

15. CITY CLEANING - "LETS PICK IT UP"

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The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the current city cleaning contract and to recommend an overall better strategy for the city.

INTRODUCTION

This report is in two parts - firstly there is a summary on city cleaning which focuses on the responsibilities of the Transport and City Streets Unit. Secondly there is a proposal to adopt an overall strategy for the city and thereby take a big picture approach.

CITY CLEANING - SUMMARY OF TRANSPORT AND CITY STREETS UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Background

Cleaning the streets, including inner city amenity areas, is the responsibility of the Transport and City Streets Unit.

There are two issues relating to the city cleaning. One is the level of service the Council 'purchases', and the other is the delivery, and that includes the management of the contractor and the performance of the contractor.

Three years ago (in 2001) a contract was awarded to Metallic Sweeping for the cleaning of the city. The contract was for a period of three years with two one-year extensions possible making a maximum five year term. As a high proportion of the work is subsidised by Transfund the term cannot be longer than five years. In November last year the Council approved a one-year extension to the contract to the end of July 2005.

2. Levels Of Service

The levels of service for street cleaning were set in 2001 when the contract was let. The City Streets Asset Management Plan was reviewed last year and was approved by the Council in December 2003. In approving it the Council made the following resolution:

"That the City Streets Asset Management Plan be adopted subject to new levels of service for street cleaning (especially for central city and suburban shopping areas) being established by the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee early next year."

On 2 March 2004 a seminar was held with the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee to discuss cleaning levels of service. From that seminar a report was written and presented to the Council's LTCCP approval meeting.

The Annual Plan Subcommittee had several debates over additional funding for street cleaning before agreeing on \$200,000 pa. There was uniform agreement that the level of service should increase but there was a reluctance to spend too much more.

3. Contractor Performance

Detailed audits of the contractor's performance are undertaken with a points scoring system used. Audits are carried out jointly between the Contractor and City Streets staff. A full audit report is produced each month.

The contract was extended by one year to allow time for the levels of service to be reviewed and, consequently, time to review the contract structure, the documents and to retender. It is a large complex contract and a long tender period is necessary.

4. Summary

It is important to separate the performance of the contractor from the level of service the Council is providing. The contractor sometimes gets the 'blame' for what is essentially a level of service issue. The Council recently reviewed the levels of service and only changed the litter bin emptying level of service.

The amount of litter is increasing and cleaning up after it is dropped is only one strategy. The litter strategy described below looks at all aspects of litter.

“LETS PICK IT UP” - A STRATEGY FOR LITTER IN CHRISTCHURCH

Litter¹ is a recurrent issue for the city. It attracts significant public interest because it is closely connected with a citizens' perception of their city. The Christchurch City Council has a role to play in ensuring that litter is dealt with in a manner consistent with how our citizens want their city - safe and liveable with a clean environment.²

The preparation of this strategy is a response to a number of individual initiatives, or ideas, from the Mayor, Councillors and staff members. While having their own individual merit, these initiatives tended to show a scattergun approach which was unlikely to achieve long term change.

This document outlines how the Council as a single organisation can respond to the issue. It suggests the following as a goal to aspire to.

“Christchurch is New Zealand’s cleanest city, with citizens who are responsible for their own litter and do not tolerate others littering.”

1 The Current Litter Situation

Although there is no empirical evidence available, Christchurch's image outside the city is not usually connected with a litter problem. The residents of the city itself generally rate their satisfaction with the way the city looks very highly.³

The Council puts an enormous effort into litter. Almost every unit (see Attachment I) has some involvement in litter, from stopping it happening through to dealing with the problem.

Some specific initiatives the Council undertakes are:

- Some \$2 million dollars is spent annually on road sweeping, litter collection, litter bin emptying and maintenance and special event cleaning.
- A total of \$1.6 million on the removal of litter from waterways and riverbanks, bin emptying, sump clearing and litter disposal. Publicity and education programmes are included in this cost.
- Sixty-six city streets have regular (either once or twice per week) roadside litter removal, while the central city has recently increased its level of service contract agreements. Each litter bin is now to be emptied every hour.

For all of this effort and expenditure and the recurrence of litter as a political issue suggests that we are not currently meeting expectations with regard to litter.

