

21st October Budget Scrutiny – Public Realm

This paper has been produced by the Public Realm division in response to requests to set out the likely impact of any savings to the street cleansing and graffiti/flyposting removal service. This is in line with the Council's approach to review all areas of Council spend, in light of the ongoing government cuts to local authority funding. It is not proposed to take any savings from the street cleansing service in 2016/17, but the paper enables Members to discuss and take a view on the service in relation to future savings the Council may need to find. Members are also invited to consider whether any efficiencies are possible within the graffiti/flyposting removal service, and whether any savings should be taken from this area for 2016/17.

Changes to Street Cleansing and Graffiti/Flyposting Removal **Street Cleansing – Statutory Requirements**

The standards that residents should expect are defined from the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA90) and the DEFRA Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse, which has existed in its recent form since 2006. The Code sets out the grades against which various levels of litter can be judged and the litter grade awarded affects the reaction time in which the Council or the relevant body can respond. Where this falls below the acceptable standard set out in the Code for longer than the period specified, then there is a duty for the relevant body to clear this.

There are 4 grades:

- Grade A: No litter or refuse
- Grade B: Predominately free of litter and refuse apart from some small items
- Grade C: Widespread distribution of litter and / or refuse with minor accumulations.
- Grade D: Heavily affected by litter and / or refuse with significant accumulations.

Grade A



Grade B



Grade C



Grade D



The Code classifies the different types of land managed by duty bodies into four main zones, however in Hackney only two are relevant for the majority of the public highway; High intensity of use (busy public areas) and Medium intensity of use ('everyday' areas, including most housing areas occupied by people most of the time).

Under the Code, Hackney is expected to set cleansing schedules so that they meet the duty to keep relevant land clear of litter and refuse, and highways clean. In some

areas, these standards can be effectively maintained during daylight hours, however, in others longer hours of management are required, for example, in Shoreditch and Dalston, Hackney Central and other secondary retail or night time economy areas. If the standard in high intensity areas should fall to an unacceptable level during the evening, it should be restored to grade A by 8am. Good practice would be that grade A is achieved earlier, by the time the area begins to get busy. This applies to weekends and bank holidays as well as weekdays.

As a last resort, if acceptable standards of litter and refuse are not met, response times have been set for each of the four categories in the Code (two apply in Hackney) by which land must be returned to an acceptable standard.

The maximum response times in Hackney to restore public highway to grade A standard if it falls below grade B range from ½ day to 1 day depending on the area:

- High intensity of use - ½ day. This means by 6pm if reported before 1pm or by 1pm the next duty day if reported between 1pm and 6pm on the previous day.
- Medium intensity - 1 day. This means by 6pm the following evening

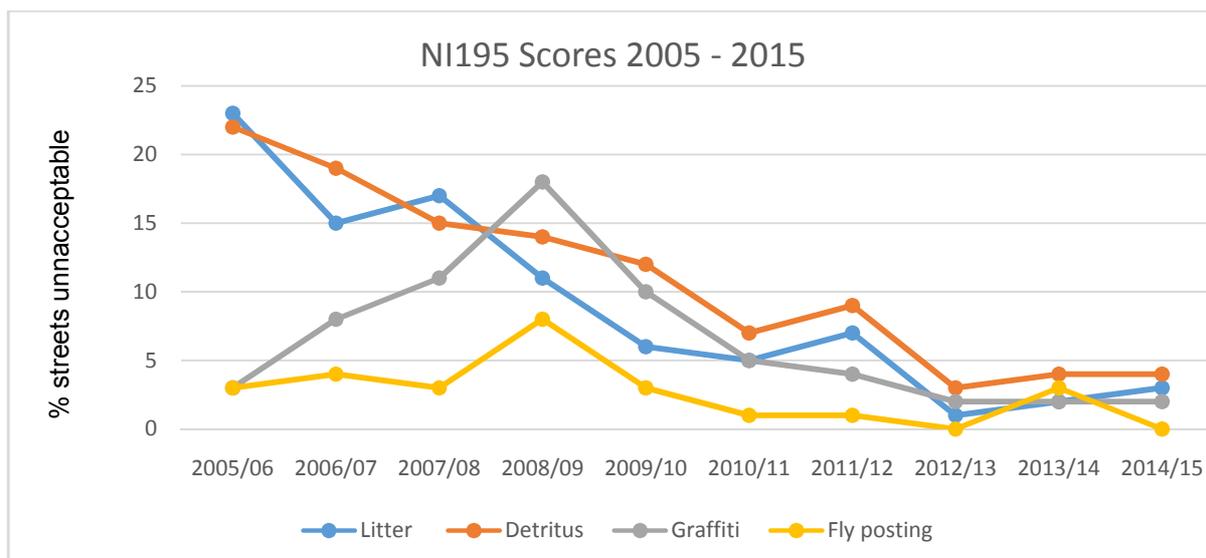
Duty bodies that allow their land to fall below acceptable standards for longer than the allowed response time may be subject to a Litter Abatement Order (section 91) or a Litter Abatement Notice (section 92) issued under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Anyone can write to the Chief Executive at a duty body giving a five day Notice of Application for a Litter Abatement Order to be issued against them, prior to going to Court.

