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**To: Community and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)**

**Date: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

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**Subject: Review of Street Cleansing**

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## **1. Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1. To inform Members the operational changes resulting from the restructure of the Streetpride Service which took effect in January / February 2016 and the resultant service impact of reduced resources on Streetpride and street cleansing.

## **2. Recommendations**

### **2.1 The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board is recommended to:**

- 1) Note that the service budget was reduced in 2015 by £.5m representing 25% of budget.
- 2) Note the operational and service changes made as a result of the resulting restructure and review.
- 3) Note the impacts of the service changes reflected in the level of complaints received
- 4) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member

## **3. Information / Background**

On 1st April 2015 Streetpride's operational budget was reduced by £500,000 as part of the Councils overall Medium Term Financial Strategy. This represented 25% of the services budgets. In order to meet the budgetary reduction the Streetpride Service was restructured. This restructure took effect during January and February 2016.

The restructure reduced Streetpride's operational zones from 10 to 6 and aligned their borders with ward boundaries, reduction in amenity mowing teams, overall staff numbers were reduced by approximately 28 full time posts. Shift patterns were altered to achieve greater efficiency from the reduced resources. Weekend working was reviewed, reduced resource for winter works such as leafing, shrub bed maintenance and edging, highway weed spraying operations reduced from 3 to 2. Grass cutting frequencies were reduced

from 16 to 8 cuts per year, associated plant and equipment was reduced. New grass cutting equipment was procured to cope with a reduction in cutting frequencies as well as new street sweeping plant to deal with the reduced sweeping frequencies. Cleansing teams and neighbourhood operatives were also reduced.

It was anticipated that the impact of these reductions would result in reduced visits to shopping centres, loss of flexibility and change to Service Standards, increased response times, increase in the appearance of highway weed growth, increase in the length of grass between cuts, visibly higher levels of litter and detritus between collection and sweeping operations, non-offensive graffiti staying longer before removal.

It was agreed that approximately 6 months after the full implementation of the restructure a review would be undertaken to assess the impact of the budgetary reductions and corresponding operational restructuring. However the review period was extended to finish at the end of the grass cutting period in order to assess the effectiveness of the new equipment.

During October 2016 a series of meetings were held with Streetpride North and South staff. The purpose of the meetings were to seek the views and thoughts from both managers and staff from the individual service areas on the impact of the restructure in terms of what has gone well, what hasn't gone well, what changes could be made to the operational management and structure to improve service delivery within the resources available. This formed a key part of the review.

It emerged from the discussion that there had been a number of clear positive aspects for instance the change in shift patterns within Streetpride had worked well.

There was no noticeable increase in complaints regarding cleansing and litter removal and evidence suggests that recorded complaints had actually fallen from the previous year.

There were however a number of areas where it was recognised that operational and structural changes could be made to improve service delivery and management.

This included a realignment of the operational zones between Streetpride North and South to create a more even spread of resource and service demand. A review of mechanical sweeping schedules following the assessment of the Scarab Sweepers, realignment of flail work and operative sweeping schedules. The transfer of City Centre staff over onto Coventry City Council terms and conditions and extend some week day operational hours. Improved utilisation of Mechanical Sweepers within the City Centre. An increase in the number of solar powered compactor litter bins throughout the City Centre funded by reviewing and reducing the city centre fleet expenditure and reducing cleansing routes.

#### **4. Existing Structure and Operation**

The restructure divided the Streetpride cleansing operations into 3 operational areas Streetpride South, Streetpride North and the City Centre. This structure shown appendix A.

The cleansing service operates 7 days per week throughout the year (with the exception of Christmas day) with shift arrangements covering the time periods from 5am to 7pm. The service can be divided into a number specific operational areas:

### **Neighbourhood Operatives**

Neighbourhood Operatives represent the smallest operational unit and operate between 7am and 3pm Monday to Thursday and 2.30pm on a Friday operating 5 days per week. There are 16 Neighbourhood Operatives and each operative covers a designated route and duties include litter collection, sweeping and litter bin emptying.

### **Streetpride Operatives**

A reduced service is provided at the weekends by a dedicated weekend team of 6 Streetpride Operatives covering suburban shopping sites and they respond to emergency cleansing requests between 07.00 – 15.00 hours.

