



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Finance & Performance Scrutiny 22 March 2021

Wards affected: All wards

FRONTLINE SERVICE REVIEW: STREET SCENE SERVICES

Report of Director (Environment & Planning)

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To report on activities of Street Scene Services.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the report be noted.

3. Background to the report

3.1 Street Scene services forms part of the Environment and Planning directorate and includes waste management, green spaces, clean neighbourhoods and car parks. This report sets out the key activities during the first three quarters of 2020/2021 (April – December 2020) during which the service has faced considerable challenges due to the coronavirus pandemic.

4. SERVICE OVERVIEW

4.1 The services are based at the Council's Jubilee depot on the Harrowbrook Industrial estate, Hinckley and are managed by the Head of Street Scene Services. Services support each other to deliver common goals, to deliver services and to deliver corporate priorities such as the climate change action plan.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

4.2 This service collects approximately 44,000 tonnes of rubbish / recycling and empties and estimated 3.4 million wheeled bins each year. As members will

recall all collections are now run in house (since April 2018) and rounds were changed in June 2018 to accommodate new housing growth.

- 4.3 Lock down in March caused significant operational challenges as approximately 40% of streetscene staff were absent initially (self-isolating, shielding, other sickness). Garden waste collections were unavoidably paused for 5 weeks and the service then reintroduced with staff redeployed from street cleansing and with a high number of agency staff. Additional COVID controls such as extra PPE and cleaning were introduced and managed and the volume of work under taken also increased significantly
- 1,000 tonnes more of recycling materials collected (Apr-Dec) compared to the same period last year (approximately a 23% increase). Glass (75%) and cardboard (43%) showed the biggest increases reflecting increased online shopping, and the closure of pubs and restaurants.
 - Up to 300% more green waste presented and collected when service reinstated in May 2020. Tonnage increased 300 tonnes in the first six months and an increase of 942 more customers (attributed again to more people being at home and spending more time in their gardens) with 79% of eligible households taking up the service.
 - 1200 tonnes more refuse (approx. 10%) collected for the first six months of the year as a result of more people being at home compared to the same period last year
 - Missed bin performance remains relatively good despite the increased pressures on the service.
 - Contamination of dry recycling remains amongst the lowest in Leicestershire although this has increased during lockdown
- 4.4 The most recent DEFRA recycling performance data for the period April – September shows our recycling rate increased to 48.8% (from 43.9%) but this is an indicative figure which may change and year-end figures are the true reflection of performance. This is still below the national target of 50%.
- 4.5 The performance measures below rely on customer behaviour i.e. correct participation in recycling

Measure	Target 2020/21	Actual at December 2020	Comment
% of eligible households subscribing to service	77%	79%	Highest percentage take up in Leicestershire
Missed bins	2700 (0.001% of the 3.4 million collections per year)	1410 (0.0005% of collections)	47% reduction on same period last year.
Household waste (kg per household)	500	492 (for 2019/20)	This is an annual indicator unavailable at present but this will

			increase for 2020/21 given the increased volumes collected due to more people being at home.
Recycling performance	44%	48.8% for April – September 2020 43.9% achieved in 2019/20.	The April to September data is part year and should be treated with caution as not comparing like with like.

- 4.6 Trade waste customers were impacted by COVID with many closing during lock down and changing their services (e.g. shift to take away / click and collect. This service supported businesses during these periods varying and suspending collections to suit each business needs. Sadly some businesses closed but new customers also joined the service. As a result of service alterations resulting from Covid, the service income reduced by £32K between April and December.

STRATEGY

- 4.7 Defra's waste and resources strategy proposals are still being consulted upon at a national level and changes proposed include free weekly food waste collections for every household from 2023, a consistent set of dry recycling materials to be collected across the country (source segregated), and a deposit return scheme for drinks containers (primarily plastic bottles). The plan commits to recycling at least 65% of municipal waste by 2035. Defra have stated that additional cost will be met by central government and Members will be kept updated as firm proposals emerge. Significant changes to the waste collection system are likely to be required to meet our recycling targets.
- 4.8 Work has commenced jointly between all the Leicestershire councils on the Joint Leicestershire Municipal Waste Management Strategy. This plan is due for completion December 2021 and is a statutory requirement and sets out how we will manage the waste we collect for the next 10 years. It will seek to address the new Waste and resources strategy proposals, and the challenges of reducing waste to landfill, the climate emergency, and meeting national recycling targets.

CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS

- 4.9 Clean neighbourhoods includes street cleansing, road sweeping over 400 miles of roads, bulky collections (large items) and enforcement of environmental crime.

- 4.10 Fly tipping increased by 55% during 2020 compared to 2019 with 1438 fly tips recorded and this created a significant amount of additional work for this team. No single reason can be attributed and this number probably reflects the significant increase in the volume of waste produced nationally during lock down. Officers are highlighting this problem through a series of social media posts during February and March 2021.
- 4.11 Demand for large item collections increased significantly and to try to counter the increase in fly tipping the number of collections per week was increased from 70 to 99 in November. Wait times are now 4 weeks and reducing. This team also provide special one off waste collections for residents e.g. house clearances, shed and garage clearances, and they also carry out work for the Housing team and other services e.g. clearing empty council houses, removing small amounts of asbestos safely etc. Litter and dog bin emptying contracts are in place with 16 parish councils.
- 4.12 Another area of work which increased significantly was abandoned vehicles with the number of requests thought to partly be the result of vehicles not moving during lock down. A total of 102 abandoned vehicles were investigated and removed and crushed during 2020.
- 4.13 The number of fixed penalty notices issued April – December 2020 was 20 (mainly for littering and fly tipping) and 12 community protection warning notices were also issued. This is a reduction on 2019 but reflects the Covid restrictions and the other work priorities outlined above.
- 4.13 Only 9 group litter picks have been organised this year due to Covid restrictions but an extra 74 litter volunteers have signed up bringing the total number of litter volunteers to 220. The efforts of these individuals should not be overlooked as they contribute significantly by removing litter thoughtlessly discarded by others. Similarly no school visits have been made.

GREEN SPACES

- 4.14 The green spaces team manage over 200 sites including the council's parks and open spaces, play areas, countryside sites, Ashby Road Cemetery, 8 closed churchyards, trees and allotments. They maintain 142 hectares of land (1.5 million square metres) and over 3500 trees.
- 4.15 The green space team led the crematorium feasibility study and the intention is that the crematorium will be operated by the green space team via a wholly owned company. This will be the major focus of work for the team during 2021, ensuring that the crematorium is ready to deliver a high quality and dignified service for the bereaved.
- 4.16 Covid presented many challenges. Staff numbers were reduced and the cemetery services were prioritised to ensure we were able to meet the forecasted increase in the numbers of burials. Green spaces were very busy as places for exercise during lockdown, and then to meet when restrictions gradually lifted. The parks and open spaces were still maintained during all lockdowns (not all councils did this) and were very much appreciated by

residents. Resources for litter removal were increased when this became a problem. Guidance for play areas, outdoor gyms and other sports facilities have changed throughout the pandemic and we have followed current guidance at all times.

- 4.17 A new Green Space Strategy and Delivery Plan will be produced and agreed during 2021 and will set out the priorities for the service including delivering our corporate climate change commitments. It will include a 10 year action plan and will identify the capital improvements needed to ensure our green spaces remain valued by residents. Managing Ash die back (*Hymenoscyphus Fraxineus* syn. *Chalara*; a disease affecting Ash trees across the UK) will also need to be addressed over the next 10 years.
- 4.18 Feasibility work is still being undertaken to develop a running track and potentially a 3G pitch at Clarendon Park. Similarly a programme of works has been developed to manage the moat at Argents Mead in the longer term. Works have commenced on Battling brook corridor to enhance this area for wildlife by sowing wildflowers at key locations. Other works were delayed due to the pandemic but these will be completed during 2021 eg outdoor gym equipment at Hollycroft Park and new play equipment at Queens Park.
- 4.19 The adoption of open spaces within developments remains a long process and officers are working to adopt land at Waterside Park, the Greyhound stadium, the Greens, London Road, Sketchley Brook east, Outlands drive and Work House Lane.
- 4.20 Performance wise the two green flags were retained for Hollycroft Park and Argents Mead. Grounds maintenance standards are at 87% (target 89%) but this is to be expected given the staff shortages and the increased use green spaces have had.
- 4.21 Green spaces also deliver the Parish and Community Initiative Fund which in 2020/21 will support 33 projects across the Borough with £136,914 of funding. Since 2005 the fund has supported 389 projects with £1.4 million of funding. They also deliver the Hinckley Community Initiative Fund and have supported the delivery of the Developing Communities Fund.

