



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**REPORT ON THE FINDINGS OF THE
STREET SCENE SELECT COMMITTEE**

OCTOBER 2018

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why we had a Select committee

- 1.1. The select committee was established to look at the quality of the local street scene in North East Lincolnshire, including the extent of littering, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour in order to give it more significant and direct attention. The review looked at the extent of the Council's investment in its Smarter Neighbourhoods programme, related enforcement activities and how the Council work with communities to enhance civic pride and change behaviours.

What we found

- 1.2. Over the course of the select committee the Members heard a lot of issues raised by the residents and ward councillors that needed addressing, but they also heard a lot of detail and evidence from officers of hard work already being done to combat these issues. There was further work required around the future provision of alleyways clearances, and the select committee would like to be kept inform on how this progresses. The select committee made a number of recommendations and these are set out within this report.

What happens next

- 1.3. The select committee's report will be referred, for approval, to a special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 14th November 2018 before recommendations are made to Cabinet on 28th November 2018.

Councillor Steve Beasant
Chair of the select committee

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Operational Services such as waste collection, street cleansing and grounds maintenance have tended to be traditional in their design and management approach. Whilst organisational change at the Council has increased in pace and intensity, change in this type of operational service has lagged behind whilst we have endeavoured to continue to deliver the traditional service model.
- 2.2 The services are often high profile and are valued by the public and Council Members and in the past were resourced to be able to be highly reactive in nature. As budgets have reduced, this reactive approach, dealing with symptoms of issues rather than addressing causes and managing demand has actually increased the pressures on service at a time of reducing budgets.
- 2.3 To improve our agreed outcomes within a reduced budget a programme of change has been developed called the “Smarter Neighbourhoods Programme”. This programme has focused on key areas of change such as the redesign of the waste and recycling collections, review of street cleansing and grounds maintenance, increased community responsibility and behaviour change.
- 2.4 This in turn has led to necessary changes in skills required and structural reviews and so increased levels of uncertainty, has affected morale, impacted on public perception and our relationship with our clients and customers. The priority programme of work, initially dealing with key areas first, has had a knock on effect on other areas, which were included within the second phase review.
- 2.5 The first phase of the Smarter Neighbourhood programme which is a business transformation programme has;
- Redesigned and modernised services within the budget envelope
 - Promoted self-help and community resilience
 - Encouraged behaviour change and opportunities to get involved
 - Prioritised education and awareness of environmental issues like recycling
 - Focussed on robust enforcement of environmental anti-social behaviour
 - Developed systems to improve service delivery
- 2.6 There is much more to do, and the second phase of the work programme is underway. Much of the impact currently being felt within our local communities is part of the next phase of work includes:
- A review of the waste strategy
 - A review of Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance
 - Community engagement, education and enforcement, including fly tipping, littering and dog fouling

- A review of our Bring-to sites
 - Proposals regarding Bulky and Commercial Waste
 - Litter bin improvements
 - Alternate waste collection pilots, building on the first phase of work, launched in November 2017.
- 2.7 We have seen improved engagement with communities and groups, and working together, have begun to address behaviour change within our local areas. We will continue this work throughout phase two of the programme, as achieving this shift in education, awareness and behaviour is fundamental to the achievement of our outcomes.
- 2.8 The rise of social media has had an impact in terms of this universal service. Issues are immediately reportable (not necessarily to the service) in a live environment and this impacts on the public perception of the council and the service it delivers in these services areas.
- 2.9 The select committee looked at the quality of the local street scene, the extent of littering, fly tipping and anti-social behaviour; giving it more significant and direct attention. The review was tasked with looking at the extent of the Council's investment in its Smarter Neighbourhoods programme, related enforcement activities and how we work with our communities to enhance civic pride and change behaviour.
- 2.10 The borough as a whole was considered as part of this review, and also took in the petition relating to the cutting times of grass in public areas within Cleethorpes.
- 2.11 The select committee had the following areas of focus within the Smarter Neighbourhoods Programme:
- Education and behaviour change of our residents
 - Anti-social behaviour in terms of littering and fly tipping
 - Our current financial position and where the budget is being spent
 - Interaction with the community and how to improve on this
 - Grass cutting on open spaces, parks, verges etc
 - Street cleaning
 - Fly tipping and Bring to sites
 - Relationships with stakeholders
 - Enforcement
 - Member engagement and contact – use of DASH
 - Process and criteria for replacement bins and boxes
 - Local residents views and perceptions

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1. Select committees do not have to be proportionally representative but every effort is made to ensure that all political groups are represented. The following Members were seated on the Street Scene Select Committee:

Councillors:

- Steve Beasant (Liberal Democrats)
- Karl Wilson (Labour)
- Gemma Sheridan (Labour)
- John Fenty (Conservative)
- Ron Shepherd (Conservative)

3.2. This topic falls with the remit of the following portfolio holder:

Councillor Matthew Patrick (Environment, Transport and Energy)

- Waste, Recycling and Environmental Management
- Street scene, parks, Open Spaces and Neighbourhood Services

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

4.1. For the purposes of the select committee, street scene is defined as:

- Physical environment:
 - Grass cutting, trees and weeds
 - Play park maintenance
 - Kerbside gullies
 - Street cleaning
- Environmental anti-social behaviour:
 - Dog fouling
 - Alleyways – council approach to private alleyways
 - Fly-tipping
 - Graffiti and fly posting
 - Litter on public highway and open spaces
 - Play park damage

4.2. The select committee agreed a set of Key Objectives which were to:

- Understand the impact of service changes upon the “Street Scene” in North East Lincolnshire.
- Identify areas of potential improvement focusing on building community resilience and increasing civic pride and make recommendations to Cabinet.
- Review the implementation of Litter Bin Review referred by Cabinet.

5. RISK AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 5.1. Members had due regard to the management of risk throughout the select committee process. Members remained mindful of financial constraints and the need to deliver services differently but within the budget envelope provided. The select committee were attentive to the impact of street scene issues on residents, particularly in terms of health, public safety and pollution. While failure to respond to these issues could potentially lead to a significant reputational impact for the Council, there was also an opportunity to promote community pride for the benefit of the whole Borough.

6. INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED / EVIDENCE GATHERED

- 6.1. The select committee was held over five sessions plus an initial scoping meeting. The sessions were held on the following dates and were themed as follows:

Wednesday 19th September 2018

Opening presentation from officers and the opportunity for Members to ask questions and seek clarification on any matters. The select committee also considered the Cabinet report on the Litter Bin Review, and had the opportunity to feedback any additional comments prior to being received by Cabinet on the 26th September.

Monday 24th September 2018

Ward councillors were invited to address the select committee and raise any issues in their wards. Members of the public who completed a consultation were also invited to address the select committee; and a petition from Councillor Brookes regarding the grassing cutting schedule for parks and open spaces in Cleethorpes was also considered.

Wednesday 26th September 2018

Community groups and voluntary sector representatives, who completed the questionnaire, were invited to address the select committee. The Chair of Town and Parish Liaison Committee was also invited.

Tuesday 2nd October 2018 (closed meeting)

This was a closed session for the select committee to consider the draft Cabinet reports on the future of street cleansing and grounds maintenance, and our bulky waste services. The reports had to be considered in an exempt session as they contained sensitive information.

Thursday 4th October 2018

The final session was reserved for seeking any further clarification needed on any areas previously covered and to form the basis for recommendations.

6.2. The select committee met initially to scope the remit of the review and identify which stakeholders should be invited to provide statements, what visits they would find useful and outline what they would focus on in the meetings. From this the Members requested that site visits be conducted around the borough to see first-hand the issues relating to the scope. The scope document can be found at appendix 1. There were two tours arranged which covered all areas of the borough and on these the Members saw the following:

- fly tipping including fly tipping in alleyways
- weeds, littering, overflowing bins
- parks and open spaces including ponds
- graffiti / vandalism
- dog fouling

An example of what members saw are captured in the pictures below:



- 6.3. A consultation on street scene was sent out to 115 people who had previously registered an interest in completing consultations for the authority. In addition, it was also sent to 150 community groups, all Elected Members and to Town and Parish Councils. A total of 113 people completed the survey and a further 68 people started, but did not finish. Those that completed the survey were given the opportunity to attend the select committee and address the Members directly, to pose their questions and receive answers. Following this offer four residents or community group representatives, seven elected members and the Chair of Town and Parish Council Liaison Committee attended. A representative from the Lincolnshire Housing Partnership was also invited to address issues regarding grass cutting and future working arrangements, and colleagues from ENGIE attended to address issues on Highways and Planning Enforcement.
- 6.4. The results of the consultation were shared in detail with the select committee and reflected the issues highlighted in this report. The results were considered by the select committee during their 3rd and 4th session.
- 6.5. The opening session saw the select committee receive a detailed presentation from officers which outlined the service areas within the scope, gave an over view of statutory duties and highlighted some of the challenges they have faced which have contributed to issues on street scene this past year (appendix 2). Throughout the duration of the select committee, key themes and areas of concern became apparent and these are captured below.