Hackney's record on cleansing performance

Methodology based on former national performance indicators measure the percentage of streets that are at an unsatisfactory level of cleanliness when compared with the code of practice for litter and refuse. Hackney has a recent positive trend in this corporate indicator.

Hackney was part of the Capital Standards Network and then the London Network which provided independent monitoring and benchmarking for Member London boroughs. Both Networks involved close association with the Keep Britain Tidy Group (KBTG) and Hackney continued with independent monitoring via KBT until 2012/13. Since then surveys have been undertaken in house to the same process.

Graph A – NI 195 Scores 2003-2015



	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Litter	23	15	17	11	6	5	7	1	2	3
Detritus	22	19	15	14	12	7	9	3	4	4
Graffiti	3	8	11	18	10	5	4	2	2	2
Fly posting	3	4	3	8	3	1	1	0	3	0

In terms of performance against other London Boroughs, Table A below shows Hackney's position where relevant information is available.

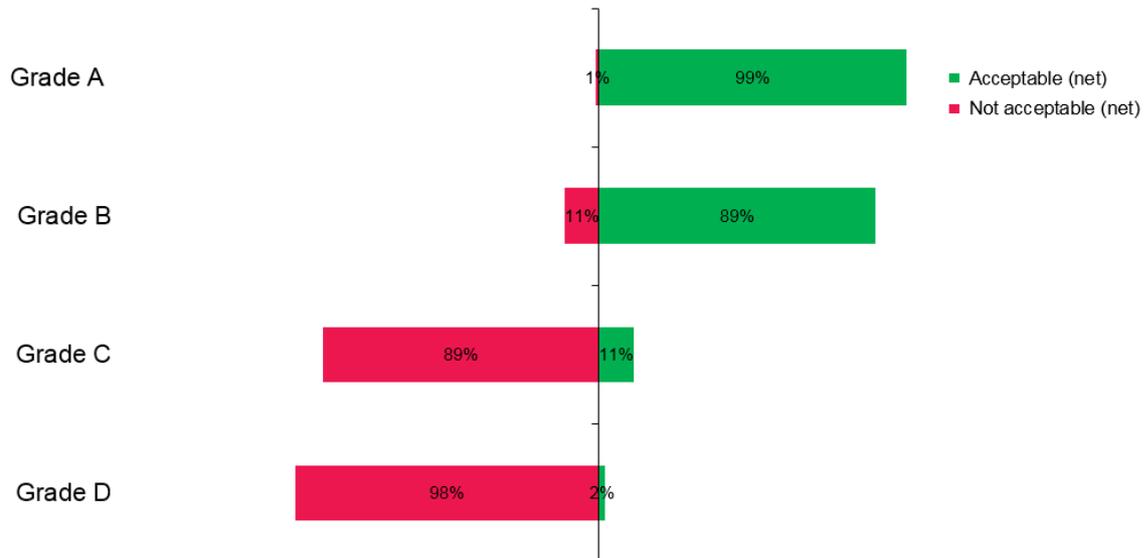
Table A - NI 195 Scores 2003-2015

