
Report To:	Safe, Sustainable Communities Committee	Date:	31 August 2010
Report By:	Corporate Director Regeneration and Environment	Report No:	ECP/ENV/AB10.59
Contact Officer:	Willie Rennie	Contact No:	4761
Subject:	Neighbourhood Management		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to assess critically the method of delivery of a range of services included within the Environmental and Commercial Services remit, and to make recommendations as to how best to deliver the services in future.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 There is no uniformly adopted local authority approach for the delivery of frontline local services such as ground maintenance, street sweeping, and roads maintenance – sometimes known as ‘streetscene’. Most local authorities have identified that an integrated service approach is advantageous in tackling the geographical or issue-based problems which are the responsibility of the Council or where responsibility is unclear or disputed, such as trunk road verges, private land, or inter-departmental demarcations. A main focus of this review is therefore how best to develop the integration of these services within Inverclyde.
- 2.2 Inverclyde Council first started to implement a streetscene type integrated approach in 1996, after local government reorganisation, although the term streetscene was not adopted until approximately 9 years later. Inverclyde Council’s ground maintenance and street sweeping services have been managed together by a single management team since 1996 and supervisory staff are required to be flexible and supervise both ground maintenance and street sweeping services as circumstances require. The current integrated approach is acknowledged to have its shortcomings, not least the inadequate levels of integration of the ground maintenance and street sweeping services with Roads.
- 2.3 Current methods of service delivery were reviewed as were the contrasting approaches taken by other local authorities who have adopted alternative ways of delivering the same range of services. In particular, consideration was given to creating a more expansive streetscene type service by extending the range of tasks undertaken by maintenance squads to make them multi-functional across almost all the service areas delivered by Environmental and Commercial Services. The outcome of the assessment is that the multi-functional squads approach is not appropriate for Inverclyde as there is little or no scope to extend the roles of the current frontline operatives and in any case the benefits some other councils may derive out of the multi-functional squads approach do not apply in Inverclyde due the comparative compact nature of the district.
- 2.4 There is still room to improve coordination of the different environmental services, particularly as regards how defect reporting is handled. The balance between supervisors supervising the workforce and supervising the geographical area they have responsibility for is a difficult one to strike, especially during the eight months or so of the year that the workforce increases in size with the employment of seasonal workers. It is recognised that there is a need for better service integration at the supervisory level and it is proposed to advance this objective by the introduction of multi service Local Environment Teams (LETs). Three LETs will be introduced,

East, Central and West. In the initial stages the LETs will be chaired by the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services. Local Environment Teams comprising officers from all disciplines will deal with issues big or small and ensure that they are dealt with holistically and in a joined up manner.

- 2.5 Under budget savings workstream 12 (streetscene) Environmental and Commercial Services has a savings target of £100k over the period 2010/2014. It is anticipated that the majority of the savings will be achieved through a reduction in overtime working. Proposals to reduce street sweeping weekend overtime and supervisors' evening and weekend overtime are outlined in this report. It is anticipated that revised working practices will achieve £30k of savings this financial year.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That approval is given for the introduction of three Local Environment Teams (LETs) with a remit to manage a range of frontline council services as detailed in this report.
- 3.2 That committee note the proposals to achieve efficiency savings by the reduction of routine overtime working across Environmental and Commercial Services where it is feasible to do so.

Aubrey Fawcett
Corporate Director
Regeneration and Environment

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The term streetscene is widely used to describe a collection of locally provided environmental services. There is however no uniformly accepted definition of the term streetscene. This is demonstrated by the dissimilar approaches taken by local authorities throughout the United Kingdom in the delivery of a range of services under the streetscene brand. Few other Scottish local authorities make specific reference to streetscene as a service delivery model and in those that do their approaches differ as to the range of services integrated within their respective streetscene services. Nevertheless, there is some commonality of approach in that they all include the ground maintenance and street sweeping functions e.g. open space maintenance, play areas, fly tipping etc. In some instances Roads are also included within the streetscene remit.
- 4.2 Inverclyde Council first started to implement a streetscene type approach in 1996, after local government reorganisation, although the term streetscene was not adopted until approximately 9 years later. Inverclyde Council's ground maintenance and street sweeping services have been managed together by a single management team since 1996 and supervisory staff are required to be flexible and supervise both ground maintenance and street sweeping services as circumstances require.
- 4.3 Up until 1996, the street sweeping service was most closely aligned with refuse collection and there was a tradition both in Inverclyde and throughout the rest of the country for street sweeping and refuse collection to be managed by the same management team, indeed some local authorities still take this approach. A negative effect of this arrangement was that street sweepers were very often redeployed to refuse collection crews to provide holiday and sickness cover which led to poor cleanliness standards in the streets. It also perpetuated a demarcation when it came to litter picking, ground maintenance operatives only dealt with litter on open spaces while street sweepers only dealt with litter on streets. The demarcation culture was ingrained, led to inefficiencies and a very poor public perception of how the service was delivered. The culture was slowly but surely changed and demarcation no longer exists.
- 4.4 The renewed impetus for considering an even more integrated approach is to explore if efficiencies can be achieved, efficiencies in terms of improved service delivery, but as importantly cashable efficiencies.

