



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All wards

**FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission**

13 August 2015

Portfolio Overview Report

Report of **Director of Culture and Neighbourhood Services**
 Director of Finance
 Director of Local Services & Enforcement

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 Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission's remit relates to a varying degree four Assistant City Mayor portfolios:-

Cllr Adam Clarke – Assistant City Mayor – Energy and Sustainability
Cllr Kirk Master – Assistant City Mayor - Neighbourhood Services
Cllr Sue Waddington – Assistant City Mayor - Jobs and Skills
Cllr Piara Singh Clair – Assistant City Mayor – Culture, Leisure and Sport

The above Assistant City Mayors' are supported by a wide range of services which fall within the responsibility the following Divisional Directors:-

Liz Blyth – Director for Culture and Neighbourhood Services
Alison Greenhill – Director of Finance
John Leach – Director of Local Services & Enforcement

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

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

Culture and Neighbourhood Services Division

Assistant City Mayor: Cllr Kirk Master

Director: Liz Blyth

Tel: 454 3501

Head of Neighbourhood Services: Adrian Wills

Tel: 454 3541

The service consists of a network of 17 libraries, 26 community buildings and 2 children's Bookbuses. The core library offer includes free book borrowing, free computer, and internet and Wi-Fi access, access to information, children and adults learning activities, and a programme of special events such as the Summer Reading Scheme for children. Community Services includes support for groups and activities, Adult Skills and Learning, food banks, room hire, children's parties, conferences events and functions. Neighbourhood Services actively promotes and develops volunteering in our centres. The service also provides support to Ward Community funding and Ward Community meetings.

Last year Neighbourhood Services had 2.4 million usages, with 168,000 virtual visits to libraries and 1.1 million book issues.

Key priorities include:

- To take 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
 - To ensure that families in Leicester are encouraged to read
 - To help residents to become included in the digital society, by offering supported and self-service access to a wide range of information
 - To develop and support community groups to engage in positive work that will enable communities to become more resilient
 - To engage with and empower communities to help shape the future of public services in neighbourhoods
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Local Services and Enforcement Division

Assistant City Mayor: Cllr Adam Clarke

Director: John Leach
Tel: 4541828

(a) Waste Management

Head of Waste Management: Geoff Soden
Tel: 454 6734

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 include:-

- To support and remain committed to a comprehensive domestic waste collection service responding to residents' needs and expectations.
- To consider how the optional green waste kerbside service can be expanded and improved.

- Promote and develop the recycling services available through Leicester City Council including encouraging residents to make use of Leicester's two Household Waste Recycling Centres at Freeman's Common and Gypsum Close.

(b) Cleansing Services

Assistant City Mayor: Cllr Kirk Master

Head of Parks & Open Spaces: Stewart Doughty

Tel: 0116 233 3020

Parks & Open Spaces Operations Manager: Michael Walker

Tel: 0116 454 4995

The Cleansing Services section currently provides a street cleansing service across the whole of the city, cleaning 487 miles of streets on a weekly basis and removing 3,900 tonnes of litter annually.. 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 a Local Area Manager who acts as the primary point of contact for local communities and ward councillors. Similar arrangements exist within the city centre 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. A rapid response team deals with instances of fly tipping, spillages and clearances of traveller's sites etc. and a 24 hour call out service is available to deal with emergency clean-up operations for road traffic accidents, diesel spillage, SHARPS removal etc.

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 include:

- To continue to provide quality services and to ensure the highest possible standards of street cleanliness within the resources available.
- Improve toilet facilities in the City.
- To support new initiatives such as Street Champions and Love Leicester Community Action Plans.

(c) Regulatory Services and Community Safety

Assistant City Mayor: Cllr Kirk Master

Assistant City Mayor: Cllr Sue Waddington (specifically Regulatory Services except Taxi Licensing)

Assistant City Mayor: Cllr Piara Singh Clair (Building Control and Taxi Licensing)

Head of Regulatory Service: Malcolm Grange Tel: 0116 4543111

City Warden Service (Cllr Kirk Master)

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.