Local Environmental Quality scores and Keep Britain Tidy (London Network) position								
	Litter		Detritus		Graffiti		Flyposting	
	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank
2003/04	40	26/28	48	13	25	21	16	23
2004/05	30	24/28	31	11	23	23	13	25
2005/06	23	26/28	22	6	3	2	3	16
2006/07	15	17/28	19	8	8	14	4	24
2007/08	17	26/28	15	6	11	23	3	25
2008/09	11	15/22	14	7	18	22	8	22
2009/10	6	15/22	12	9	10	17	3	16
2010/11	5	3/12	7	3	5	5	1	3
2011/12	7	n/a	9	n/a	4	n/a	1	n/a
2012/13	1	n/a	3	n/a	2	n/a	0	n/a
2013/14	2	n/a	4	n/a	2	n/a	3	n/a
2014/15	3	n/a	4	n/a	2	n/a	0	n/a

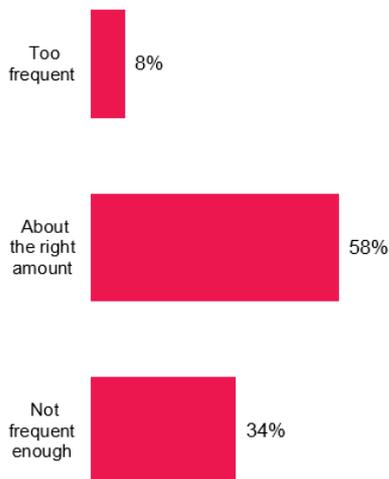
Residents' perception

The 2014 Hackney Matters survey into Litter, Cleanliness and Public Spaces showed an improvement in resident satisfaction with cleanliness of the local area. 77% are satisfied, up from 55% in 2008 and 32% in 2003.

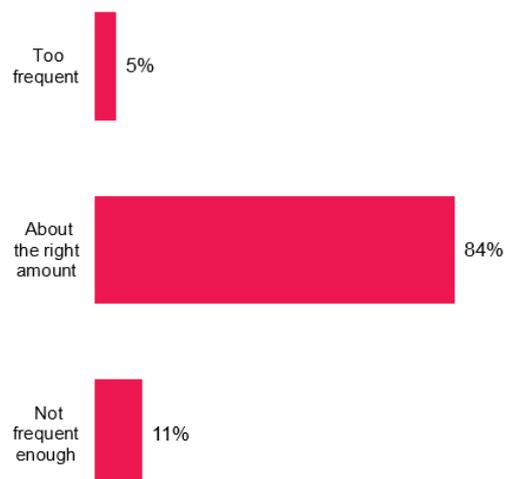
89% of residents feel that a grade B of street cleanliness is either fairly or very acceptable. But only 11% feel that a grade C is acceptable.



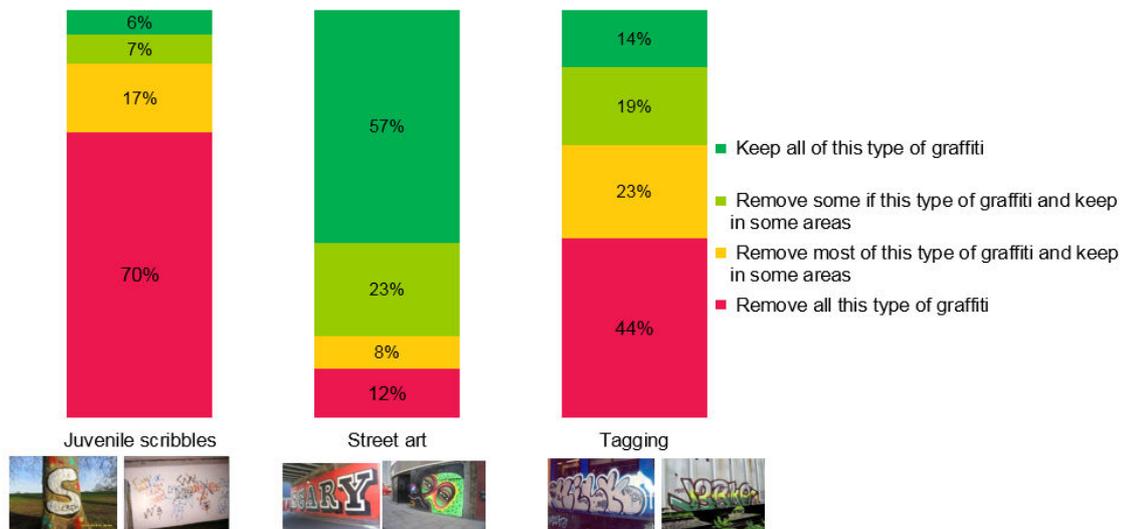
Level of sweeping of residential roads is...



