

28 November 2013

**Delivery of the “Working Smarter” Programme:
Theme 3 - Creating Safe, Sustainable and Inclusive Communities**

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Councillor M Arif – Environment
Councillor A Harris – Leisure and Culture
Councillor I Shires – Community Engagement and Voluntary Sector
Councillor Z Ali – Public Health and Protection

Executive Summary:

The council is facing major changes. We will need to identify reductions in spending of at least £105 million over the next four years. There are no corresponding reductions at present in the demands placed on the council from residents or expectations from central government. Indeed pressures continue to increase as a result of an ageing population, changes to welfare and the low performance of the local economy. The council also has to respond to major changes in other public services such as schools, the NHS and police.

As a result of this mixture of pressures the council needs to transform the way services are provided. Working Smarter is the corporate change programme to achieve this transformation. The programme encompasses five dependent themes and includes all major change initiatives underway within the Council.

The main sections within this report provide updates for Theme 3 of the Working Smarter Programme. This theme is concerned with creating and maintaining safe, sustainable and inclusive communities. The work involved in this area includes numerous services responsible for the maintenance and regulation of the local environment and the involvement of local communities.

There are five specific change initiatives underway and these are:

1. Waste Management
2. Look after the roads
3. Provide nice parks & spaces
4. Public safety & protection
5. Getting local people more involved

Outcomes for this Theme have been agreed and are now also included within the Corporate Plan [2013]. The defined outcomes are:

1. Local people value their local environment
2. People are safe, and feel safe, in their local community
3. Local people have a sense of belonging and ownership of their local community
4. There is active participation in the “civil society”
5. The housing needs of local communities are met

Over the last 6 months progress has been made in most of these areas. This report summarises the action taken and the progress being made.

Reason for scrutiny:

Update requested from Scrutiny Panel.

Recommendations:

That the report is noted.

Background papers:

None.

Resource and legal considerations:

There will be resource and legal considerations which arise as we deliver the change resulting from this programme. There are no specific implications from this report.

Citizen impact:

The work detailed within this Theme focuses on achieving a vibrant and safe environment where citizens are actively engaged through better, more co-ordinated partnership working and where they feel empowered in getting involved in matters that affect their neighbourhood.

Environmental impact:

None.

Performance management:

A new performance management framework to support the ‘Working Smarter’ Programme in its entirety is currently under development. For each Theme within the Programme, there are defined outcomes which are detailed in the Corporate Plan [2013]. Each change activity will also define its own detailed measures which will contribute to and underpin those outcomes as defined within the Corporate

Plan.

Equality Implications:


Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as each initiative is defined and delivered. In line with Council process, this will be in promoting equality of opportunity and to treat every citizen fairly whatever their race, religion or sexual orientation.


Consultation:

The nature of the deliverables within this Theme has resulted in collaborative working across the Council including working with partners, the community and local area partnerships including the Police and WIN (Walsall Intelligence Network). Consultation and discussions are also taking place with residents on the wider changes.

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Version 2 – 15 November 2013

Working Smarter Theme 3

Safe, Sustainable and Inclusive Neighbourhoods

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Working Smarter is the corporate change programme encompassing five dependent themes and includes all change initiatives underway within the Council. The main sections within this report provide updates for Theme 3 of the Working Smarter Programme. This theme is concerned with creating and maintaining safe, sustainable and inclusive communities. The work involved in this area includes numerous services responsible for the maintenance and regulation of the local environment and the involvement of local communities.
- 1.2 There are five specific change initiatives underway and these are:
 - a) Waste Management
 - b) Look after the roads
 - c) Provide nice parks & spaces
 - d) Public safety & protection
 - e) Getting local people more involved
- 1.3 Outcomes for this Theme have been agreed and are now also included within the Corporate Plan [2013]. The defined outcomes are:
 - a) Local people value their local environment
 - b) People are safe, and feel safe, in their local community
 - c) Local people have a sense of belonging and ownership of their local community
 - d) There is active participation in the “civil society”
 - e) The housing needs of local communities are met
- 1.4 Over the last 6 months significant progress has been made in most of these areas. This report summarises the action taken and the progress being made.

