



In-depth Scrutiny Project - Final Report

“Harming the environment: its causes and solutions”

14th April 2005

Environmental Scrutiny Committee

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council



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FOREWORD

Councillors Ron Price, Chairman of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's Environmental Scrutiny Committee and Jonathan Garston, Vice-Chairman:

The Environmental Scrutiny Committee decided that it should carry out the in-depth Scrutiny Project looking at the causes of harm to the environment in Southend and looking at possible solutions. The study focussed on **litter** and **graffiti** and how such anti-social behaviour can be reduced to maintain clean neighbourhoods.

The theme of the project was agreed in September 2004 and work started in November 2004. The Committee held witness sessions between December 2004 and February 2005. We asked witnesses for their views on the issues of litter and graffiti in Southend-on-Sea.

Through the Council's publication the 'Civic News' we invited residents to tell us their views on the issues of litter and graffiti. As in the Scrutiny project last year, we are pleased to say that residents did respond, and we are extremely grateful to them for taking the time and trouble in contacting us. The Council hosted a Community Conference in October 2004, and participants were asked to complete a questionnaire at the close of the meeting. As part of the questionnaire, we were able to invite comments back on the issues of litter and graffiti, and we would like to thank those who commented.

We would like to thank all those who have been involved in the in-depth Scrutiny project, those who took the time to attend meetings to give their evidence, and our colleagues on the Environmental Scrutiny Committee and the Project Team.

Councillor Ron Price
Councillor Jonathan Garston

14th April 2005

1. SCOPE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The Scope of the Scrutiny; Objectives and Outcomes

1.1 In the Municipal year 2004/05, the Council's Environmental Scrutiny Committee decided to undertake a Scrutiny on the subject of **litter** and **graffiti** and how such anti-social behaviour can be reduced to maintain clean neighbourhoods. It was agreed that the review would not cover the full panoply of anti-social behaviour, which in any event is being looked at by the Crime & Disorder Partnership Strategy Board for the Crime & Disorder Strategy 2005-08. With regard to the relationship to the management of private controlled land and private rented property sector, it was agreed that the project will consider the same issues (of litter and graffiti) in that context.

1.2 The objectives agreed by the Committee were:-

- To examine the harm caused by litter and graffiti to the environment in Southend.
- To examine measures which might be taken with regard to the education of the public about the harm caused by litter and graffiti to the environment in Southend.
- To compare the situation in Southend with the wider national situation on the basis of national Performance Indicators (PI's) etc.
- To identify and examine good practice in dealing with litter and graffiti and identify measures to improve service provision within the Borough, having regard to resources available.

1.3 The outcomes sought from the study were identified as being:-

- To devise an appropriate anti-litter/anti-graffiti education and publicity programme for the general public and/or particular groups.
- To make appropriate recommendations to improve the Council's performance in dealing with litter and graffiti to make Southend a better place to live, work and visit, having regard to resources available.

Methodology/Process

1.4 The Scrutiny was carried out by the Environmental Scrutiny Committee supported by an Officer Project Team comprising:

- Fiona Abbott Principal Committee Officer, Project Coordinator
- Graham Dare Assistant Director, Technical & Environmental Services, Corporate Officer
- David Connor Group Manager, Environmental Health, Operational/technical Officer

- Joanna Bates Administrative Support Officer
 - Clare Sheridan Trainee Environmental Health Officer
- 1.5 The following Members were attached to the Project Team in order to provide guidance and to act as a consultative body during the course of the Scrutiny:
- Councillor Ron Price, Chairman (Conservative)
 - Councillor Jonathan Garston, Vice Chairman (Conservative)
 - Councillor James Clinkscales (Liberal Democrat)
 - Councillor Judith McMahon (Labour)
- 1.6 The Scrutiny project commenced on 4th November 2004, when the Environmental Scrutiny Committee approved the project plan.
- 1.7 On 2nd December 2004 the Project Team provided Members with an informative report which provided an explanation of the key concepts under-pinning the Scrutiny, and in particular the following:
- A review/discussion of the principal issues raised in relevant background documents/research;
 - Considered a method of preparing relevant questions for those submitting evidence;
 - Considered the potential 'witnesses'.
- 1.8 The briefing material provided the necessary background information for four formal public evidence-giving sessions ('witness' sessions) at which the Committee received oral, written and presentational evidence from a large number of key stakeholders.
- 1.9 Prior to the commencement of the witness sessions, Members and the Project Team identified, devised and documented the questions which were to be asked of each witness, and identified further areas for research.

Evidence Gathering

- 1.10 The Committee agreed who should be approached as possible 'witnesses' and invitations were sent out for the witness sessions scheduled for December - February 2005, as follows:
- Cory Environmental;
 - Private Landlords Forum (who submitted written evidence);
 - Youth Forum/Council (who submitted written evidence);
 - Operational Police Officers;
 - ENCAMS;
 - Evening Echo;
 - Portfolio holder;
 - Head Teacher's Associations (the Primary Heads Association attended one of the witness sessions);
 - Cleansing Inspector – subsequently withdrawn;

- Residents Associations – South Westcliff Community Group, COBRA (who sent in a written contribution);

Written contributions were invited from the following:

- Other local authorities – Selby District Council; Sheffield City Council; Maidstone Borough Council; Taunton Deane Borough Council; Basildon District Council; London Borough of Southwark; London Borough of Camden; London Borough of Bromley; Rotherham Metropolitan Council;
 - Resident Associations - Residents Association of Westborough; Chalkwell Residents Association; Mendip Crescent Residents Association, Milton Queens Residents Association; Milton West Residents Association.
- 1.11 The Committee also contacted Colin Ralph (for information on the 'Rubbish Watch' initiative) and Martin Turner (for information on HMO licensing) and invited them to attend the final witness session.
- 1.12 The Committee accepted both oral and written evidence invited from the local community, relevant organisations and related agency officers. All the evidence was received in public under the "Local Government Access to Information Rules".
- 1.13 The views and comments of the residents of Southend-on-Sea were requested via an item placed within the Civic News, and as part of a Questionnaire issued at the Community Conference held at the new South East Essex College Campus in Luker Road, Southend-on-Sea on 18th October 2004.
- 1.14 The Committee undertook an overview visit on 26th November 2004 in an exercise to obtain a 'snap-shot' of litter and graffiti in some areas of the Borough. Photographs from the visit and also from the visit to the High Street in Southend on 1st December were circulated at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 2nd December.

It was agreed that a Questionnaire/survey of all Councillors would be undertaken to establish the level of concern across the Borough and Members were invited to take photographs if they wished.¹ A copy of the analysis from the survey is attached at **Appendix 6**.

- 1.15 In order to facilitate the process all witnesses were informed, in writing, of the questions that were to be asked at the witness session.

Stakeholders

- 1.16 Through the witness sessions, the Committee received evidence from the following individuals and associated organisations, to whom the Council is grateful:-

Witness Session 1 held on 15th December 2004

- (a) Mr. Nigel Tansley Thomas – Regional Director, ENCAMS (East of England)
- (b) Superintendent Steve Currell – Southend Police and Inspector Andy Prophet – Southend Police

¹ Members were asked to time, date and provide the location.

Witness Session 2 held on 12th January 2005

- (a) Mr. Paul Johnson – Old Southendian and Southchurch Cricket Club and Dr. David Singh – Southend-on-Sea Cricket Club
- (b) Mr. Martin McNeill – Editor, Evening Echo

Witness Session 3 held on 26th January 2005

- (a) Councillor Mrs. Ann Holland (portfolio holder, Environment & Public Protection)
- (b) Mr. Peter Hawkins (South Westcliff Community Group)
- (c) Mrs. Bron Lister-Smith (Primary Heads Association)

Witness Session 4 held on 9th February 2005

- (a) Mr. Paul Redman (Cory Environmental)
- (b) Mr. Colin Ralph ('Rubbish Watch')
- (c) Mr. Martin Turner (Private Sector Housing, HMO Management)

1.17 **Attendance at Scrutiny Committee and the witness sessions**

A list of the Environmental Scrutiny Committee Members who took part in the Scrutiny Committee meetings on 23rd September 2004, 4th November 2004 and 2nd December 2004², and the witness sessions on 15 December, 12th January, 26th January, 9th February and the special meeting on 16th March 2005 is detailed at **Appendix 1**.

² These were 'ordinary' meetings of the Scrutiny Committee, not a special meeting dealing solely with this issue.

2. LITTER AND GRAFFITI AND MAIN ISSUES FOR THE SCRUTINY

Main issues for Scrutiny

2.1 The initial phase of the Scrutiny exercise involved research into the main issues in relation to the subject matter of the Scrutiny. At the meeting held on 2nd December 2004, the Committee received a detailed report which set out the background to the issues of litter and graffiti and sought the Committee's views on further information required.

2.2 This set out the legislative framework around litter and graffiti:

- Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 – duty to keep land and highways clear of litter;
- Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse;
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 – litter offences;
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 – accumulations of Rubbish;
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - untidy land;
- Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 – abandoned items.

The report also drew attention to proposed legislative changes in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill.

2.3 The Committee received information on current initiatives in the borough:

- 'Rubbish Watch'
- Police Community Support Officer Tasking
- Town Centre Management Review

2.4 'Rubbish Watch' is a recent initiative launched in partnership with two Community Groups. It is being targeted as a pilot project at 22 roads south of Station Road, Westcliff (from the Cliffs Pavilion to Chalkwell Avenue). The scheme is led by a temporary 'Litter Enforcement Officer' who commenced a 4 month temporary contract on 22nd November and will work for 12 hours per week on the pilot area. The initiative was rolled out as:

- Familiarisation/induction phase re cleansing issues and Council services;
- Publicity phase re distribution of guidance to householders/businesses;
- Challenge' phase re identified sources of deposition to include site monitoring with the Domehawk camera;
- Enforcement phase re Fixed Penalty Notices for offenders;
- Prosecution phase re non-payment of fixed penalties.

2.5 Detailed information was also provided on the Council's current cleansing contract. The Committee was mindful that the Scrutiny Project was not intended to review the operation or management of the Cleansing Contract, which will be undertaken by the Waste Management Working Party and Cabinet as part of the Waste Management Strategy and future contract procurement. However, an understanding of the street cleansing element was necessary. This also provided information on Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and the Best Value Review Inspection.

- 2.6 In terms of **graffiti**, the Committee received information on current initiatives and learned that graffiti is not art - it is criminal damage. The term graffiti refers to drawings, patterns, scribbles, messages or tags that are painted, written or carved on walls and other surfaces. The Cleansing Contract Manager in the Leisure, Culture & Amenity Services Department is responsible for graffiti issues within the authority, and advised that:
- the section takes about 30 -60 calls a week, most of these calls are cleaned within 5 days. Racist, abusive and sexist calls are dealt with within 24 hours;
 - since June 2003 through to September 2004, the team have cleaned 14.5 miles of graffiti;
 - The most 'prolific area's' of the Borough are Leigh and Thorpe Bay at the moment. Southchurch park is 'hit' almost weekly (pavilions and the toilets);
 - The team do a regular check of the High Street, Seafront, Shelters, Chalkwell Footbridge, and the Undercliff shelter at Leigh each week and clean off graffiti as found;
 - The team work closely with the Police, and surveillance is currently being carried out on the Chalkwell Footbridge.
- 2.7 Current initiatives - The local daily newspaper, the Evening Echo sponsors one van for £1,000 and the Echo logo has been put on the van, 'Helping to clean up Southend'. The graffiti team also get weekly coverage in the paper, with Echo Graffiti Watch inviting the public to phone the hotline.
- 2.8 The Council has been offered a £500 reward by Chalkwell residents to identify local tags (if the information leads to a conviction).
- 2.9 A poster has been designed to put up in bus stops, advertising the Graffiti Hotline. The phone number is going on bus time tables at the bus stops.
- 2.10 The above information is detailed at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.11 Also at the meeting on 2nd December 2004 the Committee also asked for further information on:
- (a) The use of stickers on black/pink bags;
 - (b) Cigarette stubbers on litter bins;
 - (c) chewing gum removal and boards;
 - (d) beach/foreshore cleaning regime;
 - (e) dog faeces bins.
- 2.12 This information was fed back to Members at the witness session held on 12th January 2005, and is detailed at **Appendix 4**.

2.13 Information on Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill was provided at the witness session held on 26th January 2005, and gave an outline of the following measures:

- Crime and Disorder;
- Fixed Penalty Notices (Fines);
- Nuisance and abandoned vehicles;
- Litter;
- Graffiti and fly-posting;
- Waste;
- Dogs;
- Noise;
- Architecture and the Built Environment and also some miscellaneous matters.

