

Area West Committee – 19th September 2007

7. Report on the Performance of the Streetscene Service

Head of Service: Chris Cooper, Head of Streetscene
Lead Officer: Chris Cooper, Head of Streetscene
Contact Details: chris.cooper@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462840

Purpose of the Report

To update and inform the Area West Committee on the performance of the Streetscene Service in the Area for the period September 2006 - March 2007.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the report.

Background

As part of the restructuring of services in 2006, the Streetscene Service was formed from a number of services that previously formed part of the Environmental Services group.

The service now fulfils the following functions:

Horticulture – Maintenance, design & landscaping, arboriculture (trees), nursery, machinery workshop

Street Cleaning – Litter control, road sweeping, removal of fly tips, servicing bins

Environmental Enforcement – Dog related issues, abandoned vehicles, littering, fly posting, fly tipping, education programmes, etc.

Support & Administration at Lufton Depot – Stores, administration, health & safety.

It is the practice for the service to regularly update members on how the Service has performed in their Area.

Report

Overall, the service has had a very busy six months, and we believe has achieved a great deal, with all areas of the service working together to achieve common goals, while still managing to concentrate on making specific service improvements.

The major achievements of the service so far this year are listed below.

- Renewed South Somerset Homes grounds maintenance contract for a further 3 years
- Renewed the Westland's Thorne House grounds contract for a further 3 years
- Successfully renewed Sedgemoor District Council's bedding plant contract
- Improved BVPI 199 result
- Continued our excellent performance on BVPI 218
- Local Performance Indicator results – *detailed below*
- Instigated a new apprentice-training programme within the Lufton Nursery.
- Instigated a rolling programme of enforcement and environmental educational events.

AW

- Continued to make progress with the tree risk assessment programme.
- Awarded an Educational Business Award for the Larkhill Open Space Project
- Purchased covert surveillance cameras to enable us to comply with new powers within the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Act
- Initiated a joint working relationship with the "Community probation service"
- Planted 245,000 spring flowering bulbs throughout the District
- Initiated a working relationship with the "new deal" back to work scheme
- Received Capital funding for additional street cleaning equipment, we are currently in the process of selecting the equipment and hope to have acquired it, and have it working in the near future.
- Carried out weed spraying in Crewkerne, Merriott, Tatworth & Forton, Chard, Ilminster, Broadway and Horton.

Street Cleansing

BVPI 199a

The Best Value Performance Indicator for standards of street cleansing has been well discussed and an improvement in this part of the service had been identified as a priority for the Council.

Last year the service achieved a score of **43%** with a government target in 2004/5 of 30% (the lower the score, the better the performance).

For 2006/7 the government national performance target had been significantly reduced, and the target now sits at **25%**.

The national target is an average of three separate seasonal inspections:-

Season 1 – 23%
Season 2 – 24%
Season 3 – 30%

And this year our seasonal inspections yielded a final result of **25.6%**.

We have been successful in our capital funding application for two specialist pavement sweepers and associated transporting vehicles; these will enable us to increase the frequency of pavement sweeping across the district.

We have taken delivery of these machines and are preparing them to start work over the next couple of weeks.

Horticulture

The horticultural team has been successful in renewing the grounds maintenance contract for both South Somerset Homes and Westland's Thorne House. These contracts have been extended for a further three years.

The Lufton plant nursery has successfully competed against private companies, and has yet again been awarded the summer bedding contract for Sedgemoor District Council.

In a bid to address the problem of a shortage of trained nursery staff, because of the general skills shortage within the commercial nursery industry, we have appointed a nursery apprentice. This apprenticeship will last for three years and will result in a member of staff trained to the level of a Nursery foreman.

The tree risk survey that was started in November 2004, has continued and 5000+ trees have been identified and risk assessed. In addition 99% of the outstanding urgent works have been carried out.

In Area West over this period, our three-man Arboricultural team carried out 27 days of operational work on Council managed trees across the open spaces.

The officer team has been involved in assessing the costs and implications relating to Streetscene issues on new developments across the District, and has risk assessed the integrity of the monuments in Wayford Closed Churchyard as part of our ongoing risk management process.

