

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY SURVEY OF ENGLAND (LEQSE)

THE REPORT

of an annual survey that sets reliable national and regional benchmarks for elements that help to determine local environmental quality, related (at national level) to standard land uses.



This survey has been undertaken by EnCams, at the request of the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

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DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This section contains definitions of a range of terms used in the report. These are of three broad types:
- a. basic terms used in connection with the survey and report;
 - b. the sources which give rise to different types of litter; and,
 - c. the different land uses which form the 'building blocks' of the survey.

2.0 Basic Terms

- 2.1 **Standard Quality Interval (SQI)** - an interval (measured in terms of quality, rather than time) over which an observant person can reliably detect that a difference in the standard of an aspect of the visible environment has occurred.
- 2.2 **Transect/Survey Site** - a 50 metre length of road, or a site of similar dimensions within a car park, or within a recreation area, to which the public have access.
- 2.3 **Litter** - this comprises mainly synthetic materials (such as those related to smoking, consuming food, confectionery, or beverages) that are *improperly* discarded by members of the public whilst sitting, walking or travelling through an area. However, it also includes discrete escapes of material from domestic and commercial waste systems and some organic materials, of which animal faeces was the most important element as far as this study was concerned (see also para. 3.0 e., below).
- 2.4 **Detritus** - comprises sand, dust, grit, decayed leaf and vegetable residues, fragments of plastic, glass and other synthetic materials which have been broken down in a variety of ways.
- 2.5 **Fly-posting** - any printed material and associated remains informally or illegally fixed to any structure. It excludes formally managed and approved advertising hoardings and *valid*, legally placed signs and notices. It includes any size of material from small stickers up to large posters - often advertising popular music recordings, concerts and other events.
- 2.6 **Graffiti** - any informal or illegal marks, drawings or paintings that have been deliberately made by a person or persons on any physical element comprising the outdoor environment, with a view to communicating some message or symbol etc. to others.
- 2.7 **Flytipping** - materials abandoned in unapproved locations in significant quantities. The sources may vary – for example, domestic refuse, bulky household goods, commercial or construction wastes.

- 2.8 **Wheeled Bin** - European Standard Wheeled Bins used to contain domestic refuse and commercial wastes, with capacities of between 90 litres and 1200 litres. The most commonly used sizes were 240 litres (domestic) and 1100 litres (commercial), with the bins, generally, being made of injection moulded plastic or pressed metal.
- 2.9 **Litter Bin** - smaller bins (normally 25 - 150 litre capacity) designed to contain litter deposited in them by the general public.
- 2.10 **Overflowing Litter Bins** - litter bins that are either completely filled to the lip with litter or other solid wastes, or are overfilled, causing materials to fall on the ground around the bin.
- 2.11 **Skips** – large metal containers, normally of between 2 and 10 cubic metres (2 – 10 tonnes) capacity, most frequently used by building contractors to deliver and remove materials to and from sites.

3.0 Sources Of Solid Wastes

- 3.1 The types of solid wastes (including litter) encountered during the survey have been characterised and analysed according to eight standard sources. The sources are defined as follows:
- a. **General Litter** - the commonest type of litter, mainly deposited by people walking or travelling through public areas. The materials involved are frequently those that are associated with eating, drinking and smoking;
 - b. **Domestic Refuse** - items normally found in domestic waste containers;
 - c. **Commercial Wastes** – materials discarded by all types of businesses, such as retail, catering, commercial, industrial, and transport enterprises. Some premises, such as restaurants and hotels, can discard wastes that are similar in type to domestic refuse but are treated differently because of their source and the larger quantities that are normally involved;
 - d. **Construction Wastes** - materials associated with building and civil engineering projects, and works commissioned by utilities companies;
 - e. **Animal and Other Faeces** - this included all faecal deposits in public areas, with the exception of human faeces and occurrences of animal faeces which appeared to be associated with veterinary sources;
 - f. **Clinical Wastes** - a broad, precautionary definition of clinical waste was applied, covering human faeces and all materials which have, or which could have, come into contact with human or animal body fluids; are associated with medical, dental, pharmaceutical or veterinary activities; or materials of similar kinds which may have emanated from domestic or other residential properties. It included discarded nappies and other sanitary products, condoms, and needles and other materials used by drug / solvent abusers;

- g. **Putrescible Materials** - included larger animal and bird carcasses and all food wastes found deposited in significant quantities. Small deposits of foodstuffs were included in the 'discarded food and drink' category, and small dead birds and rodents are recorded under 'Other Wastes Occurring as Litter'.
- h. **Other Wastes Occurring as Litter** - any other materials that were either peculiar to the location or which could not be allocated accurately to the preceding categories.

4.0 Standard Land Use Classes

4.1 There can be wide variations in characteristics between local authorities – from Inner London, to rural areas. In order to provide benchmarks that all authorities can use for comparison, the Local Environmental Quality Survey for England (LEQSE) has used a series of Standard Land Use Classes.

4.2 These Standard Land Use Classes are related to the Category Zones set out in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (COPL&R), but with some amendments that are based on ENCAMS' experience gained from its consultancy work for a wide range of local authorities.

Class 1 – Primary Retail and Commercial Areas

4.3 Class 1 covers town and city centres, as defined in Area Wide Development Plans. Urban tourist 'hot spots' – for example, Durham Cathedral Close – are included in Class A. Primary Retail and Commercial Areas normally contain a choice of outlets in many retail and commercial sectors (including national and international brand names), and in terms of the range of public facilities.

Class 2 – Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas

4.4 Class 2 covers secondary retail and commercial areas outside town centres, but would exclude 'retail shed' developments, which are included in Class 3 together with industrial and warehousing areas. Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas have a minimum frontage of 50 metres and include a range of retail and commercial facilities that meet people's routine needs provided mainly by individual businesses, regional chains, and occasional national brand names.

Class 3 – Public Transport Facilities

4.5 Class 3 includes main and other railway stations and bus stations (if applicable). A number of locations are surveyed at each station, to reflect the typical sequence that would be observed by passengers passing through the facilities, from the forecourt to the platform etc..

Class 4 – Higher Density Housing/Mixed Areas

4.6 Class 4 includes terraced housing of varying types, for example in:

- a. terraced housing in the inner areas of towns and cities;
- b. terraced housing in industrial and post-industrial villages;
- c. flats and maisonettes with only limited off-street parking on social housing estates.

4.7 Such housing areas sometimes include small, individual retail, office, manufacturing, workshop and industry premises.

4.8 There may be some areas of housing where there is a mixture of on-street and off-street parking. Individual transects are assigned to Class 4 if the proportion of dwellings with off-street parking facilities in terraced areas is less than 70%. Otherwise, they are assigned to Class 5 or Class 6, as appropriate. 'Off-street parking' may include specially formed parking bays, or areas of hard standing on grassed areas, or within some curtilages.

Class 5 – Lower Density Social Housing Areas

4.9 Class 5 includes lower density social housing areas with adequate off-road garaging / parking, including higher-rise developments with relatively large areas of landscaping and open space.

Class 6 – Lower Density Private Housing Areas

4.10 Class 6 includes:

- a. low-density private housing within urban areas, and,
- b. low-density private housing in rural villages, including commuter villages.

Class 7 – Industry/Warehousing/Retail Sheds

4.11 This Class includes:

- a. low-density industrial / warehousing developments;
- b. out-of-town non-food retailing;
- c. out-of-town food retailing (superstores);
- d. science parks containing offices, laboratories and manufacturing processes, to which free public access is permitted.

Class 8 – Main Roads

4.12 This Class contains stretches of 'A' road in both urban areas and rural areas, where the speed limit is greater than 30 m.p.h. It can also (if necessary to meet target numbers of transects) include B roads in rural areas where the speed limit is greater than 30 m.p.h., and there is no development abutting directly onto the road.

4.13 In London, this Class also includes Red Routes.

Class 9 – Rural Roads

4.14 Rural roads comprise highways located outside built-up areas, but excluding A-roads. Survey sites are selected in safe locations where there are footways or wide, easily walked verges.

Class 10 – Other Highways

4.15 Other highway areas include:

- a. formal and informal lay-bys;
- b. the first 50 metres of 'BOATS'* , 'RUPPS'* and bridleways leading from metalled public highways.
- c. redundant highway infrastructure still accessible to the public, and stub roads;

* - 'BOATS' are 'Byways Open To All Traffic'; 'RUPPS' are 'Roads Used As Public Paths'.

Class 11 – Recreational Sites

4.16 Recreational sites (parks and open spaces) include picnic sites, canals, and cycleways (but exclude cycleways on or adjacent to main highways).

Class 12 - Other Sites

4.17 'Other Sites ', in the first year of the LEQSE, included:

- a. seaside fronts and promenades;
- b. university campuses and academic precincts.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.0 Background to the Survey

- 1.1 The survey protocols used for the *Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE)* have been developed by ENCAMS over 14 years on consultancy projects in the United Kingdom and abroad. ENCAMS is a registered environmental charity that, amongst other activities, manages the *Keep Britain Tidy Campaign* and the *Going for Green* brand. Since the 1970's, successive UK Governments have recognised ENCAMS as their Official Litter Abatement Agency, and in recent years as a centre of excellence in relation to local environmental quality monitoring and management.
- 1.2 As society assimilates the complexities involved in achieving *sustainable development*, there has been increasing recognition that people's *quality of life* arises not only from their social and economic circumstances, but also their physical environmental setting. In his '*Liveability*' speech in spring 2001, the Prime Minister responded to this by signalling the need to improve public spaces through the better management of the social, economic and physical factors and processes that determine *local environmental quality*.
- 1.3 An early response to this challenge by DEFRA was to ask ENCAMS to apply its expertise in monitoring to the development of an Annual Local Environmental Quality Survey of England. For the first time, this survey makes available regular, reliable information about the places where people live, work and recreate, and in particular, the effectiveness of the many public services that determine an area's local environmental quality.
- 1.4 This summary sets out the baseline findings, conclusions, and possible options for action that have been derived from the first survey, undertaken during 2001/02. The information will be continually enriched by new data, and the findings will be updated through periodic reports.

2.0 Aims and Objectives of the Survey

2.1 The Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE) assesses those aspects of the local environment that members of the public normally take into account when forming an impression of the overall 'quality' of an area – whether they are residents, workers, visitors or investors.

2.2 The objectives of the Survey are:

- a. to produce reliable national and regional benchmarks for elements that help determine local environmental quality, related (at national level) to standard land uses;
- b. to begin to identify the social and economic factors that affect local environmental quality;
- c. to supply LEQ information to Government departments, agencies, local government, and other partners on a regular basis;
- d. to develop a district version of the LEQSE that will enable local authorities to monitor their own services; inform their communities using intelligible local performance indicators; and to provide accurate reports to national audit and inspection bodies;
- e. to link the LEQSE to detailed technical process and efficiency measures.

3.0 Assessment Of Local Environmental Quality Standards

3.1 Environmental standards have been assessed for a wide range of elements of the local environment, using standard criteria which reflect the impression that an ordinary member of the public would be likely to receive on passing through an area.

3.2 Using systematic sample data from a range of land uses, and across each of the nine English Regions, each environmental element has been assessed as 'good', 'satisfactory', 'unsatisfactory' or 'poor'. Each broad category has been further split into four sub-categories, to show the detailed variations in standards, and how close they are to either rising or falling into the next category.

3.3 The survey has been based on a representative sample of 11,000 sites within 54 English local authorities, across the full range of levels of deprivation, and in different types of authority throughout the nine English regions. The LEQSE has been developed with advice from the Audit Commission, the Best Value Inspection Service, the Local Government Association, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), the Office of National Statistics, The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, DEFRA, ODPM and HM Treasury.

4.0 Introduction

- 4.1 This summary distils the main findings and conclusions of this first Annual Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE) by drawing together the main inter-relationships that exist between the groups of issues that are outlined in the main report.
- 4.2 In doing so, the aim is to identify possible options for action by central and local governmental agencies, other involved parties and the communities they serve, through which higher, sustained local environmental standards can be achieved.

5.0 Litter and Other Cleansing Related Issues

Litter

- 5.1 The overall standard for litter was *unsatisfactory*, with 18% of sites being either significantly or heavily littered. There is, therefore, much scope for improvement. When the difference between quality categories is only one or two Standard Quality Intervals (SQI), it is often possible to achieve a satisfactory level, within the existing resource base, through better specification, timing and application of service operations.
- 5.2 However, this improvement will not be achieved by a single, easy change. The LEQSE indicates that there are significant differences in cleansing standards between land uses and that some - such as Industrial and Warehousing Sites and Other Highways - are suffering considerable inequalities of standard. This is a matter for concern because low environmental standards are off-putting, both to quality investors and to skilled workers.
- 5.3 Regarding the composition of litter, the various segments, overall, conform to ENCAMS' historic benchmark data. However, the significant components that are hazardous to health - notably dog fouling (which comprises 8% of litter in Recreation Areas), and broken glass (mainly from drinks bottles), which is also a safety hazard on highways to cyclists - are of particular concern. The most widespread source of commercial litter nation-wide - elastic bands dropped by postal delivery workers - is also of interest.
- 5.4 However, when examining any component of local environmental quality, it is important to understand its relationships to other elements. Through understanding these relationships one can deduce much about the management regimes that are operating.

