

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>City Environment Modernisation Update Report</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>29 September 2020</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director, Economy, Environment &amp; Culture</b>		
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee last received an update on the City Environment Modernisation Programme at its meeting on 21 January 2020. This report provides a further progress update.
- 1.2 The report also provides information and updates relating to several Cityclean service areas since the January update.
- 1.3 The report is also seeking approval to progress two key areas of service improvement and modernisation: the expansion of the communal bin service and investment in IT systems.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee note the progress of the Modernisation Programme and the service and performance updates in Appendices 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.
- 2.2 That Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee approve for officers to begin the necessary work and consultation to expand the communal bin area as per Appendix 4. This will involve consultation with residents, ward councillors, operatives and the trade unions,
- 2.3 That Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee approve to initiate a consultation on introducing communal collections from Preston Circus to Dyke Road Drive immediately to accommodate the introduction of a two-way segregated cycle lane along part of the A23.
- 2.4 That Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee recommends to the October 2020 Policy & Resources Committee that it approve, as part of the TBM05 Budget Monitoring Report, the £529k investment in IT systems funded from the Corporate Modernisation Fund (as detailed in 3.34 to 3.36).

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The City Environment Modernisation Programme is developing a sustainable future for the service in Brighton & Hove in the context of reducing council budgets, increasing customer demand and an expanding service offer. Many City Environment services are statutory and have been under a lot of scrutiny. The service has an integral role in resident, business and visitor perceptions of Brighton & Hove and is fundamental to the success and attraction of the city.
- 3.2 The depth, breadth and complexity of the issues that are being addressed at Cityclean cannot be underestimated. A significant proportion of management time and effort is being used to address these issues in order to build a strong foundation which is required to ensure visible and sustainable improvements in service delivery for the future.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 contains an update on each of the key projects within the Modernisation Programme. This is in a new format following feedback from Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee Members on previous Committee updates. Appendix 2 contains a diagram demonstrating the complexities of the Modernisation Programme and the dependencies between the different projects. This complexity exists alongside maintaining delivery of a frontline service, as well as managing a number of associated projects such as 'Tech Take Back' and Bulky Waste, plus contract management. Additional feedback on the Keeping the City Clean Review is in Appendix 3.
- 3.4 Moving forward and to embed the improvements and changes being made by the Modernisation Programme, Cityclean will develop a waste management strategy. This will set out the direction of travel for Cityclean for the next 10 years.

#### **National Waste & Resources Strategy**

- 3.5 The government published the National Waste & Resources Strategy in December 2018. Below is an update on the proposals within the Strategy:

##### Consistency in household and business recycling collections in England

- 3.6 A second consultation is being prepared for early 2021, which will include a definitive list of the materials proposed for collection, as well as potential marginal material streams such as cartons, oil and film. Further clarification will be provided on food waste and garden waste collections proposals.

##### Deposit Return Scheme

- 3.7 A second consultation is due in late 2020. The government is exploring a funding formula whereby local authorities could be paid the deposit amount on drinks containers collected at kerbside without having to physically return them via a designated return point. This would remove the issues of local authority materials being "lost" to a DRS scheme.

##### Plastic Packaging Tax

- 3.8 From April 2022, the Plastic Packaging Tax will apply to plastic packaging manufactured in or imported into the UK containing less than 30% recycling plastic.

