

Briefing Note		
Report Title	Briefing Note – Cleansing Cuts & Pilot Trials	
Key Decision	No	Item No.
Ward	All	
Contributors	Director of Environment Services	
Class		Date: 4 th September 2019

1 Background

- 1.1 The Street Cleaning service is a barrow-based, beat street sweeping service, currently delivered on a weekly frequency to residential streets. Higher frequency sweeping is provided to town centres and areas with a higher footfall. (Fig 1)
- 1.2 In addition to sweeping streets, Street Sweepers are also responsible for emptying litter bins, reporting fly-tipping and graffiti, weeding pavements, helping Highways to grit icy pavements and clearing large amounts of leaf-fall during Autumn.
- 1.3 Cuts since 2010 have reduced the Street Sweeping workforce by 23% and supervisory posts by 19%.
- 1.4 Cuts under consideration would result in the reduction of the Street Sweeping workforce by 45% and supervisory posts by 29% since 2010 (fig 7)
- 1.5 The proposal to cut £823,000 from the cleansing budget was submitted to the Mayor & Cabinet during the 2017/18 cuts process. Officers were instructed to trial different approaches to establish the likely impact and assess whether an alternative approach would mitigate some of the impact.
- 1.6 The original cuts proposal aimed to deliver the budget reduction by reducing sweeping frequencies to all residential roads within the borough to a minimum frequency of once a fortnight. Most residential roads are currently swept once a week.
- 1.7 To deliver the proposed budget reduction officers would need to carry out a full reorganisation of the cleansing workforce.
- 1.8 A reduction of around 30 sweeping posts and one cleansing management post would be required.
- 1.9 Additional post reductions might be required to fund extra street cleaning machinery to allow us to respond to increased complaints and reports.

- 1.10 Remaining residential street sweepers would be given new workloads where they would sweep half of their workloads on alternate weeks. Main roads adjacent to their new workloads would be factored in and would still be swept Monday – Friday by these sweepers, with the assistance of additional mechanical sweeping.
- 1.11 No changes will be made to the frequency of sweeping Town Centres, these will be swept 7 days a week.

2 Historical Background

- 2.1 Lewisham Street Cleansing services have been consistently defined as ‘Low Cost, High Performing’ in annual national VfM audit reports.
- 2.2 Prior to the Government’s Austerity measures, in the period between 2002 and 2008, cleansing spend was maintained at below 2002 levels.

2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/08*
4,268,975	4,094,603	4,179,408	4,082,731	4,052,747	4,210,348

*Single Status, changes to agency staff employment conditions and the introduction of the London Living Wage increased cleansing costs by around £860k

- 2.3 During this period there was 30% improvement in resident satisfaction with Street Cleaning.
- 2.4 % saying ‘good/excellent’;

2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/08	2008/9
48%	53%	56%	60%	61%	63%	62%*

*Change of methodology for new ‘Place Survey’

- 2.5 There was also 78% improvement in cleansing performance.

- o Reduction in % of land at unacceptable standard.

2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	2007/08	2008/9	2009/10
33%	21%	28%	24%	15%	6%	7%

3 Deprivation

- 3.1 In 2009 the Rowntree Foundation presented a report “A Clean Sweep” which compared extensive data from Lewisham street cleansing and two other

councils to explore “*why affluent neighbourhoods tend to have higher levels of street cleanliness than deprived neighbourhoods and what local authorities can do to narrow this gap.*” Their findings showed that Lewisham had been remarkably successful in reducing inequality in street cleaning standards between affluent and deprived neighbourhoods; *Lewisham has secured improvements by reducing the proportions below standard in deprived areas as fast as in other areas while Leeds has focused improvements almost exclusively on the most deprived neighbourhoods... This suggests that the three case studies may be making different policy choices in terms of how they balance effectiveness and equality. In particular, Lewisham appears to place more emphasis on outcome equality than the other two authorities.*

- 3.2 The Rowntree Report outlined the pre-austerity cleansing service; “For the majority of its streets, Lewisham provides the following services:

Programmed manual street sweeping. All streets in residential areas are swept a minimum of twice weekly, and some three times a week. Areas around shops, schools etc. tend to receive daily and even twice-daily servicing. The sweepers work to beat cards on which the designated frequency of service for each segment of street is identified.

