

Decision Session - Executive Member for the Environment

25 January 2016

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities, Culture and Public Realm)

A Cleaner City

Summary

1. This report sets out a series of proposals to improve standards of cleanliness across the city.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to approve the proposals set out in paragraphs 15, 19, 26, 31, 38 and 43.

Reason: to ensure that best use is made of the available resources for street cleansing activities.

Background

3. Over the last three years street cleansing activities have been reviewed in order to deliver budget savings whilst maintaining levels of cleanliness. For example, city centre cleansing regimes have been reviewed in order to provide better staffing cover at weekends and to introduce a more mechanised approach to cleansing which will deliver better results.
4. In December, 2014 the Council's Cabinet agreed a programme to save a further £750k from place based services, including cleansing, between 2015 and 2018. In February, 2015 Cabinet agreed to devolve cleansing budgets to wards during the current financial year. Following the introduction of the new approach to neighbourhood working, agreed by the Executive last July, including devolved budgets to facilitate decision-making at a local level, it is now possible to implement devolution of control of the Council's cleansing resources.

5. Council in July approved an additional £25k for work targeted at detritus levels in locations where mechanical sweeping is not effective, e.g. around traffic calming measures and in cul-de-sacs. This will commence in the spring.

Options and Analysis

Maintaining Cleansing Standards

6. In order to maintain cleansing standards and meet customer expectations we need to deliver a service that targets resources where they are needed within the available budget. Previous cleansing standards were linked to the national Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (COPLAR) which set out standards of cleanliness and the time limits for returning areas to the standards, in the event that they dropped below them. The code was linked to a national performance indicator that is now redundant, and in reviewing York's cleansing standards it now makes more sense to base the review on local knowledge and customer requirements. Accordingly, a review of our cleansing schedules has taken place, focussing on the needs of individual locations and using the local knowledge of the front line operatives in the first instance to set appropriate cleansing frequencies.
7. Cleansing will take place with a minimum frequency of quarterly and a maximum of daily, depending on the location. Although in some locations there will be a reduction in the frequency of visits by a large mechanical road sweeper the new schedules will allow the vehicle to be driven more slowly which will ensure improved removal of detritus. This will not only improve cleanliness standards but also remove the matter in which weeds are able to grow. Ward teams will notified in advance of cleaning by the large mechanical road sweeper so that they can observe the process and verify its effectiveness. Members will also be asked to come forward and identify any priority areas for cleaning where there have previously been problems.
8. The Rapid Response service will continue to deal with waste that may cause a hazard, such as discarded needles, dog dirt, and broken glass. The service works between 07:30 and 15:00, Monday - Friday, and aims to respond within 2 working hours of receiving a report. It is not proposed to devolve this cross-city resource to ward control.

9. The new cleansing frequencies have been drawn up into schedules for each ward. These schedules will be used as the basis for devolving cleansing budgets to wards. An example schedule is set out in the map at Annex 1. This shows the existing and proposed schedules for Acomb. Areas identified by the team who undertake the work as being regularly littered, such as Beckfield Lane, are maintained at weekly visits.
10. The schedules will be shared with each ward committee, in the next round of meetings, to allow input from ward members. Within the devolved ward budgets programme, ward members may wish to adjust the schedules, based on their local knowledge, or they may wish to add to the work undertaken, either by supporting volunteer groups or by funding additional work by the Public Realm Team from their Pride in York budgets.
11. The new schedules will also be communicated to residents and businesses to ensure that they are aware of the level of visits. They will be made available on the Council's website and sent to local libraries. They will also be accessible in the customer centre so that, in the event of a customer report of litter, the customer centre will be able to inform the customer when the next scheduled visit will take place.
12. The cleansing of the city centre foot streets is a distinct service undertaken seven days a week, all year round, between 05:00 and 20:00. Given the specialist nature of this service it is not proposed to devolve it to ward control. The service involves litter bin emptying, some manual cleansing, and use of machinery. Machinery is being enhanced to include a new item of equipment which will undertake the sweeping, scrubbing and washing of pavements. Due to be in service in time for the spring this should significantly improve the cleanliness of our pavements.
13. To further improve these standards this report seeks approval for the purchase of an additional pedestrian controlled machine at a cost of £17k. This will enable further improvements to cleanliness standards by targeting the removal of cigarette butts. It will be funded from existing capital funds available of £138k .
14. Following the "yes" vote by local businesses to the Business Improvement District (BID), we will also be working with the BID team in order to offer additional services to enhance the existing

