by Kier Services. Performance of the other three contracts remains good and regular monitoring of the services continues with performance standards raised with the relevant contractors as necessary.

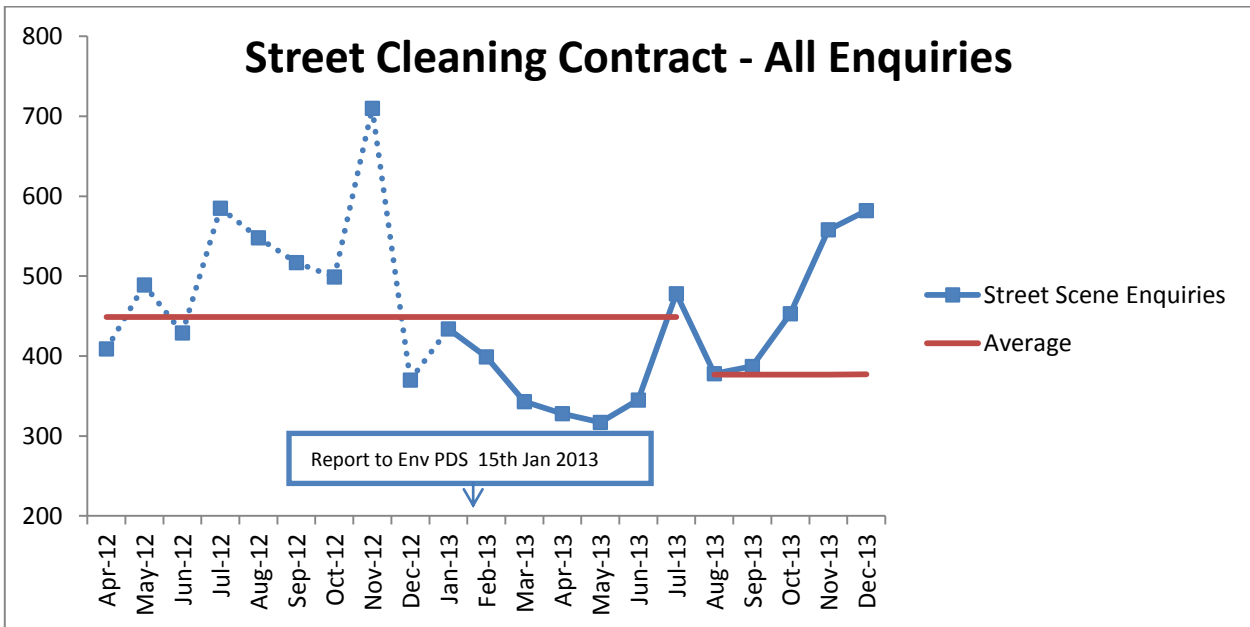
### **Review of Operational Performance**

- 3.9 As highlighted in the report to Environment PDS Committee in January 2013 (ES 13001) the key operational issues were:
- Overflowing litter bins
  - Cleansing in tightly parked streets, and
  - Excessive weed growth
- 3.10 The report outlined how officers had worked with the contractor to deal with these issues, resulting in a subsequent reduction in the number of issues reported by residents (see Figures 1-4 in this report).
- 3.11 Whilst members of the public are still reporting street scene problems, considerable effort has been taken by the contractor and officers to target the causes of problems and reduce their frequency. The service innovations indicated in paragraph 3.6 were introduced as a direct result of the contract monitoring procedures, and have led to tangible improvements in performance. These additional programmes of work are important in maintaining steady improvements to the service and reducing avoidable customer contacts. These programmes should continue as they have proven to be effective.
- 3.12 To tackle the issue of cleansing in tightly parked streets, the 2012/13 programmes of weekday deep cleaning (150 streets) and weekend road channel cleaning (41 streets) have been increased for the 2013/14 programme to include weekday deep cleaning of 252 streets and weekend road channel sweeping of 127 roads. These additional programmes of works are funded from the contract contingency sum of £200k p.a. held in the Street Scene revenue budget, as agreed by the Executive Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011 (ES11123).
- 3.13 A further £200k is held in Central Contingency to manage the potential risks to service changes that were introduced in the new contract.
- 3.14 .As reported in January 2013, customer reports showed a significant increase in enquiries following the commencement of the contract. Customer reports relating to the street cleaning contract have been measured and compared between the periods April 2012 to December 2013.
- 3.15 Whilst there continue to be seasonal variations of the volume received (such as periods of weed growth and autumn leaf-fall), the overall trend demonstrates a decline in the number of issues affecting residents. Trends in the volume of enquiries since January 2013 have now been measured and are illustrated in the graphs contained within this report. The graphs also indicate key interventions during the period. Examples include the seasonal increase in

contacts relating to autumn leaf-fall collection, and the introduction of programmes of additional work of removal.

