

September 2004

WM Enterprise Consultants
2nd Floor
Orbital House
85-87 Croydon Road
Caterham, Surrey
CR3 6PD

T: 01883 332579

F: 01883 337112

E: mail@wm-enterprise.co.uk

W: www.wm-enterprise.co.uk



Neighbourhood Management
in Springbourne & Boscombe West

EVALUATION OF THE 'SAFE AND CLEAN' PROJECT

A REPORT BY: WM ENTERPRISE CONSULTANTS

EVALUATION OF THE 'SAFE AND CLEAN' PROJECT

CONTENTS

	Page Number
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. PROJECT BACKGROUND	2
3. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS	5
4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	10

APPENDIX I – LIST OF CONSULTEES

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of the Safe and Clean Initiative run by Bournemouth Council on behalf of the Neighbourhood Management (NM) initiative in Springbourne and Boscombe West. WM Enterprise Consultants conducted the evaluation of this project during May and June 2004, with the assistance of the NM Team.

The purpose of the evaluation has been to assess the success of the scheme to date in achieving its aims, to identify the need for continued assistance, and to assess the extent to which the project is likely to be mainstreamed by the Council.

The evaluation process has included a review of project monitoring information from both the Bournemouth Borough Council Street Scene Department and the Street Representatives' grading of local streets. We have also gathered information via a face-to-face interview with the project manager (Mike Moon – Bournemouth Borough Council's Street Scene Manager) and analysis of feedback forms completed by key stakeholders within the Springbourne and Boscombe West area, including ward councillors, representatives from the Dorset Constabulary, Bournemouth Borough Council's Parks Maintenance Department, members of the Neighbourhood Wardens team and some of the NM scheme's street representatives.

Both WM Enterprise Consultants and the Springbourne and Boscombe West NM team would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to those who have contributed to this evaluation, including those who completed and returned the feedback forms.

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Safe and Clean project was originally based on an American concept, which brings together elements of enforcement and a dedicated crew exclusively to serve the NM area. The project has brought together the Neighbourhood Wardens scheme and all elements of cleansing within the Neighbourhood Management area to achieve a clean, safe and attractive local environment.

2.1 GENERAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Safe and Clean project provides 148 hours of work per week within the Neighbourhood Management area, delivered by four employees contracted through Bournemouth Borough Council. The work comprises three key elements:

- First is scheduled work, which involves cleaning/litter-picking on specific roads on designated days;
- Second is the collection of bulky goods. Residents in the NM catchment area are effectively provided with this service free of charge, given that NM funds the cost of implementing this; however, residents in other areas of Bournemouth must pay for the removal of bulky goods;
- Third is the steam cleaning of streets within the Neighbourhood Management area once a week.

The Neighbourhood Wardens are all provided with copies of the 'Safe and Clean' schedule and it is their role to monitor the project on the ground and to ensure that all of the scheduled work is completed and that all of the street cleansing takes place. The wardens are also able to report cases of fly tipping to the Safe and Clean team to ensure that these issues are addressed promptly.

The project commenced in November 2002 and its Neighbourhood Management funding is due to cease in January 2005. The project has received £170,000 of Neighbourhood Management funding to date. The project will receive £272,200 in total over its lifetime. NM funding has covered the costs of all operations and the Safe and Clean project and the project has not received funding from any other sources.

The nature of the project has evolved since its inception. Before the steam cleaning of local streets was introduced, the project merely visited each street once a week and originally, there was no limit placed on the amount of bulky goods that the Safe and Clean team could remove. Safe and Clean has now imposed a limit on the amount of bulky goods that can be removed at two calls per household per year and a maximum of three items per collection due to cost and resource related issues. In addition, in order to respond to the needs of local residents, the focus of the project has shifted from removing dumped and bulky items to concentrating on one-off cleaning as and when required. For example, during the summer of 2003, a deep clean was conducted after a significant amount of litter was found in the streets surrounding Sea Road. This change of focus was agreed between the management of the Safe and Clean project and the NM management team and since the limit was placed on the number of enquiries for bulky items, there has been no evidence of increased fly tipping within the NM area. The deep clean of the Sea Road area was well received by local residents and businesses and also illustrates that the Safe and Clean management team was proactive when notable litter problems arose in the NM area.

