

## **Report for the Safer and Stronger OSC on Street Cleansing From Janice Carrol, Waste Services Manager April 2010**

### **1. Context**

1.1 The Environmental Cleansing service is one of the 3 main services within Waste Management. The service covers:-

- A street cleaning service for in excess of 500 kilometres of streets and roads, and
- Car parks/open spaces – 1850 square metres each week
- Beaches – 230,000 square metres of amenity beaches
- Litter & Dog bins – approx 600 bins
- Public toilet cleaning at the Council's 5 sites
- Removal of fly tipping from the Council's land - Average 400 incidents per year
- Recycling site cleaning – Approx 50 sites, and
- Support of community/voluntary clean-ups

1.2 Resources dedicated to the service are:-

- Budget of £730k (2009/10), which is the equivalent of £10 per head of population pa
- 18 front-line staff, 2 temporary beach cleaners (May to Sept), 1 supervisor & 1 other officer
- 2 Large mechanical sweepers, 1 small sweeper, a pedestrian sweeper, a 7.5 tonne RCV & 7 other light goods vehicles

1.3 Benchmarking with other similar authorities (APSE 2008/9 data) shows:-

- NI195 at average performance
- Cost of service at £13.53 per head per annum lower than the £15.93 average.
- Cost at £29 per household lower than the £36 average
- The number of litter bins in the Borough at 7 per 1000 people better than the 6.7 average
- The number of dog bins in the Borough at 2 per 1000 people better than the 1.9 average
- Fly tipping incidents at less than 15 per 1000 households better than the 36 average
- Staff absence (all staff) at 3.82% significantly better than the 6% average.

## 2. Background - Service Review

2.1 Although the Cleansing service in terms of the recognised measurement of levels of cleanliness, which at the time was National indicator BV199 (replaced by NI 195) was good overall and improvements had been made in South Whitehaven and Cleator Moor as a result of targeting resources, there was some variation in performance across the Borough. There was also some recognised gaps in the service being delivered, for example there was no programme for verge cleaning or for rural road sweeping. The Waste management and supervisory team felt there was definitely scope for improving the service within the existing resources.

2.2 Engaging support from the Process Improvement team and with representatives from the front-line team the team carried out an operational service review in 2008. The review looked at the way in which tasks were carried out and activities were mapped and analysed to identify gaps in service and opportunities for improvement. The review also looked at the how two recent externally funded projects, the Clean and Green Team (2005-2007) and Cleaner Safer Greener South Whitehaven (2006/7 & 2007/8) had been delivered and their outcomes.

2.3 Conclusions on these projects included:-

- Both of the externally funded projects had enabled a more flexible approach than the traditional cleansing service
- Freedom had been given to teams to target areas in most need, which had largely been successful.
- The projects had led to improved relationships with other agencies, which could be built upon.
- The profile of the service had been increased.

2.4 At the same time a review of the Council's duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 was carried out. A Revised Code of Practice had been introduced by Defra since the service was last reviewed that:-

- Encourages the maintenance of land within acceptable standards
- Places the emphasis on 'appropriate' management to keep clean, not on how often it's cleaned
- Defines standards to be achieved by deploying suitable resources at appropriate times
- Encourages cleansing to be combined with education and enforcement.
- Reduced the number of 'cleansing' zones from 12 to 4

2.5 The 4 reclassified zones are:-

- **High intensity of use** – busy public areas
- **Medium intensity of use** – 'everyday areas, housing areas occupied by people most of the time
- **Low intensity of use** – lightly trafficked areas that don't impact on most people
- **Areas with special circumstances** – areas where health and safety, reasonableness and practicality are considerations in cleansing.

### 3. Area Based working

3.1 The outcome of the review was an agreement that the most appropriate way forward was to adopt an Area Team based service, building on the more flexible way of working tested through the externally funded projects. Although this was a significant change project, because the front-line staff had been involved in the review and were engaged in the change process, a completely new approach to the street cleansing service was implemented in April 2009 in less than 4 months.

3.2 The main aspect of the changed service is that the Borough is split into 4 areas:-

Area 1: Whitehaven

Area 2: Distington, Frizington, Cleator Moor

Area 3: St Bees, Egremont, Gosforth, Seascale

Area 4: Millom

3.3 Each area, except Area 4, which is smaller geographically, is covered by 2 teams of 2 people who are supported by mechanical sweepers. There is now a much more even distribution of resources across the working day with all teams working on a 2 shift system. The first team of 2 people in each area work from 7am to 3pm and the second team work 10.30am to 6.30pm. The 2 large mechanical sweepers support the teams working the same 2 shifts on alternate weeks. Due to the concentration of high and medium intensity of use areas (Town Centre and residential estates) the smallest of the 3 sweepers is entirely dedicated to Area 1. The 2 remaining large heavy goods sweepers support the teams in Areas 2, 3 and 4. The Millom area under the new system gets 50% more mechanical sweeping resource than it did previously.