Level of sweeping of high streets, town centre and main roads is...



The majority of residents are not in favour of tagging or juvenile scribbles, but are largely happy to keep street art.



There is greater feeling that everyone should help to keep Hackney clean compared to 2008, with 90% saying people in Hackney should do more to keep it clean.

The current service

The street cleansing service is organised on 2 areas, north and south. Each of the two areas has an Area Manager for cleansing, an Assistant Area Manager and a Supervisor. These also back up the Area Manager for refuse and their assistant.

The evening and night shift services are managed by a dedicated Night Manager who has responsibility for the whole borough. He is assisted by an Assistant Area Manager and Supervisor. Due to the amount of work in the NTWE areas, the service now operates 24 hours a day.

Residential roads: The service is based on a minimum cleansing frequency of a twice weekly sweep for all residential roads and this ensures that streets, in the main, are cleansed within 24 hours of refuse collections taking place. The primary method of cleansing is beat sweeping, which is a traditional method of cleansing and one that delivers a high standard. This method is also the best for ensuring accountability for work performance as it is easily monitored when combined with a fixed frequency of cleansing.

The baseline service is backed up using mobile cleansing crews that visit streets on non-scheduled cleansing days to clear away any litter and deal with any other waste issue that might need attending too. These crews also deal with fly tipped waste including any domestic waste that may have been placed out for collection on non-scheduled collection days. All waste collected by these crews is recorded and the information is used to assist environmental enforcement work.

High Streets and Town Centres: Cleansing of these areas takes place daily, seven days a week. The daily cleansing frequencies range for a minimum of 4 times daily to continuous sweeping in areas such as Hackney Central and Shoreditch. A range cleansing of methods are used and include manual beat, pedestrian operated mechanical sweeping and both manual and mechanical team sweeping.

Night Time Economy Areas: The NTE has steadily grown over the last few years and as a result litter and waste levels have significantly increased. Added to this problem is the fact that visitors tend not to use the litterbins provided and simply throw their waste, including bottles and cans into the street. There is also a problem with unregulated waste coming from commercial premises that do not have any waste arrangements or that overproduce against the contracts that they have with Hackney. Despite the problems these areas are regularly cleared of waste and cleaned overnight, with the final clearance being completed, in most cases, by day break. This approach ensures that complaints from residents living in these areas are kept to a minimum as areas are normally cleared and restored to an acceptable level before they venture out in the mornings. Close liaison and embedding enforcement officers within the Environmental Operations service has meant greater and more effective enforcement action in this area, including a number of successful court prosecutions.

The intention of the overall current service is to meet the Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse on a borough-wide basis. Streets are swept to a Grade A standard and should not fall to below Grade B between the scheduled cleanse. This in effect gives an overall B standard for the borough. In areas that are susceptible to a falling to Grade C and below in a short amount of time, additional cleansing operations are in place to maintain a satisfactory standard. Even with this approach there are areas of Hackney, that fall to Grade C prior to the next scheduled cleanse eg. residential streets near shopping areas and areas of night time economy.

The service currently comprises: (no. of operatives by shift)

	Early	Mid/ Late
Cleansing Resources	115	32

Proposed option of reduced frequency of sweeping

It would be possible to reduce the level of resource currently deployed by the adoption of a once a fortnight sweep in residential roads supported by a weekly litter pick and a reduced level of cleansing of high streets from continuous or up to 8 times daily down to a maximum of twice daily 7 days a week.

