

Report of the Director of Environment and Housing

Report to North East (Outer) Area Committee

Date: 17th March 2014

Subject: Environmental Services – Consultation on the 2014/15 Service Level Agreement

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Alwoodley, Harewood, Wetherby	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality/diversity and cohesion/ integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of the Main Issues

This report consults on which existing and new priorities the Area Committee would like to see addressed in a refreshed Service Level Agreement (SLA) for 2014/15. The report includes information on new responsibilities to be transferred to the Locality Team in 2014/15 and proposals as to how the service will be restructured to deliver these. The refreshed SLA will be presented for approval at the June meeting cycle, following further discussions at local ward member and Environmental Sub Group meetings.

Recommendations

The Area Committee is asked to:

- a. agree the main service principles for 2014/15;
- b. identify the continuing existing priorities and any new service issues it would like to see a focus on, within existing levels of resource;
- c. identify issues that it would like to see enhanced services delivered through the buying in additional local resources;
- d. note the new responsibilities being transferred to the Locality Team in 2014/15 and comment on the proposed new operational structure to deliver the full range of local services.
- e. agree the development of the new SLA for 2014/15 to be brought to the June meeting for approval based on refreshed Elected Member and Area Committee local priorities;
- f. note the grounds maintenance contract performance update for the Outer NE area

Purpose of this report

- 1 The purpose of this report is for the Area Committee to consider the following and where necessary refer discussion on detail to local ward member meetings and/or the Environmental Sub Group to be fed into the SLA report scheduled for the June meeting:
 - a) agree the local operational principles and service improvements Members wish to see included in the 2014/15 Service Level Agreement (SLA) to be agreed between the ENE Locality Team and the Outer NE Area Committee at the June meeting;
 - b) what, if any, enhanced services the Area Committee would like to buy-in for 2014/15 and see added to the SLA;
 - c) note the new responsibilities being transferred to the Locality Team in 2014/15 and comment on the proposed new operational and supervisory structure to deliver the full range of local services.
 - d) note the grounds maintenance contract performance update for the Outer NE area covering the grass growing/cutting period March to October 2013 (see appendix A).

Background information

- 2 At its meeting of 30th March 2011, the Executive Board approved revisions to the Area Committee Function Schedules to include a new delegated responsibility for Street Cleansing & Environmental Enforcement Services.
- 3 The Executive Board approved further delegations to be covered by this Function Schedule at its meeting of 10th February 2012: these being “ancillary street cleansing functions including graffiti removal, gully and ginnel cleansing”. The relevant Function Schedule is provided as Appendix A of this report.
- 4 The delegation makes clear the responsibility of Area Committees to negotiate, develop and approve a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the service that achieves, as a minimum, the service standards set by Executive Board. The SLA should determine the principles of deployment of the available resources by:
 - the identification of priorities for service delivery annually (both geographical and in terms of types of services delivered)
 - the agreement of the most appropriate approaches to be taken to achieve local environmental cleanliness and quality.
- 5 Services included in the original delegation are:
 - Street cleansing (mechanical and manual);
 - Leaf clearing;
 - Litter bin emptying;
 - Dog warden services (still managed at a city level);
 - Littering & flytipping regulation;
 - Domestic & commercial waste (storage & transportation issues);

- Highways enforcement (abandoned & nuisance vehicles, A-boards on pavements, mud on roads and placards on street furniture);
- Graffiti enforcement; and
- Overgrown vegetation controls.