Responsive mobile teams collect fly-tipping and do extra litter-picking and other cleaning in response to complaints and requests. Mechanised sweepers clean arterial routes.”

The report concludes: “*The outcomes achieved overall in Lewisham, as well as in the more deprived parts, are at least in part due to the emphasis placed on programmed rather than responsive service provision*”.

- 3.3 Further moves away from programmed manual street sweeping are likely to have a more negative impact on our more deprived neighbourhoods.

4 Trials

- 4.1 Officers decided to trial the proposed sweeping reduction in one part of the borough (Brockley and Ladywell Wards) for three months (June, July and August). In these two wards sweeping frequencies were reduce to a minimum frequency of once a fortnight.
- 4.2 An alternative approach, using a mainly mobile reactive cleansing service, was trialled for the same period in the south of the borough. The wards included within this trial were Catford South Ward, Whitefoot Ward, Lee Green Ward, Lewisham Central Ward, Downham Ward and Grove Park Ward.

5 Trial Outcomes

- 5.1 Officers are evaluating the data we have gathered from the two trial areas. These are the initial results.

- 5.2 The North Area (Brockley/Ladywell) tested the primarily static, barrow-based approach with reduced frequencies.
- 5.3 The South Area tested the mainly mobile sweeping and responsive approach.
- 5.4 The most noticeable result from initial analysis shows that there has been a significant increase in complaints and reports between 2018 and the same period for 2019. An Increase of around 65% for all areas/wards. (fig 2).
- 5.5 Interestingly there does not seem to be any significant difference between the increase in reports generated by the two different pilot approaches. They both generate an increase in reports for poor cleansing standards. (fig 3)
- 5.6 Officers use the Defra Code of Practice on Litter & Refuse to monitor cleansing standards. (fig 4). Both trial areas were surveyed before and during the trial period.
- 5.7 Officers will continue to survey these areas after the trial period to assess how long it takes to return standards.
- 5.8 Prior to the trial, both areas reported high cleaning standards. The highest EPA Standards (A/B) accounted for 97% of the inspection results in both areas. (fig 5)
- 5.9 During the trial standards fell sharply with the majority of inspection results reporting the poorest EPA Standards (C/D). (fig 6)

6 Summary

- 6.1 Both trial areas produced a significant drop in cleansing standards and an increase in resident reports.
- 6.2 The impact of the proposed reduction to the current beat-based sweeping service was not mitigated by a mobile, response-driven operation, as tested in the South Area pilot.
- 6.3 Since 2010 Lewisham has reduced street sweeping frequencies. Further moves away from programmed manual street sweeping are likely to have a more negative impact on our deprived neighbourhoods.

Fig 1. Barrow Based Service.



Fig 2. This chart shows reports from the public using 'FixMyStreet', 'LoveCleanStreets', LBL Web, LBL Contact Centre (Phones). These reports come to the service via the LoveLewisham API. (this chart excludes officer/operative reports).

