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Our ref: DT/CL
Your ref:

Date: 15 October 2013

Dear Councillor,

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A Meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** will be held in the **Council Chamber**, on **Wednesday, 23 October 2013 at 18:00**. You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

Chief Executive

To:- **Conservative Group**
Councillor Mrs. Plenderleith (Chairman), Councillor Atkin (Vice-Chairman) and
Councillors Mrs. Hood and Mrs. Patten.

Labour Group
Councillors Bambrick, Dunn, Mrs. Mead and Pearson.



AGENDA

Open to Public and Press

- 1 Apologies
- 2 To receive the Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 26th June 2013
- 3 To note any declarations of interest arising from any items on the Agenda
- 4 To receive any questions by members of the public pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.10.
- 5 To receive any questions by Members of the Council pursuant to Council procedure Rule No. 11.
- 6 Service Review: Grounds Maintenance **3 - 5**
- 7 Clean Team **6 - 8**
- 8 Work Programme **9 - 10**

Exclusion of the Public and Press:

- 9 The Chairman may therefore move:-
That in accordance with Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in the header to each report on the Agenda.
- 10 To receive any Exempt questions by Members of the Council pursuant to Council procedure Rule No. 11.
Details

REPORT TO:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	23rd October 2013	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Director of Housing and Environmental Services	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Bob Ledger 5975 bob.ledger@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Service Review: Grounds Maintenance	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Members note and comment on the actions that have been undertaken following the 2012 Overview and Scrutiny Committee service review.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To advise members of progress on actions following the 2012 Overview and Scrutiny Committee service review of grounds maintenance. There were four sections to the final report to the Committee in October 2012. These are now utilised again below.

3. Quality Control

- 3.1 Quality Control. There are three principal clients for the Grounds Maintenance Service: the County Council, the Housing Service and the Culture and Community Service (Parks/Open spaces). As a result of last year's work an amended quality inspection process was put in place. The outcome of this is that more detailed information has been fed back to the three clients.
- 3.2 Over the last year the client function has been exercised by Culture and Community through its monthly client meeting and the County Council through its quarterly client meeting. The Housing Service does not undertake separate client meetings but in preparation for this report the Housing Service has given a view on the last year's operation.
- 3.3 No full or part District issues have been raised in the client meetings. Most items discussed related to additional attention to specific locations rather than concerns about wholesale failures to deliver the quantity or quality specified. The Housing Service similarly does have concerns about the quality of work in some locations on some occasions. The Grounds Maintenance Manager has been made aware and repeat work has been scheduled as a result on several occasions.

- 3.4 In addition the Housing Service stated that it was only getting a Grounds performance against schedule report on request rather than monthly as a matter of course. This, along with a commentary on why certain work may be behind or ahead of that schedule, is now in place.
- 3.5 There were two outstanding actions at the time of completing last year's review in October 2012. These were:
- "That there was no gathering of complaints or concerns in a central location".
 - In response a log is now kept by the Grounds Maintenance Manager of all complaints to identify patterns or trends in non-performance
 - "That the specification for the service needs to be more adaptable and where items are needed routinely, that were not originally specified as such, then separate orders and cost transfers have to be arranged wasting time and effort on both sides of the client contractor relationship".
 - This issue relates primarily to open spaces under the management of the Culture and Community Service. In this regard variations to the original specification are being agreed in an end of season series of meetings. The unit prices for additional works are set in the base contract documentation i.e. the prices for additional works are set at the lowest 2011 tendered rates. However it is unlikely, given the current financial position, that additional monies will be forthcoming and therefore the grounds maintenance service will do what it can to incorporate the items into the regular schedule. This additional work should also be placed in the context that grounds maintenance work across the District was put out to tender in 2010/11 and the decision was subsequently made to retain the service in-house as it represented the best value option.

4 Feedback

- 4.1 A survey process was initiated as part of the last years' service review utilising a Freepost response survey card that is delivered to targeted numbers of residents residing in properties adjacent to the location of each cutting activity. The results of the surveys in the 2013 cutting season are a return rate of 23% and of that number 65% report the service as good or excellent.
- 4.2 In addition it was agreed in the review to undertake a web-based survey. This was not carried out until recently, is currently on the website and it is anticipated that we'll have the results towards the end of November.