2.2 PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the project is to enhance the environmental quality of the Neighbourhood Management area and to improve the visual quality of the area, which is intended to have a knock-on effect of reducing both the incidence of crime and the fear of crime. The other key objectives of the project are to:

- Provide an upgrade in street cleansing levels within the Neighbourhood Management area that is noticeable to all and would raise standards generally to Grade B of the Environmental Protection Act;
- Create a safe and clean environment;
- Provide a multi-skilled team to create the 'Safe and Clean' theme throughout the NM target area;
- Build up relationships with local residents and action groups;
- Remove graffiti and fly tipping on a daily basis;
- Improve the general cleanliness of local streets;
- Improve levels of pride in the local community.

The over-riding objective of Safe and Clean is to improve the local environment. While the project manager was not fully aware of precisely how the Safe and Clean project fits in with the Strategic Objectives of the NM programme, there was an awareness that the project fitted in with the Neighbourhood Management Environmental sub-group's objectives (in particular those relating to improving social housing).

The project is intended to address a number of key issues identified in the baseline research for the NM area. The Safe and Clean project is intended to contribute significantly towards addressing a number of the baseline conditions listed within the NM Delivery Plan under the 'Environment' theme, including:

- Improving levels of satisfaction with local streets and pavements. Safe and Clean would contribute towards the achievement of this outcome through the scheduled cleaning of local streets and pavements areas and one-off cleaning initiatives, which would improve residents' perceptions of their local environment.
- Addressing problems associated with abandoned vehicles, fly tipping and litter in the NM area and ensuring that the area reaches Grade B in terms of environmental cleanliness. Some of the key aims of the Safe and Clean project are to deal with instances of fly tipping and to clean litter from local streets and pavements.

Given that the environmental improvements are intended to reduce the incidence and fear of crime within the NM area, the project will also contribute towards addressing a number of the baseline conditions listed under the 'Community Safety' theme, including:

- Reducing the association made between the NM area and drugs. Safe and Clean would contribute to the achievement of this outcome through the removal of needles from local public spaces.
- Reducing levels of dissatisfaction among local residents with regard to anti-social behaviour. One of the key aims of Safe and Clean is to remove graffiti from the Neighbourhood Management area and therefore, this element of the project will contribute towards addressing the impacts of anti-social behaviour.
- Reducing the fear of crime. A core objective of Safe and Clean is to ensure that local residents feel safer within their neighbourhood.

As part of the project, a partnership has been developed between Bournemouth Borough Council's Cleansing and Waste department, the NM team and the local community and the project exclusively attempts to address the needs of residents in the NM target area.

No quantitative output targets were originally set for this project, as the team were not aware of how many bulky goods would need to be removed. Many of the targets for this project are therefore more qualitative, such as reducing the fear of crime in the locality and improving environmental quality.

The absence of any quantitative targets has meant that it has been difficult to objectively measure the success and achievements of the project, and has made it impossible to make any meaningful statements on value for money. As a result, this evaluation is based largely on qualitative evidence gathered through interview and focus groups with the management team, other key stakeholders, and representatives of the local community.

The lack of quantifiable targets for the project is a fundamental weakness of the scheme. Whilst we recognise the initial uncertainty over the numbers of bulky goods to be removed, the project should have established explicit outcome targets, either prior to the project's inception, or during the project's infancy, in order to measure the project's success more clearly. Such measures might usefully have included the proportion of local residents satisfied with the cleanliness of their neighbourhood with respect to local footpaths and open spaces; the proportion of residents feeling safe in their neighbourhood during the day and the night; the proportion of residents feeling safer than they did prior to the environmental improvements; and the key factors that have impacted on changes in perceptions of safety. Some targets could also potentially be set relating to the speed at which residents' enquiries are addressed (such as % of telephone enquiries addressed within 24 hours).