3.16 As shown in figure 1, the number of overall reports has reduced across all service types and become more consistent on a monthly basis. In general, the volume of street sweeping reports has reduced by 10%, inclusive of the reports relating to autumn leaf-fall;

Figure 1 - All Street Cleaning Contract Enquiries (incl. litter bins, sweeping, autumn leafing and weeds)



3.17 It is also possible to establish the trend of received reports for specific subject matters, such as street sweeping, street weeds and litter bins. A breakdown of these findings is illustrated in Figures 2, 3, and 4. Street weed enquiries have reduced by 59%; and litter bin issues have reduced by 42%.

Figure 2 – Street Sweeping

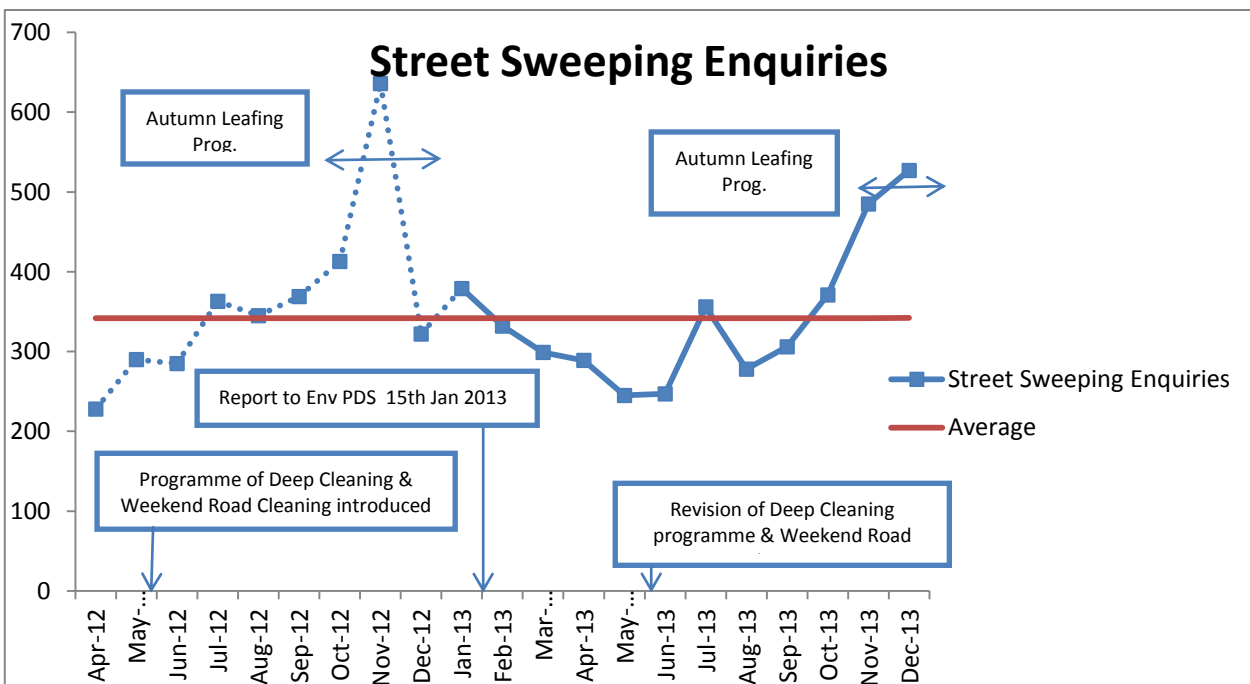


Figure 3 – Street Weeds

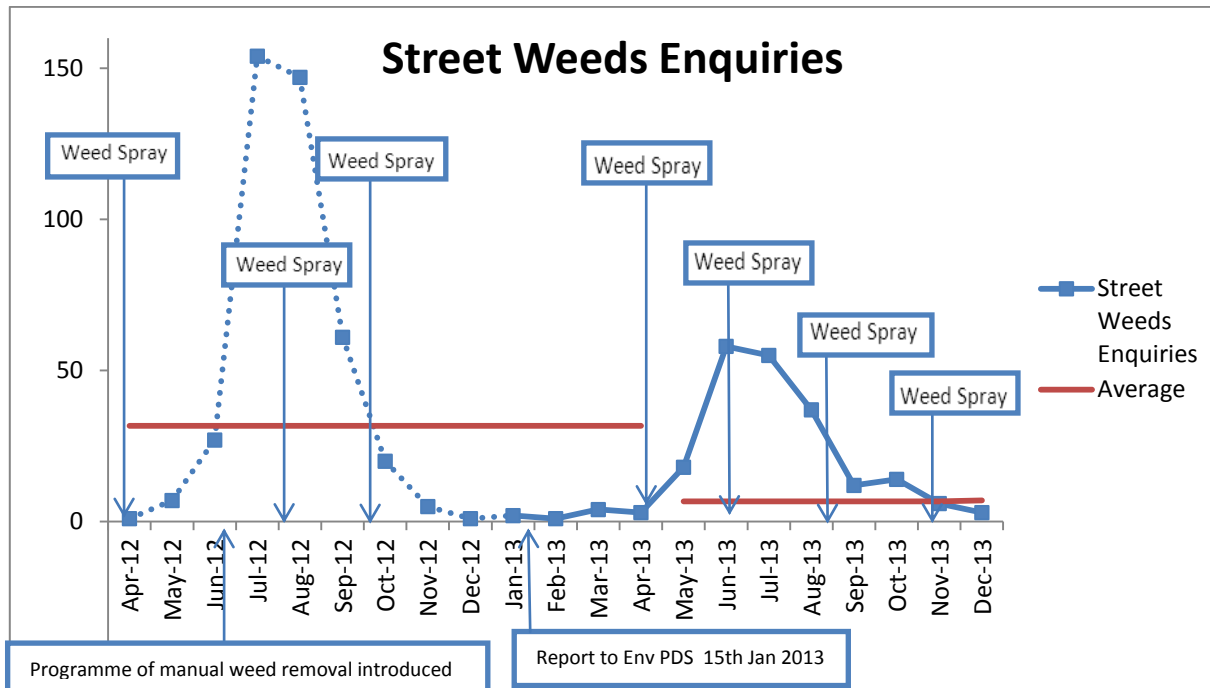
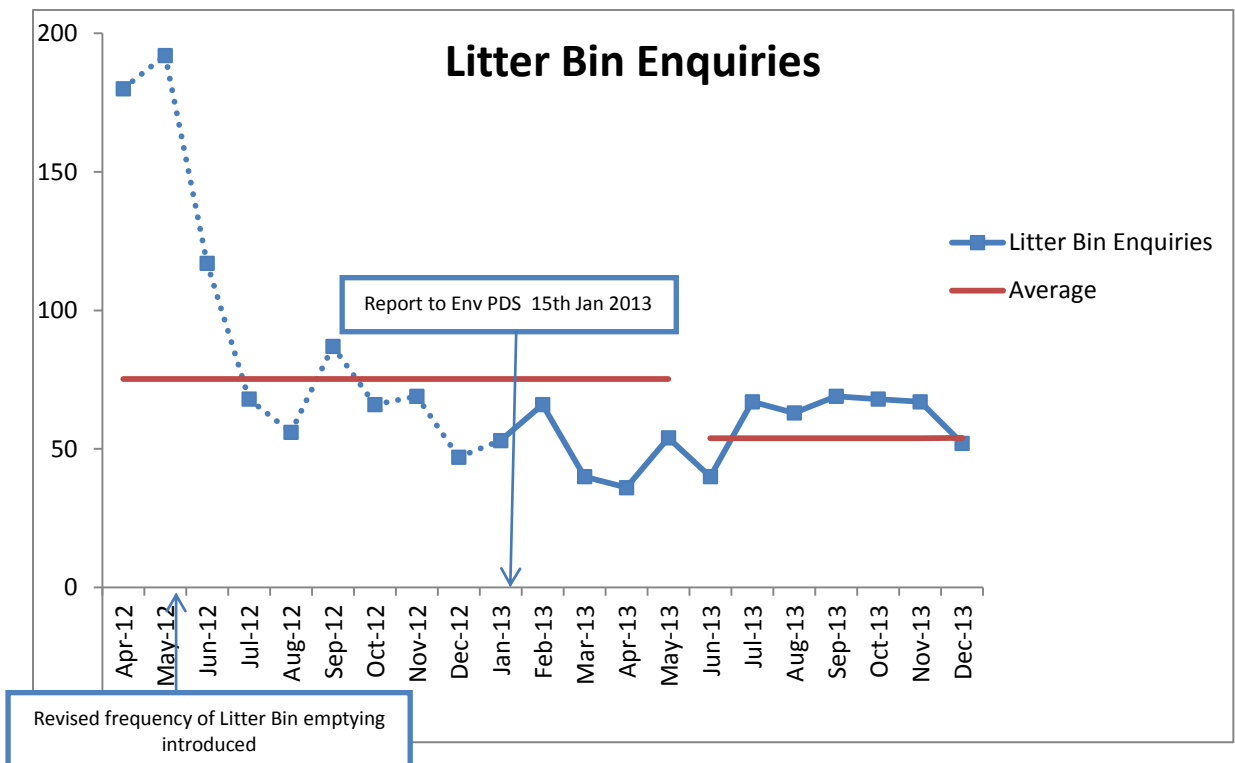


Figure 4 – Litter Bins



3.18 Information gained from customer reports has been corroborated by data from scheduled inspections of street cleanliness, as reported to Committee in November 2013 (ES 13122). In the first two tranche inspections of 2012, 6.2% and 9.7% of areas were deemed to have unsatisfactory levels of litter and detritus respectively. In the first two tranche inspections of 2013, these proportions had declined significantly to 5.1% (litter) and 6.4% (detritus).

3.19 The current street cleaning contract is based on productivity levels associated with specified frequencies of cleaning. It has proven to be versatile in its ability to cope with changing circumstances, without the need for contract renegotiation or claims for additional costs by the

contractor. The practice of monitoring and reviewing the levels of cleanliness achieved by the scheduled cleaning frequencies, and adapting routine operations to suit local requirements, will be continued.

- 3.20 Local knowledge gained from Residents Associations, Street Friends and other interest groups can lead to changes in cleansing operations. Following the January 2013 Environment PDS Meeting, Councillor David Jefferys sought assistance from officers to establish a methodology to improve links between the Council and residents associations representatives to improve their local environment. As a result a 'linkage' pilot scheme was created in June 2013 involving the Park Langley RA and Shortlands RA, both residents associations in Shortlands Ward. Guided by Councillor Jefferys, meetings have been held to share knowledge regarding service delivery and to identify local issues and 'hot spots'. The meetings discussed engagement with residents, and how the RAs could assist by encouraging car owners to park away from streets during periods of scheduled cleaning. A verbal report outlining the developments of the pilot will be presented to Committee by Councillor Jefferys.
- 3.21 To support a more efficient and effective street cleansing operation the new contract required the geographical base for the contractor to be changed. In August 2013 the street cleaning contractor moved from the Beaverwood Depot, Chislehurst, to the Annex of the Central Depot site, The Avenue, Bromley, adjacent to the Council's Waste Transfer Station.
- 3.22 The change of operational base for the contract presented a number of advantages. Most important is the elimination of the 'downtime' caused by vehicles which previously had to visit the Waste Transfer Station to dispose of waste before returning to the Beaverwood Depot at the end of each operational shift. The contractor has factored the time saved into their street cleaning schedules, improving efficiency and completing tasks earlier.
- 3.23 In order to provide more effective working practices the contractor is required to optimise street cleaning routes to align with waste and recycling collections. The contractor also has to take into account the timing of street cleaning visits to avoid contributing to traffic congestion. A night-time schedule of road sweeping of main arterial roads has also been implemented by the contractor to address this challenge.
- 3.24 Following the severe wet and windy weather experienced during November and December 2013, a review of highway drainage cleaning frequencies and identification of localised flooding hot spots will be undertaken. This will lead to confirmation of the frequencies of cleaning and determine the necessity for further drainage investigations. Improvements to Council-owned infrastructure may be necessary to alleviate surface water flooding of the public highway.

