



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All wards

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

30th June 2014

Neighbourhood Services Portfolio

Report of the Director of Culture and Neighbourhood Services

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the key areas and services related to the Neighbourhoods element of this Scrutiny Commission.

2. Summary

The portfolio of the Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhood Services is supported by a range of services which fall under the divisions of a number of Directors.

This report seeks to set out the scope of the Neighbourhood Services element of the Commission's portfolio and the relevant structures and services which support this.

3. Recommendations

The report is presented to the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission in order to help inform their work for the coming municipal year.

4. Report

Neighbourhood Services covers a wide range of services involving many different aspects of city life. The key areas of services are detailed in the section below.

Culture and Neighbourhood Services Division

Director: Liz Blyth
Tel: 454 3501

Divisional Priorities

- Taking forward the Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme to increase efficiency, bring council services together, improve customer access and make best use of buildings and staff resources
- Develop capacity within neighbourhoods by supporting and encouraging community groups and local residents to become more involved in the operation and shaping of local facilities and services
- Introduce new ways of working in our library service through better use of technology and collaborative working in order to ensure a high quality customer experience which promotes reading and learning

Community Services

Head of Service: Steve Goddard
Tel: 454 1831

The Community Services section consists of a network of community facilities and provides a range of quality driven services and activities to meet the needs of local residents and communities. The aim is to empower citizens, provide support and facilitate the development of local groups through the recently introduced role of Community Engagement Officer. Community Services attracts over a million usages year on year. The services also provide development support to Ward Community Meetings across the city.

Key priorities:

- To work with partners to provide learning, community development and cultural opportunities which contribute to the sustainable development of neighbourhoods in buildings offering joint services and activities
- To empower residents and local communities by encouraging greater participation and developing local capacity for people to get involved in shaping their neighbourhood services
- To increase the availability of small and medium sized community facilities to residents, local community groups and businesses, utilising key fob 'access control' to enable the community to use buildings throughout the week without the need for staff on site.
- To improve the visibility of Ward Community Meetings to local residents by actioning the local issues and concerns identified.

Libraries and Information Services

Head of Service: Adrian Wills

Tel: 37 3541

Libraries are a reading support and development service which provides access to a wide range of information and learning opportunities. Libraries are community hubs where people meet and a neighbourhood access route to many other council services. Services are delivered through 16 libraries and 2 Children's Bookbuses. In 2013/14, Libraries lent 1.3m items, had 1.8m visits and 470,000 ICT sessions were accessed on public computers.

Key Priorities:

- To promote reading and learning for pleasure
- To support mainstream learning provision for children and adults
- To use technology to improve services and reduce the digital divide

Customer Services

Director: Alison Greenhill

Tel: 37 4001

Customer Services includes the Granby Street Customer Service Centre (CSC), CSCs in New Parks, Saffron and Charnwood, along with the Council's telephone call centre, which also manages online and email contact. As far as possible Customer Services aim to resolve enquiries at the first point of contact i.e. without the customer needing to make further contact with the Council. The service handles approximately 60,000 calls per month, 10,000 face to face enquiries and 2500 e mails/eforms.

Key Priorities

- Working with the Transforming Neighbourhood Services review to design a customer service offering in multi service centres.
- Implementing the Digital Access Strategy across the Council
- Achieving efficiencies through service improvement

Local Services and Enforcement Division

Director of Local Services and Enforcement: John Leach (not yet started)

Divisional Priorities

- Organising and managing local services in a way that ensures that they work effectively and collaboratively in responding to local challenges, as part of a new approach to neighbourhood working.

- Ensuring that enforcement service maximise opportunities for collaborative working and improved on-street effectiveness.
- Improving service standards in the face of increasing demand and reducing resources.

Waste Management Services

Head of Waste Management: Steve Weston
Tel: 2161904

The Waste Management team manages a 25 year Public Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with Biffa Leicester, for the collection, treatment and disposal of all Leicester's household waste.