Detritus, Weed Growth and Weed Control

- 5.5 There are especially important and telling relationships between litter, detritus (grit, decayed leaves etc) and weed growth. In particular, detritus is a sensitive indicator of the quality and quantity of sweeping (as opposed to litter picking activity) that is being applied as part of a cleansing regime. Similarly, long-standing deposits of detritus provide moist, fertile locations for seed germination and weed growth. Furthermore, if weed growth

remains undisturbed its root action can subsequently damage highway and other surfaces - a frequently encountered problem during this survey.

- 5.6 The survey's findings for detritus, which was *unsatisfactory* (with 38% of sites - especially road channels and backlines - being either significantly or heavily affected), is a matter for concern, because it indicates that insufficient effective sweeping is being undertaken in England.
- 5.7 With regard to weed growth, although the overall standard is *satisfactory*, there are notable variations between land uses (with Low Density Social Housing Areas suffering the lowest standard). Furthermore, at a detailed survey site level, there was a relationship between locations where significant amounts of detritus lay and where weed growth occurred - notably along backlines, verge edges and in road drainage channels.
- 5.8 The encroachment of weed growth around verge edges was stimulated by the widespread practice of leaving grass cuttings lying on adjacent highway surfaces, where it mulches down to become a component of detritus.
- 5.9 An allied practice of relying solely on herbicidal spraying for weed control and even for 'edging' or growth restraint along the perimeters of grassed areas, is also unsatisfactory. Not only are there environmental pollution consequences to this method, but it is often poorly executed, leaving unsightly, dead or partially dead vegetation that collects detritus and litter, and can pose a trip hazard. Periodic, vigorous sweeping not only removes detritus (and therefore a major stimulant of weed growth) - but it also disturbs seedlings that germinate in other locations, such as cracks and joints in the paved infrastructure.
- 5.10 These observations reinforce later comments about the need to achieve better integration of planning, design and maintenance between agencies that are responsible for horticultural activity, highways and development.

Staining

- 5.11 Together with detritus and weed growth, staining can have a considerable 'dulling' effect on local environmental quality, leaving areas that may be satisfactorily free from litter looking grubby and unappealing. That is why the LEQSE describes these and other factors as being 'Cleansing Related'.
- 5.12 Overall, the survey assessed staining to be unsatisfactory, falling to poor in Primary and Secondary Retail Areas. A range of components are identified, with trodden-in chewing gum being the major source, although other sectors, including motor vehicles, the construction industry and fast-food businesses and their customers, are also significant contributors.
- 5.13 A range of factors are responsible for increased levels of staining: reductions in rainfall; the presence of older, poorly maintained vehicles in some areas; considerable increases in the numbers of people eating and drinking in public spaces - especially foodstuffs that are fatty and artificially

coloured drinks; lack of discipline by certain business sectors; and poorly designed and specified paving surfaces that retain and / or reveal stains.

- 5.14 Some local authorities have responded by introducing street washing and gum removal - but clearly not enough have done so. However, of those that have introduced street washing, most have tended towards high volume / high-pressure techniques. These have not only affected the joints, surfaces and stability of some paved areas, but they are also wasteful of water.
- 5.15 This evidence indicates that apart from the need to increase the amount of washing that is undertaken there is also a need for public cleansing managers in England to be more innovative. Low pressure / low volume industrial cleansing techniques that include water recovery and filtering, which ENCAMS' consultancy service has successfully introduced in Madrid, have not so far been introduced by clients in this country.

6.0 Environmental Crime and Fear of Crime

- 6.1 In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the links between neglect, wilful environmental damage, and crime. In particular, these forms of poor local environmental quality send out signals to law-abiding people and businesses that can cause them to become fearful of crime. Research also indicates that these environmental problems also send signals to criminals implying that policing (in all its forms) in the affected areas is less vigilant, and that offences are easier to commit.
- 6.2 For these reasons, and because of their disfiguring effects, the LEQSE makes detailed assessments of environmental crimes such as flytipping, graffiti, flyposting, and to a lesser degree, wilful damage.

Flytipping, Flyposting and Graffiti

- 6.3 To many people, the overall standard reported by LEQSE for flytipping, flyposting and graffiti of *good*, will be surprising. However, this finding accords with those of other surveys in Britain, and indicates something of the complexity that is often involved in many aspects of local environmental quality and management.
- 6.4 The main factors involved in these apparent disparities include: the varied spatial distributions and intensities of the problems; the relative visibility of a minority of significant incidents of environmental crime, which can influence perceptions of the problems; and the translation of these sensitivities into political prioritisation of resources that can lead to the prompt removal of problems soon after they occur.
- 6.5 *Spatial Distribution, Intensity and Visibility* - the LEQSE indicates that most areas are completely or substantially unaffected by these environmental crimes. However, on a small proportion of the sites where they are present, the problems are intense. Furthermore, in the cases of graffiti and flyposting the perpetrators are usually seeking attention, and so these relatively few cases in prominent locations have a disproportionate effect

on the perceptions of the many passers-by ⁽¹⁾. In contrast, the largest deposits of flytipping often occur in more concealed places.

6.6 *Perceptions* - The large proportion of survey sites where either little or no flytipping, flyposting or graffiti was encountered, underlines the powerful effect that the minority of significant incidents can have on people's perceptions of these problems. This conclusion is reinforced by the survey's finding that the majority of graffiti comprises small juvenile marks; that flyposting is composed largely of small stickers; and flytipping mainly comprises small quantities of domestic refuse.

6.7 ENCAMS' evidence, gained through extensive work on site-specific projects, indicates that these types of minor damage usually result either from normal adolescent behavioural patterns and boredom (exacerbated, perhaps, by a lack of youth service facilities and activities), or from residents who are unaware of the (mainly free) waste services that are provided by councils. In other words, much of the environmental crime-type activity that helps create a fear of crime in local communities is not created by individuals who are fundamentally criminal in character.

6.8 *Political Prioritisation* - Notwithstanding this background to the majority of incidents, community concerns about visible environmental symptoms of crime frequently translate into a high priority being given to flytipping, graffiti and flyposting removal services.

6.9 Consequently, the LEQSE data only describes the balance of the three types of environmental crime that were visible at the time of the survey, *not* the total size of the problems.

6.10 In order to assess the total size of the problem (i.e. the balance of the problems visible at any time *plus* other incidents that have been removed by councils, ENCAMS is developing an LEQS-based technique that aims to evaluate this other, 'invisible' portion of the problems. This work is also intended to identify the *sources* and *causes* of local problems in order to help councils focus their campaigns and programmes of action more sharply. In this way, the total size of the problems should reduce over time.

7.0 **Condition and Management of the Physical Infrastructure**

7.1 The survey assesses two key aspects of highway and other access infrastructure: the *physical condition* of the fabric; and the *degree of obstruction* to service delivery (as well as to pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists) caused by a range of impediments.

7.2 In addition to what might be termed this 'heavyweight infrastructure', the survey examined other more minor items, including litter bins and other items of street furniture.

- 7.3 The final category of physical components comprising the local environment, is 'soft' (planted) landscaping.

Physical Condition of Public Access Infrastructure

- 7.4 The LEQSE findings graphically confirm views expressed in recent debates about the condition of England's highway and public access infrastructure - that it is in a broadly *unsatisfactory* condition and that this is the result of under-investment over many years.

- 7.5 However, within this overall picture there are variations, amongst which clear patterns can be discerned. Although overall, about a quarter of the sample sites contained infrastructure that was in a *significantly* or *heavily* damaged condition, this fell to 16% on Main Roads, but rose to nearly a half in Primary Retail and Commercial Areas, and Low Density Social Housing Areas. Poor design detailing and physical deterioration, respectively, were often involved in these locations.

Obstruction of Road Channels and Paved Areas

- 7.6 The survey identifies obstruction to be a significant, but variable problem that is less prevalent on carriageways (especially on major roads) than on paved areas.

- 7.7 However, one of the important findings is that, overall, over 20% of road channels are obstructed to such a degree that the use of mechanised channel sweeping equipment is not cost-effective, rising to around a third in all types of Retail and Commercial Areas, and almost 40% in High Density Housing Areas.

- 7.8 The second notable finding is that obstruction / impediment to cleansing operations on paved areas used by pedestrians is *poor* across 11 out of 12 Land Use Classes. This situation, which affects all people, but especially those with disabilities and those pushing prams, results from lack of co-ordination by public and private sector bodies; design processes that pay insufficient attention to maintainability; poor workmanship; and the apparent lack of a single body with effective control over these locations.

Street Furniture and Other Minor Infrastructure

- 7.9 The condition of all types of street furniture was *unsatisfactory*, falling just short of satisfactory. In most cases the shortfalls were a matter of only 1 or 2 Standard Quality Intervals (SQIs), and mostly reflected a lack of basic, routine maintenance - such as washing, decoration and minor repair - most of which are capable of straight-forward remedy.

Landscaping

- 7.10 Landscaped areas are classified according to four categories, reflecting the type of landscaping they were designed to be, or currently are. Each landscaped area is then assessed in terms of cleanliness and horticultural maintenance.

- 7.11 Overall, the survey found that both the cleansing and the maintenance of landscaping in nearly all locations was *unsatisfactory*, with standards of maintenance being slightly lower than for cleanliness.
- 7.12 The general conclusion as to why low standards should be widespread is that landscaping schemes are relatively cheap and straight-forward to commission. Therefore, they have been a popular and extensive element in many capital renewal programmes over the last 30 years, bringing with them an immediate impression of transformation.
- 7.13 After installation, however, too many schemes have been neglected, either because the responsibility for their maintenance was not transferred (as a consequence, such schemes were frequently derelict), or inadequate revenue provision was made for their subsequent cleansing and care.
- 7.14 In addition to this category of sites, many older landscaped sites (often, public parks dating from the Victorian and Edwardian eras) were also neglected. These problems appeared to be because horticultural managers had not recognised, or accepted that not all such extensive, labour-intensive designs can be maintained properly in times of rising labour costs and / or specialised skills shortages.

8.0 Spatial Variation and Equity

- 8.1 In its first year, the LEQSE set out to deliver reliable national benchmarks for local environmental elements across 12 Land Use Classes, and overall benchmarks at regional level for each environmental element - this it has achieved.
- 8.2 Nevertheless, even at this initially, abstracted level of information, significant differences in local environmental standards can be seen between land uses and regions.
- 8.3 In terms of land uses, 'Other Highways' (containing many areas of disused roads, lay-bys and turn-ins) are frequently neglected, as are public recreation areas, while many coastal resort areas (reported this year under 'Other Sites') are trying hard to present an environmental setting that meets visitors' expectations.
- 8.4 However, there are some surprises. Despite the awareness of the need for principal town and city centres to compete with out-of-town shopping areas, and the many millions of pounds that have been invested, the survey shows that there is still much scope for improvement. Indeed, the survey reveals that, currently, Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas can contain better standards (e.g. for staining) than primary locations, in spite of them often being subject to less intense management.
- 8.5 While many regions display broadly similar standards *overall*, there are some significant differences, perhaps best displayed by contrasting London with the South-West. In addition, early indicative data (not reported here) suggests that there are notable variations across land uses

at regional level. These will be examined in future LEQSE reports, when sufficient data has been collected to draw accurate conclusions.

9.0 Management of Environmental Services

9.1 Running through most of the conclusions from this survey is a common thread - relating to the need to improve the management of local environmental services. This does not imply that current management is poor - rather that it tends to be patchy, often reflecting traditional professional disciplines within which many technical managers operate and according to which public bodies are often still organised.

9.2 This is a fundamental flaw, because the consumers of local environment - the service funders (be they residents, workers, businesses or investors) - do not see the world in this way. Instead, local environmental quality for them is the *overall product* of these separate professional disciplines - a perspective that the Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (and the emerging district version of LEQS) seeks to reflect.

9.3 Therefore, there is a fundamental need to do more to join-up these separate operations. But there is also a need to improve how we manage the many activities that comprise the management process. Topics that have been identified by this survey and other detailed work using the LEQS protocols include the need for managers to:

- a. ***be more aware that customers' social and economic circumstances vary greatly*** and that each 'market segment' requires specific service specification, communication and delivery strategies (the evidence shows that many people (and micro businesses) 'sin out of ignorance', especially in relation to their disposal of refuse and wastes) ⁽²⁾;
- b. ***understand how decisions in one service area can affect other services*** - examples include: the effects of the design and placement of street furniture on street cleansing; how each permitted land use has a different set of impacts for the maintenance of public spaces; and how cut-backs in youth services may have consequences for the levels of graffiti, vandalism and fear of crime in surrounding areas;
- c. ***ensure that more effective sweeping takes place***. To achieve this managers will need to be more innovative and judicious in the selection and use of mechanical equipment as part of maintenance strategies, and to realise that manual operations are frequently the only way of optimising maintenance standards in congested urban areas;
- d. ***undertake routine systematic monitoring in order to ensure a flow of relevant information*** needed for effective management. Currently, insufficient priority is attached by public bodies to this work. Without comparable information overall performance cannot be reliably assessed; the suitability and effectiveness of the resource strategy cannot be evaluated; the overall quality of workmanship cannot be ascertained

accurately; and the balance between capital investment and revenue (maintenance) requirements cannot be evaluated.

9.4 More importantly, without this type of information, local communities and their elected members also will not have the information that they require to make hard decisions about prioritising services (or even deleting them) and agreeing acceptable service standards and charges.

9.5 However, none of these comments ignore the effects of the major, long-term under investment in some aspects of infrastructure - which shows - and which local managers and their communities are unable to rectify alone.