regimes. This may include extended hours of work and targeted weekend work.

15. **Proposals** - The Executive Member is asked to agree to:
- I. Issue the new cleansing schedules to wards as the basis for devolving the budget, working with ward members to identify any amendments required and assisting them to manage this resource as part of their ward budgets.
 - II. Purchase additional machinery for city centre cleansing to be funded from the existing £138k capital budget.
 - III. Continue to work with the BID team in order to enhance our existing service and thereby to improve the visitor and resident experience of our city centre.

Litter and Dog Waste Bins

16. During 2012, due to budget reductions, we removed a number of litter bins from service, facilitating a staffing reduction of one employee and a vehicle. Following the introduction of increased devolved budgets to wards there is an opportunity for greater local decision-making with regard to bins. We have previously given wards the option to fund additional bins (subject to a minimum order number of 70 bins across the city). A capital budget of £138k is available from which bins could be purchased. It is proposed to use £31k of this budget for enhancements previously agreed to public toilets across the city, in addition to the £17k for machinery referred to above, leaving £90k to use for the purchase of additional bins. Wards would then only be required to fund the annual service cost of any new bin (at £500 per bin). This would potentially fund the additional post and vehicle that would be required to service any additional bins.
17. As the contents of litter and dog waste bins are collected by the same members of staff and disposed of together it is felt that there is no need to have separate bins in any one location. As these bins are replaced we could provide one bin clearly labelled to inform residents that it is intended for mixed waste. A bin of this type would need to be of robust construction and require a lid to prevent odours from escaping. Joint use bins are already successfully in use in other local authority areas. (See examples in Annex 2).
18. We also have 15 solar powered litter bins which were previously purchased and which are now available for deployment. Following

an initial deployment of these bins, in 2012, predominantly in the city centre foot streets, a further batch has been purchased. These bins have a capacity of up to 8 times that of a traditional litter bin and have led to a reduction in incidents of overflowing litter bins at peak times due to staff not been able to service them as quickly as required. Wards could be invited to bid, at no additional cost, for one of these bins to replace an existing bin or bins in their ward to enhance their cleansing standards.

19. **Proposals** - The Executive Member is asked to agree to:
- I. Agree to the use of up to £90k of the existing £120k capital budget for the purchase of litter bins for wards where they wish to fund the service charge.
 - II. Approve the offer of solar powered bins to wards to replace existing bins.
 - III. Agree to the introduction of new style combined bins for both litter and dog waste to be introduced during normal replacement programmes and where appropriate.

Enforcement

20. Enforcement action on littering and fly tipping is undertaken by the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team (NEO's) within the new Anti Social Behaviour Hub. This works falls into three areas:
- I. Fly tipping
21. Nationally, the illegal dumping of waste costs local authorities in excess of £44m to clean up; however, these are only the reported costs. If all fly tips were recorded, the actual costs would be in the vicinity of as much as £100m. Penalties for fly tipping can range from a fine of up to £50k and/or a maximum of 12 months' imprisonment if tried in a magistrates' court, or unlimited fines and/or 5 years' imprisonment if tried in a Crown Court. Offences mainly relate to:
- Knowingly depositing controlled waste or causing/permitting controlled waste to be deposited without a waste management licence in force.
 - Businesses not maintaining a 'Duty of Care' with regard to waste materials from commercial activity to ensure that they are disposed of with due regard to the law. Officers are able to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (£300 penalty) for non-presentation of a Duty of Care Waste Transfer Note, detailing the transfer of

waste from one person to another. Those who collect or transport waste for profit must be registered with the Environment Agency. The penalty for not registering is a fine of up to £5,000 and a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £300 for failure to produce registration documents on request.