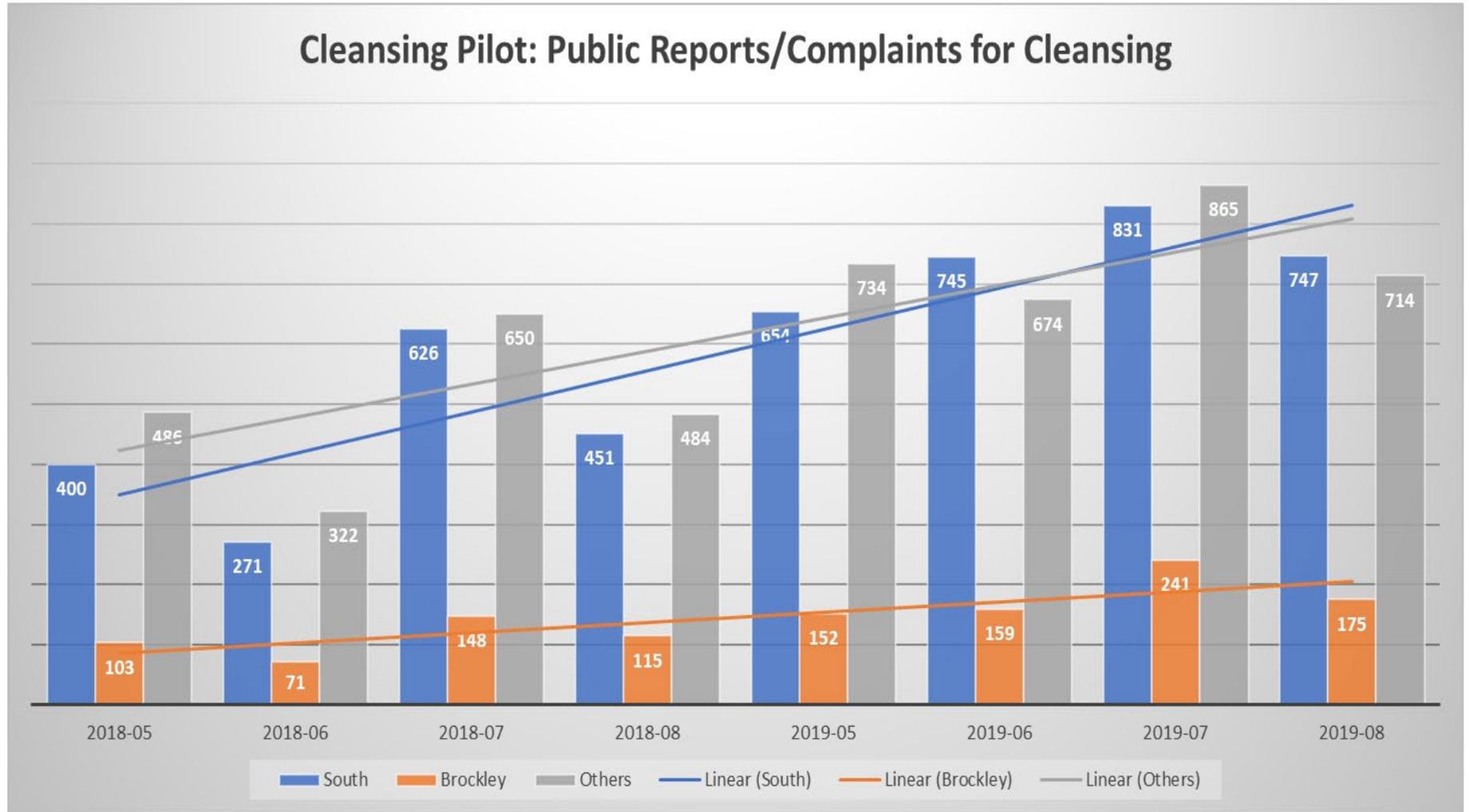


Fig 3. This chart shows the increase (%) in reports from the public using 'FixMyStreet', 'LoveCleanStreets', LBL Web, LBL Contact Centre (Phones). These reports come to the service via the LoveLewisham API. (this chart excludes officer/operative reports).