### **Cleansing Teams**

The larger operational unit is the Cleansing Team. The teams operates between 6am and 7pm 5 days per week and cover a designated route. Their duties include cleaning shopping precincts, arterial routs, collection of neighbourhood operative bags, litter bin emptying and other cleansing tasks across the City. The teams do not operate in the City Centre where separate arrangements are in place.

### **Mechanical Sweeping**

There are 6 mechanical sweepers ranging from 4.5 tonne to 17 tonnes which sweep the road side channels of main arterial routes, other main routes and some footpaths. Frequency can vary depending on nature and location of the road. This operation is undertaken in shifts the first operating between 5am and 1pm and the second 11am to 7pm five days per week.

In addition there are 3 pavement sweepers which operate on a shift arrangement again 5am to 1pm and the second 1pm to 9pm five days per week. Each shift operates to a rolling schedule.

### **Site Clearance Team**

This is a single dedicated team removing fly tipped material. This team operates 7am to 3pm 5 days per week

### **Special Cleaning Operative**

This operative operates between 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday removing graffiti, cleans and sanitises sites such as following road traffic accidents and following traveller incursions.

## **5. Cleansing Standards**

The frequency of cleansing operations undertaken on the roads and streets within the City vary depending on the type of Road, its location, the levels of litter and detritus generated and the resources available. By setting cleansing frequencies in this way it enables the Streetpride Service to use its limited resources more efficiently by focussing them on those sites of greatest need and demand.

All adopted roads within the City are subject to a routine frequency based schedule of cleansing to achieve the required standard. The frequencies are:

### **Mechanical Sweeping**

Main Arterial Routes are mechanically swept every 2 weeks.

Other Carriageways are mechanically swept every 2 -12 weeks

Pavements are mechanically swept every 4-8 weeks

### **Manual Cleansing**

Main roads are cleaned on at least a weekly frequency

Shopping sites are cleaned on a frequency that ranges from daily to weekly depending on the location

In addition there are 16 Neighbourhood Operatives (barrow staff) who clean various wards across the City on a weekly basis.

### **City Centre**

The City Centre is mechanically and manually cleaned 7 days per week and did not witness any service reductions.

As an example streets located within areas of high demand such as those found in St Michaels and Foleshill are litter picked weekly as part of a Barrow Round, Bins emptied weekly as a minimum.

We are aware that these area can attract higher levels of litter on occasions and when resources allow we undertake additional inspections and cleansing operations and bin emptying if necessary.

## **6. Service Impact**

At present there are limited source of information which can be drawn on in order to measure the overall impact on cleansing operations following the restructure other than anecdotal evidence drawn from the number of complaints received regarding cleansing.

A record of complaints regarding street cleansing operations received since 2014 indicate a slight increase in complaints:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Number of Complaints Received</b>
2014 / 15	67
2015 / 16	66
2016 / 17	99
2017 / 18	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>280</b>

The increase in overall complaints may suggest that there has been a negative impact on the quality and level of litter and detritus levels on the street environment. It is still relatively early to determine the full impact and further monitoring will be required.

It is proposed to reintroduce a self-monitoring quality inspections into the Streetpride and City Centre Service once cleansing standards have been fully established. Inspections will be undertaken weekly and reported on a monthly basis by the supervisory team based on Government Indicator NI195 methodology developed to measure the cleanliness of the local environment including levels of litter. This will enable the service to monitor the long term impacts and trends more effectively enabling the service to align resources more effectively.

## **7. Future Challenges**

Increased housing in the City and highway adoptions, growing student populations, longer shop trading hours, the growing evening economy, increased levels of fly tipping and growing customer expectations are just some of the critical pressures impacting on the cleansing service. We will continue and endeavour to meet these challenges and provide the highest level of service possible to meet these ever increasing demands with the resources available.

**Graham Hood**  
**Head of Streetpride and Greenspaces**  
City Services and Development Directorate  
Whitley Depot  
259 London Road  
CV3 4AR

Tel: +44(0)24 7683 2194

Email: [graham.hood@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:graham.hood@coventry.gov.uk)

# Head of Streetscene and Greenspaces