### **Expansion of communal bin system**

- 3.9 During 2018 and 2019, a wheelie bin audit of all streets took place across the city to determine which type of containment was appropriate for each road– a 240 litre wheelie bin, a 140 litre wheelie bin or a communal bin. A set of criteria was used to determine which roads were suitable for a wheelie bin:
- Each property must have enough room to store the bin – either on their own property or on the pavement;
  - The pavement must be wide enough for pedestrians, wheelchairs, buggies etc. to pass when the bin is on the pavement;
  - The pavement cannot be sloped;
  - The road must be accessible for the relevant truck.
- 3.10 Using these criteria, it was determined what was appropriate for each road. One of the most important factors is that every household in the street must have the same type of container to allow the collection teams to work efficiently and effectively. The rare exception to this is the odd occasion when only one side of the street is suitable for a particular bin type. Also, decisions on introducing a communal collection in a street, cannot be made in isolation from other streets in the area. Therefore, some streets are included because it makes operational sense to include them.
- 3.11 Feedback from residents and ward councillors has also been used to inform the inclusion of some streets. This includes concerns about the numbers of wheelie bins and boxes on narrow pavements across the city, causing obstructions for prams and wheelchairs, as well as presenting issues for social distancing. Not only does this present an issue on collection days, but often all days if there is not sufficient space within the property boundary to store the bins. This is exacerbated on streets where houses have been split into multiple flats, with each household requiring its own set of bins.
- 3.12 It is possible that, for some streets with limited frontage and narrow pavements, a 140 litre bin could be provided as the footprint is slightly smaller. However, this is unlikely to provide households with enough recycling capacity and they may require two bins, causing further obstructions. It will also take the crews longer to empty the bins, presenting inefficiencies and putting pressure on operatives to complete the round within their shift.
- 3.13 An initial high-level analysis indicates that this will not involve changes in staff numbers. This is based on the time taken to empty different bins (in terms of litres) and the travel time between each bin. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the expansion of the communal bin service will lead to a reduction in resources to empty the bins: communal refuse bins will be emptied daily, and communal recycling and glass emptied multiple times a week, compared to weekly refuse and fortnightly recycling wheelie bins. If there is any spare capacity following the implementation of new communal bins, this will be used on other collections e.g. increasing the frequency of communal recycling collections. In addition, through the communal bin audit, the analysis suggests that some areas with an existing

communal service, do not have enough recycling and glass facilities. Should additional bins be placed on-street to address this, it can also be covered by spare capacity.

- 3.14 Once feedback has been received from residents as to which streets are in favour of the introduction of communal, and from crews and trade unions in terms of the operations, further analysis will take place to determine the resources required to service the new communal areas.
- 3.15 Appendix 4 includes a list of streets for which Cityclean would likely to introduce a communal collection service. Members are asked to approve for Cityclean to start the necessary work to commence the introduction of communal bins in these roads. This will start with a public consultation with residents in the affected roads, as well as engagement with Cityclean crews and trade unions. The results of the consultation will be analysed and brought back to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee for approval to proceed in the most appropriate way. The expansion will be completed in three phases as indicated in Appendix 4.
- 3.16 In addition, City Transport have received funds from the Department of Transport as part of the Tranche 1 Active Travel Fund. One project concerns changes along the A23 from Argyle Road to Dyke Road Drive where the inside lane will be reallocated as a two-way segregated cycle lane between a point 50 metres south of the junction with Argyle Road and the junction with Dyke Road Drive.
- 3.17 To accommodate this change and to maintain safe refuse and recycling collections, it is proposed that communal refuse and recycling collections are introduced to 222 households between Preston Circus and Dyke Road Drive and that communal recycling is introduced to Argyle Road and Campbell Road to complement the existing communal refuse collection. A resident consultation will take place to obtain views and the results brought back to a future Committee meeting for Members to determine the way forward.

## **Service delivery in 2020**

### Internal audit report

- 3.18 As reported to Audit & Standards Committee on 21 July 2020, many actions have been taken in response to investigations and other work by Internal Audit and Counter Fraud. Internal Audit reported that City Environment management and staff responded in a very positive way to identify and address shortfalls in the control environment:
- News systems are in place for procurement and stock control which have built in checks and balances;
  - Additional training for key staff on procurement and recruitment, reminders about the Officer Code of Conduct and declarations of interest;
  - Improved contract management with support from the corporate contract management team;
  - Recruitment processes have changed so that appropriate references are taken and appointment of agency staff is appropriately approved;
  - Vehicle control and management has been enhanced to ensure records are improved and security tightened.