- 6 The delegation of the specified environmental services to Area Committees means that service resources, mainly staffing, which were previously managed centrally, are now devolved and managed by Locality Managers.
- 7 To enable this to happen, a restructuring of the previous “Streetscene” service was undertaken in 2011. Importantly this separated out the local street cleansing functions from the city’s refuse and recycling functions and created for the first time local supervisory/support roles for a key front line service. At the same time, Environmental Action Teams that had previously just focused on enforcement and regulatory practices were brought together with the street cleansing function to create new Locality Teams.
- 8 These resources are organised into three locality based teams for East North East, South East and West North West. They are geographically aligned to and work closely with the new Area Support Teams (formerly Area Management).
- 9 The Service Level Agreements set out for each Area Committee how resources will be used in their area to meet local needs and achieve the outcome of clean streets.
- 10 The Locality Managers are accountable for the use of that resource and performance of the service to the Area Committees through the approved SLAs. The Area Committees are accountable to Executive Board.
- 11 Following extensive work with Elected members and consultation through the Area Committee, the 2011/12 SLA for Outer NE was approved on October 2011.
- 12 The new Locality Team went live as a service in early September 2011.
- 13 The first full-year SLA was approved for 2012/13 at the June 2012 meeting. This included the new delegated services of dog wardens, graffiti removal, gully and ginnel cleansing.
- 15 In early 2013 a restructuring of the enforcement part of the Locality Teams took place to deal largely with historical anomalies/varieties of grades/job descriptions inherited from the transfer in 2011 and to bring the role up to the level required to deliver an effective and efficient enforcement service. This included the transfer of the management of Dog Wardens to Locality Teams (1.5 fte for ENE).
- 16 This restructuring also took the opportunity to review the streets operations and as a result introduced a new Resource/Caseworker post for each Locality Team. As well as making sure staffing and vehicle resources are being deployed as effectively as possible so that local issues are being quickly responded to, this post works alongside the streets supervisors to release capacity for more front line supervision and support.
- 17 During 2013 the Council took the decision to bring services delivered through the housing Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) back into the council. As part of this, there is a requirement to look at how local environmental services undertaken by ALMOs are best delivered in the future.

Progress made in the 2013/14 SLA

- 18 The first half-year update was provided to Area Committee at the February 2014 meeting and progress is continually monitored and discussed at the Environmental Sub Group meetings.
- 19 The second half update will be provided at the June 2014 meeting.
- 20 A senior manager from the Locality Team has been available for all Ward Members meetings where required to focus in on more localised street cleansing and environmental enforcement issues. Local actions are tracked at these meetings.
- 21 The greatest pressures on the SLA for Outer NE area in 2013/14 have been:
- a. Keeping arterial routes litter free; particularly out of cutting season when grounds maintenance contractors are not operational. Additional litter picking has been bought in to bridge this gap.
 - b. Deleafing – continues to be a significant use of resource in the Outer NE area between October and January. Feedback from Members continues to be positive.
 - c. Weather (i.e. the rain!) – the service has dealt with and worked through two of the wettest years on record. As well as the more obvious pressures this puts on the gully cleaning crews, this also causes operational/capacity difficulties for mechanical sweeping (the vehicles fill up with water quicker and therefore have to tip off more) and manual litter picking (some atrocious working conditions). We believe that the operational staff deserve huge credit for their efforts during these sustained periods of unprecedented rainfall.
- 22 In addition to the service expectations set out in the SLA, the Council's grounds maintenance contract has a significant effect on the outcome of clean and tidy neighbourhoods.
- 23 Although not part of the delegated locality service, the monitoring of the effectiveness of the contract by the Area Committee is undertaken through the Environmental Sub Group. Issues are also raised through the Town and Parish Council Forum. Simon Frosdick (Business Development Manager, P&C) attended the November meeting of the Forum and Senior Officer attends the Environmental Sub Group.
- 24 Attached to this report is a summary of performance in the Outer NE area, covering the growing/cutting period of March to October 2013. Feedback from the Sub Group and the Town and Parish Council Forum is that the performance is good and where issues arise the contract monitoring arrangements deal with this effectively.

2014/15 Service Level Agreement

- 25 This section sets out refreshed principles that will underpin the new SLA for 2014/15. The Area Committee is asked to consider these and agree any it would want to see the Locality Team focus on in making further improvements.
- a. *Outcome focused:*

The ENE Locality Team will focus on delivering the best outcome for residents across the Outer North NE area - so that the streets and neighbourhoods in which they live are of an acceptably clean standard. It is this equality of standard that every resident will be entitled to, not necessarily the same quantity of service. For example, not everyone will get their street swept every x weeks, but everyone will be entitled to get their street swept as and when needed if it is the best solution to making sure it doesn't fall to an unacceptable standard of cleanliness.