### **The Public's Perceptions of Street Cleaning**

- 3.25 Street cleaning can have a major impact on the public's perceptions of their local environment and the reputation of the services provided by the Council. The appearance of the local area can impact on health and wellbeing, crime rates, levels of anti-social behaviour and the vibrancy of the local economy.
- 3.26 To help the Council maintain high levels of public satisfaction with street cleanliness the contractor, Kier, has taken a 'neighbourhood' approach. This involves groups of workers assigned to particular geographic areas of the borough. By getting the operatives to know their area they are encouraged to develop a degree of local 'knowledge' with a greater opportunity to use their own initiative to work more flexibly and efficiently.

- 3.27 This approach improves job satisfaction, productivity and ultimately residents' perceptions of the street cleansing service. Kier has taken steps to ensure its workforce is aware of the expectations of the service. Kier also listens to feedback from its operatives, discussing issues and raising concerns where there are problems. Crucially, Kier has attempted to build a team spirit through the neighbourhood approach as operatives share responsibility for maintaining their local area. They have also addressed the status of street cleaners by building esteem and motivating staff by encouraging them to use their initiative. Training opportunities are provided to up-skill and progress, and support is provided to assist operatives with their daily duties.
- 3.28 Understanding people's perceptions is a very important factor in maintaining public spaces that everyone can enjoy. In order to identify residents' priorities, the contract requires the contractor to commission an independent survey of the public's satisfaction with street cleanliness on an annual basis. The survey asks how respondents feel about street cleanliness issues, and how important they feel problems are both in their local area and in the borough's town centres.
- 3.29 In August 2013, Kier arranged for an independent consultant to undertake a postal survey and on-street interviews in Bromley town centre. Questions were adapted for the different situations, since some of those responding to the on-street survey would be visitors to the Borough rather than residents. The response rate to the postal survey was very good (25.2%). The responses to the survey are summarised in a table in Appendix A of this report.
- 3.30 An analysis of the postal survey was broken down by the category of land use of the surrounding area, including commercial, retail, housing type, main roads and other highway areas. Overall, there were very positive responses:
- 75% were satisfied with the cleanliness of their streets
  - 82% described their local shopping area as clean
  - 89% were satisfied with the cleanliness of their town centres
- 3.31 All questions had a favourable response of more than 50%, with most having a favourable response of over 75%.
- 3.32 The top 3 issues of most concern to respondents were:
1. Leaves in autumn in their streets, with 44% indicating that it is a significant problem.
  2. General litter 29%, and
  3. Dog fouling 28%

Measures to address these points are identified in para 3.35.

- 3.33 The on-street survey asked Bromley residents about their street and local neighbourhood; non-residents were only asked about the town centre. Overall, there were extremely positive responses:
- 88% were satisfied with the cleanliness of their streets
  - 89% described their local neighbourhood as clean
  - 95% were satisfied with the cleanliness of Bromley town centre

The issues of most concern to respondents were:

- chewing gum in the town centre, with 52% indicating that it was a significant problem, and
- Cigarette ends, with 39% indicating that it was a significant problem.



