



**Report of: The Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods**

**Area Committee: North West Outer Area Committee**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

**Subject: Briefing Note on Proposed Delegation of Elements of the Streetscene Service**

**Electoral Wards Affected:**

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

At the meeting of Area Committee Chairs on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2010 it was agreed, following discussion, that a further report be prepared looking at the potential to increase the delegation for a range of Streetscene services to Area Committees, which in turn would make them more accountable and responsive to the needs of localities and the aspirations of local people and local Elected Members.

Area Committee Chairs were broadly in favour of the move to increase delegation but were keen to point out that this should be via “real” action being taken, and not merely a token delegation based on the increased ability to influence service delivery but without any real ability to change or shape it.

A further briefing note was presented to Area Chairs on the 8<sup>th</sup> October, which they supported. They agreed to the content of the note and asked that further work is undertaken by Officers, to clarify and provide more detail to committees on how the delegation will work in practice. This included the provision of robust intelligence to support the allocation of resources and provide a baseline position at the local level.

Area Committees are asked to note the contents of the attached briefing note. A more detailed report will be prepared for Area Committees later in the municipal year.

## **Briefing Note Presented to Area Chairs 8<sup>th</sup> October 2010 on the Proposed Delegation of Elements of the Streetscene Service to Area Committees**

### **1. Current Position**

- 1.1 Streetscene Services currently form part of Environmental Services and provide a range of environmental services to the City of Leeds. Within Streetscene are the refuse and recycling collection service along with services such as street cleaning, gully cleansing, fly tip removal etc. For the purposes of this note and the proposed delegation refuse and recycling collection services are excluded from the scope, whereas street cleaning and other ancillary services are included within the scope.
- 1.2 It is also accepted that within Streetscene services (excluding refuse and recycling collection) a number of activities do not lend themselves sensibly to discussions on greater delegation, and included within this would be those services provided to the city centre and also those provided on a city-wide basis such as the primary network team and gully cleansing activities etc. Even excluding the aforementioned activities, the scale of resource that is the subject of this discussion is still significant. In 2010/11 the annual revenue budget for all services within scope is approximately £6.2m and comprises 138 FTE's plus relevant machinery and equipment etc.
- 1.3 Whilst it is suggested that there is a clear argument for excluding some services from any potential delegation, other services within scope clearly have the opportunity to be influenced by local choice and local circumstances. Such services include:
- Mechanical street cleaning
  - Manual street cleaning
  - Litter bin emptying
  - Graffiti removal teams
  - Fly tip removal teams

### **2. How Could it Work?**

- 2.1 It was acknowledged at the discussion on the 6<sup>th</sup> of August that delegation of responsibility for services to Area Committees would need to be done on a needs-lead basis and that Elected Members/Area Committees would also need significant support to help them with their role and responsibilities in this regard. At this stage, it is proposed that on an annual basis each Area Committee (it is recommended that the Area Committee Environmental Sub-Group is used) negotiates a Service Level Agreement with Streetscene Services in terms of the range and methodology by which services are deployed in their area. In discussing and agreeing the Service Level Agreement it is intended that summary information will be provided to assist in that debate, such information to include:-
- Current service resources and how they are deployed on the ground
  - Current operating arrangements e.g. cleansing frequencies etc.
  - Area-based service requests over the preceding year
  - Complaint data broken down by complaint type

- Customer perception survey information e.g. residents surveys

It is also proposed that the above information is complemented by empirical, survey based data that robustly records and reports on actual conditions on the ground.