Our landscaping team has carried out re-landscaping at the sensory garden in Crewkerne and has installed new retaining walls and plantings.

We have initiated a strong working relationship with Somerset County Training, and have become an active employment avenue for the "County Training" back to work scheme, this scheme places long term unemployed and socially challenged members of the community back in to employment for 13 weeks, at no cost to the employer. We currently have five "County Training employees" working with us. These trainees are not only aiding us with our heavy seasonal workloads, but will be part of a special team, which will be targeting "one off" projects (such as community clean ups) across the district.

Local Area Quality Inspections

A member of the team monitors the overall standards of street cleaning and grounds maintenance being delivered by the service through a process of site inspections. The ward member is invited to accompany the officer in order to jointly monitor the standards of the service performance on their 'patch'. From the inspections, rectification/improvement works are highlighted and passed back to the relevant team for action.

The results from these inspections are reported in the table below.

The targets for the year are 90% pass with 50% at a good level.

October 2006 – March 2007

Month	Location	Results
October	Ilminster	23% Good 77% Fair
November	Combe St Nicholas/Buckland St Mary Chiselborough	61% Good 39% Fair
December	East Chinnock/West Chinnock	43% Good 57% Fair
January	Wayford/Tatworth Winsham	39% Good 61% Fair
February	Broadway/Horton/Donyatt Dowlish Wake/Kingstone	57% Good 43% Fair
March	Merriott/Misterton/ Haselbury Plucknett	58% Good 38% Fair 4% Fail
Total Combined Percentage		99.2% pass with 45% at Good pass level and 0.8% Fail

Customer Feedback

To help enable us to monitor the standard of the service we are providing the public, we have developed a system of collating and analysing the contacts made regarding the service from the public via customer first. We do have some work to do to capture customer contacts that come via other sources and the admin team are working on a system that will do this. The information is used to identify areas of need and to help us prioritise our resources and focus our efforts to address areas of need.

A breakdown of contacts with our customers is detailed in the table below:

Complaints, Requests & Compliments log
October - March

Area West Horticulture – complaints / requests

	Oct 06	Nov 06	Dec 06	Jan 07	Feb 07	Mar 07
Trees	5	4	6	9	0	9
Grass	2	4	0	0	0	5
Hedges	2	4	1	2	0	0
Other	0	1	1	1	1	0

*Note – Calls reference trees are often regarding overhang or T.V. interference
Most calls reference shrubs & hedges relate to overhanging branches obstructing pavements
'Others' often refers to damage to property*

Area West Street Cleaning - complaints/requests

	Oct 06	Nov 06	Dec 06	Jan 07	Feb 07	Mar 07
Fly tip	8	11	15	9	15	17
Litter/Glass	1	3	0	4	6	3
Bins	0	0	5	1	5	7
Household rubbish	2	1	0	0	0	0
Needles	0	0	0	0	1	3
Sandbags	1	3	4	3	1	0
Dead Animals	0	0	2	0	3	6
Graffiti	0	0	0	1	0	0
Sweeping	0	0	0	0	0	2
Other	0	0	1	0	0	0

These figures do not include enquiries regarding private land for which we do not have jurisdiction.

Enforcement - complaints/requests

	Oct 06	Nov 06	Dec 06	Jan 07	Feb 07	Mar 07
Flyposting	0	0	0	0	0	0
Littering	Recorded as part of the Streetcleaning P.I.					
Stray Dog	7	10	10	4	8	9
Dog Fouling	4	11	1	8	6	3
Vehicles	10	20	8	12	21	17
Other	1	2	3	1	0	1

* Please note that there have been no requests/complaints regarding fly posting in this period. Fly Posters are removed by our Enforcement Team when found, according to our policy, as detailed in the Environmental Enforcement Report taken to Scrutiny Committee on 13 June 2006.

