

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council



LGC Awards

Environment Award 2005



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2002 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council carried out a major survey, asking the people of Rotherham what improvements they wanted to their environment. Based on their responses, the result was Streetpride, a Council-wide service launched in 2003.

Streetpride tackles environmental concerns such as litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour. The method used was to integrate fully, all activities and functions which affect the street scene across the Borough, and make them customer-focused and responsive to local needs.

To deliver these objectives we have:

- Re-engineered the business by establishing a Customer Contact Centre incorporating 'state of the art' CRM technology, with a 'one stop' number for all Streetpride enquiries.
- Developed and promoted the Streetpride 'brand'.
- Made a real contribution to reducing Crime and Disorder .
- Given the service back to the community by attending every single Area Assembly meeting and delivering on our promises
- Handed part of our budget back to local people so that they can make a real difference to their area.
- Introduced area based working to promote ownership among both the workforce and the local community.
- Set ourselves stretching targets for 'response times' to 26 of the most common requests for service
- Achieved continuous improvement in meeting these response times

Introduction

After a series of initiatives improving the day-to-day quality of life for residents and businesses, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council decided to do even more.

In late 2002 it carried out a major survey of its residents, asking people what they thought about their environment. Based on their responses, the result was Streetpride, a borough-wide service launched in September 2003. Its aim – to tackle environmental concerns such as litter, graffiti, fly-tipping crime and vandalism whilst at the same time maintaining the roads, footpaths, verges and street lighting to the highest possible standards. The method – integrate fully all activities and functions that affect the street scene across this 110-sq-mile (285ha) borough, and make them customer-focused and responsive to local needs. Borough-wide publicity campaigns, a dedicated Contact Centre, area-based working and empowered staff are the key features.