2. Waste Management

- 2.1 The waste review got underway in the middle of October. The purpose was to review the bin collection service to deliver savings and improvements in service and reduce Contact Centre complaints.
- 2.2 The purpose of this service has been defined as ***“Please take away my rubbish on the day it is due to be collected”***
- 2.3 The Vanguard Systems Thinking methodology has been followed to gain knowledge and understand of how the current system operates including:
 - a) Listening to customer demands at various points of contact
 - b) Understanding what matters to customers
 - c) Understanding and identifying Value and Failure

- d) Understanding how we deal with these demands
- e) Recording the steps that take place in dealing with a customer's enquiry

- 2.4 The Team have carried out initial data capture and found that 12,588 Customer Contacts were made via calls to the Contact Centre on telephone number 01922.653344 during August and September 2013. This was 6,739 in August and 5,849 in September, an average of 6,294 per month. Of these there were around 3600 calls relating to the waste service of which around 450 related to what were classified as missed bins/excess waste/un-emptied bins.
- 2.5 Because of their importance to the customer the missed bin related calls have been reviewed further. In September, 449 calls related to missed bins which resulted in Mayrise Tickets being produced. Mayrise Tickets are task orders for Clean and Green Services to carry out. These calls can be broken down as follows.

	Green Bins	Grey Bins	Brown Bins	Totals
Un-emptied Bins	110	11	10	131
Missed Bins with same day return	11	20	16	47
Missed Bins with return within 48 hours	68	87	47	202
Collect Excess waste on next Scheduled visit	N/A	50	N/A	50
Bins not returned for	2	2	4	8
Other				11
Totals	191	170	77	449

- 2.6 The vast majority (84%) of un-emptied bins are green bins which are used for recyclable materials. An "un-emptied bin" is a bin which the crew has decided not to empty because the bin is contaminated or unsafe to do so because the lid is up or the bin is too heavy. Members will be aware of the campaign 12 months ago to encourage residents to put the right materials in the right bin because of the relatively high level of contamination (particularly the wrong materials being placed in the recycling bin) at that time. This campaign proved very successful with contamination levels halving as a result. This saves the Council money. Clean and Green Services continue to work with residents to help them take full advantage of the services on offer by explaining to residents, on a targeted basis, why their bin has not been collected. Our approach to this has been refined on

an ongoing basis throughout this period and so it has been decided not to focus on this as a part of the current review.

- 2.7 Over half (55%) of the 449 calls related to missed bins which, in this context, are those which we could not collect as normal, advised the customer that we would return within either the same day or within 48 hours and then, for some reason, did not do so. These have been identified for further analysis to find out why this happens and we will be doing this in the next few weeks. In doing so we will follow the remaining steps of the Vanguard Systems Thinking methodology which are as follows:
- a) Identifying improvements
 - b) Experiment with new ways of working
 - c) Roll out new way of working
- 2.8 As a part of this work we will identify a small number of “measures” (performance indicators) that will help us to know how well the service is performing against the stated purpose of taking away a resident’s rubbish on the day it is meant to be collected.
- 2.9 In this context it is worth highlighting that, on the basis that approximately 440,000 collections were made in September, 449 uncollected bins equates to 0.1% or 1 in every 980 bins.

3. Look after the Roads

- 3.1 The ‘Get Knowledge’ stage of this wider Vanguard review began in February 2012 and continued through to May 2012. This was intended to understand in detail how the current system of work operates and highlight the issues we would need to explore as the review progressed. It proved extremely useful and provided a far deeper understanding of the current system, and the people responsible for operating it. A number of significant issues were highlighted by this work including the following:
- a) We don’t sufficiently use our reactive maintenance experience and knowledge to inform the highways maintenance programme which is the responsibility of the planned maintenance team.
 - b) We are not able to demonstrate the benefit provided by the highways inspection regime such that there may be waste in the system.
 - c) We do not hold information about the time it takes to repair a pothole from the date we receive a complaint to the date the repair is carried out.
 - d) The cost to the Council of settling insurance claims is high and the causes of this need to be analysed to help identify opportunities to reduce this.
- 3.2 It was decided in July 2012 to suspend further work on the review pending a management restructure. This has been completed and review activity has recommenced with the following priorities identified:
- a) Review the reactive maintenance inspection regime.
 - b) Review the system of processing insurance claims in conjunction with Risk and Insurance.