The main services provided to all residents is a weekly collection of both recycling (collected using orange bags or communal bins, in which residents can recycle a wide range of items including paper, cans, cardboard, plastic containers, foil etc.) and general (or residual) waste for which a black wheeled bin is provided. Other services available for residents include a bulky waste collection service, clinical and sharps collection service, two Household Waste Recycling Centres and over 60 recycling bring sites throughout Leicester.

As part of the contract Biffa Leicester operate a mechanical treatment plant at Bursom, known as the 'Ball Mill', and an anaerobic digestion facility at Wanlip. All of the waste collected from residents black general waste bins is processed by the 'Ball Mill'. This processing diverts three streams of waste away from landfill:

1. Metals are extracted and sent for recycling
2. Light materials such as plastics, paper and cardboard are extracted and are used to produce heat and energy.
3. Organic waste is extracted and sent to the anaerobic digestion facility where it is used to produce methane and a soil conditioner. The methane is then used to generate electricity which is sold to the National Grid.

The team is also responsible for the education and promotion of the services to encourage residents to recycle their waste and to engage in positive environmental behaviours. The team also works with all other Council services to provide advice and services to help each department reduce and recycle their waste.

Key priorities:

- Maintain the current weekly collection of both waste and recycling for the residents of Leicester, whilst minimising complaints and operation issues.
- Promote the recycling services available to encourage residents to use the services and increase Leicester's recycling rate.
- Promote and develop the recycling services available to Leicester City Council buildings and thus increase our recycling rate.

Cleansing Services

Head of Parks & Open Spaces: Stewart Doughty
Tel: 0116 233 3020

Cleansing Services Manager: Lin Smith
Tel: 0116 454 4991

The Cleansing Services section currently provides a street cleansing service across the whole of the city. The service is organised into local hand-sweeping teams supported by applied sweeper machines which have scheduled routes across the city. Each of these district teams is managed by an Area Services Manager who acts as the primary point of contact for local communities and ward councillors. Similar arrangements exist within the city centre though the staff wear distinctive orange and black uniforms and operate on a full seven day a week basis.

The service also has a number of specialist functions. The Graffiti Team is responsible for removing graffiti from all types of surfaces across the City, including private land with the agreement of the owner. The FIDO (Faeces Intake Disposal Operation) machine is used for the removal of dog fouling and emptying dog waste bins. The Housing Caretakers are Cleansing staff who work under the instruction of Housing Management to deal with waste & cleansing issues in and around communal properties in particular. There is also a litter bin maintenance team.

The service is also responsible for public conveniences in the city, with a Mobile Public Convenience Cleansing Team cleaning all unattended public conveniences across the City on a 6 days per week basis.

Key Priorities

- To continue to provide quality services and to ensure the highest possible standards of street cleanliness within the resources available.
- To improve responsiveness and reduce complaints through Area Service Managers working closely with local communities.

Regulatory Services and Community Safety

Community Safety Strategy Manager: Daxa Pancholi
Head of Regulatory Service: Malcolm Grange
Head of Regulatory Service: Mike Broster
Head of Regulatory Service: Roman Leszczyszn

City Warden Service

The City Wardens have a key role in helping to keep the city clean using education and enforcement to secure improvements in the local environment. They tackle issues such as accumulations of rubbish on private land, littering, fly posting, graffiti, dog fouling, bins left on

the street, small scale fly tipping, non-licensed skips, scaffolds and hoardings as well as patrolling their ward and providing a reassuringly friendly face to the public and point of contact to council services.

Parking Services and Civil Enforcement

This team processes and issues parking permits, including those for residents parking schemes, carries out enforcement to ensure that parking restrictions are complied with, issues and processes penalty charge notices for contraventions including follow-up work, and improves and maintains parking infrastructure such as parking meters.

