

**NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S  
REPORT TO ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Choose an item.

**17 March 2022**

**Report Title:** Streetscene – Update on Position Statement

**Submitted by:** Executive Director – Operational Services

**Portfolios:** Environment and Recycling

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Purpose of the Report**

To provide the committee with an update on the current position with the Streetscene team in relation to planning for future demand

**Recommendation**

That

- 1. The committee receives the report and acknowledges the current position in relation to Streetscene service planning for future demand and the work which is in progress as part of the One Council Programme**

**Reasons**

To respond to a request from the committee to review the strategic direction of operational services based on the next 5 – 10 years growth and consider how the service can be protected and grown, proportionate to predicted growth.

**1. Background**

- 1.1 The Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee received a report on the current position with Streetscene, at the meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

RESOLVED: that the Cabinet be requested to review the strategic direction of operational services based on the next 5-10 years growth and consider how the service can be protected and grown, proportionate to predicted growth.

**2. Issues**

2.1 The Cabinet have considered the current position with Streetscene and its strategic direction over the next 5 – 10 years in conjunction with officers, and support the approach detailed in the following sections of this report, should growth in the Borough create demand for additional service investment.

It should also be noted that the One Council Programme which is now well underway, is reviewing the strategic direction of the entire organisation and seeking to create a new operating model which will deliver all appropriate services proportionate to predicted growth.

The Streetscene service will be incorporated into the new operating model, and therefore cannot be reviewed in isolation – it has to be considered in the wider context of prioritising and resourcing demand.

In the meantime, the current ongoing service challenge and review measures will continue as follows.

2.2 The Streetscene service is continuously reviewed and flexed to adapt to changing demands, both short term and longer term where known or anticipated. This is mainly done via realigning existing staff and fleet resources to deliver defined priorities as set in the Council Plan and other strategic objectives.

This review process is undertaken annually through service and budget planning and any additional pressures are considered in the wider corporate context, so that they can be balanced against other service priorities.

Throughout the year, operational peaks and troughs in demand are monitored, and the Streetscene service is flexed to respond to reactive need. Further work is planned via the One Council Programme to review demand and to continue to move towards demand led service provision, in response to clearly defined customer need.

2.3 Succession Planning is undertaken regularly in order to respond to modern and different ways of working and as employees retire or move on, job roles are reviewed and adapted where appropriate to ensure that new recruits have the required skill sets to deliver services in a more efficient and effective way. This is supplemented by training and upskilling of existing team members where appropriate and affordable, and by investing in modern equipment, technology and machinery to reduce the physical demands and risks of work tasks, and to improve systems for receiving, allocating and actioning service requests.

2.4 The Council has a Fleet Replacement Programme for all of its operational vehicles which is funded by the capital programme and is regularly reviewed with a view to staggering fleet replacement to spread expenditure more evenly over each year, rather than have significant peaks and troughs. This, as it is a 10 year rolling strategy, assists with long to medium term financial planning and allows flexibility to move items back or forward in the programme in accordance with their remaining useful life. It also helps to maximise the economic life of particular vehicles and ensure that the Council achieves the best value for money possible for each vehicle and item of machinery/equipment. The Streetscene fleet is included in this replacement programme and has been regularly renewed at appropriate junctures.

2.5 In terms of next steps for Streetscene, it has been agreed that the team will be included in phase 2 of the One Front Door/Customer Hub project in the One Council programme and this will present opportunities to develop and improve the service further, particularly around the themes of technology, productivity and prioritisation, and the customer journey. Work has commenced and is in progress with the team, and will continue throughout 2022. Work is also in progress on the Mobile Multi-Functional (MMF) Team project as part of the One Front Door Programme, and this is linked to Streetscene, but separate and distinct from it.

2.6 It is also intended that the Customer Hub and the internal support services hub will field and triage customer enquiries and service requests for Streetscene, filtering out requests which are not the responsibility of the service and also dealing with administrative and process driven tasks (eg financial day books and invoices etc) thereby freeing up manager and supervisor capacity to deal with specialist Streetscene issues. In terms of MMF, this team will focus on community safety and environmental crime issues, perhaps providing some limited operational capacity around low level, minor littering and waste incidents which will allow Streetscene to focus on core cleansing activities and reduce the call on reactive work. It is likely that there will be some elements of crossover between the teams, as the

One Council operating model develops and becomes embedded, and this is a normal and anticipated element of the agile working approach.

2.7 A further linked initiative is the Councils recently approved Urban Tree Planting Strategy. As part of this sustainable environment and carbon capture initiative, significant areas of tree planting will be undertaken over the coming years, starting this spring. This will provide opportunities to review grounds maintenance operations on sites where planting reduces the need for regular grass cutting, reducing future maintenance burdens and ultimately creating new wildlife habitat in support of the Councils Nature Recovery initiatives.

### 3. **Proposal**

**That**

**3.1 The committee receives the report and acknowledges the current position in relation to Streetscene and the work which is in progress as part of the One Council Programme**

### 4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 To respond to a request from the committee to review the strategic direction of operational services based on the next 5 – 10 years growth and consider how the service can be protected and grown, proportionate to predicted growth.

### 5. **Options Considered**

5.1 The options considered are set out in the body of this report.

### 6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 The council has a number of statutory duties in relation to street cleansing, grounds maintenance and other activities which are delivered by the Streetscene team.

### 7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 No negative equality impacts have been identified as part of this report.

### 8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 There are no new financial and resource implications arising directly from this report.

### 9. **Major Risks**

9.1 There are major risks associated with the council's statutory duties and other activities delivered by the Streetscene team. These risks are recorded and managed via a number of mechanisms, including health and safety risk assessment, monitoring and recording, budget management, business continuity planning, inspection and repair and legislative compliance.

### 10. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)**

10.1

The council's Streetscene function contributes towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals 3, 13 and 15 and the council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

LGA Guidance is here:-

[https://30312f94-9adb-4918-80dd-708c590bada3.usrfiles.com/ugd/30312f\\_79b08331d11e44bc888e1ee08c05474e.pdf](https://30312f94-9adb-4918-80dd-708c590bada3.usrfiles.com/ugd/30312f_79b08331d11e44bc888e1ee08c05474e.pdf)



11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 This report does not require a key decision.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 None

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 None