

Subject: Street Cleansing Improvement Plan

Report to: Environment Committee - Wednesday 4th November 2020

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SUBJECT MATTER/RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview:

This report provides an update on the Street Cleansing Improvement Plan actions from the Environment Committee on the 19th February 2020. Following on from the plan findings, this report sets out proposals to address the issues highlighted and to ensure Street Cleansing is effective and efficient.

Recommendations:

- 1. The Committee notes the findings and updates of the Street Cleansing Improvement Plan.**

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At the Environment Committee 19th February 2020, a Street Cleansing Improvement Plan was set out due to concerns raised over the cleanliness of the streets across Yarmouth town and the wider Borough. Its aim established what the key issues were asking how things could change to improve cleanliness of the towns.
- 1.2 In 2019 a member working group met and agreed the following street cleansing services would be included in the review:
 - Market place and surrounding area;
 - Litter bin emptying and litter picking; and
 - Mechanical sweeping.

- 1.3 As reported in February, the following activities were undertaken:
- Examination of the current approach to street cleansing including familiarisation with deployment of labour, equipment and approach undertaken;
 - Desktop research looking at other similar local authorities to identify best practice;
 - Data analysis to include financial benchmarking exercise and KPI comparison;
 - Gathering information and research from national bodies; and
 - Examining current innovative practices, including the use of new technology e.g. compacting litter bins, and vehicles etc.
- 1.5 An internal audit has been completed across the range of GYBS services which has led to a number of recommendations associated with reviewing and strengthening the evidence base for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This work continues as part of the weekly operational meetings held with GYBS.

2. THE CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 Street cleansing is undertaken on a zonal basis with the borough split into five zones; each with a different cleansing regime. The zones together with the significant differences in seasonal cleansing both influence the frequency, method and regularity of the current cleansing operation in a street by street, area by area approach.
- 2.2 An overview of the cleansing is as below:
- Market place and surrounding area – early morning mechanical sweep starting at 4am, followed by daily coverage via an operative with a hand barrow litter picking starting at 5am. Bin emptying using Bradshaw and a Refuse Collection Vehicle throughout the day. Main coverage for litter picking and manual sweeping is between 6am- 2pm however there is a presence until 5pm.
 - High footfall sites such as Gorleston High Street, Magdalen Shops - daily cleanse.
 - Yarmouth residential outside of Zone A - weekly litter pick and annual mechanical sweep.
 - Parishes and other residential parts of the Borough – High footfall sites weekly litter pick. Residential areas receive a monthly litter pick and annual mechanical sweep.
 - Main Roads – 12 weekly mechanical sweeping cycle.
- 2.3 Litter bin emptying schedules have been revised in the urban and rural towns due to high volume of waste generated after COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were relaxed, changes are:
- Rural Areas – from 1-3 times per week to daily with seasonal fluctuations.
 - Urban Yarmouth – from once Daily to and up to 5 times daily.
 - High footfall sites such as Market and Yarmouth seafront - Multiple times daily dependent on season, footfall and weather forecast.

- 2.4 In August with funding from Norfolk Strategic Fund (opening the high streets safely) for a COVID related clean-up of the High Street deployed a team of 4 operatives (Litter Hit squad) initially for 6 weeks to target problem hotspot and high profile areas, very visual in full length Orange PPE which has been noticed when they are out there working, in the first four weeks removing 25 tonnes of silt, detritus and weeds.
- 2.5 The four GYBS mechanical street sweepers are under review some of which are due to be replaced also the deployment of the sweepers, currently they operate early in the morning until lunchtime. Demonstrations by a number of different suppliers to then evaluate what equipment is appropriate for future replacement and deployment.
- 2.6 There are a number of local organisations who the council supports to undertake litter picks of prime public areas e.g. the beaches, which are of mutual benefit to the town and the organisation or commercial company undertaking the cleanse. At the committee meeting in February Officers said they would like to explore partnerships that would enable reparation services to help with clean-ups with the permission of the land owner this piece of work didn't progress and unfortunately due to COVID-19 restrictions community litter picks had to be postponed.
- 2.7 In summary, the majority of GYBS operatives are busy litter picking and sweeping the streets from early morning until mid to late afternoon. It is acknowledged that there less cover in the later part of the day. Having said that, the timings do flex across the year with additional staff working later in the summer tourism season. However, at times the lack of street cleaning cover in the later part of the day and during busy weekends has caused some issues.

