

Member Report

Neighbourhood Services Strategy



Report to: Cabinet
Report from: Executive Director for Growth, Enterprise and Environment
Portfolio: Neighbourhood Services
Report Date: 10th December 2024
Decision Type: Executive
Council Priority: Clean and Tidy

HEADLINE POSITION

1.0 Summary of report

1.1 The Neighbourhood Services Strategy sets out the various services that contribute to delivering a clean, safe and well-maintained public realm that residents of the borough experience on a daily basis. The strategy takes account of the current financial position of the council and the resource levels that are presently available to deliver these services. It also sets out the longer-term investment needed to maintain and improve services should this position change in the coming years.

2.1 Recommendation

2.1 That Cabinet agree the following document: Neighbourhood Services Strategy

DETAILED PROPOSALS

3.0 What are the objectives of the report and how do they link to the Council's priorities

3.1 The Organisational Plan which was agreed by Cabinet in March 2024 sets out the Council's approach to delivering upon the priorities set out within the Corporate Plan, which are:

- Start life well
- Live and age well
- Prosper and flourish
- Clean and tidy
- Strong and sustainable.

3.2 The approach being to develop a suite of key strategy documents, setting the strategic imperative and parameters of council operations. Each strategy will be underpinned by a delivery plan as well as suite of performance measures. Subject to approval, elected members will own and oversee delivery, with regular update reports provided.

- 3.3 It is important to recognise that the suite of strategies are interdependent, whilst this strategy focuses on Neighbourhood Services, the work done here will impact and influence outcomes elsewhere, as well as being shaped by decisions taken in other areas. It is fundamentally important to recognise that each of these strategies must align with the Finance Strategy, both in terms of realistic levels of ambition but also strive to improve outcomes whilst saving money where possible.
- 3.4 **Neighbourhood Services Strategy**–This strategy sets out the current service standards that can be delivered with the resources available, service pressures, planned improvements and longer-term strategic objectives. The key services included in the strategy are: -
- Parks and open space maintenance
 - Highway verges/hedges
 - Street Cleansing
 - Tree maintenance
 - Enforcement (dog fouling, littering, fly tipping)

4.0 What options have been considered

4.1 Maintenance of the public realm contributes to all of the council's priorities to varying degrees, as residents, businesses and visitors to the borough are all affected by the provision of these services. Although many of these are either statutory services or essential to providing a safe environment, there can be a wide variation in the quality of services provided, depending on the human and financial resources available.

5.0 Impact Assessment

- 5.1 Climate Emergency** – this strategy aims to move to a more sustainable approach in the way services are delivered, increasing levels of biodiversity, maintaining and increasing the number of trees in the borough, limiting the use of pesticides and adopting the use of electric vehicles where possible
- 5.2 Health and Safety** – health and safety is a vital element of council operations with a number of high volume/high risk services provided by Neighbourhood Services.
- 5.3 Social Value** – the suite of strategies included in the Organisational Plan cover the key elements of council business, which collectively contribute significant social value in service delivery, commissioning and procurement.
- 5.4 Legal** – there are no direct legal implications to this strategy although services will need to adapt to changing legislative requirements.
- 5.5 Financial** – in delivering the strategy the council is aware of the short-term financial restrictions; therefore, the level/quality of services are aligned to that budget envelope.
- 5.6 Human Resources** – As the delivery of these services are directly affected by the human resources available, ongoing restrictions on the staff levels within operational teams will determine the quality of services that can be provided.
- 5.7 Equality and Diversity** – a key aspect of delivering services to residents of the borough is recognising diverse needs and responding accordingly.

This will be a relevant consideration in the delivery of this strategy.

6.0 Implementation Plan

6.1 Timetable for Implementing Decision: delivery of the Neighbourhood Services Strategy will commence immediately upon agreement.

6.2 Lead Officer: Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services

6.3 Reporting Progress – progress reports will be provided to elected members in line with the quarterly performance reporting arrangements.

6.4 Communications Plan - individual elements of this strategy will be communicated as necessary on an ongoing basis.

7.0 Consultation and Engagement

7.1 In delivering upon the strategy the Council will engage with residents and partners as appropriate. In a number of instances the subject matters covered within the strategies are well known and have been the subject of extensive consultation and engagement over recent years.

8.0 Appendices and Background Papers

8.1 Appendix 1 – Neighbourhood Services Strategy

9.0 Contact Officer

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Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

Neighbourhood Services Strategy

Strategy Aims:

The Neighbourhood Services Strategy focuses on the quality of the public realm that residents see every day in the community where they live, as they move around the borough and specific locations that they may visit from time to time. Although a key part of the strategy will refer to maintenance operations and standards it will also draw in other elements that contribute to resident's experience and perception of their local environment and the wider borough. The strategy will also consider the related benefits of good quality and accessible open spaces, parks and play areas on both physical and mental wellbeing.

Lead Member Cllr Adam Brook

Officer leading on delivery Rob Hoof

Alignment with Council Priorities				
Start Life Well	Live and Age Well	Prosper and Flourish	Clean and Tidy	A strong and sustainable Council
Free access to parks, open spaces, and equipped play areas is essential to children's healthy development and wellbeing. They create safe spaces for children to meet and play with friends, have fun, develop social skills and learn about the environment. These facilities have been available to many generations and can often be taken for granted, and as	The need to access a well maintained publicly owned spaces and facilities is important to residents of all ages and impacts on every aspect of their day to day lives. Where they live, work, travel or spend their leisure time and their physical and mental wellbeing will be	The delivery of capital projects will improve a range of facilities in the borough's towns and villages. Their longer-term success will be influenced by the surroundings in which they are situated. A safe and well-maintained public realm supports the successful operation of these facilities and the way they are	The provision of street cleansing services is a statutory service although there is a large degree of latitude as to the level of service provided. The presence of litter, graffiti, dog fouling, and fly tipping in the public realm directly impacts on how residents feel	The council is adapting its approach to service provision due to the impacts of climate change, the need to be more sustainable and the development of new technology. This includes a more biodiverse approach to open space maintenance,

they are not statutory services can often suffer from lack of investment.	influenced by their surroundings.	perceived by residents and visitors.	about their local area, in terms of quality of life, safety and a sense of community.	increasing reuse and recycling, and adopting an increasing number of operational electric vehicles.
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Principles

Principle 1	Principle 2	Principle 3	Principle 4	Principle 5	Principle 6
<p>To develop an open space maintenance programme that can be delivered consistently with the available resources. This would include 14 grass cuts per year, shrub pruning once per year, maintain the current quality of parks, open spaces and cemeteries. There will also be a move towards a more biodiverse approach to grounds maintenance where appropriate. Review the partial ban of herbicides in order to address the maintenance issues that have been experienced this year.</p>	<p>To use available funding to carryout refurbishment of 3 play areas and the installation of safety surfacing at 14 play areas. Future funding will only allow one play area each year to be refurbished and a limited safety surfacing programme. Should play equipment on other sites become unserviceable or vandalised beyond repair it will be removed and not replaced (unless external funding streams can be identified).</p>	<p>The council has invested in two tree teams who are currently working through a backlog of general work requests and dealing with trees affected by Ash Dieback. With the current resources available it will take two to three years to move from a reactive tree maintenance regime to a more programmed approach.</p>	<p>To develop a street cleansing regime that can be delivered consistently with the available resources. This will include daily cleansing of town centres, weekly emptying of litter bins, twice yearly road sweeping, deployment of barrow operatives, and a reactive approach to street cleaning in other areas. We will continue to promote the work of volunteers who are an essential part of keeping the borough clean and tidy.</p>	<p>Carryout an assessment of the long-term infrastructure investment required for parks, formal open spaces and cemeteries. Current funding levels are insufficient to maintain infrastructure such as paths, walls and structures in parks and open spaces. We will continue to try and secure external funding where possible through various bids and grants.</p>	<p>Consider the impact of other services on local neighbourhoods such as highways, the ASB team, Enforcement/Parking services, Housing associations, private landowners, etc.</p>

		Actions		
Principles	Actions and Timescales	Survive: Years 1 -2– Quarter to be delivered 2024/25, 2025/26	Strive – Years: 3 - 5	Thrive: Years 6 - 10
Principle 1	Identify sites throughout the borough where maintenance standards can be changed to enable a more biodiverse environment to be established.	Quarter 4 2024/25	Ongoing	Ongoing
	Develop supporting communications and interpretation programme.	Quarter 4 2024/25	Ongoing	Ongoing
Principle 2	Review current level of play provision, quality and capital investment required	Quarter 3 2024/25		
	Set out programme for rationalisation and improvement.	Quarter 3/4 2025/26	Commence programme	Review
Principle 3	Ascertain how many more trees will require removal due to Ash Dieback	Quarter 2/3 2025/26	Subject to assessment	Review
	Ascertain ongoing demand for responsive tree works and current backlog	Quarter 3/4 2025/26	Subject to assessment	Review
	Develop proactive tree maintenance programme	NA	Programme developed	Ongoing
Principle 4	Set cleansing frequencies based on budget/resources	Quarter 3/4 2024/25	Improve standards if budget/resources increase	Review
	Increase number of volunteers to assist with local litter picking activities	Quarter 3/4 2024/25	Ongoing	Ongoing
Principle 5	Complete assessment of all non-adopted assets / budget requirements	2025/26	Review	Review
	Develop programme based on available budget	NA	2027/28	Review
Principle 6	Identify other service providers that impact on local neighbourhood standards	Quarter 3/4 2025/26		
	Develop shared work programmes	Quarter 3/4 2025/26	Review	Review

Measures of Success	Performance indicator / outcome	Outturn position 2023/24	Survive – Years 1-2	Strive – Years: 3 - 5	Thrive: Years 6 - 10
Performance measure	Number of pieces of play equipment in use across the borough.	New Measure			
	Number of trees with Ash Dieback to be removed	New Measure			
	Number of outstanding treesworks to be completed	New Measure			
	Number of volunteer groups in operation	New Measure			
	Number of street cleansing operations completed as scheduled including fly tip removal	New Measure			
	Number of grounds maintenance operations completed as scheduled	New Measure			
	% increase in biodiversity across the borough	New Measure			
	Number of non-adopted assets in need of repair/replacement	New Measure			
	Ward walkabouts to be used to resolve day to day service delivery issues	New Measure			