10.0 Overall Conclusions

10.1 The most positive finding of this first Annual Local Environmental Quality Survey of England is that, overall, 50% (15) of the local environmental elements surveyed were just one or two Standard Quality Intervals short of being *satisfactory*. Experience shows that at these quality levels many elements - especially ones involving routine maintenance, such as cleansing, painting and minor repair of infrastructure - can be improved to a satisfactory standard using existing resources, and in a relatively short timescale, simply through managers spending time identifying the sources of problems. In other words, many current, minor shortfalls in standards reflect a lack of attention to detail, and sometimes, workmanship.

10.2 However, such problems can also be symptoms of works that were undertaken as part of capital renewal programmes for which responsibility was not effectively transferred to a designated body and/or, for which inadequate revenue provision has been made for maintenance. Landscaped areas, recreation sites, street furniture and other minor infrastructure, most frequently suffer from such capital-revenue funding problems, although larger public projects are not immune. The failure of communities to accept and adjust to changing social and economic circumstances, can also be a cause of decline and redundancy affecting sites and infrastructure.

10.3 In order to identify which topics require investigation and remedy, it is necessary that managers have access to regular, reliable, and comparative information about local environmental issues which are important to their customers. To obtain this information, it is essential that they operate a routine, systematic, comprehensive, but cost-effective monitoring system, something that few public bodies do currently.

10.4 Such a monitoring system will also identify locations where problems occur, including whether there are spatial and social inequalities in the application of resources. ⁽³⁾ In this way, therefore, both local environmental quality and equity will be improved and sustained over time.

NOTES

1. In 1999 ENCAMS undertook a major benchmark survey of local environmental quality on the British railway system. This study confirmed that although a significant minority of the system was significantly affected by graffiti (mainly within one hour's travel time of central London) and flytipping (mainly adjacent to deprived housing areas), most parts of the system were substantially, or completely unaffected, contrary to many people's perceptions.

Since the benchmark study was completed ENCAMS has noted that the pattern of problems has changed. This emphasises the need for managers to operate a systematic and routine monitoring system, such as LEQS, if they are to have the information they need to address the social, economic and spatial sources of local environmental quality problems, which are forever changing.
2. Marketing segmentation work undertaken by ENCAMS since 2000, indicates the diversity of the environmental customer base, and how campaigns have to be carefully targeted if they are to achieve their objective of a change in behaviour that will lead to an improvement in environmental quality.
3. ENCAMS is also currently developing a district version of the Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (DLEQS) with local authority partners, for use by local council, which should be available in 2003.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Survey

1.1.1 The survey protocols used for the *Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE)* have been developed by ENCAMS over 14 years on consultancy projects in the United Kingdom and abroad. ENCAMS is a registered environmental charity that, amongst other activities, manages the *Keep Britain Tidy Campaign* and the *Going for Green* brand. Since the 1970's, successive UK Governments have recognised ENCAMS as their Official Litter Abatement Agency, and in recent years as a centre of excellence in relation to local environmental quality monitoring and management.

1.1.2 As society assimilates the complexities involved in achieving *sustainable development*, there has been increasing recognition that people's *quality of life* arises not only from their social and economic circumstances, but also their physical environmental setting. In his '*Liveability*' speech in spring 2001, the Prime Minister responded to this by signalling the need to improve public spaces through the better management of the social, economic and physical factors and processes that determine *local environmental quality*.

1.1.3 An early response to this challenge by DEFRA was to ask ENCAMS to apply its expertise in monitoring to the development of the Local Environmental Quality Survey of England. For the first time, this survey makes available reliable annual information about the places where people live, work and recreate, and in particular, the effectiveness of the many public services that determine an area's local environmental quality.

1.1.4 This report sets out the baseline findings that have been derived from the first survey undertaken during 2001/02. The information will be continually enriched by new data, and the findings will be updated through reports that will be published at intervals.

1.2 Aims of the Survey

1.2.1 The Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE) assesses those aspects of the local environment that members of the public normally take into account when forming an impression of the overall 'quality' of an area – whether they are residents, workers, visitors or investors.

1.3 Survey Objectives

1.3.1 The objectives of the Survey are:

- a. to produce reliable national and regional benchmarks for elements that help determine local environmental quality, related (at national level) to standard land uses;

- b. to begin to identify the social and economic factors that affect local environmental quality;
 - c. to supply LEQ information to Government departments, agencies, local government, and other partners on a regular basis;
 - d. to develop an 'everyday version' of the LEQSE that will enable local authorities to monitor their own services; inform their communities using intelligible local performance indicators; and to provide accurate reports to national audit and inspection bodies;
 - e. to link the LEQSE to detailed technical process and efficiency measures.
- 1.3.2 This baseline report concentrates primarily on reporting national and regional benchmarks, and seeks only to begin to outline the range of issues that appear to affect local environmental quality. Detailed information about the sources and causes of poor local environmental quality, derived from the 2001 / 02 Survey data, and the ways these might be abated or ameliorated, will be examined in subsequent reports.

1.4 Survey Content

- 1.4.1 The environmental aspects that contribute to local environmental quality, covered in the survey, were as follows:

Cleanliness

- a. Litter, flytipping and recent leaf and blossom fall

Cleansing-Related Issues

- b. Detritus, weed growth, staining, flyposting, graffiti and wastes placed out

Highway Infrastructure

- c. Obstruction of paved areas and road channels
Physical condition of paved areas, road channels and carriageways

Street Furniture

- d. Highway posts and lamp posts
Public signs
Other street furniture (seats and benches, railings, bollards etc.)
Visual appearance of adjoining buildings and boundary structures

Litter Bins

- e. Cleanliness, condition and degree to which bins are filled

Landscaping

- f. Litter, and standard of horticultural maintenance

Bus Shelters and Bus Stops

- g. Litter, condition, staining/grime and graffiti

Public Toilets

- h. Litter, condition of fixtures and fittings, staining/grime and odour

1.4.2 In addition to the environmental elements that comprise an area, a detailed examination of ENCAMS' existing survey databases suggested that local environmental quality is also determined by the land uses that predominate in an area. Twelve types of land use were identified for inclusion in the 2001/02 survey:

- a. **Primary Retail and Commercial Areas;**
- b. **Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas**
- c. **Transport Facilities (Railway and Bus Stations)**
- d. **High Density Housing Areas**
- e. **Low Density Social Housing Areas**
- f. **Low Density Private Housing Areas**
- g. **Industrial and Warehousing Areas, and Retail Sheds**
- h. **Main Roads**
- i. **Rural Roads**
- j. **Other Highways (formal and informal lay-bys, and rights of way)**
- k. **Recreation Areas (parks and other green spaces, and canal banks)**
- l. **Other Sites (primarily seaside promenades, and academic precincts)**

1.4.3 In addition to accounting for the differing development patterns in housing areas, the survey was also carefully structured to reflect the social and economic ranges that are present. The definitions of each land use used in the survey have been set out at the beginning of this report.

1.4.4 Two major land uses have been excluded from the survey, because of resource constraints and for practical reasons of access and safety:

- a. **Motorways and Trunk Roads (including slip roads and interchanges);**
- b. **Railway line sides.**

1.4.5 Consequently, some locations that can play a significant role in forming people's opinion of an area are excluded from the current survey. However, the scope and definitions of land uses will be reassessed periodically in the light of experience, changing development patterns and available resources.

1.5 Survey Methodology

1.5.1 Each aspect of the local environment included in this study has been assessed as either, 'good', 'satisfactory', 'unsatisfactory' or 'poor' overall. The criteria on which these judgements have been based are set out below:

- a. **‘Good’** – of an exceptionally high standard that is unlikely to be maintained in all places, at all times, but should be aimed to be achieved after an area has been serviced or a physical element has been replaced or refurbished.

- b. **‘Satisfactory’** – the site being surveyed will not be free of the environmental issue that is being reported on – for example, there may be some litter or graffiti present. However, the extent to which it is present is *unlikely* to be noticed by most people walking or travelling through the survey site, or be regarded as having a significant adverse effect on the quality of the local environment.

The aim of management should be that no element in the environment should fall below the lower end of the ‘satisfactory’ scale before the next service intervention takes place.

- c. **‘Unsatisfactory’** – The environmental element in question is present to such a degree that many people will notice it, and some may regard it as worthy of criticism.

However, many ‘unsatisfactory’ situations are capable of remedy and improvement to a ‘satisfactory’ or better standard within current policy and resource frameworks through focused management action.

- d. **‘Poor’** – the environmental element in question is present to such a degree that few people would fail to notice it, and most people would regard it as a matter for criticism.

A ‘poor’ assessment is normally a reflection of one or more of the following: a significant mismatch between maintenance requirements and policy and strategic frameworks; the impacts of external factors (for example, *very* high levels of physical obstruction, or of pedestrian traffic); a lack of co-ordination between responsible agencies; or there has been a fundamental breakdown in service management.

1.5.2 For each environmental element, these four broad categories have been divided into four subcategories using **Standard Quality Intervals**. The aim is to show detailed variations in overall environmental quality, and how close the standard of each element is to rising (or falling) to the next category. This form of analysis is used to summarise the LEQSE results in Chapters 2.0 and 3.0.

1.5.3 In Chapter 4.0, some of the key issues are examined in more detail. For this analysis, the assessments made on each survey site or ‘transect’ for all relevant environmental elements, such as litter, graffiti, etc., have been summarised and reported under the headings; ‘light’, ‘significant’ or ‘heavy’ – or, if not present at all, as ‘none’.

1.6 Survey Design

- 1.6.1 The LEQSE has been developed with advice from the Audit Commission, The Best Value Inspection Service, The Local Government Association, The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), Office of National Statistics, The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, and DEFRA / ODPM (previously DETR and DTLR).
- 1.6.2 The survey is based on a sample of 54 local authority districts, with one third being replaced each year.
- 1.6.3 There is an average of 6 districts per region (defined by Regional Development Agency boundaries) with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 7, depending on the total number of districts in a region.
- 1.6.4 At the national level, authorities have been selected to form a representative sample. Similarly, at regional level, samples aim to reflect the social, economic and physical environmental characteristics of each Regional Development Agency area.
- 1.6.5 In selecting sample districts, the DETR Indices of Deprivation (average ward scores), and the ONS Classification of Local Authorities (based on the 1991 Census) have been used.
- 1.6.6 Up to 230 standard sample sites have been drawn from each district. Within each district, survey sites have been taken from sample wards that are selected at intervals across the range of deprivation present within the district. Local Development Plans have been used to help identify main land use classes.
- 1.6.7 Survey sites have been concentrated, as far as possible, within the sample wards to maximise surveying efficiency, while ensuring that they are representative of the range of physical conditions within the ward. Surveyors have discretion to go outside sample wards to meet the target for each land use class, but only if necessary. Surveyors, employed by ENCAMS, are carefully selected and trained, and subjected to continuous quality control procedures.

1.7 Presentation Of Survey Results

- 1.7.1 LEQSE results have been presented in this report at three levels:

Overall Service Quality

- 1.7.2 Overall service standards have been presented in graphic form, in four broad colour-coded quality categories of 'good' (dark green), 'satisfactory' (light green), 'unsatisfactory' (yellow), and 'poor' (red), for each of the twelve Standard Land Use Classes, and each of the nine English Regions.

Variations in Service Quality

- 1.7.3 Detailed variations in service standards have also been presented in graphic form (using the same colour coding), for each Standard Land Use Class at a national level and at an overall level for each English Region.
- 1.7.4 In this second set of graphs, each of the four broad quality categories of 'good', 'satisfactory' 'unsatisfactory' and 'poor' has been subdivided so as to show more precisely the standard that has been achieved for each environmental element. Importantly, these graphs show clearly how close a particular standard is to rising (or falling) from one quality category to another.
- 1.7.5 ENCAMS' practical experience has shown that even an observant person will only notice that a difference in environmental standard has occurred after a minimum interval in standard has occurred. Each sub-division on this second type of graph represents such an interval, and is termed an 'SQI' (a 'Standard Quality Interval') in the text of the report.
- 1.7.6 There are four SQIs in each of the four quality categories. The maximum range in the 'satisfactory' and 'good' categories is from +1 SQI to +8 SQI. Similarly, the maximum range in the 'unsatisfactory' and 'poor' categories is from -1 SQI to -8 SQI.

Sources and Causes of Service Standards

- 1.7.7 Key issues arising from the LEQSE results are considered in more detail in Chapter 4.0. In this Chapter, attention is focused on the proportion of sites that are lightly, significantly or heavily affected by each environmental element, rather than on the overall assessment of service quality. This is designed to highlight the extent to which environmental problems are either widespread, or concentrated in small areas.

Reliability of Survey Results

- 1.7.8 Elements such as bus shelters, toilets etc. were surveyed only where they occurred on the sample transects. Sometimes the numbers of sites on which the sample is based is relatively low. In some cases no instances were found in some types of land use (e.g. there were no public toilets recorded in housing or industrial areas, or on main roads, rural roads and other highways).
- 1.7.9 Where there were no observations, this is indicated by blank spaces in the graphs. Where the number of observations was not felt to be sufficient to draw a firm conclusion, but only to give an indication of the position, this is stated in the text of the report.

