

Subject:	Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services – Continual Improvement Action Plan	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	19/07/22
Report of:	Head of Operations	Portfolio Holder:	Environment
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes/No	Attached: Yes/No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes/No	Attached: Yes/No
Contact Officer:	Patrick Killeen	Telephone:	01706 217777
Email:	patrickkilleen@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That CMT/Cabinet notes this report as an update on the current performance of the Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing operation and support the continual improvement action plan.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Operations is the largest single service area in the Council and has the largest expenditure of any service at £2.5m. Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing is the largest function within Operations. A number of service improvements and efficiencies have taken place in recent years and performance is closely monitored through a monthly performance dashboard. The service is considered cost efficient and achieved high satisfaction ratings in the recent residents' survey; however, with it being the largest and most visible service of the Council, it is essential that we continually improve the service in a structured way. A series of key objectives have been identified and actions to deliver each objective are being progressed. These are based on consultation and are:

- Increase recycling rates across the borough.
- Review of collections operation.
- Implementing new national legislation.
- Improve the prosecution and removal of fly tipping.
- Maximise income.
- Culture Change
- Improve Street Cleansing and litter bin collections

- 2.2 There remains significant uncertainty regarding the national picture in terms of refuse collections. In December 2021, the Environment Bill was passed in Parliament and this will commit the Council to possible additional expenditure and services, one prime example being the separate collection of food waste. Government suggested previously that this could be financed nationally; however, no further details on this have been provided. The purpose of the continual improvement plan outlined in this report is to get our waste operation running as efficiently as possible in anticipation of a long-term waste strategy for the Council later in the year, which can be based on clear national guidance.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The waste services element of operations employs 48 staff. This includes nine refuse crews that empty over 51,000 bins per week. There are three types of bin currently used in Rossendale; these are general household waste, glass and plastics and a waste paper and cardboard round. In addition, residents have the option of subscribing to our garden waste bin for £40 per annum.
- 3.2 Waste, Recycling and Cleansing Service improvement now forms one of the Council's Corporate projects and reports to the Corporate Management Programme Board Quarterly.
- 3.3 A number of specific improvements have been implemented, examples of these include:
- A restructure to introduce additional supervisory capacity
 - The employment of an interim Head of Service
 - A financed vehicle replacement programme to reduce downtime of vehicles
 - All staff training on customer service excellence
 - The introduction of Street Sweeping routes, which have been shared with members
 - The Introduction of Operation Trident to tackle fly tipping by increasing prosecutions and ensuring quicker removal
 - A recruitment drive to reduce the number of agency staff being used
 - The introduction of checklists for areas such as litter bin emptying
 - The introduction of a performance dashboard which is shared monthly with the portfolio holder
- 3.4 In addition, there are a number of further improvements, which we wish to make, and these are outlined in this report and brought together in the attached action plan.

Current Performance

- 3.5 Work has been undertaken to assess the performance of the Waste, Recycling and Cleansing function and a performance dashboard introduced. Key findings include:
- Operations empty approximately 51,000 bins each week. Out of these we have on average 150 that are missed due to access problems or other reasons, this equates to 0.003% of bins being missed. Each authority measures this indicator differently and accurate information is sketchy. After examining figures provided by other districts it is felt that, our figure appears slightly higher than others. Our slightly higher figure is likely to be due to the topography of the borough, but we do see this as an area for improvement. Crews are being engaged in regular meetings to improve this and crews are sent back on the same day to rectify missed bins. It is important to note that overtime on Saturdays is rarely used for missed bin collections and rounds are completed in the working week (Tuesday to Friday).
 - During a typical month staffing costs are £110k with approximately £80k of this being full time staff and the remainder agency. Agency staff do not cost any more than employed staff, however there is a push to ensure that a full establishment of employed staff is in place. Stage one of this is complete.
 - The number of reported fly tips is approximately 100 per month, operation Trident has resulted in 45 fixed penalty notices being issued for fly tipping and an extra 20 prosecutions now going through the courts. Our target average time for removing fly tipping is 5 working days. This target was not achieved up to Jan 2022 due to staffing pressures through the LGV driver shortage. The target was achieved in February 2022 and will be achieved consistently with the new systems being implemented.

- All litterbins in the borough are being emptied as per the schedule and this is monitored monthly.

3.6 It should be noted that there is still limited benchmarking information available with which to judge our performance against others and work is being progressed to develop work with neighbouring authorities.

3.7 A recruitment process is currently underway for a permanent Head of Operations

4. DETAILS

4.1 The complete action plan is included in Appendix 1, below is a short summary for each objective and the key actions that have been included:

4.2 Increase recycling rates across the borough

A recycling campaign and pilot study have been designed and will commence in August 2022. This pilot study taking place at Thorburn Drive, Whitworth – 53 properties, Queensway and Woodside Crescent, Newchurch – 129 properties, Townsend Street, Waterfoot plus side streets off Townsend Street – 72 properties and Spinners Drive and Thor Drive, Whitworth – 61 properties. The pilot study will engage residents in improving their recycling rates and will monitor closely the levels of recycling. In addition there will be a borough wide publicity campaign to promote recycling. The findings of the pilot study will be used to inform the future waste strategy.