- c) Improve the inspection and maintenance regime in Walsall town centre.
- 3.3 The purpose of the highways maintenance service has previously been identified as ***“To achieve a free flowing and safe road network”***.
- 3.4 An assessment of the highways inspection regime has now been carried out to assess its effectiveness in addressing public liability claims received by the Council in relation to highway condition. This reviewed the Council’s current and recent highways maintenance practices and the relationship between this and our ability to defend claims for damages resulting from the condition of the highway. Proposals have been prepared for changing inspection frequencies, focusing effort on areas of greatest risk and investing in supporting technology, to enable a more effective inspection regime and to minimise the Council’s future exposure to claims. In particular, the proposals seek to:
 - a) Change inspection frequencies to focus on the high risk locations such as town and district centres.
 - b) Review the Walked Safety Inspection Manual to improve clarity of defects and policy.
 - c) Support a short term investment to undertake outstanding remedial works (£40K).
 - d) Free up the capacity of inspectors to address a short term backlog in inspections.
 - e) Address longer term capacity issues as part of Engineering and Transportation restructure.
- 3.5 A number of measures relevant to this area of work are already in place and will continue to be used, in particular:
 - a) Condition of the highway network
 - b) Road traffic accidents
- 3.6 Some data is collected in relation to highway insurance claims but this requires further assessment to ensure that the right measures are identified which, in conjunction with other measures, will help to demonstrate the extent to which we are delivering against the stated purpose of achieving a safe and free flowing road network.
- 3.7 In parallel with these reviews, work is already underway in relation to the processes of preparing the highways maintenance programme, placing task orders, developing improved quality and consistency and examining the balance between reactive and planned repairs. This activity has emerged spontaneously following management changes within Lafarge Tarmac as well as the Council. The early signs are of a very positive working relationship which is considered likely to support delivery of all future change activity.

4. Provide nice Parks & Spaces

- 4.1 Providing nice parks and spaces covers a wide range of activity and it was decided to have an initial focus of the management and maintenance of the Council’s considerable tree stock. Over the past few months, the Vanguard

methodology has been followed to gain knowledge and understand how the current system operates including:

- a) Listening to customer demands at various points of contact
- b) Understanding what matters to customers
- c) Understanding and identifying Value and Failure
- d) Understanding how we deal with these demands
- e) Recording the steps that take place in dealing with a customer's enquiry
- f) Identifying improvements

4.2 The data captured through this process and collected over a 3 month period (May to July 2013) via email, the First Stop Shop, consultation documents, telephone calls, face to face, and complaints is detailed below. A total of 313 customer demands were received and the top demand type related to trees which accounted 40 135 or 43% of the total.

4.3 The typical things that customers were saying were:

- a) A tree needs pruning outside our property as it is interfering with the phone line.
- b) Broken branch hanging off tree and needs to be removed.
- c) I have tried twice to contact you by phone on the mobile number you provided without success.
- d) I've left messages asking you to contact me but this has not happened.

4.4 The current processes have been mapped and the value and failure stages identified. The waste steps below were identified:

- a) Typically the Contact Centre adds no value to the tree demands as the queries normally require a specialist.
- b) Information is entered on Mayrise (a software system to help us manage the work we do in our streets and open spaces) as a referral process to the tree inspector and this information is then used to update a customer if they are progress chasing.
- c) Following any actions the Tree Inspector enters the same information on both Mayrise and Ezytreev (a tree management software system).
- d) A manual spreadsheet is kept for works allocated and this is used as a way of monitoring completed jobs.
- e) By not actively seeking to speak to customers, waste is introduced into the system as customer may not understand the works which can be done and so expectations have not been managed.
- f) There is an unnecessary paper trail as technology is not being used to update completed works directly into Ezytreev.

4.5 The following opportunities have been identified for doing things differently:

- a) Speak with customers on site wherever possible in order to fully understand demand and reduce potential for further failure demand to be introduced into the system. We have found that such conversations last around 5-10 minutes.

- b) We are looking to conduct an experiment with customer queries coming directly to the person with tree knowledge. This will cut out the Contact Centre and Mayrise parts of the process.
 - c) We are going to experiment with the Contact Centre having access to Ezytreev notes to cut out duplication.
 - d) We will explore whether we can run system reports automatically from Ezytreev to give outstanding jobs by exception. This will alleviate the need for spreadsheets and only report outstanding jobs that need to be checked.
- 4.6 We will now be trialling these changes which will inevitably lead to further refinements until a new way of working is arrived at which will then be rolled out across the service.
- 4.7 Appropriate measures will be identified as an integral part of this process to help ensure that we know how well the tree management service is operating in the future against its defined purpose.