Street Cleansing

- 6.6. With regards to the street cleansing a number of reoccurring issues came up across all the sessions as follows:
- Over flowing litter bins and recycling tubs, including litter being blown around streets and gardens due to adverse weather. Although it was not within the scope, Members queried whether anything was being done with the recycling boxes to address this. It was also noted that refuse operatives were not picking up any litter dropped while on the rounds. Ward councillors were frustrated that as the litter bins were not being emptied often enough, especially in high footfall areas they were left to overflow creating additional litter. Some wards had received community litter picks, but this was not happening often enough.
 - Black bags being left at litter bins and Bring to sites from both residents and commercial businesses were causing concerns and could pose potential public health issues. The food waste from fast food restaurants was also attracting rats and foxes. Members queried whether stronger enforcement could be put in place, and asked if enforcement was followed up if culprits could be identified.

- One ward councillor suggested that businesses should be made responsible for their own frontage. Owners should be encouraged to take responsibility for keeping it clean and tidy, helping to achieve community pride. This could include picking up litter, removal of leaves etc. The select committee wanted to see stronger enforcement on business owners to this effect.
- The theft of wheelie bins was discussed as was the storage of wheelie bins, specifically for those in terraced houses who did not have front gardens which was where the majority of complaints came from. The select committee wanted to see something being done to address these issues, especially wheelie bins blocking pavement access. The select committee expressed the view that wheelie bins should be kept in the back gardens and the use of the alleyways optimised. It was believed this would also encourage residents to maintain alleyways and proactively report any issues of fly tipping.
- Overgrown hedges on private land/property was raised a number of times throughout the sessions, and as a result colleagues from Engie were invited to attend the fourth session to address Members' concerns. Engie colleagues explained the process followed and the challenges faced, particularly regarding empty properties. An assurance was provided that these types of complaints were actioned but it was dependent on the issues being logged in the first place.
- On a similar theme, ward councillors explained that they had received complaints from residents regarding low hanging branches on trees, on both council and private land. These were obstructing the highway for pedestrians. The Select committee were advised that those belonging to the council were cut only once this year. This was due to resources being required elsewhere, dealing with other issues being raised and consequences from the adverse weather.
- Members sought clarification on the process for street sweeping, as a Member had witnessed sweepers cleaning streets more than once when it was not required. The select committee felt that the rounds should be reviewed and resource directed to areas of need; high foot fall areas would require more sweeping compared to others for example. This was noted by officers for further consideration. Parked cars also caused issues for the sweepers to access some streets and restricted the level of cleaning. Members queried whether temporary traffic regular orders (TROs) could be used to help in situations where access was needed. The select committee also raised concerns regarding the length of time it took for TROs to be implemented; officers advised that there was currently a review of the process and the Members comments would be passed on.
- Due to the weather the leaves were already starting to fall from the trees following a hot dry summer, and now strong winds. Ward

councillors had raised that the leaves were starting to mulch on pavements and gather on the roads, which not only made surfaces slippery but also ended up blocking the gullies. It was feared that this would then result in flooding should there be heavy rain.

- 6.7. The select committee considered the Cabinet report on the Litter Bin review, a project that would remove obsolete bins, bins at the wrong location and replace with new bins that were the right size and quality. Members were pleased to see that ward councillors would be involved in deciding the location of the new litter bins and that a pilot scheme would be rolled out in parks and open spaces to analyse where they were required. The select committee requested that high footfall areas such as Cleethorpes Sea Front and Grimsby Town Centre be considered in isolation and not as part of the ward as they receive a high number of visitors and would require more bins; Members didn't want this to have a negative impact on the remaining areas of those wards. It was also important to consider that bins would be required on the outskirts of these high footfall areas, for people leaving the area. With regard to the solar bins, the select committee queried whether a pilot could be considered. In response, officers advised Members that it was not cost effective to trial the solar bins everywhere, but they were already being piloted in a small location due to the cost of the bins. It was clarified that Borough-wide use of the solar bins would not be cost effective as there could be a risk of vandalism in certain areas. The aim of the solar compacting bins was that they could be supplied with extendable wheeled bins and had a capacity of 10 times the volume of waste normally held. This would in turn reduce manual handling for staff and the units come with real time data which would enable the service to only go and empty the bins when they are full. The select committee felt that the new litter bins could also bring a potential income with regards to charging for advertising on them; officers acknowledged this and agreed to look into it. The select committee were happy to endorse the recommendations within the Cabinet report and were hopeful that the new litter bins would help towards the issues raised regarding the bins overflowing so often and causing litter.
- 6.8. Within the select committee's exempt session they received two reports both of which identified the current position for the Grounds Maintenance service and the Street Cleansing service; it reviewed all elements of past and present delivery and outlined options and recommendations for service improvement. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on any matters. The select committee welcomed the proposed service improvements and believed that the proposals would help make some important changes over the next 2 years. The recommendations were endorsed by the select committee as laid out within the report, subject to confirmation as to the financial viability of proposals over the longer term.

