

Scrutiny Topic Feasibility Study and Registration Form(s)



Agenda Item 4

The Commercial Services Scrutiny Board

2005/2006

Report of the Head of Civic, Democratic and Legal Services

Scrutiny Feasibility Study Report 112:

‘Rethinking Recycling and Re-use in York’

Purpose of Report.

1. This report asks Members to consider the feasibility study that has been carried out in respect of a newly registered topic and to decide whether or not to progress the topic, giving reasons for this action.

Background

2. This report presents Members of the Commercial Services Scrutiny Board with the findings of the feasibility study conducted in respect of the new topic ‘Rethinking Recycling and Re-use in York’. This was registered jointly by Cllr. Mark Waudby and Cllr. Andrew D’Agorne on 1st March 2005¹. See Annex A for details of the topic registration form.
3. From their work on their last topic on cleanliness in terraced streets, Members of the Board have already proposed follow up work regarding:
 - Improving city wide recycling of domestic and commercial green waste.
 - Analysis of improvements which might be made to the City of York Council’s recycling initiatives with particular reference to terraced areas, recognising the concerns of the Disabled Persons Advisory Group regarding the obstacles created by the green recycling boxes. This resulted in the Board’s recommendation that;

¹ this incorporates the topic registration form number 103 Voluntary Sector Recycling

‘ The Board consider that the specific issue of improving recycling facilities for terraces should be better addressed and propose the following short term and long term solutions:

- a) **Terraced Streets where the properties have forecourts should be issued with green boxes.**
- b) **The broader issue of recycling and terraced streets should be considered as part of the Boards next scrutiny topic and the Disabled Persons Advisory Group should be key consultees.** ²

3. Feedback from Feasibility Consultation

4. Policy Unit Response

5. Officers in the Policy Unit indicated that the topic as lodged
 - Does not negatively overlap with any corporate policy developments
 - Regarding external targets/ deadlines, increasing recycling/ reuse would help achieve landfill targets.
 - Appears to be a valid and useful scrutiny topic, building on but not duplicating work outlined in earlier reports to Members.
6. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published new Sustainable Consumption and Production Indicators on the 11th April 2005 showing the progress the country is making towards achieving economic growth while reducing damage to the environment.
7. The aim of the indicators is to break - or decouple - the link between increasing economic growth and environmental damage. Indicator 8: ‘Waste’ with the objective of decoupling economic growth from the generation of solid waste, and Indicator 9: ‘Household water consumption and waste’ with the objective of decoupling household consumption from environmental impacts are copied in full at Annex B of this report.
8. Members may also wish to consider the implications to the topic of The Clean Neighbourhoods Act which recently became law. The Act contains a range of measures to improve the quality of the local environment by giving local authorities and the Environment Agency additional powers. The main changes with a bearing on the topic as lodged, are in respect of waste. The Act makes the following provisions:
 - amends provisions for dealing with fly-tipping by: - removing the defence of acting under employer's instructions; increasing the penalties; enabling local authorities and the Environment Agency to recover their investigation and clear-

² See Commercial Services Scrutiny Report “**The Cleaning of Gullies, Gutters, Footpaths and Back Lanes on Terraced Streets**’ May 2005

up costs and extending provisions on clear up to the landowner in the absence of the occupier.

- gives local authorities and the Environment Agency the power to issue fixed penalty notices (and, in the case of local authorities, to keep the receipts from such penalties) to businesses that fail to produce waste transfer notes and for waste left out on the streets (local authority only)
- introduces a more effective system for stop, search and seizure of vehicles used in illegal waste disposal; and enables courts to require forfeiture of such vehicles
- introduces a new provision covering the waste duty of care and the registration of waste carriers
- introduces a new requirement for site waste management plans for construction and demolition projects
- repeals the divestment provisions for waste disposal functions to provide greater flexibility for local authorities to deliver waste management services in the most sustainable way
- reforms the recycling credits scheme to provide increased local flexibility to provide incentives for more sustainable waste management.