- The Act also provides powers to officers to issue Notices requiring the removal of waste unlawfully and knowingly deposited. Failure to comply can lead to a fine of up to £5000. Local Authorities can also enter land, clean up the waste and recharge the costs to the owner/occupier.

22. In York, during 2014/15, there were 1,139 fly tipping cases which cost the authority £69k to remove and dispose of. During 2014/15 the NEOs were involved in the following enforcement work linked to fly tipping:

- Investigation of 273 reports of fly tipping containing potential evidence
- Issuing of 238 warning letters.
- Investigating 12 cases further with a view to prosecutions. As a result a further 2 warning letters were issued, 2 cautions were issued and 3 prosecutions followed.
- All the prosecutions were successful and resulted in fines and costs totalling £2,248

II. Waste Presentation

23. Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers (NEOs) will seek to take action against those who commit waste receptacle offences, mainly where and when they may be placed for collection. The ability to prosecute for this offence has recently been removed, following changes to the legislation. Fixed Penalty Notices can still be issued but the process is now lengthier, with a series of warning stages and individuals being given a greater opportunity for appeal.

III. Litter and Dog Fouling

24. Fixed Penalty Notices can be issued for the offences of littering or allowing a dog to foul and failing to pick up faeces. The penalty notice charge is currently £75 and £50 respectively.

25. The Government recently issued guidance (March 2015) for enforcement officers issuing FPNs for littering and encourages some leniency, suggesting FPNs should only be issued where there

is evidence of intent and that offenders should be given an opportunity to pick up their litter before an FPN is issued. During 2014/15 the NEO's were involved in the following enforcement work linked to litter and dog fouling:

- Issuing of 3 dog fouling FPN – All paid
- Issuing of 5 litter FPN's – 4 paid

26. **Proposals** - The Executive Member is asked to:

- I. Agree to a quarterly performance report being drawn up using the Environment Portfolio indicators shown in Annex 4.

Customer Reporting

27. Various apps and online systems are available to residents and visitors to report environmental issues or service requests (See Annex 3). A new online report facility went live on the Council's website, in mid-October, as part of the Council's implementation journey for its new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) product. We have already had in excess of 2,000 reports via this report facility.
28. The new CRM system will go live in the summer including functionality relating to fly tipping, street cleansing and waste processes being made available to residents / visitors at an early stage. The CRM system will include a convenient 'my account' function replacing the current "report it" functionality. Importantly this functionality will be made available in the form of an app for customers who prefer this.
29. A drop-in session will be organised, in the near future, to engage with the public, to provide an opportunity to road test systems, and to allow regular users to discuss any issues they are aware of before new systems go live.
30. The Smarter York app (nationally known as Love Clean Streets) is not being well used with just 25 reports made in the same period that the online reporting facility has generated 2,000. The Smarter York app costs us £12,100 per year. It is therefore proposed that the app is discontinued at the end of the current licence period (August 2016) by which time we will have encouraged even more customers to use the improved website offer and the new app functionality inherent in the new CRM system. In the meanwhile it will be given the same styling as the Council's website.

31. **Proposals** - The Executive Member is asked to agree to:
- I. The discontinuation of the Smarter York app in view of the new reporting functionality outlined above.

Volunteers

32. As our resources have decreased over recent years we have increased our working with volunteers, both groups and individuals from the local community and businesses in order to maintain standards that we would all like to see in our city. To help keep York clean there are range of organisations supporting the work of the council, including Community Payback.
33. There are also around 100 regular individual volunteers operating across the city. Following an induction volunteers are given a litter picker, bags and hi-vis vest if they want one. Volunteers are covered under the Council's insurance and arrangements are made to collect the material they pick up.
34. Where a community group wishes to undertake litter picking equipment is provided. Litter picking also takes part as part of wider environment improvement projects or conservation work, often involving YorkCares.