3. Improvement Plan

Litter Bin – actions

3.1 LB1. Undertake review of litter bins and their locations across borough.

- The Council does not currently have a list of assets and bin locations and the this is still to be completed. This activity will be planned into future work around IT systems implementation planned for Spring 2021.
- There are no current plans to review bin locations until the above piece of work has been completed. In the meantime, should there be a specific issue within a community this would be reviewed as a one-off piece of work.

3.2 LB2. Cost new bin housing options for litter bins across the borough in high-profile locations.

- The summer season of 2020 has been very different has led to different pressure on the bin capacity and locations within the Borough. The increase in takeaway litter across both Yarmouth, Gorleston and other seafront locations has been unprecedented. We have identified some areas where we would look to have increased capacity available from summer 2021.

- We also have the FACET project taking place where the Council is partner in working with partners to look at the tourism sector and making it more of a circular economy, thus reducing waste at the earliest opportunity. There are several pilot projects being planned. A further FACET update report will be provided to the Environment committee once this project has been developed further. The pilots are planned to be in place for Summer 2021 season.
- As we have done over the past few summers seasons extra bins were deployed in all the high volume areas and some work is being progressed on looking at keeping this capacity as the normal with the ability to empty these wheeled bins easily with a new side lifting vehicle, giving more capacity, a more efficient emptying regime and eliminating manual handling. Costs for this are being worked on in terms of the new bin housing to facilitate this change.

3.3 LB3. Investigate use of smart technology on existing litter bins.

- As part of the FACET project, we are looking to undertake a pilot project of smart bin technology at Hemsby reducing the trips for bin emptying. Work has begun on understanding the frequency the current bins are collected and the volume of the litter within the bins. Further work is required on the composition of the litter before a scope is put to the bin companies to deliver a solution for this area.
- It is hoped that this work will mean that the emptying frequency will be reduced, and the bins will only need to be emptied when nearly full allowing better use of the GYBS resources.
- This pilot will be in place for 2021 season and will be reviewed and we will bring the findings back to this committee to look at the potential to roll this out further across the Borough, based on the findings.

3.4 LB4. Review of planning policy and section 106 agreement in relation to bin provision and design on new developments.

- Discussions have started with colleagues in the planning department to establish what we can put in the local plan and 106 agreements to ensure we have new bins costs covered which already takes place on most of the larger developments also having Waste Planning Guidance for all developers to follow.

4. Street Cleansing - actions

4.1 SC1. Review the cleaning schedule to ensure co-ordination with other functions (i.e. grass cutting, refuse collection).

- Review of litter bin schedules, provision and capacity due to existing issues and the unprecedented demand after COVID-19 lockdown restrictions were relaxed;
- Clearance of hotspot refuse communal bin collection points which were one of the

- root causes of litter;
- Weekend Cleansing shift patterns reviewed to ensure adequate cleansing provision in the afternoons;
- New St. Cleansing Team Leader (SEPT20) weekend working contractual hours supervising weekend workers ensuring cleansing schedules are complete to the right standard and litter bins area emptied at the right times to avoid overflowing bins;
- GYBS are working with Highways England (HE) and NCC Highways utilising road closures to litterpick the main arterial roads into the Towns. In August and September a Cleansing team worked from 17.30-23.30 on the A47 at Gorleston Breydon bridge;
- Work has started on a coordinated joined up approach with Cleansing, Grounds, HE & NCC Highways to eliminate grass cutting before litter picking;
- In August funding from Norfolk Strategic Fund (reopening the high street safely) for a COVID related clean-up of the High St. which is a team of 4 operatives (Litter Hit squad) initially for 6 weeks who have been targeting the problem hotspot and high-profile areas;
- due to the impact made by the Litter Hit squad funding has been extended to 16th January 2021.
- A WHATSAPP group was set up taking before after photos and videos, available for communications, social media etc.

4.2 **SC2. Ensure that staff and equipment are highly visible when working.**

- Cleansing team in full Orange PPE as per HE guidelines, Risk Assessment and Method Statement;
- Hit Squad, all in Orange PPE which was noted around the towns;
- Daytime cleansing not just early morning.
- Prior to C-19 GYBC had a network of volunteers around the Borough litter picking but due to C-19 restrictions were not allowed, some of these restrictions are now being lifted and groups (of 6 or less) are being provided with litter picking equipment which must be sanitised after use.
- Meetings have commenced with NCC Highways officer to discuss and plan maintaining the current cleansing standards, weed treatment etc.