9. **Performance Improvements Team Response**

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

10. The following information provided by Improvements Officers is based on the consultation documents for the proposed National Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) model due to be published by the Audit Commission in May 2005³.
11. The topic as lodged is directly relevant to the annual CPA rating we expect in 2005 and 2006, through performance on a number of BVPI indicators:

BV82: Recycling and composting performance
BV91: Provision of kerbside recycling
BV90: Public satisfaction with waste services
BV84: Volume of waste per head of population.
12. Meeting central targets in relation to BV82 is of particular importance as this is a key requirement in the CPA model.
13. The Audit Commission have proposed attaching a 'special rule' to this indicator whereby failure to reach satisfactory performance would contribute to holding back the entire Environment CPA assessment.

³ The Audit Commission are consulting on a revised model which will alter the way that the council's overall performance is judged. For more information visit the Audit Commissions website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/

14. This topic is also relevant to the corporate CPA assessment / inspection the City of York Council expect to host in 2007 or 2008. That inspection will seek to form a view on the council's arrangements for delivering on the 'clean and green liveability agenda'.
15. The CPA inspection framework makes explicit reference to the need to work with communities and the community sector to raise awareness, and commitment to minimising and recycling waste. For more information please see Annex C: Extracts from the CPA2005: Key Lines of Enquiry for Corporate Assessment (Practitioners Version). Pg.25
16. **Marketing and Communications Response**
17. The Marketing and Communications team – market research - at the City of York Council were able to provide the following information regarding associated research activity for the topic proposed:

Project 1: "Rethink Rubbish" brand recognition project (with supplementary research into perceived meaning of "minimisation")

When conducted: April 2003.
 Audience: York and North Yorkshire residents
 Size: 650 interviews (City of York (146),
 Richmondshire (51), Craven (55), Ryedale (49), Hambleton
 (71), Scarborough (90), Harrogate (123), Selby (65))
 Methodology: Onstreet interviewing in City of York and main centres in the
 NY districts.
 Key findings: (York only)

- 48% recognition of "Rethink Rubbish" logo.
- 90% perceive waste minimisation as meaning "recycling"
- 58% recognise that reducing waste output in first place more valuable than recycling

Project 2: Expanded repeat of above project with additional evaluation of "Recycle Now!" national logo and insight into minimisation behaviour

When conducted: April 2005 (ongoing)
 Audience: York and North Yorkshire residents
 Size: As for project 1, with City of York interviews expanded to
 300.
 Methodology: Onstreet interviewing in City of York and main centres in the
 NY districts.
 Key findings: Fieldwork ongoing.

Project 3: Future of waste strategy and technology survey

When conducted: July/August 2004.
 Audience: York residents (talkabout panel)

Size: 200 interviews
Methodology: Posted information packs for background information followed by a telephone interview

Key findings:

- Maintenance & expansion of kerbside recycling scheme seen as main priority for future of waste management in York
- 77% believe the council should deliver as much recycling and composting as is possible regardless of govt. targets
- 56% say technology should not be limited to extraction/separation OR heat processes, but a combination of both.

Project 4: Minimisation activity

When conducted: December 2004.
Audience: York residents (**talkabout** panel)
Size: 1500 interviews
Methodology: Winter edition of periodical panel questionnaire
Key findings:

- 94% engaged in some sort of minimisation activity (74% re-use items and packaging)
- Responsibility for minimisation lies with "the public" (82%), "retailers" (77%), "manufacturing industry" (75%), "the council" (72%)
- 81% recycle or compost household waste. 78% are using kerbside recycling (89% consider this service 'excellent' or 'very good').

Project 5: Waste collection strategy research

When conducted: May 2005.
Audience: Invited selection of York residents
Size: 3 groups, 30 attenders.
Methodology: Focus groups

Key findings:

- Local recycling sites (carparks supermarkets) to be expanded and standardised in what they receive
- Alternate week collection (residual/kerbside) likely to meet opposition, but beneficial to minimisation education and engagement

Other related information still under analysis may be available to the Board at a later date.

18. **The Assistant Directors and Key Officers Supporting Scrutiny**

Assistant Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods response

19. Commercial Services have responsibility for developing and progressing the waste strategy. Members may wish to revisit the content of the the paper 'Revised Waste Strategy' which went to the Executive for decision on 9th November 2004 and the associated Action Plan No 2 'Waste Minimisation', received by the Environment & Sustainability Executive Member and Advisory Panel on the 9th February 2005..
20. Progression of the topic as lodged should help to inform that action plan and could potentially assist with the waste minimisation target.

