

20 October 2022

Street Scene Strategy

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Cllr Andrew – Deputy Leader of the Council and Regeneration
Cllr Perry – Deputy Lead of the Council and Resilient Communities
Cllr Murphy – Portfolio Holder for Clean & Green

1. Aim

- 1.1. Our streets are important places. They can encourage people to be more active, improve health and well-being, reduce pollution, bring neighbours together and discourage crime. By developing a strategic 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 road. A significant proportion of these are residential streets. This report outlines the proposed scope for a street scene strategy. In December 2021, Cabinet approved the development of a strategy document that concisely identifies the key issues and sets out a series of actions associated with each priority.

3. Recommendations

This report recommends that the Scrutiny Committee:

- i. Note the Street Scene Strategy scope, set out in paragraphs 4.4 to 4.7 and provide feedback.
- ii. Note the initial feedback from the We Are Walsall 2040 consultation in relation to street scene.

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, 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.

- i. Flytipping and littering remain problematic.
- ii. A high demand for on street parking competes with a desire for greener streets.
- iii. Budget pressures mean that the council can no longer provide services to communities in the way they that they used to.
- iv. 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: **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.

4.6. Priority Three: **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.

4.7. Priority Four: **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 wellbeing 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.
- 4.8. 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, 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 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. 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.

- 4.13. The cost of current enhancements to the street cleaning service (additional barrow routes, agency staff and hawking) were funded from a one-off allocation. New service standards for street cleaning will be established as part of this strategy and will need to be reflected in the budget setting process.

Legal implications

- 4.14. 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 byelaws; and various highways and environmental enforcement powers.
- 4.15. The council also enjoys a general power of competence by virtue of section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

Procurement implications/social value

- 4.16. 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

- 4.17. 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

- 4.18. 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

- 4.19. 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

- 4.20. 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.
- 4.21. 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

- 4.22. 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

- 4.23. We are Walsall 2040 will be shaped by the views, experiences, ideas and ambitions of those who live, work, visit and do business in the borough. Earlier this year, the council commenced a 5-month programme of engagement with the community to inform this strategic partnership borough plan for the next 18 years.
- 4.24. As part of this, the council commissioned BMG Research to carry out a borough-wide survey of residents. The aim of this survey is to provide an up to date and accurate understanding of the priorities, concerns, hopes, wishes and aspirations of residents living in the borough. The consultation questionnaire included a specific focus on the borough's street scene.
- 4.25. A postal survey booklet was sent to 10,000 Walsall addresses, sampled to be representative of the number of households by ward and index of multiple deprivation (IMD) quintiles. Fieldwork took place between the 9 June and 15 July 2022 and 1,490 residents responded. Data collected is weighted and significance tested to 95% within subgroups and against the total.
- 4.26. Analysis of the consultation is ongoing but initial findings indicate the following in respect to street scene:

- i. Walsall residents consider safety, cleanliness and decent housing as key factors in making somewhere a good place to live.
 - ii. Overall priorities over the next 18 years should be surrounding police and crime, as well as cleanliness and local regeneration.
 - iii. Two out of three residents are concerned about climate change and 9 in 10 believe it's important for Walsall's organisations and residents to come together to tackle it.
 - iv. Looking ahead to 2040 residents want Walsall to be seen as a thriving, safe and clean place to live.
- 4.27. Once complete, the consultation findings will be used to inform the street scene strategy.

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 coming months, pilot projects will be used to inform the drafting of the street scene strategy.
- 6.2. Operation Clean Up will target three residential streets that are hot spots for side waste and litter. The pilot will aim to educate and empower residents and local school children to dispose of their household waste appropriately. Having set out the council's expectations and services, e.g. HWRC locations and options for bigger bins, a deep clean will be carried out giving the residents and visitors

to the street a fresh start. Finally, where necessary, a three phased approach will be taken to enforcement: inform, warn, enforce.

- 6.3. The project will take place over a period of 12 weeks with success measures focused on the amount of side waste and other domestic flytipping.
- 6.4. In September, officers were approached by a group of residents who were keen to work with the council to protect their grass verges and tackle antisocial behaviour. This aligns with the council's aspiration to create resilient communities and empower residents and presents an opportunity to trial approaches that may be considered as part of the street scene strategy.
- 6.5. Over the coming 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 has been established to provide appropriate oversight of progress in developing the council's street scene strategy in readiness for presenting the final version to Cabinet.

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