2.3 PROJECT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The project is managed by Bournemouth Borough Council's Cleansing and Waste Services Unit. The department's street scene manager monitors the project from a management viewpoint and meets regularly with the NM staff. The department's street scene manager also manages the four neighbourhood wardens, who monitor the project on the ground and ensure that all of the work is being done to schedule. In turn, the NM team has a band of resident volunteers who grade the streets in terms of cleanliness and check that no abandoned vehicles are left in the area. Volunteers received training recently from Encams, having previously relied solely on guidance packs provided by the National Grading System.

The Safe and Clean project has its own centralised call centre and database at Bournemouth Borough Council, which monitors all calls and enquiries received, together with the numbers of items that are removed as a result of the enquiries. Prior to the commencement of Safe and Clean, no comprehensive method of monitoring project outputs was employed, but the Local Authority decided to introduce a system in June 2003 to assist with the monitoring of the project. The NM team also monitors the project's finances on a quarterly basis and have regular meetings with the Safe and Clean management team.

The findings from the feedback forms and interviews have suggested that the close links between Bournemouth Borough Council's Street Scene Department and Neighbourhood Wardens and Street Representatives have been particularly effective in ensuring that the Safe and Clean team are able to respond to the needs of local residents. The fact that the management of Safe and Clean meet regularly with the NM team is also positive, as is the fact that Bournemouth Borough Council's Street Scene Department and therefore the Safe and Clean management are actually based within the NM catchment area and are therefore able to respond to calls quicker

Whilst the local community are currently involved in the delivery of the project in the form of the street representatives and the neighbourhood wardens, there would appear to be scope for increasing the involvement of the community in the project and to raise awareness of the scheme. Hence, we recommend that the management of the project liaise more extensively with local community groups and explore staging special community events (see Section 4) to increase levels of awareness of the project and to ensure that more local residents become actively involved in improving the cleanliness of the NM area.

3. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Given that the project did not have any quantitative output targets established at its inception, it is only possible to assess the impact of the project against the more qualitative objectives that have been outlined in Section 2.2. However, in June 2003, a monitoring system was established in Bournemouth Borough Council's Street Scene Department, which has monitored the number of telephone requests received from residents in the NM area for the removal of bulky goods and the Safe and Clean team have also monitored the numbers of goods removed as a result of the telephone enquiries. The Safe and Clean management team decided to introduce this system as prior to this, there was no monitoring system in place and they thought they would need to provide some sort of statistical evidence detailing some of the work being done by the project (in this case, the number of items that were being removed).

The information we have received from Bournemouth Borough Council through the number of enquiries received at the call centre has illustrated that overall the number of enquiries received for the removal of bulky goods has decreased since the monitoring procedures commenced in June 2003 and as a result, the number of items removed through requests has decreased. However, the number of enquiries received by the call centre has tended to fluctuate on a monthly basis.

In 2003, the highest quantity of enquiries was received during the summer months (June, July, August). For example, during June 2003, 81 requests were made by the public for the removal of bulky goods, with 185 items removed, whereas in December 2003, just 21 enquiries were made with 33 items removed. At the time of writing this report, we did not have any details of the number of enquiries received during the spring of 2003 (as the procedures for monitoring numbers of enquiries and numbers of items removed were not in place at this time) or the summer of 2004; however, based on previous trends, it may be the case that the number of enquiries received during the summer months of 2004 may be higher than the number received during the winter and spring months.

The absence of quantitative targets for this project has meant that the evidence we have used to assess whether the broad projects objectives have been achieved has been largely drawn from our interviews with the project manager, together with the feedback forms that have been submitted by key stakeholders within the Springbourne and Boscombe West area, including ward councillors, representatives from the Dorset Constabulary, Bournemouth Borough Council's Parks Maintenance Department, members of the Neighbourhood Wardens team and local street representatives.

3.1 KEY IMPACTS OF THE SAFE AND CLEAN PROJECT

The overall consensus from the feedback given was that the most significant impact of the project has been that standards of cleanliness within the NM area are perceived to have improved considerably since the inception of Safe and Clean. Levels of litter within the area are also perceived to have decreased.

