

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: October 2014
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Environment and Operations

Report Title

Environment and Operations Progress Update Report

Summary

This report provides an overview of the Environment and Operations services within the Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure Directorate, following a review undertaken by the Corporate Director and her Senior Management Team and Executive Member. It also provides a comprehensive summary for each service, setting out any changes that have taken place or are planned, what's working well, proposed modifications and commitments to improve customer satisfaction.

The report also sets out proposals for investment and a delivery plan with timescales.

Recommendation(s)

- 1) That the contents of this report be noted.
- 2) That the required additional capital funding of £150k be prioritised within any re-profiling of the Council's approved capital programme in 2014/15.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Helen Jones
Extension: 2561

Background Papers:

None.

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The work of the Directorate plays a major part in supporting and delivering the Council's corporate priorities.
Financial	<p>The funding for the small capital schemes set out in Section 3. of this report will need to be prioritised within any re-profiling of the Council's capital programme in 2014/15, totalling £150k. In the event resources are not available the expenditure will be financed by accelerating the 2015/16 Parks Infrastructure capital budget Scheme Ref 2631.</p> <p>In addition, funding of up to £73k will be met from existing revenue budgets and balances brought forward from previous years.</p>
Legal Implications:	None.
Equality/Diversity Implications	None.
Sustainability Implications	The proposals set out in this report compliment the work of the Directorate in promoting sustainability.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	<p>The proposals include a fixed-term appointment. The recruitment will be carried out in accordance with the Council's recruitment processes.</p> <p>The post would be opened up to staff that are currently on the redeployment register and at risk of redundancy.</p>
Risk Management Implications	None.
Health and Wellbeing Implications	None.
Health and Safety Implications	The necessary health and safety procedures will be followed as the proposals are implemented.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 There have been significant changes in the Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure (EGEI) Directorate over the last 18 months. The former Environment, Transport and Operations (ETO) Directorate and the former Economic Growth and Prosperity (EGP) Directorate have merged and the Corporate Director has carried out a review of the service areas with her Senior Management Team and the Executive Member for Environment and Operations.
- 1.2 The focus of this review was to define service standards, to identify any required adjustments to operational practices to achieve better outcomes and to improve customer satisfaction.
- 1.3 Savings of £2.254m have been delivered by the service areas during 2014/15 and further savings of £449k are on track to be delivered. The detail is set out in Section 2 of Appendix 1.

2.0 Outcome of the Review

- 2.1 The full summary of the Environmental Issues Workshop (the Summary Report) is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The services are delivering the following outcomes:
 - The impact of the first phase of the 'Be Responsible' campaign in relation to dog fouling. Complaints have reduced by 20% from April to September compared to the same period last year (2013).
 - The new rota system is providing greater flexibility to respond to Street Scene issues at weekends and in the evenings.
 - The retention of 6 Green Flag awards for Trafford's parks for 2014.
 - Recycling rates continue to improve with the rate for 2013/14 at 58% (the second best rate in Greater Manchester) with indications that the rate for 2014/15 will exceed 60% - giving the Council one of the highest recycling rates in the Country
 - Positive feedback from residents about the new recycling and refuse service:

I just wanted to say hats off to the Council for the new arrangements for refuse collection and recycling' - a Partington Resident.

We are very pleased about these changes, well done.' – a Sale Resident.

- There have also been two meetings with the Leader and Chairs of the Friends of Parks Groups to help understand the impacts of the changes within their parks and to identify issues and potential solutions, including the licence for the two Pets' corners.
- Positive feedback from partners about the Environmental Improvement Team, saying:

“... they are always there to assist us if need be, and extremely diligent in what they do. Working in partnership makes a huge difference to Sale West, and makes our jobs so much easier to have these guys on board!” – Irwell Valley Housing Association.

- Positive feedback from a participating Primary School about the Bikeability training. Bikeability training is offered free of charge to all year 6 pupils at schools in Trafford, funded by money secured from the DfT.

