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## **Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Advisory Panel**

**21 March 2007**

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

### **York Neighbourhood Pride Service – Update of Pilot and Future Rollout**

#### **Summary**

1. To provide a detailed update on progress of the street scene pilot and to provide background information for the Executive Member to consider the roll out of the new working practices to the rest of the city as a single exercise in spring of 2007.

#### **Background**

2. The Street Scene review took place in Summer 2006 involving a cross section of staff involved in the service. Key findings were presented to members in a report to Executive on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2006, at which Members agreed to how the findings of the review would be implemented.
3. Findings included the trial of new street cleansing practices to be tested in a pilot area of the city over a three month period. The new working practices introduced barrowmen 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.
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 4 December 2006.

#### **Objectives of the Pilot**

6. The outcomes from the Street Scene Review provided five key objectives for service improvement, which have been incorporated into the project planning

and management of the pilot. These can be used as success measures for evaluating the effectiveness of the pilot. The five objectives are:

- To move to zone working, in recognition of different areas of the city requiring different cleaning arrangements
- Improve performance monitoring, staff communication and morale
- Develop environmental initiatives to support the new service
- Improve customer focus and a continual review of what we do
- Increase education and enforcement

### **Monitoring of the Pilot**

7. Prior to the launch of the pilot an independent audit of cleansing standards was carried out in a cross section of streets in the pilot area, by Neighbourhood Services Service Development team. Eighty transects of land were chosen in line with Best Value Performance Indicator 199a (BVPI199a)<sup>7</sup>, and were measured in accordance with its methodology, to ensure consistency. This audit was repeated in weeks five and eight of the pilot and is to be repeated in week twelve to give an overall picture of progress.
8. Team meetings between the Project managers, Zone Supervisor, SEO and enforcement officer took place on a weekly basis, whilst regular meetings were held with the cleansing team in the field. In addition, the Supervisor and SEO were in regular face to face contact with the barrowmen to provide support and guidance. All meetings provided two way communication and continual monitoring of the pilot's progress.
9. City of York Council employees, ward councillors and resident association members in the pilot zone, were provided with information about the pilot prior to its launch and were invited to assist in the auditing of cleansing standards during the trial.

### **Communication Strategy**

10. A detailed communication plan was included in the Street Scene Review report to Executive. This ensured diversity in communication and consultation with stakeholders, including residents living in the pilot. Three press releases have been issued since the launch, an accompanied interview for Radio York with a barrowman has also taken place. Articles have been featured in Your Ward newsletters to all pilot wards, and appeared on the front page of Your City, distributed to every household in the city in January 2007. To keep key stakeholders up to date with progress in the pilot, a regular newsletter has been circulated via email to ward councillors and officers.

## Findings of the Pilot

11. The following achievements have been achieved during the first three months of the pilot period:-
12. The second independent audit by the Performance Improvement Team has found that the percentage of the pilot area meeting the ENCAM standard had increased from 80% to 85%. This is a considerable achievement given that the audit has taken place during poor weather, high winds, the end of the leaf fall period, Christmas and New Year holidays and changes to refuse collection.
13. Barrowman have embraced their new working arrangements and remain positive about the new role. Regular meetings have not highlighted any drawbacks to the use of barrows and brushes.
14. The mobile crew have also reported positive progress in the zone and have demonstrated ownership and commitment to the zone and the work they carry out.
15. The pilot has enabled good practices to be developed including closer working relationships with other council services to report problems, such as dog fouling, fly posting, overgrown vegetation and refuse problems.
16. 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.
17. The department has received an unprecedented number of compliments from councillors and residents about noted improvements. These have been received via letter, email, telephone and direct to staff whilst in the street.
18. There have been no major setbacks with the working relationships developed between cleansing staff and venues providing welfare facilities. The number of facilities provided are adequate however work continues to build up working relations, and permit access.
19. The provision of dedicated enforcement three days a week has seen a rapid response to environmental crime and a more visible presence in the wards to tackle domestic waste presentation problems. A dedicated officer has enabled consistent and continual monitoring of problems, previously outside the capacity of the SEO.

