

Report of the Cabinet Members for Environmental Services, Leisure, Culture and Tourism, and Crime and Stronger Communities

Smarter York: A Smarter Charter

Introduction

1. This report updates the Cabinet with progress on Smarter York and seeks approval for a “Smarter Charter”.

Background

2. Smarter York working was introduced last year to ensure joined up working over the following services:

- Environmental enforcement / street environment service
- Street cleaning
- Litter bins and grass cutting
- Salt bins, household refuse collections and centres, road maintenance, street lighting
- Parking enforcement
- Street lighting
- Communities and Equalities Team
- Parks and Open Spaces

The list is not definitive: further services will be brought under the Smarter York umbrella over time.

3. Smarter York aims to:
 - Create more responsive services
 - Engage ward members, the public, and key organisations such as Residents Associations, Parish Councils, business and voluntary sector organisations
 - Deliver budget savings through technological innovation, capacity building and supporting new ways of working

4. The Smarter York app was introduced in June last year in order to give 24 hour access to reporting of issues. It allows users instantly to report an issue including a photograph and then track the progress from reporting to completion.
5. Since its introduction this has made a impact; to date 374 service requests have been received, see table 1 below:

Category	No Of Cases
Litter	124
Cleansing Offensive Material	23
Cleansing Assessment	54
Fly-Tipping	39
Non Offensive Graffiti	115
Offensive Graffiti	6

6. Users of the app are shown in table 2 below:

User	No of Cases
General User	241
Councillors	85
Staff	48

7. Staff will now be making greater use of the app, for example housing staff will be using handheld technology to report relevant issues through the app. The key issue for future development is to make the app link in a more integrated way to other customer channels and to back office systems; it is currently a bolt-on and to make it available to all mobile operating systems. It will also be expanded to cover other categories of reportable issue. This work will take place through the Customer Strategy Board later in the year.
8. A wide variety of projects are being pursued under the Smarter York umbrella. Some examples include:
 - a) **Community Payback (CP)**. We have worked with CP, who organise offenders to undertake work on our behalf, for some years, albeit in an uncoordinated way. To improve the use of CP a coordination group of council officers now meets on a six

weekly basis to agree proposals for works and deal with Health and Safety and other operation issues. Benefits seen include:

- Approx 10,000 hours of work carried out for CYC during 2012 compared to approx 4000 in 2011.
- The above includes approx 3000 where November offenders have been reporting directly to Neighbourhood Pride Supervisors and working alongside our staff on daily tasks.
- To further improve the partnership CP now utilize one of our vehicles for weekend use. A CP supervisor will soon be based at Hazel Court with the public realm team, which will speed up the process of placements and inductions

The Council will, through Smarter York, co-ordinate suggestions from the public for possible work schemes.

- b) **Copmanthorpe Parish Council** – we have been working with the parish council on regular events including litter picking, vegetation clearance and general environmental awareness; this commenced with joint working and has progressed to us just acting in a support roll by supplying tools and equipment and collecting debris for disposal.
- c) **Greenfields School and Community Garden** - This is a project to transform an unused playing field (belonging to Haxby Road Primary School) from an area where there was a great deal of dumping of rubbish, and anti-social behaviour. With support from the Street Environment Service (SES) the local residents have developed a relationship with the school to come up with ideas for the area. Some growing beds have been dug and a launch garden party was held in summer 2011. It was transformed through becoming a York Cares big community challenge project in 2012 and SES continue to support the project to build on this success.
- d) **Working with Students** - The Street Environment Service has developed a package of activities and projects to support and educate students moving into off-campus accommodation and ensure that they quickly settle into their waste collection arrangements across the city. Working with both student unions and Higher York, the Student Community Strategy has been put in place. To improve the appearance of student areas, the Street Environment Service also run an annual 'ground force' event in Heslington Road, where teams of

students carry out gardening and clearance work to improve the area. Graffiti removal days are also held to help students demonstrate community involvement.

- e) **Woodthorpe Shops** – The SES assisted Westthorpe Scout Group to set up a weekend of improvement work at the shops, which are privately owned by the Co- operative. The group carried out weeding, planting and cleaning up of the beds outside the shops, which were in a neglected state. A local volunteer also came forward to help keep the beds weed-free after the event and the local school also wished to be involved. Over the last 6 months, a small group of volunteers has been developed to help maintain the beds once a month and a group of school pupils now visit the area on a regular basis, weeding the beds and recently planting spring bulbs. SES will be assisting with the promotion of new events planned from March 2013 to gain more volunteers and involvement of local businesses.

The Smarter York Charter

- 9. A Smarter Charter is now proposed (See Annex 1). The idea is that two versions will be produced: The first with the “What we encourage residents to do” section and the second with the “What we encourage businesses to do” section.
- 10. Key elements of the programme going forward will be:
 - a) Spring Clean: We are planning to hold a four week event in May in 4 areas of the city: One week in each of Westfield, Tang Hall, and Bell Farm with the fourth week to be in various parishes. Using Community Payback for the labour and our staff to facilitate the event, we will advertise the event and encourage residents, both private and council tenants to suggest or request works to be undertaken. This may then be expanded into a bigger event in the Autumn using parishes, local businesses and other volunteer groups
 - b) A reorganisation and streamlining of enforcement roles across CANs is currently being planned in order to support the need to encourage and facilitate increased community and volunteer use. Within the scope are Street Environment Officers, Environmental Enforcement Officers, Dog Wardens, Park Rangers and City Centre Civil Enforcement Officers. The duties will be redefined to remove distinctions between team members

and create flexible roles. This will free up capacity to deal with community environmental issues whilst maintaining a targeted enforcement service. There will be a post dedicated to the city centre. It is proposed to call it the “Community Environment Service”

- c) The member portal is being developed for reporting of issues, ensuring that it dovetails with the work of the Community Environment Team
- d) A Smarter York Co-ordinator will be deployed from March to:
 - Support the Smarter York programme e.g. the Spring Clean
 - Identify and develop models of good practice in community participation in the public realm and roll these out across the city under the Smarter York banner
 - Support a programme of handover of functions to community groups by developing appropriate community structures, recruiting volunteers
- e) An anti-litter campaign is being planned
- f) Action will be co-ordinated to enforce the Council’s policy on ‘A’ boards
- g) Proposals will be developed and consulted on to reduce the nuisance caused by commercial waste being left in the city centre over night
- h) The Council’s work with external partners will be better co-ordinated including voluntary sector organisations such as Friends of St Nicks, and other agencies including the Police Community Support Officer service
- i) Management processes across CANs and CES will be streamlined to ensure co-ordinated working for example around waste enforcement issues
- j) Staff awareness meetings will be held, utilizing existing communication events to highlight and encourage internal ownership of Smarter York
- k) A flood conference is being organised which will lead to increased community resilience.

Communications

11. The Communications Team are leading on the communications plan and will work with the Smarter York Co-ordinator, who will be in post

from March. Endorsements have been obtained from a number of organisations including Visit York, CVS, the Chamber of Commerce and Sir Ron Cooke / Reinvigorate York. Smarter York branding has been developed and this will replace other current brands for example on vehicles:



12. The new CYC webpage is now up and running at www.york.gov.uk/smarteryork. We have also rebranded the existing Love Where You Live York Twitter account to @SmarterYork – to ensure that we keep the established number of followers. This switch will take place on a Friday to capitalise on “Follow Friday” (#FF).
13. We are also investigating the development of a free ‘platform website’, similar to GeniUS, where all ‘wardens’ have a central platform to communicate and receive the latest details.
14. A campaign will be run in a similar way to that for snow wardens with a view to broadening the programme with a database of volunteers also covering ‘street buddies’ and, in the future, ‘flood wardens’.

Wider Ambitions of Smarter

15. Although community engagement on environmental issues are initially the focus of Smarter York, other ambitions include work to improve
 - Energy efficiency
 - Digital inclusion
 - Health & Wellbeing
 - Smarter working

Governance

16. A project board has been established, chaired by the Director of CES, and including the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

as the lead member, service heads from key services across CANs and CES, a representative of the Communications Team and the manager of the Customer Centre. Recognising that the strength of Smarter York lies in its cross-cutting approach it is proposed that it is expanded to involve others, particularly the Cabinet Members for Leisure, Culture and Tourism, and Crime and Stronger Communities who will attend the project board and participate in key initiatives.

Implications

17. **Finance:** In view of the challenging financial circumstances facing the Council it is imperative that Smarter York working delivers budget savings. Key activities will be:

- Testing new ways of working involving community delivery
- Building the capacity of the community to take on service delivery where appropriate
- Using technology to implement new approaches

The Project Board will be monitoring the delivery of current savings proposals.

18. **HR:** There are no additional implications arising directly out of this report. Any changes to staffing arrangements resulting from new working arrangements will be dealt with through the Council's Management of Change procedures.

19. **Equalities:** The initial community impact assessment indicates that key equalities issues for Smarter York will concern ensuring that all parts of the community are enabled to participate in community led initiatives and accessible technology. These issues will be addressed in action plans associated with each initiative.

20. There are no other implications.

Council Plan Priorities

21. The project supports Council Plan priorities for creating Jobs, Growing the Economy and supporting Ambition 4 in the York Economic Strategy, that of a world class place.

Risk Management

22. The main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives and to deliver services, leading to financial loss, damage to the Council's image and reputation and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations.

Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risk score all risks has been assessed at less than 16, This means that at this point the risks need only to be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

Recommendations

23. Cabinet is asked to:

- Comment on progress to date with Smarter York
- Approve the “Smarter Charter”

Reason: To make York an even better place to live.

Contact Details

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	Report Approved	✓	Date 21 February 2013
Specialist Implications Officer(s)			
None			
Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all			All ✓

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1: Smarter Charter