Community Safety Team and Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse

Community Safety Officers work with a range of partners (both internal and external to the council) such as the police, probation service and health to identify local problems and solutions in relation to community safety. The team is also responsible for ensuring the delivery of projects such as the establishment a city-wide street drinking order, ensuring council staff are aware and ready to work to the new ASB legislation, working with the two universities and private landlords to establish a scheme for “safe” accommodation for students. The Domestic Violence Co-ordinator is responsible for establishing and managing an inter-professional citywide strategy for domestic violence and sexual abuse; commissioning specialist services and facilitating the co-ordination and joint working between key professionals in the city.

Enviro-Crime Team

This team seeks to reduce environmental crime by principally tackling persistent fly tippers and those involved in trade waste.

Pest Control/Dog Wardens

Pest Control Officers work to eradicate and exclude a variety of common pests in homes and businesses throughout Leicester. These include rats, mice, bed bugs, cockroaches, fleas and wasps. The treatment of rats at domestic premises is free but all other pest treatments are chargeable except for mice treatments in Pest Action Zones. These are areas within deprived wards which have high rates of mice infestation and where residents are on low incomes and so cannot easily afford to pay pest control charges. The Dog Warden Service deals with stray and dangerous dogs and dog nuisance such as barking and fouling on premises.

Private Sector Housing Team

This team aims to ensure that private rented properties in the city are suitable for occupation. The team investigate complaints and inspect private rented properties for disrepair and freedom from unacceptable hazards and ensure standards in houses in multiple occupation and hostels are being met. Assessment of living accommodation for immigration purposes is also carried out as support to sponsors.

The team also investigate issues around filthy and verminous premises and faulty drainage, dangerous trees on private land and high hedges obstructing light. They will work with Pest Control to investigate various public health pests.

The Building Regulation Team

This team seeks to ensure that buildings in the City comply with statutory standards for quality, safety and sustainability by considering applications requiring building regulation approval.

Building Safety and Protection Team

This team seeks to protect the public from dangerous structures and demolitions and ensures that vacant and derelict properties are secured from unauthorised access

Licensing Team

The Licensing Team work in several key areas including taxis, alcohol and entertainment, sexual entertainment and on street activity such as street trading, distribution of flyers and charitable collections. A vehicle testing station carries out safety checks on all taxis and provides MOT's for the public. The overall role of the service is to make pre-licensing checks on suitability and ensure licensing requirements are complied with.

Leicester Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (LASBU)

LASBU are responsible for managing and dealing with complex and high risk anti-social behaviour cases in the City. The team works closely with Police, other Council Services and partners.

Noise Control Team

The Noise Control Team provide a call out service up until 2am on four nights each week to deal with disturbance from noise, as well providing advice on licensing and planning applications.

Pollution Control Team

The Pollution Control Team are responsible for monitoring and coordinating action on controlling emissions from industrial processes, petroleum licensing and dealing with contaminated land.

Food Safety Team

The Food Team are responsible for monitoring food hygiene standards in Leicester food businesses and the safety and nature of food products. There are around 3000 food establishments in the City.

Public Safety Team

The Public Safety Team work to protect those working, living or visiting Leicester from incidents that could cause death, injury or economic damage. The Team monitors safety arrangements in sports stadia and public events, working places and explosives/fireworks storage. The Team is also responsible for monitoring individuals conducting invasive treatments such as tattooing and compliance with smoke free requirements.

Business Regulation Advice Support and Training Team

The Business Regulation Support Team helps new and existing local businesses to comply with regulatory requirements relating to the running of the business and the delivery of goods and services. The team provides information, advice and staff training. Advice and training are delivered on a chargeable basis.

Trading Standards Team

The Trading Standards Team work to ensure that local citizens and businesses are not harmed by fraudulent and reckless trading practices. The remit of the team spans the full range of goods and services from food to cars to home maintenance. The team supports an intel and financial recovery function.