This is supported by the findings from the monitoring forms from the street representatives regarding the grades of streets in terms of environmental quality. The forms have illustrated that at present, the vast majority of the streets within the NM area that have been inspected have been awarded Grade B or higher. The findings have indicated that a slightly higher proportion of those streets inspected in Boscombe West have been awarded Grade A than those in Springbourne. Since the commencement of these grading procedures in May 2003, the number of streets inspected and subsequently graded would appear to have decreased; at present there is no quantitative evidence that Safe and Clean has resulted in long term improvements in street cleanliness as measured by the street reps.

However, evidence collected via feedback forms and interviews suggest that to date, the project has succeeded in achieving its objective of improving street cleansing levels within the NM area and improving the visual quality of the area. However, it would appear that levels of

street cleanliness need to improve further if the overall objective of the NM area reaching a consistent Grade B in terms of environmental cleanliness is to be achieved.

The other key impacts that have been generated by the scheme are detailed below.

- The overriding consensus from the feedback forms was that fly tipping within the NM area is being removed significantly faster than it was prior to the inception of Safe and Clean and this has prevented fly tips from growing. It would appear that before the project was introduced, fly tipping within the area was being reported but the problems were not being addressed rapidly enough in the eyes of local residents. It was commented that the number of fly tipping 'hotspots' within the NM area has decreased since the inception of Safe and Clean. As a result, it would appear that the objective of removing graffiti and fly tipping on a daily basis is being achieved, and that the scheme is improving levels of satisfaction with the cleanliness of the area.
- The findings from the feedback forms and interviews have suggested that the free removal of bulky goods service has been well received by local residents, a number of whom are earning low incomes and are unable to fund the removal of large items themselves. This aspect of the project has also had a significant positive impact on improving the quality of the visual environment. However, one respondent commented that as a result of the removal of bulky goods service, some residents are dumping chairs etc on the pavements to a greater degree, simply because they know that Safe and Clean will remove it. However, the evidence collected would again suggest that to date, the objective of improving the general cleanliness of the local streets is being achieved.
- A number of those who completed the feedback forms thought that local residents' satisfaction with their locality has increased significantly since the inception of Safe and Clean. This would suggest that the project's objective of improving levels of pride in the local community may be currently being achieved; however, it would appear that there is a need for further consultation with the community to explore with more certainty whether levels of residents' satisfaction in their locality are increasing and the key reasons for any increases in satisfaction. The results of the impending household survey are likely to provide a strong indication as to whether levels of satisfaction have increased since the inception of both the NM programme and the Safe and Clean project. A number of the people who completed the feedback forms have suggested that the active involvement of the local community, through the introduction of street representatives (who are essentially local volunteers), the involvement of the neighbourhood wardens and the NM Environmental sub-group has contributed significantly to an increase in community pride. In turn, the active involvement of the local community has contributed towards increasing the speed at which instances of fly tipping are being reported.
- The local community in Springbourne and Boscombe West has benefited from the improved levels of cleanliness, given that residents in the NM area are receiving more street cleaning than residents in other areas of Bournemouth and they also benefit from the free removal of bulky items. Without Safe and Clean funding, the Springbourne and Boscombe West area would only receive the same amount of cleaning as other areas in Bournemouth. It was the opinion of the project manager that Safe and Clean has improved residents' opinions about the local authority, given that they can actually see the work being carried out and in turn feel safer. One respondent also commented that the additional cleaning work has made the local residents feel 'more valued'. Some of those who completed the feedback forms thought that the Safe and Clean project has helped to improve the level of awareness of the NM scheme amongst local residents; however, the findings from some of the other feedback forms have suggested that some scope exists for increasing levels of awareness of the NM scheme among local residents further.
- It is unclear as to whether the improved street cleansing has directly contributed to a reduction in the rate of crime in the Springbourne and Boscombe West area; however, various beat officers from the Dorset Constabulary (in addition to general public feedback) have suggested that the street cleansing has contributed to a reduction in the fear of crime in the locality. One of the ward councillors also commented that fewer

complaints have been received about street cleanliness, graffiti, needles and unsightly corners. Given that the feedback has suggested that overall cleanliness levels have improved and that the fear of crime would appear to have decreased, it does appear that the project is achieving its objective of creating a safe and clean environment. It would, however, appear important that future public consultation processes continue to monitor residents' perceptions of the fear of crime and the occurrence of crime within the NM area and whether they feel that the street cleansing initiatives and other environmental improvements are impacting on these perceptions.