2 How Can We Reach This Goal?

The issue may be easy to identify - rubbish blowing down a street is a vivid image - but the fact that so many Council units have an active involvement in the litter issue is clear evidence that it is complex and multifaceted. This suggests there is no single solution to the issue, but a multi-layered approach is required:

- (a) Strategy 1 - Better define and measure the issue

We can only say we have reached our goal when we can prove it. At present that is not possible.

¹ According to the 1979 Act 'Litter' includes any refuse, rubbish, animal remains, glass, metal, garbage, debris, dirt, filth, rubble, ballast, stones, earth or waste matter, or any other thing of a like nature. A more 'user-friendly' way to think about litter is rubbish or material not properly disposed of and lying about in the streets or public places.

² Draft community outcomes, LTCCP 2004

³ Annual residents survey, 2003

We have various sources that inform us about the litter issue - Keep Christchurch Beautiful's litter count project, tonnage data from our rubbish collection, how much money we spend on cleaning litter, anecdotal evidence from our citizens. None of these measures of themselves gives us reliable citywide information about how clean we are and what our citizens think about litter.

Recommendations:

1. Develop robust indicators for assessing city cleanliness that can be gauged on an annual basis.
2. Undertake a research project that establishes citizen's views of litter and their role in addressing it, establishing benchmarks that can be regularly measured against.

(b) Strategy 2 - Attack the problem at the source

This has two components; creating a sense of responsibility for litter amongst our citizens, and providing some tools and assistance for people to deal with litter at its source.

Recommendations:

1. Review all education and promotion campaigns linked with litter using the data from the research project conducted above.
2. Develop and implement an integrated (across the Council) public education campaign around litter, with an emphasis on personal responsibility. This could include the use of different approaches such as social marketing techniques used successfully in the United States.
3. Use existing Council relationships, or other mechanisms, to help problem areas address litter generation (eg food businesses, education providers, bars, convenience stores).
4. Review and reinforce our support of community groups who play a role in addressing litter.

(c) Strategy 3 - Deal with the results aggressively

Dealing with litter before it enters the waste stream is the most powerful approach to achieving the goal, but the Council also needs to aggressively deal with, and be seen to deal with, litter and litterers.

Recommendations:

1. Send a message of zero tolerance - get parking wardens and other enforcement staff to use the Council's statutory powers to fine litterers, backed with a communication campaign.
2. Trial an area with an education and zero tolerance campaign (could be an area around a shopping mall, or a central city area).
3. Review our agreed service levels for collecting litter against those used in other major metropolitan areas and tighten if we need to.
4. Combine street and greenspace litter collection and cleaning contracts for particular areas, so that one contractor is responsible for litter collection in that location.
5. Ensure that every Council unit actively involved in addressing litter has key performance indicators that are tied to the litter goal.

3. Implementation

The purpose of developing this strategy is to ensure that there is an overall framework for the prioritisation and linkages between initiatives that will further the achievement of the goal that Christchurch is "New Zealand's cleanest city, with citizens who are responsible for their own litter and do not tolerate others littering".

This is a long-term strategy, and achievement of the goal will involve a journey. It requires behavioural changes, and thus reduce the need to spend considerable time and money clearing up the litter that is produced.

The Executive Team has now appointed the General Manager City Environment, supported by the General Manager Public Affairs, as the owners of the implementation of this strategy, and they will ensure that its implementation is coordinated across the organisation. They will convene a working group of staff from the most directly involved Council units.

First priorities for new work, to be funded from diverting some of the money spent cleaning up litter, will be to undertake the research, and develop the indicators, set out in strategy 1 "Better define and measure the issue". That does not necessarily preclude other actions from starting which can clearly be demonstrated as achieving the goal of this strategy.

Staff

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Committee notes that the City Cleaning Contract expires at the end of July 2005.
 2. That the Committee recommends to the Council that they enthusiastically endorse the goal that Christchurch is "New Zealand's cleanest city, with citizens who are responsible for their own litter and do not tolerate others littering".
 3. The Committee requests regular reports from the General Manager City Environment on the progress of the three litter strategies namely:
 - Better definition and measurement of the issue,
 - Attacking the problem at the source,
 - Dealing with the results aggressively.

Chairman's

- Recommendation:**
1. That the above recommendation be adopted.
 2. That in respect to strategy two, a report be provided to the Committee by September 2004 on:
 - (a) What regulatory methods might be able to be implemented to require fast food outlets to collect and remove litter, originating from their premises, which is deposited in areas surrounding those premises.
 - (b) Whether the Council could impose fines, similar to parking infringements, on individuals who deposit litter in the city.