Head of Parks & Open Spaces (Education and Leisure) response

21. In the parks we are trying to do more on site recycling of green waste so there would be a definite departmental interest in this topic. In respect of libraries at present the Head of Parks and Open Spaces is aware that they do try to sell and then give away old books.

Recommendations

22. **After discussion of the information in this report, Members of the Commercial Services Scrutiny Board are recommended to take one of the following courses of action:-**
- i. **Progress this topic further, giving reasons, either as set out in the topic registration form or by modifying the topic registration form**
 - ii. **Make recommendations on the topic to the Executive without further investigation.**
 - iii. **Not progress the topic further, giving clear reasons for not doing so**

Annexes

- Annex A:** Scrutiny Topic Registration Form
Annex B: DEFRA Indicators 8 and 9
Annex C: Annex C: Extracts from the CPA2005: Key Lines of Enquiry for Corporate Assessment (Practitioners Version). Pg.25

Annex i

SCRUTINY TOPIC REGISTRATION FORM NO. 112

‘Rethinking Recycling and Re-use in York’

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS TOPIC IS IMPORTANT?

On the 25.04.2004 a topic with the title ‘Voluntary Sector Recycling and Re-use Projects’ was submitted for consideration by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Board. Scrutiny Management Committee encouraged progression of this topic, however, the Board were pursuing two other topics at the time and were not able to immediately schedule this work in.

York currently disposes of around 66,000 tonnes of bio-degradable municipal waste (bmw) to landfill. Due to international environmental agreements and European legislation each disposal authority must reduce the amount of bmw they tip or face heavy fines. York’s targets are to reduce the current 66,000 tonnes down to around 44,000 tonnes in 2010 and 20,000 tonnes in 2020 – despite the natural growth of the city and its population. Fines of £150 for every tonne of bmw tipped over the allowance will apply; in addition, a proportion of any fines imposed by EU infraction proceedings may also apply.

Fly tipping of bulky household items is detrimental to a neighborhood and costly to the council. Low income households including the elderly and those with young families could benefit from repaired or refurbished goods that have been assured for quality and safety.

Voluntary groups and charities already fulfill this service in some areas but may lack resources, storage space or facilities for collection and delivery. By establishing a greater understanding of this issue the scrutiny board could identify how it could assist voluntary groups to maximize the effectiveness of their service.

A scrutiny review in this area could help to raise awareness of the role of repair and re-use as part of the waste strategy. It could also identify areas of good practice in supporting the role of the voluntary sector and any potential there may be to extend training and rehabilitation opportunities for refurbishing damaged household goods. A review could assist the development of good practice in relation to dismantling or repairing surplus electrical goods in advance of the Waste Electrical Equipment (WEE) directive coming into force and could ultimately lead to many household goods being taken out of the waste stream and reused and more low income households having an increased disposable income.

DO YOU KNOW IF THIS TOPIC IS IMPORTANT TO OTHER PEOPLE? IF SO, WHO & WHY?

It would benefit the residents of York, as hopefully it would stop many bulky household items going into the waste stream, which would reduce our payments of landfill tax.

WHAT DO YOU THINK SCRUTINY OF THIS TOPIC MIGHT CHANGE, DO OR ACHIEVE?

- Create an independent Audit of existing Community Recycling Schemes in York.
- Create a clearer picture of where these tie into the Local Authorities recycling strategy.
- Link to the Executive agreement of the 9 November 2004 for the need to consult the public on how best to minimise waste and the range of solutions for the future. A budget of £30,000 was identified for this consultation and an awareness raising campaign.
- It could examine which items are in demand and ways to make those which are not safe and/or more popular. It could examine the obstacles that prevent more repairs and recycling being carried out and the skills and facilities needed to increase the capacity for more action in this area.
- It could look at groups who may be interested in taking on such work and the potential for different groups to combine resources to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations.

DO YOU HAVE IDEAS ABOUT THE APPROACH SCRUTINY MEMBERS MIGHT TAKE TO YOUR SUGGESTED TOPIC?