“Just wanted to email and pass on my thanks to your team of bike ability instructors. All the children at Well Green had a fabulous week and really enjoyed the course. They gained so much from the patient and well organised instructors. Please pass on my thoughts and thanks.”

- Positive feedback about the Environment Enforcement Officers - extract from the Stretford M32 Facebook page:

“Gorse Hill.

What a fantastic event by Mark Dale and his team talking to Forever Manchester and Stretford Wombles about really brilliant schemes. This put a smile on my face considering the recent loss in the park but the work that is planned and linking with the group will mean a safer cleaner Gorse Hill. A big thank you also for Mark giving the group the anti-graffiti kit to help clear up the graffiti. Great talking to the Stretford Wombles absolutely brilliant team and big thank you to Forever Manchester James and Alison Trafford-cb for linking us together.”

“Mark Dale is great !” – a Trafford resident.

2.3 The summary report also clarifies some misconceptions about services. Some key points to note are:

- There has been no change to the frequency of emptying of litter bins.
- No changes have been made to the frequency of waste collections since October 2013.
- The highways service will continue to spend the defined allocated highway funds as effectively as possible. Schemes will continue to be prioritised on the basis of engineering risk.
- In Public Protection, the approach is now based on encouraging responsible behaviour and environmental awareness rather than on enforcement, although legal action will still take place when appropriate.
- In Groundforce, Street Scene staff began working to a new rota system including weekend working from the middle of April, with Parks staff commencing the rota system in July.

- Box mowing (where grass clippings are collected) has been reduced to cover ornamental areas only and weed control (rather than strimming) has been increased.
- The mowing frequencies are 12 p.a for open grass and urban road verges. In the summer months it will be more than once a month and less in the winter months.

2.4 There were some modifications identified, including:

- The new rota system is being monitored and some local adjustments have already been made, including earlier starts to enable staff working in Town Centres to clear bins and clean hard surface areas with minimum disruption to pedestrians.

3.0 Proposals for adjustments to services including one-off investment.

3.1 The workshop led to a constructive dialogue between service areas and some specific proposals about how to improve service delivery further.

3.2 The detailed business cases are set out in Appendix C of the Summary Report and cover the following initiatives:

- Maximise impact of the 'Be Responsible' Litter Campaign building on the positive impact of the first phase.
- Small refuse collection vehicle, specifically designed to collect small quantities of waste from litter bins. This will address the increased use and abuse of litter bins and have a positive impact on service delivery.
- Replacement of more open-top litter bins in key areas with boxed trap litter bins (within 2 – 4 weeks).
- A fixed-term Education Officer to cover a range of environmental issues.
- Notice boards to be provided to all parks as agreed with Leader and Friends Groups.
- The planned capital works for 6 parks could be enhanced with additional capital investment.
- Trial of 'Eurobins' in the M16 pilot area, i.e. larger shared bins.

4.0 Outline proposals to improve environmental awareness and promote cleaner streets in the Old Trafford area.

4.1 For many years the back alleyways of the Old Trafford area have been problematic in as much as there has been regular, high volume fly-tipping of domestic waste and bulky items that is both detrimental to the area and costly for the Council to deal with. The aim of this proposal is to effect a long term, sustainable change in the behaviour of local residents and businesses to increase recycling and help them to dispose of their waste correctly. The aim

is to break the cycle of fly-tipping and clean ups that have become the norm in the area.

- 4.2 A number of proposals have been drawn up and are set out in Appendix 2. The proposal is that these initiatives will run in tandem for a period of 12 months, as a pilot. The objective is to work with partners to bring about sustainable behaviour change in the Old Trafford area.
- 4.3 All or part of this approach could be targeted in other areas of the borough, building on what proves to be most effective. The measures of success are also noted in the M16 report. A dashboard of local performance indicators will be developed to evaluate and monitor the project objectives.
- 4.4 The overall objective of the campaign is to positively promote behavioural change to improve the local environment.
- 4.5 In a limited number of cases it will still be necessary to take formal enforcement action; the service has the capacity and intention to use regulatory powers where necessary.

