



Report of the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods

South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 4th July 2011

Subject: Delegation of Environmental Services Update

Electoral Wards Affected:

All

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

Following input from Area Chairs, the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) will now be submitted for approval in September rather than June/July. The appointment of the Environmental Locality Managers has provided the capacity to look at street cleansing services objectively and in more detail than previously. As a result two pieces of work have emerged, one being a short-term service evaluation and the other a longer term, fundamental review of street cleansing services.

Other work is currently ongoing to prepare for the delegation, including:

- Overlay of the refuse collection schedules with those of street cleansing;
- Discussion with other services/organisations around land vesting issues; and
- Investigating local equipment storage and disposal points options to minimise downtime.

It is the intention to present information on resource provision verbally at the Area Committee, following work to realign budgets to the new team configurations.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report provides with an update on progress towards the delegation of certain environmental services to Area Committees, as well as information relating to the current review of street cleansing services.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Work has been ongoing with Members and Area Committees since late 2010 on achieving the successful delegation of certain environmental services in 2011.

2.2 Services included in the proposed delegation are:

- Street cleansing (mechanical and manual);
- Leaf clearing;
- Litter bin emptying;
- Dog warden services;
- 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.

2.3 Area Committee workshops have been held, in January and March, to involve Members in the development of Service Level Agreements (SLA), through which the delegated services will be delivered at a local level. The workshops also provided an opportunity for Members to consider current service schedules and activity, in terms of meeting the need of local areas. A further workshop is planned for Members of the Outer South Area Committee on **Wednesday 20th July 1-4pm**, Civic Hall.

2.4 In April appointments were made to the new Environmental Locality Manager roles, the following officers are now in post and will be responsible for the delivery of services through the approved Service Level Agreements:

South East – Andy Beattie (Tom Smith from October 2011)

West North West – Jason Singh

East North East – John Woolmer

2.5 Induction sessions were held in late May for new Members elected at the recent local election, to introduce them to Area Committees, locality working and the proposed environmental services delegation.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 Following further consideration and input from Area Committee Chairs, a decision has been made to continue work on the SLAs, for approval by Area Committees in September now, for reasons provided below.

3.2 At the April Area Chairs' meeting a number of Chairs stated their support for the delegation of services to be done properly and not rushed through just to meet the original timescale of June/July.

3.3 The appointment of the Environmental Locality Managers has provided the capacity to look at street cleansing services objectively and in more detail than previously. This, together with the feedback from local community forums, environmental sub groups and the earlier Member workshops, has proved beneficial in identifying issues to be addressed in order to be confident of the deliverability of future street cleansing functions, as recorded in the SLA. The Locality Managers have been looking closely at operation aspects of street cleansing, especially with regard to resources and capacity to deliver scheduled work and have the flexibility to respond to unplanned but urgent work when the need arises.

3.4 As a result of the Locality Manager's initial considerations, two pieces of work have emerged, one being a short-term service evaluation and the other a longer term, fundamental review which could potentially lead to a radical overhaul of street cleansing services.

3.5 Short-term Review

The review will assess the existing scheduled services in terms of their deliverability within the resource capacity currently available, with a focus on achieving a satisfactory standard of cleanliness rather than prescriptive inflexible fixed periodic cleansing cycles. It is intended that this will result in a better understanding by all parties of what is expected to be delivered through the SLAs.

It is also intended that this review will identify a flexible resource to be available to respond to ad hoc, or planned but significant street cleansing matters/events, as well as Member/public referrals, without impacting on scheduled cleansing activities.

The review will be completed by the end of June, with the outcomes being shared with Members at the next round of Area Committee workshops to take place in July.

3.6 Long-term Review

This review will take approximately 6-12 months dependent upon the issues raised and will be a more significant fundamental review which will include a redesign of street cleaning services and changes to current operational arrangements. This will also coincide with work now being commenced to review existing and future fleet requirements and future procurement of a new fleet contract to be in place from 2012. It is intended that Members will be kept fully up to date with the progress of this review through Area Committee reports and Environment Sub-group meetings.

It is anticipated that the review outcomes and subsequent service change programme will be completed by the next municipal year (2012/13) when the Area Committee's year two SLA will take effect, reflecting the new ways of working.

4.0 **Other current & future work.**

4.1 Work is underway to overlay refuse collection schedules with the current street cleansing programme, in order to achieve more effective co-ordination of services. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by June and be incorporated with the street cleansing review outcomes to deliver a more efficient and effective service within the resource capacity available. A similar piece of work will take place regarding the current grounds maintenance schedules.

- 4.2 There is much to do to improve upon the use and deployment of the current resource on street cleansing. The issue of localising equipment storage and disposal points to minimise travel and downtime; the additional supervision to improve general attendance and productivity and the full attention of managers and staff on street cleansing rather than being drawn towards refuse collection services will all improve the impact of the current level of resource.
- 4.3 Discussions with other services/organisations around land vesting issues are being progressed by the Area Leaders. Discussions are taking place with partners such as the ALMOs to ensure at the very least that good co-ordination exists between the estate caretaker roles and the Locality Teams (when created in July). In addition, the possibility of transfers of land ownership to the majority land owner in areas where the picture is confused is being pursued.

Meetings have been arranged, and are currently taking place with the respective organisations/parties to discuss land vesting issues. An update on progress of these discussions will be given at the Area Committee meeting by the Area Leader.

- 4.4 We are keen to identify and connect with any local capacity through residents associations and other locally active groups in terms of their potential to contribute to promoting responsible behaviour and to assist in clean-ups or cleanliness monitoring & reporting in their areas. Connections into 'Community Payback' as another potential avenue to increase service delivery are being pursued. A positive dialogue is being maintained with WY Police regarding the use of PCSOs to help regulate local environmental cleanliness as a part of their day to day work.
- 4.5 The restructuring of Environmental Services, including Waste Management is coming to an end in terms of agreeing the new structure and recruiting to the new roles created. This is due for completion by July, from when the additional significant supervisory capacity that will benefit street cleansing services will be in place. Also at that time, the separation of refuse services and street cleansing will allow staff and managers to fully dedicate their time to one area alone, which has been an issue for street cleansing services as refuse has taken the greater priority over time.

5.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

- 5.1 The Council's Constitution has been amended, approved at Executive Board in March and ratified at the Annual Council meeting held on 26th May, to include the environmental services delegation within the Area Committee Function Schedule.
- 5.2 Amendments have also been made 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 & Neighbourhoods.
- 5.3 The proposed delegation of environmental services to Area Committees will significantly contribute towards the Stronger Leeds section of the new 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.

6.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 6.1 At this point in time there are no financial or resource implications. It is the intention to present information on resource provision verbally at the Area Committee, following work to realign budgets to the new team configurations.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 The Area Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and the intention to submit, for approval, a full Service Level Agreement to its September meeting.

Background Papers

- Briefing Note of Proposed Delegation of Elements of Streetscene Services, 18th October 2010
- Area Leaders Report, 14th March 2011
- Delegation of Environmental Services, 31st January 2011
- The Executive Board report 'Delegation of Executive Functions in Relation to Street Scene Management to Area Committees' 30th March 2011