2.0 OVERALL BENCHMARKS AND VARIATIONS BY LAND USE

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 Figures 2.1 – 2.2 summarise the standards assessed for each of the main aspects of the local environment covered in the LEQSE.
- 2.1.2 Figure 2.1 shows the overall national benchmark standards recorded both for England as a whole, and for each of the Standard Land Use Classes included in the survey. They are expressed in terms of the four broad colour-coded categories of ‘*Good*’, ‘*Satisfactory*’, ‘*Unsatisfactory*’ and ‘*Poor*’.
- 2.1.3 Again at a national level, Figure 2.2 indicates the point on the scale within each broad category at which each element was located.
- 2.1.4 For example, the presence of two ‘blocks’ (called ‘*Standard Quality Intervals*’ - SQIs) on the scale in the *Unsatisfactory* category for cleansing indicates that standards fell towards the middle of that category. On the other hand, the presence of three SQI ‘blocks’ in the *Unsatisfactory* range for detritus indicates that standards fell towards the bottom end of the *Unsatisfactory* range.
- 2.1.5 An SQI represents an interval over which it has been found that an observant person can reliably detect that a difference in quality standard for an environmental element has occurred. There are 4 SQI in each of the four broad quality categories.
- 2.1.6 Figures 2.3 – 2.14 show the pattern of survey results for each of the Land Use Classes. The relatively low number of observations on ‘Other Sites’ means that results for this land use category should be treated only as indicative.

2.2 Cleansing Standards

Litter

- 2.2.1 The overall standard for litter in England during 2001/02 was *Unsatisfactory* (-2 SQI), and rising to *Satisfactory* only in Low Density Private Housing Areas and on Other Sites.
- 2.2.2 Different land uses did, however, display a wide range of variation within the *Unsatisfactory* category, with the highest standards of cleanliness being recorded on Recreation Areas (-1 SQI), and the lowest on Other Highways (-4 SQI).

Flytipping

- 2.2.3 Both overall, and in each Land Use Class, standards maintained in relation to flytipping were *Good*, with significant amounts of flytipping being recorded only on some survey sites within Industrial/Warehousing areas and on Other Highways. A limited proportion of survey sites were, however, heavily affected (see paragraph 4.2.12 ff).

Leaf and Blossom Fall

- 2.2.4 Leaf and blossom fall occurs on a seasonal basis. Overall, standards in relation to leaf and blossom fall were *Good*, both overall and in each Land Use Class, with the lowest standards being found in Recreation Areas (+5 SQI) and on Other Highways (+6 SQI).

2.3 Cleansing-Related Issues

- 2.3.1 The absence or presence of the local environmental issues included in this section can have a significant effect in determining people's perceptions of the cleanliness of public spaces.

Detritus

- 2.3.2 Detritus is formed mainly of grit, silt and other decayed and finely divided organic and inorganic material that accumulates in areas such as road channels and at the back of footways. The level of detritus is a sensitive indicator of the effectiveness of a street cleansing regime.

- 2.3.3 Standards in relation to detritus were *Unsatisfactory* nationally, and were towards the bottom end of the quality category (-3 SQI). However, there were wide variations between land uses, with standards rising to *Satisfactory* in Primary Retail and Commercial Areas (+1 SQI), and falling to *Poor* in Industrial / Warehousing Areas (-5 SQI) and on Rural Roads (-6 SQI). The lowest standards were found on Other Highways (-7 SQI).

- 2.3.4 Detritus accumulated most often in road channels, followed by backlines and on footways.

Weed Growth

- 2.3.5 The overall standard for weed growth was *Satisfactory*, rising to *Good* in Primary Retail and Commercial Areas and Transport Facilities (+5 SQI). Standards were *Satisfactory* in Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas (+2 SQI) and on 'Other Sites' (+3 SQI). Elsewhere, standards were *Unsatisfactory*, falling to their lowest level in Low Density Social Housing Areas (-3 SQI).

- 2.3.6 Weed growth was seen most often along backlines, and in the form of encroachment onto footways from adjacent grass verges. Road channels, footways and paving joints were also commonly affected areas.

- 2.3.7 In some locations, weeds were recorded growing in detritus that had accumulated in road channels and elsewhere, and that root action appeared to be a contributing to the deterioration of highway surfaces.

Staining

- 2.3.8 The overall level of staining was assessed as *Unsatisfactory*, falling to *Poor* in Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas (-6 SQI). However, staining was *Satisfactory* in 'Recreation Areas' (+1 SQI), on Main Roads (+2 SQI), and on Rural Roads (+3 SQI).

2.3.9 The most widespread form of staining was deposits of chewing gum, followed by vehicle-related emissions (primarily oil) and construction-related deposits (paint, cement, concrete etc.). In a minority of cases (mainly in Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas), food and grease stains related to food premises were significant factors.

2.3.10 Other forms of staining occasionally encountered included glue dripped from outdoor advertisement and flyposting sites, and fluids leaching from waste sacks placed out for collection.

Flyposting

2.3.11 Overall, the standard in relation to flyposting was *Good*. Flyposting was most common in Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas (+5 SQI and +8 SQI), where 5% and 3% of sites, respectively, were significantly affected.

2.3.12 Most flyposting took the form of small stickers and posters advertising entertainments. Additionally, there were much smaller proportions of political and personal flyposting, and out-of-date public notices (such as highways and planning notices).

2.3.13 Flyposting was recorded most often on lamp posts (usually in the form of small stickers). There were occurrences on a range of other sites, including litter bins, public utility boxes, signs, shop fronts, and walls.

Graffiti

2.3.14 The overall standard in relation to graffiti was *Good*. It was most prevalent in four types of land use – Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas, Transport Facilities and Recreation Areas (all +5 SQI).

2.3.15 However, locally, graffiti could be intense. Overall, 4% of sites were heavily affected, rising up to 10% in the areas where it was most common.

2.3.16 The majority of graffiti took the form of juvenile scribbles and scratches, but ‘tagging’ (sprayed or boldly drawn personal graphic identifiers) was also a major element.

2.3.17 Graffiti was most common on lamp posts and other highway poles, followed by walls and fences and, as with flyposting, it was also recorded as being present on a wide variety of other street furniture.

2.4 Highway Infrastructure

2.4.1 Some physical elements comprising the local environment can obstruct or impede normal cleansing activities and the delivery of other environmental services. Where areas are badly affected, it may not be possible to achieve *Satisfactory* service standards reliably, or they may be attained only by using innovative or special servicing techniques.

2.4.2 Several aspects of the highway infrastructure can make the delivery of public services more difficult, including physical obstruction, and poorly designed, managed and maintained surfaces.

Obstruction of Paved Areas

2.4.3 The criterion for assessing the degree of obstruction or impediment of paved areas used in the LEQSE is ‘to what extent could the survey site be cleansed solely using a hand-operated mechanical vacuum sweeper?’

2.4.4 Obstructions to cleansing might be fixed (e.g. a range of street furniture) or unfixable (e.g. heavy pedestrian flows, retail goods, advertising boards, or café tables and chairs on the footway). Impediments might include the narrowness of the footway, or the lack of an ‘upstand’ against which to brush. The latter situation was commonest where there were gaps at the bases of hedges and fences, and where grass verges adjoined footways.

2.4.5 Taking all sources and causes into account, the degree of obstruction of paved areas was judged *Poor* - both overall and in most Land Use Classes. The highest standard - *Unsatisfactory* - was recorded in High Density Housing Areas (-4 SQI), with all other Land Use Classes lying in a narrow range between -5 SQI and -6 SQI.

2.4.6 The causes of obstruction and impediment varied between Land Use Classes. Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas were affected by a range of fixed and unfixable obstructions (including retail displays, café tables and chairs, and advertising boards). In other land uses the lack of adequate upstands – either along the backline of footways or around the edges of grass verges - was the main factor.

Obstruction of Road Channels

2.4.7 The overall degree of obstruction of road channels by parked vehicles and other objects, such as construction skips, was assessed as *Satisfactory*. There were, however, wide variations between Land Use Classes.

2.4.8 The highest levels of obstruction were recorded in High Density Housing Areas (-2 SQI), and in Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas (-1 SQI). The lowest levels of obstruction were in Low Density Private Housing Areas (+5 SQI), and on Main Roads and Rural Roads (+8 SQI).

Condition of Paved Areas, Road Channels and Carriageways

2.4.9 Paved areas can be affected by cracking, unevenness and surface ‘pitting’, and by poor reinstatement of utilities’ works. Their detailed design can also create ‘litter traps’, such as deeply incised joints in paving.

2.4.10 Road channels and carriageways are also prone to cracking, unevenness and ‘pitting’, and poorly executed reinstatement work. Road channels may also become eroded by repeated mechanical sweeping. These factors can all affect how practicable it is to remove all items of litter – especially small items such as smokers’ litter, which are easily trapped.

2.4.11 Nationally, and in most land uses, the physical condition of paved areas, road channels and carriageways was assessed as *Unsatisfactory*. Standards ranged mainly between -2 and -3 SQI; rising to -1 SQI in the case of channel condition on Main Roads; but falling to -4 SQI for channel condition in High Density Housing Areas and Low Density Social Housing Areas, and to -4 SQI for paved areas on Other Highways and Rural Roads. Only one *Poor* assessment was recorded, in relation to carriageway condition on Other Highways (-5 SQI).

2.5 Street Furniture

2.5.1 Standards relating to street furniture were uniformly *Unsatisfactory*, with the sole exception of buildings and boundary structures (walls, fences etc.) in Private Housing Areas (+1 SQI). Most assessments were in the upper half of the *Unsatisfactory* category.

2.5.2 The lowest standards were recorded for public signs in Recreation Areas, and for 'other street furniture' on Other Highways (both -3 SQI).

2.5.3 The incidence of derelict or disused (including vacant) buildings was also recorded. Overall, they occurred on 2% of the sites surveyed, and were most common in Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas (8% of sites), Primary Retail and Commercial Areas (5%), and Industrial / Warehousing Areas (4%).

2.6 Litter Bins

2.6.1 Overall, the cleanliness and condition of litter bins was assessed as *Unsatisfactory*, with standards in most land uses ranging from -1 SQI to -2 SQI ⁽¹⁾.

2.6.2 In Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas, however, standards of cleanliness fell to -3 SQI. On Other Highways, however, standards fell to -3 SQI for cleanliness, and -4 SQI for condition - reflecting the 17% of bins that were heavily soiled, and the 22% of bins were either significantly damaged, or destroyed.

2.6.3 The servicing regime (emptying) of litter bins was generally *Good*, with 90% of bins being within serviceable limits. Only 7% were at the point where they were ready for emptying, and just 3% were overfull. On Other Highways and in Low Density Private Housing Areas, however, standards were lower: 9% and 6% of bins, respectively, were overfull.

2.7 Wastes Placed Out

Domestic Refuse

2.7.1 Overall, domestic refuse was placed out for collection on 4% of transects, and was most widespread in Low Density Social, and Private Housing Areas (7% of transects), and in High Density Housing Areas (10%).

2.7.2 Domestic refuse placed out for collection was also recorded in Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas (2% of transects); and in Primary Retail and Commercial Areas and Main Roads (1%), with only a handful of occurrences in other areas.

2.7.3 The great majority of domestic refuse was well contained, either formally (in refuse bins – 75%), or informally (in other containers – 25%). Spillage and loose materials occurred only on 0.25% of survey sites.

Commercial Wastes

2.7.4 Commercial wastes were placed out for collection on 3% of transects overall, and up to 5% in Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas. Elsewhere, they were recorded on Industrial Sites (3%); on Other Sites (2% - mainly seaside promenades).

2.7.5 Most commercial wastes were well contained, either formally (in waste bins – 66%) or informally (in plastic sacks and other containers – 33%). In a small number of cases, wastes were either poorly contained or (more often) placed-out loose.

2.8 Landscaping

2.8.1 Levels of cleanliness and maintenance of landscaped areas located within survey sites were both *Unsatisfactory*.

2.8.2 Cleansing standards were highest in Low Density Private Housing Areas (+1 SQI), and in Recreation Areas, Other Sites and Primary Retail and Commercial Areas (-1 SQI). However, they fell to -4 SQI in Industrial / Warehousing Areas, Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas and Transport Facilities, and to -5 SQI on Other Highways.

2.8.3 The overall standard of landscape maintenance (-3 SQI) was lower than for cleanliness (-2 SQI). The highest standard was recorded in Primary Retail and Commercial Areas (-1 SQI), falling to -5 SQI on Other Highways, and to -4 SQI in other land uses.

2.9 Indicative Findings

Introduction

2.9.1 For two environmental elements - Bus Shelters / Stops and Public Toilets - insufficient data is available to draw conclusions to the same degree of reliability as for other aspects covered by the LEQSE. This was because of the relatively low frequency with which these elements occurred within the selected survey sites. However, useful indicative findings can be drawn from the available information, and these are set out below.

2.9.2 In the case of litter bins, the number of observations varied widely between Land Uses. The reliability of LEQSE findings is summarised in Footnote 1.

Bus Shelters and Bus Stops

- 2.9.3 Cleanliness and staining around bus shelters and bus stops were both assessed as *Unsatisfactory*, as was their physical condition. Staining in and near bus stops was more extensive than in other survey locations (-4 SQI, compared to -1 SQI), reflecting the presence of concentrations of chewing gum, stubbed out cigarettes, and food and drink stains.
- 2.9.4 The number of observations in individual land uses was sufficient to provide reliable data only in Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas (-4 SQI), and Main Roads (-2 SQI). In the former areas, the pattern of staining evident at national level is particularly noticeable. In other Land Use Classes, the results are merely indicative.

