

Environment - Waste Management and Street Cleaning

Southend on Sea Borough Council

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Service Inspection

This inspection has been carried out by the Audit Commission's Inspectorate under powers under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999 and is in line with the Audit Commission's strategic regulation principles. These principles embody the objectives of our Strategic Plan and Strategic Regulation. They also reflect the principles from The Government's Policy on Inspection of Public Services (July 2003). Audit Commission service inspections should:

- focus on public service outcomes from a user perspective;
- act as a catalyst to help inspected bodies improve their performance;
- concentrate inspection work where it will have most impact, so that it is proportionate and based on an assessment of risk;
- be based on a rigorous assessment of costs and benefits, with a concern for achieving value for money both by the inspected organisation and within the inspection regime itself;
- be, and be seen to be, independent of the inspected organisation;
- report in public, using impartial evidence to inform the public about the performance of public services so as to enhance accountability;
- involve collaborative working with other inspectorates and external review agencies to achieve greater co-ordination and a more holistic approach to the assessment of performance by audited and inspected bodies;
- share learning to create a common understanding of performance that encourages rigorous self-assessment and better understanding of their performance by inspected organisations;
- be carried out objectively by skilled and experienced people to high standards and using relevant evidence, transparent criteria, and open review processes; and
- enable continuous learning so that inspections can become increasingly effective and efficient.

We assess services using published key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) to inform our judgements. The KLOE can be found on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk.

This report is issued in accordance with the Audit Commission's duty under Section 13 of the 1999 Act.

Summary

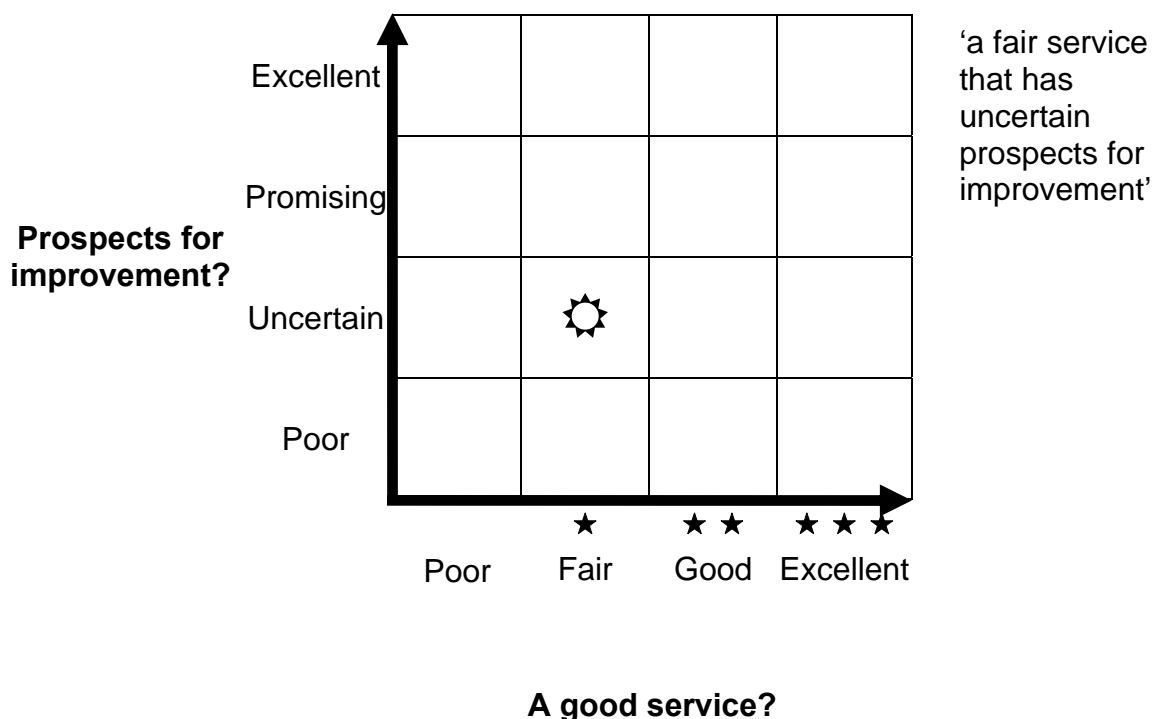
- 1 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council provides a 'fair', one-star waste management and street cleaning service. The service is reliable and provided at a low cost. Refuse is collected on time with few missed collections. The streets are generally kept clean. However, communication with the public is weak. Recycling facilities are inadequate and too much waste is being sent to landfill sites. Graffiti is not being dealt with promptly. The Council is introducing improved recycling facilities and is engaging with other Essex authorities to meet the waste management challenges that lie ahead. However, it has limited time and capacity to resolve these major issues and other weaknesses identified. It also lacks a clear track record of recent improvement. As such, the prospects for improvement in the service are uncertain.
- 2 The Council is responsible for the collection and disposal of household waste. It has identified its vision for the borough which is 'creating a better Southend'. Its core aims are: 'working together to achieve a safe, clean, healthy and prosperous Southend'. In 2005 the Council identified seven critical priorities, one of which relates specifically to waste disposal and refuse collection. It seeks to increase current recycling rates to meet national statutory targets (deferred by two years), and reduce levels of waste going to landfill in the long-term.
- 3 The inspection examined waste management (including refuse collection, waste disposal, waste minimisation and recycling), street cleaning (including sweeping, fly-tipping, fly-posting, graffiti, abandoned vehicles, dog fouling and public toilets) and wider issues of environmental sustainability (including biodiversity, use of natural resources, energy efficiency, climate change and air quality).
- 4 The service provided meets basic requirements but is not integrated and is not fully effective in some areas. The waste management service and street cleaning in most parts of the borough are effective. However, the Council has not sought to meet its statutory national recycling standard for 2005/06, with a high amount of waste collected and an average recycling rate. Service standards are incomplete and not communicated to the public. Public satisfaction with the service is mixed. Graffiti is a particular problem and litter in Southend town centre - though improved - remains an issue. Whilst the service has implemented a number of initiatives to address these problems, ineffective communication and co-ordination means that the outcomes have been limited.

- 5 The service has uncertain prospects for improvements due to a combination of major challenges and weaknesses. Despite the high priority of the service it does not have a clear track record of improvement. Recycling and composting rates have increased little over the past three years. The Council does not have a clear understanding of public opinion or the needs of sections of the community. The service faces complex waste disposal issues, particularly of biodegradable waste. The Council has joined with other Essex authorities to seek solutions and councillors have engaged positively in the process. However, plans for waste management and street scene improvements are still incomplete and capacity in the service is limited. In the short-term the Council's financial position will mean budget cuts in future years. A continuation of these trends means the Council will face significant landfill tax penalties from 2009/10.
- 6 The service has taken a number of steps to improve. The Council has prioritised work on its waste management strategy. In June 2006 the range of materials that can be collected for recycling was extended, the number of mini recycling centres is being increased and recycling facilities at the civic amenity sites are being expanded. Some existing projects are being extended across the borough and contract negotiations have improved value for money. Councillors have demonstrated their commitment to the service recently through additional funding and through all-party participation in addressing street scene and waste management issues. The Council needs to build on these initiatives to improve outcomes for residents and deal with future challenges.

