

APPENDIX 1



REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF STREET CLEANSING TASK AND FINISH GROUP

1. Purpose of the Report

As part of the Scrutiny Work Programme in June 2012, members of overview and scrutiny agreed Street Cleansing as part of their planned work for 2012.

It is anticipated that the Council will experience around a 39% cut in its revenue budget by 2014. Over the past two years the Council has saved around £1.5m, but are required to find a further £1.3m savings by 2014.

Therefore, it was agreed to use the scrutiny process as part of the savings review to look at potential savings to the street cleansing service.

2. Background Information

Whilst members understand that street cleansing is a high profile front facing service with a substantial level of spend, this service along with many others within the Council, are under pressure to make savings. The task and finish group members were under no illusion that any recommendations they suggest will hit the service in one way or another and had difficult decisions to make.

3. Membership of the Group

Councillor Roberts (appointed Chair at the first meeting)
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Farrington
Councillor Morris
Councillor Shipley

4. Terms of Reference of the Group

The following terms of reference were agreed by the group.

- To identify potential changes in the context of £1.3m savings required
- To work closely with the Director of Customer and Communities on the review of street cleansing services.
- To consider how Whitworth Town Council contributes to street cleansing
- To review the current situation, processes and the condition of the street scene
- To look at current working patterns
- To consider current levels of action
- To consider current levels of concern – what are the major issues?

5. The objective of the review

The purpose of the review was to challenge the current position and if possible, maintain customer satisfaction within a reduced budget.

The Task and Finish Group met on five occasions between August and October 2012. Task and Finish Group members each shadowed the town centre caretakers to understand their way of working on a daily basis.

5.1 The areas agreed for research and discussion

Lots of information was gathered for members of the group by Officers as follows:

- Street cleansing function including vehicle/staffing and direct costs
- Whitworth Town Council contribution towards costs of cleaning their town centre
- Types of mechanical vehicles used on a daily basis for street cleansing
- Timetable of rounds for street cleansing
- Number of requests received by Operations and Communities teams
- Timetable for the town centre caretakers
- Presentation on the types of enforcement within the service
- Number of street litter bins throughout the borough

5.2 Findings relating to the terms of reference

The Council's Operations Team is responsible for clearing away litter and detritus from adopted streets and highways throughout the Borough. They aim to sweep all streets and highways a minimum of once a month, with areas of high footfall being swept at least weekly by a range of mechanical sweepers within the Operations Team.

Nineteen staff work within the street cleansing function, with salaries costing in the region of £488,104. This includes overtime, agency staff and insurance. Direct costs for such things as protective clothing, petrol, sweeper brushes, street litter bins (and the list goes on) are in the region of £238,250.

Street cleansing at weekend for two employees, working 4.5 hours on Saturdays and 4 hours on Sunday for 52 weeks costs £16,743. There is no bank holiday working for street cleansing.

The Council prioritise during autumn and winter the removal of leaves from the adopted roads and footpaths within the borough of Rossendale. Over 200 tonnes of leaves are normally swept up from off the roads and footpaths during this period, all of which are mixed with the garden waste from brown wheeled bins and sent for composting.

Town Centre Caretakers

Caretakers are employed to cover Rawtenstall, Haslingden, Waterfoot and Bacup. Whitworth Town Council employ a part-time caretaker who is in the main paid by Rossendale Borough Council, with a contribution of approximately £1.9k from the Town Council).

The details in this section relate to the Town Centre caretakers employed by Rossendale Borough Council, unless stated otherwise.

Each day at around 8.15am each of the caretakers open up and clean the public toilets, litter pick the town centre and any other duties required of them and then at 3.15pm close the toilets (later on market days to fit in with market cleansing duties).

Caretakers in Bacup and Waterfoot are responsible for the clearance of 55 culverts on a scheduled basis. They are also responsible for removal, repair and installation of litter bins.

Other duties undertaken by all the caretakers are as follows:

- Clearing footpaths of overgrown shrubs/weeds
- Strimming
- Weeding
- Grass cutting
- Hedge cutting
- Picking up dead animals
- Graffiti removal
- Litter bin removal and installation
- Removal of fly tipping
- Removal of fly posting on street furniture
- Renovation of benches
- Weeding and planting of shrub beds

Litter Bins

There are currently 687 litter bins across the borough that are emptied by the Mobile Gangs (this excludes cemeteries, Stubbylee and Moorlands Park, Victoria Park and Whitaker Park, which are emptied by the Parks Team).