## **Review of Pilot Objectives**

### **Zone Working**

20. The pilot has successfully developed and implemented zone working, incorporating barrow rounds, a rapid response service, bin and back lane cleansing, and mechanical sweeping. The zone team have been empowered to provide all cleansing needs for the pilot area, with the exception of the large mechanical sweeping schedule for main roads. The new regime is working well with identified improvements across the performance measures available.
21. The role of the SEO was not been measurable until January 2007, due to staffing problems. Proactive work has proved difficult due to reactive workloads arising from the five pilot wards. This pilot has shown that the allocation of wards to SEO's needs to be carefully balanced. Before the rollout commences this work of balancing the wards will be complete. Therefore, it is envisaged that this problem will not arise in the second and subsequent areas.

### **Improve performance monitoring, staff communication and morale**

22. The pilot has developed performance monitoring to measure cleanliness standards and the effectiveness of the new working arrangements. The Performance Improvement Team has carried out this monitoring by independent auditing of the zone. It is unlikely that the service would have the capacity to continue this level of monitoring for the entire city, however given that the pilot was a trial of new arrangements, such intensive measurement is not deemed necessary.
23. The Pilot Cleansing Supervisor has carried out performance monitoring as part of his duties without problems. A weekly report of all service requests via YPAL/Call Centre has also been devised to measure performance and identify hot spots and trends. This technique could continue across the city supported by the Performance Improvement Team.
24. It was proposed that the role of the SEO within the zone would be developed to extend the level of performance monitoring of cleansing standards, however this has not been practicable due to workloads preventing proactive work of this kind. However, whilst out addressing other issues, the SEO has continued to monitor standards where possible. In addition, the pilot team has met regularly to discuss issues, problems and to give praise, thereby ensuring morale and performance are kept on the agenda. A key improvement has been the relationship between the cleansing team and the SEO, the new team working has improved communication and morale, as well as everyone working as one service team.
25. Morale amongst the staff on the pilot has significantly improved. Those staff carrying out barrowman duties were volunteers, however there were reservations about the role and these have been addressed or not materialised. These positive findings are being disseminated to the

remainder of the service outside the pilot and will assist in the roll out. The duties of the other cleansing staff remained largely unchanged, and therefore ownership and empowerment of the pilot zone has brought about greater job satisfaction and improved morale. Regular meetings will be maintained across the new zones with the individual teams.

### **Environmental initiatives**

26. The pilot is working closely with the York Pride Initiatives being delivered over a 12 month period to improve the condition of the local environment at a neighbourhood level. The role of the Environmental Enforcement Officer (EEO) has been of significant assistance in delivery to date as recent campaigns have been enforcement related. Improved working relationships in the pilot between the Street Environment function and the cleansing team has brought about a more effective method of tackling bags out early, the first initiative launched in October 2006, which continues to be a predominant work area for the EEO.
27. It is expected that the proposed creation of a small enforcement team will be significant in tackling these problems, and enable a much more effective delivery of the environmental initiatives across the city.

### **Improve customer focus and a continual review of what we do**

28. The pilot strategy has brought about improved cleanliness standards, a consistent, recognisable presence in the wards, and a visible service responding to customer needs. As stated in point 11, customer compliments have never been so high, and the influx relates to the pilot zone. It is therefore likely that performance indicator Best Value 89 - resident's satisfaction with their local area, will have improved in areas B and D, which cover the pilot wards. These findings will be available from the next Talkabout Survey, due May 2007.
29. The pilot strategy has included the review of schedules, staff satisfaction, workloads and cleanliness monitoring. This has been practicable due to the size of the pilot zone, and a concerted effort to measure output, needed to ensure that the trial is effective prior to roll out. Methods to review and monitor need to be agreed and introduced for the roll out, to ensure continued measurement of service delivery. As stated at point 19, a key vehicle for this will be zone team meetings, in addition to reports and support generated from Performance Improvement Team.