- *Responsive to local needs:*

The service will be more responsive to local needs. There will be capacity built in to react to current sites of concern, plan for known local events that may affect the cleanliness of neighbourhoods and go where the problem is at that time. We will respond to all requests for new litter bins or relocating existing ones to more effective locations, if the requests can not be met we will explain why.

- *Common sense approach:*

The service will have a common sense approach which supports getting the job done. No cleaning of clean streets, more flexible routes/coverage, no driving/walking past problems.

- *Working as a team in our priority neighbourhoods:*

The service will work as part of the "team neighbourhood" approach and contribute towards tackling problems identified in the agreed priority neighbourhood of Moor Allerton (Lingfields and Cranmer Bank). We will provide a lead at tasking meetings on environmental issues and make sure coordinated action is being taken against the local priority. We will target enforcement activity at the locations causing the greatest problems.

- *Supporting community action:*

We will work closely with and support local community based organisations (such as Town and Parish Councils, In Bloom/Friends of groups) that: add value to what we do, provide eyes and ears, contribute towards making our streets and neighbourhood cleaner and have a role to play in making our service more accountable.

- *Education and Enforcement:*

We will develop and implement local strategies which effectively combine education and enforcement approaches to tackling long standing problems. For example; we will support work with schools to prevent litter on school routes and work with local businesses to make local shopping centres/main streets clean and pleasant places to visit.

- *Working with Housing Leeds and the Police to deliver more effectively:*

We will work in partnership with local Housing Leeds staff and the Police to make more effective and efficient use of our combined resource; focusing on joint approaches to cleaning open land/spaces, maintaining ginnels, effective tenancy management (e.g. with waste in gardens) and enforcing against environmental crime/offences.

- *Planning for seasonal and annual events:*

We will ensure that there is sufficient capacity and flexibility in the service to programme work to deal with leaf fall in autumn. We will help clean up after significant community events. We will prepare the route for the Tour de France and ensure a thorough during and after vent plan is in place to minimise littering and clean up afterwards.

- 26 The 2014/15 SLA will be delivered through use of existing resources allocated to the Locality Manager to manage across the ENE area. This will deliver the agreed level of service as set out in the SLA to be presented to the June meeting.
- 27 However, there is opportunity for Area Committees to enhance the provision within their area through use of local budgets available to them. For example the Area Committee could “buy-in” additional services such as:
- Weekend/out of hours enforcement patrols (inc dog wardens)
 - Additional one-off litter picks/mechanical sweeps over and above those scheduled
 - Additional scheduled litter picks (i.e. taking on more staff)
 - Additional enforcement/dog warden staff
 - Additional de-leaving capacity in autumn
 - New litter bins
- 25 If there are other localised enhancements the Area Committee would like adding to their 2014/15 SLA then the Locality Manager will investigate and provide options/costs with the SLA at the June meeting. Discussions will take place at ward member meetings and through the Environmental Sub Group prior to any proposals reaching Area Committee.

Changes to the Locality Teams in 2014/15

- 26 Since October 2013 Housing Arms-length Management Organisations (ALMOs) no longer exist. The services delivered are now within Leeds City Council, within the Environment and Housing Directorate. This provides us with an opportunity to move to one service that covers all of the environmental issues that were previously split between the Locality Team and ALMOs.
- 27 The integration of these services will provide one, accountable point of contact for these issues, leading to faster resolution and easier access for residents and the public.
- 28 In the current financial climate the council’s priority is to protect front-line services. A reduction in the duplication of management, and therefore a smaller number of managers covering these services will help to deliver this.
- 29 In addition to former ALMO services there are a number of other environmental services currently managed through Locality Teams which are still delivered on a citywide basis. Household bulky waste collection, needles collection and public convenience cleaning services are currently managed by South and Outer East Locality Team for the whole city; Graffiti removal is managed by West North West Locality Team and the ginnel team is managed by East North East. This leads to inefficiencies in terms of travel and resources, but also means that these services are less able to be influenced and prioritised at a local level.
30. Whilst the service has made good progress over the last two years to initially stabilise and subsequently improve delivery, there are areas which could be more efficient and effective. The current reliance on lone working all year around leads to inefficiencies and

a lack of flexibility within the service. Staff who work on their own have also fed back that they feel isolated and do not see their supervisor or colleagues often enough.