CAR PARKS

- 4.22 This service manages 15 pay and display car parks and 12 free car parks and enforces restrictions on these car parks. Car parks have remained open and operational during the virus but occupancy and income are significantly reduced reflecting reduced footfall in Hinckley town centre. Occupancy January 2021 was at 25% and pay and display income for April to December was £245,037 compared to £494,848 or the same period 2019. Holliers walk car park is currently a Covid test centre, and charges were also dropped at the Leisure centre car park when vaccinations of critical groups took place.
- 4.23 Works to upgrade pay and display machines and improve health and safety have continued where possible with new dropped kerbs installed at the

Leisure centre, machines moved to safer locations at St Marys and Castle car park, and cashless payment now possible on 11 car parks. Cashless payments now accounts for 21 percent of all income. The first electric vehicle charge points will be installed and operational by end of March 2021, with 12 points at Lower Bond street car park and 12 at Castle car park (Hill Street). Feasibility studies are being undertaken on several other car parks at present, including car parks outside of Hinckley.

JUBILEE DEPOT AND FLEET

- 4.24 Significant changes were made to the depot during 2019 to improve health and safety and the site continues to operate safely with the infrastructure changes and under these new site rules.
- 4.25 The council remains fully compliant with the environmental permit to operate the waste transfer station on site. This was well managed throughout the Covid pressures and a significant amount of scrap white goods are now transferred through the site (this is a revised waste transfer system).
- 4.26 No changes have been made to the fleet during this period and a Green Fleet Review has been commissioned from the Energy Saving Trust to enable a plan to be developed to transition to electric vehicles from 2023. This will be dependent on a number of factors including vehicle suitability, economic viability, and our ability to charge our fleet.

Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules

- 4.1 This report can be taken in open session.

5. Financial implications [DS]

- 5.1 Budgets for Streetscene services are monitored on a monthly basis and presented quarterly to this committee.

6. Legal implications [MR]

- 6.1 None

7. Corporate Plan implications

- 7.1 Street Scene Services contribute to all three priorities in the corporate plan, helping People to stay healthy and reducing crime; improving Places by keeping our borough clean and green, and protecting parks and open spaces; and by delivering Prosperity by supporting town centres and our rural communities.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 None.

9. Risk implications

- 9.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.
- 9.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.
- 9.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks		
Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
SS41 Ash die back	This disease is now evident in HBBC tree stock and a plan to manage this issues will be reported to SLT by June 2021.	Caroline Roffey
SS40 Covid disruption to services	Continuity plan developed and implemented which reduces risk of disruption to waste collections, street cleansing and grounds maintenance.	Caroline Roffey
SS38 Environmental targets – 50% of all waste collected to be recycled (65% by 2035)	Continue to encourage residents to recycle, and develop new waste collection systems for 2023 which meet the governments waste and resources plan. The Joint Leicestershire waste management plan will contribute to this work.	

10. Knowing your community – equality and rural implications

- 10.1 Street scene services takes into account equality and rural issues as part of planning and delivering its services.

11. Climate implications

- 11.1 Waste and clean neighbourhoods contribute to the climate change by recycling, and by removing litter and other harmful waste and disposing of this responsibly. Changes to the waste collection system in future years should support the climate agenda e.g. food waste collections. Green spaces have in recent years reduced their impact on the environment through initiatives such as no peat, tree planting, and wild flower planting. Electric vehicle charge points are a new initiative which will support residents to move to electric vehicles.

- 11.2 The fleet remains the biggest carbon source for the service and a green fleet review has been commissioned which will enable the council to begin to plan the switch to electric vehicles from 2023.

12. Corporate implications

- 12.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

Background papers:	None
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