

OUTER WEST COMMUNITY COMMITTEE - CONSULTATIVE MEETING

MONDAY, 21ST JUNE, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Amanda Carter in the Chair
Councillors A Blackburn, D Blackburn,
A Forsaith, D Seary, S Seary and T Smith

1 Apologies

Apologies were noted from Cllrs Carlill, Andrew Carter and Simon Seary. However, Cllr Simon Seary joined the meeting later.

2 Declaration of disclosable Pecuniary interests

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

CHAIRS COMMENT

The Chair welcomed everyone to this special consultative meeting in relation to bin collections and street cleansing. The meeting had been called to discuss the issues within the outer west area. Members wished to voice their concerns to the service and look at real solutions for the area.

3 Environmental Services in Outer West Community Committee Area

In attendance for this meeting were:

- James Rogers – Director of Communities, Housing and Environment
- John Woolmer – Chief Officer Environmental Services
- Jason Singh - Head of Service Environmental Action
- Sean Flesher – Chief Officer Parks and Countryside
- Chris Chamberlain – Area Manager

Officers acknowledged that there was a number of issues and challenges with the key services, bin collections and street cleansing. The service wanted to work with Ward Members to address matters and agree solutions which are sustainable.

It was recognised that the current routes were designed many years ago, about 2010. The city has changed significantly since then with numerous new developments. However, there has been significant work undertaken to review the routes so that they are effective and efficient across the city. The service is in the process of having a new depot built which should be operational by early 2022, this is essential for the new routes to work.

Prior to the pandemic the service was having issues with access to a number of streets, due to parked cars or narrow streets. The service has been trying

to implement a number of Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) to address the issue of parked cars so refuse vehicles can access streets. However, this has been impacted by Covid.

Covid has been a challenge to the service trying to continue providing a service working within all the restrictions, including how many people are allowed in a cab, staff who develop symptoms then having to stand down crews, this has been a challenge on a daily basis.

The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment, said that he was immensely proud of the way that the services had kept running to deliver a service to the city. It was noted that the service collect on average 67,000 – 87,000 bins every day across the city. Since the pandemic started and as people spent more time at home, there has been a significant increase in the amount of waste that is being collected, this is still being seen currently, and it was the view that this would not change as we move forward.

It was noted that there had been significant new developments across the city that were not part of the routes and this had added to the workload.

Many of the staff have gone above and beyond to deliver a service for the city. Many are now wishing to take holiday leave that they were unable to take last year, as the service tried to keep going. This is now causing an issue as we go into the holiday period.

Street cleansing has been impacted as a number of the staff were classed as being clinically vulnerable and were instructed to stay at home. The service lost about 30-40% of the workforce during the pandemic as they were required to stay at home. Many are now back at work and the service is now starting to catch up.

Members discussions focussed on the following issues:

- Number of complaints being received by Members in relation to missed bin collections, many were on the same routes numerous times. Members were able to provide specific areas, and streets.
- End of day reporting needed to be accurate Members had noticed that there were discrepancies and the issues listed for non-collection were not always clear. It was suggested that where a temporary crew were collecting and no access to in cab technology they should write down any issues and report back at the end of the day.
- Side waste was an issue and is often left for days before it is collected.
- Dumping of waste on private land was an issue and should be an enforcement issue.
- The re-starting of the outer west cleansing team was acknowledged as being a good suggestion, as it would provide a consistent approach across the outer west area. It was suggested that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) would be beneficial to the Community Committee. SLA's had been previously used by the Environmental sub-group of the Committee, this provided clarity of the service to be provided for the area.

- Bin collection times coinciding with school times was causing issues where access is required near to a school.
- Assisted access bins not being collected.
- Clear instructions to be provided to temporary crews of routes, assisted bin collection and end of day reports.
- Litter bins
- Traffic Regulation Orders in specific areas. It was suggested that in some cases these could be time limited, so as not to cause an issue for residents.
- Better and more timely communication with residents was needed. It was suggested that where residents of missed streets needed to be informed what was happening, officers and ward councillors could work together to use social media to get a message out.
- The Committee were of the view that the street cleansing was of a poor quality, listing issues such as fly-tipping and inaccessible ginnels. A number of complaints had been received especially during the hot weather.
- Clear information for residents in how to reduce waste and improve recycling.

In responding to questions from Members the Committee was provided with the following information:

- Improvements will be made to the end of day reports. This work had started prior to the pandemic, the improvements will look to make the reports more relevant. The suggestion to write down issues for temporary crews had been noted.
- Staffing levels were still a challenge on a daily basis, working with 15-20% less staff as crew bubbles were stood down due to positive tests.
- It was the aim of the service to collect missed streets within 48 hours and it was acknowledged that better communication for residents was needed for this issue.
- A SLA would be dependent on the route review, how designed and managed. It was noted that there was a commitment on the services' part in relation to the delegated functions, with the aim to refresh the collective understanding. It had been a struggle to maintain the service specifically in relation to waste, public health, street cleaning and litter picking. However, the service was now working on this, looking at changing supervision and staffing levels.
- A new supplier for litter bins was currently in the process of being procured. It was noted in relation to the design of the litter bins that the service would look to get the design as close to those already in situ and would be fit for purpose.
- Routes around Elland Road would be looked at as part of the review with a view to swap collection days if necessary.
- It was recognised that there were system delays in relation to Councillor emails regarding missed street collections. The service would look to improve this system.
- There was a need for better communication with residents in relation to side waste.

- It was acknowledged that fly-tipping was an issue. It was noted that waste recycling centres did not charge for items such as house clearances and fridges. Members were requested to contact the service with any specific areas that needed looking at.
- The service has use of 10 back up crews with up to 8 back up crews out across the city to pick up missed bins and streets. The Outer West are covered from the Henshaw depot and this relies on staff being able to crew the extra collections. Members were advised that there had been considerable overspend in the 1st quarter of this year due to using back up crews and agency staff.
- In the term, there was uncertainty in how future working arrangements would impact on the service with more people choosing to work from home.
- The review will look to address the impact that new build development is having on the service including timescales and weight limitations.
- The service would look to employ more people over the holiday period to address leave entitlement.
- The service would also look again at communicating with residents about recycling. It was noted that any information should reinforce that waste management was about reducing, re-using and recycling.
- Members were requested to advise the service of any ginnels which required maintenance.
- Gulley Cleansing was on a regular programme and was now getting back to an improved service after the pandemic, again Members were request to advice on areas where there was an issue.

RECOMMENDED – That the discussions be noted.

4 Date and Time of next Meeting

RECOMMENDED - To note that the next meeting of the Outer West Community Committee is scheduled for Monday 5th July 2021 at 1pm, in Civic Hall, Leeds.