- In addition, a representative from the Dorset Constabulary suggested that the reductions in dwelling burglaries and vehicle crimes in the NM area have been partially due to Safe and Clean and have therefore led to a reduction in police time spent within the locality, which, in turn, has saved a considerable amount of money; however, the representative stated that the amount saved was difficult to quantify. Thus Safe and Clean is having an impact on reducing the occurrence of crime within the NM area (which represents a key aim of the overall NM programme).
- It is apparent that the Safe and Clean project has encouraged groups and agencies within the Springbourne and Boscombe West area to work more closely together. The project manager commented that an unexpected success of the project was the fact that the Safe and Clean team has formed close relations with the neighbourhood wardens, who report cases of fly tipping to the local authority. This relationship has been crucial, given that previously, the wardens would report fly tipping to Bournemouth Borough Council but due to resource issues, fly tipping was not being addressed. In addition, the wardens have worked closely with the Dorset Constabulary to remove untaxed cars and other unwanted items.
- In addition, the project has promoted a greater level of collaboration and improved the flow of information between different departments within Bournemouth Borough Council (including Cleansing and Waste, Leisure Services, Highways and Parks) on issues relating to litter, fly tipping, dog fouling, the removal of needles and sharps and graffiti removal. The Safe and Clean project has also formed close relations with local residents' groups, essentially through the street representatives highlighting any emerging problems, and has therefore ensured that the local community has been actively involved in the project.
- Given the levels of engagement with the local community, neighbourhood wardens, council departments and the NM team, it would appear that the objective of providing a multi-skilled team to create the 'Safe and Clean' theme throughout the NM target area is being achieved.
- The Safe and Clean project has not resulted in additional Council resources being concentrated in Springbourne and Boscombe West, given that NM has funded the entire project. However, during the summer of 2003, Safe and Clean was viewed as a successful example of area-based cleaning and because of this, Bournemouth Borough Council have introduced area-based cleaning teams in the town centre and coastal areas to ensure that the busiest areas of Bournemouth are now being cleaned more frequently and more comprehensively. In addition, during the Autumn of 2004, Bournemouth Borough Council are intending to evaluate their methods of street cleaning and could potentially introduce more area-based cleaning teams. This therefore illustrates that the Safe and Clean project is having an impact on policy making in other areas of Bournemouth.

3.2 KEY PROJECT SUCCESSES

A key factor behind the success of the project has been the liaison between the Safe and Clean project management and the Neighbourhood Management team. The good relationship between the Safe and Clean management and the contractors has also contributed to the success of the project.

In addition, the project has ensured that local residents in Springbourne and Boscombe West are now actively controlling the cleanliness of their locality through the introduction of street representatives (which has encouraged local people to volunteer). This, together with the introduction of neighbourhood wardens, has helped to increase the speed at which cases of fly tipping and littering are being reported and subsequently addressed. The local community also shapes the cleaning process by phoning the Safe and Clean team and highlighting items that need to be removed. These factors have helped to ensure that the project has been able to meet the needs of the community and have contributed to the fact that members of the community now feel safer within the NM area.

It is also clear that the project is attempting to further increase levels of community involvement by promoting the project at Neighbourhood Management Environmental sub-group meetings and Safe and Clean project meetings and also through the Safe and Clean project manager attending various Neighbourhood Management open days and community events. However, the findings from the feedback forms have suggested that some scope exists for increasing levels of community involvement further.

Additionally, the change in project focus (the introduction of steam cleaning and emphasis on one-off cleaning projects) has demonstrated that the project has been flexible and has changed to ensure that it has been able to respond rapidly to the changing demands of the local community. This flexibility represents an element of good practice.

3.3 KEY PROJECT WEAKNESSES

Despite the fact that overall the Safe and Clean project has been successful to date and the feedback received has been positive, some respondents identified weaknesses associated with the project, which are detailed in this section.

