

Cabinet – 15 December 2021

Street Scene Strategy – Proposed Scope

Portfolio:	Councillor Andrew – Regeneration
Related portfolio:	Councillor Butler – Clean & Green Councillor Perry – Resilient Communities
Service:	Place & Environment; Resilient Communities
Wards:	All
Key decision:	No
Forward plan:	Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1. Our streets matter. They can encourage people to be more active, improve health and well-being, reduce pollution, bring neighbours together and discourage crime. The Walsall Council Street Scene Strategy will provide residents, communities and visitors to the borough with a clear outline of the Council's aspirations and holistic approach to maintaining and improving residential street scene. By developing an approach to improve and maintain our street scene, the Council will contribute to positive outcomes for our residents and create a better environment in which to run a business.

2. Summary

- 2.1. The council manage and maintain over 520 miles of street scene, a significant proportion of which are residential streets. This report outlines the proposed scope for a street scene strategy and seeks Cabinet approval to proceed with the development of a strategy document that concisely identifies the key issues and sets out a series of multifaceted actions associated with each priority.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That the proposed Street Scene Strategy scope, set out in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.7 be approved.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1. When our streets are clean and safe, we can create an environment that residents are proud to call home, visitors return to and businesses want to invest in. Additionally, well-designed and well-maintained streets can encourage people to be more active, improve health and well-being, reduce pollution, bring neighbours together and discourage crime.
- 4.2. The creation of great neighbourhoods is not without its challenges. Flytipping and littering remain problematic, a high demand for on street parking competes with a desire for greener streets and, budget pressures mean that the Council can no longer provide services to communities in the way they that they used to. We have to embrace new technology, empower communities, change behaviour and, in some cases, charge for what we do.
- 4.3. It is proposed that the street scene strategy should focus on four priorities, each of which will be considered in the context of four different approaches:
- 4.4. Priority One: **Safer Streets** – Our streets are place where anti-social behaviour and nuisance is tackled and people feel safe to live, learn, work and play.
 - i. **Empower:** Initiatives to engage local communities and help them to influence and affect the safety of their neighbourhoods e.g. community speed watch schemes and easy, responsive reporting mechanisms for highway safety issues and concerns about anti-social behaviour.
 - ii. **Educate:** Opportunities to educate residents, businesses and communities and change behaviours e.g. road safety initiatives such as ‘Don’t hurt the one you love’ which is aimed at younger drivers and focuses on the responsibilities associated with driving for the individual, passengers and other road users and discussing coping strategies for young passengers if they find themselves in a situation within which they do not feel comfortable.
 - iii. **Enforce:** Actions the Council will take to safeguard our streets from anti-social behaviour and irresponsible driver behaviour e.g. parking enforcement outside of schools and tackling street drinking.
 - iv. **Deliver:** Services and initiatives that the council will deliver to maintain our streets in a safe condition e.g. highway safety inspections; maintenance of signing, lining and pedestrian guard rail and road safety engineering.
- 4.5. Priority Two: **Stronger Streets** – Our streets are a place for strong, inclusive communities. They are designed encourage physical activities and have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents.
 - i. **Empower:** Initiatives facilitate community events e.g. easy to do road closure applications for street events such as gardening days, film screenings and street parties for events such as the Queens Platinum Jubilee.
 - ii. **Educate:** Sign posting to Healthy Walsall initiatives and promoting programmes such as A*STARS and Bike-ability which encourage residents to be more active by promoting the health and welling benefits.

- iii. **Enforce:** Ensuring initiatives such as school streets and play streets are supported by effective enforcement to ensure their safe and sustained operation.
 - iv. **Deliver:** Investing in active travel measures e.g. walking and cycling provision including safe cycle parking and ensuring that our streets are accessible so that those with limited mobility are empowered to access facilities and initiatives that will support their health and wellbeing.
- 4.6. Priority Three: **Cleaner Streets** – Our streets look and feel clean and tidy and our communities take pride in their surroundings.
- i. **Empower:** Continuing to build on existing community and business engagement e.g. community action days and the Litter Charter.
 - ii. **Educate:** Opportunities to educate residents, businesses and communities and change behaviours e.g. issues around recycling and promoting the importance of using the correct bin to dispose of waste.
 - iii. **Enforce:** Actions the Council will take to challenge environmental crime such as dog fouling, Flytipping and dropping litter.
 - iv. **Deliver:** Services that the council will deliver to maintain the cleanliness of our streets e.g. street cleansing; bin provision; sign cleaning and bulky waste collections.
- 4.7. Priority Four: **Greener Streets** – Our streets have a positive impact on wellbeing, connect communities to nature and support carbon reduction.
- i. **Empower:** Opportunities for communities to create a natural environment that gives them a sense of pride and ownership e.g. schemes such as community gardening, verge adoption and “Walsall in Bloom”.
 - ii. **Educate:** Initiatives to raise awareness and encourage carbon reduction and measures to improve air quality e.g. promotion of active and sustainable travel choice and advice on domestic bonfires.
 - iii. **Enforce:** Steps the council will take to ensure that unauthorised commercial and industrial activities do not impact residential areas e.g. regulation of industrial premises to ensure that air quality is not adversely impacted
 - iv. **Deliver:** Actions that the council will take to improve air quality and make it easier for residents to make sustainable choices.
- 4.8. The Street Scene Strategy will briefly identify the key issues and set out a series of actions that are needed to create an environment that our residents and wider communities can be proud of. Some of the actions identified will already be underway, some will already be planned for the future and some may be completely new initiatives. The purpose of the Strategy will be to bring them together into a single document to create an overarching coherent and coordinated approach.
- 4.9. It is recognised that the Council has a key role to play in delivering the actions but help and support of key partners and local residents will also be essential. There will be a need to help and support local community groups to do more and to encourage local people to change their behaviours to help develop improved streets.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.10. Create a clean, safe environment that residents are proud to call home, visitors return to and businesses want to invest in is critical to the future of the borough's quality of life. It is therefore fully consistent with the five strategic priorities identified in the Council's Corporate Plan.

Risk management

- 4.11. The Street Scene Strategy will be supported by risk assessments for proposed service changes. The assessments will consider how the proposed actions align with Council objectives, evaluate the consequences of identified risks and detail any mitigations considered necessary.

Financial implications

- 4.12. The costs of the 2021/2022 enhanced street cleaning service (additional barrow routes, agency staff and hawking) had been partly financed from the balance carried forward from 2020/21 Enhanced Street Cleansing Reserve which stands at £165k. However, for the current year forecast is £589k therefore there is a shortfall of £424k, which a realignment of reserves is proposed to support the pressure.
- 4.13. As an interim measure, until the new service model is implemented, there is a proposal to continue with the current enhanced service. The cost of a 6 month extension to the current service, until September 2022, is £375k and is included draft budget proposals for 2022/23.
- 4.14. The expectation is that the final strategy will set out the financial implications of the new service delivery model. Any delay to the delivery of that strategy will have a financial implication of £50k per month should the enhanced street cleansing service be extended beyond the 6 month period.
- 4.15. Longer Term Delivery of the Street Scene Strategy will have a range of financial implications. The strategy will be supported by a series of business cases for proposed service change. Where feasible, external funding or alternative delivery models will be considered.

Legal implications

- 4.16. The Council has a wide range of powers available to it, which may be used to facilitate the implementation of the strategy once drafted. These powers include, but are not limited to, the power to make traffic regulation orders; powers to make local bye-laws; and various highways and environmental enforcement powers.
- 4.17. The Council also enjoys a general power of competence by virtue of section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

Procurement implications/social value

- 4.18. Any contractual arrangements, including entering into any framework agreements for service delivery, must be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, if applicable; and with the council's contract rules. The council's procurement and legal services teams will continue to work with officers from the service areas to ensure that mini-tenders and call-offs from any such frameworks are

conducted in compliant ways and that any contracts will be validly entered into before any services are provided to the council.

Property implications

- 4.19. The scope of the proposed strategy includes residential streets which form part of the council's adopted highway and associated council owned green spaces and public realm. Consequently, a proportion of the action will either be delivered on land already owned or managed by the council. Where necessary, agreements will be in place for the use or enhancement of third party land.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.20. Our streets and outdoor spaces have a part to play in delivering a range of benefits with respect to health and wellbeing. They can encourage people to be more active, reduce pollution, bring neighbours together and discourage crime.

Staffing implications

- 4.21. Delivery of the Street Scene Strategy will require contributions from across the Council, partners and community representatives. If required, a business case will be developed for additional resources to coordinate the development, delivery and monitoring of the strategy.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.22. The adoption of a street scene strategy will have a positive impact by making streets safer and more attractive to use by all sections of the local community, but specifically those who may feel less confident currently including young people, older people and people with disabilities. Specific actions will result in the car being less dominant so allowing for an increase in cycling and walking, especially around routes to schools which will benefit young people.
- 4.23. It is recognised that some groups may require additional support to adapt to any changes in service provision and make the necessary behavioural changes than others. Equality impact screening will be undertaken against all actions and equality impact assessments will be carried out where necessary.

Climate Change

- 4.24. It is proposed that creating streets that connect communities to nature and, support carbon reduction, is a key priority of the Street Scene Strategy.

Consultation

- 4.25. In evolving the actions detailed in the strategy, consultation will be undertaken internally as well as with stakeholders including, but not limited to, Members, community representatives and third sector organisations delivering related services in the borough.
- 4.26. Further consultation will be carried out in relation to specific measures as required.

5. Decide

- 5.1. A range of local authority street scene strategies have been considered in evolving this proposed approach.
- 5.2. Taking a concise and focused approach is intended to make the final document accessible, giving our residents and stakeholder's clarity around the Council's aspirations and approach to delivery.
- 5.3. The four priorities have been identified in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Regeneration, Clean and Green and Resilient Communities with a view to reflecting the Council's wider aspirations and corporate priorities.
- 5.4. The four phased approach to delivery is intended to reflect both the breadth of opportunities to achieve the Council's aspirations and a holistic approach to service delivery.

6. Respond

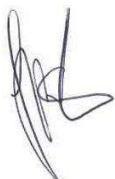
- 6.1. Over the next 9 months the council will prepare a final version of the street scene strategy. This will be presented to Cabinet for approval, along with business cases for any elements of the strategy that require investment.

7. Review

- 7.1. A street scene strategy project board will be established to provide appropriate oversight of progress in developing the council's street scene strategy in readiness for presenting the final version to Cabinet in 2022.

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6 December 2021



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