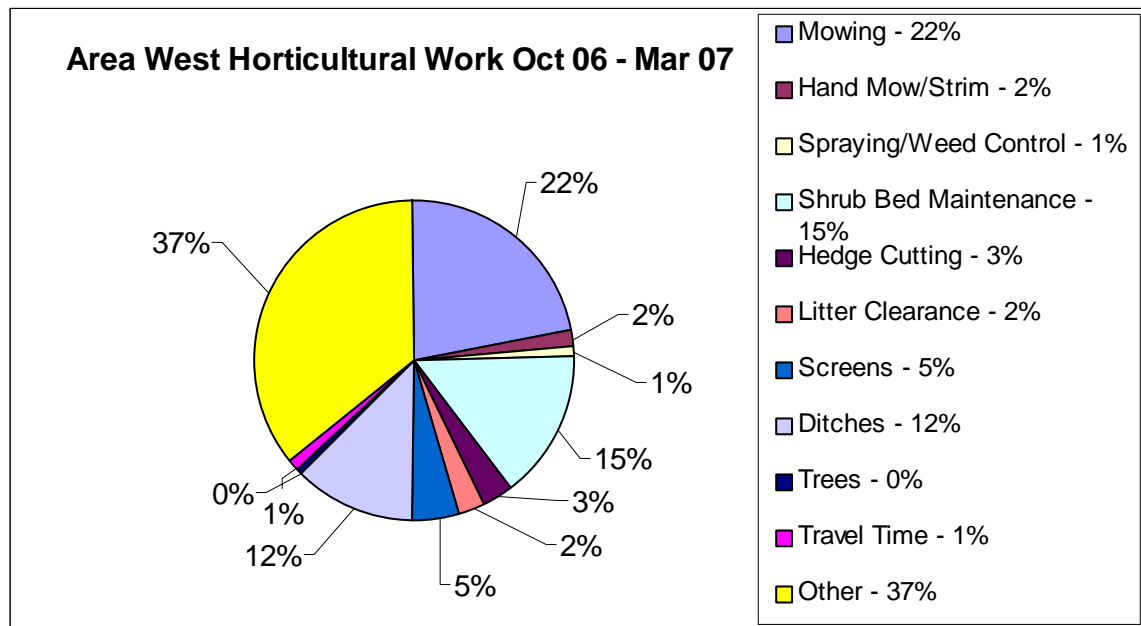
Compliments

Service	
Street cleaning	4
Horticulture	2
Enforcement	0

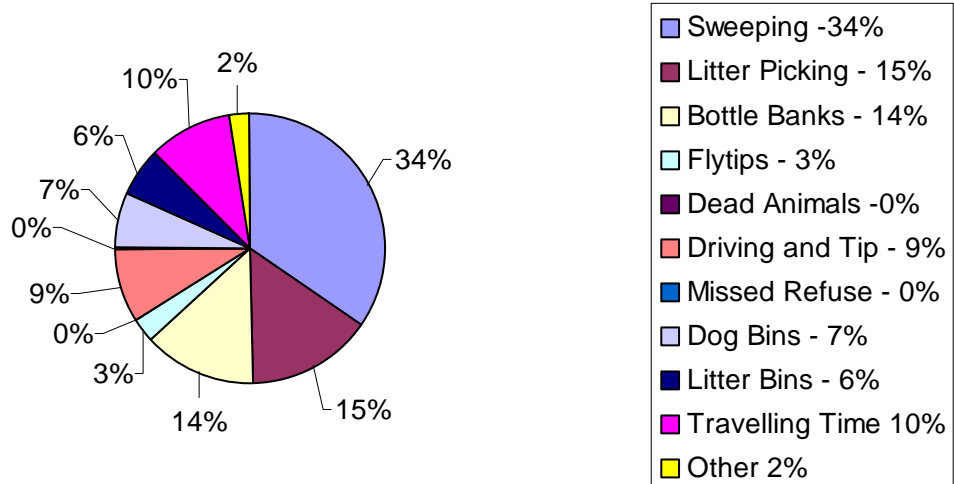
Analysis of the Time Recording System

In May 2006, the service introduced a time recording system to produce reports that can be used to analyse how much time a team spends on its various tasks. This information is being used to assess how we best allocate our resources and when compared alongside our local quality inspections and patterns of complaints of poor service, understand any reasons to explain any concerns over performance. The system can also be used to assess the cost of the operations, and to assess the costs of current methods of work when looking for service efficiencies.

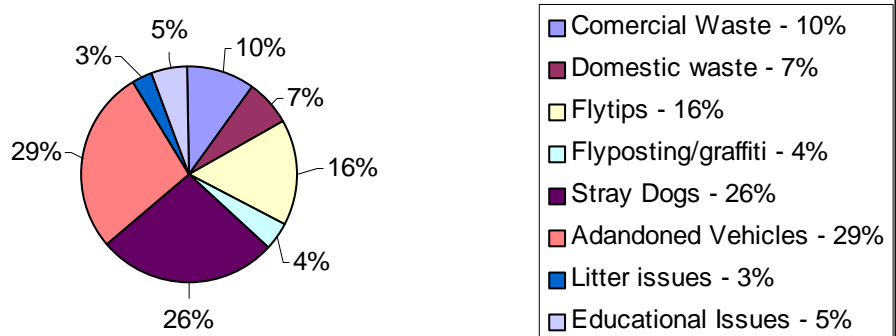
It should be noted that we also have this information available to us on a system that shows the number of hours spent on each function of the service and this is what would be used to assess costs.



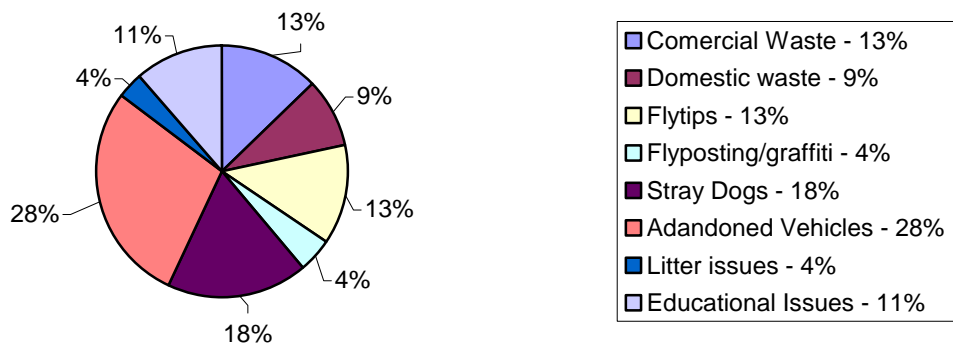
Area West Street Cleaning Work Oct 06 - Mar 07



District Wide Enforcement Operational Work October 2006 - March 2007



District Wide Enforcement Administration Work October 2006 - March 2007



Enforcement

The enforcement team has recently been audited for the abandoned vehicle related parts of the service and was given a 2* rating (reasonable) and an action plan to address areas that need improvement has been implemented as a result of the audit.

The team is responsible for two best value indicators, these are: -

BVPI 218a – Investigation of reported abandoned vehicles within 24 hours

BVPI 218b – Removal of abandoned vehicles within 24 hours of the expiry of a removal notice.

The service is recording performance figures of

91% for BVPI 218a (*an increase of 1% on last years figures*)

100% for BVPI 218b.

The team has been working to develop a series of networks with other associated services and organisations in order to provide efficient and effective enforcement. These groups include the Town Council's, Local P.C.S.O.s, Environmental Health, the Environment Agency, Community Safety groups & Local Housing Associations.

The team has instigated a rolling programme of enforcement and environmental educational events and as a result have already undertaken a variety of presentations and events. This is detailed below.

Education and Campaign Programme for South Somerset 2006 -2007

PLACE	EVENT	DATE
Schools	Presentation	
Preston School	Larkhill Consultation event (presentation)	17/18 July 2006
Other schools as and when organised	Presentation	Ongoing
Area Parish Councils		
All 4 areas at possibly tying in with Area Committee Meetings	Area North - Safety Community Seminar	2/11/06
Area South Safety Action Panel		
Area West with Parish Cllrs	Presentation	15 November 2006
Area East Workshop with Parish Councils	Presentation	22 November 2006
Public Stands		
Yeovil Festival	Display Boards	12 & 13 August 2006
RSPCA Dog Show Odcombe	Display Boards and judging dog show (PR)	9 September 2006
Ham Hill Country Fayre	Boards with public info	16 September 2006
Supermarkets	Morrisons Yeovil	13 & 14 Dec 06
Recycling road show	Tesco Chard	18 and 20 Dec 06
	ASDA Yeovil	10 & 11 Jan 2007

PLACE	EVENT	DATE
Ilchester Community event	Display boards and public information	14 October 2006
Village Fêtes, Litter Picks etc		
East Coker	Litter Pick	May 2006
East Coker	Display Boards	Sat 8 July 2006
Posters/Advertising		
Press release local papers	Public information	Ongoing
Media	Public information	Ivel FM August 2006
Out on Patrol		Ongoing
Miscellaneous		
Butt and Gum Pouches (portable ashtrays) various retailers	Supermarkets Local shops Cinema Garages Public Houses (Masons Arms Odcombe) 'Freebies' from SSDC	

2007

PLACE	EVENT	DATE
ASDA Supermarket	Recycling road show	10 & 11 Jan 2007
Great Lyde Cub Scouts	Environmental presentation	6 February 2007
Area North Parish workshop Chilthorne Domer hall	Environmental presentation	15 February 2007
St Michaels Beavers	Environmental presentation	21 February 2007
Ilton Community Safety Event	Environmental display	3 March 2007
Curry Mallet C of E Primary School	Presentation	8 March 2007
Curry Mallet Litter Pick	Village litter pick	11 March 2007
St Michaels Cubs	Environmental Presentation	22 March 2007
East Coker Parish	Litter Pick	31 March 2007
Norton sub Hamdon Parish Council	Litter Pick	14 April 2007
Yeovil Rotary Club	Presentation	24 April 2007
Yeovil Country Park	Dog show, displays, stands etc	24 June 2007
Ferne Animal Sanctuary	Display stand	25 July '07
Ilton Youth Parish Council	Litter Pick	June 2007
RSPCA dog show Odcombe	Fun Dog Show etc	September 2007
Ham Hill Country Fayre	Display Stands	8 September 2007

One member of the team has been heavily involved in working to address issues relating to refuse collection and wheeled bins within Town Centres. Good progress has been made in addressing this issue.

The team have issued three fixed penalty notices with successful prosecutions for fly posting & dog fouling, as well as issuing 607 written warnings to people who have been suspected of fly tipping and dog fouling within the last year.

The team has also approached the Community Services Agency (probation service), and are in the process of finalising a programme of small projects and operations that they can be involved in.

The team are also now in possession of a set of covert cameras, they are in the process of using these cameras to identify offenders at sites where habitual fly tipping occurs.

Support Services

The team has embedded a number of reporting procedures mentioned in the previous performance report, these have been further developed and implemented to record & produce information and are being used to improve service delivery in a practical way. The results of some of these systems are used earlier in this report.

The stores controls and procedures were recently audited and as a result a programme of improvement is being implemented.

The routine work of the stores & depot has been streamlined in order to improve the logistics for the operational teams when acquiring goods. This process is already showing efficiencies for the teams that previously would have lost an amount of time through ordering & collecting aggregates, cement and other building materials.

The work of the Health & Safety Officer has focussed on re-evaluating existing risk assessments, and safe systems of work, to ensure that they are up to date and meet any changes in Health and Safety legislation.

What's Coming Up Next?

Although we have achieved a great deal over the last six months, we do not intend to sit back on our 'laurels' and here is a taster of what the service will be working towards over the coming months:

- Further development & delivery of the community clean-up programme
- Further development & delivery of the Enforcement educational programme
- Review the quality, location and allocation of litter and dog waste bins across the Area
- Continuation of the Tree Risk Assessment Programme
- Continue to balance the budget
- Continuation of the Horticultural Winter Enhancement bulb-planting programme.
- Develop and deliver a programme of joint working with Somerset County Training and the community probation service.
- Initiate and develop the district councils Green space strategy

Area West Specific

- Winter Development Programmes – Expand the spring flowering bulbs across the Area including sites such as Crowshute Car Park and Snowdon Park, Chard and Village entrances where appropriate to be agreed between Area Co-ordinator and Parish Councils.
- Complete the landscaping works at Snowdon Park, Chard
- Work on hedge lines at Mitchell Gardens, Chard

Background Papers: *Area West Performance Report – April-September 06 – Chris Cooper*