- One respondent commented that there is scope for increasing the level of publicity about the project, particularly by promoting the contact details of the Safe and Clean team to a greater degree, so that all local residents are aware of the key contacts for the removal of bulky items. Therefore, there is a need for both the NM team and the management of Safe and Clean to continue to promote both the Safe and Clean project and the overall NM scheme to a greater degree within Springbourne and Boscombe West, either through advertisements in the local press or through notices at prominent points within the NM area. It is our understanding that at present, the NM team hosts various community events; however, an additional way of increasing levels of community involvement in the Safe and Clean project is for the Safe and Clean team to explore the staging of additional special community events, such as a 'Litter Pick Funday' (which has been pursued in similar street cleaning project that has occurred as part of the Coventry NDC programme, which is described in Section 4) where members of the community would be given an opportunity to actively participate in improving levels of cleanliness within the locality and would also subsequently become more aware of both the Safe and Clean project and the NM scheme.
- It was also commented that the issue of car parking has not been addressed sufficiently within the NM area; however, this does not appear to be within the remit of the Safe and Clean project but does fall within the remit of the overall NM project and therefore, this, combined with any findings from the recent household survey on parking issues, should be noted by NM staff.
- In considering sustainability, a key weakness of the project is that it has been exclusively reliant on NM funding. To date, the management of the Safe and Clean project have

sought funding from other sources to enable the project to continue beyond January 2005; however, they have been unsuccessful in their applications. In addition, there has been no commitment from the Council to continue the initiative beyond the current NM funding. At present, it would appear that in order to enable the project to continue beyond the cessation of NM funding, there would either be a need for the Safe and Clean project to seek additional funding from NM, which would appear unlikely, given the amount of resources required for the project, or for the management of Safe and Clean to attempt to ensure that the project becomes part of Bournemouth Borough Council's mainstream budget after January 2005 (which would appear the more likely option). It is unclear as yet as to whether Bournemouth Borough Council is likely to commit any mainstream funding towards the Safe and Clean project or commit additional resources to the Springbourne and Boscombe West area that would facilitate additional levels of cleaning over and above what other areas within the Borough receive after the cessation of NM funding. To maintain existing levels of provision, it is likely that the project would need to secure match funding from other sources and it was suggested that further funding could potentially be made available through the Lottery Community Fund, given that the project supports community and voluntary organisations and would contribute towards reducing future disadvantage.

- A considerable amount of support exists for the Safe and Clean project within the Springbourne and Boscombe West locality and many people would like the project to continue beyond the cessation of NM funding. Many respondents feared that should the project receive no further funding beyond the cessation of NM funding, the problems associated with litter, vandalism and fly tipping that were prevalent within the locality prior to the inception of Safe and Clean will return. This is a key issue and would represent a failure of NM if this were to happen.
- The lack of monitoring data prior to 2003 has made it not possible for the evaluators to assess the extent to which the project has represented value for money and to compare the relative cost effectiveness of this project with other similar projects pursued in other parts of the UK. The current monitoring data (i.e. the number of calls received and number of goods removed) does not provide a direct indication of whether the projects aims and objectives are being achieved; however, the monitoring and grading of the local streets for environmental cleanliness by the street representatives has provided an indication as to whether the objective of raising street cleansing standards in the NM area to Grade B of the Environmental Cleanliness Act is being achieved. Many of the targets for this project have been of a qualitative nature and the only means of measuring the success of the project meeting the needs of the local community has been through the feedback forms for this particular evaluation and through consultation with the local community.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Environmental improvements in many disadvantaged localities can make significant contributions towards reducing the fear of crime. A high occurrence of crime and fear of crime can frequently be a significant source of unhappiness in deprived neighbourhoods, as it affects both the daily lives of residents and also the economic well being of neighbourhoods, as many employers are reluctant to recruit people from areas with a reputation of crime problems. Poorly kept and unsafe local environments will also deter potential tourists from staying in a locality for a significant period of time and spending money within the locality.