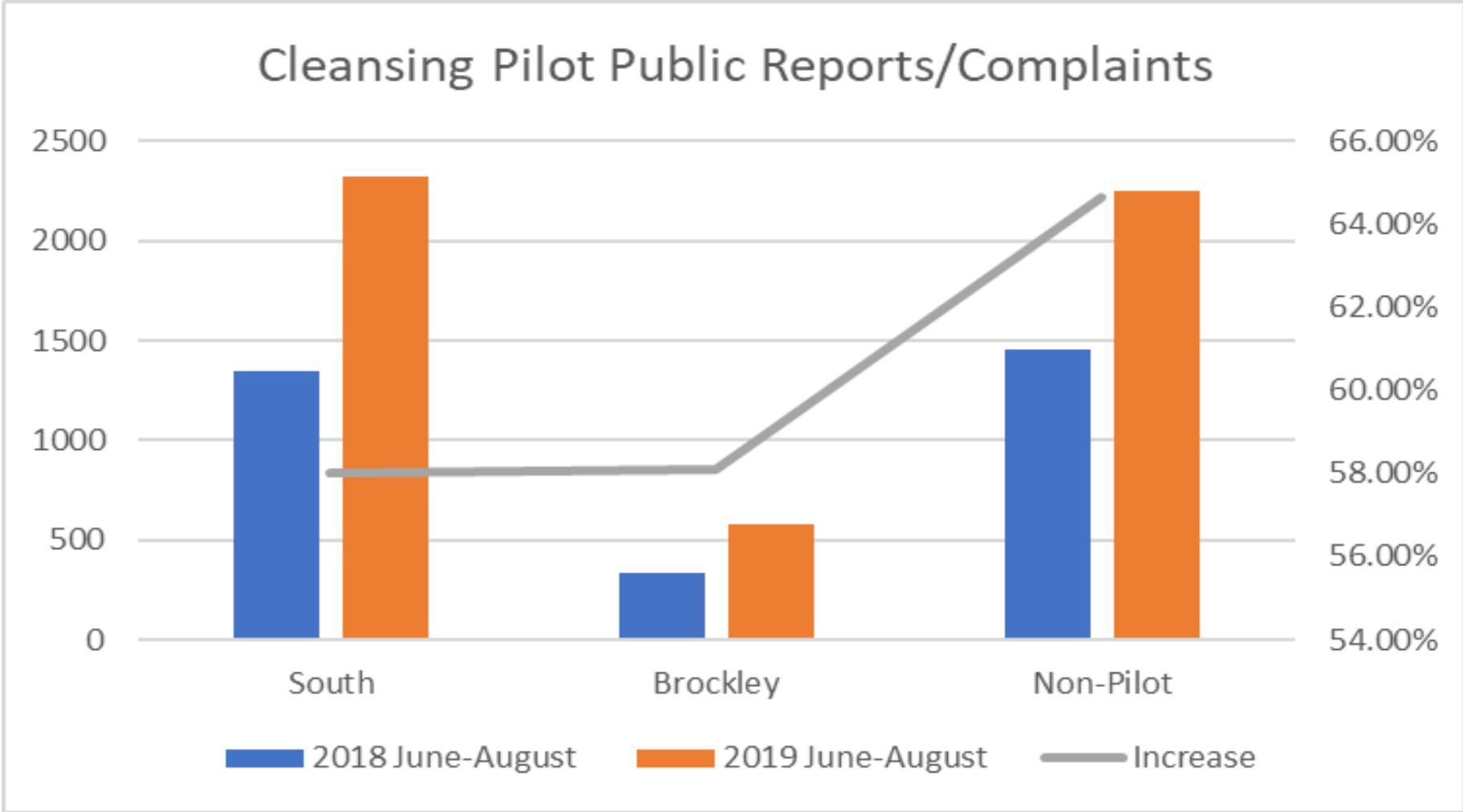


Fig 4. Defra Code of Practice on Litter & Refuse

7.7 Pictorial examples of the grading principles in different settings

Set A: litter and refuse in both relevant highway and hard surface setting

Set B: litter and refuse in a soft surface setting

 <p>© ENCAMS</p> <p>Grade A No litter or refuse</p>	 <p>© ENCAMS</p> <p>Grade C Widespread distribution of litter and/or refuse with minor accumulations</p>	 <p>© ENCAMS</p> <p>Grade A No litter or refuse</p>
 <p>© ENCAMS</p> <p>Grade B Predominately free of litter and refuse apart from some small items</p>	 <p>© ENCAMS</p> <p>Grade D Heavily affected by litter and/or refuse with significant accumulations</p>	 <p>© ENCAMS</p> <p>Grade B Predominately free of litter and refuse apart from some small items</p>

Secondary Roads (residential) are classed as 'high intensity use' areas in the Code of Practice and should litter and refuse be identified in these areas the requirement is to ensure that this is brought up to a grade A standard from being classified as a B standard to within half a day. This means by 6pm if reported before 1pm or by 1pm the next day if reported between 1pm and 6pm on the previous day. Further, if the standard in high intensity areas should fall to an unacceptable level during the evening, it should be restored to grade A by 8am. Good practice would be that grade A is achieved earlier, by the time the area begins to get busy. This applies to weekends and bank holidays as well as weekdays.

The Environmental Protection Act timescales for returning areas to a grade A are listed below for information.

		A	B	C	D
1	TOWN CENTRES & SHOPPING CENTRES	←	6 hrs	3 hrs	1 hr
2	HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREAS	←	12 hrs	6 hrs	3 hrs

Authorities that allow their land to fall below acceptable standards for longer than the allowed response time may be subject to a Litter Abatement Order (section 91) or a Litter Abatement Notice (section 92) issued under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The reducing of sweeping frequencies to residential roads will impact on performance and the cleanliness of the local environment.

Fig 5.

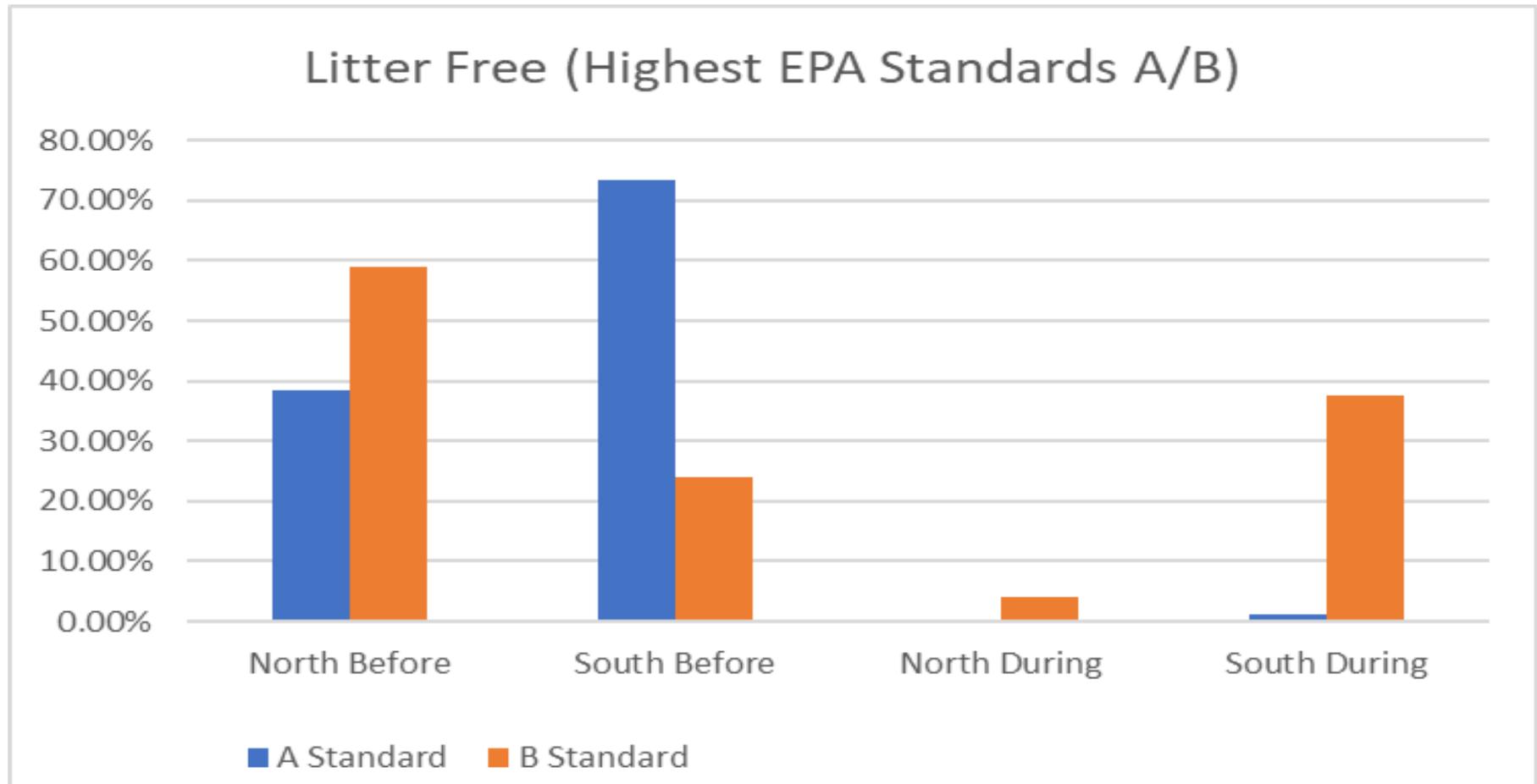


Fig 6

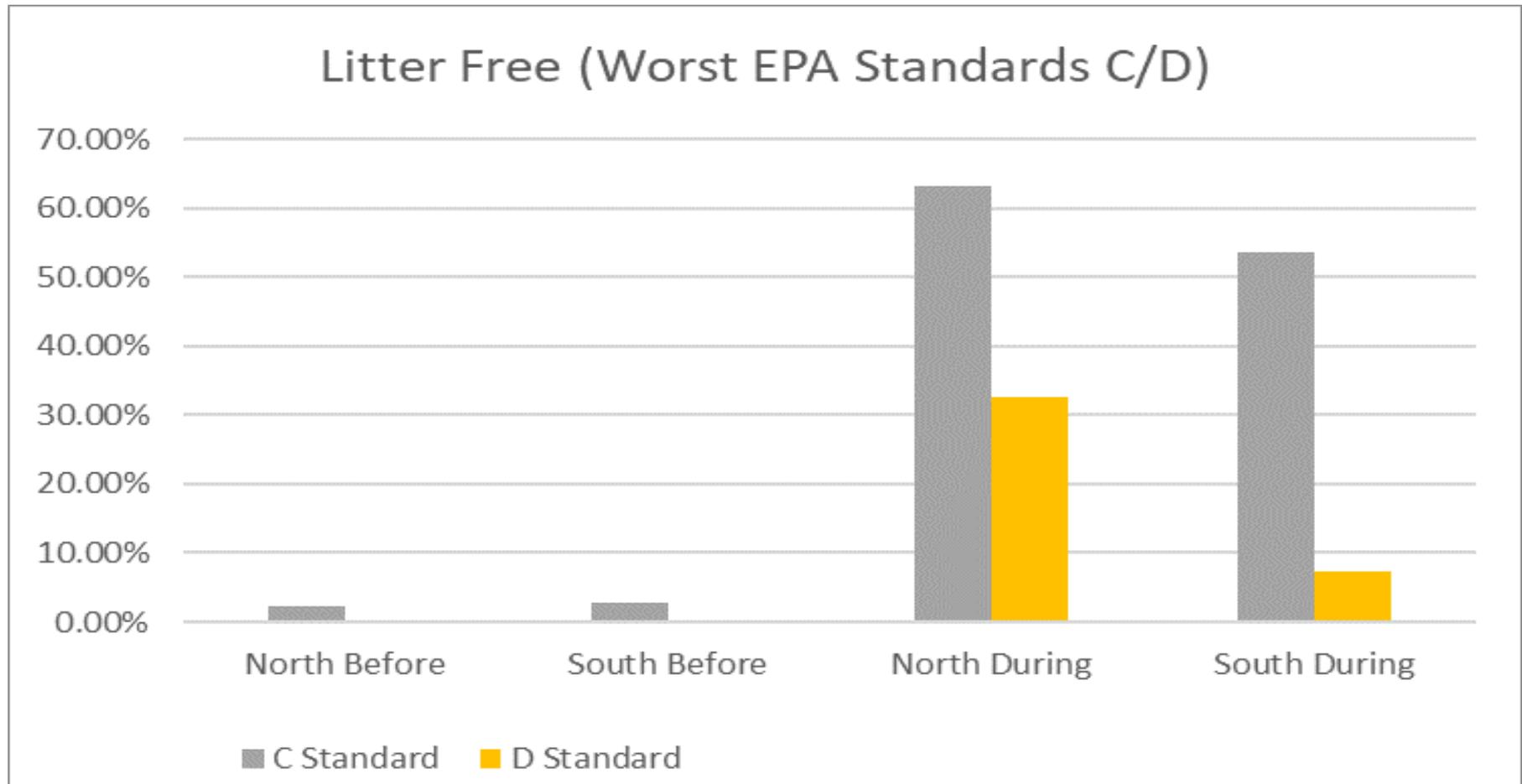
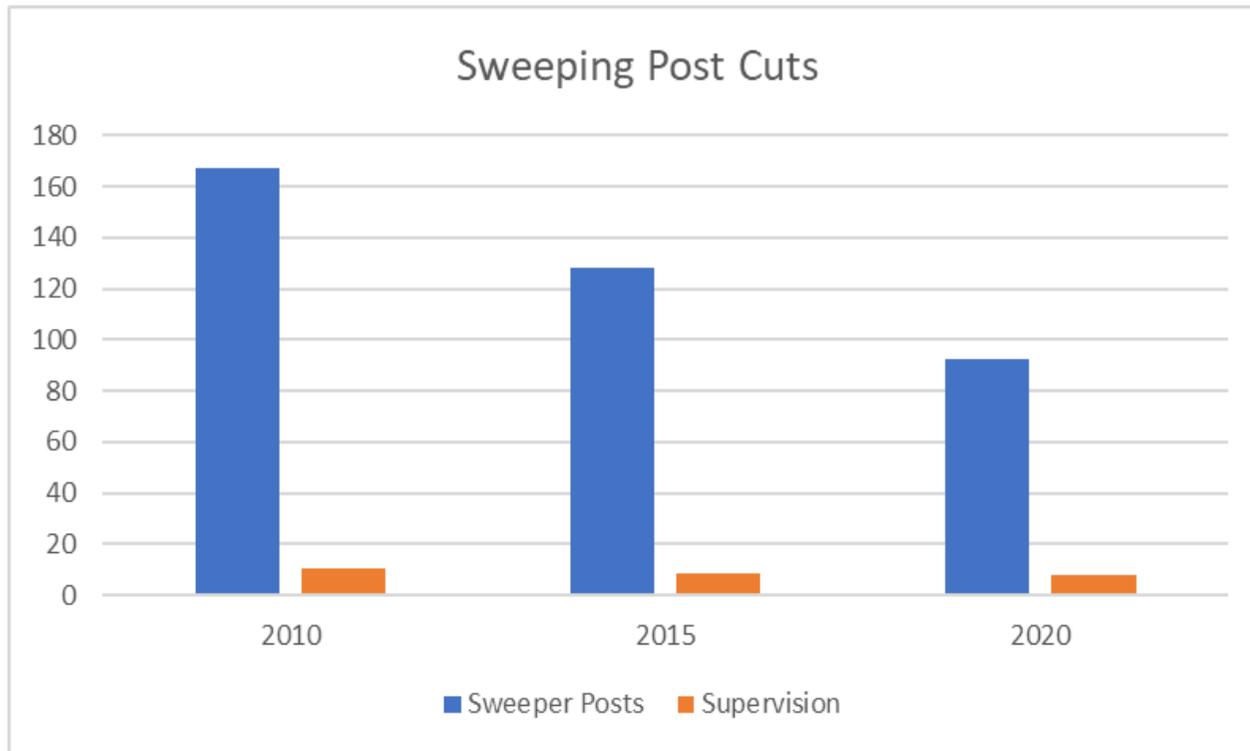


Fig 7 Historical Background



	2010	2015	2020	Posts Cut	Reduction
Sweeper Posts	167	128	92.5	74.5	45%
Supervision	10.5	8.5	7.5	3	29%