

AGENDA 11, Enc vi) DRAFT Report of the Enhanced Neighbourhood Services Partnership Board, held on Tuesday 17th December 2024, commencing at 2:00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, 65 Station Road, Ashington

Members Present:

Cllr Marjorie Chambers, Cllr Gemma Hemsley, Stephen Wardle – Divisional Manager, Neighbourhood Services, Peter Bowman – Area Manager (South East) Ashington, Blyth and Newbiggin, Neighbourhood Services, Robin Wallace - NCC Senior Team Leader Neighbourhood Services, Ritchie Halliday – NCC Team Leader Neighbourhood Services.

Also, in Attendance:

Sarah Eden – ATC Executive Officer/RFO, Stephen Humphrey – Assets and Development Manager.

1. WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

Cllr Marjorie Chambers opened the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr John Tully, Cllr Louis Brown, Cllr Glyn Davies.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

None received.

4. DISPENSATIONS

None required.

5. PREVIOUS MEETING

The report of the last meeting, held on 17th December 2024 was **RECEIVED**, and **AGREED** as a true record.

In respect of those items on the agenda for updates from the last meeting. Peter confirmed that NS Roundabout was litter picked but does require traffic management for more substantial works.

Sarah apologised for not being available for the meeting held with neighbourhood services and the regeneration team in respect of Wansbeck Square. It was agreed this would need to be picked up later.

Sarah confirmed that the Markets Manager was attending the January FGS meeting. Stephen Wardle confirmed that there was a Markets Strategy up for review.

The evident and perceived issues of the market were discussed.

6. PARTNERSHIP BUDGET 2024/25

a) 24/25 Budget

The operational budget for 2024/25 was **RECEIVED**, along with an update of spending against it.

b) 2025/26 Budget Update

The operational budget for 2025/26 was **RECEIVED**. The figures highlighted that the Council's previously agreed cap of £238k would allow the continuation of five operatives but would not allow the seasonal that had been used to great effect in the second half of the current financial year.

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NCC advised that having the additional seasonal had given the team a great head start on winter works, including leaf clearance as well as covering sick leave.

7. WEED CONTROL PROGRAMME

Peter advised that in June 95% of weed spraying had been carried out, with 5% not complete due to parking and being unable to access kerbsides. They have a good head start and 25-30% of street furniture has been done, due to the current conditions they have been able to weed spray this week. Edging and gateways is being carried out. 252 additional hours were attributed to weed control as part of a county-wide initiative. It was noted that weed killer is not as strong and although outside the football club was done six times, weeds came back.

Cllr Chambers highlighted an issue at Lynecroft with weeds kerbside and in the gutter. It was AGREED this would be looked at.

8. FLY-TIPPING ACTION PLAN

Stephen Wardle advised that a press release is due to be released this week regarding the action on fly-tipping. There are 12 CCTV cameras installed on hot-spot streets, and two crime scenes have been identified each month. On some occasions offenders took back in the fly-tipping. The figures are coming down, and it is hoped they will come down further with CCTV being used effectively.

The update was well received, and members hoped the reduced numbers would continue.

9. ENHANCED SERVICES PERFORMANCE

a) Clerk's Summary

It was **AGREED** to receive the summary of information prepared by the Clerk from the monitoring tool and rapid response reports provided by Northumberland County Council.

Street Cleansing Overview:

No exceptions to the cleansing schedule between September and November.

NCC Officers noted greater emphasis on Kenilworth Road due to this being used more regularly.

Images of before and after following teams being diverted were shared, and the efforts applauded.

Average waste collection across zones:

Zone 1: 1,618 kg/week (decreased from previous period)

Zone 2: 1,783 kg/week (slight increase)

Zone 3: 1,828 kg/week (increased)

Roadsides: 640 kg/week (increased)

Total average of 1,467 kg across all areas, similar to the previous year.

In response to a question from Cllr Chambers, it was confirmed that all litter bins were emptied every week, but cleansing may be less frequent (as agreed as necessary), but litter bins were still emptied, with many being emptied more than once/week.

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Street Sweeping:

Sweepers were operational for two-thirds of the 13-week reporting period.

NCC Officers advised that they were trialling the new hako which had double capacity that currently being used.

Rapid Response (Fly-tip Removal):

349 fly-tips removed, compared to 544 in the same period last year

Average of 27 fly-tips per week (down from 42 in the previous year)

Total fly-tip collection weight: 20,260 kg

Additional bin store collections: 7,020 kg

Combined total of 27,280 kg, slightly over 4% higher than last year

Notable 36% decrease in fly-tip incidents.

Key Observations:

- Fly-tipping primarily consists of household waste
- Most prevalent areas: Central (40%), Hirst (25%), College (20%)
- Persistent problem streets include Sycamore St, Chestnut St, and Castle Terrace.

The report suggests a positive trend in waste management and fly-tip reduction, with recommendations for further investigation into reporting systems and collection patterns.

Because the geographical hotspots highlighted (Sycamore St, Chestnut St, Castle Terrace) consistently appear there could be targeted strategies for these areas, with increased surveillance, community engagement programs, further waste collection points, and community clean-up initiatives. Castle and Chestnut now have CCTV.

10. INSPECTIONS

An update on Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) and Quality Assurance (QA) inspections carried out by NCC Leaders was **RECEIVED**.

45 LEQ (Local Environmental Quality) inspections conducted

Inspection scores mainly ranged between 3 and 4, with some 2 scores for litter.

11. FUTURE CHANGES

Members supported the opportunity for NCC operatives to be diverted onto the removal of flyposting when this was possible. The town was blighted with posters, and although ATC Officers removed from our own assets, we could not dedicate the time to removing all from windows and those attached to lamp standards and the like, across the town. It was discussed that the Safety Advisory Group should look at persistent offenders when they are granting permissions. It was discussed that some jobs that neighbourhood officers could potentially be diverted onto were highways, cleaning signs for example, but it was agreed they did have the potential to improve the appearance of the town.

Stephen Wardle advised that the consultation on grounds maintenance was expected in 2025, and this would be a huge exercise giving all residents the opportunity to engage on the principles of a more climate conscious and biodiverse approach.

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12. DATE, TIME, AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 18th February 2025, Town Hall, Ashington, NE63 8RX.

The meeting ended at 15:30pm.