Recommendations;

- (1) That street cleansing work schedules be reviewed and scheduled on the basis of need and that a culture of continuous improvement be adopted.**
- (2) That the use of temporary Traffic Regulation Orders be explored to assist in situations where access is required to carry out street cleansing.**
- (3) That the Council engage with shop owners to encourage them to keep their frontage clean and tidy; and to implement enforcement to this effect.**
- (4) That the recommendations within the Litter Bin Review report be endorsed.**
- (5) That the recommendations of the Review of the Street Cleansing Service be endorsed, subject to consideration of long term financial viability.**

Grounds Maintenance

6.9. With regards to grounds maintenance, the issues that came up across all the sessions are detailed below:

- Concerns around weeds, and the rate at which they have grown this year. One ward councillor also raised that one or two streets had been missed on the rounds, so the weeds hadn't been treated at all, although it was acknowledged this could be easily done. In response to this, the select committee asked officers to look into a way of marking the streets/street concerns to avoid this happening again. Members asked whether the weed killer used was effective and used correctly; as the weeds had been out of control this year. Members questioned whether the weeds had grown too fast given the warm weather or whether staff had failed to catch the weeds early enough. Officers advised that weed spraying rounds for the whole borough took 14 weeks each cycle, and unfortunately hadn't been completed as often as they would have liked due to reduced resources. The Council also have to follow legislation along with duty of care to our residents in terms of how we apply weed chemical including the product we use. Under the Plant Protection Products (Sustainable Use) Regulations 2012 the Council must demonstrate due diligence in taking 'reasonable precautions' to protect human health and the environment when using pesticides. Therefore the 'contact' weed killer used by the Council was not as strong as the pesticides available over the counter.
- Specific concern was raised over the appearance of the A180, including the roundabout and grass verges; as the entrance to the

town this was appalling and required attention. Officers acknowledged this and agreed with Members.

- The River Freshney was discussed as ward councillors had reported a number of complaints from residents regarding the unsightly overgrown grass banks. Litter would also get blown into the long grass which added to the eyesore. Members appreciated the grass was left to grow for ecology reasons but queried whether something could be done to make it low maintenance. The select committee asked if wild flowers could be considered along the river banks, in areas on open spaces and along grass verges; this would not only look pretty and provide ecology benefits but would also reduce the area of grass cutting. The benefits of In Bloom were also raised by Immingham ward councillors. Other Members echoed this and often looked towards Immingham Town Council as a flagship of In Bloom and an area which had succeeded in achieving community pride.
- General ground maintenance issues were covered by various ward councillors including local ponds not being cleaned, play equipment often being damaged and broken glass being left in parks as well as outside pubs and shops. Officers reassured the select committee that when broken glass was reported it was actioned within 1-2 days and as a priority, depending on available resources. With regard to play equipment, the select committee were advised that when this was damaged there wasn't the money available to replace it and therefore it often got removed.
- During the officers presentation on opening session officers advised that there were currently 80 un adopted walk ways throughout the borough that also required maintaining; but there was no clear ownership and the cost of these repairs were currently sitting with the Council. Members were provided with additional information on where these walk ways were by ward. The select committee asked that options for these pieces of land be explored.

- 6.10. A petition on the 'maintenance schedule for public grassed areas in Cleethorpes' from Councillor Brookes was received by the Council in July 2017, but with his permission and due to other mitigating circumstances was put on hold. It was agreed with Councillor Brookes and the portfolio holder earlier in the year that the petition would be considered as part of select committee process, and therefore Councillor Brookes as lead petitioner was invited to address the select committee at session 2. The complaints which had led to the petition were in relation to the reduction of maintenance grass cutting within the ward and that the grass was being left to grow long. Residents raised a number of issues with this; litter was gathering in the long grass, dog fouling was being covered or got hidden and when the grass was eventually cut it would cause the litter to be cut up into small pieces and spread across the open spaces. It was also noted that when the grass was cut it was left sitting which would look unsightly, and cause the fresh grass to die off. The select committee considered the

issues and concerns raised and the Chair reassured Councillor Brookes that they would be addressed.

- 6.11. Within the select committee's exempt session they received two reports both of which identified the current position for the Grounds Maintenance service and the Street Cleansing service. With regard to the Grounds Maintenance report, the select committee were given the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification of matters. Members felt that more work was required on community engagement and publicising the ground maintenance schedules. They explained that it would be useful for both ward councillors and residents to be able to see on the Council's website when activities such as grass cutting and weed spraying were due. The select committee welcomed the report and were happy to endorse the recommendations as laid out.