31. Staff have historically had rigid roles which only enabled them to do one task, e.g. litter picking or driving a particular vehicle. This again means we are not as flexible as we could be, and staff also have little opportunity to develop their skills and progress up through the service. Locality Team staff are often confused about their roles and about what tasks they are (and are not) required to do. Again this leads to a lack of flexibility and can cause conflict between managers and frontline staff.
32. Vehicle usage within the service is considerable, largely due to the size of the Locality Team area and the small number of mobile teams. There is a need to reduce travel time, and therefore fuel usage and wear and tear on vehicles to reduce costs and the impact on the environment.
33. Although overtime cost reductions have been made over the last couple of years (50% reduction in ENE) and some flexibility brought in through the introduction of “capacity days” in programmed work, the Locality Teams still spend a significant amount on overtime to cover sickness and holidays. The reliance on lone workers and specific job roles compounds this problem as the service cannot easily move resources to cover functions and therefore has to use overtime payments. The imperative to protect frontline jobs also means that we should be using any additional budgets to create or protect permanent jobs, rather than to pay for additional hours.
34. Even though the service has made great strides in bringing together enforcement and cleansing functions so that they complement each other and deliver better outcomes, this relationship could be improved further. Co-locating services with partners such as the Police and Housing Leeds, is also a key aim to deliver a more integrated, holistic service.
35. Whilst the gully cleansing service has again been stabilised and improved, the delivery of this on a locality basis has its operational problems, especially given the level of resources at our disposal (one vehicle per Locality Team) and the close links to Highways Services who are responsible for the actual gullies themselves. It is therefore proposed to move the gully service back to a citywide service and to further look at whether this service would be better delivered through Highways Services in future.
36. Environmental Action Services is therefore reviewing the delivery of our services and structures in order to deal with the challenges above, whilst protecting jobs and pay.

Proposed Zonal Model:

37. Environmental Action Services propose to move to a zonally based service delivering all the services described above through a multi-skilled team of people.
38. The service will be directly responsible for all current aspects of Locality Team street cleansing services (excluding gully cleansing – see para 35 above) as set out in the SLA:
 - Manual litter picking
 - Litter bin emptying
 - Mechanical path & road sweeping
 - Flytipping removal

- Graffiti removal
- Needle removal
- Ginnel clearance
- Cleaning of arterial routes
- Cleaning around recycling (e.g. bottle banks) facilities
- Leaf clearing

39. In addition to these in future Locality teams will be also be responsible for:

- Scheduled bulky household collections
- Void garden clearances (responsibility for clearing the interior of void houses will remain with Housing Leeds) *
- Maintenance of Housing Leeds land and estates *

(* will be subject to a separate service agreement with Housing Leeds as will be funded through Housing Revenue Account)

40. This proposal does not cover those services delivered by Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation (BITMO).

41. The service proposes that East and North East Leeds area is split into 5 local teams. The teams will reinforce the service accountability with Area Committees and will be fully coterminous with the new Policing structure.

42. A Team Leader will oversee both the cleansing and enforcement staff/functions in those teams and take responsibility for local relationships with and reporting to ward members.

43. Table 1 below describes the proposed teams for ENE. Job roles will be broader and multi-skilled enabling the local teams to flexibly deliver all the services described above within their area/zone.

Table 1 – Proposed operational areas/zones

Area Committee	Area	Ward(s)
Inner East	1	Burmantofts & Richmond Hill (will be split into 2 zones)
	2	Gipton & Harehills (will be split into 2 zones)
	3	Killingbeck & Seacroft
Inner NE	4	Chapel Allerton, Moortown & Roundhay
Outer NE	5	Alwoodley, Harewood & Wetherby

44. The service will remain a 7 day/week street cleansing service, but there will be some staff employed 5 days/week (non-shift) to create more flexibility and greater numbers at key times.

