

## Road Cleaning Team To Be Cut From 18 To 10 As Part Of Wiltshire Council's £1m Savings



A Balfour Beatty worker in Trowbridge

Road sweepers were told this week that their numbers would be cut as part of efforts by Wiltshire Council to save £1million.

There are 18 road sweepers in the county but this will be reduced to 10.

However, a spokesman for the council's highways contractor, Balfour Beatty, said that up to 15 new roles are to be created as part of restructuring of its highways and streetscene team and the road sweeper staff will be able to apply for the new roles.

A spokesman for Balfour Beatty, which took on the £25million a year highways contract last June, said he could not give details as to how the restructured contract would operate as it had not been finalised.

A Balfour Beatty employee, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "We are disgusted because we

were told that there would be no cuts to frontline services and now this is happening.

"Morale is just so low – it has been for a long time now – but when Balfour Beatty took over we were told nothing like this would happen because we've got contracts and now it has.

"We were told that agency staff will be moved on and we can have their jobs but just because we work in one town now doesn't mean we'll get offered a job in the same town and people won't want to travel so it's just a way of getting rid of us. "People will notice a massive difference."

It is believed that one member of staff would be cut in towns which have both a litter picker and another member of staff operating a large street cleaning machine.

However, Coun. John Thomson, cabinet member for transport, disputed the £1 million figure given by spokesmen for both Wiltshire Council and Balfour Beatty on Wednesday.



He said: "There are no cuts; there is a restructure to the highways team so people will be moved from one role to another.

"When highways maintenance was put under one umbrella contract the company that took it on were told they had to make efficiency savings year on year for the life of the contract so our money went further.

"As long as the roads are swept, gullies are emptied and holes in roads are filled we don't mind how they choose to deliver the service as long as they meet our standards."

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**By Anna Mauremootoo, Senior Reporter for Marlborough and Pewsey**