5.0 CURRENT PRACTICE

5.1 Street Sweeping

At present, there is only one Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) for street sweeping and ground maintenance. The SPI is referred to as the annual cleanliness index (CI) and it is usually reported to committee via the directorate performance report. The undernoted tables explain the CI standards and show Inverclyde Council's Cleanliness Index scores in the period 2000-2009/10.

Table 1: Explanation of the CI standards

Cleanliness Index (CI)	Description
71 & Above	Good overall standard of cleanliness
68-70	Just above the minimum standard
67	Meeting the minimum standard
64-66	Just below the minimum standard
Below 64	Reduced standard of cleanliness

Table 2: Inverclyde Council's CI scores

Year	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
CI	65	65	66	69	68	69	72	73	68 *	76

* New method of calculation introduced.

Inverclyde Council operates the Street Cleaning Service in accordance with the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse 2006, which is part of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Act places a responsibility on Councils to keep public areas free from litter as far as is practicable. These public areas include roads, footpaths, roadside verges, parks etc. The Code of Practice doesn't state how often each type of area should be cleaned, it instead encourages Councils to use local knowledge to allocate resources as required, depending on the Zone allocated to the street. The following is a summary of the service standards applied in Inverclyde, they are directly linked to the standards set out in the national Code of Practice:

- Busy town centre areas: repeat visits throughout the day, 7 days a week (zone 1)
- Litter hotspots (e.g. shop fronts and areas around secondary schools): cleaned daily (zone 1 or 2)
- Residential areas: cleaned at least once per month (zone 2 or 3)
- The Council will respond to reports of excessive littering or overflowing bins, normally on the same day or the next working day.
- The Council will endeavour to place/move litter bins or dog bins to best use the resources available.

The foregoing is a general summary of the standards. A more detailed street by street zoning list is also available on the Council's website which identifies each street in Inverclyde and what zone it falls into. The zone informs how quickly incidences of littering have to be addressed. Appendix 1 further explains the concept of zones and their respective response times. The need to respond to incidences of littering within a fixed and often very tight timescale, one hour in some circumstances, is a key consideration in deciding whether or not to redeploy street sweepers to other duties. It is safe to say that most local authorities meet their response time obligations so far as zone 1's are concerned by having a permanent sweeper presence on-site throughout most of the working day. In the circumstances, there is little scope to redeploy operatives permanently assigned to zone 1 areas.

Outwith zone 1 areas street sweepers are deployed to general sweeping duties, to deal with litter and fly tipping hotspots, litter bin emptying, servicing of recycling sites etc. Street sweepers also undertake refuse collection work every week as a matter of routine, on sack routes where access is difficult for large refuse collection vehicles. This type of regular and routine redeployment to refuse collection is different to the ad hoc redeployments referred to earlier as it can be factored into the work programme so as to negate or at least minimise disruption to street sweeping activities. Appendix 1 details the local authority's duty to respond to incidences of littering within a defined timescale. In most cases badly littered areas need to be dealt with on the same day or at the latest the next day.

In the circumstances, there is no scope to routinely extend the range of tasks undertaken by sweepers without compromising service quality and the Council's cleanliness index score (SPI).

5.2 Ground Maintenance

In general terms there is an expectation that the soft landscaping and open spaces managed by Inverclyde Council will be maintained to a standard that provides an aesthetically pleasing and

safe environment. There is no code of practice for open space maintenance in the same way as there is for litter, and there is no Statutory Performance Indicator, so there is no standard approach to frequencies and standards of ground maintenance across the country. This is most evident in Inverclyde in the often contrasting standards of maintenance on trunk road verges as maintained by the trunk road contractor Amey and nearby plots maintained by Inverclyde Council, with the majority of the Inverclyde Council maintained plots enjoying a much higher standard and frequency of maintenance than the trunk road verges. In some situations the reasons for there being differing maintenance regimes are practical e.g. the requirement to have costly and disruptive traffic management in place when mowing trunk road verges.

While Amey is responsible for the maintenance of trunk roads, including the ground maintenance of verges, it is Inverclyde Council that is responsible for the sweeping and litter picking. This has proved to be a quite anomalous situation for a number of reasons, but the main issue as regards the Council provided service is that the cost of sweeping and litter picking on trunk roads is much more expensive than in other situations. A large element of the cost is due to the need for expensive traffic management in most situations, and often the work has to be undertaken outwith normal working hours, so overtime rates apply. Foremen regularly liaise with Amey in order to try to share lane closures wherever possible and they ensure that where possible both ground maintenance and street sweeping operations are undertaken at the same time.