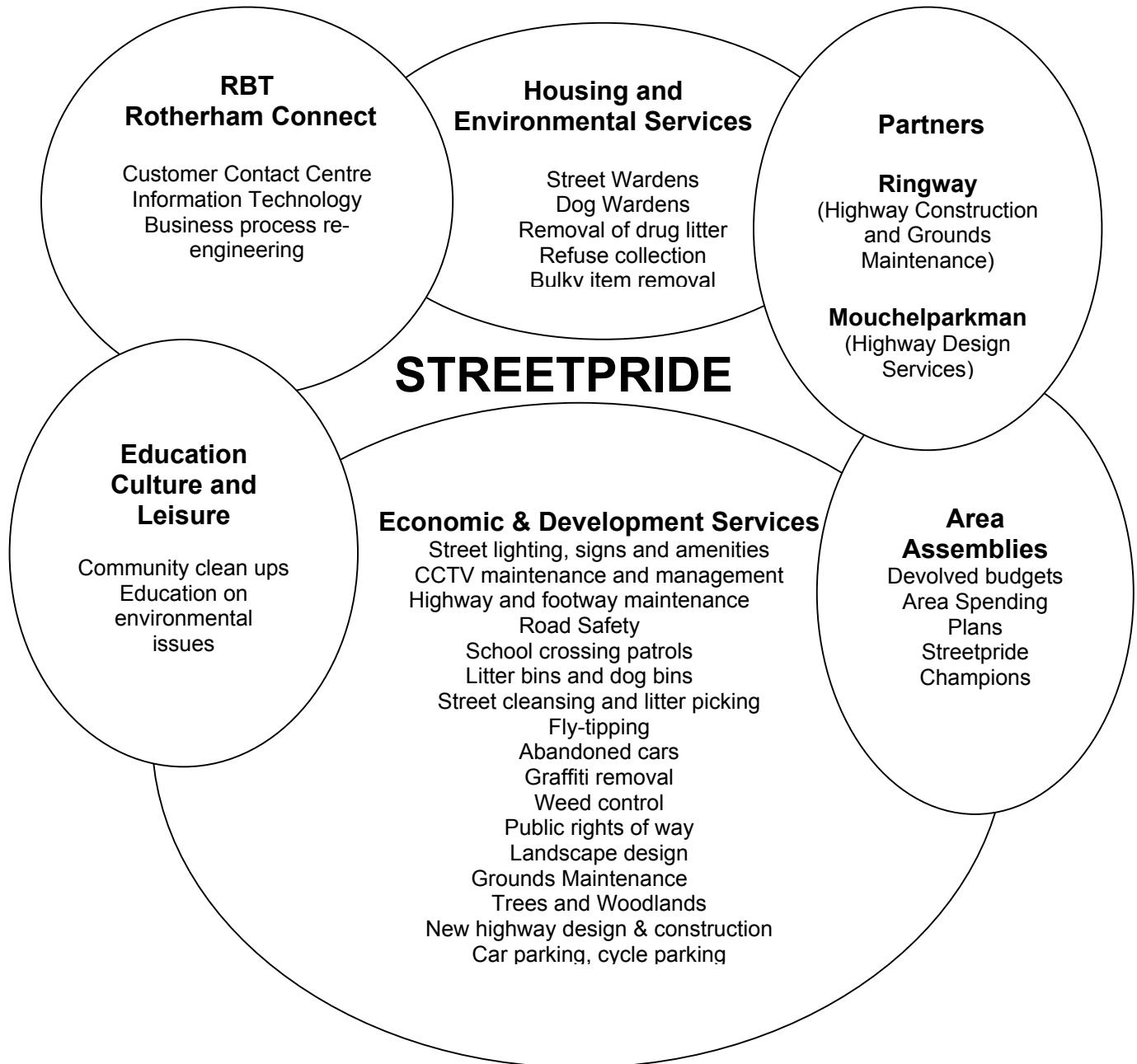
Scope

Streetpride embraces not just the lead Programme Area – Economic & Development Services – but also includes services provided by two other Programme Areas and two external partners.

The customer contact elements were then re-engineered in partnership with BT and a system developed so that all customer contacts could be managed effectively and efficiently through a one stop telephone number.



This organisational diagram shows the wide ranging scope of Streetpride and allows an understanding of the responsibilities and who deals with what:



Each Programme Area had to redefine its responsibilities and restructure to ensure that the philosophy was embraced and that agreed performance measures could be achieved.

ISO 9001 Accreditation

The Economic and Development Services Programme Area has a fully integrated Quality Management System and, after much hard work, achieved ISO 9001 Accreditation in September 2004. The Quality Management system includes Streetpride and ensures a consistently high level of service delivery to customers.

The Streetpride Mission is “To work with the community to maintain and improve the street scene to a standard that will promote civic pride and community responsibility.”

The Streetpride Vision is to make first impressions count – a key recognition was that residents and visitors alike should gain a pleasant first impression of Rotherham from the appearance of its streets.

The Streetpride Ethos of pride in serving the public is possible only if staff are committed and enthusiastic. Streetpride staff are proud to do it, and they look the part, dressed appropriately for the tasks, in a clear house-style . The aim is for them to be “Ambassadors for Rotherham”. As such they are able to give basic information and advice on any of the services provided by the Council or its partners.

Community Empowerment

Streetpride is part of a wider mission to encourage a sense of Rotherham Pride. The engagement of local communities has to be effective to instil and reinforce that sense of pride, responsibility and achievement. To do that, part of the Streetpride budget is devolved to local communities via the borough’s eight Area Assemblies. From a standard fully priced “shopping list”, they can make their own choices on what to spend the money on, which not only improves the areas but enhances local democracy.



Employment Opportunities and Social Inclusion

In July 2003, the whole Council achieved 'Investors in People' accreditation and the philosophy behind this has been particularly relevant to the development of Streetpride

Streetpride is a major local employer, able to offer high-quality employment and training in a wide range of skills. Particular emphasis is placed on working with

the long-term unemployed and youth offenders to help them gain skills and experience necessary to gain employment.