3.4 Teams are empowered to clean land according to the type and level of use and are responsible for maintaining acceptable cleanliness standards across their area. This involves them:-

- Litter picking
- Toilet cleaning

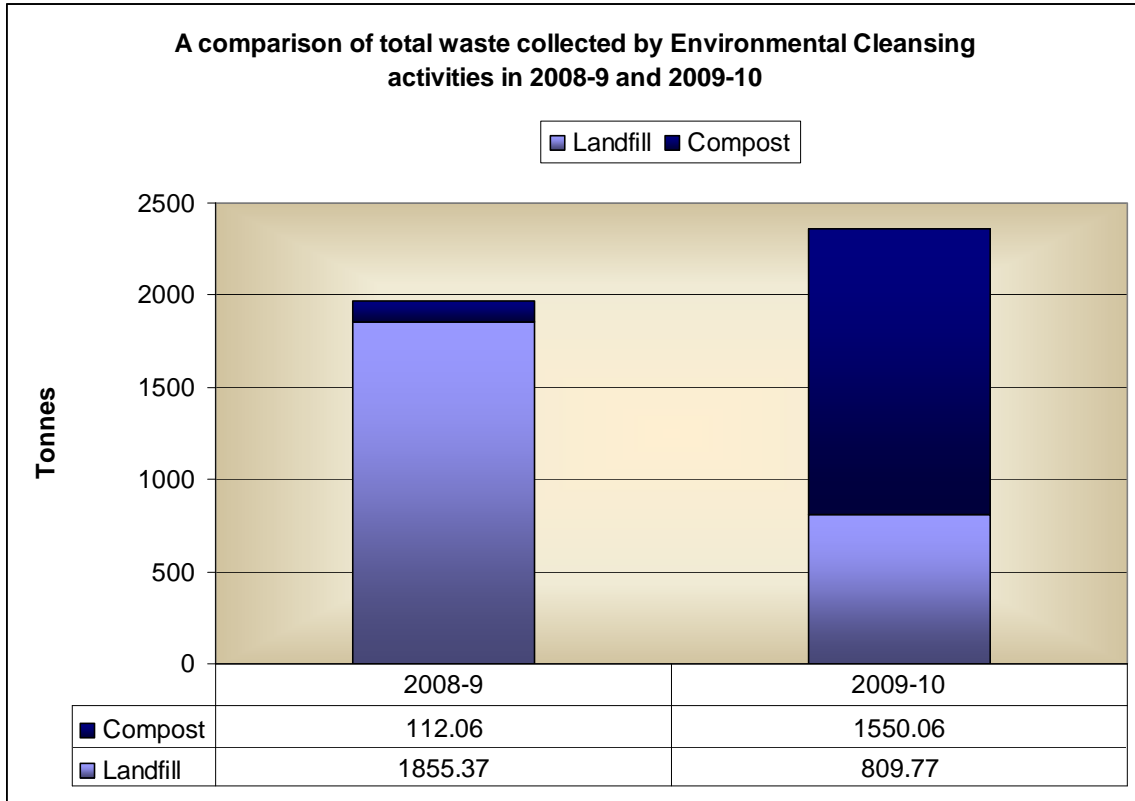
- Bin emptying
- Recycling sites
- Fly tipping
- Manual sweeping
- Beaches – with additional seasonal staff
- Identifying areas that require mechanical sweeping and communicating this to the sweeper drivers.

3.5 To ensure the teams are supported and are able to provide feedback on problems or suggestions for improvements regular team meetings are held with the supervisory team. As part of the change project all front-line staff were provided with training to ensure they can recognise the NI195 grading standards. Although there is an inevitable turnover of staff, every effort is made to ensure the teams are not changed unless absolutely necessary so that teams not only become familiar with their area and can be proactive with the hot-spots and problem areas but work together as an effective team.