Recommendations:

- (6) That options for the maintenance or ownership on the 80 un-adopted walk ways within the borough be explored, and brought back to the select committee for consideration.**
- (7) That the use of wild flowers in parks, open spaces and grass verges, in consultation with Ward Councillors and communities, be supported.**
- (8) That it be noted that the petition requesting improvements to grass cutting in Cleethorpes had been addressed within the review of the grounds maintenance service report.**
- (9) That the recommendations of the review of the grounds maintenance service be endorsed, subject to consideration of long term financial viability.**

Anti-Social Behaviour, including enforcement

- 6.12. The issues and concerns raised regarding anti-social behaviour and enforcement are detailed below. Also covered within this element of the scope was a discussion around alleyways - how they've been cleared previously and what our options are going forward.

- In response to concerns from ward councillors and the select committee around dog fouling and the current lack of enforcement, officers advised that a new contract was in place to tackle this. Cabinet had recently agreed to delegate a number of key decisions required in order to partner with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council who would be enforcing against environmental anti-social behaviour issues such as dog fouling and littering. Penalties would be issued for anyone caught as part

of this service level agreement; which was for a period of two years (with the addition of three optional years if successful). The Select committee were in full support of this approach, and felt it would go some way to address irresponsible behaviour by some residents in the community.

- The select committee heard from the majority of ward councillors that additional black bags were being left next to litter bins across the borough. The content of the black bags ranged from household to commercial rubbish.
- Another reoccurring issue which came up from both the select committee themselves and the witnesses invited in, was fly posting. This was an issue which seemed to be increasing around the borough; it was damaging to the street scene, and was often done badly. Colleagues from Engie were invited to address the select committee and they explained the enforcement process. Consent was required and there were different challenges dependent on whether the activity occurred on private or council land. While officers had the right to remove posters on Council land or the public highway, this required a staffing resource. The select committee suggested that the Council should publicise when fines or prosecutions had been issued to promote that this type of behaviour was not acceptable and would be challenged in the hope that this would act as a deterrent.
- The select committee was surprised to learn that the Council played a role with regard to following up shop lifting incidents (within the town centre), and felt that this should be the responsibility of the Police and individual businesses themselves to ensure their safety and that of the customers. With our resources being limited, the Members believed that we should be concentrating on issues such as drug dealing or use within our town centre as they felt that the residents were now starting to feel unsafe again due to a perceived rise in drug related incidents.

6.13. The issue of fly tipping was the single biggest issue raised by all involved, fly tipping in alleyways was also a major issue. The select committee were advised that although fly tip removal was not part of the current service tasks, it did account for the majority of street cleansing staff time. Fly tipping hotspots had been identified and were now under surveillance by rapid deployment cameras. Two cameras were in use by the Community Protection and Compliance teams and an extra eight were on order. While on the borough tours before the select committee began, Members saw fly tipping within the borough first-hand; some in alleyways and some in open spaces and it consisted of fridges, mattresses, furniture, nappies, clothing and commercial waste. Members wanted to see more being done about rogue landlords who would clear their properties out and fly tip the items. The select committee also believed that if we had a more robust bulky waste collection recycling service, and more relaxed rules about the access to the community recycling centres it could help reduce the amount of fly tipping.

Ward councillors asked if more could be done in terms of retail fly tipping, officers advised that if it was clear from packaging where the litter had come from then the retailers could be held responsible under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. With regards to the community recycling centres, officers informed Members that work was underway to consider future options. These included automatic number plate recognition to reduce waiting times and help with accessibility. Officers welcomed consultation with Members when plans had been identified.

- 6.14. With regards to alleyways, Members were advised that the Probation Service had recently withdrawn their alleyway clearance service. The Community Payback team had confirmed that they were willing to support North East Lincolnshire Council up to two days per week on tasks such as small painting jobs, gardening and litter picks in a variety of settings. Based on the current resources available from the Council, this left a gap that needed to be filled in terms of alleyway clearances. The select committee received a paper laying out a number of options available for consideration to address this gap. Following a detailed discussion of the options, the select committee could not support either of the options as laid out; but wished to see a hybrid of two of the options for consideration. Officers were left tasked with coming up with further options for consideration.
- 6.15. The select committee felt that the Council needed build on the great work already been done with stakeholders in order to be more robust on enforcement and raise the profile of prosecutions and fines when issued.