Scoring the service

- 7 We have assessed Southend on Sea Borough Council as providing a 'fair', one-star service that has uncertain prospects for improvement. Our judgements are based on the evidence obtained during the inspection and are outlined below.

Figure 1 Scoring chart¹



Source: Audit Commission

¹ The scoring chart displays performance in two dimensions. The horizontal axis shows how good the service or function is now, on a scale ranging from no stars for a service that is poor (at the left-hand end) to three stars for an excellent service (right-hand end). The vertical axis shows the improvement prospects of the service, also on a four-point scale.

8 The service is a fair, one-star service because:

- service standards are incomplete and not communicated to the public;
- communication with the public and the media is ineffective;
- the service does not fully understand the diversity issues it faces;
- recycling facilities are inadequate and the statutory recycling and composting standard (27 per cent) for 2005/06 was not achieved;
- levels of waste collected are above average, waste minimisation efforts are limited and all waste that is not recycled or composted is buried in landfill sites;
- graffiti is a significant problem and is not being dealt with adequately;
- public satisfaction with the service is mixed, and litter in Southend town centre - though improved - remains a public concern; and
- the Council's approach to environmental sustainability is inconsistent.

However, the service performs well in some respects:

- street cleaning on the seafront and most other parts of the borough is effective;
- public toilets have been upgraded and are well maintained, within a programme of rationalisation;
- service costs have been consistently low, although waste disposal costs rose sharply in 2005/06;
- service charges are used appropriately; and
- environmentally-sustainable outcomes have been achieved in some areas, such as reductions in Council building energy consumption and carbon-dioxide emissions.

9 The service has uncertain prospects for improvement because:

- it lacks a track record of significantly improved outcomes, despite its high corporate priority;
- plans for addressing recognised weaknesses are lacking;
- there are complex waste disposal issues facing the Council and little time to resolve them;
- environmental sustainability objectives and targets are lacking;
- performance management is not yet embedded or used consistently to drive improvement;

- there is inadequate understanding of the views of service users and non-users;
- inter-departmental communication and working is inadequate so capacity is not being well utilised;
- a significant number of senior managers in the service are nearing retirement and workforce planning is in its early stages; and
- the Council's financial situation is weak and further budget cuts will be required in future years.

Features that may help the service in the future include:

- the service has made good use of the private sector and has achieved further savings through contract negotiations;
- establishment of the Clean Neighbourhood Team, improving management of refuse and litter problems, and plans for community involvement in tackling graffiti;
- from June 2006 a wider range of materials will be accepted for recycling via the pink sack system;
- plans for 11 additional mini recycling centres, improvements to the civic amenity sites and planning permission for local waste transfer stations;
- additional funds have been allocated for 2006/07, including recycling and the Clean Neighbourhood Team;
- added capacity and shared risk through participation in the Essex waste partnership, with other Thames Gateway authorities, and alternative options if necessary;
- a positive approach by councillors to resolving the waste and street-scene challenges; and
- corporate awareness of the importance of developing an effective waste strategy and the financial risks involved if the service fails.

Recommendations

- 10 To rise to the challenge of continuous improvement, councils need inspection reports that offer practical pointers for improvement. Our recommendations identify the expected benefits for both local people and the council. In addition we identify the approximate costs² and indicate the priority we place on each recommendation and key dates for delivering these where they are considered appropriate. In this context the inspection team recommends that the Council should do the following.

Recommendation

R1 Undertake a thorough review of communications, including:

- *identifying and addressing how customers access information;*
- *clearer, co-ordinated and up-to-date customer information;*
- *structured community consultation and engagement; and*
- *proactive media management.*

The expected **benefits** of this recommendation are:

- better understanding of community needs and services tailored to meet them;
- more effective communication to maximise community participation in initiatives and customer satisfaction; and
- minimisation of negative media messages that undermine Council initiatives

The implementation of this recommendation will have **high** impact with **medium** costs. This should be implemented by March 2007.

² Low cost is defined as less than 1 per cent of the annual service cost, medium cost is between 1 and 5 per cent and high cost is over 5 per cent.

Recommendation

R2 Improve Performance Management and Value for Money, including:

- *more proactive leadership and goal setting on environmental sustainability issues;*
- *scrutiny to be more challenging, analytical and forward thinking;*
- *develop and publish service standards;*
- *more focus on, and a more structured approach to, customer satisfaction;*
- *better monitoring of waste and street scene quality and service; and*
- *a more systematic approach to evaluation of value for money.*

The expected **benefits** of this recommendation are:

- resources and skills being directed to deliver the maximum benefits in line with priorities;
- robust internal challenge to ensure policy is fit for purpose and reasons for under performance understood and resolved; and
- improved value for money.

The implementation of this recommendation will have **high** impact with **low** costs. This should be implemented by March 2007.

Recommendation

R3 Enhance Service Capacity by:

- *joined up service delivery (waste contract, Customer Contact Centre, street scene staff, etc);*
- *seek additional capacity through external funding and partnerships;*
- *ensure capacity to develop Waste Management Strategy and associated contracts; and*
- *use procurement to deliver corporate objectives, including diversity and environmental sustainability.*

The expected **benefits** of this recommendation are:

- improved co-ordination, consistency and quality of service received by the public;
- availability of resources to address weaknesses and improve service; and
- more efficient and effective use of resources.

The implementation of this recommendation will have **high** impact with **medium** costs. This should be implemented by March 2007.

Recommendation

R4 Adopt a structured approach to diversity issues in the service, including:

- raise understanding of the issues; and*
- evaluate and improve service delivery.*

The expected benefits of this recommendation are:

- a better understanding of the range of issues and needs of the population; and
- a service that is tailored to ensure that it meets those needs.

The implementation of this recommendation will have **high** impact with **medium** costs. This should be implemented by March 2007.

Report

Context

The locality

- 11 The borough of Southend-on-Sea is located approximately 40 miles east of central London on the north side of the Thames estuary. It forms part of the Thames Gateway regeneration area. The area is the largest urban conurbation in the East of England with a resident population of 159,600 (ONS mid-2004 estimate) living within 77,570 households in the borough. It has a population density that is more than ten times the national average. A high proportion of the population lives in flats or maisonettes. 7.1 per cent of the population are from ethnic minorities in comparison to the national average of 13.0 per cent.
- 12 An estimated 16 per cent of the economically active population of 80,000 commute to London. The area attracts approximately 5.4 million day visitors each year. Unemployment is 3.1 per cent (June 2006) compared to the national average of 2.5 per cent. There is a mix of relatively wealthy areas alongside areas of deprivation. Taken overall, using the index of deprivation, the borough is ranked 114th most deprived out of 354 local government areas (354 being the least deprived).

The Council

- 13 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council achieved unitary council status in April 1998 and comprises 51 councillors. It is controlled by the Conservative Party (30 Conservatives, 8 Labour, 9 Liberal Democrats and 4 Alliance Southend). The Council has adopted a leader and cabinet model of governance. The cabinet consists of ten members with a leader and nine portfolio holders. Two portfolios are relevant to the service: Culture, Sport and Amenity, which includes waste management, and Cleaner, Safer Southend. In addition there is portfolio holder for Sustainability. There are three scrutiny committees, including an Environmental Scrutiny Committee. There are no parish councils but Leigh-on-Sea has a Town Council.
- 14 The Council employs over 5,000 staff (including schools) across all services. The budget for all services in 2006/07 is £365 million. Due to a reassessment of the borough population number leading to a reduction in central government grant, the Council had to find savings of £11 million in 2006/07. Further savings will be required in future years.

- 15 In 2002 the Audit Commission undertook a comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) of the Council. The assessment rated the Council as Fair. In 2005, the Council was rated as one that is improving adequately and providing two-star performance overall. Environment was allocated a three-star rating, with four being the highest. The assessment found that some services had improved but almost half of the Council's targets and 40 per cent of performance indicators declined. The Council had not established effective value-for-money mechanisms despite a difficult budget position with overspends in Children's Services and the need to cut the overall Council budget by £11 million in 2006/07. A new Chief Executive was appointed in March 2005.

Inspection scope

- 16 The scope for this inspection includes the following:
- waste management, including refuse collection, waste disposal, waste minimisation and recycling;
 - street cleaning, including sweeping, fly-tipping, fly-posting, graffiti, abandoned vehicles, dog fouling and public toilets; and
 - environmental sustainability, including biodiversity, use of natural resources, energy efficiency, climate change and air quality.
- 17 The main focus of the inspection is waste management. The relevant period of assessment is the past three years, June 2003 to June 2006. In reaching its judgments, the inspection team has placed emphasis on recent priorities, the current quality of service and the current direction of travel.

The Council's waste management service

- 18 The Council's waste collection and street cleaning services are provided as follows:
- weekly collection of black sacks for residual waste and pink sacks for dry recycled waste (newspaper/magazines, cans, plastic bottles, cardboard, and textiles/shoes);
 - optional weekly collection of green garden waste (chargeable);
 - two civic amenity sites and 20 mini recycling-banks (extending to 31 in 2006);
 - recycled materials are sorted locally; refuse is taken to landfill at Barling and Pitsea;
 - cleaning is undertaken according to fixed rotas;
 - service inquiries from the public are, in principle, handled initially by the Council's Customer Contact Centre; and
 - service budget of £10 million per annum.
- 19 The Council's waste collection and street cleaning services are undertaken by a contractor, Cory Environmental Municipal Services Ltd. There is an integrated ten-year contact which ends in March 2008. The Council is not involved in the collection or disposal of commercial waste.

National context

- 20 Councils are expected to support the UK sustainable development strategy, Securing the Future, 2005. Indeed, many local authorities are at the forefront of efforts to achieve greater social, economic and environmental sustainability. Unitary councils are expected to use their powers as planning, transport, housing, waste collection and waste disposal authorities, as well as their general wellbeing powers and community leadership, to achieve sustainable development. This includes working with others to promote energy conservation and efficiency, protect wildlife habits and promote biodiversity, reduce and mitigate climate change, and promote more sustainable patterns of development.
- 21 The Government has promoted the Cleaner, Safer, Greener agenda and many local authorities have adopted similar aims.
- 22 Councils have a duty to keep their land clear of litter. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) gives a local authority power to deal with litter based problems affecting its area, including issuing fixed penalty tickets to people who commit an offence by dropping litter. A Code of Practice, issued under the Act, recommends a 'clean as necessary' approach and specific levels of cleanliness for various environments. Under the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, an authority has the power to issue a notice to a private landowner to clean up their land and to undertake the cleaning itself if the landowner fails to act. The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 has strengthened the legal powers available to councils to keep their area clean and to tackle other nuisances, such as abandoned vehicles.
- 23 The Government has set statutory performance standards for local authorities to reduce the amount of waste that is collected and to encourage more recycling. In May 2006 the Government announced a minimum recycling standard of 20 per cent for all councils by 2007/08. In addition, the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) provides a powerful financial incentive for local authorities to minimise waste sent to landfill.
- 24 Promoting biodiversity is an objective of the UK sustainable development strategy. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are of particular importance. Section 28G of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) states that public bodies must 'take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of their functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSI'. The Government's Public Service Agreement target is for 95 per cent of SSSI land to be in 'favourable' or 'recovering' condition by 2010.

- 25 Reducing energy consumption and promoting use of energy from renewable sources is important for reducing fuel poverty and climate change. There are specific legal and policy commitments for national and local governments, including:
- Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 - this requires local housing authorities to promote energy efficiency in the local housing stock (public and private), with a target of 30 per cent improvement by 2010;
 - Kyoto Protocol – The UK is committed to a 12.5 per cent cut in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2008 to 2012;
 - UK wide targets – the UK government has itself set a target of reducing carbon emissions by 20 per cent from 1990 levels by 2010 with the ultimate goal of achieving a 60 per cent reduction by 2050 (Energy White Paper and UK Climate Change Programme); and
 - UK Renewables Obligation – a target has been set for 10 per cent of all electricity generated in the UK to be from renewable sources by 2010.

How good is the service?

What has the service aimed to achieve?

- 26 The community plan launched in 2003 by the local strategic partnership (known as Southend Together) sets out the vision for Southend as:
- a vibrant coastal town and a prosperous regional centre where people enjoy living, working and visiting.
- 27 The vision is guided by three 'overriding principles' of sustainable development, equality of opportunity and social inclusion. In order to deliver the vision, seven key themes were identified: Prosperous Town; Learning Town; Safer Town; Healthy Town; Environmentally aware town; Supportive Town and Cultural Town.
- 28 The Council's corporate plan 2006/09 identifies its own vision for the borough which is 'creating a better Southend'. Its core aims are: 'working together to achieve a safe, clean, healthy and prosperous Southend'. The plan identifies three year targets and annual milestones to deliver aspects of the community plan.
- 29 The Council has identified a number of high level priorities. In 2005, the Council reduced the number of priorities from 33 to 7 in order to focus on delivering them by March 2006. The critical priority relevant to the inspection is:
- waste disposal and refuse collection – to drive up current recycling rates to meet national statutory targets and implement the delivery programme to reduce levels of waste going to landfill in the long-term and the interim, in the context of replacing the cleaning contract (excluding waste disposal) in 2008.
- 30 Also relevant to the service is the priority of community safety and reducing anti-social behaviour.
- 31 For 2006/07 the critical priorities have been reviewed and amended but the one relating to waste and refuse remains. A new priority has been added relating to improving public satisfaction. The Council also identified some key local delivery projects for 2006/07 that departments will be responsible for to help deliver the Council's vision and aims. Included in these, in respect of the aim of a clean Southend, are projects to:
- improve the level and public satisfaction of street cleanliness in the borough focusing on the High Street; and
 - focus efforts on regenerating the town's run down areas, and continue to implement initiatives to keep Southend's streets clean (such as Rubbish Watch).
- 32 The corporate plan is supported by departmental summary plans and service plans.

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- 33 The Council published a municipal waste management strategy in 2004. This set out the national targets, the challenges facing Southend-on-Sea and the various services the Council provides. Informing the strategy was a public consultation exercise (War on Waste) undertaken in 2002. The waste management strategy is currently being reviewed and there are ongoing discussions with the other authorities in the Essex Waste Partnership regarding long-term waste collection and disposal arrangements.
- 34 The national recycling performance standard set by the Government for the Council are as follows.
- To recycle or compost household waste:
 - 18 per cent by 2003/04; and
 - 27 per cent by 2005/06.
 - To reduce biodegradable waste:
 - 75 per cent of the 1995 baseline by 2010;
 - 50 per cent by 2013; and
 - 35 per cent by 2020.
- 35 For 2005/06 the Council set its own target for recycling and composting at 22 per cent, which is below the national standard set by the Government for Southend.
- 36 The Council has estimated that the landfill tax will cost approximately £2 million per year if it fails to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill, with penalties being incurred in 2009/10 onwards. These estimated costs (based on the 2002/03 budget) indicate that the cost of alternative treatment facilities to avoid future landfill tax would be over £2.5 million per year.

Is the service meeting the needs of the local community and users?

- 37 The service is not fully meeting the needs of local people. It is also underperforming against the Council's critical priorities and national objectives. The service is not customer-focused and does not communicate effectively with the public. Refuse collection is reliable but the recycling service is inadequate and has missed local targets and the 2005/06 statutory recycling standard. Street cleaning is generally effective except in Southend town centre but graffiti is a serious local problem which is not being dealt with adequately. Delivery of environmental sustainability outcomes is not consistently pursued or promoted. The impact is that the public satisfaction is mixed, litter and graffiti detract from efforts to regenerate the town centre and too much waste goes to landfill sites.

Access, customer care and diversity

- 38** Access to the service is adequate but not consistent or co-ordinated. The public can contact the service via a number of means, including the telephone, in person at the Civic Centre, by letter, email and via the Council's website. The Council opened a Customer Contact Centre (CCC) in January 2005 and this is supposed to be the first point of access. However, the service is still publicising a number of other contact points, including the waste management contractor and direct numbers, and customers are not receiving a consistent or co-ordinated service. At least one third of calls on waste issues are transferred from the CCC to the service department or the contractor. Information from the contractor and service department is not passed to the CCC. The CCC deliberately avoids a call-centre style and treats callers as individuals, which, according to customer comments, is appreciated by users. However, opening hours are only 8.30am to 5.15pm Monday to Friday and structured information on customer satisfaction with contact arrangements is not collected.
- 39** The Council does not have a robust understanding of the needs and views of local people. It does not consult the public and stakeholders adequately on waste management issues. Since the War on Waste consultation in 2002, there has been little structured consultation. There is no recent information on public satisfaction or service changes other than customer comments and complaints. Although these are properly dealt with on an individual basis, they are not collated comprehensively. Feedback to the public is variable. For example, the issue of introducing wheeled bins has been raised by residents and businesses but no clear answer has been given. This means that the decisions about current and future service design are not based a clear understanding of local views and needs.
- 40** Communication with the public is ineffective. The quantity and quality of information provided to the public on waste management is inadequate. Publications are not co-ordinated or adequately checked before being circulated. Leaflets and other information designed for the public are out-of-date and not in plain English. For example, the labels on the pink sacks (still being issued after the launch of the June 2006 new recycling scheme) have old telephone numbers and refer to the blue sack scheme which ended in 2001. And the recycling messages on the side of the refuse vehicles are so small as to be effectively illegible. The result is that the public do not get clear or timely information. It also discourages participation in recycling.
- 41** Communication with the media is weak. The service is not sufficiently proactive and is not publicising sufficient clear information or data to ensure clear reporting of waste issues in the local press. Prominent reports in the media of recycled materials being sent to landfill were not rebutted by the Council, at the very time that it launched its new recycling service. The result is a loss of public confidence in the recycling service and the Council. It undermines the Council's efforts to encourage recycling.

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- 42 Customer service standards are incomplete and not communicated to the public. The Council does not inform the public of the service levels they can expect to receive, staff do not have clear performance standards to work to, and there is therefore no consistent monitoring against customer service standards. For example, the CCC does is unable to tell the public a target time for removing graffiti or fly-tipping. The impact is that service levels are unclear, councillors and the public are unsure of what they should expect, and performance is variable and not properly managed.
- 43 The Council does not have a clear understanding of the diversity issues that it faces in delivering the service. The Council has assessed itself as being at only Level 1 on the equalities standard. The waste management service was due to carry out an equalities audit in 2004/05 but this has been deferred to 2006/07. Whilst there are a number of positive features in the delivery of the service, overall it lacks a systematic approach to diversity. For example:
- the Council has not engaged effectively with certain groups, such as residents in flats and maisonettes, on refuse and recycling issues;
 - the high proportion of people living in rented accommodation means that more information is needed on service changes, such as bank holiday collection days, to avoid refuse being put out on the wrong day; and
 - some, but not all, leaflets are available in different languages and formats.
- 44 Despite the lack of systematic approach, some aspects of the service do meet the diverse needs of local people, for example:
- the recycling service is available to almost all residents, including those who live in flats;
 - the civic amenity sites are open every day except Christmas day;
 - detailed individual arrangements are made to assist residents who are unable to put out their refuse or recycling sacks, and assistance is also provided at the civic amenity sites;
 - the website provides information in a variety of formats including a listening option, a telephone interpreting service, automatic translations and a text-only version; and
 - the websites also provides specific information for people according to the type of property that they inhabit, such as flats.

Service outcomes for users and the community

Waste and recycling

- 45** The Council provides a basic but reliable domestic refuse collection service. For most households, the refuse, recycling and garden waste are collected on the same day which is helpful to residents. The crews are experienced and the number of missed collections is relatively low at around 22 per 100,000 collections. Crews record any sacks not collected, eg refuse sacks rejected for containing garden waste, but they do not put stickers on refuse sacks to inform the residents. Also, although the contractor reports this information to the Council, it is not passed to the CCC which deals with most calls from residents complaining about a missed collection. Consequently, a member of the public phoning to report a missed collection would not be given the relevant information. This is frustrating for both the public and staff involved.
- 46** There are a number of disadvantages as well as advantages with a refuse sack collection system and the Council has not managed the system adequately until recently. In particular, sacks put out on the wrong day or rejected by the collection crews tend to remain in the street for some days. Also, sacks are sometimes split open by foxes and rubbish is scattered on the street. The Council has expanded a local initiative (Rubbish Watch) to the whole borough and is now actively managing the situation. However, problems of litter and dumped sacks remain (albeit at a lower level).
- 47** The Council's overall performance on waste minimisation, recycling and composting is inadequate, particularly in view of the high corporate priority attached to the service.
- 48** Levels of waste collected are above average, indicating that waste minimisation efforts are not adequate, despite this being a specific priority in the service's 2005 to 2008 Delivery Plan. Few actions are being taken to minimise waste and there are no significant partnerships with voluntary groups or community businesses which are often effective at diverting items from the waste stream. There is no control on the amounts of refuse that can be put out for collection or taken to the civic amenity sites by residents. The Council provides information on waste minimisation and reuse schemes, such as the 'real' nappy campaign, and the website contains more detailed information. However, information is not kept up-to-date. For example, the telephone numbers of the local furniture recycling schemes are invalid.

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- 49 The Council's recent performance on recycling and composting is inadequate and all remaining waste is sent to landfill, with minimal recovery of energy from waste. Although the recycling performance was relatively good in earlier years, it has improved little and has declined relative to other councils (See Appendix 1). In 2005/06 the Council recycled 13 per cent and composted 8 per cent (21 per cent combined) which was short of its own 22 per cent target and far below the statutory recycling and composting standard of 27 per cent. This is due to inadequate recycling arrangements and poor promotion resulting in low rates of public participation (under 50 per cent). Specific weaknesses include:
- a limited range of materials is collected at the kerbside (prior to June 2006);
 - limited recycling facilities (wood and heavy plastics have recently been added) at the civic amenity sites which are small and become congested at busy times;
 - only half the number of mini recycling banks recommended for a population of its size; and
 - confusing and poorly-promoted arrangements.
- 50 The Council has promoted home composting by sales of subsidised compost bins and by introduction of a chargeable green waste collection service. The 2004 waste audit found that approximately 10 per cent of household waste was garden waste. The Council believes that little garden waste is now collected in the black refuse sacks but it has not carried out a follow-up survey to verify this. There are no arrangements for collecting or composting other putrescible waste (fruit and vegetable peelings and cooked food waste) which comprises some 33 per cent of residual household waste and this goes to landfill. This biodegradable waste is environmentally harmful and the Council will have to reduce it considerably to meet its LATS limits.

Street cleaning

- 51 Street cleaning in most parts of the borough is carried out effectively. The seafront area is swept particularly well and clearing up after large public events, such as the Southend Air Show and carnival, is swift and efficient. Litter bins and dog waste bins are well provided and emptied daily or more frequently if necessary. The physical improvements made to areas such Hamlet Court Road have helped to engender a greater public respect for these areas and reduced environmental problems. The Council has won four Blue Flag awards for the quality of its beaches, including cleanliness. This enhances Southend's image as a holiday resort and visitor attraction.

- 52 Cleaning and litter prevention measures are not sufficiently effective in Southend town centre, including the High Street. Despite continuous daily cleaning from 8.00am to 8.00pm, unacceptable levels of litter are visible in parts of the town during the day. The Council has identified this as a specific objective and has increased resources to improve the situation, with cleaning now extended to 8.00pm. It has also concluded agreements with six fast food outlets so that shop staff clean the area around the premises up to 6.00pm each day. However, this does not deal with the problems of litter that arises later in the evening or other sources of litter. Education and enforcement measures are inadequate and the Council has not made full use of the powers available to it. A public opinion survey in May 2006 found improved levels of satisfaction with litter, particularly in Southend town centre. There was also support for more enforcement action against littering. Overall, litter continues to detract from efforts to regenerate Southend High Street.
- 53 Graffiti has become a significant problem in Southend over the past three years and the Council has not dealt with it adequately. Graffiti is widespread in the borough and the problem is not reducing. Public and private property, including walls, bus shelters, railways bridges, electrical boxes, shop shutters and park buildings have all been defaced. The Council's website advises the property owners to remove graffiti as quickly as possible. Offensive graffiti is not widespread and the Council endeavours to remove it within 24 hours. However, 'tagging' and other forms of graffiti are not cleared, often for long periods, and there is no target time or service standard. Prevention measures to reduce graffiti are not well developed. The service participates in the Southend Multi Agency Anti social behaviour Response Team but overall liaison with other agencies, including police, youth services and probation services is insufficient. Although the number of *reported* graffiti incidents declined in 2005/06, the Council acknowledges that the problem is increasing.
- 54 The Council is not adequately using its enforcement powers with regard to street scene matters. The Rubbish Watch initiative (now broadened to the Clean Neighbourhood Team) has reduced the number of rubbish bags being put out on the streets at the wrong time. The service has also recently started to issue fixed penalty notices with some 300 being issued since February 2006. It is also taking action to prevent cars being sold illegally on the highway. However, the Council is not photographing graffiti to enable prosecution of offenders. Little enforcement action is being taken to deal with littering, fly-posters or dog fouling. Publicity campaigns to educate the public and deter littering are also limited.
- 55 The Council is dealing with abandoned vehicles effectively and these are removed quickly. The service has established a protocol with the police that allows the removal of abandoned vehicles within 24 hours. The Council is also tackling the illegal sale of cars on the highway. These actions improve the street scene.

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- 56 Weed control and grass-cutting are unsatisfactory on the A127, a key road into the town. The uncut central reservations have attracted a variety of litter. This leads to a perception that the local environment is not cared for, or valued, and as such attracts yet more litter. As a tourist resort the quality of the environment is key.
- 57 Services are not joined up. For example, refuse collection is not co-ordinated with street sweeping to ensure where possible that collections are carried out before cleaning. Frontline staff do not have integrated roles and are not providing a co-ordinated street scene service. For example, contract cleaning and parking staff are not required to report fly-tipping, graffiti or fly-posting. Development plan policies have not imposed requirements in the past for new developments or conversions to provide adequate waste storage facilities. As a consequence, many properties have inadequate bin storage.

Environmental sustainability

- 58 The Council's contribution towards aspects of environmental sustainability is mixed. Whilst there are positive outcomes it has not defined its objectives clearly and sustainability has not been consistently pursued or monitored.
- 59 The Council has delivered:
- significant reductions in energy and water consumption and carbon-dioxide emissions in council buildings, particularly at schools;
 - energy efficiency in council housing and unquantified improvements in the private housing stock; and
 - located the new college and university buildings in the town centre, close to railways stations.
- 60 However the Council has not taken action to:
- adopt a sustainable travel plan for Council staff (as the Council imposes through planning requirements on large new developers); or
 - set clear and consistent objectives for environmental sustainability, for example in new developments, and ensuring that they are pursued.
- 61 The Council is actively supporting biodiversity. It is managing effectively the SSSI that it owns, including those in neighbouring boroughs, and giving support to voluntary groups to manage other local SSSI. The 2004 Biodiversity Action Plan is being implemented and efforts focused on identified priority species, such as the dormouse and avocet. However, the coastal SSSI are in unfavourable condition due to 'coastal squeeze' and inter-agency work is not fully effective here.
- 62 The Council has taken action to protect the foreshore from the immediate effects of climate change. The foreshore has been 'recharged' with sand to protect the revetments and avoid flooding of the seafront area.

Is the service delivering value for money?

- 63** The waste service overall does not provide good value for money. Value for money is the efficient and economic use of resources to deliver effective services that deliver outcomes that address local and national priorities. The service provided is basic and it has been able to negotiate improvements to its main contract. However, outcomes are mixed, satisfaction with parts of the service is low, there is no systematic, ongoing approach to evaluating costs and performance monitoring is weak. The Audit Commission's recent use of resources assessment undertaken in late 2005 found the Council performance in respect of value for money was only at minimum requirements.
- 64** Public satisfaction levels are mixed with some key indicators below average for important elements of the service. The most recent comparable satisfaction data (2003/04) showed residents' satisfaction for recycling facilities and civic amenity sites was in the best quartiles for comparable waste authorities. However, satisfaction with waste collection was below average and satisfaction with standards of street cleanliness was worst quartile.
- 65** Expenditure by the Council on environmental services appears to be above average when compared to other similar councils. Expenditure per head on waste disposal is close to top quartile (high) whilst expenditure on waste collection is low.
- 66** The service has no systematic approach to defining, evaluating or monitoring value for money. Decisions and initiatives are not routinely assessed against the short, medium and long-term cost implications and interests of the service users. Initiatives, such as Rubbish Watch, are not being assessed to identify outcome and the costs involved. There is no systematic evaluation of information circulated by the service to ensure it is understood by users and achieves the required outcome. Without evaluation and monitoring the service cannot be sure that resources are being used efficiently and directed to where they make the most impact.
- 67** Effective procurement is not established corporately. In 2004 an Audit Commission inspection rated the Council's procure as 'poor' with uncertain prospects for improvement. The Council now has a draft procurement strategy which seeks to address some of the weakness identified but overall procurement remains weak and unco-ordinated. Achieving value for money is dependant on individual department negotiation skills and other issues, such as promoting diversity or 'green' procurement, are not proactively considered in the procurement process.

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- 68 The street scene service is not integrated to maximise use of resources. Whilst individual elements of the service are seeking to control their costs, overall effectiveness and outcomes are not being maximised. Frontline staff do not have integrated roles and are not providing a co-ordinated street scene service. For example, contract cleaning and parking staff are not required to report fly-tipping, graffiti or fly-posting. New bus shelters have been installed by the Council but resources have not been organised to promptly remove and deter graffiti. And suggestions that road sweeping and refuse collection should be co-ordinated are resisted. This leads to delays in identifying problems, such as fly-tipping, and inefficiencies.
- 69 The service does not have robust systems for comparing costs with other service providers or assessing value for money. It has only limited comparative cost information and does not undertake regular benchmarking or comparisons with best-in-class performers. While performance information and budgetary information are both reported regularly, there is little evidence that they are routinely considered together, using comparative data on costs and service performance, which might enable officers and councillors to form a clear view on what represents value for money.
- 70 Learning from others is not being used to improve performance or value for money. The service is doing little to seek out the best performers nationally in order to learn and improve. Comparison and learning has been largely limited to Essex or unitary councils who are not necessarily the best performers.
- 71 However, the Council has made good use of the private sector to deliver waste management services at a reasonable cost. The costs of refuse collection have been consistently low (best quartile) and waste disposal costs, prior to 2005/06, were also low. Although the integrated waste contract is based on a detailed specification and not partnership principles, it has proved sufficiently flexible to enable the Council and contractor to vary its terms to meet changing circumstances, such as the introduction of the weekly recycling collection.
- 72 Street cleaning has been competitively tendered, as part of the integrated waste contract, and improved terms were achieved by the Council in the recent contract extension. The Council does not have comparative costs.
- 73 The Council has applied appropriate service charges for optional elements of the service, such as the green waste collection service. This keeps down council tax costs and provides an incentive to minimise garden waste and to compost waste at home.
- 74 Efficiencies have been made in some areas through joint working with other Council services. The public toilets have been upgraded using revenue savings and capital funding from working in conjunction with other services, notably transport. The physical improvements made to areas such as Hamlet Court Road have helped to engender a greater public respect for these areas and reduced environmental problems.

What are the prospects for improvement to the service?

What is the service track record in delivering improvement?

- 75 The waste management and street cleaning service has a mixed record of improvement, despite its high corporate priority. Some elements of the service have improved but others have not or performance has slipped relative to other unitary councils. The trends in the Council's performance indicators for the waste management service are shown in Appendix 1. Taken with other information, these show the following.
- Recycling and composting has improved by only 2 per cent over the past three years. The recycling and composting participation rate by the householders has not increased. Performance relative to other councils has declined.
 - The amount of waste collected has fluctuated although remaining above average; unaudited figures for 2005/06 show an improved performance.
 - Street cleanliness standards have fluctuated (although remaining better than average). Changes have been made to the cleaning contract reflect changing circumstances but the problem of litter in Southend town centre is not fully resolved.
 - Incidents of fly-tipping and refuse sacks being put out on the wrong day have diminished due the Rubbish Watch initiative (now Clean Neighbourhood Team). Densely populated streets, such as Tylers Avenue and Grosvenor Road, are now cleaner as a result.
 - Graffiti has become worse while the number of cases removed by the Council declined in 2005/06.
 - Abandoned vehicles are now dealt with promptly and are much less of a public nuisance.
 - Access to the service has improved due to the CCC (early 2005) and an improved Council website (early 2006).
 - Communications with the public and the media have not improved, despite identification of this weakness in 2004 Waste Strategy.
- 76 The Council has achieved improved value for money in its integrated waste management contract. It achieved annual savings of £200,000 in street cleaning and public toilet cleaning. Additionally, it has secured a contract with a local waste-sorting plant that considerably expands the range of recycled materials that can be accepted, from June 2006. However, the Council has not sought to use recent contract negotiations or meetings with contractors to promote wider corporate objectives, such as diversity, or to achieve a more integrated street scene service.

How well does the service manage performance?

- 77 The Council's plans and performance management system are not sufficiently comprehensive or embedded to fully address the weaknesses identified. Good progress has been made recently with developing long-term waste management options and contracts, with Essex partners and alone, if necessary; but considerable uncertainty remains. The Council has recognised the need to improve other aspects of the service and to strengthen service capacity, but plans are at early stages.

Improvement planning

- 78 The Council does not have a clear future strategy for the waste management service. The Community Strategy acknowledges the priority but sets only broad objectives. The Community Strategy Action Plan 2005/06 includes the aims of meeting government medium-term and long-term recycling targets and reducing waste to landfill. However, the Council simultaneously abandoned attempts to meet the 2005/06 recycling target. (It now plans to meet it by 2007/08.) The 2004 Waste Strategy sets out the future challenges and some broad options. It also identifies the need for local treatment and transfer sites. However, the 2004 strategy is largely descriptive and does not set out a clear plan of what the service will do or how. The Council has subsequently developed its waste strategy and has investigated options to join the Essex waste partnership PFI or to develop its own local facilities, such as an 'autoclave'.
- 79 The Council is now facing multiple and complex waste management issues and it has very limited time and resources to resolve them. This is recognised by the Council in its corporate risk register. By September 2006, decisions must be made about whether to support the Essex Public Finance Initiative (PFI) bid or whether the Council will pursue its own waste management strategy. At the same time, the Council needs to decide the outline specification for the replacement waste and cleaning contract, which expires in 2008. There is considerable uncertainty about the technical and financial feasibility of the options. Whilst this is not of the Council's making, it clearly has implications for its ability to expedite the processes effectively. In addition, the options are likely to have considerable impact on the public, who have not been consulted since the War on Waste consultation of 2002. The Council is running focus groups to test the likely acceptability of options. It also intends to consult residents more regularly in future, using mechanisms such as the Council's consultation panel.