- 3.34 To summarise, satisfaction with cleansing and perception of cleanliness are generally very high. Greater emphasis on tackling the autumn leaves issues was identified as being of the most concern, with litter being a secondary issue in residential areas followed by dog fouling. Chewing gum and cigarette ends were the main issues of concern in the town centres.
- 3.35 Issues such as dog fouling, cigarette ends, chewing gum, general litter and autumn leaf-fall clearance require a range of different approaches in addition to routine cleaning of pavements. Examples of programmes of work relating to these issues include:
- (a) The Council encourages dog owners to pick up after their dogs. Where fouling 'hot spots' emerge, awareness can be raised by improving signage, and enforcement action can be taken by targeted patrols with the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN). These steps are outside of the scope of the street cleaning contractor's remit and are currently being trialled by the Parks Security contractor. The success of the measures under the Council's control clearly plays an important role in the public's perception of how effective the street cleaning contractor performs.
  - (b) All town centres have ashtrays attached to litter bins to accommodate smoking related litter. Mechanical sweeping of town centres is carried out on a daily basis from the early morning until late evening, with regular visits by operatives to remove any build-up of cigarette ends. Enforcement action is also taken in town centres with targeted patrols for littering offences with predominance (80-90%) of FPN's issued for smoking related litter.
  - (c) A seasonal programme of chewing gum removal for all town centres has been in operation since the commencement of the contract, with periodic revisits to local hot spots such as bus stops and outside fast food establishments by the graffiti removal contractor (Community Clean).
  - (d) An additional programme of litter picking patrols and litter bin emptying of local hot spots and other busy areas are scheduled between the routine frequencies of street cleaning visits in order to reduce the build-up of general litter.
  - (e) The street cleaning contractor does not have complete control over the clearance of autumn leaf-fall, as the prevailing weather conditions can have a dramatic effect upon the dropping period of autumn foliage. The contractor employs additional resources during the autumn months to accommodate the significant volume of leaf-fall, estimated in the range of approximately 1,000 tonnes of material each year. The Council has records on its stock of 36,000 street trees, and estimated periods of leaf-fall are calculated to enable an intelligence-led programme of collection to be planned in advance. The Council does not hold the details of all trees in private ownership that adjoin the public highway, but it is estimated that there is a similar number with foliage dropping onto the highway. The very wet and windy autumn weather of 2013 added to the complexity of these operations, as higher levels of leaf-fall than anticipated were experienced during October and November. The St Jude Storm (28th October 2013) created significant problems for scheduled street cleaning activities, with continued wet weather conditions throughout November and December making litter, leaf and detritus removal a difficult task. This also led to localised flooding difficulties. The routine schedules of work of the street cleaning contractor (Kier) and the highway drainage contractor (Veolia) were disrupted during this period, to accommodate the removal of debris and to alleviate flooding affecting the public highway.

#### 4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council's street cleaning service should: take account of public expectations and levels of satisfaction; achieve and sustain a high level of quality in the local environment; achieve a high visibility; and be flexible to take account of changing local circumstances.
- 4.2 The street environment contract supports a number of ambitions expressed in Building a Better Bromley, in particular the commitment to "provide a clean, green and tidy environment, meeting and maintaining standards of quality, which reflect service levels agreed between local communities and their elected Members"
- 4.3 Improved street cleanliness is a key outcome set out in the Environment Portfolio Plan 2013-16, and supports the Council's Building a Better Bromley aims to provide a quality environment, vibrant thriving town centres, and safer communities.

#### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The 2013/14 budget for the street environment contract is £3.946m. The table below sets out the budget and projected spend for the service areas within the contracts:-

| Street Environment Contract      | 2013/14      | 2013/14      | 2013/14     |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
|                                  | Budget       | Projection   | Variance    |
|                                  | £'000        | £'000        | £'000       |
| Street cleaning                  | 3,153        | 3,153        | 0           |
| Graffiti removal                 | 244          | 244          | 0           |
| Cleansing of public conveniences | 56           | 56           | 0           |
| Cleaning of highway drainage     | 293          | 253          | (40)        |
| Cleaning contingency             | 200          | 220          | 20          |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>3,946</b> | <b>3,926</b> | <b>(20)</b> |

- 5.2 The additional non-scheduled programmes of work (such as deep cleaning, weekend carriageway cleaning, litter picking, etc.) have improved street cleanliness and helped reduce call volumes to a satisfactory level. These activities have been funded from the £200k contract contingency sum held within the Street Scene and Street Cleansing revenue budget.
- 5.3 The provision of a sum of £200k was set aside in the Central Contingency to manage the potential risks to service changes, agreed by the Executive Committee 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011. To date, the Executive has not been requested to draw-down any funding for such changes.
- 5.4 The current financial climate presents the challenge of continuing to deliver satisfactory standards of service with fewer resources.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>                       | Personnel, Legal   |
| Background Documents:<br>(Access via Contact Officer) | Street Environment Contract Review 2013/14 ES13001 (15 <sup>th</sup> January 2013)<br><br>Environment Portfolio Plan 2013/14; Half-Year Progress Report (ES 13122, 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2013) |