5. Public Safety & Protection

- 5.1 The main change initiative in this area is to join up the enforcement responsibilities in the Council, and other partners, to provide a more co-ordinated response to local problems. The purpose of the Enforcement Project came out of a report on 9 July 2013 to the newly constituted Local Policing and Crime Board outlining proposals for Walsall Council to modernise its enforcement functions bringing in a more flexible approach and inclusive of its partner organisations. The proposals intend to maximise the identification of the potential and scope for an Intelligence Lead Task Force that includes Police, registered social landlords, Council services and input from the community. Walsall Council and partner organisations deal with litter, fly tipping, dog fouling, noise nuisance and many other criminal offences in a variety of ways. Although some good practice exists, there is a need for oversight designed to ensure that we maximise effectiveness.
- 5.2 The method adopted to take forward these proposals were to form a working group and on 24 September 2013 a workshop was held facilitated by the Council's Programme Delivery and Governance Team. At this workshop the attendees produced a comprehensive picture on which to build the enforcement project. This included scoping likely enforcement activities, the gathering of intelligence and intelligence gaps, mutual priorities, a draft time line and vision as to how a problem solving Intelligence Lead Task Force would operate in the future. This piece of work was fed back to the Local Policing and Crime Board on 22 October 2013, where it was agreed to establish a core group to take forward the proposals and with the assistance of the Council's Programme Delivery and Governance Team produce a detailed project plan and communication plan.
- 5.3 The governance arrangements for monitoring and oversight of the project will be provided by the Local Policing and Crime Board and the project champion is the Executive Director Neighbourhoods. Performance measures regarding the outcome from the enforcement activities will be developed from a base line that will be produced from the recently improved intelligence system that takes into account the newly agreed antisocial behaviour categories.

- 5.4 On 22 November the core group is being asked to, amongst other things, agree the detailed project plan, carry out process mapping across the partner organisations, agree initial enforcement activities to be targeted, together with developing outcome measures. It is intended to implement new ways of working in the New Year, after which a programme of different enforcement activities will be timetabled for similar treatment.

6. Getting local people more involved

- 6.1 The overarching purpose of "getting people more involved" is to better design and deliver services with individuals and local communities, in order to meet the Walsall vision. Essentially, harnessing the value of co-production by recognising the resources that citizens already have and delivering services **with** rather than **for** service users, their families and neighbours. Evidence through Area Partnerships for example, indicates that better outcomes are achieved through this "joined up" approach. It is also clear that if individuals are part of a process as opposed to apart from it, they tend to own the solutions which become more sustainable, at less cost.
- 6.2 On 24 April, 2013 the Cabinet considered seven proposals for devolution, which focus on "getting people more involved."
- 6.3 The measures of success for this programme of work are both qualitative and quantitative, focussing on:-
- a) Number of people and voluntary and community sector organisations involved in devolution activities.
 - b) Resources get allocated to where they are most needed.
 - c) Local communities feel greater ownership and understanding of public services (Residents Survey).
 - d) New ideas are generated to solve local hard to resolve problems.
- 6.4 Agreed actions for devolution with associated updates are highlighted below:-
- 6.5 Devolution of Budgets/Participatory Budgeting (PB)
- 6.5.1 Currently PB is being utilised to support decisions within the Council's Engineering and Transportation Service, with respect to making decisions on the location of parking on grass verges. PB has also supported work in Walsall South by helping a housing developer direct resource for local community benefit in accordance with the wishes of the local community, and in the Willenhall, Short Heath Area Partnership £10,000 has been allocated by the Area Panel for PB purposes. Participatory budgeting is also being used to determine local priorities in the two Big Local schemes in Walsall, namely Mossley and Palfrey.
- 6.5.2 In the New Year, pilot work will be taken forward concentrating on street cleansing, grounds maintenance and highways maintenance.
- 6.6 Greater Alignment of Teams

6.6.1 On 8 April 2013 the Council adopted a new Sustainable Community Strategy for the period 2013-16. The Council and its partners continues to focus its locality work on the Area Partnership model and new delivery plans that aligned to the priorities in the SCS have been developed. An event showcasing this work is planned for December 2013.

6.7 Strengthening Local Accountability

6.7.1 Six Area Panels have been established based on the Area Partnership areas. These Area Committees have the ability to make certain decisions, including where Area Partnership funding is allocated.

