

Agenda Item

Report to Place Select Committee

Report of the Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services

7 September 2015

ANNUAL OVERVIEW OF DIRECT SERVICES

The ambition set out in the Council Plan was for a cleaner, greener Stockton-on-Tees which leads the UK in waste minimisation, has excellent parks and green spaces and the highest quality housing provision. It sets out how we will tackle climate change by preparing for potential changes in the services we deliver and how we deliver them in so doing reducing our own carbon footprint. It also details the activity associated with the ambition to have neighbourhoods in which our residents feel pride and have a real sense of belonging and ownership.

Summary

The purpose of the report is to present to members an overview of the Council's Direct Services over the last year, highlighting key achievements and future challenges. The report gives an overview of key achievements during 2014-15, along with a summary of key challenges for the year ahead, and reference to some of the emerging issues which are likely to impact on future delivery and performance of services.

1. Appendix 1 gives further detail regarding the performance indicators that underpin some of the key achievements referred to in report.
2. Officers will present this overview of performance for discussion with the Committee.

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DIRECT SERVICES OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND EMERGING ISSUES

1. KEY WORK AREAS

Care for Your Area - Community Services

- Refuse collection
- Recycling and green waste collection
- Street cleansing
- Grounds maintenance and arboriculture services
- Registration and bereavement services
- Markets
- Community transport
- Asset management

Care for Your Area - Commercial Services

- Heating, ventilation and electrical
- Fleet management
- Vehicle maintenance
- Highways
- Winter maintenance

Waste Management

- Waste minimisation
- Civic amenity site
- Waste strategy
- Waste disposal

2. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS – 2014-2015

- 1) **Direct Services Management Review** - Successfully implemented a key management review within transport and fleet management, which included a large-scale change of key management staff whilst embarking on a process to review and improve the way in which we procure vehicles across the Council.
- 2) **Community Transport** - Successfully incorporated an additional key frontline service into the scope of services provided by Direct Services. Community transport has been incorporated into the service and ongoing joint working parties have already commenced with colleagues in CESC with the aim of delivering savings across both Adults and Education.
- 3) **Customer Satisfaction** - Maintained extremely high customer satisfaction surveys across key areas of service including Refuse Collection (99%) Kerbside Recycling (98%) Street Cleansing (91%) and Grounds Maintenance (89%). The Grounds Maintenance rating is particularly positive especially as we have reduced 40% of the bedding / ornamental areas across the borough this year as part of £300k savings from this service area alone.

3. CHALLENGES DURING 2014-15

- 1) Continuing to deliver a significant range of essential frontline services in the face of extremely challenging times whilst still ensuring the support and engagement of our residents and elected members - £1m removed from revenue budgets in 2014-15 which included the loss of a further 27 FTE operational staff.

- 2) Ongoing difficulties operating large and complex operational services across a range of small depot locations which are no longer fit for purpose.

4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2015-16

- 1) Develop and deliver the Council's Green Vision:
 - a) Develop national excellence in the ultra-low emissions vehicles market
 - b) Locally manage waste and resources via extended industrial park networks
 - c) Undertake a feasibility study for the provision of a crematorium facility within the borough
 - d) Protect and enhance the borough's networks of parks, open spaces and other environmental assets in line with our Green Infrastructure Strategy
 - e) Develop and manage the outdoor environment in ways which will provide multiple benefits for local communities and ensure the borough remains a highly attractive place to visit and to work
 - f) Provide and protect attractive parks and green spaces
 - g) Provide effective management of waste collection and disposal
- 2) Ensure effective public protection:
 - a) Improve quality of life and wellbeing by ensuring clean and safe public spaces

5. EMERGING ISSUES 2015-16

- 1) Ongoing revenue pressures which will impact upon our ability to continue with the same scope and quality of service that we have delivered for well over a decade.
- 2) Ongoing review into the potential for additional depot space / accommodation to deal with the growing demands and size of our operational services
- 3) Continue to incorporate the new street lighting unit into our service portfolio whilst making immediate and sustained operational improvements and efficiencies and, more importantly, ensure that the programme for the street lighting replacement programme is improved.

DIRECT SERVICES – PERFORMANCE UPDATE Q4 2014~15

A. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES)

- 1) EH102 Percentage of household waste landfilled: 7.5% of household waste diverted to landfill during 2014-15. Performance has reduced due to lines at the energy from waste plant being closed for both planned and unplanned essential maintenance, and therefore all waste being diverted to landfill. Target of 5.0% therefore not achieved.
- 2) EH103 Percentage of household waste reused, recycled or composted: 27% of household waste recycled, composted or reused. Seasonal green waste collections saw performance increase to over 30.0% during the summer months, however, as green waste collections ceased in October 2014, quarters three and four have seen performance reduce to below target of 30.0%. Target therefore not achieved.
- 3) EH104 Percentage of household waste used for energy production: 65% of household waste used to recover heat, power and other energy during 2014-15. The reduction is due to the closure of lines at the energy from waste plant for essential maintenance during quarter three, seeing waste diverted to landfill. Despite this the target of 65.0% has been achieved.
- 4) EH105 Percentage of areas with unacceptable levels of litter: 5% of surveyed areas unacceptable for levels of litter. The increase is due to the types of areas being surveyed during the second and third surveys. Industrial land, retail and commercial, highways and high obstruction housing often sees a higher level of litter than other types of land, and is not routinely cleansed as often as other land types. Annual target of <4% not achieved.
- 5) EH106 Percentage of areas with unacceptable levels of detritus: 1% of surveyed areas unacceptable for levels of detritus. Annual target of <5% achieved.

B. GENERAL THEMATIC PERFORMANCE ISSUES

- 1) **Highway Maintenance** - The successful delivery of some key projects for the Council by our Highway Maintenance team including the car parks at Yarm and Preston Park.
- 2) **Wynyard Woodland Country Park** - Stockton Council has been working in partnership with the Forestry Commission on a scheme to encourage Wynyard Woodland Park's native ancient semi-natural woodland habitat to regenerate. Pickard's Meadow is also blooming nearly three years after work began to transform a disused piece of arable land. It is the largest managed area of this type of habitat in the Tees Valley. Stockton Council secured £31,500 from SITA Trust's 'Enriching Nature' programme to transform the area using a mix of meadow seed and hand-collected wildflower seeds from nearby sites, gathered by local volunteers.
- 3) **Wynyard Woodland Park Restoration** - The second phase of a major project to protect and conserve Wynyard Woodland Park is under way. Stockton Council is working with the Forestry Commission to restore Tilery and Brierley Wood within the park. The first phase of work to expand and improve Tilery Car Park at the A689 entrance has now been completed, making it even easier for people to visit the park.
- 4) **John Whitehead Park 'Sport in the Park'** - The Mayor of Stockton officially opened the 'Sport in the Park' facilities at the Billingham Park in July. Work is now complete on the £320,000 project which has seen the refurbishment of existing facilities as well as the installation of a brand new BMX and skatepark and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA).
- 5) **John Whitehead Park 'Heart of the Park'** - Work is almost complete on the £200,000 project to complete the transformation of John Whitehead Park in Billingham. Stockton Council's 'Heart of the Park' project will put the finishing touches to the regeneration of this highly popular town park. The Council has worked in partnership with a range of stakeholders to develop the project.

- 6) **Flood Risk** - Commenced the projects to manage flood risks and build defences at Port Clarence and Lustrum Beck.
- 7) **Allotments** - In partnership with Durham Tees Valley Probation Trust and Community Payback, created 50 new allotments in Thornaby, including 10 half-sized plots designed to be more manageable for older gardeners.