5 County Funded Works

- 5.1 It was reported as part of the service review that the current agreement and funding with the County Council for the cutting of highway verges is relatively loosely defined. The work includes urban verges, rural verges and junction visibility splays all at different frequencies. Our assessment at that time was that overall the amount of work we do (including Highway cleansing) is broadly commensurate with the County Council funding supplied. However in Grounds we are cutting verges and visibility splays at marginally higher frequencies than the County expect. We identified in last year's review that from the District's (or contractor) perspective more needs to be written down but that the County officers take the view they will provide funding to a partner and it's up to that partner (ourselves) to deliver as best we can within that amount.

- 5.2 Alongside last year's review the County were also stating that the budget was likely to be cut. When this was put into the political domain last year in the event no cuts were made to the funding level. However the County Council officers are again now stating that a reduction in funding is likely next year.
- 5.3 From the District Council perspective it seems reasonable that the specification and budget should be agreed at a level to formally define service levels. Whereas the County Council's position, although based on that principle, in the light of budget cuts seems to be we all need to manage with less without agreeing to any reduction in service. To some extent the District Council's negotiating position is adversely affected by the fact that the scale of our operation only works with the County Council funding in place and if we were to lose that work the costs of service provision to the District would rise disproportionately.
- 5.4 Therefore the negotiating rationale to date has been to wait and assess the extent of any proposed reduction in funding on our whole service and then lobby or change specification levels accordingly. As there is no formal contract in place either side has the ability to pull out of the current arrangement subject to reasonable notice.

6 External accreditation.

- 6.1 After some consideration in the review process it was agreed we don't follow a formal accreditation route but officers develop further in-house quality monitoring processes and produce an annual report detailing priorities for future action. The first such report for the 2013 season is being produced and will be available in the next few weeks.

7 Developments during the 2013 season

- 7.1 In 2013 the Grounds Maintenance service has taken on additional highway spraying works that were previously sub-contracted out. This includes spraying around highway signage and street furniture. The cost saving of bringing the work in-house is around £11,000 per annum.
- 7.2 Additional cuts to churchyards have been introduced at no extra charge which has generated some compliments in to the service.
- 7.3 The service continued to respond to emergency requests (which would be additional costs in a formal contractual situation) such as removing dangerous trees and filling and delivering sandbags in response to flooding alerts.

8 Corporate Implications

- 8.1 The Council's reputation is assessed by many on the standard of such generic services as grounds maintenance i.e. it is key that this service be of a good quality. The outcome of the review was that this is generally the case but that actions identified in the initial review, and subsequent to it, will help to further improve the quality of the service delivered.

REPORT TO:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	23rd October 2013	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Director of Housing and Environmental Services	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Bob Ledger 5975 bob.ledger@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Clean team	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1. Recommendations

1.1 That Members note and comment on the current service provision.

2. Purpose of Report

2.1 To advise members of the current arrangements for tackling littering, fly tipping and dog fouling in the district and seek members input and comment on current processes.

3. Detail

3.1 The Clean team was established in 2002 in response to the Environmental Protection Act that requires local authorities "to ensure land, so far as is practicable, is kept clear of litter and refuse" as well as set frequencies and timescales for street cleaning.

3.2 The clean team is made up of 8 personnel who also have other substantive duties but can respond as a part or full team to instances of extensive littering or fly tipping. In this way we don't have personnel stood by phones waiting to react to reports.

3.3 The team's substantive or standard duties relate to manning the two mechanical footpath sweepers which follow pre specified routes in the built-up areas. The frequency of such sweeping is dependent upon the location and amount of foot traffic. In brief this is town and village centre areas at 4 times a year and all other urban areas at 2 times a year.

3.4 Also in the team is a dedicated barrow sweeper for the Swadlincote urban centre, the Swadlincote public toilets cleaner and the clinical waste officer (who collects from all parts of the District) The other three posts (of which one is currently held vacant) empty litter and dog bins around the District, again at varying frequencies to reflect their usage, as well deliver new to and collect broken wheelie bins from people's homes.