In conducting this project the scrutiny board could consider working with, / interviewing the following consultees /partners;
waste development officers,
charity representatives,
housing/commercial services staff responsible for clearing void homes,
the St Nicks Environment Centre
Chambers of Commerce
And other relevant groups.

OLD TOPIC REGISTRATION FORM NO. 103

'Voluntary Sector Recycling and Re-use Projects'

What is the issue that scrutiny needs to address?

Fly tipping of bulky household items is detrimental to a neighborhood and costly to the council. Low income households including the elderly and those with young families could benefit from repaired or refurbished goods that have been assured for quality and safety. Voluntary groups and charities already fulfill this service in some areas but may lack resources, storage space or facilities for collection and delivery. By establishing a greater understanding of this issue the scrutiny board could identify how it could assist voluntary groups to maximize the effectiveness of their service.

What do you feel could be achieved by a scrutiny review?

A scrutiny review in this area could help to raise awareness of the role of repair and re-use as part of the waste strategy. It could also identify areas of good practice in supporting the role of the voluntary sector and any potential there may be to extend training and rehabilitation opportunities for refurbishing damaged household goods. A review could assist the development of good practice in relation to dismantling or repairing surplus electrical goods in advance of the Waste Electrical Equipment (WEE) directive coming into force and could ultimately lead to many household goods being taken out of the waste stream and reused and more low income households having an increased disposable income.

A scrutiny project could be conducted by initially identifying the nature of current recycling and re-use operations run by charity/voluntary organisations (Oxfam for example). It could examine which items are in demand and ways to make those which are not safe and/or more popular. It could examine the obstacles that prevent more repairs and recycling being carried out and the skills and facilities needed to increase the capacity for more action in this area. It could look at groups who may be interested in taking on such work and the potential for different groups to combine resources to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations.

ANNEX ii

Extract from DEFRA document 'Sustainable Consumption and Production Indicators Revised basket of 'decoupling' indicators'
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs April 2005

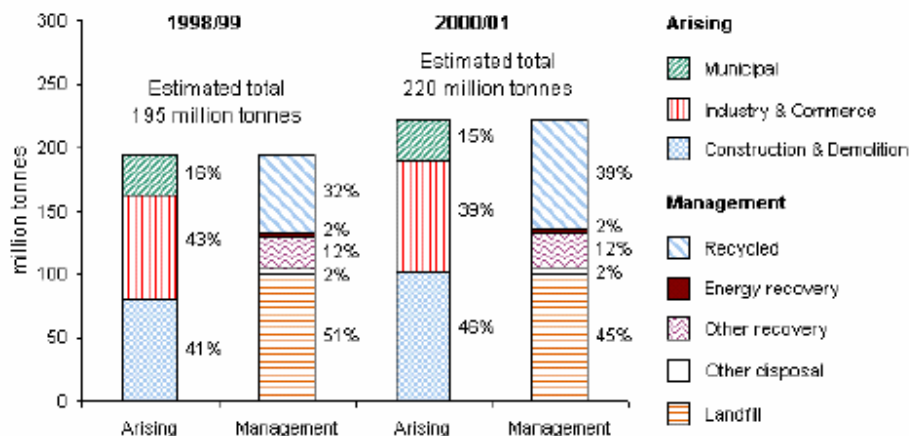
Indicator 8: Waste

Objective: Decoupling economic growth from the generation of solid waste

Relevance

As well as emissions to air and water, the other significant residual output of production and consumption is solid matter in the form of waste. The total amount of waste generated is an indicator of the efficiency of resource use. The disposal of this waste also has significant impacts on the environment: landfilled waste takes up space and is a major source of methane and leaching of heavy metals and toxins to the environment.

Arising and management of controlled waste from municipal, commercial and industrial sources, UK 1998/99 and 2000/01



Source: see footnote ¹⁰

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Trends

Estimates of total controlled waste arisings are only available for two years, 1998/99 and 2000/01. Over this period, estimated total waste arising rose by 25 million tonnes. The proportion of waste being recycled increased from 32% to 39%, with actual tonnage increasing by 24 million tonnes. The tonnage of materials sent to landfill remained roughly the same, resulting in a relative decrease in the proportion of total waste going to landfill, from 51% to 45%. Over the same period GDP increased by 7%.

