

## **Environment Sub-Committee**

**4 October 2017**

Present: Councillor B Burdis (Chair)  
Councillors L Bell, K Clark, D Cox, D Drummond,  
E Hodson, M Huscroft, W Lott, G Madden,  
A Percy and M Thirlaway.

### **E12/10/17 Apologies**

There were no apologies submitted.

### **E13/10/17 Substitute Members**

There were no substitutes reported

### **E14/10/17 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

### **E15/10/17 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2017 be confirmed.

### **E16/10/17 Northumbrian Water Authority**

Consideration of this report was deferred to a future meeting.

### **E17/10/17 Overview of Street Cleansing**

Consideration was given to a report which provided an overview of how the Authority managed street cleansing in the Borough.

It was explained that North Tyneside Council was a principal litter authority and had a statutory duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to ensure that relevant land in its area was, as far as practicable, kept clear of litter and refuse. The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had provided advice to local authorities on how they could meet their obligations under the Act in the 'Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse'. The Code set out the different categories of land use, the expected standards of cleanliness and the target response times.

It was explained that in areas of high footfall, such as town centres, the Authority had dedicated teams operating 7 days a week who carrying out manual litter removal as well as mechanical sweeping teams who operated on an early morning and a late evening, when the access was better for the vehicles.

Members were advised that the service had a budget of £2.5M to support a fleet of 15 mechanical sweepers and a team of 64 frontline staff who were deployed borough wide to carry out street cleansing duties. This included the:

- Cleaning of 687 km of roads each week;
- Supply, emptying and maintenance of 2,500 litter and dog waste bins;
- Removal of discarded syringes and needles;
- Removal of flytipping;
- Removal of graffiti and fly posting;
- Removal of dead animals; and
- Gritting parks and priority footpaths.

It was also explained that in a typical year the service received an average of 2,100 requests for street cleansing along with around 350 Members Enquiries. The service also carried out hundreds of litter inspections. Members were advised that in North Tyneside only 4% of the streets inspected had been classed as having a widespread distribution of litter and refuse in 2016/17. According to the most recent comparison data from the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) the average across the country was 5.1% of streets in the same condition.

The service also undertook a number of education campaigns in schools to reinforce the anti-litter campaign. It also worked closely with communities and voluntary groups to assist with clean up events such as Estate Cleanups, the Big Spring Clean Initiative and Love your Street.

It was explained that fixed penalty notices were issued for littering and dog fouling offences. The current penalty charge was £50 but this figure was under review. During 2016/17 the Authority had issued 42 community protection notices, 27 fixed penalty notices for littering offences and also prosecuted 3 offenders for fly tipping offences.

A resident of the North Shields/Tynemouth area of the Borough attended the meeting to explain her concerns at the poor standard of street cleansing in her local area. She also sought clarification on whether the crews of the mechanical street sweepers were required to get out of the vehicle to deal with litter in hard to reach areas such as grass verges. It was explained that the driver of the mechanical sweeper would get out of the vehicle and use a broom to sweep litter into the gutter so that it could be picked up by the sweeper.

A number of photographs of various streets in the North Shields area, including Trevor Terrace, Grosvenor Place, Alma Place and Saville Street, were circulated which showed litter both on the pavement and in the gutters. She explained that the streets outside the North Shields Metro Station were always grotty and this did not give a good impression for visitors to the borough. Photographs were also circulated of the informal seating area, made of pallets, on the Fish Quay which were surrounded by food waste and other litter. She explained that this area was very busy with lots of visitors and it was a shame that it was often litter strewn.

Officers offered to meet with the resident to undertake a walkabout of the areas of concern to identify the issues and look at how the concerns could be addressed. It was also suggested that managers would monitor the cleanliness of area and report back to a future meeting.

Members referred to the need for publicity to be provided to advise dog walkers that they could deposit dog waste in the general litter bins and not just in dedicated dog waste bins. It was explained that dog fouling was on the increase and work was ongoing to address the problem with the owners of the dogs. Reference was made to the consultation on the proposed introduction of Public Space Protection Orders which could be used to address dog fouling. It was suggested that the possibility of obtaining sponsorship for the provision of dog fouling bags in areas popular with dog walkers might address some of the concerns.

Reference was made to the restrictions on the type of litter bin which could be sited in conservation areas. Elsewhere in the Borough larger litter bins were being installed, which could take more waste before they needed to be emptied.

Reference was also made to the need tackle the behaviour of some residents to stop the litter being dropped in the first place. Members referred to a number of areas where there were a large number of absent landlords and transient tenants and which suffered from litter and flytipping. It was confirmed that attention was given to those areas but as soon as they had been cleared further rubbish had been dumped.

Members sought clarification on whether there had been an increase in fly tipping as a result of the restrictions placed on commercial vehicles using the waste transfer station. It was explained that there had not been a significant increase in fly tipping and the Authority was looking to introduce a permit scheme for vans to use the waste transfer station.

Reference was also made to the litter along the Metro lines and it was explained that Nexus had a duty to keep its land free from litter.

The Chair thanked the resident for attending the meeting and bringing her concerns to the attention of the Sub-committee. He also explained that Members would wish to be kept up to date on the outcomes of the walkabout.

The Chair thanked the officers for their report.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted