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**SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE
2 MARCH 2004**

**A seminar meeting of the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee
was held on Tuesday 2 March 2004 at 12 noon**

PRESENT: Councillor Denis O'Rourke (Chairman),
Councillors Sally Buck, Graham Condon, Carole Evans, Chrissie
Williams and Ron Wright.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received and accepted from
Councillors Megan Evans and Ingrid Stonhill.

The Committee reports that:

PART A - MATTERS REQUIRING A COUNCIL DECISION

1. STREET CLEANING LEVELS OF SERVICE

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The purpose of this report is to advise the Council of the consensus reached at the seminar meeting of the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee held on Tuesday 3 March 2004 to discuss street cleaning levels of service.

As requested at the Committee's Annual Plan meetings, held between 2-4 February 2004, the seminar reviewed the existing levels of service with a view to establishing new levels of service for street cleaning, especially for the central city and suburban shopping centres.

It was noted that the Annual Plan Subcommittee had approved, at that stage, the provision of an additional \$200,000 per annum for increasing the levels of service for street cleaning. The seminar considered how this extra funding should be used and also identified other increased levels of service that it considered should be funded.

LITTER BIN EMPTYING

The seminar agreed that the additional \$200,000 of funding per annum would be best used for increasing the level of service for litter bin emptying in the central city. This was seen as the highest priority.

The current level of service is that litter bins are emptied three times a day generally at the following times, 10-11.30am, 1.30-2.30pm, and at midnight. This frequency has been developed to ensure that, generally, nine out of 10 bins are not overflowing at any time. Problems can occur between 9pm and midnight on Thursday to Sunday nights with this level of service.

The proposed level of service is as follows:

- Goal is - overflowing bins in the central city are unacceptable,
- Nine out of 10 bins in any area shall not be overflowing at any time,
- No overflowing bin shall be left for more than one hour,
- Continuous monitoring of bins and bins emptied on request/demand.

The continuous monitoring will be for 24 hours a day so the current night problems will be solved. Emptying the bin includes picking up litter in a five metre radius around the bin.

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OTHER LEVEL OF SERVICE INCREASES

Changes to the levels of service for other activities were also discussed and these are summarised below. It is noted that the current draft budget will not fund these increased levels of service.

Litter Patrol

This activity involves litter patrol persons walking around an area of the central city and picking up litter and other loose material. Currently they operate Monday to Friday between 8am and 4pm with selected areas only being covered on Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 4pm. The cycle time is three hours so no litter will remain for longer than three hours.

An increased level of service would rationalise the area covered and increase it to seven days a week between 8am and 4pm.

The additional cost of this would be \$40,000 per annum.

Glass Patrol

This would be a new activity and would involve a daily clean up of glass in areas of the central city not covered by the litter patrol. It would occur once a day (early morning) so glass would be there for no more than 24 hours.

The cost of this new activity would be \$60,000 per annum.

Footpath Sweeping

This activity involves the mechanical sweeping of footpaths. This removes all loose material from the paths. Currently areas are swept nightly, twice per week and once per week.

An increased level of service would rationalise the areas into nightly sweeps and once per week sweeps, with the inner city, ie generally Manchester Street to Oxford Terrace and Armagh Street to Tuam Street and Colombo Street from Moorhouse Avenue to Salisbury Street, done nightly.

The additional cost of this would be \$80,000 per annum.

Cobblestone Stain Removal

This activity involves spot cleaning to remove fresh and light stains and wet scrubbing to remove deep stains at varying frequencies.

An increased level of service would rationalise the areas to ensure high profile inner city areas such as Cathedral Square, Cashel Mall, Oxford Terrace, Colombo Street and Worcester Street are all spot cleaned daily and are scrubbed more frequently than now.

The additional cost of this would be \$80,000 per annum.

SUMMARY OF ADDITIONAL COSTS IDENTIFIED

Litter Patrol	\$40,000
Glass Patrol	\$60,000
Path Sweeping	\$80,000
Cobblestone Stain removal	\$80,000
Total	<u>\$260,000</u>

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CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

There have been increasing complaints about central city streets especially; overflowing rubbish bins mostly at weekends, broken glass on footpaths encountered by pedestrians mostly in the mornings, dirty pavements and cobbled areas mostly in the Cathedral Square and City Mall, and more litter generally on central city streets. Staff have shown the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee a graph which indicates an increase of about 20% over the last year in refuse collected from central city rubbish bins. The Council added more rubbish bins last year and there is now no shortage of bin capacity. The increase in demand needs to be met if we are to avoid overflowing rubbish bins in the central city. The Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee accordingly recommends the standard of service set out in the report. This will cost \$200,000. The Annual Plan Subcommittee has already made provision of this sum for this activity in the proposed draft budget.

The Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee sought advice from staff about the performance of the contractor for central city street cleaning. The professional advice of staff is that the contractor is meeting the requirements of the contract. Most members of the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee visited the central city between 5am and 6am on Sunday 7 March 2004 to see for themselves what the state of the streets was. Some members observed the contractor's staff carrying out sweeping and spoke to one of those staff. It was clear from that conversation that the contractor's staff actually do somewhat more than they are required to do by the contract, in order to achieve a 'good job'. A review of the contract and of the whole street cleaning function is to be carried out this year prior to retendering the contract.

Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee members noted during their early morning inspection tour, a horrifying degree of littering in the vicinity of the fast food outlets in the City Mall and Colombo Street and parts of the Oxford Terrace 'strip'. They were amazed at the degree of activity and business being done at these outlets even at that time of the day, and the resulting litter and staining of cobbled and paved areas. Photographs taken by Councillor Williams will be tabled. Committee members are of the view that in addition to greater resources for street cleaning, there should be greater accountability by the purveyors of fast food in the central city for the huge amount of litter around their premises. Council staff have been asked to prepare a report for later this year, examining the powers the Council now has for by-laws to pursue this objective. At the same time the question of penalties for littering by individuals will be reviewed with a view towards a tougher stance by the Council. But there is little confidence that enforcement against individuals will solve the problem to any acceptable degree.

The new service for sweeping of broken glass is a necessity for safety reasons as well as for aesthetic reasons. There seems to have developed a particularly nasty culture amongst some young people under which throwing glass bottles out of car windows or onto the footpath when walking the streets, had become the norm. It is clear that a lot of drinking on central city streets is still being done. Broken glass lying around on the street is a problem we should not continue to ignore. The Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee has worked with staff to identify the areas where the problem is worst, and only these are being targeted in the proposal set out in this report.

The Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee members are also dissatisfied with the rate at which central city streets are scrubbed. The most used streets are too dirty for too long. The proposal seeks to address this by increasing the street wet scrubbing and spot cleaning cycles. There is no doubt that this problem is also the result of much more food and drink being consumed on central city streets than hitherto. Again, we need to increase resources to meet this new level of demand, if we are to remain the garden city and not the dirty city.

Chairman's

Recommendation:

1. That in addition to the \$200,000 already provided in the proposed draft budget for increased emptying of litter bins, a sum of \$260,000 be provided for a new broken glass sweeping service, for additional spot cleaning and wet cleaning, for more litter patrol services, and for more footpath sweeping, as set out in this report.

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2. That a report to the Council via the Sustainable Transport and Utilities Committee be provided this year on the scope and methodology available through Council bylaws for greater accountability by fast food outlets and similar generators in respect of street litter, and on penalties in respect of individuals for littering in public spaces in the city.

The meeting concluded at 2.15pm.

CONSIDERED THIS 18TH DAY OF MARCH 2004

MAYOR