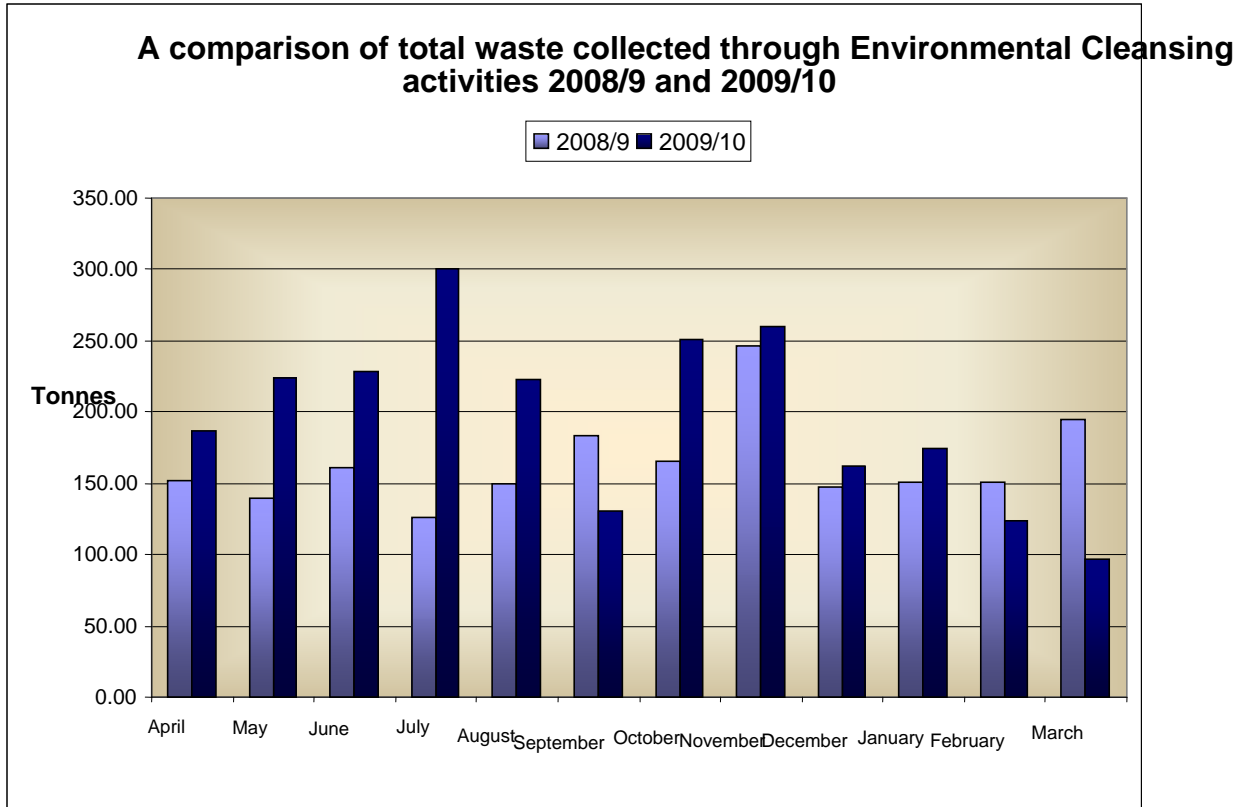
#### **4. The Outcomes**

4.1 As this has been the most significant change to the way the service is delivered since 1997, a “settling in” period was to be expected and initial estimates were that would take as long as 6 months. However as can be seen from the following graphs, improvements in some areas were evident much quicker than had been expected.

4.2 Productivity has increased as can be seen in the following graph. The amount of waste collected through Cleansing activities has increased on the previous year by almost 400 tonnes. More significantly more than 1550 tonnes of street sweeping waste was sent for composting rather than to landfill.

