

BRIEFING NOTE TO COUNCILLOR ANDERSON

MEETING WITH AMEY - 25 MARCH 2004

I attended a meeting with representatives of Amey at their offices. I was also accompanied by Carr MacDonald.

I explained that during a tour of the city with yourself, the general cleanliness of the City Bypass was substandard and this conveyed a poor image of the city to motorists using the bypass and to visitors entering the city from neighbouring authorities.

In response, Amey's representative explained that the removal of litter was of the lowest priority, that de-littering was programmed to take place every four months and a team were assigned to the task for one week. However, the service team had other duties and could be taken off de-littering to do other duties. The representative indicated that although the service team were Amey employees, it was not always possible to ensure that the programmed work was carried out.

I offered to take the work over and supply Amey with a price. I asked the representative to convey this offer to his superiors and I requested a response in writing. I explained that I would have to report on the results of the meeting to you. I am sorry to have to report that my offer was not met with any indication that it would be treated seriously and to date I have not received a reply.

It is the view of Mr MacDonald and myself that Amey spend as little money as possible on de-littering and do not wish to co-operate on working in partnership with us to improve the cleanliness of the city.

Amey's representative was Fraser Boyd.

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EDITORIAL

A rather Dickensian tale of two cities



BELFAST SPENDS more money on street cleaning than any other city in the UK, the city council revealed last week.

After Ulster television presenter, Eamonn Holmes, described his home city as "full of vomit, drunks, crime, dirt and urine," the city's mayor joined the condemnation, saying that the people of Belfast should be "embarrassed" by the huge amount of money that the council spends on clearing litter every year.

Some £9 million is spent annually keeping the streets clean, more than virtually any other similar sized city in the UK.

Heather Loudon, Belfast's director of contract services was reported as saying: "If we cleaned the city centre first thing in the morning and didn't do it again until the evening, the main areas in the centre would be ankle deep in litter."

To cut its costs in the long run, Belfast has just launched a £2 million campaign to stop litter and encourage recycling. It might have lessons to learn from Edinburgh.

An independent survey of the Scottish city carried out last December has shown consistent improvements in street cleanliness over the past two years. The award winning Keep Edinburgh Clean campaign, launched in 2002, built upon resident's pride in their city. The council used council vehicles, taxis and buses to promote the anti-litter message as well as a series of television and cinema adverts.

A business awards ceremony was also introduced under the campaign. The awards recognise businesses which make an active contribution to keep the city clean. Money was also invested in environmental wardens, which patrol the city enforcing litter legislation.

The programme is ongoing, Edinburgh is planning to introduce a fast food litter campaign later in the year, it is also launching a 'spring clean-up' project which will see residents getting involved in cleaning up the city. Not only this city chiefs announced last week that no new housing developments would be allowed to go ahead without the inclusion of recycling facilities in design plans, the announcement coincided with news that the Scottish Executive would be committing a further £83 million to the city's waste management and recycling programmes.

The differences in waste management are not just between cities, there is a massive polarisation in the waste and recycling strategies of different counties within the UK. Surely it can't all be down to resident's 'attitude.'

Jocelyn Mercer