Key Priorities:

- To ensure an effective and joined up City Council approach to complex high risk ASB cases in the City
- To ensure an effective approach to ASB in the context of new legislation.
- To ensure statutorily compliant and effective public protection arrangements in food safety and standards
- Establish strategies for domestic violence and sexual abuse for 2015-2020.
- Plan and commission specialist domestic and sexual abuse services.
- Projects and initiatives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- To explore a shared services model for building control in Leicestershire in order to help maintain a robust high quality and cost effective service to local homeowners, builders and developers .
- To ensure that buildings on the “vacant historic buildings register” are monitored and remain secure from unauthorised access until brought back in to use.
- To improve the effectiveness of Building Control enforcement.
- To identify and improve substandard rented accommodation particularly used by vulnerable people.
- To promote environmental responsibility both at individual and community level as part of managing waste related problems in the City.
- To focus on the persistent fly tippers and those involved with trade waste offences and ensure compliance with requirements under the new Scrap Metal Dealers Act
- To address mice infestations in deprived wards through a rolling programme of Pest Action Zones on a prioritised basis.
- To ensure stray dogs are not allowed to roam freely in our city and cause a nuisance.
- To improve online access to parking permit applications.
- To ensure the recovery rate for penalty charge notices remains high.
- To replace parking meters across the city with more user friendly machines.

Key Priorities for Business Regulation and Licensing:

- To support the LLEP Business Growth Hub and devise products/services that help people establish and expand their businesses and create more jobs.
- To protect vulnerable adults from fraudulent traders.

- To continue reducing the risk of food poisoning in the City
- To ensure the food brought into the country by local importers complies with safety standards
- To reduce the risk of legionella outbreaks from poorly maintained cooling towers
- To reduce fire and gas risks to people living above fast food, restaurants and other similar establishments
- To reduce sheesha smoking by children

Revenues and Benefits Service

Head of Service: Caroline Jackson

Tel: 454 2501

The Revenues and Benefits Service is responsible for the billing and collection of Council Tax for approximately 131,000 households in the city and for the billing and collection of Business Rates. It is also responsible for the assessment and payment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction, the detection and prevention of benefit fraud and the management of the corporate fraud team.

The service is located in Wellington House, Wellington Street and maintains a telephone enquiry line for Council Tax, business rates and Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction. Face to face enquiries are dealt with by the Customer Service Centre at York House.

Key Priorities:

- Maximise the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates to protect Council finances
- Support people to claim Housing and Council Tax Reduction
- Maximise the take up of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and various Council Tax and business rates discounts and exemptions
- Minimise the opportunity for fraud and detect occurrences
- Operate a localised Council Tax Reduction scheme and review it in line with funding constraints
- Operate and manage Community Care Grants and the Crisis Fund (previously held by the Department for Works and Pensions) with a prescribed level of funding
- Support corporate objectives to address Child and Family Poverty
- Work with the Department for Work and Pensions and individuals as Universal Credit is introduced, gradually replacing Housing Benefit
- Manage the smooth transfer of the benefit investigation work to the DWP under its Single Fraud Investigation Service initiative

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 37 4081.

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications concerning the Recommendations in this Report. Project officers are working with Legal Services when legal advice is sought on projects that deliver the priorities that are described.

Greg Surtees, Legal Services, ext. 37 1421

5.3 Equality implications

This portfolio of services serves all protected characteristics across the city as a whole. The services within this portfolio contribute directly to a number of equality outcomes as set out in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's equality measurement framework: improved standard of living (by tackling/addressing issues that affect people's environmental, built environment and socio-economic circumstances); promotion of participation, influence and voice (through provision for community activities that individuals can engage in); promotion of identity, expression and self-respect (through provision of community activities and resources for individual use which support these outcomes); promotion of individual, family and social life (through provision of activities which support these outcomes); and improved physical security (by tackling/addressing issues that negatively affect individual safety). If these services were not provided by the council/local government/government, there would be adverse impacts preventing the achievement of the above equality outcomes, as well as other related equality outcomes: life, health, productive and valued activities (work), and education and learning. The portfolio is truly far reaching in its impact on supporting and promoting community and personal resiliency.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead, ext. 374147

6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

None.

7. Consultations

Contributions provided by the Directors/ Heads of Service named in this report.

8. Report Author

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