A number of schemes are in operation including the promotion of voluntary work using the 'Make a Difference' register, extensive training of the long-term unemployed via 'Step-Up' schemes, and 'Reparation Order' work for youth offenders. 'Community Service Order' work for offenders is also to be introduced in Streetpride later this year.

Although in their early stages, these initiatives are already bearing fruit in terms of people obtaining permanent employment after leaving the schemes.

Branding

This is a key issue that contributes to shaping the image of the whole Council. Streetpride uniforms and vehicles carry the Streetpride logo and the easy-to-remember telephone number.



At approximately 2km intervals along strategic routes into Rotherham, Streetpride's bright banners fly from lamp-posts, giving the telephone number and a simple message about the service. This branding philosophy has been extended across all Service and Programme Areas involved, clearly demonstrating the joined-up thinking behind Streetpride.

Golden Telephone Number (336 003)

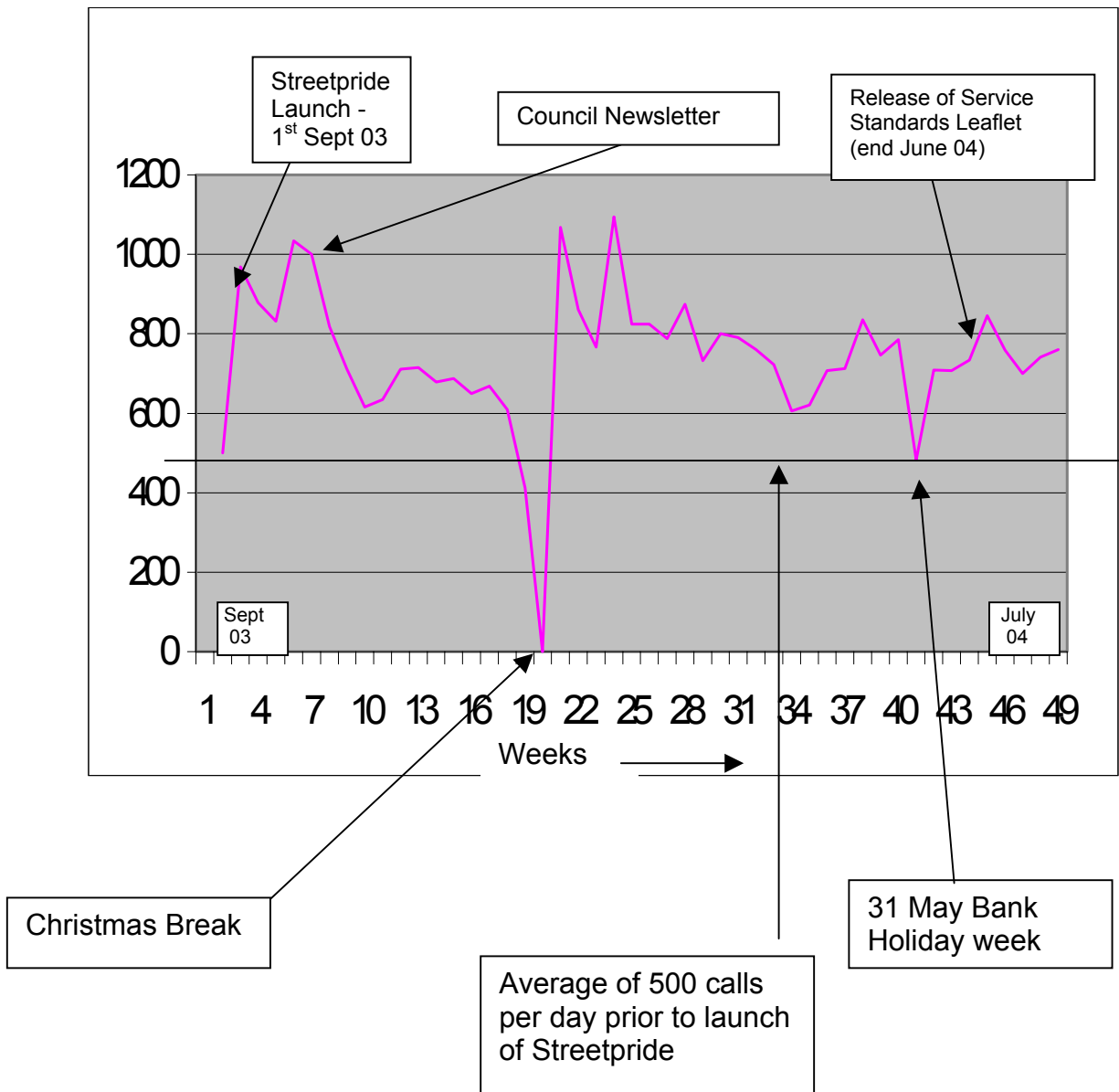
Streetpride is primarily aimed at improving services and engaging the community in their delivery. Chief among image and branding issues is the introduction of a simple, easy-to-remember, golden telephone number which is displayed prominently on street banners, vehicles and literature. The Streetpride number was also publicised on local radio with the jingle: *'Phone us and tell us what you see on double-three six, double-oh three'*



In addition, a Streetpride 'Service Standards' leaflet was delivered to every home in Rotherham in June 2004. This leaflet lists the services Streetpride can provide, and sets out what service customers can expect in terms of coverage and response times. Included on the leaflet is the Streetpride golden number.

All calls are routed to a contact centre formed in a Council-BT partnership. A joint venture company (RBT Connect) manages the centre. A graph showing call-rates before and after the Streetpride launch is shown below:

CALLS RECEIVED



Customers like the new arrangements and have given positive feedback.

Monthly random sampling of 100 customers (by telephone) has shown that 98% of customers find the new service either easy or very easy to use



These are extracts from some of the letters received:

GKP: *"I must congratulate you on the prompt way the matter was dealt with and I was very impressed with the standard of the clearance work"*

IK: *"Thanks for always replying to my letters and being so nice on the telephone, too"*

EC: *"Once again, thank you very much for caring enough to do something about our problem."*

Area-based working

To encourage pride and ownership, among staff and residents, area-based delivery is a core principle. Specific area teams were set up to carry out work in each Area Assembly area. These include cleansing (mechanical and manual), litter-picking, fly-tipping removal, graffiti removal, weed control - and basic highway maintenance, such as repairs and potholes.

Again, this has resulted in positive feedback

LT: *"Thank you for the excellent job you made of cleaning up our village"*

C L *"... what a pleasure it is to see someone who takes a pride in their work"*

Environmental Management

The Council has a target in its 'Environment Action Strategy 2003-2006' to develop an Environmental Management System across all the Council's main services. Streetpride is leading the way and below are a few examples of what has been achieved:

1. Most of the detritus collected by the three Mechanical Road Sweepers (approximately 1500 tonnes per year) is now recycled as a substitute for raw materials in the production of cement.
2. In partnership with Ringway Highway Services, Streetpride has established a recycling Centre. All surplus materials from highway works (excluding small patching works) are now taken to the recycling centre, crushed and re-used in further highway works.
3. Recycled glass is being used as hard stone in major maintenance and construction schemes.
4. The majority of road resurfacing in Rotherham is now being undertaken using the waste product steel slag from the local Steelphalt plant. In addition, this material has less rolling resistance which helps to save fuel and lowers tyre noise.
5. Use of a "Hotbox" allows tarmac materials to be kept for use over several days. This prevents excess materials being wasted every day and reduces the number of trips to fetch materials.
6. Streetpride has carried out successful trials of an infra-red heater system which allows defects in the highway to be repaired without the need for excavation. Negotiations are now well advanced to purchase the system.

Environmental Wardens and Dog Wardens

Streetpride recognises the needs for active enforcement and education to support neighbourhood clean-up initiatives and has a very active Environmental and Dog Warden Team. They ensure that people follow the law regarding such issues as littering, fly-tipping, dog fouling and stray dogs. This team also works with schools and local community groups to promote a greater sense of community pride.



The range of penalties varies depending on the type and seriousness of the offence;

- Fixed penalties of £50 for littering and dog fouling
- Fines through court of up to £20,000 and / or imprisonment for serious illegal deposits of waste

Between April and July 2004, the wardens issued 109 fixed penalty notices for littering and 38 for dog fouling.

Nationally the performance of our enforcement team is in the top 5% of councils who serve fixed penalty notices

Again, letters received from the public demonstrate that the new approach is working:

DG: "...Just to say what a super clean-up job has been done in two quite local areas ..."

GP: "We would like to thank all the people who work on the Streetpride team for the way they are improving our area"

JJ: "... the work they are doing is outstandingly impressive"

RB: "I would just like to say a big thank you for the gentleman who ensures my local roads never have any litter on them, even when I am off work I see him regularly collecting litter and I never see any other roads looking this good"

Campaigns

'Toxic'

A new education package called 'Toxic' has recently been developed and is now being delivered to all Secondary Schools in Rotherham. The Britney Spears song 'Toxic' forms the musical backdrop to the campaign which is designed to inform secondary school children of the environmental impacts of dropping litter.

It is a hard-hitting campaign combining music, images and videos to help deliver the message that environmental crimes of whatever nature are not acceptable - including littering by schoolchildren. Interaction with the children is made easier and fun with the use of mobile radio microphones.

The children are then advised that uniformed officers will be visiting the areas where there are litter problems and issuing fixed penalty notices of £50 to anyone witnessed dropping litter. The initiative is currently exclusive to Rotherham but it

is hoped that the campaign may become nationally recognised and adopted by other local authorities.

'Don't be a Tosser'

The 'Don't be a Tosser' campaign has recently been introduced and will be officially launched later this year. The campaign targets motorists who discard litter from their vehicles. It draws attention to the environmental problems caused and the £50 fixed penalty fines levied on offenders

Voluntary surrender of scrap vehicles

This recently launched campaign, which includes posters on local buses, is aimed at reducing the number of abandoned cars and publicises Streetpride's free vehicle-surrender service.



Crime and Disorder

A key feature of Streetpride is its role in tackling crime and disorder issues, thereby fulfilling the Council's obligations under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act. Streetpride works closely with the Safer Rotherham Partnership to ensure joined-up thinking on all such issues

More than 400 staff are clearly identifiable as Streetpride team members, and are equipped and trained to act as eyes and ears for the community, police and other enforcement agencies. Most have mobile phones or radio communication links with Streetpride's CCTV control room, which is staffed 24 hours a day 365 days of the year. This allows immediate distribution of information to those who can respond - including the Police, Neighbourhood Wardens, Environmental Wardens and Traffic Wardens.

All front-line staff are receiving 'Eyes and Ears' training organised jointly with the Police to enable them to be even more effective in dealing with crime and disorder issues.

The Streetpride Neighbourhood Warden Scheme

This is at the forefront of the drive to reduce crime and disorder.

Neighbourhood Wardens provide the links between the community and other agencies such as Housing and Environmental Services, Housing Associations, and the Police. They provide highly visible patrols on the streets and won a national ENCAMS 'Clean and Safe' award in November 2003. In addition, an independent survey by ENCAMS in 2003 showed 98% of streets in Rotherham with an acceptable standard of cleanliness.

The service has so far dealt with over 3,000 complaints - all closed to the customers' satisfaction. A 95% graffiti removal rate has been achieved in Rawmarsh following the creation of the youth activity 'Project External Gallery' involving over 60 young people.



Again, feedback from the public has been positive:

JTW: "The council is to be congratulated for its efforts towards improving the environment in our area. It makes everyone feel so much better and is a good advertisement to anyone thinking of living or setting up business here. Keep up the good work, we all benefit long term."

EP: "Thanks for your hard work which you have put in Bradgate Park, Clifton Park - most likely all parks ...visitors to Rotherham must envy us"

HH: "Many thanks for your help... it is good to know there are some other kind people out there"

P M: "Congratulations for the excellent work"

Performance Management

Local Performance Indicators (LPis)

Local Performance Indicators have been developed covering areas such as highway cleanliness, removal of fly-tipping, road accidents, network condition, highway Inspections, utilities works, blocked gullies, streetlighting, highway defects and winter maintenance. Most of these indicators have displayed a trend of continuous improvement since Streetpride was launched despite the increased demand for services.

Members of the public agree as demonstrated by the following extracts from letters received:

DF: "We both commented on how well maintained the town looked in terms of general cleanliness and the state of the roads. Rotherham certainly compares very favourably to many Metropolitan Boroughs that I visit."

PW: "It is with some pride that I write to commend your workforce for the thorough and professional job."

PDG: "I am most grateful to you for following through this work and for your prompt and efficient action"

National Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

All BVPIs covering the activities of Streetpride are regularly monitored with the aim of reaching national upper quartile performance in all Indicators. Last year Streetpride achieved upper quartile performance in 3 out of 8 national indicators.

Response times

Target response times have been set for 26 of the key 'reactive' services undertaken by Streetpride. Actual performance achieved for all 26 services is monitored on a monthly basis and reported to Senior Management, and the relevant Cabinet Members. The results are also published on the Council's Website and in regular council newsletters.

Continuous improvement has been made in virtually all response times since Streetpride was launched. This has been achieved despite a continuously rising demand for most services following the launch of Streetpride.

Waste Management Best Value Inspection

In July 2004 the Audit Commission inspected the Council's Waste Management service (waste collection and disposal, street cleansing, environmental education and enforcement) and awarded the Council a **2 Star "Good"** service rating with "**Promising**" prospects for improvement. The award acknowledges the changes made under the Streetpride initiative to significantly improve the environmental well being of people who live and do business in Rotherham.

Comments within the Inspection reports about Streetpride were positive:

- *"We asked ourselves when we came into Rotherham, does it feel different to its neighbours....and yes, it does. We can see you are trying to do something different".*
- *"We like the use of Streetpride and branding, bringing services together".*
- *"We were very impressed with the litter education and enforcement campaign".*
- *"The Streetpride service is making best use of available staff and resources to make sure that it delivers".*
- *"The service is responsive to service requests. It is customer focused and this is reflected in the standards that it communicates".*
- *"The service positively seeks to encompass best practice"*
- *"The tour was very helpful and helped us to get thinking – seeing the graffiti project was useful, very imaginative".*
- *"The establishment of Streetpride has shifted emphasis from financial efficiency to outcomes and meeting customers' needs by delivering joined-up and more flexible services".*

Streetpride was officially launched in September 2003. In just one year we have:

- Given the service back to the community by attending every single Area Assembly meeting to “stand up and be counted” for our service. This has made a major impact – an Area Assembly chair recently said: “Streetpride is making an instant impact on focused service delivery”; and later: “Streetpride is making a difference at a local level”.
- Handed part of our budget to local people so that they can make a difference to their area. They have devised eight area spending plans comprising some 140 schemes.
- Introduced area-based working to promote “ownership” among the workforce and the community.
- Made a positive contribution to the Crime and Disorder agenda. We are involved at the strategic level through the Rotherham Safer Partnership and at the sharp end by training all our outside staff to become the “eyes and ears” of the community.
- Introduced and promoted the Streetpride brand, including a full range of banners, new uniforms and re-liveried vehicles.
- Completely reorganised to eliminate the old CCT “client” and “contractor” splits and brought together teams – those who order work with those who deliver.
- Re-cast the budgets into team budgets to reinforce the team culture and encourage “ownership” of the service.
- Re-engineered our business. All Streetpride services are accessible on one “golden number” and most issues are resolved by the first contact.
- Produced a Service Plan that contains clear actions and targets geared towards the Councils Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy.
- Set ourselves targets for response times for 26 common reports. These are not covered in other Key Performance Indicators – and we are achieving 100% success on 22 of them. We have also achieved continuous improvement in most local and national performance indicators.