Although the service would work to minimise the impact of the proposal, a fortnightly sweep with weekly litter pick on residential roads will result in a significant deterioration in the condition of streets, particularly between scheduled sweeps. Overall a lower standard of street cleanliness would become the norm. The standard of cleansing generally across the borough is likely to be at a Grade B shortly after cleansing, certainly in high streets and within a day or so of cleansing in residential roads. These roads will then deteriorate to a Grade C standard prior to the next scheduled sweep or litter pick. However it should be noted that the longer term impacts of reduced frequencies will further impact on the condition of streets as it becomes more difficult to maintain the cleansing frequencies, due to the increased amount of work at each visit and greater difficulty in achieving a Grade A standard due to the lack of time available. Therefore we can expect a steady deterioration in the condition of streets once the new arrangements are introduced and based on senior management experience of similar situations in the past this would, within a year or even sooner, likely to make the cleansing schedules unachievable and

present a number of difficulties to manage. Unsatisfactory levels of cleansing as recorded by existing monitoring measures will increase. The annual out-turn for litter in residential streets for 2014/15 was 4.58% (unsatisfactory level of performance). The standard in residential streets is already poorer than for the borough overall (3.07%). It is difficult to provide an estimate of the full impact of the proposed change however, Hackney has seen poor levels of performance previously suffering unsatisfactory levels of performance around 20%. It would effectively take Hackney back at least to cleanliness standards experienced in 2007/08 and probably an even worse level of cleanliness.

Revised resource:

Early	Mid/ Late
90	20

The overall reduction in resources to make the saving of £650,000 will be 32 manual staff. The precise split between the early and evening shift has yet to be determined, however the figures above are a good indicator of the levels expected if the saving is taken.

It should also be noted that any proposal from the provision of an integrated service with Hackney Homes, as per the Cross Cutting Public Realm programme, would be impacted by this proposal.

Specific impact on street:

- The twice weekly sweep in residential roads will cease in all cases and there will be less frequent visits by mobile crews to clear fly-tipping outside of the scheduled sweeping visits.
- Significant reduction in standard of cleanliness and litter remaining on street for longer.
- A steady deterioration in the cleanliness and standards of the street environment, with a significant increase in complaints expected. We would attempt to manage this by ensuring scheduling of work takes account of local conditions, for example dealing with streets close to night time economy areas earlier in the week following the weekend's activities.
- It is expected that there will be a challenge around workforce issues and for sickness levels and performance issues to become major issues. Workforce fatigue will become an issue, as will industrial relations issues, due to the setting of unrealistic productivity levels for manual workers to achieve.
- There may be additional fleet and related costs through a likely greater reliance on mechanical sweeping in residential areas.
- Removal of dedicated cleansing operatives from NTE areas. At present waste operatives are split across both the day and night shift services and include dedicated beat sweepers and cleansing crews. Cleaning resources will be moved

into high streets from residential roads to deal with waste from the NTE as priority will need to be given to these areas.

- Litterbins in residential roads, which are currently emptied daily, would receive less frequency attention and may need to be removed altogether. Those in high streets, currently emptied up to eight times a day, will be done twice daily. Litter bins are likely to become a problem as they fill up rapidly.
- There will be a reduction in the frequency of cleansing in all high streets and town centres. Mechanical sweeping in these areas will be reduced from twice to once daily with only a further litter-pick and empty of litterbins provided on the second visit. At present these areas are swept up to 8 times daily and in very high profile areas continuous sweeping and emptying of litterbins takes place.
- We will be unable to provide a litter clearance within 24 hours of the refuse and recycling service due to the reduced frequency of cleansing.
- Recycling on the Go will be less effective, and possibly reconfigured or removed, as the service relies on dedicated beat sweepers in high streets and town centres and these will no longer be present.
- There will be an increase in the presence of weed growth/vegetation in all residential roads and in town centres as detritus levels increase.
- Removal of materials dumped around recycling bins, something that happens regularly at present, will take place less frequently due to the reduction of cleansing resources.
- Collection of recycling materials from flats above shops in residential roads will take place less often.
- Providing a cleansing service for the removal of litter on scheduled refuse and recycling days with either option will not be possible.
- Given previous experience in the period 2002-2006, it is likely that there will be a significant increase in cleansing complaints however the service will not be able to respond to these within the existing 24 hours as is the case at present. Residents would however be told that the problem would be resolved on the next scheduled sweep.
- The cleansing service will respond slower to seasonal challenges and ad hoc incidents than at present eg. Winter maintenance and leaf-fall.
- Reducing cleansing levels in high streets to twice a day, down from currently up to 8 times a day in some areas would result in our major high streets being clean twice a day. The intervening periods of time would see a large build of litter in these areas. Night Time Economy pressures, particularly at weekends would not be addressed overnight and the subsequent early morning cleansing resource would not be able to cope, as it currently does. Recent monitoring of cleansing performance in Shoreditch during the night and weekend has seen a rapid

deterioration in standards between inspections only three hours apart. The level of unsatisfactory inspections increased from 7% to 16% during that period. Although not fully indicative of a reduction in daytime town centre resource it does give to some extent the likely deterioration across much of Hackney's town centres. The standards for NTWE is recovered quickly on the following mornings due to the level of current resource deployed. This would not be possible in the same timeframe with a reduced resource.

- Reductions in street cleansing services coupled with potential future changes to household refuse and recycling collections (eg. reduced frequency of collections), would present considerable difficulties in maintaining Hackney's streetscene at acceptable levels.

Graffiti and Flyposting – current service

The Environmental Operations graffiti removal team carry out work predominately on a pro-active basis. The team also deals with street washing requirements and operates with 5 crews. The work which involves household and commercial properties, street furniture and the public highway is fully identified, catalogued and then scheduled for removal/cleansing. This is a specialist job as it requires a different approach dependent upon the type of graffiti/staining and the surface it has been applied too eg. teams have the responsibility for the clearance of vehicle oil/fuel and blood spillages following road traffic incidents, and gum, dog fouling and paint spillages. It also requires a high degree of contact with residents and businesses.

Proposed option to reduce graffiti and flyposting resource

The proposal is to reduce the service down to 3 crews. With the consequent re-scheduling of remaining resource between street washing and graffiti/flyposting removal.

Specific impact on street: The reduction of graffiti crews will have a very similar impact to reducing cleansing resources. As most areas suffering graffiti are regularly targeted, the reduction would mean that graffiti would be removed less often and therefore graffiti would be visible for longer periods at all locations. Previous experience has shown that the longer graffiti is present at a particular site, the more its graffitied. Neighbouring boroughs are evidence of this, as walls that had relatively small amounts of graffiti on them have now been completely covered, often up to roof level, due to the fact that the Authority failed to remove what was placed there in the first place. Gradually there's a decline and the amount and type of graffiti, due to the lack of control, becomes a detriment to the area. . A good example of this is Hackney Road, where Tower Hamlets approach shows the stark contrast in approach and impact, and is a situation where that authority's approach has an adverse impact on our local environmental quality grades, despite our high level of removal.

There is also evidence to show that there is an element of graffiti that is connected with street gangs and the current frequency of removal has played a major part in

keeping the amount visible to the public at a very low level. Reductions in the resources would result in this type of graffiti becoming more prevalent.

In 2014/15 the following was removed by the Team:

Square meters removed

Flyposting	27,306m ²
Graffiti	19,139m ²
Jet washing	34,620m ²

Items removed

Flyposting	49,371
Graffiti	20,216
Jet washing	6,837

Number of Jobs

Flyposting	9,480
Graffiti	4,706
Jet washing	3,574

The proposed reduction would see these figures reduced by 2/5ths.

Relationship with Integrated Cleansing

The proposals within this paper have not been cross referenced with any potential integration with estates' cleansing operations currently managed within Hackney Homes. Savings and efficiencies can be achieved through both approaches, however, the sensible approach would be to firstly integrate related and similar services to achieve first stage savings; then monitor the impact of the integration, enabling services to bed in and finally seek to achieve further efficiencies with the knowledge gained at that stage.

Comparison of Local Environmental Quality

The 2 sets of photographs below show an example, along Mare Street/Cambridge Road, of differing approaches to cleansing and graffiti. The top row of photographs show the approach to street cleansing and graffiti in other authorities' boundary whilst the bottom row show the approach on similar roads within Hackney.