The rise in total waste arising was mainly due to a large increase in construction and demolition waste. However, a greater proportion of this construction and demolition waste was sent to registered exempt sites and recycled as aggregates and soil,

¹⁰ Defra, Environment Agency, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Welsh Assembly Government, Northern Ireland Environment and Heritage Service

contributing to the overall increase in the proportion of recycled/recovered waste and the decrease in waste going to landfill. A rise in the proportion of recycled municipal waste also contributed to this change.

The estimates are drawn from a wide variety of sources and comparisons between the two years should be treated with caution. When a longer time series is available for all waste streams, it will be possible to see which industrial sectors are decoupling their waste generation from their economic production.

Targets

To reduce industrial and commercial waste in England and Wales going to landfill to 85% of 1998 levels by 2005. Under the EU Landfill Directive, to reduce biodegradable municipal waste in the UK sent to landfill to 35% of 1995 levels by 2020. There are also targets for household waste recycling – see indicator 9.

Background

The most significant waste stream is from construction and demolition activity, where waste minimisation and greater re-use of on-site materials such as waste soil is needed. Major waste producers in the industrial and commercial sectors in 1998/99 were the basic metals sector, the food, drink and tobacco industry, retailers and the coke, oil, gas, electricity and water industries. New data on industrial and commercial waste is due in 2005.

Separate information is collected on the arisings of special or hazardous waste. Since 1996, when the definition of hazardous waste was extended to include further waste types such as waste oil, the level of waste generation in the UK has stayed roughly constant at between 5 and 5.5 million tonnes per year. Hazardous waste arisings will continue to be monitored as part of this indicator.

Indicator 9: Household water consumption and waste

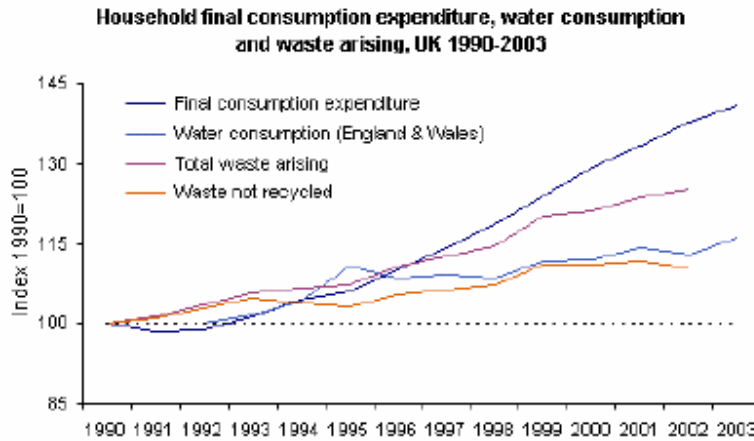
Objective: Decoupling household consumption from environmental impacts

Relevance

The consumption activities of households have a major effect on the environment. This indicator and the three that follow monitor changes in that impact from 1990. They emphasise the message that our decisions over lifestyle and individual purchases and our attitudes towards resource use and recycling do make a difference to the world around us.

In England and Wales, household consumption accounts for roughly two-thirds of water put into the public water supply, excluding leakages that occur before the household's stop-tap. Housing development is creating a growing pressure on water resources, especially in the south and east of England and, with factors such as climate change also likely to put supplies under greater pressure in the future, there is an increasing need for conservation of water in the home.

Households also account for about 15% of all controlled waste arising in the UK, producing around 520 kilogrammes per person in 2002, equating to approximately 24kg per household per week. Actions to reduce the amount of household waste are urgently needed to help the UK move towards more sustainable waste management.



Source: Office for National Statistics, Defra, Ofwat

Trends

Between 1990 and 2002, household final consumption expenditure rose by 38%, whilst waste not recycled from households increased by 10% and total household waste arising increased by 25%. Household water consumption (excluding distribution losses and supply pipe leakages) increased by 16% in England and Wales between 1992 and 2003, whilst household final consumption expenditure rose by 42% over the same period.