4.3 **SC3. Review of cleansing equipment (including mechanical) and methodology.**

- Review of Mechanical Sweepers all of which are due for replacement, demonstrations by a number of different suppliers to then evaluate what equipment is appropriate for future replacement;
- Plastic Bodied Utility Vehicles (PBUV) increased payload with side bin lifter which lifts and empties 240L bins completely eliminating manual handling issues and increasing bin capacity which are due to be purchased for Litterbin collection replacing transit caged tippers;
- New technology is also been evaluated; i.e. Electric sweeping machines by 3 suppliers were trialed,
- Funding from Norfolk Strategic Fund (reopening the high street safely) enabled 2 Electric sweeping machines to be purchased and put into the Street Cleansing service.
- Bin housings for 240L bins with restricted apertures preventing misuse by traders.

- New 1100L bins with a newly designed lockable bins with apertures for use, again preventing misuse.

4.4 **SC4. Review best practice from other similar Councils (to include parking restrictions for cleansing, litterbins, methods of working, timings etc).**

- One effective strategy is a letter drop to all residents in targeted areas engaging with residents to assist if possible, used in problematic areas with parked cars preventing kerb lines being swept, usually over a 2 day period cleansing one side each day. This practice can be very effective in certain areas but problematic in others where vehicles are parked by visitors or workers.
- Being more proactive instead of reactive;
- Litter bin review, one size doesn't fit all;
- More benchmarking with other seaside towns and Local Authorities;
- Regular meetings and communication with HE, NCC Highways;
- We have recently taken part in a Keep Britain Tidy study into recycling bin contamination and have recently had the findings shared with us. This has highlighted some interesting learning and we will use when implementing any future work on recycling. A report will be brought to this committee on the findings of this work once we have had time to digest it.

4.5 **SC5. Review Ops Plans to ensure fit for purpose for 21/22 onwards.**

- Weekly GYBS managers meetings
- Weekly GYBS/GYBC operations meetings
- Updated and reviewed cleansing schedules
- Communication with supervisors and frontline staff
- Forward planning to prevent reoccurring issues:
 - Weed treatment commencing late spring 2021
 - Adding areas onto schedules
 - Vehicle / Plant renewal programme under constant review
- Operations Plan 21/22 being worked on to include outcomes of this review and recommendations of the internal audit;

5. **Communication Plan – actions**

5.1 **CP1. Hotspot campaign, using education, information and enforcement.**

- Some initial work on this was started pre the COVID outbreak, but has been put on hold over this period, we have recently started meeting again and have identified some hotspot locations to initiate this work. A Project Plan is currently being drawn up with a proposal to start on community engagement and monitoring in November 2020.

5.2 **CP2. Targeted media campaign based on specific issues in identified areas.**

- As above

5.3 CP3. Key borough wide messages disseminated as part of sustained campaign.

- As above, although we continue to send out messaging in line with Norfolk Waste partnership communications plan around responsible waste disposal and recycling.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 We have utilised external fund provided by the Norfolk Strategic fund to support our work around opening the high street and tourism sector safely and have. This has paid for increased cleansing staff for a 4 month period and also 2 new Electric sweeping machines as detailed in the report above.
- 6.2 The Council has become a full partner of the FACET project meaning that with an investment of £80 000 (drawn from COVID funding streams) that we can draw down in excess of £200 000 of funding for the implementation of the innovative projects around making the tourism sector into a more circular economy.

7. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Adverse publicity and risk of failure – members are fully aware of the anecdotal evidence and compounded perceptions that an unclean town can attract. There is always a risk of adverse publicity whether the council agrees to take a stand or not in terms of cleanliness.
- 7.2 In respect to littering and maintaining clean streets, Great Yarmouth shares similar social issues with many towns and cities in the UK. The key is to boldly demonstrate that unclean streets are not tolerated in the borough and work with local media and other stakeholders who want to improve the quality of the local environment.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The Committee notes the findings and updates of the Street Cleansing Improvement Plan.**

Areas of consideration: e.g. does this report raise any of the following issues and if so how have these been considered/mitigated against?

Area for consideration	Comment
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Monitoring Officer Consultation:	
Section 151 Officer Consultation:	
Existing Council Policies:	
Financial Implications (including VAT and tax):	
Legal Implications (including human rights):	
Risk Implications:	
Equality Issues/EQIA assessment:	
Crime & Disorder:	
Every Child Matters:	