- 80 The Council has identified alternative options if the Essex PFI bid does not proceed. The Cabinet resolved recently to reopen the debate about the possible use of waste from energy. It is considering a joint approach with Rochford to replacing its waste collection service. It has also planned improvements to the civic amenity sites and planning permission has been granted for two sites for a waste transfer station and depot, should they be required in the future. The Council also recognises that a short-term interim waste collection and disposal contract may be required while a longer-term solution is found. The Council has established a Waste Project Board, comprising the leader, key portfolio holders and senior officers. The Council has a good awareness of the challenges it faces but a number of difficult questions and decisions remain. Consequently, no approved, costed plan has been adopted.
- 81 Plans and actions to address some known, more immediate weaknesses are absent. For example there is no inter-agency plan or targets to resolve the graffiti problem and plans to provide a more integrated street-scene service are lacking. The service plan contains insufficient detail of actions to deliver targets and improvement and means of monitoring of them.

Arrangements and culture to support improvement

- 82 Communication is a key weakness and actions to address this are at early stages. The service spends considerably less on recycling promotion than is recommended or necessary to achieve its corporate critical priority. The budget has been increased for 2006/07 and some actions are planned. However, a proper marketing and communication plan is lacking. Within the service this is an important issue to ensure that new initiatives are effective. At present much of the information provided to the public is unco-ordinated and out of date, for example the revised pink sack scheme. Communication is largely 'one way' and the service is not seeking feedback from the public to ensure that its communication is effective. At a corporate level the Council's communication and consultation strategy is currently being updated. A consultation panel was set up in 2005 and a corporate communication group was established but there are no clear outcomes to date. The Council is planning to relaunch its corporate newsletter, unpublished so far in 2006, later in the year. Effective communication within the Council and externally are essential if initiatives undertaken by the service, such as the revised pink sack scheme, are to deliver the improvements sought.

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- 83 Performance management is not yet embedded or used effectively to drive improvement. Systems are being put in place and data is now being collected and reported to the corporate management team, the Cabinet and newly established Performance Task Force. The Task Force includes officers and councillors and has sought to raise the importance of performance management. It calls in officers to explain areas of poor performance with corrective action reports being monitored monthly. Performance management is now starting to focus on the seven critical priorities but to date the system still relies on individual departments to collect accurate information. Departments are also still carrying out their own forecasts in respect of whether they will meet their targets - and these targets are the Council's own targets rather than the national targets. In the case of recycling the Council target was below the national target. Within the Technical and Environmental Services there are regular management team meetings focussing on key issues with progress checking and recording. The performance of the main contractor is monitored closely. However, provision of performance data is not always timely and a performance management culture is not yet embedded in all parts of the service.
- 84 Working practices to support continuous improvement are not always effective. The service operates an externally accredited quality assurance system. However, there are inconsistencies between how the contractor and the Council work and liaise on waste and recycling matters. There is inadequate information available to monitor this properly or to manage performance. The result is confusion for the public, less recycling and litter from refuse.
- 85 Other Council policies to support the service are not in place. Existing planning policies contain little reference to waste storage provision and no mention of the need to provide provision for more than one waste stream. As a consequence, adequate household waste storage in new developments or flat conversions has not been provided. This has meant that rubbish sacks are often left in the front gardens or the street. The emerging local development framework is seeking to address this in the future.
- 86 Scrutiny is not being used effectively to drive performance improvement. There are relatively few matters called in or challenged. For example the decision by the service to set a target lower than the government target for recycling was not questioned and policy does not appear to be routinely scrutinised before being considered by the Cabinet. An exception is where the former Environmental Scrutiny Committee undertook an examination in 2004 of litter and graffiti. One of the outcomes was the extension of the Rubbish Watch across the borough, funded by an additional £50,000. A special Scrutiny Committee was also held recently to consider the long-term waste strategy. Effective scrutiny involving the constructive challenge of policies and performance is an important function to ensure improvement and effective use of resources.
- 87 Corporate procurement is improving but remains underdeveloped. The Council is working in partnership with, and utilising the in-house and consultant procurement resources of, Essex County Council. A procurement team has been established and a permanent head has been appointed.

- 88 The councillors have shown leadership in respect of the service, although objectives for recycling and environmental sustainability have been unclear. In 2005 waste disposal and collection was identified as a critical priority and it remains so in 2006/07. In a period of severe financial cut backs across the Council the service's budget has been cut less than others and the potentially controversial option of waste to energy (including incineration) reopened. The leader is playing a prominent role in waste management strategy issues. A new portfolio of Cleaner, Safer Southend-on-Sea was created in 2005 to provide greater political leadership of the service. In terms of leadership from officers, this has increased with the appointment of the new chief executive. Service managers are technically competent but there is a lack of leadership in respect of non-technical issues, such as communication, diversity and public engagement.
- 89 The Council has recognised the need for improved performance management and taken some steps to improve. Managers within the service and the Portfolio Holder for Safer, Cleaner Southend have completed the pilot ODPM capacity building programme module for performance management. The Portfolio Holder has introduced enhanced performance reporting arrangements for street scene. A new performance management reporting system (Covalent) is also being installed. These are not yet embedded but are likely to have positive outcomes.
- 90 The approach to learning from others is limited. Within the service there is limited information or awareness of which council's are good at aspects of the service. There is no formal benchmarking against the best performers nationally and comparison is limited to an examination of BVPIs with little effort to gain a more thorough understanding of why performance is better in other councils. Learning from the best performers or those that have improved significantly can be a valuable in helping the service improve.
- 91 Plans to addresses the wider environmental agenda are limited or still at early stage. A biodiversity working party has been established and a sustainability portfolio created. The Council's energy policy 2005 is unlikely to deliver significant environmental benefits. It contains little detail, is unambitious and internally focused with no targets, milestones, action plans or resources. There is little proactive promotion by the Council or service of the need to minimise waste, or reduce energy usage. Whilst the Council has recently increased the amount of energy it obtains from renewable resources it has done little promote this to others and lead by example. Other parts of the service, particularly planning have helped secure sustainable developments but proactive initiatives with waste and street cleaning are limited.

Does the service have the capacity to improve?

- 92 The Council's overall financial capacity is weak. It has already made significant budget cuts and further cuts of approximately £5 million will be necessary in 2007/08. Although the waste management service has not been affected, cuts in the street cleaning budget were required in 2005/06 (although services were not reduced due to negotiated efficiency savings). Because of the low level of recycling, the Council projects that it will face a shortfall in its LATS allowance in 2008/09 and will have to pay LATS penalties of approximately £1.8 million from 2009/10 onwards.
- 93 The Council lacks financial capacity to improve the condition of local SSSI and has not engaged environmental partners adequately in planning matters regarding possible shoreline development. There have been cutbacks in the parks service and proposals for recreational development of the seafront would damage the SSSI.
- 94 The service has the technical skills to deliver an adequate service but lacks resources and skills to improve some areas of weakness. The service has limited expertise in communication and consultation and what has been done in the past has been ad hoc and unco-ordinated. The corporate communication capacity is already stretched and unable to provide much support to the service. Communication remains largely reactive rather than proactive to support initiatives. For example, no robust press release was issued to counter the adverse articles in the local press that coincided with the introduction of the extended recycling pink sack scheme. As a consequence many of the public reported that they believed that material for recycling was in fact put into landfill so questioned why they are asked to separate waste in the first place thus negating the new initiative to increase recycling. Whilst the Council has recently set up a corporate communication and consultation group and is revising the communications and consultation strategy, these have yet to impact on the service.
- 95 Effective cross-departmental working is not being used to enhance capacity. The Council has staff from many departments working across the borough. However, there are no arrangements to ensure staff, such as parking wardens, planning or building control officers, report litter, graffiti or flying-tipping in order that it may be dealt with promptly. Use of staff from other departments would increase the service's ability to detect and resolve issues.
- 96 Existing capacity is not being used effectively. The CCC has capacity to handle additional waste inquiries but currently transfers a high proportion (about one third) to the service department. The waste contractor is not part of the CRM system and information from the contractor is not available to the CCC. As a result information is not being shared and the public will not receive consistent or timely information. Within the service, six staff are employed to check on the contractors carrying out street cleaning and waste collection.

- 97 There is no effective workforce plan in place. Corporate human resource capacity has been largely focussed on achieving single status. Whilst the service has a post that deals with human resource issues this post has been vacant. As a consequence there is no plan identifying the future challenges, the skills that will be required and those that are available. This means the service will be reactive rather than proactive in ensuring it has the right skills available when it needs them. Recruitment and retention is also an issue. In addition, a number of senior managers within the service are approaching retirement and there is no clear succession plan in place which is leading to uncertainty within the service. The Chief Executive is developing proposals for restructuring the Council, which are at an early stage.
- 98 The Council has not used procurement to consistently further its wider policy objectives. The procurement strategy requires compliance with legislation but there is no clear means to monitor and inform service improvement. It is reliant on individual negotiation. Procurement decisions are based on achieving the most economically advantageous tender (not only price) but procurement strategy does not include any reference to sustainability. There are no contract conditions or performance indicators about being an environmentally aware town or being supporting town. As such, opportunities to achieve greater sustainability and diversity are not being taken.
- 99 However there are some positive capacity features that will help the service in the future.
- 100 Partnership working is adding capacity. For example participation in the Essex waste partnership has added capacity, expertise and shared risk. There is also some joint working with external bodies. For example there is an effective protocol with the police that results in abandoned vehicles being moved quickly. The Clean Neighbourhood Team has a remit to develop better cross-departmental and inter-agency working on street scene issues, including liaison with the Crime and Disorder Partnership. The service is also proposing to issue graffiti removal kits to local residents groups to enable them to remove graffiti from their area. The Council has also demonstrated some innovative ways to attract investment and reduce ongoing costs, such as in the redevelopment of Bryant Avenue shelter and public toilet and a private restaurant and public toilet.
- 101 The service is using consultants effectively to provide specialist skills. A consultant is currently employed part-time to advise the service on the proposed PFI contract. Such use of consultants to provide specific expertise enhances the capacity of the service and enables it to have access to advice that it would otherwise lack.
- 102 Some external funding is being attracted to support local initiatives. Adventure Island has provided £30,000 to fund an additional graffiti team. An audit of recycling was undertaken by ROTATE, a recycling advisory service, in March 2006 to assist the service in obtaining possible government funding. However, to date the Council has not taken advantage of the considerable government waste minimisation grants available to local authorities.

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- 103** The capacity for recycling is also being increased, with an additional £200,000 in 2006/07. A new contract enables additional materials to be recycled. From June 2006 a local firm will sort and recycle the materials contained in the pink sacks. This considerably increases the range of materials that can be recycled and makes it easier for residents to recycle. All paper (including shredded paper which was previously excluded), card, cans, foil, plastics and clean textiles can now be placed in the pink recycling sacks. For the convenience of residents, even tetra-packs will be accepted, although they cannot be recycled. The number of mini recycling centres is being increased from 20 to 31, although this is by less than the number recommended by the Council's consultant. This should increase the amount of waste recycled and reduce the number of pink sacks rejected by collection crews and left on the street.
- 104** The Council is strengthening its approach to environmental sustainability. It has recently restructured to create a Design and Resource Performance team to address issues such as resource efficiency more effectively.

Appendix 1 - Waste management and street cleaning performance indicators 2002/03 to 2005/06

Indicator	2002/03		2003/04			2004/05			Target 2005/6	Result (unaudited)	Target met?	Improved on 04/05?
	Result	Quartile	Result	Quartile	vs CPA Threshold	Result	Quartile	vs CPA Threshold				
BVPI 82a & b Percentage of household waste recycled or composted	18%	Highest	20%	Highest	n/a	21%	3rd	Upper	22%	21%	no	yes
BVPI 91 Percentage of population served by a kerbside collection of recyclables	99%	Best	99%	3rd	n/a	99%	3rd	Middle	99%	99%	yes	no
BVPI 90b Resident satisfaction with recycling facilities	69% (2000/01)	3rd	78%	Highest	Upper	Next survey 2006/07			80% (2006/07)	n/a	n/a	n/a
BVPI 84 Kg of waste collected per head	559	Worst	522	3rd	n/a	535	3rd	Middle	<3%	515	yes	yes
BVPI 86 Cost of waste collection per household	£21	Lowest	£27	Lowest	n/a	£32.00	n/a	n/a	(not above inflation)	£33	?	?
BVPI 87 Cost of waste disposal per tonne municipal waste	£39	3rd	£38	2nd	n/a	£39.00	n/a	n/a	£53.00	£52	?	?
BVPI 90a Resident satisfaction with waste collection	83% (2000/01)	3rd	82%	3rd	Middle	Next survey 2006/07			85% (2006/07)	n/a	n/a	n/a
BVPI 90c Resident satisfaction with civic amenity sites	69% (2000/01)	3rd	82%	Best	Middle	Next survey 2006/07			85% (2006/07)	n/a	n/a	n/a
BVPI 199 Percentage of land significantly littered	Not Collected		11%	Best	n/a	16%	2nd	n/a	<12%	12%	no	Yes
BVPI 199b Percentage graffiti						(new PI)			2%	4%	no	n/a
BVPI 199b Percentage fly-posting						(new PI)			2%	1%	yes	n/a
BVPI 89 Resident satisfaction with standards of cleanliness	68% (2000/01)	3rd	54%	Lowest	Middle	Next survey 2006/07			65% (2006/07)	n/a	n/a	n/a
BVPI 63 Average SAP rating of LA dwellings	64%	Best	68%	Best	n/a	75%	Best	Upper	71%	75%	yes	yes

NB: CPA threshold new for 2004/05. The satisfaction PIs 2003/04 with CPA ratings were decided in 2004/05