
Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel

7th June 2007

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

York Neighbourhood Pride Service and Enforcement – Update

Summary

1. To provide a detailed update on progress of the new Neighbourhood Pride Service.

Background

2. A Street Scene review took place in the summer 2006 involving a cross section of staff involved in the service in addition to representatives from relevant trade unions. Key findings and recommendations were presented to the Executive on 21st November 2006. Members subsequently agreed how the recommendations from the review were to be implemented.
3. Recommendations included the implementation of a pilot of new street cleansing practices to be tested in an area of the city over a three month period. The new working practices introduced barrow operatives, cleansing by barrows and brushes, working to a defined beat, in addition to a mobile cleansing team to address other service needs.
4. The pilot also introduced new working arrangements between the Street Cleansing team and the Street Environment Officer (SEO), who took overall responsibility for the pilot 'zone' and the deployment of resources where necessary. Finally the pilot introduced a dedicated enforcement officer to the zone to address environmental crime issues.
5. The pilot zone was designated in the west of the city, including the wards of Acomb, Holgate, Woodthorpe and Dringhouses, Westfield, and Micklegate (outside of the walls). The pilot was launched on 4th December 2006. Within a short period it was evident that the new service was both popular with residents and effective. Street cleaning performance had increased by nearly 5% during the pilot period which was a significant achievement considering that it was the most problematic period of the year for the service due to late leaf fall (following the extremely mild autumn) and wet weather conditions that were being experienced.

6. The Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services approved the roll-out of the pilot to all areas, except the city centre on 21st March 2007. The following is an update detailing how the service has developed since the rollout:

Barrow Rollout

7. Barrow operatives have embraced their new working arrangements and remain positive about the new role. Regular zone meetings have not highlighted any drawbacks to the use of barrows and brushes.
8. The mobile crew have also reported positive progress in the zone and have demonstrated ownership and commitment of their area.
9. Improved practices are being developed and encouraged including closer working relationships with other council services to report problems, such as dog fouling, fly posting, overgrown vegetation and refuse problems.
10. Working practices have also improved within the service, to enable more rapid deployment to tackle street level problems, such as fly tipping, domestic waste, heavy leaf fall and areas in need of deep cleaning. This has removed the need for the SEO to work via York Pride Action Line/Call Centre, and has meant greater empowerment and responsibility to the cleansing team.
11. The section has received a number of compliments from councillors and residents who have noticed the improvements including letters being sent to the Press by local residents. All compliments are passed on the operative who have also been receiving positive comments directly from the public.
12. New uniforms have been ordered for the staff which will improve the visibility and appearance of the team. Officers are also currently considering how branding on existing vehicles can be improved working within existing budgets.

Increase Education and Enforcement

13. In order to test the benefits of an Environmental Enforcement Officer (EEO), a temporary appointment into the pilot area was made in January 2007. The member of staff had no previous experience in enforcement therefore he needed training before he commenced certain areas of work, including litter enforcement, business visits and use of CCTV equipment. The member of staff works three days a week in the pilot which is representative coverage of the remaining zones. The support of the EEO has been significant in delivery the education and enforcement objectives.
14. Interviews are planned beginning of June for the recruitment of the two permanent Environmental Enforcement Officers who will assist the Street Environment Team in tackling environmental crime, through pro-active monitoring and appropriate enforcement action against fly tipping, domestic and commercial refuse problems, graffiti, fly posting and nuisances.
15. Below are details of the enforcement-related work carried out by the Street Environment team from February 2007 to mid-May 2007.