5.0 Linkage with the current procurement process for Joint Venture partner/s.

- 5.1 Services covered by this report with the exception of Public Protection, are included in the current JVC procurement exercise being undertaken by the Council. The adjustments to services set out in this report will be incorporated in revised guidance to be issued to bidders to ensure service standards are maintained.
- 5.2 The customer satisfaction commitments set out in Section 8 of this report will be provided to bidders to indicate to them the importance of good standards of Trafford's services expected.

6.0 Timescales for Implementation

- 6.1 The timescales for implementation are as set out in the Appendix to the Summary Report.

7.0 Funding Proposals

- 7.1 The proposals in section 3. above will require additional funding of up to £223k. This includes £150k of capital costs which will need to be prioritised within any phasing of the Council's existing capital programme/S106/external partner contributions in 2014/15. In the event resources are not available this expenditure will be financed by accelerating the 2015/16 Parks Infrastructure capital budget Scheme Ref 2631.
- 7.2 One-off revenue costs of upto £73k will provide for the Education officer, "Be responsible" campaign, Eurobins in the M16 pilot area, refuse vehicle hire, refuse bins and park signs. This will be funded from existing revenue budgets, such as for bin purchases, and also from the use of Directorate underspends brought forward from previous financial years in accordance with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy..

8.0 Commitment to Improve Customer Satisfaction

8.1 The Directorate is committed to providing a good standard of environmental services. A culture of customer focus is being reinforced.

8.2 The workshop led to agreed key actions to improve customer satisfaction. These are set out in Section 5 of the summary report and include:

- There needs to be a focus on better communication across services and also better communication in response to queries and complaints along with proactive communication about successes and positive feedback.
- A culture of doing the best possible job on site and delivery about commitments made in accordance with timescales given needs to be embedded at all levels in the directorate.
- Along with better communication in general, there needs to be more clarity with for public about what will be delivered and how the Directorate will be working with partners to maintain good standards in a sustainable way.
- Supporting the Be Responsible Campaign to change behaviour and reduce demand for services will be a key focus for the Directorate.

8.3 The measures of success are set out in each of the business cases in Appendix C of the Summary Report. These will be monitored monthly and a comprehensive review will be carried out in 6 months.

9. Be Responsible Campaign Phase II - Residents Commitments

9.1 Phase two of the Council's successful Be Responsible Campaign is scheduled to begin at the end of October 2014. This second phase of the campaign will focus on environmental awareness to tackle litter and fly-tipping reinforcing the message about recycling.

9.2 The key messages will be a 'call to action' to all residents and stakeholders. The campaign will promote the need for greater social responsibility and the need for all businesses, residents and visitors to:

- Look after the area you live in and have pride in protecting and improving the local environment
- Take responsibility for personal litter/waste and a "take it home with you" message for open spaces.
- Use bins responsibly and appropriately.
- Understand and support the need for more recycling.
- Support local groups involved in environmental improvements, e.g. litter picks and community clean ups.

- Engage and challenge irresponsible behaviour when they see it or report it to the Council.
- Enforcement action will be taken, in line with the Council's enforcement policy, when residents or businesses continue to act irresponsibly.

Other Options

Other options include making no changes to service delivery and managing the services as is. This would not be the best use of resources and would not maximise the potential for service delivery.

Consultation

None of the proposals require formal consultation, but the proposed initiative in the M16 area is being discussed with local ward members.

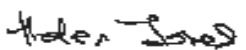
Reasons for Recommendation

To enable continuous improvement in service delivery and to increase customer satisfaction. The proposed capital expenditure will enable further investment in Council parks and greenspaces and will support the service delivery proposals.

Key Decision *(as defined in the Constitution):* No.
If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? N/A.

Finance Officer Clearance *(type in initials) GB*
Legal Officer Clearance *(type in initials) JLeF*

[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.