There are 144 bins in town centre areas (Waterfoot, Bacup, Haslingden and Rawtenstall), which are emptied daily. If the town centre bins were passed to the Caretakers there would be **543** bins to empty.

Mobile Gangs

There are 3 mobile gangs in the Communities Street Cleansing Team.

Mobile Gang (MG1), which is a 15 tonne refuse vehicle with 1 x LGV driver and 1 other who undertake the following:

Monday am –empty paper bins at ‘bring sites’ throughout the borough – 12 sites

Monday pm – Fly tipping, contaminated bins (residential), litter picking (jobs come from Officers).

Tuesday – tidying around bins at bring sites and emptying 1000litre bins at Parks, Cemeteries and Council Offices (9 sites)

Wednesday – tidying around bins at ‘bring sites’ , followed by fly tipping, contaminated bins, litter picking etc

Thursday – Refuse/recycling round in hard to reach areas – 249 properties

Friday – tidying round bins in ‘bring sites’, fly tipping, contaminated bins, litter picking

Mobile Gang 2 (MG2), is a 3.5 tonne caged transit with 1 x litter picker and 1 x apprentice who undertake to empty 635 bins per week as follows:

Monday – litter bins in Bacup, Britannia, Shawforth, Whitworth and litter picking accordingly

Tuesday – litter bins in Crawshawbooth, Loveclough, Staghills, Haslingden, Rawtenstall, litter picking accordingly

Wednesday – litter bins in Stubbins, Irwell Vale, Edenfield, Haslingden, Helmshore, Turn and litter picking accordingly

Thursday – fly tipping jobs, targeted litter picking plus jobs for Locality Officers

Friday – litter bins in Crawshawbooth, Loveclough, Bacup, Rawtenstall, Stacksteads, Waterfoot and litter picking accordingly

Mobile Gang 3 (MG3), is a 3.5 tonne caged transit with 1 non LGV driver and 1 x apprentice who undertake to empty 687 bins per week and also collect refuse from hard to reach properties (around 15-20 per day) as follows:

Monday – litter bins in Haslingden, Rawtenstall and Waterfoot

Tuesday – litter bins in Bacup, Cloughfold, Cowpe, Stacksteads, Waterfoot, Weir. Farm refuse to 14 properties in Rawtenstall

Wednesday – litter bins in Bacup, Water, Waterfoot and Rawtenstall Farm refuse to 11 properties in Rawtenstall and Edenfield

Thursday – litter bins in Bacup, Britannia, Whitworth

Farm refuse to 19 properties in Sharneyford, Britannia and Whitworth

Friday – litter bins in Rising Bridge, Haslingden and Rawtenstall

Farm refuse to 20 properties in Rawtenstall, Cloughfold and Whitwell Bottom

There was discussion about the possibility of reducing to 1 person in 1 truck doing solely litter bins (no farms). If this was done, then the Council would need to reduce the number of bins from 543 to around 390 (-153). This would allow the emptying of bins twice per week and would involve some being done on a Saturday. For example, bins would be emptied Monday and Thursday, Tuesday and Friday and then Wednesday and Saturday.

On this basis there would be 130 bins emptied per day, with town centre bins emptied as usual on Sunday

If hard to reach properties were kept with the litter bin truck, they would need to reduce bins by around 15 per day, which would mean a total reduction in litter bins from 543 to 375.

On the basis of emptying 140 bins per day, this would result in the removal of 123 bins.

To empty 150 bins per day, would result in the need to remove 93 bins. This is the maximum realistic figure for 1 person.

Dog Bins

If the Council need to separate the dog waste from litter Officers indicated that Wednesday would be the designated day to empty dog bins. This waste would need to be taken to Leyland, meaning more travelling time. Dog bins would be situated on walking routes borough wide, so there would also be more travelling throughout the day.

An estimated 100 dog bins would be able to be emptied on the Wednesday.

The Council currently has 22 dog bins, a shortfall of 78. Buying these would have a capital cost of at least £8000. An alternative would be to produce stickers to convert existing litter bins into dog waste only bins

The Council could possibly lose weekend work as there would only ever be a 3 day gap in emptying litter bins ie Monday/Thursday/Monday.

The Council adopted Dog Control Orders in 2009, making it an offence to fail to clear up after your dog if it fouls any land which is open to the air and to which the public have access.

Enforcement

The Council only act where they have power to do so – the powers which support street cleansing and refuse are as follows:

S46 – requirements regarding household bins

S47 – requirements regarding trade bins

S33 & 34 – flytipping and duty of care

EPA Litter offences – dropping and leaving litter (Fixed Penalty Notice)/Litter clearing notices/street litter control notices

Dog Control Orders – dog fouling, dogs exclusion, dogs on leads

Statutory Nuisance - accumulations or deposits prejudicial to health or a nuisance

PDPA - accumulations likely to cause harbourage to pests

Seizure of abandoned shopping trolleys

Fixed Penalty Notices

Litter - If any person drops and leaves litter on any land in the open air, this is an offence for which they can receive a fixed penalty notice of £75, payable within 28 days of the notice being issued.

Dog fouling - If any person in control of a dog allows that dog to foul on any land in the open air to which the public has access, and fails to remove the faeces, they can receive a £75 fine, payable within 28 days of the notice being issued.

Anyone guilty of a litter or dog fouling offence can be prosecuted instead of receiving a fixed penalty notice fine.

Anyone who receives a fixed penalty notice but fails to pay the fine will be prosecuted.

Locality Officers carry out patrols of dog fouling and litter hotspots and will issue fixed penalty notices to anyone caught committing an offence.

To consider how Whitworth Town Council contributes to street cleansing

Rossendale Borough Council's contribution to the Whitworth Town Caretakers has remained constant at an annual grant of £15,975 paid in two halves over the year. In 2012 the total cost of the town centre caretaker was £17,767 and therefore the cost to Whitworth Town Council was £1,792.

Bring-sites (Recycling sites in Rossendale)

There are fourteen sites in Rossendale where you can take a wide range of materials for recycling, including paper, cardboard, glass, cans, plastics and textiles/shoes.

Members felt that this was a duplication of services already provided to everyone in the borough within their own homes.

Review of Refuse Service

Members understand that there is to be a review of refuse services and one idea was for puller/loaders to stay behind whilst the driver takes the wagon to be emptied.

Conclusion

The Task Group understand the complexities and work needed to be undertaken around some of the recommendations but feel they are needed in this difficult financial climate, although where possible, any decisions should not be at the detriment to the cleanliness of the Borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a strategy be produced to look at reducing one cage truck based on a detailed plan of bin locations, with the aim of reducing the number of litter bins (150-160). This could be done by prioritising hotspot areas and reduce the number of bins in areas where they are underused, whilst at the same time ensuring the same level of collections and cleanliness as the pictures show in appendix A/B.
2. Should, in the future, the Council need more dog bins then these could be recycled from the reduction as in recommendation 1, although the task group are mindful of the risk of on-costs if large bins were used (fittings etc).
3. Members agreed that, following a review of refuse services, the puller/loaders could stay behind whilst the driver takes their wagon to be emptied to undertake duties such as litter picking etc.
4. Whilst the task and finish group understand that all authorities are under financial pressure, it was agreed that the Council should reduce their contribution to Whitworth Town Council for their town centre caretaker, to be determined by the Director of Customer and Communities.
5. The task and finish group feel that the town centre caretakers are a focus of the town centres, it was felt that there was a need to review weekend overtime payments, with the aim of possible reduction and more flexible working patterns being established.
6. It was agreed that the Council should look at making possible savings to the Cleansing Agency budget by extending the working arrangements with other local authorities.
7. That the Council review the frequency of the small mechanical sweepers and to investigate the feasibility of reducing one small sweeper.
8. To develop a frequency rota of all road sweeper activities (HGV and small) that may result in the reduction of one of the large sweepers, whilst at the same time working with LCC to increase the number of times grates are cleaned.
9. To remove all 'bring-sites' around the borough, but at the same time promote the 'private' bring-sites and that people be encourage to use grey bins provided by the Council.
10. To discuss ways of promoting cleanliness in the borough to takeaways, nightclubs etc by either leaflet distribution or face-to-face contact.
11. Due to the geographics of the borough, consideration should be given to more joint working with surrounding boroughs for such areas as litter picking/road sweeping etc.

12. That the Council review the 'Direct Costs' budget by bulk buying/sharing procurement arrangements with other local authorities.
13. That the Council considers a mid-management review to look at the tighter operation of these staff.