2.14 This information is detailed at **Appendix 5**.

3 ISSUES TO EMERGE DURING THE EVIDENCE GATHERING FROM STAKEHOLDERS

- 3.1 As indicated earlier in this report, whilst background knowledge and understanding of the issues was obtained from witnesses, evidence of the situation on the ground in Southend was obtained via the formal evidence-taking sessions with key witnesses.
- 3.2. A detailed record of general comments and specific responses to questions posed by Members of the Committee was prepared. This record of evidence was forwarded to a representative of each stakeholder group which contributed to the study, in order to ensure that the recorded evidence was factually correct.
- 3.3. The questions for the witnesses were sent to the witnesses prior to their attendance at the Committee. The subsequent responses from the various witness groups concerned indicated that there was a broad consensus on the issues which needed to be tackled.
- 3.4. The written evidence received from interested persons/groups was also beneficial, and the Committee considered evidence from the following:
- Southend Youth Council;
 - Chalkwell Ward Residents Association;
 - Residents Association of Westborough;
 - Other local authorities -
 - ❖ Selby District Council – on their recent Scrutiny on litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles;
 - ❖ Sheffield City Council – on Cleaner Sheffield initiatives;
 - ❖ Taunton Deane Borough Council – will be providing information on their efforts to engage with the producers of fast food litter;
 - ❖ Basildon District Council – local streetscene initiatives (rubbish amnesty, box wagon & graffiti);
 - ❖ Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council – on the Streetpride initiative.
 - ❖ Southwark Council – will be providing information on their policies for cleaner, greener, safer Southwark.
 - COBRA;
 - Private Landlords Forum.
- 3.5 A survey of all 51 members was undertaken in January 2005. The findings from the survey are detailed at **Appendix 6**. The Committee was grateful to the Members who provided evidence.
- 3.6 The Committee undertook an overview visit on 26th November in an exercise to obtain a 'snap-shot' of litter and graffiti in some areas of the Borough. Photographs from the visit and also from the visit to the High Street in Southend on 1st December were circulated at the Committee meeting on 2nd December. It was highlighted that the key issues arising from this appeared to be:
- Black/pink bags, mainly on private land
 - Accumulation of rubbish on land not owned/controlled by Council.

- 3.7 Following the witness session on 12th January 2005, Councillors I.T. Robertson and Brown undertook a visit to the materials recycling facility at the cleansing depot to observe the separation of materials.
- 3.8 Residents were asked to give their views on the issues of litter and graffiti in the Councils newsletter (the 'Civic News') as part of 'Have your say'. The Scrutiny Committee received correspondence/letters from 17 residents. The information was considered by the Scrutiny Committee and was forwarded to relevant officers in the Council for action.
- 3.9 The views and comments of the residents of Southend were also requested as part of a Questionnaire issued at the Community Conference held at the new South East Essex College Campus in Luker Road, Southend-on-Sea on 18th October 2004.
- 3.10 The Community Conference³ was attended by over 100 delegates and one of the exercises focussed on issues relating to anti-social behaviour that need to be tackled and why. All delegates were asked to complete a Questionnaire at the conclusion of the conference and over 90 were returned⁴.
- 3.11 In terms of the Scrutiny, delegates were asked to respond to the following questions:

(a) Level of concern about different types of environmental crime -

Respondents were asked to rate how concerned they are about different types of environmental crime on a scale of 1 – 10; (with 10 indicating a major concern to the respondent) responses are shown below:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Litter / rubbish on highway	6%	0%	6%	5%	9%	12%	9%	17%	12%	24%
Rubbish on private property / front gardens / alleyways	5%	2%	3%	2%	7%	12%	19%	16%	14%	20%
Graffiti	6%	1%	2%	2%	13%	7%	15%	17%	10%	27%
Chewing gum on the pavements	13%	5%	5%	10%	5%	8%	6%	12%	12%	24%
Vandalism	8%	2%	1%	0%	3%	1%	4%	13%	15%	53%
Other – please specify:										

³ Further information about the Community Conference, which was commissioned by Southend Together and facilitated by 'Crime Concern' can be accessed by contacting the Strategy & Performance Team on (01702) 215896.

⁴ The questionnaire included a variety of questions which officers on the LSP Support Group had requested. Throughout the discussions delegates were encouraged to prioritise actions for the future, to inform work on the next Community Safety Strategy which will prioritise activities for the next three years.

Other types of environmental crime that respondents indicated were a major concern to them included:

- Gangs / groups of youths;
- Dog fouling;
- Late night noise;
- Too many street/road markings/signs;
- Fly tipping;
- Travellers and related issues;
- Untaxed abandoned cars;
- Cycles and skateboards on the pavement;
- Dogs swimming in children's pools on the beach;
- Illegal parking on pavements and grass verges.

(b) What action was taken – and responses received?

If respondents had complained to the authorities about environmental crimes, they were asked to describe the response that they received, ranking it either good, satisfactory or poor. This question was not applicable to all respondents, therefore the percentages do not add to 100%.

Authority	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
Police	9%	17%	22%
Environmental Health	15%	15%	10%
Council's Housing Service	4%	11%	4%
Landlords	1%	1%	4%

Respondents also stated specific Council departments they had complained to about environmental crimes:

- Planning (buildings);
- Green environment;
- Cleansing Department;
- Housing Association Premises;
- Trading Standards;
- Graffiti busting squad;
- Cory Refuse Collection.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Committee undertook a thorough review, in line with the objectives of the study, including a significant and wide-ranging input from stakeholders, which gave it a thorough understanding of the issues of litter and graffiti in the borough.
- 4.2 General street litter is not a major issue in large parts of the Borough, but there are a number of hotspots identified by some Members,
- 4.3 This general view is supported by a site visit by the Committee and comments from EMCAMS and others. The cleansing contract and the contractor's performance are generally satisfactory in this regard.
- 4.4 There are pockets of concern by Members in some wards and litter in Southend High Street in the evenings continues to be an issue which will need funding resources to resolve.
- 4.5 Graffiti is not at a high level in the town, however, particular locations (pavilions in parks and some sea front shelters and footbridges) are of concern. There is a noticeable level of graffiti on street furniture in a number of areas across the Borough.
- 4.6 The graffiti team are considered a good asset and the work of the team is generally well received. The work being undertaken in coordination with the police is recognised as a valuable way forward
- 4.7 The main concern over litter is:
 - A. The appearance of black sacks:
 - (a) on the highway, either put out early or late for refuse collection, or generally discarded.
 - (b) on private property; and
 - B. The accumulation of rubbish/unwanted goods on private land, and in particular, private alleyways.
- 4.7 Litter/refuse on private land is not a requirement for the Council to clear as there are currently no direct powers/duty. There is a need to use persuasion and assistance to get land owners/users to clear unsightly accumulations.
- 4.8 Contaminated pink recycling sacks having a contamination 'sticker' are very low numbers but some of these may be left in a street for a week and this is perceived by some residents as an unnecessary source of annoyance. Cory Environmental confirmed that, within the current recycling process, the use of contamination stickers is the most appropriate practice to maximise recycling and minimise contamination.
- 4.9 Spilt black sacks, or spills from untied or overfilled refuse containers, is perceived to be a source of littering in some areas.

- 4.10 Questionnaire survey of all 51 Members – the response was from 13 Members from 9 wards in the Borough. Just over 50% of the responses considered that street litter and rubbish on private property were of major concern to their residents. 9 of the responses considered graffiti as a major concern. The overall response reinforced the Committee's view that the litter issue is confined to a few areas around the Borough.
- 4.11 Initiatives in other authorities have revolved around awareness campaigns, community clean-ups; and enforcement action via dedicated officers with appropriate legal and administrative support.
- 4.12 It is early days of the 'Rubbish Watch' initiative but this is proving to be successful and indicates that personal contact with residents and others can be effective in reducing local littering/rubbish issues - there are some aspects of the Clean Neighbourhoods Bill which, when enacted, may prove useful in extending the current powers.
- 4.13 Whilst littering on the highways is an offence, littering on private land is not – however the Clean Neighbourhoods Bill will make littering on private land, which is publicly available, an offence.
- 4.14 Rubbish accumulation etc. on private land may be able to be addressed by serving an 'Untidy Site Notice' under Planning Legislation (current practice in some circumstances). The Clean Neighbourhoods Bill introduces fixed penalty notices and the ability to serve litter notices on private owners.
- 4.15 Percentage of residents satisfied with street cleanliness (BVPI 89) was 54% for Southend in 2003/2004. This compares with a lower quartile for Unitaries of 50% and upper quartile for Unitaries of 64%.
- 4.16 Proportion of relevant land not to a good standard (i.e. littered) (BVPI 199) was 10.89% for Southend in 2003/2004. This compares favourably with a lower quartile for other unitaries of 28% and upper quartile figure of 12.7%.
- 4.17 Some residential properties which have been split into flats or are in multiple occupation appear to be causing issues with litter/refuse in front gardens etc and early putting out of black bags. This is seen as a difficulty with space within the properties for storage of refuse. There is a suggestion that the Council may assist in the provision of suitable storage containers by buying in bulk and re-selling to residents.
- 4.18 The Council's Waste Collection Policy and Practices have some influence on street litter mainly due to the presence of black bags in the street and in front gardens, which have either been put out for collection at inappropriate times (i.e. too early/late) or in inappropriate locations.
- 4.19 Chewing gum – like most parts of the country chewing gum is seen as an issue, particularly in the High Street shopping areas. Chewing gum boards have been trialled in a few areas nationally but, clearly they are not '100% successful' and can be unsightly and additional resources are required to remove gum frequently.
- 4.20 There is no clear evidence that a general local litter education campaign could successfully address the litter issues in Southend. National campaigns to change

attitudes and practices would appear more appropriate. Some awareness raising locally could be useful in targeted areas.

- 4.21 The local paper has indicated a keenness to work with the Council on promoting a 'Pride in Your Town' campaign.
- 4.22 ENCAMS have information packages and guidance on litter campaigns and the development of local action groups. The Government's cleaner, safer, greener communities' initiative will be producing 'How to.....' guides on a number of issues following pilot projects in 20 towns and cities.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to Cabinet:

That:

- 5.1 With the apparent success of 'Rubbish Watch', more personnel resources should be considered for funding to persuade/educate/assist people to store their refuse appropriately and keep their land tidy and the initiative should be expanded to cover other areas of the Borough and to assist in improving awareness of 'pink bag' recycling.
- 5.2 Consideration should be given to resourcing increased publicity to make residents etc. aware of their responsibility for the ownership and containment of refuse until the point in time/location when the Council collects it and takes over responsibility.
- 5.3 In considering the Cleansing Contract, due for renewal in 2008, methods of containment and presentation of waste by householders be reviewed within the contract process, to establish what affordable and practical methods may be available to improve on the current position.
- 5.4 Increased resources should be considered to increase the number of graffiti team vehicles and operatives.
- 5.5 General local litter education campaigns are unlikely to be beneficial but targeted campaigns at local areas and issues should be devised and resourced.
- 5.6 The current procedures be reviewed to consider whether the new powers in the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 can be developed to improve the enforcement activities of the Council, particularly in the light of expanding the use of fixed penalty notices, whilst recognising that increased enforcement is likely to require increased resources.
- 5.7 Development of the Police Community Support Officers' roles be continued to include assistance with the 'Rubbish Watch' initiative.
- 5.8 A 'Pride in our Town' campaign be considered for development with the ECHO to increase local community involvement in litter and graffiti clearance and avoidance, and resourced accordingly.

6. APPENDICES:

APPENDIX 1	ATTENDANCE AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE & WITNESS SESSIONS
APPENDIX 2	INITIAL INFORMATION PROVIDED TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON 2ND DECEMBER 2004
APPENDIX 3	NOTES FROM WITNESS SESSIONS HELD 15TH DECEMBER 2004, 12TH JANUARY, 26TH JANUARY AND 9TH FEBRUARY 2005.
APPENDIX 4	FEEDBACK INFORMATION FROM MEETING HELD 12TH JANUARY 2005
APPENDIX 5	OUTLINE INFORMATION ON THE CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS & ENVIRONMENT BILL
APPENDIX 6	ANALYSIS FROM MEMBERS' SURVEY
APPENDIX 7	LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

7. CONTACT DETAILS

For further information relating to this report, or general enquiries about Scrutiny, please contact:

By post:

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01702 215104

APPENDIX 1

Attendance at Scrutiny Committee & Witness Session

Attendance at the Environmental Scrutiny Committee meetings and Witness Sessions was as follows:-

Councillor	Role	23.09.04	04.11.04	Members site visit 26.11.04	02.12.04	15.12.04.	12.01.05	26.01.05	09.02.05	16.03.05
Ron Price	Chairman	√	√	Apologies	Apologies	√	√	√	Apologies	√
J. Garston	Vice Chairman	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√ in chair	√
Aylen		√	√		√					
Brown		√	√	√	√	√	√	Apologies		√
Davy		√	√	√	√	√		Apologies	√	√
Day		√	√	√	√	√			√	√
Mrs. Evans		√	√		√			Apologies		Apologies
Jarvis		√	√	√	√	Apologies	√	√	√	√
Mrs. Robertson		√		√	√	√	√	√	√	Apologies
Mrs. McMahon		√	√		√					√
Mrs. Merrison		√	√	√	√	Apologies	√		√	√
Royston		√	√		√			√		√
Clinkscapes		√	√		√	Apologies	√	√	√	√
Wexham			√	√	Apologies	√	√	Apologies	√	Apologies
I Robertson				√			in attendance	Substitute	in attendance	
Mrs Roast			in attendance				in attendance			
Mrs Horrigan		in attendance	in attendance		in attendance					
D Garston		in attendance	in attendance		in attendance					

Kelly		in attendance	in attendance		in attendance					
North		in attendance	in attendance							
Terry		in attendance	in attendance							
Longley		in attendance	in attendance							
Mrs Holland			in attendance							
Lamb			in attendance		in attendance					
Waite			in attendance							
Foster			in attendance							
Miss Cushion			in attendance							
Robinson			in attendance							
George			in attendance							
Delaney			in attendance							
Crystall			in attendance							
Garne			in attendance		in attendance					
Flewitt			in attendance							
Cole			in attendance							Substitute
Mrs Rayner			in attendance							
Baker			in attendance							
Mrs White			in attendance							
Moring					in attendance					

**INITIAL INFORMATION PROVIDED TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2nd DECEMBER 2004**

Legislative Framework

Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 – Duty to keep land and highways clear of litter

The EPA (Section 88) placed a duty on this Authority in respect of “relevant land”, “to ensure that the land is, so far as is practicable, kept clear of litter and refuse”.

Relevant Land is highway land, and publicly accessible land which is open to the air and which is under the Council’s direct control. The Council also has litter duties in respect of education land it controls. The Secretary of State has issued a Code of Practice for the purpose of providing practical guidance on the discharge of the duties.

The Act does not provide a definition of litter or refuse, although the Courts have considered the definition to be wide. (However, dog faeces are required to be treated as refuse on certain descriptions of public land by a specific Order).

The Council may, by Orders under EPA and associated regulations, define “Litter Control Areas” if it demonstrates that litter and refuse on certain publicly accessible land, if no order were in place, would be detrimental to the amenities of the locality. Possible areas involve public car parks, shopping centres, business parks, cinemas, theatres and sports facilities, as well as public open air land under the direct control of certain bodies.

There are no Litter Controlled Areas designated in the Borough.

The Council may, under the EPA, issue “street litter control notices” on occupiers in and around any street imposing requirements on owners with respect to litter and refuse. Appeals and enforcement is via the Magistrates Court.

No “street litter control notices” have been issued in the Borough. There is an agreement with six fast food outlets in Southend High Street that they each undertake daytime litter picking in defined areas of the High Street and surrounding roads to supplement the Council’s litter clearance regime.

Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse

The Code of Practice provides a cleanliness standard based on land use and time which Council’s should comply with when discharging their duties. It sets out grades of cleanliness and divides land into zones according to usage and volume of traffic. If the cleanliness of an area falls, the Code sets out a response time which is the target for the Council to restore the land to a particular grade of cleanliness. What matters is maintaining the cleanliness of an area, rather than how often it is cleaned.

The Code defines four grades of cleanliness:

- Grade A: no litter or refuse;
- Grade B: predominantly free of litter and refuse apart from some small items;
- Grade C: widespread distribution of litter and refuse with minor accumulations; and

Grade D: heavily littered with significant accumulations.

Grade A is the standard which a thorough conventional sweeping/litter-picking should achieve. Whilst Grade A is the aim, it is not reasonable to expect that standard to be maintained at all times. A very few items on a Grade A surface will not necessarily be sufficient to degrade that area to Grade B.

The Code includes photographs to indicate Grades A to D.

The Code has two key principles:

- areas which are habitually more heavily used should have accumulations of litter cleared away more quickly than less heavily used areas; and
- larger accumulations of litter and refuse should be cleared more quickly than smaller accumulations.

The Code therefore divides land types into 11 broad categories of zones according to land usage and volume of traffic (use). The Borough therefore produced, in 1991, a zoning map covering all of its relevant land in the Borough to meet the categories of zones set out in the Code. Six of the categories apply to the Borough's relevant land.

The concepts of standards of cleanliness, practicability and zonings are brought together in the Code which identifies, for different situations, practicable and achievable response times during which the duty body should restore the land in question to a particular condition, as set out below.

It is stressed that the time periods given below are response times for cleaning an area which has become littered. They do not represent intervals between sweeps, which in many cases could be much longer. If it isn't dirty, don't clean it.

Zone	Description of Area	Cleanliness Standard			
		A	B	C	D
1	Town Centres, Bus Stations, Shopping Areas, Town Centres Car Parks, Seafront etc.	Achieve after cleaning	Restore to Grade A within 6 hours	Restore to Grade A within 3 hours	Restore to Grade A within 1 hour
2	Terraced housing, dense residential, district car parks, recreational areas	Achieve after cleaning	Restore to Grade A within 12 hours	Restore to Grade A within 6 hours	Restore to Grade A within 3 hours
3	Semi-detached/detached residential areas, Recreation Open Spaces, SBS verges etc.	Achieve after cleaning	Restore to Grade A within 2 weeks	Restore to Grade A within 12 hours	Restore to Grade A within 6 hours
4	Other areas	Achieve after	Restore to Grade A	Restore to Grade A	Restore to Grade A

		cleaning	within 2 weeks	within 1 week	within 60 hours
5	Beaches	Should be cleaned May to September clear all litter and refuse			
7	Local Roads (applies to some roads and footpaths in the Borough)	Hard surfaced Areas	Achieve after cleaning	Restore to Grade A within 2 weeks	Restore to Grade A within 5 days
		Grassed areas		Restore to Grade B within 2 weeks	Restore to Grade B within 5 days

The Code also states that:

- Technical difficulties may make it impossible to achieve in some circumstances, such as on grassed areas. On grassed areas where it is impossible to achieve Grade A, Grade B should be achieved after cleaning.
- The duty applies seven days a week, but the period from 8pm to 6am is to be discounted for the purpose of assessing compliance with the standards, subject to the proviso that in Zone 1, if the standard should fall to Grade B or below during the period from 8pm to 6am, it should be restored to Grade A by 8 am.

Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Litter offences

Personal responsibility for litter deposition is controlled by sections 87 and 88 of the Act which make it an offence where 'any person throws down, drops or otherwise deposits ...and leaves" litter. The section applies to public open places and relevant land including highway and educational land.

Section 88 provides for the issue of a 'Fixed Penalty Notice', in the sum of £50, by which an offender can avoid conviction for the littering offence, with potentially a maximum fine of £1000.

The offence is in two parts – that of deposition and leaving – with Government advice being that enforcement is not appropriate where an offender picks up deposited litter on challenge by an enforcement officer.

Environmental Protection Act 1990 – Accumulations of Rubbish

Accumulations of rubbish which are prejudicial to health can be dealt with as a 'statutory nuisance' by the Environmental Health service. In such case, however, there has to be either a noxious element to the deposited material or a direct health risk. The accumulation of 'junk' or rubble etc may therefore not be actionable under these provisions. Consideration would separately be given to whether action was appropriate under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, if the accumulated material was shown to be

providing harbourage for rodents.

Whilst residents may regard land as 'littered' where such accumulations exist, it is not felt that such accumulations fall within the remit of this Scrutiny process.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 - Untidy land

Similar powers exist to deal with sites that are shown to be detrimental to the amenity of the neighbourhood.

The Council's policy since 1999 has been that where land is untidy but does not seriously and adversely affect the amenities of the neighbourhood it is dealt with by a letter to the owner/occupier simply requesting remedial action be undertaken. Where it does seriously and adversely affect the neighbourhood, a letter is sent requesting action within 28 days. Failure to take action is followed by the service of a Section 215 notice.

The notice provides a period of 28 days before it is effective, following which the recipient has a further 28 days to clear the site. Members will appreciate that this is a long drawn out process and therefore only initiated in the most serious of situations that severely impact on local amenity

Once again, residents may feel that untidy sites are 'littered'. However, it is believed that such sites are again outside of the brief of this Scrutiny process.

Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978 – abandoned items

A power exists under this act to deal with the abandonment of single items by notice on the owner of land. Whilst the provision is generally seen as a more speedy way of dealing with 'dangerous' items like freezers and refrigerators, in practice officers will achieve removal of items on an informal basis once owners are advised of the legal situation in respect of occupiers liability.

Proposed Legislative Changes

Proposals were announced in the Queen's Speech on 23rd November that the Government intends to enact the provisions contained in the recent Defra consultative document 'Clean Neighbourhoods' (July 2004). Whilst the precise details will not be known until the legislation is enacted, a number of new powers may be made available to local authorities.

Perhaps of greatest significance is a proposal that a new provision is made for the issue of a fixed penalty notice where domestic refuse is put out in advance of a time prescribed by the waste collection authority. This particular power will potentially allow specific addressing of the perceived problem of black sacks in some areas of the Borough and overcome the current potential challenge to litter fixed penalty notices.

Current Initiatives

'Rubbish Watch'

'Rubbish Watch' is an initiative which was supported by Chalkwell and Milton Wards in 2003/4 under the Minor Wards Scheme. The scheme was specifically targeted at black sacks deposited on the highway in advance of collection day. Members of the South Westcliff Community Group and the Milton Community Partnership undertook the distribution of information leaflets to residents within their wards and, with the support of the Borough Patrol earlier this year, identified problem areas for targeted action.

'Rubbish Watch' signs were erected and stickers produced which were affixed to refuse sacks to highlight incorrect deposition. Borough Patrol Officers issued fixed penalty notices in 33 cases. Unfortunately, progression of the initiative stalled with the demise of the Borough Patrol in March.

The scheme also achieved the acquisition of a mobile 'Domehawk' camera to monitor locations of concern. However, in the absence of the Borough Patrol resource, this element of the initiative had similarly to be suspended.

However, following a meeting with ward Councillors chaired by the Leader on 21st October, the initiative is currently being re-launched in partnership with the two Community groups. It is being targeted as a pilot project at 22 roads south of Station Road, Westcliff (from the Cliffs Pavilion to Chalkwell Avenue).

The scheme is being led by a temporary 'Litter Enforcement Officer' who commenced a 4 month temporary contract on 22nd November and will work for 12 hours per week on the pilot area. It is intended that the Rubbish Watch initiative will 'roll-out' as:

- Familiarisation / induction phase re cleansing issues & Council services
- Publicity phase re distribution of guidance to householders/businesses
- Challenge' phase re identified sources of deposition to include site monitoring with the Domehawk camera
- Enforcement phase re Fixed Penalty Notices for offenders
- Prosecution phase re non-payment of fixed penalties

Members will appreciate that the scheme is in its infancy. However it is likely that they will wish to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme as part of this Scrutiny process.

Police Community Support Officer Tasking

Members will be aware that the Council is funding 50% of the costs of 10 of the new PCSOs within the Southend Division. By the time of reading this report, a total of 13 PCSOs will be in post with a further 6 expected to commence training at the beginning of January 2005. (It is hoped that 25 will have been appointed by the financial year end).

The 'Special Services Agreement' between the Council and Essex Police sets out a number of tasking objectives for PCSOs, the achievement of which will be monitored by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. The combating of litter and graffiti (as well as fly-posting and fly-tipping) fall within the objectives of the PCSOs who will work with Council officers as part of the shared crime reduction initiative - **'Partners for LIFE'**

(Liaison; Information; Focus and Enforcement). The Rubbish Watch initiative is being used to introduce PCSOs to this particular element and to establish long-term reporting and liaison arrangements between the respective services.

Town Centre Management Review

Members may be aware that an Officer group is currently reviewing the management of the Town Centre as required by the action plan within the 'Gateway Town Centre Strategy 2002-2012'. Specific regard is being had to the co-ordination and control of operational services, especially street cleaning and litter control which have been identified as issues of concern.

A report will be produced in due course which will have regard to the deliberations of this Scrutiny Committee

Cleansing Contract

The Council undertakes its street cleansing functions via a contract with Cory Environmental. This current contract expires in 2008.

The Contract covers the following:

waste collection; waste disposal; street cleaning/litter bin emptying (routine and some special events); foreshore cleansing; toilet cleansing, servicing and repair; CA sites; recycling; gully/cesspit emptying/cleansing; winter maintenance; highway emergencies; response to marine oil pollution; and some miscellaneous works.

The street cleansing element will be of interest to this Environmental Scrutiny Project together with some understanding of the waste collection element where this overlaps with street scene matters.

The Scrutiny Project is not intended to review the operation or management of the Cleansing Contract, this will be undertaken by the Waste Management Working Party and Cabinet as part of the Waste Management Strategy and future contract procurement. However, an understanding of the street cleansing element is necessary.

In outline the cleansing contract requires that streets are cleaned on a particular frequency ranging from monthly for most residential streets in the Borough to twice daily for main shopping areas (some isolated footpaths are cleaned only twice per year). There are approximately 750 litter bins (including 100 beach litter bins and 90 large capacity seafront bins) to be emptied. Routine street washing is not undertaken.

The cleansing requirement for Southend High Street is as follows:

Thorough cleaning by 08:00 and again after mid-day with continuous mechanical cleaning between approximately 10:00 and 17:30. This operation is seven days a week, 364 days a year (excludes Christmas Day). Ten additional full cleans can be initiated in addition each year by the Town Centre Manager in order to deal with additional litter during Special Events etc. in the High Street. Also on 125 occasions per year during school holidays an extra cleaner undertakes litter picking generally between 11:00 and 16:00.

Accumulation of litter and refuse occurring between cleansing operations, which require intervention having regard to the Code of Practice on litter and refuse, are dealt with on an ad hoc basis as necessary and within resources available. When repetitive intervention is required the Council issues Variation Orders to Cory Environmental to change the programmed cleaning frequency.

The Contract performance is monitored seven days a week 365 days a year on a sample basis by the Council's Contract Cleansing Inspectors.

BVPIs

BVPI 89 is collected every three years from a structured satisfaction survey related to the percentage of people satisfied with the cleanliness standard in their area and the result for 2003/04 was 54%. This compares with 68% in 2000/01 which had at that time for unitary authorities a lower quartile of 51% and an upper quartile of 64%.

BVPI199 Cleanliness of relevant land under EPA was first introduced in 2003/04. Surveys are carried out throughout the year and the outcome for 2003/04 was 11% of relevant land assessed as being Grade B or below.

Best Value Review Inspection

A Best Value Review of Highway Maintenance, which included street cleansing, was undertaken in 2001/04. The Audit Commission undertook a Best Value Inspection of this in February 2002 and reported in July 2002. The Review found that the Council is successful in securing competitive works contracts, including street cleaning. The inspector states in respect of "Clean streets and public areas – litter education and enforcement":

"We found:

- There is a high standard of cleanliness throughout the Borough but the town centre, particularly the High Street, becomes litter strewn once cleaning operations cease at 6.00 pm. Extensive littering and vandalism of litter bins is carried out by those who frequent the town centre at night.
- Following an early morning clean from 6 am to remove the results of the previous night's anti social behaviour the cleansing contractor maintains a continuous presence in the High Street area (two men litter picking and a mechanical sweeper) until 6 pm.
- Residents we spoke to (including Leigh Town Council representative) spoke highly of street cleaning.
- We saw abandoned fridges cleared as soon as the Council was made aware. Fridges or freezers with doors are treated as emergencies because of the danger of child entry and suffocation.
- The Council works in partnership with fast food retailers in the town centre to reduce litter and with the police to remove abandoned or unsafe vehicles from the highway. Southend is delivering nationally recognised good practice for abandoned vehicle removal.
- Effective contract enforcement ensures that the specified cleanliness standards are achieved.

However:

- No cleaning or litter enforcement beyond 6 pm combined with anti-social town centre users results in a litter strewn town centre until cleaned by 8 am.
- There is public dissatisfaction with litter in the High Street and perception that standards are falling.
- Autumn leaves can be a problem on footways
- No enforcement of litter laws
- No education plan in operation.

In terms of street cleaning the recommendations in the Best Value Review improvement plan are to:

1. Improve litter clearance of Southend High Street in the evening.
2. Trial Enforcement of Litter Laws.
3. Producing and undertaking a Litter Education Plan
4. Establishing a voluntary agreement with Fast Food Businesses in High Street. This is now in operation.

Items 1 and 3 have not progressed as funding has not been identified. The Borough Patrol had begun a trial enforcement of the litter laws but this could not be completed as the Borough Patrol was disbanded on the basis that the function would be undertaken by the formation of the Police Community Support Officer organization. In respect of item 4, an agreement has been put in place with fast food businesses.

Graffiti

The Cleansing Contract Manager in the Leisure, Culture & Amenity Services department is responsible for graffiti issues within the authority, and has provided the following information:

- Graffiti is not art - it is criminal damage;
- the section takes about 30 -60 calls a week, most of these calls are cleaned within 5 days. Racist, abusive and sexist calls are dealt with within 24 hours;
- since June 2003 - September 2004 the team have cleaned 14.5 miles of graffiti;
- The most 'prolific area's' of the borough are Leigh and Thorpe Bay at the moment. Southchurch park is 'hit' almost weekly, the pavilions and the toilets;
- The team do a regular check on the High Street, Seafront, Shelters, Chalkwell Footbridge, and the Undercliff shelter at Leigh each week and clean off graffiti as found;
- The team work closely with the Police, and surveillance is currently being carried out on the Chalkwell Footbridge.

Current Initiatives

The Evening Echo has kindly sponsored one van for £1,000 and the Echo logo has been put on the van, "Helping to clean up Southend". The graffiti team also get weekly coverage in the paper, with Echo Graffiti Watch inviting the public to phone the hotline.

The Council has been offered a £500 reward by Chalkwell residents to identify local tags. A press release will be given, and the reward offered in the result of a conviction.

A poster has been designed to put up in bus stops, advertising the Graffiti Hotline. The phone number is going on the Bus time tables at the Bus stops.

Getting a second van on the road last May has made a tremendous difference to the service.

Scrutiny Considerations

It is perhaps pertinent that the Scrutiny Committee should initially challenge the perception by Members and residents that litter and graffiti are a serious problem within the Borough – albeit accepting that there is a need to address such incidents. It is therefore suggested that Members may wish to determine the scale of the problem and what evidence exists that the Southend situation is beyond that which might be deemed reasonable and acceptable.

Members may therefore feel that a survey of all Ward Councillors should be undertaken to establish the level of concern across the Borough and, if appropriate, seek the identification of specific problem areas.

The Committee undertook an overview on 26th November in an exercise to obtain a 'snapshot' of litter and graffiti in some areas of the Borough. Photographs from the visit will be on display at the meeting on 2nd December for consideration by Members who were unable to be present.

NOTES FROM WITNESS SESSIONS HELD 15TH DECEMBER 2004, 12TH JANUARY 2005, 26TH JANUARY 2005 & 9TH FEBRUARY 2005

WITNESS SESSION NO.1

15th December 2004

ATTENDEES

- 1 Mr Nigel Tansley Thomas – Regional Director, ENCAMS (East of England)
- 2 Superintendent Steve Currell – Southend Police
Inspector Andy Prophet – Southend Police

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

1. QUESTIONS TO ENCAMS

Mr Nigel Tansley Thomas responded to the questions previously submitted on behalf of the Committee with a presentation. He prefaced his presentation by mentioning that he had arrived early in Southend in order to have the opportunity to look around parts of the west of the town and make his own assessment of the extent of the litter and graffiti problem. On the whole he had been impressed by the standard of cleanliness, which he rated as very good, and the level of graffiti as well below the national average, but nonetheless he recognised that the Committee was right to be concerned by the issue.

Question 1

Could you provide Members of the Committee with some background/information on ENCAMS?

Answer

Mr Tansley Thomas explained to the Committee that ENCAMS was an environmental charity part-funded by the Government, the private sector and by grant-aiding bodies, whose brief was to address environmental campaigns. The issues it concerned itself with included litter and waste, detritus and weeds, gum and stained paving stones, fly-tipping, graffiti, fly-posting, abandoned and nuisance vehicles, and dog fouling.

In 1989 it had launched The People & Places Programme which is targeted specifically to help local authorities, private businesses/organisations and landowners to improve their local environment and also to help them to fulfil many of their duties outlined in the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Programme also has a wider remit to tackle local environmental quality issues under the Government's Liveability Agenda and Anti-Social Behaviour.

Question 2

Current national initiatives to raise street scene standards and combat litter and graffiti (?Replacement of “Spring Clean” or other former initiatives by the Tidy Britain Group).

Answer

Mr Tansley Thomas highlighted national initiatives such as the Code of Practice on fast food, the Eco-Schools Programme and the Blue Flag Programme.

In particular he drew attention to the People & Places Programme, to which over 170 partner organisations, mostly councils, have subscribed. The Programme provides a range of strategic support and advice, including best practice from other partners in the People & Places programme. ENCAMS summarises best practice and details of relevant legislation in what it calls Knowledge Bank CD-Roms. These Knowledge Banks address a selection of issues, including litter and graffiti, flyposting, abandoned vehicles, chewing gum, etc. ENCAMS are producing a number of new knowledge banks each year. In addition the P&P programme has a number of structured programmes and initiatives dealing with the wide range of issues that affects the quality of the local environment.

Mr Tansley Thomas emphasised that ENCAMS bases its work on scientifically-collected data to ensure that the campaigns are targeted at the right audience. He stressed the importance of working at a local level to identify the perpetrators of such problems as litter and graffiti before putting in a remedial programme.

As well as the Knowledge Banks, ENCAMS provides training and produces a range of leaflets.

Question 3

Can you advise on any Local Authority initiatives elsewhere which could help us in looking at the issues of litter and graffiti?

Answer

Mr Tansley Thomas explained that the Knowledge Banks brought together ‘best practice’ remedial solutions to a range of issues, including litter and graffiti, from authorities around the country. The Knowledge Banks are available to all subscribing members of the People & Places Programme.

He also suggested that sometimes such issues were best addressed through a local Neighbourhood Environment Programme (NEAT), and pointed out that the local authority could not necessarily be expected to pay for all solutions.

Additional points:

- Members raised the issue of flyposting, which is considered a significant problem in Southend because of the nightclubs. Mr Tansley Thomas referred the Committee to Cambridge, who had faced a similar problem, and who had built up their own very successful strategy, and also to Bedford, who had taken the opportunity to address the whole issue of the night-time economy.
- Members also raised the issue of ‘early bagging out’. Mr Tansley Thomas suggested that the most effective solution was through enforcement, and reminded Members that the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) now had the power of

enforcement with respect to litter. He cited the example of Great Yarmouth, who had also experienced this problem and who had dealt with it in this way.

- Mr Tansley Thomas mentioned the survey of 70 wards in England carried out for Defra which put forward the view the graffiti is not as widespread as is often thought. Some of the worst-affected areas are public transport areas such as bus stops and railway stations.

Councillor Price thanked Mr Tansley Thomas on behalf of the Committee for attending.

2. QUESTIONS TO POLICE

Superintendent Steve Currell responded to the questions previously submitted to Southend Police on behalf of the Committee.

Question 1

Could you provide Members of the Committee with some background information on the PCSOs.

Answer

Superintendent Currell explained that the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) had now taken over from the Borough Patrol. Research has shown that fear of crime is very high, and PCSOs are a key part of addressing this by increasing police visibility and hence reassuring the public. Their numbers are steadily increasing locally – there will ultimately be 9 in Central Southend, 5 in the East of the Borough and 9 in the West of the Borough. Eastwood Police Office has been re-opened as a base for PCSOs and special constabulary and community officers. Eventually there will be one PCSO associated with each ward. The intention is for them to be in touch with the local community through carrying out regular foot patrols and through meeting key community representatives in the evenings. Through building up links with the local community it is also possible to glean local intelligence. The period 8 a.m. to midnight, 7 days a week is the intended coverage.

Question 2

What will their powers/responsibilities be?

Answer

Superintendent Currell listed the PCSOs' powers. Relevant to this study were the powers to issue fixed-penalty fines for dog fouling, dropping litter and they have been attending incidents of criminal damage. They currently have no direct powers linked to graffiti, but in the future there will be a fixed penalty. As yet they have no power to detain, but again this will be changed in the future to allow them the power to detain for up to 30 minute. Performance Indicators have been devised to monitor PCSO effectiveness.

Question 3

How do you see the liaison role with the local authority working in respect of street scene issues? What are the PCSO's actually going to be allowed to do where rubbish is concerned?

Answer

Superintendent Currell reported that meetings had been held with Dave Connor, John Whiddon and cleansing inspectors, and that there was a strong commitment to working

together. It is also intended to identify contact officers within the Council for the PCSOs to liaise with. Where problem areas are identified, the PCSOs can be called in to issue notices, which gives a very visual message. The intention with regard to litter is to change behaviour, and one way to do this in regard to 'early bagging out' could be to issue leaflets to homes adjoining an offender's home explaining that a fixed-penalty notice had been issued, and why. Superintendent Currell explained that PCSOs were encouraged to deliver penalty notices by hand rather than sending them through the post, as this had more impact.

Additional points:

- It was agreed that a leaflet drop to every house in Southend was a good idea, so that all members of the public knew that remedial action on litter and graffiti was only a phone call away. Superintendent Currell told the Committee that there would shortly be a national leaflet campaign on drugs and fly-tipping.
- In response to Members' questions, Superintendent Currell confirmed that CCTV cameras were being used to try to discover graffiti perpetrators. It was recognised that there were serial graffiti offenders who needed to be identified.
- Members suggested that there should be a positive article about the PCSOs in the Civic News, as feedback so far had been very good.
- Superintendent Currell invited Members of the Committee to go out on patrol with PCSOs.

Councillor Price thanked Superintendent Currell and Inspector Prophet on behalf of the Committee for attending.

WITNESS SESSION NO.2
12th January 2005

ATTENDEES

1. Mr Paul Johnson – Old Southendian and Southchurch Cricket Club
Dr David Singh – Southend-on-Sea Cricket Club
2. Mr Martin McNeill – Editor, Evening Echo

1. QUESTIONS TO MR. PAUL JOHNSON

Mr Johnson responded to the question previously submitted on behalf of the Committee.

Question

Could you provide Members of the Committee with your views about litter and graffiti issues?

Answer

Mr Johnson explained that he was presenting the views expressed by all the Sports Clubs that use Southchurch Park, totalling around 1,000 people of all ages and backgrounds. The Clubs paid rent for their facilities in the Park, and all were concerned at the substantial increase in criminal damage within the Park. A joint meeting had now been set up with the

Police and Council for 13th January, and Mr Johnson hoped that they could all work together to address the problems.

Mr Johnson agreed that litter was not a major problem in Southchurch Park, but graffiti, as a form of criminal damage, was indeed a serious problem. Since last autumn it had been a particularly bad problem, and he provided photographic evidence of graffiti damage to some of the Clubs' buildings. He felt that such damage gave a bad message to visiting Clubs, and was a poor advertisement for the Town, affecting Southend's reputation both within the Borough and nationally.

The Clubs recognised that the criminal damage is regarded as low-level crime, and that there are limited resources for dealing with it. However, such damage represents a significant financial and administrative problem to the Clubs, which are non profit-making and run by volunteers, and the Clubs also felt that if the perpetrators of such damage were ignored it encouraged them to carry out more, and turn to more serious crimes.. There was a general feeling that the Park was becoming a no-go area, particularly in the evenings, and that there was a lack of civic pride. He was also disappointed to learn that the Park had lost its green flag status for 2005.

Mr Johnson sought to identify the causes for the problem. He expressed the view that Central Government policy had been a failure, and that there was a perception that the Police had given up – he cited two recent articles in the Press expressing criticism of the Police for inaction. He believed that there was too much time spent in talking about the problem, and not enough action, and was concerned that there were inadequate Council resources to enforce Park bye-laws. He also believed that there was an absence of a clear Community strategy, and a culture of self-obsession, with some members of the Community believing that they had the right to behave as they liked.

Mr Johnson believed that improvement was not possible unless individuals accepted responsibility for their own actions, and the actions of their children, and respected the rights of others. It was important for all community groups – Police, Council, Schools, etc. – to promote the principles of good citizenship and that a sense of pride should be instilled through all appropriate channels. There should be greater Police and Council visibility for dealing with the perpetrators. Mr Johnson enquired how the Essex Police trial of imposing on-the-spot fines was progressing.

Mr Johnson advised that the problem was not peculiar to Southchurch, and that the Cricket Club buildings in Chalkwell Park were also experiencing similar problems.

Additional points:

- Councillor Price drew attention to the well-publicised number for reporting graffiti, which usually results in the graffiti's removal within three days, and Members were surprised to learn that using this number to report graffiti within the Park had not been effective. The Clubs are aware of this number, and now look forward to seeing the removal of the current graffiti within a few days.
- Mr Johnson confirmed that only one of the Clubs has CCTV, although they do use lights on timer-switches. CCTV facilities had themselves been targeted for criminal damage.

- Mr Johnson said that much of the damage takes place after school and into the evenings, especially during the winter months when many of the premises are not occupied on a regular basis. He felt that the perpetrators were almost certainly youngsters who took no notice of locked gates.
- Mr Johnson confirmed that many of the Clubs already had good youth sections. The Clubs offer membership to all.
- Mr Johnson advised that the forthcoming meeting with the Police and the Council was the appropriate forum for formulating and implementing solutions, and the Clubs had a number of proposals to present to the meeting.

Councillor Price thanked Mr Johnson on behalf of the Committee for attending.

2. QUESTIONS TO EVENING ECHO

Mr Martin McNeill responded to the questions previously submitted to the Evening Echo on behalf of the Committee.

Questions

- (a) To what extent do litter and graffiti appear to be an issue for your readers? Can you provide some examples of such letters (summarise them) and also the quantity involved?
- (b) Could you provide background information to your support for the graffiti team?
- (c) Would you consider promoting, work with Southend on a 'tidy up your town' campaign, and what elements and methods do the Echo see as important in achieving this?

Answers

Mr McNeill confirmed that letters to the Echo suggested that there was indeed strong feeling about litter and graffiti, and showed the Committee a selection of press cuttings. Mr McNeill was unable to quantify the number or proportion of letters received on the subject. In June 2004, for example, the paper had launched a campaign across South Essex to raise public awareness, which had met with considerable response. He emphasised that it was not just a question of highlighting the problem, however, but of reporting on what was being done to combat it, and he stressed the importance of sponsorship for the Council, so that money was given to help address the problem. He confirmed the Echo's support for a 'Pride in Your Town' campaign, and also confirmed that the Echo could highlight the Committee's report when the current in-depth Scrutiny Study is completed.

Mr McNeill was asked if the Echo could publicise where the Rubbish Watch dome hawk cameras would be operating, in the same way that it publicised the whereabouts of speed cameras. Mr McNeill agreed that this could be possible.

Members raised the issue of chewing gum, which is now spoiling the new paving in the High Street. It was felt that it was important to educate the public across the Borough. Mr McNeill agreed that the Echo could run a feature on the problem, but that it was not the newspaper's responsibility to re-educate the population of Southend.

Mr McNeill confirmed that the graffiti hotline number is published in the Echo every day as part of its information panel. Mr McNeill said that it was preferable to publish details of where graffiti had been removed, rather than reproducing the graffiti itself and hence giving publicity to the perpetrator!

It was acknowledged that anti-social behaviour is high on everyone's agenda, and Mr McNeill felt that neighbourhoods should be involved in local clean-up operations. Once streets were clean they tended to stay that way, but there was a need for neighbourhoods to be involved in the first place. The Echo could help with feedback from the public, and then reporting on what was being done, as it had in the past.

Members suggested that there needed to be a holistic approach to litter, and the suggestion of a monthly 'citizen of the town' award was put forward. It was also suggested that hotspots could be identified around the town, and pictures published to show the litter problem before it was addressed, and then to show the same spot after improvements had been made.

Mr McNeill was unable to quantify the exact rubbish issues which concerned Southend residents, but confirmed that whenever the Echo ran a feature the public always responded to it. He felt that the Council worked well with the Echo, and confirmed the Echo's willingness to be involved with any long-term initiatives, though stressed that the Echo would always want to maintain its independence. He agreed that when the Committee publishes its Scrutiny report in March the Echo would support a 'Pride in our Town' campaign. The newspaper has a promotions budget, and Mr McNeill thought it could be possible to put some money into the campaign – maybe funding the printing of some posters for schools, for example. Members felt that the newspaper and the Council should have a co-ordinated approach.

Councillor Price thanked Mr McNeill on behalf of the Committee for attending.

WITNESS SESSION NO.3

26th January 2005

ATTENDEES

- 1 Cllr Mrs Ann Holland (Portfolio holder, Environment & Public Protection)
- 2 Mr Peter Hawkins (South Westcliff Community Group)
- 3 Mrs. Bron Lister-Smith (Primary Heads Association)

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

1. QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Councillor Mrs Holland, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Public Protection, had previously been asked by the Committee to give a presentation on the following issues:

1. Outline your views/understanding on litter and graffiti issues in Southend;
2. What initiatives are currently being addressed?
3. What policy/legislative changes in the future will impact on litter and graffiti?

Response

Councillor Mrs Holland said that she did not think litter and graffiti were major problems in Southend. As far as graffiti was concerned, she said that the hotline had been very successful. There were now two vans, another one having been funded by the Crime & Disorder Partnership Strategy Board, who had also set up a database enabling graffiti tags to be recorded which should help with prosecutions. The hotline number will shortly change to that of the Together Action line.

With regard to litter, she said that Nigel Tansley Thomas of ENCAMS had confirmed that Southend was complying with the code of practice, but she recognised that the situation in the High Street could be improved. The first sweep was normally before 8.00am, and there was continuous sweeping through the day. There was currently no sweep after 6.00pm, and the agreement with the fast food outlets did not extend to the evenings.

From her own experience she said that most of the complaints she received were about black sacks in the street, particularly in Milton, Chalkwell and Westborough wards. She acknowledged that residents still needed educating about the pink bags, although she said that there had been fewer problems since the introduction of the sticker system. The Borough Patrol had been able to issue fixed penalties for leaving bags out in the street, but of 33 issued only one had been paid.

She was delighted with the effects of the Rubbish Watch initiative, through which Fixed Penalty Notices were being pursued.

She referred to the new legislation being proposed under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill. This identified cigarette butts and chewing gum as litter, and gave local authorities new powers to require businesses and individuals to clear litter from their land.

Cllr Mrs Holland told the Committee about initiatives that had been tried by Southwark. They had two officers issuing fixed penalties operating in the High Street dressed as a 10-foot-tall cigarette and an 8-foot-tall crisp packet. This apparently had more impact than an officer in ordinary uniform. They also had someone with a loud-hailer applauding when a person used a litter bin, and giving out a number of £10 rewards.

Additional points:

- Members were concerned that there was a perception that the Police were not pursuing prosecutions for graffiti. Cllr Mrs Holland confirmed that the Police were active in following up prosecutions, but it was often difficult to have enough evidence to go to court. CCTV had now been installed in Chalkwell, which should help the situation, and the PCSOs should also be able to support prosecutions.
- Members asked about the conditions outlined in the Highway Licence, enabling commercial premises to have tables out on the pavement, and it was confirmed that there would be a condition to keep the area clean.
- Members asked if the refuse collection arrangements for Christmas 2005 could be communicated to residents better than they had been in 2004, as uncertainty about collection times had resulted in large numbers of rubbish sacks littering the streets throughout Southend. From their own experience, Members said that there had been

disruption to the collection service from 24th December through to 28th January. Cllr Mrs Holland explained that 2004 had been unusual in that both Christmas and New Year's Day had fallen on a Saturday, which was normally Cory's 'catch-up' day, so that it had been very difficult to work out a schedule, particularly as the landfill site closed early in the day. This meant that double collections in any one day were impracticable. The possibility of leaflets to be distributed to all residents was being considered, in addition to the situation now whereby the changes are advertised in the Civic News, the Yellow Advertiser and on the Council's website. The possibility was also discussed of printing the collection details on the black bags themselves. Members suggested that more prominent advertising could be beneficial, such as large posters in the town centre. Cllr Mrs Holland thought advertising on buses could be useful, as they travel around the town.

- There was discussion around the problem of early bagging out, and attention was drawn to a recent article in the Echo. It was recognised that the public needed educating into putting their bags out on the right day, and that fines were a useful tool. Bags put out too early became a litter problem in the street, especially when they split open and the contents were blown around. The possibility of wheelie bins was discussed, but officers explained that residents would still have to lift the bags out of the bins ready for collection, as this was not included in the Cory contract. A wheelie bin collection also caused other problems, as it was much slower to carry out and indeed led to greater quantities of rubbish which needs to go to landfill. Members confirmed that having clean and tidy streets was always an issue for residents, and it was agreed that the problem of black bags only occurred in pockets around the town.
- There was also discussion around the pink bags. Members were concerned that pink bags with stickers were left in the street instead of being collected. Cllr Mrs Holland stressed that pink bags only represented 1% of the overall bag problem, and that many of the suggested remedies would use a disproportionate amount of finance. It was agreed that it was a problem of education, and just removing the bags would not solve the problem. Cllr Robertson said that he would look into the possibility of private funding through Business Improvement Plans; he was reminded that there would need to be a consensus among the business communities in the area.
- Chewing gum boards were discussed, as it was now proposed that chewing gum be classed as litter, and the problem needed to be addressed. Attention was drawn to Bournemouth, where they had used boards successfully. Members suggested that if it was decided to go down this route local art colleges could be invited to submit designs for boards.

Councillor Price thanked Councillor Mrs Holland on behalf of the Committee for attending.

2. QUESTIONS TO SOUTH WESTCLIFF COMMUNITY GROUP

Mr Peter Hawkins responded to the questions previously submitted to the South Westcliff Community Group on behalf of the Committee.

Question 1

Could you provide Members of the Committee with information about litter and graffiti issues in your area?

Answer

Mr Hawkins explained that the Group covered the area south of London Road from Chalkwell Avenue through to the Cliffs Pavilion. The main issue in this area was rubbish, especially in the area around Station Road. In particular, black bags littered the streets all week, and old TVs and furniture were dumped at the roadside. There was a perception that rubbish was being dumped in the area on collection days by people from out of the area. There were also concerns about untidy private sites, where again rubbish, including unwanted furniture, was dumped.

Question 2

Could you provide photographs (dated) evidence of the scale of the problem? Do you believe there are problem areas elsewhere in the borough?

Answer

Mr Hawkins confirmed that he had an enormous stock of photographic evidence, most of it collected by Mr Trevor Bell, who had been campaigning about the rubbish for a long time.

Mr Hawkins believed that the rest of Westcliff was just as bad. He thought that the problem was largely caused by the number of large houses with multiple occupancy, where the residents are only renting and perhaps do not feel any responsibility towards keeping the environment tidy. Where there was a high number of people living in bedsits it became difficult to get people concerned and involved. He also felt that the landlords were not accepting any responsibility for the problem.

Question 3

What do you think SBC should be doing to address your specific concerns within resources available?

Answer

Mr Hawkins recognised that it was a challenge to persuade people to put their bags out on the right day. He recommended that the first step should be to identify the culprits who were dumping the black bags at all times, and then to establish whether they had appropriate internal storage. He was not convinced that houses that were converted for multiple occupancy always provided the space for rubbish as defined in the original plans, and he thought that inspectors were not diligent enough on checking up on them. Having enough space internally to store rubbish was often a problem, and he felt that landlords should be challenged to provide space either internally or externally. Mr Hawkins suggested that there could be storage facilities out on the road, especially near the station, for people who lacked internal storage facilities. He recommended that rubbish on the streets should be cleared quickly – it looked bad, it attracted other rubbish to be dumped alongside, and it was becoming a health issue. However, he recognised that just clearing the rubbish was not necessarily the answer as people needed to be educated, and he was doing his best to talk to local people about the issue.

With regard to rubbish dumped from people from outside the area, he told the Committee that he had been encouraging residents to note registration numbers of the cars involved in an effort to address the issue. CCTV now covered some of the hotspots, although the bus stop was still a problem.

As far as the untidy private sites were concerned, he felt that it would help to have litter-abatement notices served. This would encourage the landowners to keep the sites tidy in the future, and would serve as an example to other offenders.

Mr Hawkins asked for 'official' metal rubbish watch plates that could be attached to lamp-posts in the same way as the neighbourhood watch signs.

Additional points:

- Officers raised the point that black bags awaiting collection as such did not constitute litter, but became a litter problem when they split open, and when they were left out all week. They were also very unsightly when they were piled up on private forecourts and other sites, and it was agreed that landlords should be encouraged to provide external storage facilities.
- Members discussed the possibility of the Council offering bins at a subsidised rate, as the Council could probably buy them in bulk. This could be linked to the garden waste initiative.
- Members raised the possibility of a 'good citizen' approach to encourage people to deal with their rubbish in a considerate manner. There are already plans in hand to put in more trees in Station Road, and generally to smarten the area, and it is hoped that residents can be encouraged to keep it pleasant.

Councillor Price thanked Mr Hawkins on behalf of the Committee for attending.

3. QUESTIONS TO MRS LISTER-SMITH, PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION

Mrs Lister-Smith responded to the questions previously submitted to the Primary Heads' Association on behalf of the Committee.

Question 1

To what extent do you think that the issues of litter and graffiti are an issue for children/young people?

Answer

Mrs Lister-Smith told the Committee that litter and graffiti were major issues for children and young people, mainly because respect for the environment no longer started in the home. Schools worked hard to address the issues through Personal and Health Education, but there was a problem in conveying the message to the parents. She felt very strongly that society had to recognise its responsibilities.

Mrs Lister-Smith said that schools were often strange shapes, and that after a high wind litter would accumulate in all sorts of corners. Her own school accepted responsibility for any litter going from the school into the street, but a problem arose from litter blowing from the street into the school. The wind also blew around the contents of split black bags, with unsightly results. Houses close to the road often had rubbish piled up, and the overall effect was bad. She emphasised that the Council's policy on black bags rather than domestic wheelie bins was a key area for change as black bags frequently split or were attacked by animals.

Question 2

What initiatives do the Head Teachers' Associations / your Association get involved in in terms of litter and graffiti (in terms of discouraging anti-social behaviour)? Are litter and graffiti matters an issue for the Head Teachers' Associations / your Association?

Answer

Mrs Lister-Smith said that all head teachers were battling in the same way as she was – they all complained about the problem of litter, but nobody had yet found a solution. Some of her colleagues also had a problem with graffiti. Members suggested a poster campaign, and she agreed this could be helpful. She felt that there needed to be something permanent put in place that children had had a hand in, and cited the example of traffic signs that had involved children. She was confident that if an initiative could be identified she could put it across to the Primary Heads' Association.

Additional Points:

- Members asked if PTAs were an appropriate forum for addressing the problem, but Mrs Lister-Smith said that PTAs were generally not well supported, and any initiatives addressed through this route would not have a major impact.
- There was discussion around the involvement of the Police in schools. While it was recognised that Community Officers were very effective, it was also recognised that there are not many of them and so they are limited as to how often they can come into schools. David Connor explained that he was the link between the Council and the Police, and that this was a link he was very keen to foster. He was concerned at the difficulties of getting the Police into schools, where teachers are constrained by their curriculum demands. Mrs Lister-Smith told the Committee that she believed it was critical for children to have respect for the Police, and stressed the importance of them coming into school where they could play an important role in citizenship education.

Councillor Price thanked Mrs Lister-Smith on behalf of the Committee for attending.

WITNESS SESSION NO.4

9th February 2005

ATTENDEES

1. Mr Paul Redman (Cory)
2. Mr Colin Ralph (Rubbish Watch)
3. Mr Martin Turner (Private Sector Housing, HMO Management)

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

1. QUESTIONS TO CORY

Mr Paul Redman (General Manager) responded to the questions previously submitted to Cory on behalf of the Committee.

Question 1

Could you provide Members of the Committee with a brief outline of Cory?

Answer

Mr Redman told the Committee that Cory Environmental Services Ltd (CEMS) was a national dedicated waste management company that was currently engaged in the collection of waste and recyclables from nearly half a million households across the country, as well as cleansing streets, beaches and shopping centres, managing Civic Amenity sites and providing and operating bespoke Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) and Transfer Stations. It was committed to providing high quality, innovative solutions for its customers with a strong emphasis on Best Value and a drive towards helping clients achieve their Statutory Performance Standards for recycling and composting. To this end, it constantly investigated new technology in terms of collection and treatment methods that enabled the company to offer every customer a tailor-made solution suited to their specific needs.

Mr Redman detailed the range of services offered by CEMS, and also gave an overview of the waste management and associated services that it currently provided to five other local authorities.

Question 2

The Committee has a particular concern over the impact of black and pink bags left on the street and in front gardens, etc by residents and others, and the impact on the street scene. In terms of the impact on the street scene, could you give your views on the current system of black bag/pink bag use and whether you consider there are any ways to improve the situation? Additionally, are there any other initiatives or methods which Cory undertakes for other authorities which may have an improved impact on the street scene, and, if so, what are the pros and cons? (wheeled bins and plastic recycling containers have been mentioned by Members).

Answer

Mr Redman told the Committee that the current twin-sack system in Southend represented good value for money, and was an efficient method of collection. However, he acknowledged that the refuse sacks, due to their potential to contain food waste, were liable to be ripped open by scavenging animals, especially when residents left their bags out overnight. Waste could also be spilled when the sacks were inadequately tied at the top, and where the sacks were too heavy or contained sharp objects. Mr Redman also warned of the increasing phenomenon of spillage caused by persons looking for financial information. He recommended enforcing the issue of 'early refuse' by visiting householders or leaving a card to inform them of the problems associated with leaving sacks out overnight. He also raised the possibility of supplying sacks with ties incorporated into the design, or sacks made of a heavier gauge.

He acknowledged that wheelie bins were also very efficient, particularly as the possibility of spillage was much reduced, but went on to detail the disadvantages. In the short term they represented a very expensive solution, since he said that the initial cost of the bins represented 7-8 years of black bags. The wheelie bins needed a special vehicle to lift and empty them: since the lift itself was heavy, this reduced the amount of waste that the vehicle could carry, which in turn meant that more vehicles were needed, thence increasing the cost of the service. In Southend's case, the majority of the refuse freighter fleet would either need to be replaced with bin-lift vehicles, or the lifts would have to be retro-fitted to make a wheelie-bin collection possible. The special vehicles were also longer than the usual vehicles, and this may lead to problems in confined streets. The primary effect, however, was on the collection process itself, as the bin had to be returned after

being emptied which made the process slower. Mr Redman also told the Committee that experience showed that if residents were equipped with 240-litre bins, rather than bags which held on average 60-80 litres, then the amount of waste they presented for collection significantly increased. Other councils had tried either reducing the size of the bin or moving to a 2-weekly collection with varying success.

Mr Redman told the Committee that at several other contracts the recyclables were collected in plastic boxes. These reduced spillage, although paper could be blown out of the boxes on windy days. They were initially more expensive than the sacks, were more unwieldy to deliver when setting up the system, and took longer to empty owing to the return trip involved to return the empty box.

As far as the pink bags for mixed dry recyclables were concerned, Mr Redman said that they represented an efficient solution. The bags were less attractive to scavengers than the black bags, as they did not contain food waste, and so were less likely to be split open.

Mr Redman believed that the way forward was for good education and enforcement, all supported by an efficient collection service.

Question 3

Please outline any street cleansing or litter initiatives/methods of working which Cory may be involved with elsewhere and which provide benefits and may be useful for Southend in the future?

Answer

Mr Redman said that, generally, most of Cory's other contracts followed a similar system to that employed at Southend, i.e. a mixture of manual and mechanical sweeping using various sizes of mechanical broom. The timing and frequency of the sweeps is determined by the Council, and Mr Redman believed that the current specification was right.

Mr Redman told the Committee that in some contracts Cory carried out a periodic "deep cleanse". This was carried out on a different area once a week, drawing on operatives from other rounds that required less attention, and typically involved sweeping the street, clearing accumulations of fly-tipping, litter picking hedges, and so on. Every area was attended to in this way at least once a year, with problem areas given greater frequency.

Mr Redman regretted that the national culture as far as litter was concerned differed from other European countries, and that it was very difficult to change. He believed that local initiatives to improve matters could only make limited inroads, and that it needed a larger, national initiative to have significant impact. In the meantime, the problem could be dealt with, but there were always cost implications.

Question 4

Are Cory involved in, or aware of, any cleansing/rubbish-clearing régimes/initiatives elsewhere in terms of working with authorities, or others, on the removal of rubbish, etc from private land (gardens, back alleys etc) or the prevention of accumulations of rubbish?

Response

Mr Redman said that Cory carried out ad-hoc work on private land for other local authorities when requested. However, he stressed that while local authorities had powers

to take certain enforcement measures, Cory themselves had no powers to enter private land to clean it up.

He drew attention to three pieces of legislation:

Crime and Disorder Act 1998: this introduced the concept of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), which the London Borough of Camden, in particular, had successfully used to combat fly posting by targeting those responsible.

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003: this improved the operation of ASBOs, and gave stronger powers to local authorities generally in tackling fly tipping, fly posting and graffiti. The fixed penalty notice scheme was expanded to include graffiti, and it was made an offence to sell paint spray cans to under 16s.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill: this was currently progressing through parliament, but potentially would give local authorities greater legislative powers in tackling litter and graffiti. In particular, it would become an offence to drop litter (including gum and cigarette ends) anywhere, including on private land, and local authorities would be given new powers to require business and individuals to attend to their litter.

Mr Redman said that some authorities used periodic “deep cleanse” operations, well publicised in advance, to address the problem of fly tipping on private land.

Additional points:

- Members enquired about the frequency schedules for street cleansing, and were told that these were already available through the Department of Technical & Environmental Services.
- Members raised the issue of the disruption to the refuse collection service over Christmas. Mr Redman said that the Christmas schedule had been well publicised by the Council, but acknowledged that a greater number of people than usual had forgotten the details. He agreed that it was a challenge to educate residents into putting out their refuse on the right day.
- Members asked about the capacity of the sacks used in Southend, and were told that they effectively held between 60 and 65 litres. The quality of the sacks was regularly tested. Mr Redman believed that increasing the thickness of the sacks would have only a very marginal benefit.
- Members were told that there was currently no alternative private refuse collector that collects household waste in Southend. Cory sometimes provided services to groups of councils, but this did not always reduce the costs to each individual authority. Mr Redman confirmed that incinerators and landfill sites could both serve more than one district.
- Members raised the issue of pink sacks that had been rejected by the collection team, and were left in the street with a sticker. Mr Redman said that simply clearing them away did not help in educating the public, and in fact made the problem worse. He claimed that putting a sticker on the sacks to explain why they were not being removed had greatly reduced the number of sacks with the wrong recyclables, and

he believed this form of education was the best course of action. Members were concerned that the sacks were left in the street for a week until the next collection.

- Mr Redman confirmed that it was incumbent on the collection staff to clear up spillages as they went. However, it was not their duty to remove sacks that had been put out on the wrong day. He acknowledged that some residents, especially in older properties that had been converted to HMOs, did not have adequate storage for their refuse.

Councillor J. Garston thanked Mr Redman on behalf of the Committee for attending.

2. QUESTIONS TO RUBBISH WATCH

Mr Colin Ralph responded to the questions previously submitted concerning the 'Rubbish Watch' initiative.

Question 1

Could you provide Members of the Committee with information about the Rubbish Watch initiative?

Answer

Mr Ralph explained that he had been working on the Rubbish Watch scheme since the end of November 2004, working 12 hours a week, and that his contract would run until the end of March 2005. The scheme was focused on the streets south of Station Road between Chalkwell Avenue and the Cliffs Pavilion, but attention had been given separately to other parts of Milton and Chalkwell.

His first task had been to deliver a letter and leaflet to all homes confirming the refuse collection day and the action requested of the residents. The second task involved opening sacks that had been left out at the wrong time, finding a document to identify their source, and then sending a letter to the offender warning that if the offence was repeated they would be prosecuted. He confirmed that this second stage 'warning' was part of the initial educative approach, but that it would be intended to immediately issue fixed penalty notices at some stage.

Mr Ralph said that of the 30 letters he had sent, only two residents had re-offended, and he was in the process of issuing fixed penalty notices. If these were not paid, then the offenders faced prosecution in court.

Question 2

How effective do you feel this is – what changes has the initiative brought about? Do you personally favour an enforcement or advisory approach?

Answer

Mr Ralph believed the initiative had been very successful, as was evident just from walking around the Station Road and Pembury Road area where there was a marked improvement.

As far as which approach to use, he favoured whichever proved to be the most effective. He had no personal preference for enforcement, but believed it was necessary where education proved insufficient. He found actually knocking on doors and meeting people to

talk through the problem was often the best way forward.

Question 3

To what extent do you feel that there is a problem with litter and graffiti in the borough?

Answer

Mr Ralph said he could only speak for the area he knew, but there both litter and graffiti certainly represented a problem. He believed the main problem stemmed from the numerous HMOs which had inadequate space for storing refuse, and recognised that issuing fixed penalties was not the way to address this.

Additional points:

- Members recognised that there were areas in Station Road where the residents had nowhere to store their refuse, and it was agreed that this was an issue that needed addressing. They raised the possibility of installing wheelie bins or some other sort of refuse storage by the bridge.
- Members agreed that it was a challenge to change the behaviour of residents. Sometimes people did not realise they were committing an offence, and responded well to education. It was hoped to link the PCSOs into the work of Rubbish Watch – there would be a training day for the PCSOs on 15th March to familiarise them with the enforcement procedures. Members urged that the Echo should be informed when offenders were prosecuted, and noted that it was intended to publicise both the issuing of the Fixed Penalty Notices and the effect that Rubbish Watch was having within the area.

Councillor J. Garston thanked Mr Ralph on behalf of the Committee for attending.

3. QUESTIONS TO PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING, HMO MANAGEMENT

Mr Martin Turner responded to the questions previously submitted concerning Private Sector Housing, HMO Management.

Question 1

Could you provide Members of the Committee with information about the controls open to local authorities in respect of private sector accommodation?

Answer

Mr Turner explained that currently the only powers in housing legislation in respect of the control of domestic refuse were confined to Management Regulations that applied to HMOs. These Regulations required that the manager of the HMO ensured that refuse was not allowed to accumulate in the house except where properly stored, and that the manager should provide and maintain suitable refuse and litter bins. HMO standards adopted by the Council included a requirement to provide suitable receptacles for refuse storage, readily accessible to occupants of the house. The provision of a hard-standing and/or screened enclosure for refuse storage would normally be appropriate. The Regulations were enforceable by the Council, and failure to comply was punishable by a fine.

Question 2

Could you advise the Committee about any proposals that may improve the control of tenanted property?

Answer

Mr Turner told the Committee about the recently enacted Housing Act 2004, which contained some provisions that would affect the control of tenanted property. The new provisions fell into three parts:

The licensing of HMOs, to which there were mandatory and discretionary elements. Licensing would control whether the house was reasonably suitable for occupation by a maximum number of households, whether the management arrangements for the house were satisfactory, and whether the manager of the house was a fit and proper person.

Selective licensing of other residential accommodation, which would occur either in an area of low housing demand, or in an area that had experienced a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behaviour that was not being addressed by private landlords who had let premises in the area.

Management Orders, which could be made by the local authority in cases where an HMO or other house was not licensed, but should be, and there was no reasonable prospect of it being licensed in the near future, or where premises were licensed but the licence was being revoked because of health and safety issues. Management orders represented an interim intervention measure, through which the local authority could temporarily become the landlord.

Question 3

Do you have any ideas on how to overcome the problem of householders/ tenants and/or landlords who dump rubbish?

Answer

Mr Turner suggested that education, enforcement and direct action were the ways to address this issue. Education aimed to change behavioural patterns, and was supported by enforcement aimed at those who breach applicable legislation. Direct action – the clearance of accumulations on public or commonly-owned private land – represented a temporary solution.

Additional Points:

- Members queried how many HMOs there were in Southend, and Mr Turner told them that the number was going down. However, he explained that the definition of HMOs was changing and that more landlords would need to be licensed. If landlords did not come forward to be licensed, the local authority would have powers to pursue them and could impose heavy penalties.

Councillor J. Garston thanked Mr Turner on behalf of the Committee for attending.

FEEDBACK INFORMATION FROM MEETING HELD 12TH JANUARY 2005

Containment of Waste (Black/Pink/Corn coloured sacks)

The Council's policy in relation to the containment of waste collected under the Council's duty is:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Green Sack | - | Commercial waste collected by the Council. Sacks are purchased as a charge is made by the Council. |
| Black Sack, or other disposable type sack | - | Mixed waste for disposal at landfill. |
| Pink Tinted Sack, or other disposable type sack | - | Only defined recyclable waste which is sorted for sale: newspapers, magazines; plastic bottles; food and drinks cans; textiles and shoes; cardboard. |
| Corn coloured sack | - | Only green garden waste. Sacks are purchased as a charge is made by the Council for the collection. |

When a householder puts waste, other than that prescribed, in a Pink tinted sack or a Corn coloured sack a Contamination Sticker is put on the sack by the collection operative. A sample of the Sticker used for Pink sacks and Corn coloured sacks is attached. Two colours are used for the sticker. One week a green sticker is used. The following week a red sticker is used. If the following week Pink sacks with a green sticker are detected, the black sack refuse crew will collect the sack but it will be disposed of at landfill as the sack contains contaminated waste. The following week Pink sacks with red stickers will be collected and so on. This arrangement was introduced to encourage householders to correctly present their waste as contaminated sacks cannot be processed through the material sorting plants and to provide time for sorting and rebagging. If garden waste, for which a charge is payable, is contaminating a Corn sack, another Sticker of a similar design is put on the sack. If the sack is left abandoned by the householder the sack is likely to be collected as dumped rubbish for which the Council's contractor is paid to collect on an ad hoc basis.

Where a black sack is presented which contains garden waste another sticker is affixed to the sack. A copy of the sticker is attached. If the sack is not removed by the householder it is likely that the sack will be removed as dumped rubbish and the Council's contractor is paid specifically to collect the sack.

It is important to note that the householder as waste producer has a responsibility to present waste in a manner prescribed by the Council so as to minimise the

overall cost to the community. If a householder does not comply then the Council's contractor is paid to collect the sack as dumped rubbish.

The approximate number of contamination stickers issued is:

Black Sacks - 4 per collection day – approx 0.01% of total collected annually

Pink Tinted Sacks - 90 per collection day – approx 1% of total collected annually

Corn coloured sacks - 44 per collection day – approx 5% of total collected annually

In the period April to November 2004 there were approximately 1350 incidents of rubbish etc (fly tipping) being collected separately from the streets, at least 1000 of which were household waste.

Cigarette Stubbers on Litter Bins

Litter bins purchased for the regeneration of High Street, Hamlet Court Road and London Road and those generally provided throughout the Borough are not provided with cigarette stubbers. However, the Litter bin design currently purchased for general use within the Borough, excluding regeneration areas, can be provided with cigarette stubbers at an additional cost of approximately £10.00 per bin. In addition to the 'stubber cost' daily cleaning would be needed to remove the stubbed out cigarettes at an additional cost to the Council.

Chewing Gum

Removal of Chewing Gum from Highway Surfaces

The following specification clause was included in the Cleansing Service 1998-2008 tender documents, but due to the need to reduce the contract price, to satisfy budgetary needs, this requirement was not included in the contract when the contract was awarded.

Mobile steam spray system used by Kirby Jet Washing Limited of 1 Hawkins Road, The Hyde, Colchester, Essex CO2 8JX (tel: (01206) 791636) or similar approved system, to carefully remove chewing gum, graffiti, fly posting, etc from a variety of surfaces.

The work includes street washing

- (a) block paving using special steam jetting. Repairing joints in paving where the cleaning process has removed the sand, by filling the joints completely with kiln dried sand and a liquid sealing compound, all materials to be approved by the Engineer. The sealing compound is provided at no cost by the Council.

- (b) hot rolled asphalt surfaces cleaned using special steam jetting.

Areas to be cleaned are as follows:

	Location	Frequency	Approx Area (m ²)
A	36/38 London Road to Victoria Circus – block paving	Twice per annum during (March and October)	4,280
B	Queensway bus facility and footpath north from spiral ramp adjacent to Odeon Cinema – block paving and asphalt	“	995
C	Victoria Circus and Southchurch Road footpaths to Chichester Road, Victoria Circus to top of Pier Hill. Footpath top of Pier Hill to Church Road. Footpath Heygate Avenue, Chichester Road west side. Footpaths York Road west to High Street. Short Sections of footpaths east and west of High Street – block/modular paving.	“	11,925
D	York Road bus station including section of north footway Heygate Avenue and east footway of Chichester Road abutting the bus station.	“	1,195
E	Pier Hill and north footway of Marine Parade to Southchurch Avenue - asphalt	“	4,945
F	Queens Road, Elmer Avenue to High Street – block paving [when constructed]	“	1,695
G	Tiled subway, walls and floor to remove flyposting, graffiti, mud, grime, debris etc at Victoria Avenue (opp. Civic Centre) - approx. 600m ² ; Grange Gardens to Whitegate Road - approx. 610m ² ; and Southchurch Road/Queensway (3 approaches) - approx. 1185m ² .		
	The frequency of cleaning is twice per annum during March and October.		

Prior to the new contract this specification was undertaken but damage was occurring to the joints in the High Street paving and along Marine Parade, the hot

rolled asphalt surface was severely eroding. Street washing to remove chewing gum is destructive in the medium term to highway surfaces.

Chewing Gum Boards

A very limited trial of a chewing gum board has been undertaken by the Community Project Officer in the vicinity of the Hamlet Court Road Community Office. The board was provided on a lamp column for a relatively short period of time and was used.

Luton Borough Council have been using 'Gum Targets' for the last year following the example set by Bournemouth Borough Council. An area of Luton's town centre is provided with 80, A4 sized 'Gum Targets' positioned on street furniture, normally lamp columns. The Targets have a slogan such as 'Football – Love it, Hate it', and the gum is stuck on the section of the target to suit the users opinion.

A private company provides, cleans and maintains 80 'Gum Targets' six days a week at a cost of £14,400 per year.

Foreshore Cleansing

Foreshore cleaning is undertaken as follows:

Summer and Winter - above and below tide mark, daily (one clean per day)

This daily clean shall be completed by 10.00 each day where the tide state permits.

During the summer period an additional 100 number pm visits shall be undertaken upon instruction. This additional pm cleaning will generally be undertaken during the following periods:

- 1) Half term school holidays (including weekend preceding and following),
- 2) Easter school holiday (including weekend preceding and following),
- 3) Summer school holiday (including weekend preceding and following),
- 4) Other high season periods.

Provision of Dog Faeces Bins

Dog faeces bins are generally provided to support Dog Byelaws which require persons in control of a dog to pick up faeces deposited by the dog. Byelaws apply mainly to beaches and Amenity Land. Specially designed bins are provided for this purpose. Dog faeces bins are not generally provided in relation to Highway Land. The locations of dog faeces bins are set out below:

Dog Bins – Emptying three times a week	Number of Bins
Shoebury Common	6
Maplin Way Open Space	2
Shoebury Common North	3
Shoebury Park	5
Shoebury Village Green (Asda & North Shoebury)	3

Southchurch Boulevard	2
Southchurch Hall Gardens	3
Southchurch Park	5
Southchurch Park East	4
Thorpe Bay Gardens (Thorpe Esplanade)	2
Garons Sports Centre (adj to car park)	2
Gunners Park	6
Youth Commemoration Ground	1
Friars Park	5
Eagle Way Open Space	
Elm Road Shoebury (recreation area)	4
Burleigh Square	2
Bishopsteignton Open Space (Sedgmoor)	3
Brankscombe Square	2
Bournes Green Park	5
Eastern Esplanade & Thorpe Esplanade	27
East Beach	6
Cheldon Barton Open Space	1
Thorpe Hall Avenue (Central Reservation)	4
Cluny Square (St Lukes Road Entrance)	1
Warners Park (Sumpters Way)	1
Priory Park	6
Jones Memorial Park	2
Victory Sports Ground	3
Chalkwell Promenade + 1 bin at The Leas	6
Churchill Gardens	3
Gainsborough Playground	1
Prittlewell Square	1
Prittlewell Path (Westbourne Grove & Gainsborough Drive)	7
Southend Cliffs	14
Milton Gardens (Tennis Court)	1
Warrior Square	2
Western Esplanade (Three Shells)	2
Cinder Path (Leigh-on-Sea)	3
Manners Way End of footpath to Sherbourne Gds	1
North Road Cemetery	1
Three Shells	1
Bonchurch Park	1
Blenheim Park	6
Undercliff Gardens Green	1
St Clements Churchyard (Leigh)	1
Belfairs Sports Ground	2
Warners Park	2
Warren Road	1
Belfairs Park (Woodlands Park)	1
Westbarrow Park (Aviation Way)	2
Belfairs Park (Lime Avenue)	1
Fairview Gardens	1
Cockethurst Park	1
Chalkwell Park	5
Prittlewell Brook Path/Cavendish Gardens (Ground to tennis court)	1

Fairfield Crescent Playground (Benvenue Avenue)	1
Oakwood Recreation Area	3
Edwards Hall Park	1
Millennium Copse Open Space (Prince Avenue opp Exford Avenue)	1
Leigh Marsh (playing field near pond opp golf range)	1
Leigh Library Gardens	3
Highlands Boulevard	2
Belfairs Park (Agnes Avenue)	1
Marine Parade Gardens (Belton Hill)	9
Eastwood Park	3
Old Leigh Cliffs	6
Scott Park	2
Owls Hall Wood	2
Parkway Strip	3
Danescroft Playground	2
Mendip Crescent Grassed Area Opp Martock Avenue	1
Repton Green (Western Approaches)	1
Ridgeway Gardens	2
Belfairs Park (Golf Course & Belfairs Park Drive)	4
Belfairs Park (Eastwood Road)	1
Richmond Drive/Fairview Drive	1
Belgrave Road Grassed Area North Side Arterial Road	1
St Lawrence Park	2
Underwood Square	2
Two Tree Island	3
Green Lane Ap 223	1
TOTAL	244

OUTLINE INFORMATION ON CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ENVIRONMENT BILL

Crime and Disorder

- ensures that local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships will take anti-social behaviour affecting the local environment into account in developing crime and disorder reduction strategies.
- gives local authorities new, more effective powers to deal with alleyways affected by anti-social behaviour.

Fixed Penalty Notices

- make greater use of fixed penalties as an alternative to prosecution, in most cases giving local authorities the flexibility to set their own rates;
- gives parish councils the power to issue fixed penalties for litter, graffiti, fly posting and dog offences.

Nuisance and Abandoned Vehicles

- gives local authorities the power to remove abandoned cars from the streets immediately;
- creates two new offences to help local authorities deal with nuisance parking: offering for sale two or more vehicles, or repairing a vehicle, on the road as apart of a business.

Litter

- makes it an offence to drop litter anywhere, including private land and rivers, ponds and lakes;
- gives local authorities new powers (litter clearing notices) to require businesses and individuals to clear litter from their land;
- strengthens existing powers for local authorities to require local businesses to clear up litter they generate (street litter control notices);
- enables local authorities to restrict the distribution of flyers, hand-outs and pamphlets that can end up as litter;
- confirms that cigarette butts and discarded chewing gum are litter.

Graffiti and fly-posting

- extends graffiti removal notices (as introduced by the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) to include fly-posting;
- improves local authorities powers to tackle the sale of spray paints to children;
- strengthens the legislation to make it harder for beneficiaries of fly posting to evade prosecution;
- enables local authorities to recover the costs of removing illegal posters.

Waste

- amends provisions for dealing with fly-tipping by:
 - removing the defence of acting under employer's instructions
 - increasing penalties
 - enabling local authorities and the Environment Agency to recover their investigation and clear-up costs
 - extending provisions on clear up to the landowner in the absence of the occupier.
- gives local authorities and the Environment Agency the power to issue fixed penalty notices (and, in the case of local authorities, to keep the receipts from such penalties):
 - to businesses that fail to produce waste transfer notes
 - to waste carriers that fail to produce their registration details or evidence they do not need to be registered
 - for waste left out on the streets (local authority only)
- introduces a more effective system for stop, search and seizure of vehicles used in illegal waste disposal; and enabling courts to require forfeiture of such vehicles
- introduces a new provision covering the waste duty of care and the registration of waste carriers
- introduces a new requirement for site waste management plans for construction and demolition projects
- repeals the divestment provisions for waste disposal functions to provide greater flexibility for local authorities to deliver waste management services in the most sustainable way
- reforms the recycling credits scheme to provide increased local flexibility to incentivise more sustainable waste management.

Dogs

- replaces dog byelaws with a new, simplified system which will enable local authorities and parish councils to deal with fouling by dogs, ban dogs from designated areas, require dogs to be kept on a lead, and restrict the number of dogs that can be walked by one person.
- gives local authorities, rather than the police, sole responsibility for stray dogs.

Noise

- reduces nuisance caused by noise by giving local authorities to:
 - deal with burglar alarms
 - impose fixed penalty fines on licensed premises that ignore warnings to reduce excessive noise levels
- gives local authorities greater flexibility in dealing with noise nuisance

Architecture and Built Environment

- establishes the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) on a statutory basis.

Miscellaneous

- enables the local authorities to recover the costs of dealing with abandoned shopping trolleys from their owners
- extends the list of statutory nuisances to include light pollution and nuisance for insects
- improves the contaminated land appeals process.

SURVEY OF ALL COUNCILLORS

Environmental Scrutiny Committee**'Harming the environment in Southend: its causes and solutions'**

51 Councillors invited to respond to questionnaire:

- 13 responses;
 - 11 complete questionnaires
 - 2 incomplete questionnaires.
- (and one Councillor provided photographic evidence)

1. To what extent is street litter perceived to be an issue for your residents?

NOT AT ALL	MINIMUM	MAJOR
	6 responses	7 responses

2. What are your views on street litter?

- Street litter is deemed a highly visible problem for the Borough, but one which is concentrated into specific wards rather than being a universal problem; Eastwood and Leigh do not appear to be as widely affected as Westcliff and Southend.
- Main concerns are that street litter gives the (erroneous) impression of the town being run-down and neglected (4 responses) and promotes a negative message to residents and tourists alike (2 responses).
- Street litter contributes to an increased fear of crime by residents (2 responses) and is felt to encourage anti-social behaviour.
- There is a concern that the litter could lead to health problems (1 response).
- Causes of street litter are felt to include:
 - ❖ black and pink refuse bags being put out too early and split by cats/foxes (2 responses);
 - ❖ inappropriate scheduling of road sweeping by Cory (1 response);
 - ❖ pigeon feeding and fly posting (1 response).
- It was felt that street litter should be addressed as a priority, as many residents feel it is the only visible sign of the Council 'doing something'/providing a service (1 response).
- Increased provision of bins (1 response) and use of a system of fines for offenders (1 response) are suggested as possible remedies.

3. To what extent is graffiti perceived to be an issue for your residents?

NOT AT ALL	MINIMUM	MAJOR
	4 responses	9 responses

4. What are your views on graffiti?

- Graffiti is felt to have a huge negative visual impact on both residents and tourists alike (4 responses), and greatly contributes to an impression of neglect within an area (5 responses).
- It contributes to an increased fear of crime within the community, with the elderly feeling particularly under threat (2 responses).
- Residents are felt to have strong feelings regarding graffiti (1 response).
- Graffiti is felt to be caused by a minority who lack social responsibility (1 response) and target specific areas (2 responses).
- Illegal alcohol and spray-paint sales are felt to contribute to the problem (1 response).
- A 'zero tolerance' approach should be adopted (1 response)
- and offenders should be made to clean affected areas (2 responses).

5. To what extent is rubbish in front gardens and alleyways perceived to be an issue for your residents?

NOT AT ALL	MINIMUM	MAJOR
	7 responses	6 responses

6. What are your views on rubbish in front gardens and alleyways?

- This problem is highly distressing and frustrating to residents (2 responses) and again is a greater problem in some wards than others (3 responses): Milton ward mentioned specifically (1 response).
- While areas with a high proportion of owner/occupiers are deemed less of a problem (1 response), fly-tipping by non-residents appears to be the main cause of the nuisance (2 responses).
- Transient populations, i.e. those in HMO accommodation, are also seen as a contributory factor (1 response). Lack of residential storage facilities and inadequate bulk waste collections increase the problem (1 response).

- It was felt that the Council needs to be more pro-active in encouraging residents to maintain a clean environment, as perceived inaction reflects badly upon the Authority (1 response).
- The 'private property' status of alleyways was recognised as a problem for enforcement (1 response).
- Fixed penalty fines were suggested as a method of addressing the problem (1 response).
- On a positive note, regular litter patrols and the alleyway clearance and gating scheme were deemed very successful (3 responses). It was suggested that an effective initiative from Middlesbrough to combat fly-tipping – 'snatch squad' - could be adapted for Southend (1 response).

7. To what extent are people leaving black bags/pink bags on street / in gardens perceived to be an issue for your residents?

NOT AT ALL	MINIMUM	MAJOR
1 response	4 responses	6 responses

8. What are your views on people leaving black bags/pink bags on street / in gardens?

- This problem was deemed highly de-motivating for the community.
- Lack of storage facilities (especially in flat conversions) was regarded as a major contributing factor to people putting their bin bags out too early (4 responses). This in turn leads to bags being torn open by foxes/cats and the litter becoming strewn around the environment (2 responses).
- Lack of awareness by residents as to correct waste collection dates, particularly during Christmas and Bank Holidays, adds to the problem (2 responses).
- Transient populations/short-hold tenancies were identified as a potential source of nuisance due to the possible lack of social responsibility to their community (1 response).
- A lack of ownership by householders as soon as the rubbish is placed outside means residents are less likely to clear up a split bin bag, believing it to be Cory or the Council's responsibility (1 response).
- It was also felt that the practice of placing stickers on pink bin bags of contaminated recycling waste instead of collecting them with the normal refuse leads to bags being left on the highway for weeks on end (1 response).
- Fixed penalty fines and high profile prosecutions were felt to be a means of encouraging residents to clear up (2 responses).
- Awareness of collection timetables should be promoted along with the 'rubbish watch' initiative (3 responses).

9. Are there any particular locations which you would like to bring to the Committee's attention?

- 59 separate locations have been specifically mentioned by Cllr. Martin Terry, a high proportion of which are alleyways.
- Station Road, York Road and Hamlet Court Road – Cllr. Robertson.
- North, South and Central Avenues, North Road, Queensway and Balmoral – Cllr. Dandridge
- Nightingale, Denton and Whitehouse Road – Cllr. Flewitt
- Rochford Corner – Cllr. Moring
- Station Road and York Road – Cllr. Garston
- St. Thomas More School – Cllr. Foster
- Leigh Road – Cllr Wexham.

10. Do you have photographic evidence which can be shared?

Photographic evidence can be supplied by Cllrs. Robertson, Dandridge, and Garston.

Responses received from:

- Cllr Martin Terry, Westborough
- Cllr Peter Wexham, Leigh
- Cllr Andrew Moring, Eastwood Park
- Cllr Christopher Walker, Eastwood Park
- Cllr Murray Foster, Prittlewell
- Cllr Howard Briggs, West Leigh
- Cllr Jonathan Garston, Milton
- Cllr Ann Robertson, Milton
- Cllr Mark Flewitt, St Laurence
- Cllr David Norman, Victoria
- Cllr Jane Norman, Victoria
- Cllr Derek Jarvis, West Shoebury
- Cllr Judith McMahon, Kursaal (photographic evidence)

Approximately half of the Councillors who responded did so on behalf of their Ward members, the remainder responded as individuals.

LIST OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Reports

1. In-depth Scrutiny Project - "Harming the environment: its causes and solutions'- Report of Chief Executive & Town Clerk – Report of Chief Executive & Town Clerk No 46 - 4th November 2004.
2. 'Harming the environment: its causes and solutions' - Background - Report of Project Team – No CETC 64 – 2nd December 2004
3. In depth Scrutiny 'Harming the environment: its causes and solutions' – Information Update – Report of Project Team No DTES 05/03 - 12th January 2005

Witness sessions

4. Notes from witness session held 15th December 2004
5. Notes from witness session held 12th January 2005
6. Notes from witness session held 26th January 2005
7. Notes from witness session held 9th February 2005

Minutes

8. Minutes of the Meeting of Environmental Scrutiny Programme Working Party held on Wednesday, 25th August, 2004 – agreed at Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 23rd September 2004
9. Extract from Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 23rd September 2004
10. Extract from Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 4th November 2004.
11. Extract from Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 2nd December 2004.
12. Minutes of Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 15th December 2004 (witness session 1).
13. Minutes of Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 12th January 2005 (witness session 2).
14. Minutes of Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 26th January 2005 (witness session 3).
15. Minutes of Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 9th February 2005 (witness session 4).
16. Minutes of Environmental Scrutiny Committee held 16th March 2005.

Information from other local authorities

17. Sheffield City Council – information on 'street force' and 'cleaner Sheffield Strategy'

18. Selby District Council – information on recent Scrutiny on litter, graffiti, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles.
19. Basildon District Council – information on ‘streetscene’.
20. Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council – information on ‘streetpride’.
21. Southwark Council responded and advised that they would provide information on their policies for cleaner, greener, safer Southwark.
22. Taunton Deane District Council responded and advised that they would provide information on their efforts to engage with the producers of fast food litter.

Written evidence & other evidence

23. Item from The Times 19.01.2005 ‘Green squads set to help Councils move up recycling league’. Refers to the ‘Rubbish Watch’ initiative.
24. Information on the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill.
25. Information received from Mr. Paul Johnson regarding Southchurch Park.
26. Information from Mr. Darren Kiggins, South Westcliff Community Group.
27. Press cuttings referred to by Mr. Martin McNeill.
28. Response from COBRA.
29. Initial response and further information from Landlords and Property Agents Forum meeting held 11th March 2005.
30. Information from Southend Youth Forum/Council
31. Response from Residents Association of Westborough
32. Response from Chalkwell Ward Residents Association.
33. Email information from Mr. Trevor Bell.
34. ‘Pink sack’ analysis.
35. Information from Councillor I.T. Robertson re visit to MRF.
36. Southend Together Community Conference – 18th October 2004 – Conference Report.
37. Responses from ‘Have your Say’.
38. Information from ENCAMS regarding graffiti and litter.

Project Team meetings

30. Meeting of the Member Project Team were held on the following dates – 22nd October 2004, 18th November 2004, 7th January 2005, and 18th February 2005.

Notes of the formal meeting of the officer project team held on 11th November 2004 are available.

Member's survey

31. Questionnaire responses and additional information from Councillors Jarvis, Terry and Mrs. McMahon.

In depth Scrutiny Report
'Harming the Environment: its causes and solutions'
April 2005