## Appendix A

### Public Satisfaction Survey Results (August 2013)

| Satisfied/ Clean/ Small Problem/ Occasional Prob./ Not a Problem | Postal | Difference (On-street – Postal) | On-street |
|--|--------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Street</b>  |        |                                 |           |
| 1. Satisfied?  | 75%    | 13%                             | 88%       |
| 2. Clean?  | 76%    | 14%                             | 89%       |
| 3a. General Litter   | 71%    | 6%                              | 77%       |
| 3b. Graffiti   | 99%    | -2%                             | 97%       |
| 3c. Chewing Gum  | 96%    | -1%                             | 95%       |
| 3d. Cigarette Ends   | 81%    | 6%                              | 87%       |
| 3e. Dog Fouling  | 72%    | 4%                              | 76%       |
| 3f. Leaves in Autumn   | 56%    | 19%                             | 75%       |
| 3g. Fly-Tipping  | 89%    | -2%                             | 87%       |
| 3h. Fly-Posting  | 99%    | 0%                              | 98%       |
| 3i. Weeds  | 82%    | 3%                              | 85%       |
| 3j. Overflowing Litter Bins                                      | 76%    | 4%                              | 80%       |
| 3k. Mud, Dust or Dirt  | 84%    | 2%                              | 87%       |
| <b>Local Area</b>  |        |                                 |           |
| 5. Clean?  | 82%    | 7%                              | 89%       |
| <b>Town Centre</b>   |        |                                 |           |
| 7. Satisfied?  | 89%    | 6%                              | 95%       |
| 8. Clean?  | 90%    | 4%                              | 94%       |
| 9a. General Litter   | 79%    | 0%                              | 80%       |
| 9b. Graffiti   | 90%    | 6%                              | 96%       |
| 9c. Chewing Gum  | 64%    | -16%                            | 48%       |
| 9d. Cigarette Ends   | 69%    | -8%                             | 61%       |
| 9e. Dog Fouling  | 89%    | 6%                              | 95%       |
| 9f. Leaves in Autumn   | 87%    | 4%                              | 91%       |
| 9g. Fly-Tipping  | 94%    | -2%                             | 92%       |
| 9h. Fly-Posting  | 93%    | 3%                              | 96%       |
| 9i. Weeds  | 94%    | 4%                              | 97%       |
| 9j. Overflowing Litter Bins                                      | 79%    | 6%                              | 85%       |
| 9k. Mud, Dust or Dirt  | 92%    | 2%                              | 94%       |

## **Findings from the Survey**

(i) The comparison shows that respondents to the on-street survey had a more favourable view of most issues than respondents to the postal survey. In particular they were more likely to describe their streets, local area and town centre as clean, and to be satisfied with the cleanliness of their streets and town centre.

(ii) The issue of most concern for postal survey respondents was leaves in autumn. The issue of most concern to on-street survey respondents was chewing gum in town centres. Cigarette ends in town centres was the next most concerning issue for on-street survey respondents. Both these issues (chewing gum and cigarette ends in town centres) are viewed considerably less favourably by those responding to the on-street survey than those responding to the postal survey. This may be due to the visibility of these issues when responding to a survey in the town centre, whereas those responding at home may not recall these being an issue.

(iii) Fly-posting and graffiti were considered to be among the least problematic issues affecting respondents having a favourable response of 99% .

(iv) Other important aspects of street cleanliness relate to the levels of detritus (such as natural grit, mud or dirt) and litter. These issues are an important measure of street cleanliness and form part of the daily monitoring of the contractor's performance in cleaning streets. 84% of respondents were satisfied with the standard of detritus levels in their street and town centres (92%), whereas 71% of respondents were satisfied with general litter levels. High levels of detritus can cause damage to road surfaces; often large accumulations instigate weed growth, which can then also begin to damage road and pavement surfaces. Litter, although not as much of an issue on the ground as detritus, is something the public feel strongly about, with 29% of respondents saying this was an area for improvement in their street.

(v) 24% of respondents were not satisfied with dog fouling levels. The health risks associated with dog fouling (in particular the risks to young children on routes to schools and open spaces), and the fact that it is perceived as dirty and unacceptable, makes this an issue for the public.