Campaigns

35. Environmental campaigns are a key driver in getting messages to and involvement from residents and businesses. Historically we have participated in national campaigns coordinated by the Keep Britain Tidy group as well as undertaking our own, such as the Spring Clean campaigns.
36. Local authorities and community groups are currently being contacted to seek their involvement in a national campaign in what is hoped will be one of the biggest ever clean-ups of the country, which will be taking place in March 2016, in the run up to The Queen's 90th birthday on 21 April 2016.
37. All of the litter charities across the country have come together in support of this campaign together with a growing range of companies, land managers and associations. There will be 'Clean for The Queen' litter blitzes throughout the UK in January, February and March, and the most monumental of all litter clear-ups from Friday 4 to Sunday 6 March 2016.

38. **Proposals** - The Executive Member is asked to agree to:

- I. Formally accept the invitation to take part in this campaign linked to our annual Spring Clean Campaign.

One Planet York

39. The One Planet York framework aims to build on and strengthen City of York Council's ambitions to put sustainability at the heart of everything it does and work towards 'One Planet' living. It includes increased recycling, reduced carbon emissions, improved air quality and a sustained focus on energy costs and efficiency.

40. A related deliverable is the implementation of a One Planet York app which, with regard to Waste, will include the ability to:

- Receive alerts regarding which type of waste to present on which week
- A scanning facility to indicate if an item is recyclable based on York's collection policy
- A facility to advertise items for exchange
- You will gain 'planet points' for scanning and exchanging activity, enabling users to rate themselves against others. Data has potential to be aggregated to show ward based activity levels
- A message facility to inform residents and businesses of any collection issues

41. The app will be managed by community groups and a member of our Waste Strategy team will represent the service on the management team.

42. The app requires additional funding of £5k for further developments work, this reports seeks approval to fund this from the £30k budget allocation for improving recycling rates across the city made by Council in July 2015.

43. **Proposals** - The Executive Member is asked to:

- I. Approve the allocation of £5k towards further work on the One Planet York app.

Consultation

44. A range of consultation exercises is proposed within this report with existing networks, elected members, Parish and Town Councils, residents, residents associations and local businesses.

Council Plan

45. The proposals in this report are in line with the Council Plan priority to Place a Focus on Frontline Services.

Implications

46. **Financial:** There is currently £138k budget set aside for replacement litter bins. This report proposes that the budget is used for £90k replacement bins, £31k to support the toilet procurement and £17k to fund additional machinery. The proposals therefore are within overall budget.
47. The One Planet York app can be funded as part of the £30k Waste Recycling Promotion budget approved at the July Emergency budget.
48. **Equalities:** Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken in respect of each of the action areas proposed.
49. The report has no additional implications relating to: Human Resources, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology, Property.

Risk Management

50. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified associated with the proposals contained in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives and to deliver services, leading to damage to the Council's reputation and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations. The level of risk is assessed as "Very Low" as the consultations and business case development proposals in this report are intended to mitigate this risk. This means that periodic monitoring is required of the operation of the new arrangements.

Annexes

- 1: New Cleansing Schedules
- 2: Examples of Types of Waste Bins
- 3: Apps and Online Reporting Systems
- 4: Environment portfolio performance indicators

Background Papers: None

Contact Details

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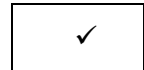
Report Approved



13 January, 2016

Wards Affected: All

All



For further information please contact the author of the report.

Abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---------------------------------------|
| BID | Business Improvement District |
| COPLAR | Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse |
| CRM | Customer Relationship Management |
| FPN | Fixed Penalty Notices |
| NEOs | Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers |