



5.1 Qualities of streets: two sides of the same coin

Table 5.1 Local Environmental Quality Survey of England results by environmental element (ENCAMS, 2002)

<i>Element</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Observations and notes</i>
Litter	Unsatisfactory	Significant components of litter are hazardous to health, such as dog fouling and broken glass Most widespread source of commercial litter is elastic bands from postal workers
Detritus	Unsatisfactory	38% of sites were significantly or heavily affected by detritus
Weed growth	Satisfactory	Detritus is a product of poor street sweeping, that can lead to weed growth and highway and paving damage.
Weed control	Unsatisfactory	Weed control often has pollution consequences and can lead to unsightly and dead vegetation
Staining	Unsatisfactory	Major sources include chewing gum, oil, paint, and cement
Fly-tipping, fly-posting and graffiti	Good	Not widespread, but instead focused on a few hotspots Graffiti is focused on a few prominent locations and mainly consists of small juvenile marks Fly-tipping occurs in concealed areas, mostly as small stickers
Highways and pavements	Unsatisfactory	25% of public highways and pavements are significantly or heavily damaged
Pavement obstruction	Poor	Mainly a product of increasing café culture
Street furniture	Unsatisfactory	Lack of basic maintenance such as washing, decoration, and minor repair
Landscaping	Unsatisfactory	Both the cleanliness and the maintenance of landscaping was unsatisfactory Once installed many landscaping schemes are neglected due to poor maintenance routines or inadequate funding

indicated that 69 per cent of authorities described their stock as 'fair' and 13 per cent as 'poor'. However, and more worrying, 37 per cent of authorities separately described their parks as 'declining'. The Urban Green Spaces Task Force (DTLR 2002a), linked the decline directly to the reduction in spending on urban parks and open spaces over the past 20 years as a proportion of overall local authority leisure spending; as well as to other factors such as a decline in the skills base required for effective green space management.

Second, on the issue of public space management:

- Evidence from the limited range of national performance indicators used by the government to monitor performance in the street scene ambit revealed a mixed picture, but generally little overall improvement except on the percentage of pedestrian crossings with

facilities for people with disabilities (Audit Commission 2002a). The work revealed that standards of highway cleanliness, numbers of broken streetlights, numbers of public conveniences, action against fly tipping, and road repairs were all stable, but unimpressive.

- The Audit Commission's ongoing inspection work of local street scene services, revealed a mixed picture with the majority of services judged as 'fair' (56 per cent), a smaller proportion judged as 'good' (40 per cent), none as 'excellent', and 4 per cent as 'poor'. Drawing on the results from the first 120 or so inspections, 43 per cent of services were judged 'unlikely to improve' or 'will not improve' (Audit Commission 2002a).
- On the crime prevention scene, Audit Commission inspection reports of 23 Community Safety Partnerships revealed that only 40 per cent of authorities were delivering a 'good' service, and that 39 per cent had 'uncertain' or 'poor' prospects for improvement (Audit Commission 2002b).