Ground maintenance operatives are already multi-functional within their generic post e.g. excavator operators, pesticide sprayers, chainsaw operatives, greenkeepers, play area inspectors, arborists etc., but only in selected circumstances do they cross over to different service areas such as street sweeping or roads maintenance. During the peak workflow and holiday months grounds maintenance operatives can be hard pressed to meet the commitments of the grounds workload let alone expand their role to other areas of the service. April through mid July is a very busy time, planting flower beds, weedkiller spraying, grass cutting, hedge cutting, and events support etc. At less busy times ground maintenance operatives are utilised to cover in other service areas e.g. to support street sweepers during leaf fall or to cover for gravediggers through the summer holiday period. It is this type of selective and adaptive multi-functional working that best suits the nature of service delivery in Inverclyde.

In the circumstances, there is no scope to routinely extend the range of tasks undertaken by ground maintenance operatives.

5.3 Roads

Roads have an establishment of 21 roads operatives. The works carried out by the majority of the roads operatives are generally sizable surfacing projects either through the capital programme, the revenue budget or other internal budgets such as reservoirs and schools and more recently, external work for the private sector. In a standard week the Service operates 2 pothole squads, this down from 3 in previous years due to the introduction of a more efficient method of dealing with potholes. The backlog of potholes and roads defects ensures that both squads are employed almost all of the time dealing with these issues. During holiday periods and to cover sickness it is necessary to reduce these resources even further to ensure that programmes are maintained and larger projects are fully manned. The net result of this is that the backlog of potholes and roads defects continues to increase until resources are restored to their normal level.

The other standard arrangement is the gully emptying programme, which runs year round. Again, where there is a need to provide additional resources to fulfil programme obligations, holiday and sickness cover these resource are often commandeered to meet these ends with the resultant effect on the programme for gully emptying.

During the 22 week winter maintenance period there are periods when, as a result of ongoing adverse weather, as has been experienced over the last two winters, all surfacing and roads

maintenance has to stop completely while resources are deployed to deal with these conditions. This includes drafting in additional resources from other internal services e.g. ground maintenance and street sweeping.

In the circumstances there is little scope to routinely redeploy Roads operatives to other activities.

6.0 CIVIC PRIDE & WORKFORCE ISSUES

6.1 Civic Pride and Motivation

To support workforce motivation and engender a sense of civic pride, a consistent approach to staff education and development needs to be adopted, even for apparently straightforward operations such as manual street sweeping. It is important to convey initially and thereafter to continue to reinforce a culture of ownership and civic pride

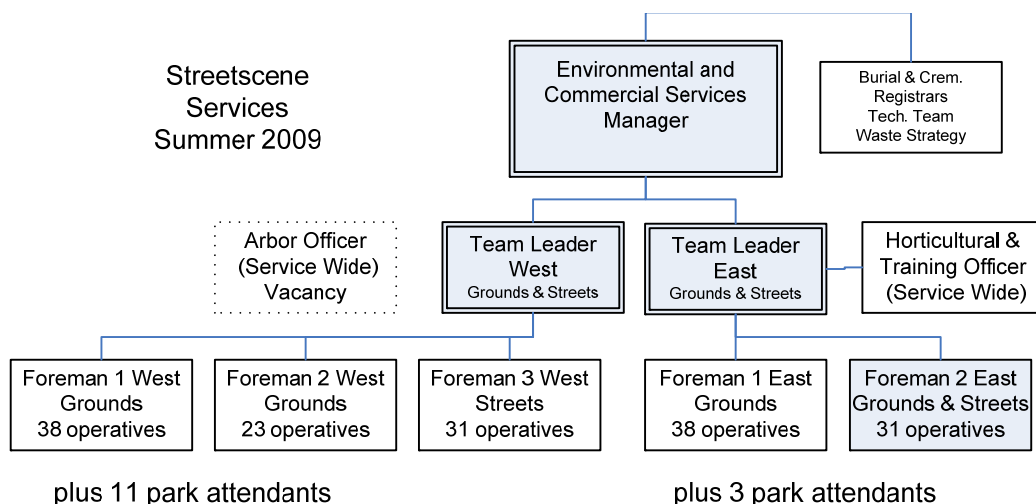
There is still however progress to be made in the utilisation of a range of staff within the service, through improved coordination and in particular how defect reporting is handled. The balance between supervisors supervising the workforce and supervising the geographical area they have responsibility for is a difficult one to strike, especially during the eight months or so of the year that the workforce increases in size with the employment of seasonal workers. The ratio of supervisors to operational staff can be as high as 1:40 and in some areas 50% or more of the operatives may be seasonal workers. As a result, it is recognised that the area supervision element of an area supervisor's role can often be less effective than it needs to be. First reporting of adverse situations by members of the public is the main consequence of inadequate area supervision. It is therefore intended to reprioritise the duties of roads inspectors to better support area supervisors in their area supervision role.