No explicit quantitative targets were set out for this project either prior to or since its inception; however, our research findings, which have been based essentially on qualitative evidence from a small number of individuals, have strongly suggested that Safe and Clean has been a successful project to date and that the project has contributed towards addressing the objectives of the overall NM programme relating to both environmental and community safety issues. Our findings have also strongly suggested that Safe and Clean is currently achieving all of its project level objectives.

In addition, it would appear that the project has been well received by the local community and is well supported by local residents, a number of whom have been actively involved in the project's delivery. It is apparent that many members of the public would like Safe and Clean to continue beyond the cessation of NM funding; however, obtaining additional funding does, at present, present an obstacle that could prevent the project from continuing beyond 2005.

Given that no quantitative output targets were proposed by the project at its inception, it is difficult to measure value for money in any detail. However, our research findings illustrated that the Safe and Clean project (which will receive £272,200 of funding over a three year period) is slightly less costly than a similar street cleansing service that has been offered by Coventry NDC, which has received £322,690 of funding over a three-year period, targeting a slightly larger geographical area. Similar to Safe and Clean, which has relied exclusively on Neighbourhood Management funding to facilitate its operations, the Rapid Response Street Cleaning project in Coventry has received the overwhelming majority of its funding through the NDC and has received very little funding from other sources and the project has essentially attempted to address the problems of fly tipping, removing items of unwanted bulky refuse and weed growth and has operated on a flexible basis by buying in operatives and equipment from Coventry City Council to help address these issues.

The Safe and Clean project does, however, employ double the amount of workers of the Coventry scheme, and provides a significantly greater number of hours of work per week (the Coventry NDC scheme provides just 37 hours of work per week). Safe and Clean has also dealt with a greater number of enquiries and removed a higher quantity of goods on a quarterly basis than the Coventry scheme. This would suggest that the Safe and Clean project has represented greater value for money than the Rapid Response Street Cleaning Project in Coventry. However, the scheme in Coventry has pursued a number of initiatives to improve the local community's awareness of environmental issues, such as the staging of a 'Litter Pick Funday', a clean up of the local park followed by an Easter Egg Treasure Hunt, a 'Garden Plant Giveaway' and an environment picnic at a local beauty spot, where the community has been actively involved in improving the cleanliness of the local environment. While the NM scheme in Bournemouth has staged similar events, the Safe and Clean project could potentially pursue similar initiatives if levels of community awareness about the project are to increase and the local community is to become more involved in contributing to local environmental improvements within the NM area.

Despite the fact that the Safe and Clean project has not received funding from any other sources than Neighbourhood Management, our research findings have strongly suggested that there is a need for the project to continue beyond the cessation of NM funding. First, our consultations suggest that local residents now feel safer within the NM area as a result of the environmental improvements and street cleaning services and should the operation cease, the environmental problems in the area that were prevalent prior to the inception of Safe and Clean may build up again and as a result, community safety levels may decrease.

Second, continued environmental improvements are also likely to make a significant contribution towards strengthening the local economic base and supporting local businesses (particularly those reliant on the tourism industry), which, in turn, supports jobs for local people as continued environmental improvements and street cleansing will make the Springbourne and Boscombe West areas more attractive to tourists and will help encourage visitors to stay in the area for longer periods. Conversely, should the project not continue, any subsequent deterioration in the quality of the local environment and levels of community safety are likely to deter visitors from staying in the area.

At present, the project requires approximately £130,000 per year of funding if it is to continue offering the existing level of provision. The project has been unable to secure additional funding beyond the cessation of NM funding. Given that it would appear unlikely that NM would have sufficient funding available to fund the project beyond 2005, the most likely method of funding the project would be for Bournemouth Borough Council to include the project within its mainstream budget.

As a result, given that Bournemouth Borough Council appear to have accepted that the Safe and Clean approach is effective and represents good practice, as they are now pursuing similar area-based cleaning initiatives in other busy areas of the town, it is recommended that the NM team should lobby for the continuation of the Safe and Clean project beyond January 2005 (when NM funding for the project ceases) and that they lobby for Bournemouth Borough Council to include the project as part of its mainstream budget to ensure that the project continues. Should the NM team be successful in lobbying Bournemouth Borough Council to include Safe and Clean within its mainstream budget beyond January 2005, this would contribute towards achieving one of the key targets of the NM scheme, which is for some elements of the NM scheme to be integrated into the work of mainstream service providers in the longer-term.

However, in order to maintain existing levels of provision, it is probable that the project would also need to attract funding from a number of additional sources. Potential sources include the Lottery Fund (this includes the Community Fund, which supports and develops community and voluntary organisations and facilities, the Community Chest, which can fund the publicity of environmental events, the People's Places awards scheme, which facilitates environmental improvements to areas of land or community buildings and the Transforming Waste initiative, which supports increasing the amount of waste collection in deprived communities and encourages recycling and re-use), the Environmental Action Fund (which promotes the efficient use of waste), the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation (under its 'Community Living' priority, which promotes environmental improvements to run down areas) and Living Spaces (which gives people the opportunity to improve open spaces within their neighbourhood; however, at present, they have suspended awarding any fresh grants).

The findings from the feedback forms suggest that some scope still exists for increasing levels of community involvement in the Safe and Clean project. It is therefore recommended that should the project be successful in securing continuation funding, the staging of special one-off events should be explored, such as a 'Litter Pick Funday', to supplement the events that the NM team already stage. This would help to ensure that the local community become actively involved in carrying out local environmental improvements and that the community becomes more aware of how environmental improvements can impact on perceptions of community safety. It is also likely that the staging of such events would increase levels of awareness of the NM scheme amongst members of the local community. In addition, it is important that the NM team promotes the Safe and Clean project (and key contact details for the project) within the local press and on notice boards at prominent points within the Springbourne and Boscombe West area in the future to increase levels of public awareness of how the project can help to improve their quality of life.

Should the project continue, it is essential that the management of Safe and Clean devise a number of quantitative targets in order to assess the extent to which it is representing value for money, and to better assess the overall impact of the project. Given the nature of the project, it would appear difficult for it to set any targets for outputs to be generated directly

through the project (as it is difficult to predict future changes in the number of enquiries); however, the project could potentially introduce a number of outcome targets, including the proportion of local residents satisfied with the overall cleanliness of their neighbourhood, the proportion satisfied with the cleanliness of local footpaths and open spaces, the proportion of residents feeling safe in their neighbourhood during the day and the night (and the proportion feeling safer than they did prior to the inception of Safe and Clean), reductions in crime rates since the inception of Safe and Clean, improvements in visitors' perceptions of the NM area with time and increases in levels of visitor spending within the area. Some targets could also potentially be set relating to the speed at which residents' enquiries are addressed (such as % of telephone enquiries addressed within 24 hours).

In concluding, we would recommend that every effort be made to ensure that this project continues, as it makes an important contribution towards improving the local quality of life and improving levels of community safety, it provides some support to local businesses and the local economy, it has the support of local residents and has demonstrated good practice, which has been recognised by the local authority, given that similar area based cleaning programmes are now being conducted in other areas of Bournemouth. However, there is a clear need for long-term funding to be sorted beyond the cessation of NM funding and it would appear that negotiations need to take place between Bournemouth Borough Council and the Safe and Clean project team to see if the Council could allocate some funding towards the project as part of its mainstream budget, even if levels of provision may need to decrease, due to cost levels. As a result, it is also important that match funding opportunities continue to be fully explored.

APPENDIX I – LIST OF CONSULTEES

We would like to express our gratitude to the following individuals who have either participated in face-to-face interviews or completed and returned feedback forms:

- Mike Moon – Bournemouth Borough Council Street Scene Manager
- Sue Bickler – Neighbourhood Management Programme Manager
- Mark Kelly – Dorset Constabulary
- Anne Filer – Ward Councillor East Cliff and Springbourne
- Andrew Garratt – Ward Councillor Boscombe East
- Peter Crompton – Bournemouth Borough Council Parks Manager
- Caroline Smith – Neighbourhood Warden
- Andy Makin – Neighbourhood Warden
- Andrea Carvell – Neighbourhood Warden
- Six street representatives
- Twelve other anonymous residents