Public Toilets

- 2.9.5 Among the limited number of public toilets that were encountered on survey sites during the year, the overall national standard for litter was *Satisfactory* (+3 SQI). In contrast, the other aspects assessed – the condition of fixtures and fittings (-1 SQI), the level of staining, grime and faecal contamination (-1 SQI), and the degree of odour (-2 SQI) all fell into the *Unsatisfactory* classification.

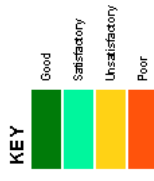
1. Footnote - In some Land Use Classes, the number of litter bins recorded was sufficient to produce reliable results (Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas, and Recreation Areas).

In a number of cases, the results are indicative rather than reliable (Transport Facilities, High Density Housing, Low Density Private Housing, Industrial Areas, Other Highways, and Other sites).

In the remaining Land Use Classes – in Low Density Social Housing, and on Main Roads and Rural Roads – the number of litter bins recorded was not sufficient to be able to draw any conclusions for individual Land Uses.

LEGIS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)

	ALL LAND USE CLASSES											
	Primary retail / commercial	Secondary retail / commercial	Transport facilities	High density housing	Low density social housing	Low density private housing	Industry / warehousing / retail sheds	Main roads	Pure / trade	Other highways	Recreation areas	Other sites
CLEANSING STANDARDS												
Cleansing	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Flyposting	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Leaf fall	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
CLEANSING RELATED												
Detritus	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Weed growth	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Staining	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Flyposting	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Graffiti	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE												
Paved areas obstruction	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Channel obstruction	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Paved areas condition	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Channel condition	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Carriageway condition	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
STREET FURNITURE												
Posts & lamp posts	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Public signs	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Other street furniture	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Buildings/boundary structures	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
LITTER BINS												
Cleansing	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Condition	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Degree of fill	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTR												
Cleansing	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Condition	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Staining/grime	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Graffiti	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
PUBLIC TOILETS												
Cleansing	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Fixtures/fitings	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Staining/grime	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Odour	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
LANDSCAPING												
Cleansing	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
Maintenance	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good



LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions, all land uses)

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 Primary retail / commercial

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS	
	Cleansing
	Flytipping
	Leaf fall
CLEANSING RELATED	
	Detritus
	Weed growth
	Staining
	Flyposting
	Graffiti
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE	
	Paved areas obstruction
	Channel obstruction
	Paved areas condition
	Channel condition
	Carriageway condition
STREET FURNITURE	
	Posts & lamp posts
	Public signs
	Other street furniture
	Buildings/boundary structures
LITTER BINS	
	Cleansing
	Condition
	Degree of fill
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE	
	Cleansing
	Condition
	Staining/grime
	Graffiti
PUBLIC TOILETS	
	Cleansing
	Fixtures/fitings
	Staining/grime
	Odour
LANDSCAPING	
	Cleansing
	Maintenance

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 Secondary retail / commercial

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS	
	Cleansing
	Flytipping
	Leaf fall
CLEANSING RELATED	
	Detritus
	Weed growth
	Staining
	Flyposting
	Graffiti
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE	
	Paved areas obstruction
	Channel obstruction
	Paved areas condition
	Channel condition
	Carriageway condition
STREET FURNITURE	
	Posts & lamp posts
	Public signs
	Other street furniture
	Buildings/boundary structures
LITTER BINS	
	Cleansing
	Condition
	Degree of fill
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE	
	Cleansing
	Condition
	Staining/grime
	Graffiti
PUBLIC TOILETS	
	Cleansing
	Fixtures/fitings
	Staining/grime
	Odour
LANDSCAPING	
	Cleansing
	Maintenance

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 Transport facilities

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	



























KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 High density housing

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 Low density social housing

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 Low density private housing

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 Industrial / warehousing / retail sheds

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 Main roads

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 Rural roads

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 Other highways

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	4 yellow blocks
10 green blocks	Flytipping	
5 green blocks	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	10 blocks: 6 yellow, 4 red
	Weed growth	2 yellow blocks
	Staining	1 yellow block
10 green blocks	Flyposting	
10 green blocks	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	10 blocks: 8 yellow, 2 red
5 green blocks	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	4 yellow blocks
	Channel condition	2 yellow blocks
	Carriageway condition	8 blocks: 6 yellow, 2 red
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	2 yellow blocks
	Public signs	2 yellow blocks
	Other street furniture	3 yellow blocks
	Buildings/boundary structures	2 yellow blocks
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	3 yellow blocks
	Condition	4 yellow blocks
3 green blocks	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	2 yellow blocks
	Condition	1 yellow block
2 green blocks	Staining/grime	
10 green blocks	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	8 blocks: 6 yellow, 2 red
	Maintenance	8 blocks: 6 yellow, 2 red

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 11 Recreation areas

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 England (all regions)
 Other Areas

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 South-East

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fitings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 South-West

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS	
	Cleansing
	Flytipping
	Leaf fall
CLEANSING RELATED	
	Detritus
	Weed growth
	Staining
	Flyposting
	Graffiti
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE	
	Paved areas obstruction
	Channel obstruction
	Paved areas condition
	Channel condition
	Carriageway condition
STREET FURNITURE	
	Posts & lamp posts
	Public signs
	Other street furniture
	Buildings/boundary structures
LITTER BINS	
	Cleansing
	Condition
	Degree of fill
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE	
	Cleansing
	Condition
	Staining/grime
	Graffiti
PUBLIC TOILETS	
	Cleansing
	Fixtures/fittings
	Staining/grime
	Odour
LANDSCAPING	
	Cleansing
	Maintenance

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 West Midlands

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	2 yellow blocks
10 green blocks	Flytipping	
5 green blocks	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	4 yellow blocks
	Weed growth	1 yellow block
	Staining	2 yellow blocks
10 green blocks	Flyposting	
10 green blocks	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	4 yellow blocks, 1 red block
4 green blocks	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	2 yellow blocks
	Channel condition	2 yellow blocks
	Carriageway condition	2 yellow blocks
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	1 yellow block
	Public signs	2 yellow blocks
	Other street furniture	1 yellow block
	Buildings/boundary structures	1 yellow block
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	2 yellow blocks
	Condition	2 yellow blocks
5 green blocks	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	1 yellow block
	Condition	2 yellow blocks
	Staining/grime	3 yellow blocks
4 green blocks	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	1 yellow block
	Fixtures/fittings	1 yellow block
	Staining/grime	1 yellow block
	Odour	4 yellow blocks, 3 red blocks
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	2 yellow blocks
	Maintenance	3 yellow blocks

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 East Midlands

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fitings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 East of England

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 Yorkshire Humberside

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 North-West

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fitings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

LEQS OF ENGLAND 2001/2002
 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY STANDARDS
 North-East

Y1 2001-02

CLEANSING STANDARDS		
	Cleansing	
	Flytipping	
	Leaf fall	
CLEANSING RELATED		
	Detritus	
	Weed growth	
	Staining	
	Flyposting	
	Graffiti	
HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Paved areas obstruction	
	Channel obstruction	
	Paved areas condition	
	Channel condition	
	Carriageway condition	
STREET FURNITURE		
	Posts & lamp posts	
	Public signs	
	Other street furniture	
	Buildings/boundary structures	
LITTER BINS		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Degree of fill	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE		
	Cleansing	
	Condition	
	Staining/grime	
	Graffiti	
PUBLIC TOILETS		
	Cleansing	
	Fixtures/fittings	
	Staining/grime	
	Odour	
LANDSCAPING		
	Cleansing	
	Maintenance	

KEY



Each of the coloured blocks in this chart represents a standard quality interval. This represents the minimum interval over which a reasonably observant person will notice that a difference in quality standard has occurred in an element comprising the local environment.

3.0 REGIONAL VARIATIONS

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This chapter describes the regional variations in local environmental standards that were found by the LEQSE. Figure 3.1 shows the Overall Standard recorded for each element of the local environment (expressed in the four broad, colour-coded, quality categories - 'Good', 'Satisfactory', 'Unsatisfactory' and 'Poor') for each of the nine English Regions, related to the overall national benchmark standards. This figure is a graphic presentation of the analysis of all data collected across all Land Use Classes for each environmental element.

3.1.2 With the exception of the London Region, variations in standards between Regions, at this broad level, were considerably less marked than those between Standard Land Use Classes at a national level.

3.1.3 Except where stated, the variations within each broad quality category between the national benchmarks (Figure 3.2) and regional standards (Figures 3.3 to 3.11) were no more than 1 SQI.

3.1.4 The survey results for 'Other Sites', and for bus shelters and bus stops, are based on relatively low numbers of observations and so the findings at regional level are indicative rather than conclusive.

3.1.5 In the case of public toilets, the number of observations at regional level was very low, and the overall national benchmark is itself only indicative.

3.2 London

3.2.1 A number of aspects of the local environment in the London region fell below overall national standards. In no cases did standards in London exceed national benchmarks.

3.2.2 Standards of street cleansing, the cleansing of litter on landscaped areas, and the visual appearance of adjacent buildings and boundary structures were each 1 SQI, and staining was 2 SQI, below the national benchmark.

3.2.3 Littering and staining around bus shelters and bus stops were also relatively heavy (although here the results are indicative, due to the relatively low number of observations at regional level).

3.2.4 Graffiti was also a greater problem in London than in any other region (+4 SQI, compared to the national benchmark of +8 SQI). Whilst the overall standard was 'satisfactory', with graffiti being either *absent* or *light* on just over 80% of transects, there was a significant minority of sites on which members of the public would have found graffiti to be either noticeable or obtrusive.

- 3.2.5 While the standard of servicing of litter bins was 'good' at +5 SQI, London still fell 2 SQI below the national benchmark of +7 SQI.
- 3.2.6 Obstruction to cleansing and other maintenance operations caused by on-street parking was more pronounced in London than in any other region (-1 SQI compared to the national benchmark of +4 SQI). Therefore, the operation of mechanical road sweepers is significantly impeded, and probably largely ineffective, on over 30% of streets in the Capital.
- 3.2.7 Local environmental standards in London may to an extent, also reflect the generally higher density of population and traffic than elsewhere in England, and the consequent pressures on environmental management resources. In the cases of graffiti and channel obstruction, it is clear that that London faces significantly greater problems than other parts of the country. Overcoming these challenges, therefore, will require clear and relevant strategies and considerable tactical innovation.

3.3 South-East

- 3.3.1 In the South-East, the standard of cleansing, and the condition of litter bins, were slightly better than the national benchmark.
- 3.3.2 However, the level of deterioration of public signs and the visual appearance of adjacent buildings and boundary structures, were slightly worse than the norm. In terms of the level of obstruction of road channels, conditions were 2 SQI worse than the national benchmark (+2 SQI, compared to +4 SQI).

3.4 South-West

- 3.4.1 Local environmental standards in the South-West Region were equal to or higher than national benchmarks in all respects. Cleansing, leaf fall, staining, and the cleansing and maintenance of landscaped areas, were among the elements displaying higher standards.
- 3.4.2 The physical infrastructure of highways also displayed a higher standard than for England, in terms of the condition of paved areas and road channels. The same was true for the condition of 'other street furniture' such as seats, benches and railings, and for the condition of litter bins.

3.5 West Midlands

- 3.5.1 In the West Midlands, standards of physical infrastructure were slightly higher than the national benchmarks in terms of the condition of paved areas, road channels, and 'other street furniture'.
- 3.5.2 On the other hand, some cleansing-related elements – such as detritus and weed growth - fell just below the relevant national benchmarks, as did the condition of public signs.

3.6 East Midlands

- 3.6.1 Most aspects of the local environment in the East Midlands were at or close to the national average. In terms of the level of staining and the degree of obstruction of road channels, however, standards were slightly higher than the norm. The condition of public signs was a little below the national benchmark, as was the visual appearance of adjacent buildings and boundary structures.

3.7 East of England

- 3.7.1 In the East of England, standards were a little higher than the national benchmarks in respect of street cleansing, the cleansing of landscaping, and the condition of highway posts, lamp posts, and 'other street furniture'. However, standards in relation to weed growth were just below the national norm.

3.8 Yorkshire and the Humber

- 3.8.1 Standards in relation to cleansing, staining, the condition and servicing of litter bins, and the cleansing of landscaped areas, were slightly higher in the Yorkshire and the Humber Region than in the country as a whole.

3.9 North-West

- 3.9.1 The condition of litter bins in the North-West was slightly better than the average, as was the standard of maintenance of landscaping.
- 3.9.2 The amount of weed growth, however, was slightly greater than the norm, while the visual appearance of adjacent buildings and boundary structures fell just below the national average. Landscaped areas were also more heavily littered than any other region, with the exception of London.

3.10 North-East

- 3.10.1 In terms of staining and the amount of channel obstruction, standards in the North-East were higher than the national benchmark. A number of aspects of local environmental quality, however, fell below the national benchmark. These included leaf fall; graffiti; the condition of highways, lamp posts, and of public signs; and the visual appearance of adjacent buildings and boundary structures.

4.0 KEY ISSUES

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This chapter looks in more detail at some of the issues noted in Chapters 2.0 and 3.0; specifically at the nature and location of the problems, and at some of the linkages between them.