Recommendations:

- (10) That the Council work with other agencies and partners to develop greater collaboration between services to tackle anti-social behaviour and environmental crime.**
- (11) That a community led pilot scheme for alleyway clearances be developed by exploring options for support from the Council (over the next 12 months).**
- (12) That all legal options and best practice be explored in order to pursue enforcement, particularly in respect of fly-tipping.**
- (13) That there be improved co-ordination between all stakeholders, leading to more robust enforcement processes and higher profile action.**
- (14) That good news stories around the successful removal of fly posting and enforcement of littering and dog fouling be publicised in order to promote effective action with the public.**

Skip It Events and Bulky Waste Service Provision

- 6.16. The Skip It! initiative was designed to give something back to the community along with building relations with the community and providing educating material on recycling. The Council has provided skips and vehicles for residents to dispose of their unwanted waste with a view to help kerb fly tipping. Locations have been set up in each ward, and although the Skip It! events were ongoing at the time of the select committee, it had been very well received. Ward councillors and Members on the select committee spoke highly of the events, the turn out from residents was remarkable and it was believed it was having an impact on fly tipping. At the event, additional free recycling boxes and educational material were also being given out to those who requested them with the intention of improving our recycling rates. The select committee would like to see the Skip It! events continue but with more engagement with ward councillors on the location.
- 6.17. In conjunction with the Skip it! update and figures from officers, the select committee considered the draft cabinet report on an improved bulky waste collection service which included a business case for Cabinet's approval on 24th October 2018. The proposed new service would prevent fly tipping by offering an attractive alternative to residents and improve the quality of the local environment by reducing the current level of reactive work which was diverting resources from programmed street cleansing work. The select committee hoped that should the new bulky waste service be approved by Cabinet, it would reduce the future need for initiatives such as Skip it!. Although the pilot had been well received, Members felt future events should be approached with caution as it could end up being costly to the Council and encourage adverse behaviours, such as holding onto items specifically for the Skip it events. The select committee had the opportunity to ask any questions and seek clarifications on any matters relating to the report; the consideration of this report was done in exempt session. The recommendations as laid out in the report submitted, were endorsed by the select committee.

Recommendations:

(15) That the positive feedback on the Skip It Campaign be noted, and the scheme be reviewed following evaluation of the pilot.

(16) That the recommendations within the Bulky Waste Collection Service report be endorsed.

Lincolnshire Housing Partnership

- 6.18. Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP) was invited to address the select committee and engage with the process. When LHP took over from

Shoreline, there was some confusion over land ownership which led to certain areas not having their grass cuts for weeks on end. Ms Bridget Lloyd attended the select committee and explained the reasons behind the grass not being cut in certain areas. The merger took place at the same time as the contract for grass cutting was renewed; this also coincided with a lot of rain. The outgoing contractor missed the last cut, and therefore the new contractor had to play catch up. Ms Lloyd acknowledged that this had caused a significant amount of dissatisfaction for residents and customers across the borough.

- 6.19. Recently, LHP colleagues had met with Council officers to iron out some of the land ownership issues and start the conversations required in order to work together collaboratively in the future. In response to questions from the select committee, Ms Lloyd explained that LHP were currently in the process of re-budgeting service areas which included rolling out a repairs programme for their customers to try and encourage lease holders to take part in improving roofing, fencing etc. They were also creating a bespoke anti-social behaviour team and Ms Lloyd was hopeful that they would work in partnership with the Council's own anti-social behaviour and enforcement teams and Humberside Police to present improved and more robust services. Ms Lloyd confirmed that although LHP have not previously had the capacity to gather evidence on fly tipping and other anti-social behaviours matters, this would be a focus for the new team. With regard to the Skip It! events, Ms Lloyd welcomed them and expressed what a fantastic initiative it was; she felt it had a very positive impact on fly tipping within their areas and explained that LHP would like to get involved in future. Ms Lloyd would like to see future events located on LHP land as many tenants did not have access to transport; with this in mind she offered the use of their land and asked that they be engaged with in order to provide support to any future initiatives.
- 6.20. Ms Lloyd went on to advise the select committee that LHP would soon be consulting with their customers and stakeholders, which would include the Council, to ask what was important to them; the results of this would be fed into their corporate strategy. Ms Lloyd wanted to reassure the select committee that, although the working relationship didn't get off to the best start, LHP were committed to working closely with their stakeholders to achieve common outcomes. The select committee welcomed the update and the offer of further support for future Skip It! events. The Chair followed on from this and explained to Ms Lloyd that many years ago Shoreline had a service level agreement with the Council which helped fund the community pride team. The service level agreement covered matrixed foot patrols tasked into Shoreline estates and warden type neighbourhood development activity, in addition to enforcement activity around dog fouling and litter. The Chair asked if LHP would be willing to have any similar arrangement going forward, Ms Lloyd agreed to take this back to the LHP Leadership Team for discussion and would come back

with an answer in the future. It was noted this was likely to happen after the select committee process had concluded.

- 6.21. The select committee raised concerns around empty homes and the anti-social behaviour they can attract including fly tipping, and asked what LHP approach to this was. Ms Lloyd advised Members that it was in their best interest to keep all empty homes well maintained and ready for tenants to view or move into as this was potential income; she went on to reassure that this included gardens and that any fly tipping was removed as soon as possible. Within her presentation, Ms Lloyd explained that some of their residents had struggled initially with the change in the bin collection rota the previous year, when the general waste and recycling went to alternate week collections. It was noted that not all tenants had brown wheelie bins, and LHP had struggled to purchase these commercially for their tenants; officers acknowledged this and reassured the select committee that this was a simple fix that could be actioned straight away.
- 6.22. Overall the discussion and engagement with LHP was positive and the Chair was hopeful that positive changes would come from further collaborative working.

Recommendation:

(17) That the offer of support towards any future Skip It! events be noted, and that officers engage with Lincolnshire Housing Partnership when making future arrangements.

Community Engagement

- 6.23. A strong message came across throughout the select committee from Elected Members, residents and stakeholders that clearer communication was required. It was believed that residents did want to help more, engage with community litter picks and take pride in their communities but were unsure who to contact to set one up, or how to go about organising one. Feedback received from current community groups was that the Council did not harness the skills already available. When the leader of a community group was ready to stand down, groups tended to disperse, therefore community groups required more support in order to sustain their activities. The use of community asset transfers had been successful and a good example of helping community groups and town and parish councils to help themselves. It encouraged collaborative working between all involved and had positive benefits for the community.
- 6.24. With regard to fly tipping, it was noted that implementation of a simple hotline could increase the amount of calls the council received. Although fly tipping could be reported via the Council's website, not everyone had access to the internet and the select committee felt the process should be made as simple as possible to encourage people to call and report it.

What the select committee hoped for was to encourage residents to have the confidence to report someone for fly tipping and provide reassurance that action would be taken and their details remain confidential. The Council required the public's help to gather evidence and catch those guilty of fly tipping in order to prosecute.

- 6.25. During the session with ward councillors, it became apparent that our Elected Members were not all aware of the services the council offered e.g. composting. It was also noted that during the course of the process, the select committee were keen to receive facts, figures and details by ward. The select committee wanted to see this incorporated into future communications with Elected Members in order to assist them on ward issues. Simple yet effective changes could be put in place to increase communication by optimising our website; this could include interactive maps of wards to show schedules of grass cutting, weed spraying, refuse collections and other council services.
- 6.26. Lastly the select committee heard that residents were not happy with the way the council was conducting consultations as it always seemed to be via a website and requiring a computer or smart device. Officers advised Members that paper copies of consultations and questionnaires were made available at local libraries, and explained that it was too expensive to send paper copy questionnaires out to every household in the borough. A local community group asked the Council to consider engaging in different ways as not everyone had access to the internet or could get out to a local library. They would like to see the council engaging with residents by getting out and out and speaking to people face to face. Getting out into the community could send a positive message and allow direct engagement with residents.

Recommendations:

- (18) That communications to the public and Members on guidance about service areas be reviewed and improved.**
- (19) That reporting arrangements be reviewed and new options explored to increase the public's reporting of fly-tipping.**
- (20) That enhanced ward based information on street scene activity and enforcement to be provided to Elected Members on a quarterly basis.**

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1. Over the course of the select committee the Members heard a lot of issues raised by the residents and ward councillors that needed addressing, but they also heard a lot of detail and evidence from officers of hard work

already being done to address these issues. The select committee were reassured by the proposals being brought to Cabinet on Street Cleansing, Ground Maintenance and the Bulky Waste service reviews and endorsed the recommendations laid out in the reports submitted. The recommendations within these reports seem to address a number of issues highlighted during the select committee, including the issued raised by Councillors Brookes' petition.

- 7.2. There was further work required around the future provision of alleyways clearances, and the Select committee would like to be kept informed on how this progresses. The Chair also requested that the select committee reconvene in 12 months' time to receive an update from officers in terms of the recommendations and whether services had seen improvements or if the issued remained. The recommendations once endorsed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agreed by Cabinet would be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any further work could be referred back to the select committee for further investigation.

Recommendation:

(21) That the Street Scene Select committee be reconvened in 12 months' time to receive an update on progress.

8. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That street cleansing work schedules be reviewed and scheduled on the basis of need and that a culture of continuous improvement be adopted.
- (2) That the use of temporary Traffic Regulation Orders be explored to assist in situations where access is required to carry out street cleansing.
- (3) That the Council engage with shop owners to encourage them to keep their frontage clean and tidy; and to implement enforcement to this effect.
- (4) That the recommendations within the Litter Bin Review report be endorsed.
- (5) That the recommendations of the Review of the Street Cleansing Service be endorsed, subject to consideration of long term financial viability.
- (6) That options for the maintenance or ownership on the 80 un-adopted walk ways within the borough be explored.

- (7) That the use of wild flowers in parks, open spaces and grass verges, in consultation with Ward Councillors and communities, be supported.
- (8) That it be noted that the petition requesting improvements to grass cutting in Cleethorpes had been addressed within the review of the grounds maintenance service report.
- (9) That the recommendations of the review of the grounds maintenance service be endorsed, subject to consideration of long term financial viability.
- (10) That the Council work with other agencies and partners to develop greater collaboration between services to tackle anti-social behaviour and environmental crime.
- (11) That a community led pilot scheme for alleyway clearances be developed by exploring options for support from the Council (over the next 12 months).
- (12) That all legal options and best practice be explored in order to pursue enforcement, particularly in respect of fly-tipping.
- (13) That there be improved co-ordination between all stakeholders, leading to more robust enforcement processes and higher profile action.
- (14) That good news stories around the successful removal of fly posting and enforcement of littering and dog fouling be publicised in order to promote effective action with the public.
- (15) That the positive feedback on the Skip It Campaign be noted, and the scheme be reviewed following evaluation of the pilot.
- (16) That the recommendations within the Bulky Waste Collection Service report be endorsed.
- (17) That the offer of support towards any future Skip It! events be noted, and that officers engage with Lincolnshire Housing Partnership when making future arrangements.
- (18) That communications to the public and Members on guidance about service areas be reviewed and improved.
- (19) That reporting arrangements be reviewed and new options explored to increase the public's reporting of fly-tipping.
- (20) That enhanced ward based information on street scene activity and enforcement to be provided to Elected Members on a quarterly basis.

- (21) That the Street Scene Select committee be reconvened in 12 months' time to receive an update on progress.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION

9.1. The following reports are background documentation for the select committee and can be found on the Council's website:

- Review of Neighbourhood Operations (including making waste pay) - Cabinet Report 17th February 2016
<http://archive.nelincs.gov.uk/committees/committees.aspx?commid=10&meetid=2502>
- Review of Operations & Making Waste Pay – Cabinet Report 3rd August 2016
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/meetings/cabinet-3/>
- Smarter Neighbourhood Operations Project Review and Governance Update – Cabinet Report 23rd November 2016
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/meetings/cabinet-5/>
- Smarter Neighbourhoods Operations Project Review (grounds and waste) – Cabinet Report - 12th April 2017
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/meetings/cabinet-10/>
- General Statement of Enforcement Policy – Cabinet Report 12th April 2017
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/meetings/cabinet-10/>
- Smarter Neighbourhoods Operations Project Review – Cabinet Report 30th August 2017
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/meetings/cabinet-18/>
- Environmental Compliance in the Community – Cabinet Report 25th October 2017
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/meetings/cabinet-20/>
- Smarter Neighbourhoods Next Steps – Cabinet Report 14th March 2018
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/meetings/cabinet-25/>
- Street and Parks Litter Bin Upgrade Plan, Installation & Pilot Scheme (capital service statement) 4th June 2018
Exempt document due to commercially sensitive information.
- Depot Rationalisation – Cabinet Report 2nd July 2018
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/meetings/cabinet-30/>

- Dog fouling and litter cabinet report 26th September 2018
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/meetings/cabinet-33/>
- Bulky waste cabinet report 24th September 2018
<https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/meetings/cabinet-34/>

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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10.2 The review was supported by:

- North East Lincolnshire Council
 - Laura Cowie, Scrutiny and Committee Advisor
 - Beverly O'Brien, Scrutiny and Committee Support Officer
 - Sharon Wroot, Director for Resources and Operations
 - Helen Isaacs, Director for Communities
 - Spencer Hunt, Assistant Director Safer NEL
 - Neil Clark, Regulatory Services Strategic Lead
 - Lisa Logan, Strategic Lead Bereavement Services and Ground Maintenance
 - Chris Dunn, Deputy Head of Operations
 - Sara Hemming, Waste Operations Team Managers
 - Drew Hughes, Commissioning and Relationship Manager
 - Sean Topham, Communication and Marketing Advisor
 - Angela Webster, Advanced Practitioner
 - Andrew Dulieu, Communications and Engagement Officer
- Engie
 - Martin Ambler, Enforcement Officer
 - Martin Dixon, Senior Development Management Officer
- Lincolnshire Housing Partnership
 - Bridget Lloyd, Director of Customers

End