### **Increase education and enforcement**

30. The support of the EEO has been significant in delivery of this objective. The EEO works three days a week in the pilot which is representative coverage should the proposed enforcement team be established. It should be noted that in January 2007, the temporarily appointed EEO, with no previous experience in enforcement, needed training before he commenced certain areas of enforcement, namely litter enforcement, business visits and use of CCTV equipment.

31. The EEO has been carrying out proactive monitoring of the known problem areas in the zone, leafleting properties in the vicinity of where fly tipping and side waste has been found and searching for evidence.
32. Routine monitoring takes place on a weekly basis across the pilot, as follows:-
- Monitoring of ad-hoc properties in Acomb, Dringhouses/Woodthorpe and Westfield
  - Leeman Road – Thursdays
  - South Bank -Mondays
  - Chapelfields - Wednesdays
  - Beaconsfield St area – Thursdays
33. This enables the service to keep abreast of compliance and have a visible presence in the back lanes where incorrect presentation is at its worst. Since monitoring commenced by the dedicated EEO in January 2007, only 30 letters have had to be served. A new issue of the advice letter was sent to all properties in the Leeman Road area in December, before monitoring commenced, this included approximately 250 properties. Since then, only two notices have been served in this area, which reflects the success of sustained monitoring, advice and liaison with residents.
34. The majority of fly tipping incidents do not provide evidence. However, one warning letter has been issued where an allegation was made. Without evidence a case cannot be progressed, but the warning letters serve their purpose, followed by routine monitoring by the EEO.
35. Eight business inspections have taken place during the pilot to measure compliance with the commercial 'duty of care' on waste. This has resulted in the issue of three notices. Five inspections are under investigation.
36. Removal of graffiti on private land has taken place across the pilot area, the EEO has visited and sought permissions from several households and businesses affected by graffiti damage.

## **Options**

37. Members could decide not to roll out to the remainder of the City.
38. Members could decide to roll out the new working arrangements gradually to the remainder of the city.
39. Members could decide to roll out the new working arrangements as a single exercise.
40. Members could decide to roll out the new working arrangements as a single exercise. But to exclude the Guildhall City Centre (within the walls).

## **Corporate Priorities**

41. 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**

42. The following implications have been noted:

### **Financial**

43. There are no financial implications associated with this decision. The costs associated with re-branding of uniform have been taken from current revenue budgets. The re-branding of fleet will take place at the renewal of appropriate vehicle leases.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

44. Street Scene employees and the Street Environment Officers have been continually kept abreast of developments within the pilot. There will be ongoing consultation with employees and their representatives about the proposed operational changes for the planned rollout across the city. Any operational, contractual changes will be implemented following Council policies and procedures and will be subject to full consultation with Trade Union officers and individual employees.

### **Equalities**

45. Customers will be updated on the implementation city wide by a variety of communication channels including the provision of written information in alternative formats. This will be clearly stated in articles produced to promote the roll out.

### **Legal**

46. It has been established that the new working practices are compliant with the council's duties under Environmental Protection Act 1990 regarding responsibility to maintain cleanliness of the public highway.

### **Crime and Disorder**

47. The introduction of the proposed 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)

48. There are no IT implications.

## Risk Management

49. Risks associated with the roll out of new working practices as a single exercise to the rest of the city have 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 given the positive outcomes of the pilot.

## Recommendations

50. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to agree that the new service should be rolled out as a single exercise, but excluding the City Centre

Reason: To provide an improved Street Cleaning service in the City.

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**Report Approved**  **Date** 7 March 2007

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

**All**  *tick*

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** Executive Report 21<sup>st</sup> November 2006 – Street Scene Review - Executive