4.1.2 Where environmental problems are described as 'none', 'light', 'significant' or 'heavy', these terms have precise meanings in the context of this report, and refer to the extent that an issue was present:

- a. **None** – the issue was not present – there was no litter (or no graffiti, or no flytipping) on the relevant survey transects.
- b. **Light** – the issue was present, but only to a limited degree and would not have been noticed by many people passing by;
- c. **Significant** – the issue was present; would probably have been noticeable to most people passing by, and could have given rise to public concern;
- d. **Heavy** – the issue was extensively present and obtrusive in the affected transects, and remedying the problem would probably have involved significant expenditure and / or management effort.

4.1.3 These terms have been applied also to issues of physical condition: for example, the condition of highways and street furniture where descriptions reflect the degree of physical deterioration.

4.2 Cleansing

4.2.1 Between 1% and 2% of sites were free from litter. 81% of sites were *lightly* littered. There were *significant* amounts of litter on 17% of sites, but a little less than 1% were *heavily* littered.

4.2.2 The proportion of sites that were either *significantly* or *heavily* littered ranged from 4% in Low Density Private Housing Areas and 9% on Other Sites (including seaside promenades), to 30% in Industrial and Warehousing Areas, and 43% on Other Highways.

Most Littered Locations

4.2.3 Overall, litter accumulated most often in road channels, followed by backlines and footways. In Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas, and on Other Sites, footways were the most littered parts.

4.2.4 In a number of Land Use Classes, grassed areas and / or verges were the most littered parts: these included, Recreation Areas, Main Roads, Rural Roads, and Other Highways. Grassed areas and verges were also a secondary focus for litter in all Housing Areas, and in Industrial and Warehousing Areas.

Composition of Litter

- 4.2.5 Most litter (89%) came from general litter dropped by people walking or travelling through an area (Pedestrians' & Travellers' Litter); 4% came from commercial sources; 3% comprised spilt domestic refuse; and 3% comprised faeces (mainly dog faeces). Putrescible, clinical, construction, and 'other' materials (that could not be assigned to any specific type) each comprised 1% or less of total litter.
- 4.2.6 The proportion of general litter varied from 78% in Industrial and Warehousing Areas to 95% in Primary Retail and Commercial Areas. The most widespread forms of general litter were smokers' materials, confectionery packaging, and drinks-related material. These variations in general litter reflected the presence of other forms of waste.
- 4.2.7 In housing areas, spilt domestic refuse accounted for between 7% (High Density Housing Areas) and 9% (Low Density Social Housing Areas) of litter. This indicates that there are problems in places with refuse collection systems, either through inadequate containment, allowing spillage; wastes being left out uncollected for a period (for whatever reason), increasing the possibility of spillage; or spillage during the process of loading onto refuse collection vehicles.
- 4.2.8 The most widespread forms of commercial waste were rubber bands discarded by Post Office workers (most common in housing areas), and wastes from industrial and warehousing premises. Commercial wastes formed 20% of litter in Industrial and Warehousing Areas, and between 1% and 4% elsewhere.
- 4.2.9 The proportion and incidence of faeces (mainly dog faeces, but with some elements of bird and other faeces), is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 - Proportion & Incidence of Faeces

Land Use	% Faeces	% Sites Affected
Primary Retail/Commercial	2	10
Secondary Retail/Commercial	1	10
Transport Facilities	2	7
High Density Housing	2	21
Low Density Social Housing	2	20
Low Density Private Housing	3	18
Industrial and Warehousing	1	11
Main Roads	1	10
Rural Roads	5	21
Other Highways	5	18
Recreation Areas	8	28
Other Sites	7	28
All Sites	3	16

4.2.10 The highest proportions of faeces in total litter were recorded in four land uses – Recreation Areas (mainly parks and open spaces); Other Sites (mainly seaside promenades); Rural Roads (primarily where there were footways alongside carriageways), and Other Highways (often on rights of way near built up areas). This pattern reflects the areas where dogs are exercised. Because it can form a health hazard, the extent of faeces in parks and other recreational spaces is a particular cause for concern.

4.2.11 The most widespread form of hazardous waste was broken glass, which was recorded on 13% of sites. This was found mainly on footways, carriageways and in road channels, presenting a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists and animals.

Flytipping

4.2.12 Flytipping is defined as ‘materials that have been deliberately abandoned in unapproved locations, often involving a degree of concealment’.

4.2.13 No flytipping was found on 95% of survey sites. The problem was highly localised, occurring on just 5% of sites. On 58% of sites where flytipping was present, it was only *light*; on 36% it was *significant*; and on 6% (i.e. on only 0.3% of *all* sites surveyed for LEQSE), was it *heavy*. There were, however, wide variations between land uses.

4.2.14 Flytipping was most common on Other Highways (23% of sites, mainly on formal and informal lay-bys) and Industrial and Warehousing Areas (11%). Between 4% and 5% of sites were affected in Low Density Social Housing, Rural Roads, Main Roads and Secondary Retail Areas.

4.2.15 Table 4.2 indicates how widespread and heavy flytipping was in each land use:

Table 4.2 - Incidence and Severity of Flytipping (%)

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Light</i>	<i>Sig't</i>	<i>Heavy</i>
Primary Retail	2	83.5	8.3	4.2
Secondary Retail	4	62.5	37.5	0.0
Transport Facilities	2	61.1	38.9	0.0
High Density Housing	3	70.0	30.0	0.0
Low Density Social Hsg	5	74.0	24.0	2.0
Low Density Private Hsg	1	70.5	29.5	0.0
Industry/Warehousing	11	44.7	43.0	12.3
Main Roads	4	74.4	25.6	0.0
Rural Roads	5	76.7	21.0	2.3
Other Highways	23	40.6	49.6	9.8
Recreation Areas	3	50.0	40.0	10.0
Other Sites	4	70.0	30.0	0.0
<i>Overall</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>58.0</i>	<i>36.0</i>	<i>6.0</i>

4.2.16 The dominant sources of flytipping were domestic (recorded on 25% of sites), commercial (21%) and construction wastes (21%). Other contributory sources included travel-related materials - including tyres and abandoned cars (9%), horticultural wastes (8%), bulky household goods (6%), and 'other' types of materials (10%).

4.2.17 It is important to note that these survey findings are a reflection of the balance between the rate at which flytipping takes place, and the rate of clearance. Although relatively little *significant* or *heavy* flytipping was recorded in Housing Areas, this might reflect higher levels of complaints, or more intense removal services in these areas, compared to Industrial and Warehousing Areas. It would be instructive to compare the LEQSE findings with a similar land use-based analysis of local authority records of flytip removals.

Cleansing Operations

4.2.18 On those occasions where cleansing operations were seen in progress during the survey, only 13% resulted in the complete removal of litter from the site, achieving Grade A under the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (COPL&R).

4.3 Cleansing-Related Issues

Detritus

4.3.1 Detritus comprised decayed organic materials, grit, soil, and finely divided synthetic materials. The presence of detritus has been found to be a sensitive indicator of the quality and / or quantity of the sweeping component of a street cleansing regime.

4.3.2 Detritus was encountered on 98% of the sites surveyed. There was *light* detritus on 59% of sites, *significant* amounts on 37%, and *heavy* detritus on just 1% of sites. Significant or heavy detritus was, therefore, overall just over twice as common as significant or heavy littering.

4.3.3 *Significant* or *heavy* detritus was least common in Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas (8% and 26% of sites respectively), and on Transport Facilities (20%). In residential areas, the proportion of affected sites varied from 34% in Low Density Private Housing to 40% in Low Density Social Housing Areas, and 44% in High Density Housing. Detritus was heaviest in Industrial and Warehousing Areas, Main Roads, Rural Roads, Recreation Areas and Other Highways (between 51% and 67% of sites significantly or heavily affected).

4.3.4 Long-standing, significant or heavy accumulations of detritus were often associated with weed growth, and in many cases the action of weed roots was contributing to the physical deterioration of the highway. This pattern was most common in road channels, along backlines, but was also observed on carriageways and kerb edges.

4.3.5 The most widespread components of detritus were grit / mud / sand / soil (occurring on 77% of transects), followed by decayed leaf and blossom fall (24% of sites). Old grass cuttings were found in 4% of cases.

4.3.6 The majority of detritus was found in road channels, followed by backlines, then footways – a similar pattern to that found for litter. In the majority of land uses, most detritus was recorded in the road channels. The exceptions were Primary Retail and Commercial Areas, where most detritus was found along the backlines; and Recreation Areas and Other Sites, where footways were most affected.

Staining (Primary and Secondary Retail Areas, Bus Shelters/Stops)

4.3.7 Staining was present on 95% of all sites. 71% of sites were *lightly* stained; 23% had *significant* staining; and less than 1% were *heavily* stained.

4.3.8 The most common forms of staining were chewing gum (found on 67% of sites); vehicle related - mainly oil (42%); and construction / DIY related - paint, cement, concrete etc. (14%). Stains originating from food premises and their customers affected between 1% and 2% of sites.

4.3.9 *Significant* or *heavy* staining was concentrated in Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas and around Transport Facilities, where the proportions of affected sites were 51%, 45% and 36% respectively.

Flyposting

4.3.10 Flyposting affected 14% of the sites surveyed. It was *light* on 12% of sites, and *significant* on just under 2% of sites overall.

4.3.11 *Significant* quantities of flyposting were most common in Primary and Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas (9% and 4% of sites respectively); and on Other Sites (3%), the majority of which were seaside promenades. In other land uses, the great majority of flyposting was *light*.

4.3.12 The most widespread form of flyposting was small stickers (placed on lamp posts and highways posts), followed by entertainments posters (mainly on vacant shop fronts and public utility boxes, and sometimes on walls and railings). Other forms of flyposting were infrequent, and included old planning and highway notices that had not been removed; political posters; and personal material (such as 'lost cat' posters).

Graffiti

4.3.13 Graffiti is defined as 'any informal or illegal marks, drawings or paintings that have been made by a person or persons on any physical element comprising the outdoor environment, with a view to communicating some symbol or message to others'.

- 4.3.14 74% of sites contained *no* graffiti, and it was confined to a minority of 26% of the transects surveyed. However, the LEQSE does not currently include land alongside railway tracks (see para 1.4.4), and so omits a proportion of the graffiti that is seen regularly by some members of the public.
- 4.3.15 Where graffiti was present, it was only *light* on 19% of sites, while there was *significant* graffiti on 6%; and *heavy* graffiti on only 0.3% of affected sites.
- 4.3.16 *Significant* and *heavy* occurrences of graffiti were found mainly in four types of location – Recreation Areas and Transport Facilities (15% of sites); Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas (13%), and Primary Retail and Commercial Areas (8%). Elsewhere, between 1% and 5% of sites were affected.
- 4.3.17 Most graffiti (73%) took the form of juvenile scribbles and scratches, with a minority (25%) taking the form of ‘tags’ (personal graphic identifiers, mostly using spray paints or thick indelible marker pens).
- 4.3.18 Graffiti was most common on walls and fences, and on lamp posts and highway posts. It was also found on a variety of street furniture, including public utility boxes, litter bins, seats and benches, public and private signs, and on play equipment and shop fronts.

4.4 Issues Related to the Physical Infrastructure of Highways

- 4.4.1 The cleansing function can be adversely affected by a range of obstructions and other impediments that make it difficult or impossible to cleanse an area completely. These factors include:
- a. ***fixed obstructions***, such as seats, benches, railings, bollards, public utility boxes, lamp posts and highway posts, telephone boxes, bus shelters;
 - b. ***unfixed obstructions***, such as shop displays, advertising A-boards, parked vehicles, wastes placed out for collection;
 - c. ***design factors***, such as the placing of street furniture and the detailing of surfaces that can make an area difficult-to-clean, and the lack of an effective ‘upstand’ against which to brush, whether along the backline, by fences and hedges, on next to grassed verges and other areas;
 - d. ***the physical condition of the infrastructure***, such as cracking, pitting and holing of surfaces due to deterioration or poor workmanship.

Obstruction of Paved Areas

- 4.4.2 Paved areas were assessed on the basis of the extent to which they could be completely cleansed solely using a hand-operated mechanical sweeping machine.

- 4.4.3 99% of survey sites were affected by some degree of obstruction or impediment. 20% of transects were *lightly* affected, and less than 1% were *heavily* obstructed, but 78% suffered from *significant* obstruction.
- 4.4.4 The most widespread factor causing obstruction or impediment was design - the presence of poorly designed or located street furniture, and/or the lack of an upstand - which affected over half of all sites. The lack of an upstand was especially common in a large proportion of the sites in Housing Areas and in Recreation Areas.
- 4.4.5 Business activities (shop displays and advertising A-boards) caused obstruction on about 10% of sites overall, rising to between 35% and 40% in Primary and Secondary Retail Areas. Other minor contributory factors included vehicles parked on footways (4% of sites), and wastes placed out (1%).

Obstruction of Road Channels

- 4.4.6 Road channels were assessed on the basis of the extent of obstruction by parked vehicles and other obstructions, such as skips.
- 4.4.7 Road channels on 50% of survey sites were free from obstruction; 29% were *lightly* obstructed; 18% were *significantly* obstructed; and 3% were *heavily* obstructed. On over 20% of sites, therefore, the efficacy of mechanical sweeping is questionable, because the machines would have been unable to gain access to much of the channel.
- 4.4.8 The degree of obstruction varied widely between land uses. *Significant* or *heavy* obstruction ranged from 1% on Main Roads and Rural Roads, to 29% in Primary Retail and Commercial Areas; 33% in Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas; and 38% in High Density Housing Areas.

