

AGENDA 12a, Enc vii)

Minutes of the Enhanced Neighbourhood Services Partnership Board, held on Tuesday 21st March 2023, commencing at 2:00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington

Councillors present:

Cllrs. Pauline Thompson (Chair until 2:25pm) Caroline Ball (arrived at 2:25pm and took Chair), Louis Brown, Marjorie Chambers

Also, in Attendance

Sarah Eden – ATC Clerk/RFO, Sharon Parmley – ATC Administration, Stephen Wardle – NCC Divisional Manager Neighbourhood Services, Peter Bowman – NCC Senior Team Leader Neighbourhood Services

1. Welcome by the Chair

Cllr Pauline Thompson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies of absence were received from, Cllrs. Lynne Grimshaw, Vicky Brown, Matthew Cuthbert, Ray Wealleans – NCC Neighbourhood Services Area Manager.

3. Disclosure of interests

There were no declarations of interest on items for agenda discussion.

4. Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

5. Previous meeting

a) Report of Previous Meeting

It was AGREED to receive the minutes of the last meeting, held on 6th December 2022, as a true record.

b) Update on actions agreed

The meeting went through the following outstanding actions:

- i. Play Areas – Annual Inspections from Zurich.

It was noted that a response would be received from Ray Wealleans, who was now able to log in to access reports online.

- ii. Play Areas – Response from Legal Services about Licence/Lease, and copies of Title Deeds.

Stephen Wardle updated that since being raised this has become a complex matter which remains with NCC Estates and Legal Services. Progressing a legal agreement for those play areas that are belonging to NCC should be straightforward, but there are also some that were originally with the developer. Work is ongoing and the Clerk is being updated.

- iii. Street Sweeping – Feedback on areas to be changed according to need as opposed to schedule, i.e., Haydon not as often, Hirst/Central more often.

Peter Bowman updated that a schedule had been devised for alternative sweeping for certain areas. Either every other month or quarterly if the area is not bad, which allows the sweeper to visit the Hirst area more frequently.

The Clerk asked if the new schedules could be shared, listing the streets that could be less frequent, and those that could be more frequent.

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Cllr Pauline Thompson asked the following questions:

1. How often are inaccessible front streets on colliery rows being cleared? **PB to check.**
2. If machines cannot fit, due to pavement width and overgrowth, etc. is the street cleared manually?
3. Where has the small sweeper gone that was purchased in 2021?
4. Where there are overgrown shrubs, can private landlords be forced to take action?

Stephen Wardle agreed to speak directly to Highways to ascertain if private landlords could be approached, or if the work could be carried out and the landlord billed.

It was discussed that a substantial number of the properties belong to Advance Northumberland.

The Clerk advised that information on empty homes was brought to the November 2022 Full Council meeting, and although it would have been appropriate to seek further information on Landlords, possibly via a FOI request, this was not agreed.

Cllr Pauline Thompson asked if the information could be brought back, and action reconsidered. The Clerk advised that it could.

It was AGREED that Peter Bowman would check which streets the sweeper is not able to access and forward the list.

- iv. Contaminated Waste – Response on suggested live filming at Sleekburn to show impact of contaminated waste.

The Clerk reported that the visit to the waste site was delayed until December. Stephen Wardle **AGREED** to try to seek a sooner date.

Cllr Caroline Ball entered the meeting at 2:25pm and replaced Cllr Thompson as Chair of the meeting.

Cllr Ball suggested that different ways to highlight the contaminated waste problems need to be devised and highlighted that the Council's suggestion of live streaming should be considered.

It was AGREED that this was a good idea.

- v. Use of underspend from 2021/22 (£7,792) - a programme of works with associated costs for:
 - a. Additional weed spraying.

It was AGREED that there were other more pressing issues than weed spraying, so this idea was dismissed.

- b. Shrub/Bush work.

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As AGREED earlier Stephen Wardle would seek the thoughts of NCC Highways to private landlord bushes and shrubbery that thwart street sweeping on colliery rows, being actioned.

- c. The purchase or hire costs of a small sweeper that will fit in colliery rows.

It was noted that if the rows were cleared they could be accessed by existing machinery.

It was further AGREED, that work to clear the problem colliery rows of the Hirst Ward would be costed, to include removal of overgrown shrubs and full sweeping, and that agreement to proceed with an order for the works would be delegated to the Clerk, to the value of the funds available.

6. Partnership Budget

It was AGREED to RECEIVE the updated budget report sent out in advance of the meeting. Further clarification would be given by Ray Wealleans at the next meeting.

7. Enhanced services performance

a) Rapid Response

It was AGREED to RECEIVE the Clerk's summary and evaluation of information from the weekly fly-tipping reports, sent out in advance of the meeting.

The Clerk commented that the reports from 1st December 2022 to 12th March 2023 had all consisted of the same type of fly tipping, furniture, white goods, and toys; mostly household waste.

It was AGREED that the following be arranged to move forward in a positive way with the litter picking volunteers.

- a) Ray Wealleans to create a generic email address solely for reporting bagged litter. The email address will be monitored by several NCC staff members to avoid delayed pickups.
- b) Sharon Parmley to arrange a breakfast meeting with the litter picking volunteers and the NEAT Team staff, and Cllrs.
- c) Work with litter picking volunteers to promote more positive comments on Facebook.

Stephen Wardle informed members that a new customer relations app was being developed for reporting issues. The app will also show customers if the item they are reporting has already been reported.

b) Weed Control

i. Weed Control Update (Die-back removed under Enhanced Services)

Peter Bowman reported that operatives had carried out some weed spraying over the winter, mainly on Station Road, Woodhorn Villas and Garden City Villas.

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ii. Operational Improvements (Enhanced Service results in dieback being removed more effectively)

Peter Bowman explained that new back packs for weed spraying had been sourced which are lighter for staff to use. The new pack also have an output monitor fitted to eliminate the problem of wasted chemical spray.

c) Street cleansing

i. Cleansing Schedules

Peter Bowman to devise a schedule for alternative sweeping for certain areas. Either every other month or quarterly if the area is not bad.

ii. Operational Improvements

- Looking into recording litter picking.
- More staff to be trained.
- Can now say how much grass cutting needs to be done.

d) Street sweeper

i. Street Sweeper Schedules

- Will concentrate on worst estates first.
- Peter Bowman to compile schedule list.

ii. Operational Improvements

- Increased street sweeping in the Hirst Area

8. Partnership Negotiating

It was updated, that at the first meeting of the Partnership Negotiating Group, the following points were discussed:

- Frequency of emptying bins.
- Rapid response.
- ATC waste collection service, free service, with a view to being a proactive scheme with arranged pickups, reducing fly tipping.
- Ask NCC to reduce the charges for bulky waste collections.

It was discussed that 18.5 tonnes of fly tipping had been collected so far this year and that education/prevention is much better than dealing with the aftermath of fly tipping.

Suggestions to link into any research being carried out to prevent fly tipping. Look at other Council's and how they deal with fly tipping and litter. The Clerk advised that a short report of neighbouring Council's was received at the previous Partnership meeting.

Cllr Caroline Ball suggested looking at how Finland deal with waste.

Other suggestions that were included at the previous meeting were amnesties, and CCTV.

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In addition Cllr Pauline Thompson raised that Landlord Licensing would help and that this is supported by the Police.

It was discussed that graded fines could be considered, along with much better communication.

9. Date, time and venue for the next meeting

Tuesday 12th June 2023.

Meeting end 3.20pm

DRAFT