Enviro-Crime Team (Cllr Kirk Master)

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

Pest Control/Dog Wardens (Cllr Kirk Master)

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 (Cllr Kirk Master)

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 (Cllr Piara Singh Clair)

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 (Cllr Piara Singh Clair)

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

Community Safety Strategy Manager: Daxa Pancholi Tel: 0116 4540203

Community Safety Team and Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse (Cllr Kirk Master)

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.

Head of Regulatory Service: Mike Broster Tel: 0116 454 3041

Licensing Team (Cllr Sue Waddington (except taxi licensing Cllr Piara Singh Clair))

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.

Noise Control Team (Cllr Kirk Master)

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 (Cllr Kirk Master)

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

Head of Regulatory Service: Roman Leszczyszyn

Leicester Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (LASBU) (Cllr Kirk Master)

LASBU are responsible for managing persistent high risk anti-social behaviour cases in the City and supporting other teams dealing with ASB. The team works closely with Adult Social Care, Housing, Legal Services, the Police and other partners. The team leads on tenancy action where council property is used for criminal purposes such as drug cultivation and manufacture.

Food Safety Team (Cllr Sue Waddington)

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 (Cllr Sue Waddington)

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 (Cllr Sue Waddington)

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

Trading Standards Team (Cllr Sue Waddington)

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 in Regulatory and Community Safety Services include:-

- To ensure an effective and joined up approach to complex high risk Anti-Social Behaviour (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.
- Plan and commission specialist domestic and sexual abuse services.
- Projects and initiatives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- To identify and improve substandard rented accommodation particularly used by vulnerable people, including exploring the development of a new local standard,

working with tenants and landlords to develop a robust and relevant measure of quality for homes in Leicester.

- To support Love Leicester Community Action Plans through the City Warden Service.
- To continue to introduce enforcement campaigns to address issues like dog fouling, littering and spitting.
- Protecting vulnerable people from scams, including extending the Love Leicester smartphone app to include a scam alert system to inform Trading Standards of concerns.
- Extend the City's No Cold Call Zones where residents request and support this.
- To supporting start-up businesses to comply with relevant regulations.
- Enhance the taxi driver knowledge test.
- Review the licensing and gambling policy.
- Increase access to more applications via channel shift.
- Support measures to help tackle Child Sexual Exploitation where relevant to the licensing service.
- Explore new measures to tackle street drinking.

Finance

Director: Alison Greenhill

Tel: 454 4001

Revenues and Customer Support

Assistant Mayor: City Mayor / Councillor Kirk Master

Head of Service: Caroline Jackson

Tel: 454 2501

The Revenues and Customer Support Service is responsible for the billing and collection of Council Tax for approximately 134,000 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 York House, Granby Street and maintains a telephone enquiry line for Customer contact including waste management, parking, electoral registration, Council Tax, business rates and Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction to name but a few. Face to face enquiries are dealt with by the Customer Service Centre at the contact centre within York House. From April 2015 the service manages the Advice contract for the city.

Key Priorities include:

- Maximise the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates to protect Council finances
- Support people to claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction

- Maximise the take up of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and various Council Tax and business rates discounts and exemptions
- Support struggling households pay council bills and shortfalls in rent through the effective management of discretionary funds.
- Minimise the opportunity for fraud and detect occurrences
- Operate a localised Council Tax Reduction scheme and review it in line with funding constraints
- Oversee the Welfare Law Advice contract for the City ensuring need of the city is appropriately targeted and met with the restraints of the funding portfolio.
- Operate and manage Community Support and the Crisis Fund (previously held by the Department for Works and Pensions) with a prescribed level of funding and review it in line with funding constraints
- 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
- Leads an ambitious customer contact and engagement transformational channel shift and IT programme including the introduction of a corporate Customer Record Management (CRM) system
- Manage the smooth transfer of the benefit investigation work to the DWP under its Single Fraud Investigation Service initiative

(c) Customer Services

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 70,000 calls per month, 9,000 face to face enquiries and 3500 e mails/eforms.

Key Priorities include:

- 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

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. 454 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. 454 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. 454 4147

6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

No specific papers.

7. Consultations

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

8. Report Author

Liz Blyth, Director of Culture and Neighbourhood Services
Alison Greenhill, Director of Finance
John Leach, Director of Local Services and Enforcement