Highway Condition

- 4.4.9 The physical condition of the highway has a direct effect on whether or not cleansing activities can remove all the litter and detritus that is present. Cracked, eroded and uneven surfaces can trap material in such a way that mechanical, and even sometimes manual sweeping can fail to dislodge and remove. Importantly, they can also present trip hazards for pedestrians and puncture and safety hazards for cyclists.
- 4.4.10 The LEQSE has distinguished between problems caused by lack of maintenance, leading to deterioration or decay, and those caused by initial design or poor construction.
- 4.4.11 *Paved Areas* - The level of physical deterioration of paved areas was *light* on 65% of sites; *significant* on 34%, and *heavy* on less than 1%. This pattern was fairly consistent across most land uses. On Other Sites (mainly seaside promenades) and in Recreation Areas, the condition of paved areas was better than average, with 24% and 27% of sites, respectively, showing *significant* deterioration. On Rural Roads, on the other hand, this proportion rose to over 50%.

- 4.4.12 The major cause of deterioration was lack of maintenance / decay, with design or poor workmanship being factors in a small proportion of cases.
- 4.4.13 *Road Channels* - The level of physical deterioration of road channels was *light* on 64% of sites, *significant* on 34%, and *heavy* on less than 1% - a similar pattern to that for paved areas.
- 4.4.14 Standards ranged considerably between land uses; *significant* deterioration occurred on only 16% of sites on Main Roads, but on 44% in Primary Retail and Commercial Areas, and 48% in Low Density Social Housing Areas.
- 4.4.15 As with paved areas, the major cause of deterioration was lack of maintenance / decay, with design or poor workmanship being subsidiary factors.
- 4.4.16 *Carriageways* - The level of physical deterioration was *light* on 78% of sites, and *significant* on 21%, with a handful of sites showing *heavy* deterioration. The predominant cause was lack of maintenance / decay.

Street Furniture

- 4.4.17 The condition of all types of street furniture – highway and lamp posts, public signs, and other items, such as seats and benches, bollards and railings – was consistently assessed as falling just short of a ‘satisfactory’ level.
- 4.4.18 On most land uses, there was relatively little variation in standards. However, on ‘Other Highways’, all three environmental aspects (obstruction, highway condition and street furniture) were in poorer condition than on other land uses. The same was true of public signs and other street furniture within Recreation Areas.
- 4.4.19 In the case of lamp posts and highway posts, deterioration was noted in terms of flaking paintwork, peeling plastic coatings, rust, and on occasion, vehicle impact damage. Similar factors were seen affecting other street furniture, while some seats and benches also suffered from missing slats, gouged woodwork, and general ageing of wooden components. Public signs were affected in several ways; fading, algal growth, being obscured by graffiti and/or flyposting, and physical damaged caused by vandals and passing vehicles.
- 4.4.20 *Significant deterioration*, however, was limited to 7% of sites in the case of highway and lamp posts; 13% for public signs; and 16% for other street furniture. This suggests that a relatively modest programme of investment, linked to regular monitoring of maintenance operations, could lift standards to a ‘satisfactory’ level.

4.5 Landscaped Areas

4.5.1 Landscaped areas (including grassed verges) were present on approximately half of all the sites surveyed. The majority of sites (70%) were formal, low maintenance grassed or shrubbed areas. Natural planting using mainly native species was recorded on 9% of sites, and unmaintained / abandoned landscapes were found on 18% of sites. The remaining 3% were high maintenance landscape sites (e.g. formal flowerbeds), requiring more intense horticultural maintenance.

Cleanliness of Landscaped Sites

4.5.2 No litter was found on 3% of sites, while 78% were only *lightly* littered. However, 18% of sites were *significantly* littered, and 2% suffered from *heavy* littering.

4.5.3 The proportion of sites that were *significantly* or *heavily* littered varied widely between land uses. In housing areas: 7% of sites were affected in Low Density Social Housing; 11% in Low Density Private Housing; and 15% in High Density Housing, while in Recreation Areas, 11% were similarly affected.

4.5.4 At the other end of the scale, *significant* or *heavy* littering was found on 30% of landscaped sites in Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas, 32% in Industrial and Warehousing Areas, and 43% on Other Highways.

Maintenance of Landscaped Sites

4.5.5 The standard of maintenance of landscaped areas was somewhat lower than the standard of cleanliness. 70% of sites were maintained to an adequate or better standard, but there was a *significant* shortfall in maintenance standards on 29% of sites. The level of maintenance was poor in less than 1% of cases.

4.5.6 As with the findings for cleanliness, the maintenance of landscaped areas in business locations was generally the least satisfactory. In Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas, 32% of sites showed either a *significant* or a *heavy* shortfall in maintenance. The comparable figures for Industrial and Warehousing Areas, Transport Facilities (railway and bus stations) and Other Highways were 37%, 45% and 53% of sites respectively.

5.0 SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 As society assimilates the complexities involved in achieving *sustainable development*, there has been increasing recognition that people's *quality of life* arises not only from their social and economic circumstances, but also their physical environmental setting. In his '*Liveability*' speech in spring 2001, the Prime Minister responded to this by signalling the need to improve public spaces through better management of the social, economic and physical factors and processes that determine *local environmental quality*.

5.1.2 An early response to this challenge by DEFRA was to ask ENCAMS to apply its expertise in monitoring to the development of the Local Environmental Quality Survey of England. For the first time, this survey makes available reliable annual information about the places where people live, work and recreate, and in particular, the effectiveness of the many public services that determine an area's local environmental quality.

5.1.3 This summary sets out the baseline findings and conclusions of the first survey, undertaken during 2001/02.

5.2 Litter and Other Cleansing Related Issues

Litter

5.2.1 The overall standard for litter was *unsatisfactory*, although only by 2 Standard Quality Intervals (SQI). There is, therefore, scope for improvement. When the difference between quality categories for applied services (such as cleansing) is only one or two SQI, it is often possible to achieve a satisfactory standard within the existing resource base, through the better specification, timing and application of service operations.

5.2.2 However, this improvement will not be achieved by a single, easy change. The LEQSE indicates that there are significant differences in cleansing standards between land uses and that some - such as Industrial and Warehousing Sites and Other Highways - are suffering considerable inequalities of standard. This is concerning, because low environmental standards are off-putting, both to quality investors and skilled workers.

5.2.3 Regarding the composition of litter, the various segments, overall, conform to ENCAMS' historic benchmark data. However, the significant components that are hazardous to health - notably dog fouling (which comprises 8% of litter in Recreation Areas), and broken glass (mainly from drinks bottles), which is also a safety hazard on highways to cyclists - are of particular concern. The largest source of commercial litter nation-wide - elastic bands dropped by postal delivery workers - is also of interest.

5.2.4 However, when examining any component of local environmental quality, it is important to understand its relationships to other elements. By understanding these relationships, one can deduce much about the management regimes that are operating.

Detritus, Weed Growth and Weed Control

5.2.5 There are especially important and telling relationships between litter, detritus (grit, decayed leaves etc) and weed growth. In particular, detritus is a sensitive indicator of the quality and quantity of sweeping (as opposed to litter picking activity) that is being applied as part of a cleansing regime. Similarly, long-standing deposits of detritus provide moist, fertile locations for seed germination and weed growth. Furthermore, if weed growth remains undisturbed its root action can subsequently damage highway and other surfaces - a frequently encountered problem during this survey.

5.2.6 The survey's findings for detritus, which was *unsatisfactory* (with 38% of sites - especially road channels and backlines - being either *significantly* or *heavily* affected), is a matter for concern because it indicates that insufficient, effective sweeping is being undertaken in England.

5.2.7 With regard to weed growth, although the overall standard is *satisfactory*, there are notable variations between land uses (with Low Density Social Housing Areas suffering the lowest standard). Furthermore, at a detailed survey site level, there was a relationship between locations where significant amounts of detritus lay and where weed growth occurred - notably along backlines, verge edges and in road drainage channels.

5.2.8 The encroachment of weed growth around verge edges was stimulated by the practice of leaving grass cuttings lying on adjacent highway surfaces, where it mulches down to become a component of detritus.

5.2.9 An allied practice of relying solely on herbicidal spraying for weed control and even for 'edging' or growth restraint along the perimeters of grassed areas, is also unsatisfactory. Not only are there environmental pollution consequences to this method, but often it was poorly executed, leaving unsightly, dead or partially dead vegetation that collects detritus and litter, and can pose a trip hazard. Periodic, vigorous sweeping not only removes detritus (and therefore a major stimulant of weed growth) - but it also disturbs seedlings that germinate in other locations, such as cracks and joints in the paved infrastructure.

5.2.10 These observations reinforce later comments about the need to achieve better integration of planning, design and maintenance between agencies that are responsible for horticultural activity, highways and development.

Staining

- 5.2.11 Together with detritus and weed growth, staining can have a considerable 'dulling' effect on local environmental quality, leaving areas that may be satisfactorily free from litter looking grubby and unappealing. That is why the LEQSE describes these and other factors as being 'Cleansing Related'.
- 5.2.12 Overall, the survey assessed staining to be *unsatisfactory*, falling to *poor* in Primary and Secondary Retail Areas. A range of components have been identified, with trodden-in chewing gum being the major source, although other sectors, including motor vehicles, the construction industry and fast-food businesses and their customers, are also significant contributors.
- 5.2.13 A range of factors is responsible for increased levels of staining: reductions in rainfall; the presence of older, poorly maintained vehicles in some areas; considerable increases in the numbers of people eating and drinking in public spaces - especially foodstuffs that are fatty and artificially coloured drinks; lack of discipline by certain business sectors; and poorly designed and specified paving surfaces that retain and / or reveal stains.
- 5.2.14 Some local authorities have responded by introducing street washing and gum removal - but clearly not enough have done so. However, of those that have introduced street washing, most have tended towards higher volume / high-pressure techniques. These have not only affected the joints, surfaces and stability of some paved areas, but they are also wasteful of water.
- 5.2.15 This evidence indicates that apart from the need to increase the amount of washing that is undertaken there is also a need for public cleansing managers in England to be more innovative. Low pressure / low volume industrial cleansing techniques that include water recovery and filtering, which have been introduced successfully elsewhere in Europe, are still uncommon in this country.

5.3 Environmental Crime and Fear of Crime

- 5.3.1 In recent years, there has been an increasing recognition of the links between neglect, wilful environmental damage, and crime. In particular, these forms of poor local environmental quality send out signals to law-abiding people and businesses that can cause them to become fearful of crime. Research also indicates that these environmental problems may also signal to criminals that policing (in its various forms) in the affected areas is less vigilant, and that offences are easier to commit.
- 5.3.2 For these reasons, and because of their disfiguring effects, the LEQSE makes detailed assessments of environmental crimes such as flytipping, graffiti, flyposting, and to a lesser degree, wilful damage.

Flytipping, Flyposting and Graffiti

- 5.3.3 To many people, the overall standard reported by LEQSE for flytipping, flyposting and graffiti of *good*, will be surprising. However, this finding accords with those of other surveys in Britain, and indicates something of the complexity that is often involved in many aspects of local environmental quality and management.
- 5.3.4 The main factors involved in these apparent disparities include: the varied spatial distributions and intensities of the problems; the relative visibility of a minority of significant incidents of environmental crime, which can influence perceptions of the problems; and the translation of these sensitivities into political prioritisation of resources that can lead to the prompt removal of problems soon after they occur.
- 5.3.5 *Spatial Distribution, Intensity and Visibility* - the LEQSE indicates that most areas are completely or substantially unaffected by these environmental crimes. However, on a small proportion of the sites where they are present, the problems are intense. Furthermore, in the cases of graffiti and flyposting the perpetrators are usually seeking attention, and so these relatively few cases in prominent locations have a disproportionate effect on the perceptions of the many passers-by. In contrast, the largest deposits of flytipping often occur in more concealed places.
- 5.3.6 *Perceptions* - The large proportion of survey sites where either little or no flytipping, flyposting or graffiti was encountered, underlines the powerful effect that the minority of significant incidents can have on people's perceptions of these problems. This conclusion is reinforced by the survey's finding that the majority of graffiti comprises small juvenile marks; that flyposting is composed mainly of small stickers; and that most flytipping comprises small quantities of domestic refuse.
- 5.3.7 ENCAMS' evidence, gained through extensive work on site-specific projects, indicates that these types of minor damage usually result either from normal adolescent behavioural patterns and boredom (exacerbated, perhaps, by a lack of youth service facilities and activities), or residents who are unaware of the (mainly free) waste services that are provided by councils. In other words, much of the environmental crime-type activity that helps create a fear of crime in local communities may not be created by individuals who are fundamentally criminal in character.
- 5.3.8 *Political Prioritisation* - Notwithstanding this background to the majority of incidents, community concerns about visible environmental symptoms of crime frequently translate into a high priority being given to flytipping, graffiti and flyposting removal services.
- 5.3.9 Consequently, the LEQSE data only describes the balance of the three types of environmental crime that were visible at the time of the survey, *not* the total size of the problems.

- 5.3.10 In order to assess the total size of the problem (i.e. the balance of the problems visible at any time *plus* other incidents that have been removed by councils, ENCAMS is developing an LEQS-based technique that aims to evaluate this other, 'invisible' portion of the problems. This work is also intended to identify the *sources* and *causes* of local problems in order to help councils focus their campaigns and programmes of action more sharply. In this way, the total size of the problems should reduce over time.

5.4 Condition and Management of the Physical Infrastructure

- 5.4.1 The survey assesses two key aspects of highway and other access infrastructure: the *physical condition* of the fabric; and the *degree of obstruction* to service delivery (as well as to pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists) caused by a range of physical impediments.
- 5.4.2 In addition to what might be termed this 'heavyweight infrastructure', the survey examined other more minor items, including litter bins and other items of street furniture.
- 5.4.3 The final category of physical components comprising the local environment that the LEQSE assesses, is 'soft' (planted) landscaping.

Physical Condition of Public Access Infrastructure

- 5.4.4 The LEQSE findings graphically confirm views expressed in recent debates about the condition of England's highway and public access infrastructure - that it is in a broadly *unsatisfactory* condition and that this is the result of under-investment over many years.
- 5.4.5 However, within this overall picture there are variations, amongst which clear patterns can be discerned. Although overall, about a quarter of the sample sites contained infrastructure that was in a *significantly* or *heavily* damaged condition, this fell to 16% on major roads, but rose to nearly a half in Primary Retail and Commercial Areas, and Low Density Social Housing Areas. Poor design detailing and physical deterioration were often involved, respectively, in these locations.

Obstruction of Road Channels and Paved Areas

- 5.4.6 The survey identifies obstruction to be a significant, but variable problem, which is less prevalent on carriageways than on paved areas - especially on major roads.
- 5.4.7 However, one of the important overall findings is that, over 20% of road channels are obstructed to such a degree that the use of mechanised channel sweeping equipment is not cost-effective, rising to around a third in all types of Retail and Commercial Areas, and almost 40% in High Density Housing Areas.

- 5.4.8 The second notable finding is that obstruction on paved areas used by pedestrians is *poor* across 11 out of 12 Land Use Classes. This situation, which affects all people, but especially those with disabilities and those pushing prams, results from lack of co-ordination by public and private sector bodies; design processes that pay insufficient attention to long-term maintenance; poor workmanship; and the apparent lack of a single body with effective control over these locations.

Street Furniture and Other Minor Infrastructure

- 5.4.9 The condition of all types of street furniture was *unsatisfactory*, falling just short of satisfactory. In most cases the shortfalls were a matter of only 1 or 2 SQIs, and mostly reflected a lack of basic, routine maintenance - such as washing, decoration and minor repair - most of which are capable of straight-forward remedy.

Landscaping

- 5.4.10 Landscaped areas were divided into four categories, reflecting the type of landscaping they were designed to be, or currently are. Each landscaped area was then assessed in terms of litter and horticultural maintenance.

- 5.4.11 Overall, the survey found that both the cleansing and the maintenance of landscaping in nearly all locations was *unsatisfactory*, with standards of maintenance being slightly lower than for cleanliness.

- 5.4.12 The general conclusion as to why low standards should be widespread is that landscaping schemes are comparatively cheap and straightforward to commission. Therefore, they have been a popular and extensive element of many capital renewal programmes over the last 30 years, bringing with them an immediate impression of transformation.

- 5.4.13 After installation, however, too many schemes have been neglected, either because the responsibility for their maintenance was not transferred (as a consequence, such schemes were frequently derelict), or inadequate revenue provision was made for their subsequent cleansing and care.

- 5.4.14 In addition to this category of sites, many older landscaped sites (often, public parks dating from the Victorian and Edwardian eras) were also neglected. These problems appeared to be because horticultural managers had not recognised, or accepted that not all these many labour-intensive designs can be maintained properly in times of rising labour costs and / or specialised skills shortages.

5.5 Spatial Variation and Equity

- 5.5.1 In its first year, the LEQSE set out to deliver reliable national benchmarks for local environmental elements across 12 Land Use Classes, and overall benchmarks at regional level for each environmental element - this it has achieved. Nevertheless, even at this initially, abstracted level of information, significant differences in local environmental standards can be seen between land uses and regions.

5.5.2 In terms of land uses, 'Other Highways' (containing many areas of disused roads, lay-bys and turn-ins) are frequently neglected, as are public recreation areas, while many coastal resort areas (reported this year under 'Other Sites') are trying hard to present environmental settings that meet visitors' expectations.

5.5.3 However, there are some surprises. Despite the awareness of the need for principal town and city centres to compete with out-of-town shopping areas and the many millions of pounds that have been invested, the survey shows that there is still much scope for improvement. Indeed, the survey reveals that, currently, Secondary Retail and Commercial Areas can contain better standards (e.g. for staining) than primary locations, in spite of them often being subject to less intense management.

5.5.4 While many regions display broadly similar standards *overall*, there are some significant differences, perhaps best displayed by contrasting London with the South-West. Early indicative data (not reported here) suggests that notable variations will be displayed also across land uses at regional level. These will be explored in future LEQSE reports when additional data has been accumulated.

5.6 Management of Environmental Services

5.6.1 Running through most of the conclusions from this survey is a common thread - relating to the need to improve the management of local environmental services. This does not imply that current management is poor - rather that it tends to be patchy, often reflecting traditional professional disciplines within which many technical managers operate and according to which public bodies are often still organised.

5.6.2 This is a fundamental flaw, because the consumers of local environment - the service funders (be they residents, workers, businesses or investors) - do not see the world in this way. Instead, local environmental quality for them is the *overall product* of these separate professional disciplines - a perspective that the Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (and the emerging district version of LEQS) seeks to reflect.

5.6.3 Therefore, there is a fundamental need to do more to join-up these currently separate operations. But there is also a need to improve how we manage the many activities that comprise the management process. Topics that have been identified by this survey and other detailed work using the LEQS protocols include the need for managers to:

- a. ***be more aware that customers' social and economic circumstances vary greatly*** and that each 'market segment' requires specific service specification, communication and delivery strategies (the evidence shows that many people (and micro businesses) 'sin out of ignorance', especially in relation to their disposal refuse and wastes);

- b. **understand how decisions in one service area can affect other services** - examples include: the effects of the design and placement of street furniture on street cleansing; how each permitted land use has a different set of impacts for the maintenance of public spaces; and how cut-backs in youth services may have consequences for the levels of graffiti, vandalism and fear of crime in surrounding areas;
- c. **ensure that more effective sweeping takes place.** To achieve this managers will need to be more innovative and judicious in the selection and use of equipment as part of maintenance strategies, and to realise that manual operations are frequently the only way of optimising maintenance standards in congested urban areas;
- d. **undertake routine, systematic monitoring in order to ensure a flow of relevant information** needed for effective management. Currently, insufficient priority is attached by public bodies to this work. Without comparable information, overall performance cannot be reliably assessed; the suitability and effectiveness of the resource strategy cannot be evaluated; the overall quality of workmanship cannot be ascertained accurately; and the balance between capital investment and revenue (maintenance) requirements cannot be evaluated.

5.6.4 More importantly, without this type of information, local communities and their elected members also will not have the information they require to make hard decisions about prioritising services (or even deleting them) and agreeing services levels and charges.

5.6.5 However, none of these comments ignore the effects of the major, long-term under investment in some aspects of infrastructure - which shows - and which local managers and their communities are unable to rectify, either quickly or on their own.

5.7 Overall Conclusions

5.7.1 The most positive finding of this first Annual Local Environmental Quality Survey of England is that, overall, 50% (15) of the local environmental elements surveyed were just one or two Standard Quality Intervals short of being *satisfactory*. Experience shows that at these quality levels many elements - especially ones involving routine maintenance, such as cleansing, painting and minor repair of infrastructure - can be improved to a satisfactory standard within existing resources, and in a relatively short timescale, simply through managers spending time identifying the sources of problems. In other words, many current, minor shortfalls in standards reflect a lack of attention to detail, and sometimes, workmanship.

5.7.2 However, such problems can also be symptoms of works that were undertaken as part of capital renewal programmes, for which responsibility was not effectively transferred to a designated body and / or, for which inadequate revenue provision has been made for maintenance.

- 5.7.3 Landscaped areas, recreation sites, street furniture and other minor infrastructure, most frequently suffer from such capital-revenue funding problems, although larger public projects are not immune. The failure of communities to accept and adjust to changing social and economic circumstances, can also be a cause of decline and redundancy affecting the infrastructure of public spaces.
- 5.7.4 In order to identify which topics require investigation and remedy it is necessary for managers to have access to regular, reliable, and comparative information about local environmental issues that are important to their customers. To obtain this information, it is essential that they operate a routine, systematic, comprehensive, but cost-effective monitoring system, something that few public bodies do currently.
- 5.7.5 Such a monitoring system will also identify locations where problems occur, including whether there are spatial and social inequalities in the application of resources. In this way, therefore, both local environmental quality and equity will be improved and sustained over time.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The following recommendations are made based on the evidence gained from this first Annual Local Environmental Survey of England. The recommendations have kept deliberately to a strategic level for consideration by Government and at Local Authority corporate levels. Other, detailed recommendations can be produced in support of these main action topics.

6.1.2 The recommendations are made under three headings:

- a. *a strategic approach to local environmental maintenance;*
- b. *reconciling capital and revenue funding imbalances;*
- c. *operational excellence.*

6.1.3 Some recommendations can be implemented within existing resources; some will require information gathering at local level, but can be implemented in the medium-term, within the expected resource and operational structures; others will require significant capital funding, or action within the context of multi-agency projects, or may require changes in policy or organisational settings, implying a longer-term framework.

6.2 A Strategic Approach to Local Environmental Maintenance

Monitoring Systems

6.2.1 Local authorities should adopt a systematic monitoring system that enables them to assess local environmental standards, and to compare them with national benchmarks. Such a monitoring system should cover all aspects of local environmental quality that are important to customers, including infra-structural elements as well as maintenance standards.

6.2.2 A comprehensive monitoring system will have components in addition to the LEQS, including a review of district demographic trends, customer characteristics and preferences, and an examination of the functional performance of existing urban design solutions.

Use of Monitoring Data

6.2.3 The outputs of the monitoring system should be used by all involved local authority departments and other agencies to identify issues upon which improvements need to be made.

Local Environmental Improvement Plan

6.2.4 The issues for improvement should be compiled into a Local Environmental Improvement Plan. In the plan, actions should be allocated to appropriate time horizons (short, medium and long-term); responsibility for each issue should be assigned to a department / agency; and a target and date for improvement should be set.

- 6.2.5 The design and management of paved areas is an example of a widespread problem that should be addressed in this way.

Communications, Campaigns and Service Specifications

- 6.2.6 The information derived from the recommended monitoring of district demographics and communities will have considerable benefit also in ensuring that:

- a. *communications* use appropriate media and language;
- b. *campaigns* are precisely targeted; and that,
- c. *public services* meet the different social and economic characteristics and preferences of local communities.

Environmental Equity

- 6.2.7 Last, but not of least significance, is the role of a reliable monitoring system in ensuring that all land uses and communities receive environmental maintenance services that attain (and maintain) at least a minimum acceptable standard.

6.3 Reconciling Capital and Revenue Funding Imbalances

- 6.3.1 At both national and local levels, considerable work is required to ensure that public and public-private capital investments are properly maintained through the timely allocation of adequate revenue funding and maintenance responsibility.

- 6.3.2 Current and past imbalances between capital and revenue funding streams have resulted in many areas having been subject to environmental improvement and regeneration schemes that now languish in a neglected condition.

- 6.3.3 To address these inherited problems, remedial programmes will need to be established that are designed either:

- a. to renovate affected schemes where future revenue funding and stewardship can be secured; or,
- b. to amend, remove or dispose of the assets where adequate future maintenance funding cannot be identified and assured.

6.4 Operational Excellence

Service Frequencies and Work Standards

- 6.4.1 The LEQSE identifies that much 'lightweight infrastructure' (such as street furniture) is capable of being improved to a *satisfactory* standard through the better timing and more careful application of current resources.

- 6.4.2 Therefore, two further applications of the recommended local environmental monitoring system should be to ensure that:
- a. the refurbishment / replacement of assets occurs before they decline to an *unsatisfactory* condition, or worse; and,
 - b. the quality of workmanship employed on local environmental maintenance works is satisfactory or better.

6.4.3 To assist in achieving the second objective, steps should be taken to ensure that all operatives are properly trained in the tasks that are assigned to them - even apparently straight-forward operations, such as manual sweeping.

Innovation

6.4.4 The LEQSE found that a relatively limited range of maintenance techniques was being used, and that some were being applied inappropriately.

6.4.5 This appeared to be especially the case in relations to litter, staining, and to an extent, landscape maintenance.

6.4.6 *Litter* - The main shortcoming was a lack of adequate sweeping, either because of:

- a. the excessive use of expensive mechanical equipment in physically obstructed locations (a potentially significant waste of a current resource); or,
- b. the over-reliance on litter picking (even in some instances where operatives were equipped also with a range of brushes).

6.4.7 *Staining* - The LEQSE identifies that staining can be a significant problem, caused partly by changes in people's eating patterns and the foodstuffs they consume, and by a general reduction in overall rainfall. Some councils have responded by undertaking targeted pressure washing, although most areas do not receive any routine attention.

6.4.8 Experience gained abroad indicates that there is considerable scope for innovation, including the use of equipment from outside the traditional municipal equipment field.

6.4.9 An innovation programme should be established to demonstrate both the range of alternative equipment that is available and the bases for deciding whether or not mechanical techniques should be deployed.