Total waste arising from households has increased steadily through the period and, whilst the increase has been slightly slower than that of household final consumption expenditure, there is no evidence of any significant decoupling between the prosperity of households and their resource use. However, recycling of household waste has increased from 2% of waste generated in 1990 to 14% in 2002. As a result, waste going to landfill sites has increased more slowly, although the cumulative impact of this waste stream is clearly still increasing. Water consumed by households has risen much more slowly than consumption expenditure since 1995, suggesting a relative decoupling from expenditure increases.

Targets

There are targets for household waste recycling in England and Wales of 25% by 2005, 30% by 2010 and 33% by 2015. Similar targets exist for Scotland and Northern Ireland. There are currently no targets for water abstractions for public water supply or water use by households, but there are leakage targets for public water companies – refer to Indicator 2 for further details.

Background

Most of the water consumed by households is for drinking, washing and sanitation purposes. The increase in the use of water meters has gone some way towards balancing recent trends for more water-intensive uses such as power showers, dishwashers and the use of hosepipes in gardening and car washing. The current main regulatory driver for the efficient use of water is the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations 1999, which define minimum standards for WCs, baths, washing machines and dishwashers.

Household waste is comprised predominantly of bin waste, plus waste from civic amenity sites and other household collections. The observed increase in total waste arisings is a result of many factors, such as the growth in consumption of pre-packaged food and the increasingly 'throwaway' nature of society. The rise is offset to a certain degree by increased use of recycling services.

Most recycling comes from "bring" sites such as bottle banks and civic amenity sites, although rising proportions are now from kerbside collection schemes and composting. However, more can be done to increase participation in such schemes by raising public awareness and improving collection performance. Greater support is also needed from retailers through innovation in consumer product and packaging design to minimise material use and maximise recyclability.

ANNEX iii

Extract Pg. 25 : CPA2005; Key Lines of Enquiry for Corporate Assessment (Practitioners Version)

Key Question

5.1.3 What has the council, with its partners, achieved in its ambitions for the local environment?

Inspection Focus

Evidence that the council, working in partnership with others:

- has established and is delivering on its clean and green liveability agenda
- has contributed to ensuring environmentally sustainable communities and lifestyles

Criteria for Judgement

Level 2

- The council has raised awareness and commitment to minimising and recycling waste.
- The council is developing partnerships with other local authorities and has started to deliver the benefits of more cost effective and sustainable waste management practices reducing its own resource consumption.
- The council is aware of significant local issues, for example, air pollution near power stations, noise pollution near international airports, and is now starting to address the issues.
- The council is addressing the quality of design in buildings and public spaces and is addressing these matters in its local development plans. There has been some increase in the proportion of new developments (public buildings, housing, fixed infrastructure) which mitigate the effects of, or adapt to the impact of, climate change during planning, design and construction.
- The council can demonstrate that it has fully thought through the linkages to the other shared priority areas. For example, tackling graffiti, the quality of open public space as a contributor to the reduction in the fear of crime, as part of safer and stronger communities and targeting environmental improvements in the most deprived neighbourhoods as part of healthier communities.
- The council is setting a positive example to others through its environmental management practices.

Level 3

- The council is working successfully with local communities and the community sector to raise awareness and commitment to minimising and recycling waste and is not afraid to take unpopular decisions, the reasons for which it communicates clearly.
- The council has a clear policy on influencing commercial and industrial waste producers to shift their waste management up the hierarchy.
- The council is working in partnership with other local authorities and is delivering the benefits of more cost effective and sustainable waste management practices
- The council has reduced its own resource consumption significantly and is able to quantify the cost and/or environmental impact these policies have had.

- The council is effectively addressing significant local and global environmental issues and actively communicating environmental issues to the wider community.
- There exists a high quality of design in buildings and public spaces and these matters are addressed in the local development plans. There has been a sizeable increase in the proportion of new developments (public buildings, housing, fixed infrastructure) which mitigate the effects of, or adapt to the impact of, climate change during planning, design and construction.
- The council can demonstrate benefits at having made linkages to the other shared priority areas. For example, tackling graffiti and the quality of open public space as a contributor to the reduction of the fear of crime, as part of safer and stronger communities, and targeting environmental improvements in the most deprived neighbourhoods as part of healthier communities.
- The council is working effectively to create and maintain attractive and welcoming parks, play areas and public spaces; it can demonstrate improvements to the physical fabric of places, including streets, and is taking measures to make public places cleaner and well maintained.