- The SEOs have been attending Joint Action Group Meetings and Pre-Ward Committee meetings in the last few weeks. These meetings enable multi-disciplinary working to tackle anti-social behaviour and ward environmental improvements at a local level. Officers have also been attending various parish council meetings, walkabouts and ward improvement meetings.
- There have been 15 private drainage problems across the city that SEOs are responsible for investigating and resolving with the home owners. Investigations involve identifying the source of the problem and bringing about repair through notices served on affected properties.
- Five unauthorised encampments have also warranted visits and in some instances, the issue of Direction Orders to remove the travellers from public land. Some of these encampments are still being investigated with a view to removal and complaints are being managed. One SEO is also involved in a multi-disciplinary working group to address problems with a group of vagrants with tents in the Clifton ward.
- Proactive monitoring for litter offences has been taking place around the city, including the school runs and retail areas in Micklegate ward, ten fixed penalty notices have been issued, nine of which have been paid. Enforcement proceedings have commenced for one non payment.
- Refuse presentation problems in Micklegate, Clifton, Guildhall and Clifton wards continue to be monitored by the SEOs and as part of the role of the Enforcement Officer. The continuous presence and monitoring in these bag areas has seen a dramatic decrease in early presentation problems and fly tipping in back lanes. 226 warning letters have been issued, largely to new residents or streets that have been added to the monitoring schedule. 22 Statutory Notices have been served for continual refuse presentation problems. Failure to comply will result in a fixed penalty notice for £100.
- Nine business inspections have taken place to discuss duty of care requirements with business owners. This includes ensuring that commercial waste is correctly stored and disposed of, including lawful collection arrangements.
- 61 investigations for fly tipping have been carried out, resulting in 5 warning letters, four possible prosecutions are currently being investigated arising in Bad Bargain Lane, Tang Hall and Lord Mayors Walk.
- 282 requests for service have been received via the Customer Contact Centre, including various complaints and calls for advice, environmental improvement requests, nuisance issues and reports of anti-social behaviour.

ENCAMS

16. ENCAMS (Environmental Campaigns), formerly the Tidy Britain Group, will be assisting and advising the Council in the development of the new service. ENCAMS will visit the city during the next three months to independently assess our street cleaning operations whilst consulting with customers to assess if their needs are being delivered and also talking to a number of ward councillors. This information will be fed back to the officers along with suggestions to improve service delivery. Officers consider that by working in partnership with ENCAMS a relationship can be developed that will promote the continual improvement of the service.
17. Along side this, ENCAMS are considering a number of national campaigns targeting specific aspects of the problems associated with a busy city centre environment. The Council is looking to support these campaigns in a partnership role.

Performance

18. Performance is measured by BVPI199a. In 2006/07 19.2% of relevant land and highways were free from litter and other 'detritus'. This compares with 22% in 2005/6, 24% in 2004/5 and 30% in 2003/4. In the pilot area BV199a was measured at 15% and it is hoped that this can be achieved throughout the city following the rollout.

Corporate Priorities

19. The new working practices have been developed in direct response to the Council's Corporate Strategy and in particular to the Corporate Priority:

'Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city's streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces'.

Implications

20. The following implications have been noted:

Financial

21. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Human Resources (HR)

22. Street Scene employees and the Street Environment Officers were kept abreast of developments during the pilot and the eventual roll-out. There are ongoing staff meeting design to iron out any problems as they occur.

Equalities

23. There are no equalities implications associated with the report.

Legal

24. It has been established that the new working practices are compliant with the council's duties under Environmental Protection Act 1990 and associated enforcement, fixed penalties and surveillance laws.

Crime and Disorder

25. The introduction of the enforcement team city wide, in addition to the work carried out by SEOs will enable greater impact on environmental crime, which leads to cleaner neighbourhoods, tackles anti-social behaviour and improves perceptions of crime. A clear enforcement policy and strategy for tackling environmental crime, gathering information to identify and combat hot spots, and using education and promotion to raise awareness amongst stakeholders will contribute to the council's duties towards crime and disorder, working closely with Safer York Partnership and North Yorkshire Police.

Information Technology (IT)

26. There are no IT implications.

Risk Management

27. Risks associated with the enforcement activity been measured in terms of impact and likelihood and a risk score has been assessed at 9 or less. Key control measures have been identified for the greater risks, however the likelihood of these risk materialising is minimal.

Recommendations

That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to note and comment on the report

Reason: To update the Executive Member on progress of the new Neighbourhood Pride Service.

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Specialist Implications Officer(s) *List information for all*
Implication ie Financial *Implication ie Legal*
Name *Name*
Title *Title*
Tel No. *Tel No.*

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: Executive Report 21st November 2006 – Street Scene Review – Executive
Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services and Advisory Panel 21st March 2007 – York Neighbourhood Pride Service – Update of Pilot and Future Rollout