Greater involvement and integration of the Roads section with the other sections of Environmental and Commercial Services for the purpose of local neighbourhood management is an acknowledged requirement in order to progress the civic pride agenda.

6.2 Ground Maintenance and Street Sweeping Supervisors/Foremen

The current ground maintenance and street sweeping establishment is as illustrated in the undernoted organisation chart. It should be noted that operative numbers will reduce by approximately 60 at the end of the grass cutting season and rise again in the spring.

Figure 1: Grounds & Street Sweeping



The potential to further extend the role of supervisors/foremen to cover other areas within the Environmental and Commercial Services' remit was also considered and for the most part rejected. The numbers of operatives supervised and the diversity of roles already undertaken by foremen make it impracticable during core working hours. However, as a matter of routine, supervisors oversee a range of employees that work outwith core hours and at weekends e.g. park attendants and street sweepers, and any ground maintenance operatives working overtime. A review of all overtime within Environmental and Commercial Services is currently underway and this review will include an assessment how best to supervise all employees working outwith core hours, including a review of what the core hours should be in future.

Scope for extending the roles of supervisors is further curtailed by the requirements of the River Clyde Homes (RCH) ground maintenance contract. The contract was awarded for a 2 year term commencing October 2008 with an option for RCH to extend the period by a further 2 one year extension periods. As part of our strategy to gain the extensions, the ground maintenance foremen have made a concerted effort to build good working relationships with RCH estates staff. This strategy appears to be working as demonstrated by the smooth operation of the contractual relationship thus far.

In addition to dealing with the anti-social behaviour issues at the sharp end e.g. fly tipping, dog fouling, vandalism etc., the foremen have close ties with the community and enforcement wardens and work with them, the police, local schools and other support staff in delivering a range of campaigns and awareness raising events e.g. 'Clean Up or Pay Up' Campaign; 'Do the cool thing with litter and bag some cash' initiative with local schools etc.

The most recent addition to the foremen's list of duties involves them in supervising ground maintenance and street sweeping operatives in the setting up and dismantling of polling places and the uplift and delivery of ballot boxes. They fulfilled these rolls for the most recent European elections, a by-election and the general election.

6.3 Roads Inspectors, Clerks of Works and Technical Staff

There are several posts that fall into this category and unlike supervisor's posts, the remit of these posts does not involve the incumbent exercising direct supervision of frontline operatives. That being the case, it is considered feasible to review and where appropriate amend and extend their remit. Examples of the extended remit are: the inspection and instruction of repairs to Council owned but non-adopted roads and footways, or indeed any council asset; report and take action to have graffiti and fly posting attended to; orphan land management; identify and take action to resolve neighbourhood problems related to the assets of third parties, such as utility cabinets, fences, walls, post-boxes, manholes, trees, drains etc. At present it is the case that much of the first reporting of neighbourhood problems is from a non-council source, which means a reactive response to problems as opposed to a proactive response. It will never be the case that all first reporting will be via council staff, but the allocation of additional Roads staff to matters relating to neighbourhood management and the introduction of methodical inspections within neighbourhoods will see the instances of first reporting by council officers increase.

There is no doubt that this major change of approach will take time to become fully effective. All of the Roads officers concerned will be required to take on a wider remit and become involved in areas of service delivery that are unfamiliar to them at present, so at the outset the process will require to be managed sensitively. As part of the process of change it will be absolutely essential to embed a culture of civic pride in all staff as it is anticipated that Road's officers will in future play a key role in the day to day management of Inverclyde's neighbourhoods.

7.0 PROPOSALS

7.1 Local Environment Teams

It is proposed to set up Local Environment Teams comprising officers from all disciplines so that issues big or small affecting the respective areas are dealt with holistically and in a joined up manner. Initially the teams are intended to be made up of officers from Environmental and Commercial Services. It is anticipated that there will be 3 LETs, East, Central and West. At the outset the LETs will be chaired by the Head of Environmental and Commercial Services.

Since the housing stock transfer, the majority of housing estates within Inverclyde are managed by housing associations or private factors. There are very few estates in which Inverclyde Council is still responsible for open space maintenance, so most of the public realm that the LETs will be involved with is adopted roads and footways, play areas and orphaned land. Orphaned land refers to land that receives little or no maintenance - neglected open spaces that may or may not be within the Council's ownership. Land ownership and management responsibility will be an important issue for the LETs as some of the functions included within their remit will require that they pursue housing associations, owners or factors to meet their obligations e.g. fly tipping and graffiti removal. The introduction of LETs must be at a no additional cost, indeed £100k of efficiencies require to be achieved over the next 4 years, so it is important to make clear from the outset that the Council is not extending the range of services it provides, but rather delivering the current ones more effectively and efficiently.

The following functions will be covered by the LETs:

- Open Space Grounds Maintenance
- Street Sweeping
- Play Areas
- Refuse Collection
- Footway Encroachment (hedges, epicormic growth etc.)
- Graffiti (not free of charge)
- Ad Hoc Fly Tipping Emergencies
- Road Sign Maintenance
- Monitor private contractors, public utilities groups e.g. skips, scaffolding etc.
- Inspection of Watercourses
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Recycling Sites
- Routine Fly Tipping Hot Spots
- Litter/Dog Bin Emptying
- Minor Footway/Roadway Repairs
- Lighting Faults
- Street Furniture Maintenance (bollards, bins, benches etc.)
- Gullies
- Public Liability Claims
- Tenants And Residents Assoc. Liaison
- Councillor Liaison
- Winter Maintenance (local footway priorities)
- Third party land issues

Once established the LETs will be chaired by an Environmental and Commercial Services Team Leader. It is not intended for LETs to be the first point of contact for enquiries or complaints; the Council already has systems and procedures in place for this. LETs will meet once per month to deal with set agenda issues such as those undernoted:

- Bring to a resolution operational issues that remain unresolved after initial attempts through normal channels have not been successful.
- Communicate/share information on forthcoming projects so that all service areas are made aware of them e.g. installation of new lampposts in a street or neighbourhood; pending road works/utilities works; community clean-ups and other community events etc.
- Fly tipping, litter, graffiti, dog fouling hot spot monitoring and planned enforcement actions.
- Attendance at local Tenants and Residents Assoc. meetings and other partner liaison.

The proposed setup is intended to encourage a two way process of information exchange and closer liaison amongst stakeholders. When the teams are in place and functioning, it is expected that colleagues from Safer and Inclusive Communities will be invited to join the teams in order to expand and enhance the working relationship already in place with the Community Wardens, Enforcement Wardens, Clean-Up Squads and Anti-Social Behaviour Team. Also included in the remit of the LETs will be the requirement to liaise with stakeholders such as community groups, tenants and residents associations and elected members. Figure 2, below illustrates the proposed LETs setup, which will involve a core of permanent members all of which are council staff, ad hoc members, who are also council staff, but will only attend if a particular agenda item requires their expertise, and invited members, who will be asked and encouraged to attend if an agenda item would benefit from their input. Consideration was given to aligning the LETs with Council wards, but due to the different geographical sizes of wards this is not practicable. Appendix 2 shows the geographical area that will be covered by each LET.

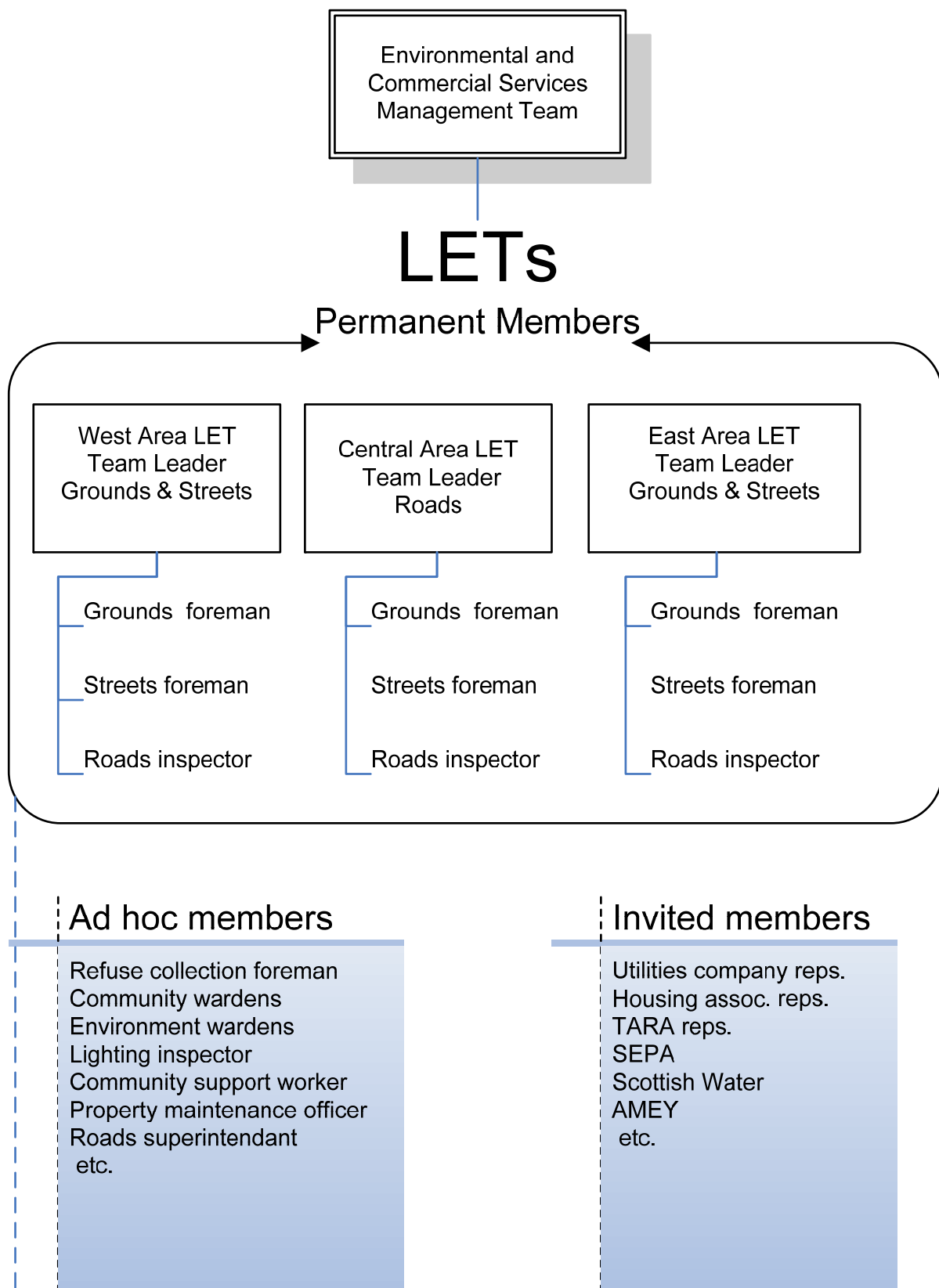


Figure 2: LETs setup

Figure 3 is an illustration of the escalation process that may be implemented when elected members or other stakeholders wish to refer an unresolved matter to be dealt with by the LET. It is stressed at this point that the definitive escalation process will evolve from the knowledge developed in the months following implementation of the LETs method of neighbourhood management.

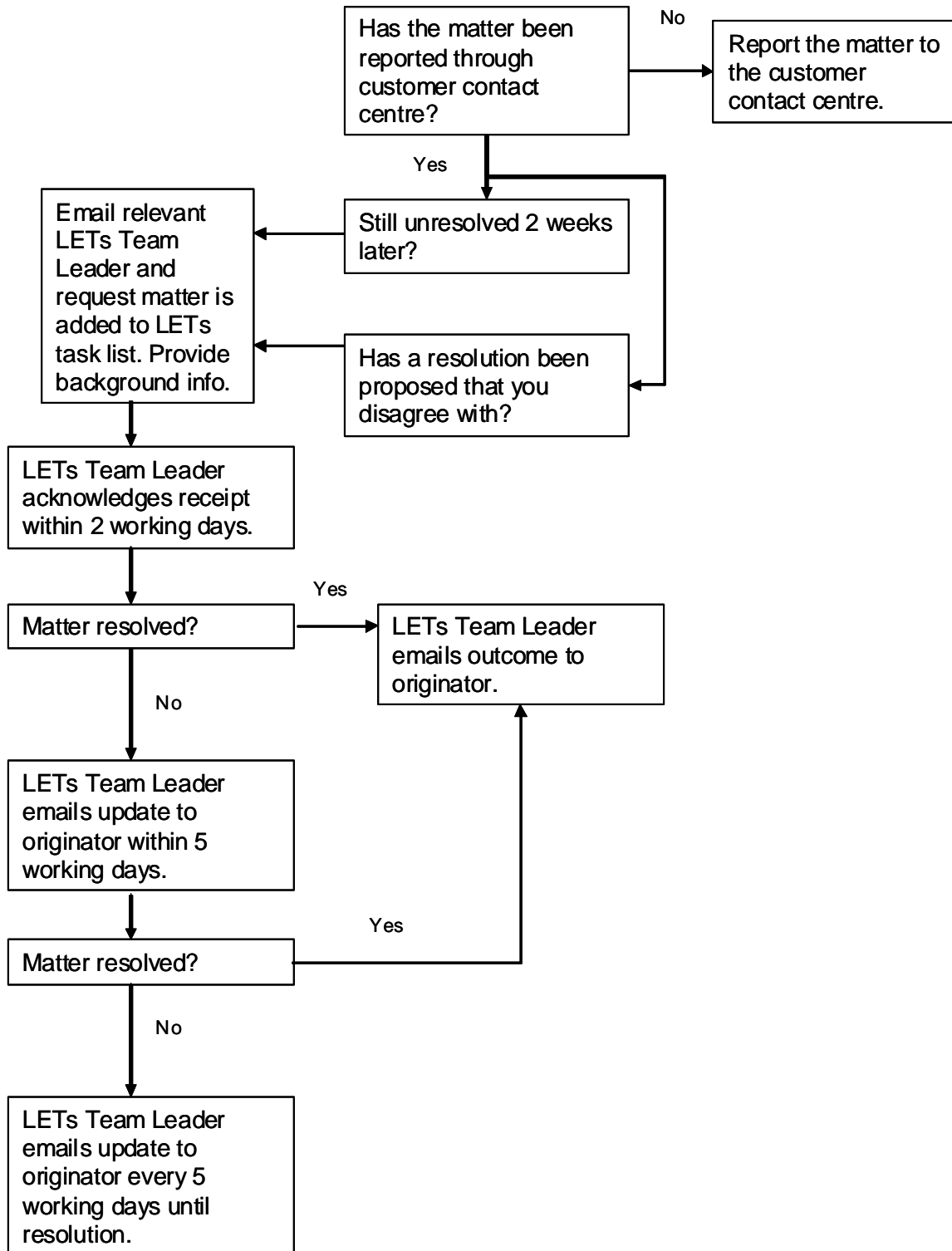


Figure 3: Sample Escalation Process

8.0 EFFICIENCIES

8.1 Budget savings workstream 12 (streetscene) sets a target of a £100k in the period 2010/2014.

8.2 Overtime

Street sweeping services are delivered 7 days per week and both operatives and supervisors work routine overtime at the weekend and some evenings. Routine overtime is also worked in refuse collection, roads, the refuse transfer station, burial grounds and the crematorium. Routine overtime is no longer worked in parks following the introduction of park attendants.

A review of all overtime is currently underway and initial indications are that there is potential for efficiencies, as can be seen from the data in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3: Supervisors Overtime 08/09

Section	£ Overtime	£ By week	Employees	Average £ By employee
Roads	31,027	597	7	4,432
Grounds & Streets	29,002	558	5	5,800
	60,029	1,155	12	

Table 4: Operatives Overtime to period 3 09/10

Section	Average £ employee per week
Ground Maintenance Permanent	15
Ground Maintenance Seasonal	4
Street Sweeping	41
Roads	52

8.3 The reduction of overtime working holds the prospect of major savings. However, the potential cost savings come with a caveat, the experience of implementing change in the parks and ground maintenance section had its difficulties, not least, the antipathy it engendered in the workforce and the subsequent unofficial industrial action by operatives that resulted in parks and sports pitches being closed for a period during the summer of 2008. A degree of resentment remains and morale is undoubtedly low in the section, a main cause of which is the significant reduction of overtime earnings once enjoyed by parks employees.

8.4 Routine street sweeping overtime is now being focussed on. The options under consideration are as undernoted and whichever option is finally implemented it is intended that it will negate the need for routine overtime working in the future.

- weekend only workforce
- a 4 days on 4 days off shift pattern
- a 5 days over 7 shift pattern

The range of possible options will be discussed with the relevant trade union(s) prior to deciding the preferred option. Details of the 5 days over 7 proposal are being developed at present. It is however anticipated that the abolition of routine weekend overtime in street sweeping will contribute at least 30% of the £100k savings target.

8.5 A service wide overtime review is also being undertaken to address existing budget pressures within the employee costs budget and to contribute towards the remaining £70k savings target, which requires to be achieved over the next three financial years.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 In consideration of the available options it is concluded that there is no obvious benefit to be gained from pursuing a full-blown streetscene model of delivery for frontline services within Inverclyde.
- 9.2 It is recognised that there is a need for better service integration and the most appropriate strategy to advance this objective is by the introduction of multi disciplinary Local Environment Teams (LETs).

10.0 IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Financial

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report £'000	Virement From	Other Comments
Various	Various	2010/2011	(30)		

10.2 Human Resources

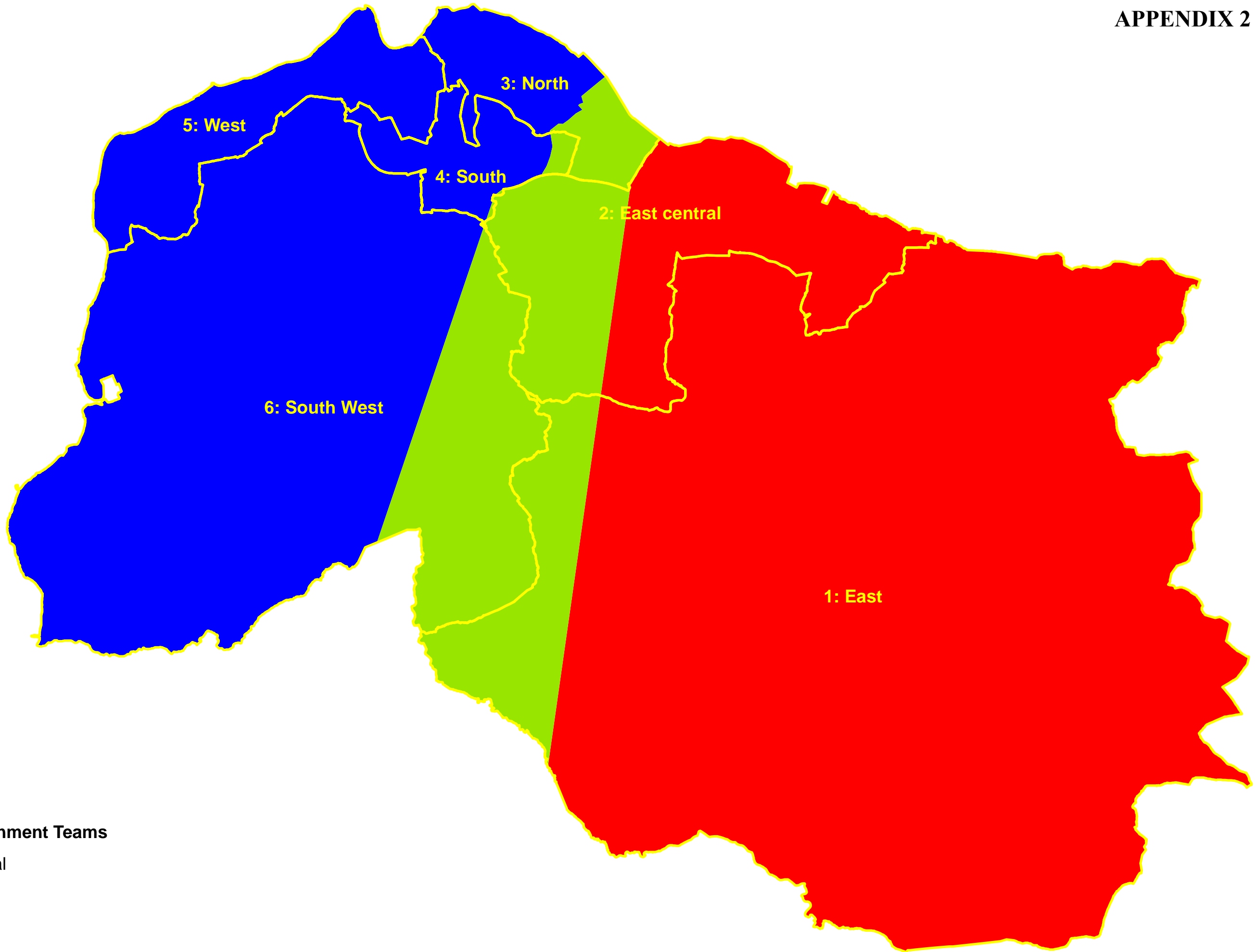
A range of employees will have their shift patterns revised and those employees involved in the proposed Local Environment Teams will have their job descriptions revised.

The overtime review was discussed at the March management and shop stewards meeting and initial discussions involving management and Human Resources have taken place.

APPENDIX 1

GRADE A	No litter or refuse
GRADE B	Predominately free of litter apart from some small items (no accumulations)
GRADE C	Widespread distribution of litter (minor accumulations)
GRADE D	Heavily littered (significant accumulations)

		Response Times & Cleanliness Standard			
Category Zone	Zone description & example	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D
1	Town centre and shopping centres (e.g. West Blackhall Street, Greenock, Princes Street, Port Glasgow)	←	6 hours		
		←	←	3 hours	
		←	←	←	1 hour
2	High density Residential (e.g. Belville Street, Greenock, Highholm Street, Port Glasgow)	←	12 hours		
		←	←	6 hours	
		←	←	←	3 hours
3	Low density residential (e.g. the majority of streets within Inverkip, Kilmacolm)	←	2 weeks		
		←	←	12 hours	
		←	←	←	6 hours
7a	Local roads – hard surface areas	←	←	2 weeks	
		←	←	←	5 days
7b	Local roads – grassed areas (verges)	←	←	2 weeks	
		←	←	←	5 days
12	Public land attracting large numbers of people (e.g. public land when used for occasional events such as car boot sales or licensed entertainment)	←	24 hours		
		←	←	24 hours	
		←	←	←	24 hours



Legend

 Wards

Local Environment Teams

 Central

 East

 West

Head of Environmental Services
Alan Barnes
Ingleston Park, Cartburn Street
Greenock PA15 4UE

Produced By : Martin Burrows
Date: July 2010
Scale: 1:54,755

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