

LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

17 MARCH 2020

Environmental Services Project Update

1.0 Purpose of Report

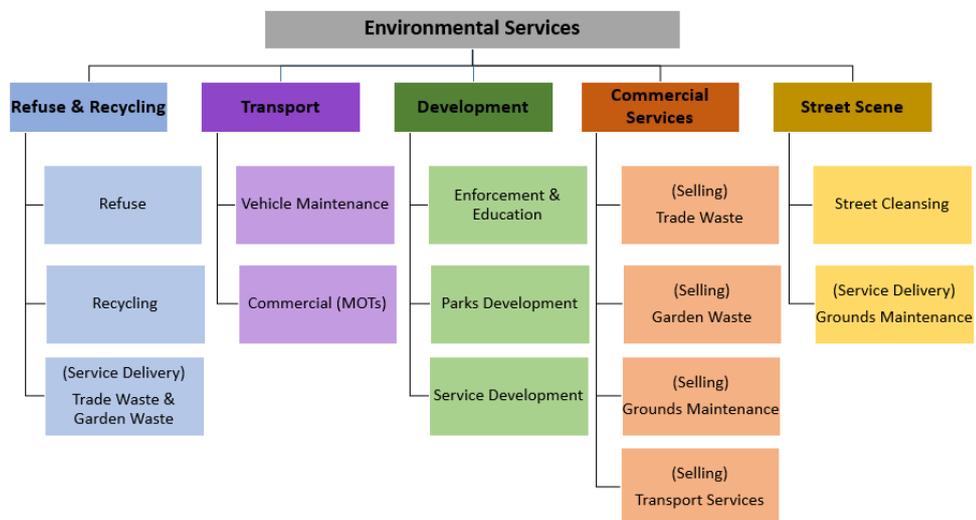
1.1 To update members in respect of the project to realign and invest in Environmental Services. This project commenced in September 2019 and the project aimed to realign and refocus the service towards effective delivery of the Community Plan.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The Environmental Services within the scope of the development outlined in this report include; Street Cleansing, Refuse and Recycling, Transport, Parks and Grounds Maintenance. These services now sit within one unit enabling synergies across the functions however these services report into different Committees – namely, cleansing, waste and transport to Leisure and Environment and parks and grounds maintenance to Economic Development. This report will provide an overview of the work done within the project and compliments the Environment Strategy presented at this Committee under separate cover. This Strategy is for 2020-2023 covering refuse, recycling and green spaces and outlines the way forward for the Council over the next three years as the service prepares for national change. This report summarises the work done, and planned, for the development of this service whilst the strategy sets the vision for the service.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The project aim was to develop the services within Environmental Services to a secure foundation through realignment and investment to enable the service to be ready to deliver the objectives outlined in the Community Plan. The project is still ongoing however the majority of the activity undertaken to develop and improve the services has been completed. These activities have been undertaken across the service and this report will review the work undertaken underneath each of the five ‘delivery arms’ within the newly formed environmental services;



3.2 **Restructure**

Firstly, the project undertook a service wide restructure to create the five delivery arms within Environmental Services. The aim of the restructure was to realign resource to strengthen street scene functions, improve succession planning and separate commercial services and service delivery to increase income generation and provide a better service for our residents and customers. The restructure was approved at JCC 18 October 2019, consultation took place and the restructure commenced November 2019. The Environmental Services Business Manager is in place and, at the time of this report, it is expected the structure will have been recruited to by April 2020 and the completed new structure will be in place by September 2020.

3.3 **Refuse & Recycling**

The main focus for the refuse and recycling delivery arm has been creating efficiencies and realigning services to reflect best practice. This included;

- Utilising the new larger vehicles and driving efficiency by removing a waste round from the programme. At the time of this report, it is expected the round will be removed late February or early March with a minimal impact on residents. It is expected that approximately 80 households will have their collection day changed. The savings made with the removal of this round are being reinvested into the development of the action team.
- Redesigning the rounds to ensure best use of the waste vehicles by adapting how collections are made to best practice methods.
- A review of the trade waste service to ensure best practice in charging methodology and service delivery, including a transition to zero-based budgeting and the expansion of the trade recycling offer.
- Finally, an additional supervisory resource has been added to ensure efficiency and best practice in service delivery.

3.4 **Transport**

The project has enabled several actions within transport;

- The restructure included the addition of a mechanic apprentice, set to join the team Summer 2020. They will act as an additional resource and offer a route for succession planning.
- A refresh of the procurement process for vehicles to ensure transparency and best practice, and
- Consideration of sustainable options for our fleet (please see the strategy for details).

3.5 **Development**

Three functions now sit within development;

- Education and enforcement houses waste enforcement but also leads on changing behaviour through education and thus leads on campaigns and days of action.
- Development leads on reporting and the constant development of the service as a whole considering performance, synergies and efficient use of resources.
- Parks development contains the ranger service as well as a new role Environmental Programme Officer which leads on the green and sustainability agendas including ownership of the 'Greening' campaign encapsulating work to improve sustainability across Newark and Sherwood with a special focus on recycling.

3.6 Commercial Services

The commercial services within Environmental Services are; garden waste, trade waste, bulky waste, transport and grounds maintenance. The service delivery of these functions stays within the appropriate delivery 'arm' however the 'commercial' arm focuses on 'selling' these services this will include brand management, marketing, pricing and customer interaction. Creating a central point for at cost services improves communication and cross marketing. The new Commercial Manager will drive the renewed focus on commerciality working to optimise the income achieved by the service through marketing and communication and consideration of the offer. This will include the potential introduction of a quality and affordable trade recycling offer.

3.7 Street Scene

The newly formed street scene delivery arm contains street cleansing and grounds maintenance functions. The following activities have been undertaken;

- In coordination with housing, health and community relations and in response to data gathered through the Residents Survey, the wider district (areas outside of town centres) has been zoned to enable areas that require it to be cleaned more regularly.
- A new street cleansing shift is being introduced allowing town centre cover every weekend and until 6pm Monday to Saturday to ensure that our town centres are well-presented as people commute through or go into town for the evening. Subject to recruitment, this shift will be in place from April 2020.
- A three person 'Action Team' has been created. This multi-skilled team are able to complete cleansing and light grounds maintenance tasks such as pruning, bin installation and pothole filling (on council land only). They will work with the litter hit squads to target key areas and respond to multi-faceted service requests as well as acting as the foundation, in terms of staff presence, for days of action. Subject to recruitment, this team will be in place from April 2020.
- Finally, there has been extensive development of the Grounds Maintenance Service to get this service to a solid foundation from which it can be grown as a commercial service. The following activities have taken place;
 - Alterations to shift patterns to enable greater capacity during the summer months,
 - A review of all sites to update site schedules ahead of the development of a digital work management/scheduling system,
 - Introduction of a refreshed, and commercial, pricing matrix and service budget,
 - Review of internal SLAs for services delivered in-house, and
 - Working to develop, and populate, a digital system for recording site information and associated tasks. This system is in development. The intention is that the system will cover all aspects of Street Scene. The system will be developed in phases and the intention is to roll-out phase one in May 2020.

3.8 Next Steps

The project is expected to close in May 2020 when the reshaped services will become 'Business as Usual'. Subject to approval at Policy and Finance on 02.04.20, the Environmental Services Strategy will direct service from April 2020 until March 2023. The standard lifespan for a strategy is five years however this strategy has a shorter lifespan in reflection of the currently altering national picture. The purpose of this three year strategy is to deliver the Community Plan objectives and prepare the service for the changes coming so that the service will be on a solid foundation in 2023 ready to grow and to deliver nationally mandated change.

3.9 **Garden Recycling Update**

Finally, to keep members up to date, there are currently 12,476 garden recycling customers a market penetration of 23.6%. The customer service is ready for rollout on 1 April 2020, communications informing customers of the change and requesting customers to sign up for the service for 2020/21 have been sent out and the service has been rebranded to 'Garden Recycling' to reflect that garden refuse is composted not landfilled and is thus recycled sustainably.

4.0 **Equalities Implications**

4.1 Equalities impact assessments will be completed where appropriate for activities taking place within this project.

5.0 **Financial Implications (FIN19-20/4539)**

5.1 The projected additional costs for the new Environmental Services were included in the 2020/21 Revenue Budget. There will be some additional costs in 2019/20 due to some staff recruitment before the 1st April 2020. These can be covered through current projected underspend within the service. There will be some staff redundancy costs, which have not been finalised yet. There will be a separate report to address this issue if required.

5.2 Since the last report to this committee on 24 September 2019, the additional capital budget of £89,410 was approved to purchase three additional vehicles. These will enable the action team to operate and the new shifts to start as per paragraph 3.3 and 3.7.

6.0 **Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives**

6.1 This project works deliver the following Community Plan objectives;

- Improve the cleanliness and appearance of the local environment,
- Protect, promote and enhance the district's natural environment, and
- Generate more income, improve value for money and increase residents' satisfaction with the Council (income generation to be achieved by the development of the Environmental Services Commercial Services).

7.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

a) For members to note the progress made in the development of Environmental Services.

Reason for Recommendations

To deliver the improvements required to ensure delivery of the Community Plans' objectives.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Ella Brady on Ext.5279

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