2.2 Moving forward it is recommended that Area Committees be given fuller and more regular data on local environmental quality to assist them in their role, and a number of options have been considered and are proposed for discussion.

i) Enhanced NI 195 Data

The Council currently collects, on a city-wide basis, data on cleanliness levels via national indicator NI195. As outlined, the indicator is collected at a city-wide level only and is statistically unreliable at areas below the city-wide level, even at the wedge or Area Committee level the data cannot be regarded as robust. Nevertheless, there is the potential to increase the annual sample size and as a consequence produce data that is capable of interpretation at a more local level.

ii) DLEQS Surveys

District Local Environmental Quality Surveys (DLEQS) is a district version of a National Environmental Quality Survey, designed by the Keep Britain Tidy group. Leeds has experience of working with this survey over a number of years and it is accepted as a robust and relevant indicator of local environmental quality. The DLEQS methodology is similar to that for NI 195 but covers a wider range of issues than simply cleansing, for example weeds, staining of surfaces, condition of street furniture, fly-tipping, fly-posting and the condition of grassed areas etc. As such, whilst the survey is more intense and intensive from a labour input perspective, it does provide real and robust local environmental quality data that can be better used to assess service effectiveness both from an outcome and also from an input perspective. It is recommended that if the DLEQS route were to be followed this should be pursued on the basis of producing information on a regular basis at the Area Committee footprint level. There is currently some in-house capacity within LCC to produce this, though probably not on the scale that would be required, and there may be some resource implications if this route were to be followed.

iii) An LCC Version of the DLEQS Model

Whilst the DLEQS model is a nationally agreed approach locally derived versions can be produced and monitored locally. It is not clear from our analysis of this option why we would pursue a variant to the DELQS model in terms of the additional benefits it would bring. At the same time producing a DLEQS variant will require additional work both in terms of survey planning and also data interpretation.

2.3 Of the 3 options set out above, option 2 (the DLEQS survey model) is recommended as the best and most appropriate vehicle to report at an Area Committee level, such that Area Committees can fully understand how services are performing in their area and also how they can be amended to reflect local priorities and deliver outcomes on the ground. The DLEQS model, whilst fundamentally being a data repository, is also capable of producing visual

representation of survey data and comparing that to accepted benchmarks and norms. Visual representations of the DLEQS approach will be provided to Elected Members as part of the discussion on this issue.

### **3. Other Issues**

3.1 In considering the issues outlined within this report Members also need to be aware of other issues that can potentially impact on any final decision taken, these are set out briefly below:-

- Within Environment and Neighbourhoods, work is currently going on to look at how a wider range of locality based services including the work done by Environmental Action Teams (EATs) and Environmental Enforcement can be made more accountable to area based structures and reflect the wider locality working agenda. This work is looking at operational and management structures and is likely to see groupings based on the existing wedge based structure that currently operates within area management and the (EATs). A verbal update on this issue will be given at the meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> October.
- Street cleaning services are currently being reviewed as part of the Streetscene Change Programme. The programme covers a range of issues agreed at the end of the industrial action in November 2009 and in particular the move to more 7 day a week street cleaning arrangements across the city. This work involves mapping out current levels of service provision and resource deployment and will be an essential 'building block' of the enhanced delegation approach envisaged. This work will be completed in the next few months and will be instrumental in helping Members to understand the current service provision in their area and how that can be changed moving forward.
- INM funding has recently been completely removed from a range of street cleaning services and has resulted in service reductions on the ground. Further decisions on service levels/budgets may also be necessary in response to the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement in late October. Central to the issue is ensuring that resources are deployed on the ground in response to service need and that where it can be demonstrated that it is necessary resources should be moved, if needs be, from one Area Committee area to another.

### **4. Conclusions**

4.1 This note sets out the range of Streetscene services that could potentially be delegated to the Area Committees.

4.2 The note also sets out an approach to data collection and reporting that will allow Area Committees to set out a clear plan for service delivery in their area and negotiate a Service Level Agreement which can be monitored throughout the year.

4.3 The note also sets out a range of issues that are currently relevant to this work and that need to be considered in relation to any decision and action plan around changes/implementation.

## **5. Recommendations**

5.1 Area Committee Chairs are asked to note the contents of this report and to agree to the following:-

- That the scope of services to be delegated includes those set out at paragraph 1.3 and excludes refuse and recycling collection services.
- That further information on service and resource levels on an Area Committee basis is shared with Members once it is compiled.
- That the process of producing DLEQS monitoring data as a tool for assessing service performance be commenced.