6.8 Community Hubs

6.8.1 A proposed model of community hubs, community-based organisations delivering a variety of service through local venues was put forward to Cabinet Executive on 25 July 2012. The Community Hubs Project initially focussed on Moxley Peoples Centre and Ryecroft Neighbourhood Resource Centre. The pilot has identified that an amended model was required (other than the model detailed in the Cabinet) to develop a broader partnership approach rather than a single organisation lead. Evaluation of this work scheduled for the New Year will assess the extent that capacity has been built within local communities to improve services for residents, the sustainability of local community organisations within the pilot areas, the degree to which the programme contributions to reducing dependency on public services.

6.9 Local Area Co-ordination

6.9.1 This project is being supported with assistance from "Inclusive Neighbourhoods" and is following three key phases: **design, citizen led recruitment** and **implementation** by April 2014.

6.9.2 Within phase 1, a Steering Group has been established with representation from Area Partnerships, Children's Services, Adult Social Care and Public Health. The Portfolio Holder for the Voluntary Sector and Community Engagement also attends.

6.9.3 The Executive Director for Neighbourhood Services has delegated authority to determine where Local Area Co-ordination will be trialled and he will be considering data developed through the Walsall Intelligence Network and the thoughts of the steering group in order to do this. An evaluation exercise at the end of the programme will establish if those "participants" within the programme are able to lead better, more independent lives and are also better able to access an improved standard of living within their local area (experience less crime, cleaner environs, etc).

6.10 Pilot work to support the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS)

6.10.1 A number of programmes of work have been taken forward in order to support the VCS, including the establishment of new third sector networks in for example the Area Partnership areas of Aldridge and Beacon Area Partnership area,

Darlaston and Bentley and Willenhall and Short Heath. A review of VCS work has also been conducted.

6.11 Support for attracting funding for key local initiatives

- 6.11.1 A new Strategic Resources Officer post has been established in the Council. The officer has been engaging with many groups at a local and Black Country level in order to profile local need for funding whilst also seeking to harness opportunities for good/successful funding bids to be made.

7. The working smarter objectives

7.1 Staff feel empowered and involved in change

- 7.1.1 Staff from many parts of the Council were directly involved with the enforcement project and, in particular, the initial workshop held on 24 September 2013 where together with partners, they contributed to scoped out proposals to modernise enforcement functions by developing the more flexible approach.
- 7.1.2 The waste and tree reviews have involved small groups of frontline employees in assessing customer demand and verifying the way in which the current systems operate. The employees supporting the tree review have helped to map out the proposed new system for testing and will be involved in trialling and refining the proposed way of working through to finalisation. The same is envisaged for the waste review once it has progressed to this stage.
- 7.1.3 In respect of the highways service, it is emerging that there was historically a lack of empowerment for some of the employees operating the system but there are encouraging signs, both within the Council and our contractor Lafarge Tarmac, that, following management restructures in both organisations, this is changing with resultant benefits for the service to road users and further improvements in the value for money provided for Council Tax payers.

7.2 Improved services to residents

- 7.2.1 The aim of the enforcement project is to work closely with partner organisations to provide a more coherent and structured service for the benefit for all of our customers.
- 7.2.2 Opportunities to improve the Council's services in respect of waste, trees and highways have been identified and some have been realised while others are expected as the respective reviews reach a conclusion and new ways of working are rolled out across the borough. One example of this is in Walsall town centre where, for the last six months or so, there has been a focused effort to identify and rectify defects in the highway including the extensive pedestrian areas where there has been a concentration of insurance claims historically.

7.3 Saving the Council money

- 7.3.1 The aim of the enforcement project is to work closely with partner organisations to provide a more coherent and structured service for the benefit for all of our customers that will mitigate any reduction in staffing levels due to budget savings.
- 7.3.2 The most significant opportunity to save money is likely to come from an overhaul of the highways maintenance service and in particular a reduction in the Council's liability as a result of highway defects. This will result in lower insurance payouts. It is too early to quantify this at this stage.

8. Challenges and Opportunities

- 8.1 There are opportunities and challenges, particularly those in the 'experiment' stage where new ideas and approaches are being trialled and will continue to be closely monitored with adjustments made where necessary.
- 8.2 Closer working with key stakeholders including customers, service areas within the Council, NHS and voluntary partners is providing the delivery teams to design, introduce and trial alternative ways of working with the aim of improving services, empowering staff and ultimately reducing the costs for the Council to deliver services.