- 45 As is currently the case, the service will determine how resources/staff numbers are deployed within these areas/zones in order to meet the commitments made in the three SLAs covering the ENE locality. But the following important principles will be applied in the initial allocations :
- **there will be no reduction in the existing Locality Team level of resource spread between wards (i.e. for the street cleansing and enforcement functions);**
 - additional resource brought into the service to meet the new responsibilities (primarily those transferred from the former ALMOs and paid for by HRA) will be used to enhance capacity in those areas/zones according to where the known and anticipated demand/need is.
 - any further capacity will be allocated to where the need is greatest, where the most difference can be made and with consideration to other complementary resource such as the ground maintenance contract.
- 46 It is proposed to still have a commitment to a degree of scheduled level of service for some functions, such as mechanical cleaning, litter-picking and bulky waste collection. However these scheduled services would be part of the zonal teams and therefore more flexible and reactive to the needs of the local Elected Members and residents.
47. Lone-working will be minimised with staff instead mainly working in small teams. This would deliver the same level of scheduled litter-picking service but more quickly and efficiently and, as an added benefit, white bags could be more often removed at the point of clearance, rather than waiting for a collection crew to arrive.
48. **However, it is anticipated that Members will want to see a more traditional “litter picker” presence maintained in Wetherby and Boston Spa main streets and that will be factored into the how the Outer NE Team operates.**
49. Overtime cover would further reduce as the multi-skilled workforce would be required to cover each other, with managers moving resources around the zones and the locality to meet the services’ needs. A significant proportion of the current overtime budget would instead be used to fund additional permanent frontline posts. A small overtime budget would be retained to cover some specialist services, e.g. mechanical cleaning.
50. The service is also working with partners, such as the Police and Housing Leeds, to develop proposals for co-location where possible. The sharing of depot facilities in local areas would deliver significant efficiencies in terms of time and fuel usage. **Positive discussions have already taken place with WY Police about co-location and use of facilities at Wetherby Police Station.**
51. Work is still required to fully develop detailed operational arrangements and to agree resource allocations within each zonal team. The Locality Team proposes to use the same process for the development of the Service Level Agreement for 2014/15 to undertake consultation with Elected Members on the detailed aspects of the proposals.

Implications for Council Policy and Governance

- 52 The Council's Constitution was amended, approved at Executive Board in March 2011 and ratified at the Annual Council meeting held on 26th May 2011, to include the environmental services delegation within the Area Committee Function Schedule.
- 53 Amendments were also made at that time to the Area Committee Procedure Rules to make allowance for the decision making powers being devolved to Committees, which will run concurrent to the same authority given to the Director of Environment & Housing.
- 54 At its 10th February 2012 meeting, the Executive Board approved the following further additions to the delegation: "Ancillary street cleansing functions including graffiti removal, gully and ginnel cleansing".
- 55 The delegation of environmental services to Area Committees significantly contributes towards the Stronger Leeds section of the Safer & Stronger Communities Plan 2011-15. By delivering services at an Area Committee level, the priority to '*ensure that local neighbourhoods are clean*' will be much more achievable.

Legal and Resource Implications

- 56 The SLA for 2014/15 will be delivered mainly through the resources delegated to the Locality Manager to manage across the East, North-East area. A summary of the approved 2014/15 Locality Team budget will be provided as an appendix to the SLA.
- 57 The SLA will also set out how partnership resources will complement and add value to the Locality Team resources in helping jointly deliver the outcome of cleaner streets and neighbourhoods. For example closer working with the Parks and Countryside service on sharing facilities, addressing problem ginnels/rights of ways and litter bins around park perimeters, and, work with Housing Leeds on coordinated enforcement activity, for example through tenancy management.

Recommendations

- 58 The Area Committee is asked consider the following and where necessary refer discussion on detail to local ward member meetings and Environmental Sub Group to be fed into the SLA report scheduled for the June meeting:
- a) agree the main service principles for 2014/15;
 - b) identify the continuing existing priorities and any new service issues it would like to see a focus on, within existing levels of resource;
 - c) identify issues that it would like to see enhanced services delivered through the buying in additional local resources;
 - d) note the new responsibilities being transferred to the Locality Team and comment on the proposed new operational structure to deliver the full range of local services.
 - e) agree the development of a new SLA for 2014/15 to be brought to the June meeting for approval based on refreshed Elected Member and Area Committee priorities
 - f) note the grounds maintenance contract performance update for the Outer NE area covering the grass growing/cutting period March to October 2013 (see appendix A).