- 3.5 In terms of resources, the team have access to several different types of collecting bags, litter pickers, gloves and other PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). The team have dedicated vehicles for the clinical waste collections, the mechanical footpath cleaning as well as a general vehicle for use on fly tipping. This general vehicle is in poor condition and due for replacement this financial year.
- 3.6 Our target is to respond on a reactive basis to reports of extensive littering or fly tipping on public land within 24 hours. In the year to date this has been achieved on 192 of 281 reports, 80 of these were cleared on the day of the fly tip being reported.
- 3.7 In terms of responding to the need of keeping the District as clean as possible the perception has been to date that the clean team was an effective innovation in 2002 and it continues to be so. Before the creation of the clean team there was certainly more discussion in the Committee process about how to effectively tackle the cleaner streets agenda.
- 3.8 A log of clean team call outs is kept but through the input of 2 of the Committee's members on spending half a day with the team in August 2013, more is now being done with that log to track repeat locations for incidents and share that information particularly with the Safer Neighbourhood Wardens.
- 3.9 The clean team also respond to reports of dog fouling. The approach taken is to undertake this as needed and reported on public highway and associated areas e.g. footpaths in built up areas. Clearly it would not be possible to respond to all dog fouling across the whole District in all areas e.g. rural footpaths. The primary emphasis has to be on prevention.
- 3.10 The Safer Neighbourhood Wardens patrol known hotspots for dog fouling. These include parks and recreation grounds but also a number of key footpaths, mainly in the urban area, linking housing estates. The aim of the wardens is to encourage owners to take responsibility for their dogs and the approach usually taken for first time offenders is advice and warnings.
- 3.11 Everyone knows that it's in the wider community interest to pick up after their dog i.e. people know it is wrong not to do so. This is well evidenced that as soon as the wardens appear in a location people do pick up the faeces. The Council can only issue a fixed penalty notice or take someone to court for allowing their dog to foul public areas if this is witnessed by a neighbourhood warden or other appropriate officer. This combination of factors means that the current strategy is for wardens to offer a high visibility presence and engage with the dog owning community to prevent rather than react to fouling.
- 3.12 There are only three Neighbourhood wardens for the whole District covering a 7 day working week of 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. i.e. the majority of the time there is only one warden on duty across the whole District. However large numbers of warning leaflets and lamppost dog fouling signs have been and continue to be deployed to encourage people to be responsible in relation their dog's fouling.
- 3.13 Neighbourhood wardens also follow up on fly tipping incidents and close liaison with the clean team is often key. If the clean team find any documentation with identifying marks in the dumped material they will refer such matters to the neighbourhood wardens. They then will seek to trace the persons responsible and if possible prosecute the offenders under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. In

the calendar year to date we have issued 46 warnings and 8 fixed penalty notices for fly tipping.

4. Corporate Implications

- 4.1 The District's reputation is assessed on a number of generic factors one of which is the standard of street cleanliness.

REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	23RD OCTOBER 2013	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO: N/A
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	DEBRA TOWNSEND debra.townsend@south-derbys.gov.uk 01283 595848	DOC:
SUBJECT:	WORK PROGRAMME	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: N/A

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers its work programme and agrees the review area(s) for the next meeting.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To enable the Committee to review and update its work programme.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees an annual work programme, which is reviewed at each meeting. Attached at Annexe 'A' is the updated work programme for 2013/14. Members are asked to consider the work programme for future meetings and particularly the review areas to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.
- 3.2 Task Group Members for the Environmental Volunteering and Clean Team / Litter Reviews are invited to give verbal updates.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 None arising directly from this report.

6.0 Background Papers

- 6.1 Scoping documents for reviews and previous Committee reports.

Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2013/2014

Project	COMMITTEE DATE	JUN		SEP		OCT		NOV		DEC		JAN		FEB		MAR		APR		MAY		Responsible Head of Service / Notes
			26		18		23				11			22		12			26			
Annual Report	Council																					Legal and Democratic Services (Paul Spencer)
Budget	F&M																					Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Crime and Disorder Scrutiny	H&CS																					Director of Community and Planning (Chris Smith)
RIPA	F&M																					Legal and Democratic Services Manager.
Grounds Maintenance	E&DS and H&CS																					Director of Housing & Environmental Services.
Cemetery Provision	H&CS																					Director of Community and Planning
Environmental Volunteering																						Director of Community and Planning
Debt Recovery																						Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Clean Team / Litter																						Director of Housing & Environmental Services.
Key																						
Report to Committee																						
Report to Task Group																						