The actions linked to this objective are:

- Carry out a pilot scheme within the area to demonstrate what engaging and educating residents can achieve.
- Launch a borough wide campaign to encourage recycling
- Review the provision of receptacles and the size to determine if this would increase the amount of recycling presented by households.
- Roll out good practices across the borough.

4.3 Review of collections operation.

Resident satisfaction for waste services is relatively high compared to other areas with 60% of residents rating the service either good or excellent. Only 10% rated it poor. In focus groups, residents have suggested there is some dissatisfaction with the number of bins cluttering up streets in general. There is an allocation in this year's capital programme for depot improvements.

The actions linked to this objective are:

- Reduction in the number of missed bins
- Reduce overall agency spend
- Reduce overtime spend
- Clarify procedure on removal of side waste and lane end collections
- Improve Customer Care/Experience
- Undertake a review of collections by 2023.
- Review software provisions for real time in cab reporting
- A review of back office technology and our website
- Review the customer experience in partnership with Corporate Support.

- Introduce a performance management system that drives continual improvement and demonstrates service effectiveness
- To work with LCC on a more efficient waste transfer and disposal process including their review of depots and waste transfer stations
- Upgrade the depot at Henrietta Street to be more effective

4.4 Implementing new national legislation.

We are awaiting further national guidance on the implementation of the Environment Bill in order to put firm proposals to council around future bin collections.

The actions linked to this objective are:

- Monitor and implement new government legislation
- Develop a waste strategy that is aligned with national guidance.

4.5 Improve the prosecution and removal of fly tipping.

In the recent residents' survey, fly tipping was seen as a major issue for residents with 72% seeing it as either a slight issue or a significant issue. Operation Trident has seen success in prosecutions, but it remains a key priority of the action plan. The enforcement team has been expanded and extra cameras have been purchased. Joint work with the police has resulted in the sharing of information from their Automatic Number Plate Recognition System. Levels of fly tipping reported appear to compare favourably with other districts in Lancashire; however, residents and elected members do see this as a key priority.

The actions linked to this objective are:

- Introduction of new joint protocols for the PPU team and Operations team for dealing with reports of fly tipping
- Develop Operation Trident to gather evidence via both Operations and PPU to identify individuals that are responsible for fly tipping.
- Develop the Town Centre Caretaker role to focus on removing smaller fly tips immediately and reporting larger ones
- Increase the level of enforcement action by the PPU team on those responsible for fly tipping
- Raise awareness with residents and businesses on the impact of fly tipping and publicise successful enforcement.
- To work in conjunction with the PPU team to ensure all businesses in the area are aware of their responsibility to have appropriate collections in place to remove business waste.

4.6 Maximise income

During 2021, a number of pilot studies and feasibilities were completed to examine the potential of increasing income. A crematorium for Rossendale was discounted through feasibility and a bin-cleaning pilot showed small returns for the significant staff input. The establishment of our own MOT test centre remains a possibility for future years; however, the key areas of income remain our commercial waste collection service and our gardens waste bin service. This is therefore the focus of the action plan.

The actions linked to this objective are:

- Introducing a dedicated officer to increase the number of local businesses that use our collection service.
- To increase awareness of the garden waste service we provide through all communication channels.

4.7 Culture Change

A key element of the continual improvement plan is to ensure that staff are engaged in the changes. Regular staff meetings take place and individual meetings with crews to discuss issues and performance. Training has taken place with all staff on customer care and referral cards have been issued to give to customers that may have queries about other council services.

The actions linked to this objective are:

- Staff engagement to articulate expectations and engage the workforce in continual improvement.
- Increased monitoring of collections and overall performance to be shared with individual crews
- Introduce Corporate Values and celebrate successes

4.8 Improve street cleansing and litter bin provision

New street cleansing routes were introduced late in 2021 and are now embedded. Routes have been shared with members and they are now being closely monitored. The amount of waste being collected by street cleansing has risen from approximately 60 tonnes per month to 160 tonnes, which demonstrates the effectiveness of the new routes in clearing more litter and detritus.

The actions linked to this objective are:

- Review street cleansing and introduce fixed routes
- Develop the Town Centre Caretaker role to focus on litterbin emptying and smaller fly tipping removal as a priority.
- Undertake stage two of the litterbin review and introduce additional bins.
- Introduce monitoring of litter bin emptying
- Continually improve our relations with local Pride Groups and support them to maximise their impact.

4.9 Conclusion

A number of actions have been taken to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our Waste, Recycling and Cleansing Services. A performance management framework has been adopted and is now embedded. In addition, the programme of improvements are monitored through the Council's Programme Board and a separate specific project board, which includes the Director of Communities, Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder.

The action plan attached will be monitored through this board, as will the performance indicators.

5. RISK

5.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- Reduction in overtime spend. If this is not reduced we risk an overspend on the budget.
- Reduction in agency spend. If this is not reduced we risk an overspend on the budget.
- Clarity on the removal of side waste and lane end collections is required. If we are to remove all side waste, the benefit is a cleaner borough. However, this could affect recycling rates.
- Demonstrating service effectiveness is key to understanding that we are providing value for money.

6. FINANCE

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL

There are no legal implications arising from this update report.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy or equalities implications.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

It is important to update Members on the work being undertaken to improve services and for Cabinet to agree that the priorities in the action plan.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Operations Continual Improvement Plan	Attached