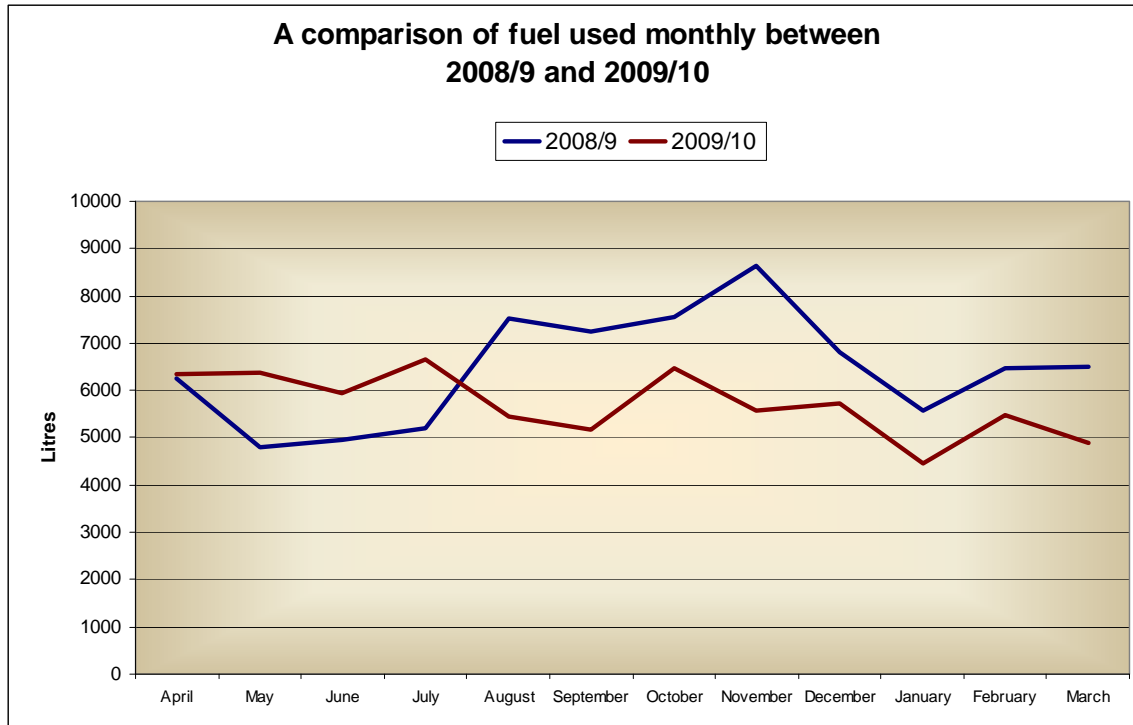


4.3 The following graph shows that the waste collected month by month has in the main increased on a monthly basis from the previous year.



4.4 At the same time the amount of fuel used in delivering the service which is monitored on a monthly basis has reduced significantly on the previous year and the “traditional” task based way of working is illustrated in the following graph. In 2008/9 77,518 litres of fuel was used by the service, averaging at around 6500 litres per month. Following the settling in period of the new service the average monthly usage reduced to around 5000 litres, amounting to a reduction over the year of around 9000 litres.

4.5 This reduction meant the target set in the Corporate Improvement plan for 2009/10 was exceeded and a further target for the entire waste fleet has been set for 2010/11.



- 4.6 Using the data for fuel usage and tonnes collected a straightforward simple measure of productivity can be calculated. In 2008/9 77,518 litres of diesel was used to collect 1967 tonnes of waste. This equates to 39 litres per tonne collected. In 2009/10 68549 litres was used to collect 2360 tonnes of waste. This equates to 29 litres per tonne of waste. This represents an improvement of 10 litres per tonne. This calculation however doesn't take into account the additional benefits in that 66% of the waste collected was composted increasing the Council's recycling rate by around 5%.

## 5. Other outcomes

- 5.1 The service review identified that smoking related litter was the single most significant litter problem facing the Cleansing Team. Consequently and with the support of the Whitehaven in Bloom group the majority of suitable litter bins in Whitehaven Town Centre have been fitted with an ashtray specifically designed for those types of bin. This led to a noticeable reduction in cigarette litter however the problem still exists at a lower level.
- 5.2 In the 2009/10 a budget saving of around £22k was made as a result of not replacing a small mechanical sweeper that was due to be replaced in April 2009. As can be seen from the productivity graphs this has not had a detrimental impact on the service.

- 5.3 As vehicles are now largely driven by the same drivers there has been a reduction on the number of vehicle damage problems or vehicle defects.
- 5.4 Sample analysis of service requests carried out by the Process Improvement Team as part of a six month review of the service identified there had been fewer service requests or complaints on cleansing issues such as overflowing bins or litter problems.
- 5.5 There has been a noticeable improvement in staff morale and team working and in the relationships between front-line staff and the management team.
- 5.6 One of the disappointments is that there has been a decline in the standard of cleanliness as measured by NI195. In 2008/9 4% of streets surveyed (around 900 50 metre stretch surveys) were judged to have below acceptable levels of litter, and 13% below acceptable levels of detritus. In 2009/10 6% of the 900 streets surveyed were below par for litter and 17% for detritus. This is disappointing however it should be noted that the final set of surveys were carried out immediately following the long period of extreme wintry weather in January, when mechanical sweeping was impractical.

## **6. Future Initiatives**

- 6.1 In 2010/11 we will continue to develop the Environmental Cleansing Service aiming for top quartile performance in street cleanliness (NI195). The following actions are included in the Waste Service Plan for 2010/11:-
- Evaluate data from the past year to identify further efficiencies and to streamline workloads
  - Critically analyse NI195 results and Flycapture reports for 2009/10 and share the analysis via a briefing for front-line teams.
  - Further analyse litter and dog bin data captured by Waste and Open Spaces and work towards a joined-up approach to bin servicing.
  - Identify and work with at least 2 key community groups to instill ownership and civic pride into the local area. This to include where possible the use of education/awareness raising in schools.

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