3.19 Work continues to implement the agreed recommendations.

Covid-19 response

3.20 As has been reported elsewhere, Cityclean has been significantly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.21 A significant number of staff within the refuse & recycling service were required to self-isolate. Business Continuity Plans were used to prioritise the statutory collection service and included deploying staff from other roles and a large number of temporary staff to maintain collections. In the first few weeks, when temporary staff were appointed and trained, recycling collections were paused. However, recycling was not deposited in the waste stream as occurred in some local authorities. The need to social distance meant fewer people were able to be in a cab, and this led to some delays. Operatives were driven to their rounds in minibuses and moved around the city, adding another layer of complexity and cost to the service. There was also an increase in the volume of domestic waste and recycling arising from lockdown due to online shopping and people not eating out, as evidenced in Appendix 5. These increased volumes meant crews had to tip more, often causing further delays. Most self-isolating staff have now returned to work and temporary staff have gone. The complexity and delay to the service as a result of Covid-19 as described above and the need to social distance remains.

3.22 During lockdown, 40-50% of street cleansing operatives were at work. Consequently, busier and high footfall areas of the city were prioritised, alongside urgent activities such as dangerous waste or offensive graffiti. In the early stages of lockdown, this was manageable. However, as the good weather returned and lockdown restrictions were eased, footfall increased significantly, particularly along the beach, resulting in high volumes of litter being produced. This produced several challenges, particularly in relation to managing waste along the seafront. On one day, 11 tonnes of waste was removed from the beach, as opposed to three tonnes on a normal busy summer's day. This was likely a result of 1) indoor venues being closed so much larger numbers of people were outside generating litter 2) most establishments were providing a takeaway service only, leading to a lot more waste and little opportunity for that waste to be kept / disposed of on the premises. In addition, the Environmental Enforcement Service was suspended for a time to reduce face-to-face interactions, reducing the littering deterrent. As many staff as possible, often including managers, were deployed to the seafront. Approximately 60 large 1100 litre bins were rolled out along the seafront as additional litter bins. Signage was placed along the seafront warning people of the £150 fine for littering and the number of Environmental Enforcement Officers patrolling the seafront increased. Cityclean has been working closely with other departments and third sector organisations to try to reduce littering on the seafront and an action plan has been developed with Surfers Against Sewage. More detail on this action plan will be brought to a future committee, prior to Spring 2021.

3.23 In City Parks, 50% of staff had to self-isolate, leading to delays on routine and planned maintenance activities such as mowing and planting. Staff have now returned to work and are catching up with these tasks.

- 3.24 Due to the pandemic, the Environment Contact Centre telephone line closed in March and remains so due to telephony technical issues and working from home. Instead, residents were encouraged to use online means to contact Cityclean, with all resources diverted to respond to emails and online forms. As part of the Covid-19 response, an accessibility line was established, supported by the council's Switchboard Team, to take environment-related calls. Those with access to the internet continue to be encouraged to email Cityclean or use an online form. The telephone line is only for those who have no other means of reporting an issue. The person they speak to will either support them to complete the online form or will complete it on the resident's behalf in order to get the issue reported to Cityclean. This arrangement is being kept under review, both in terms of the service it is providing to residents and the impact on staff.
- 3.25 The prioritisation of statutory work and the impact of the pandemic on certain areas, such as the beach, has led to delays in other areas. Modernisation activities and project work was deprioritised as Project Officers were deployed to support the frontline delivery of services. This affected much of the project work. The majority of staff have now returned to work and service improvement work is progressing again.
- 3.26 The council would like to acknowledge the commitment and efforts of staff at all levels who continued to work throughout the pandemic ensuring that refuse, recycling and litter on streets and in parks were dealt with appropriately. The staff have received many compliments and thanks from members of the public, councillors and senior management.

#### Covid impact on waste disposal

- 3.27 The two Household Waste Recycling Sites (HWRS) were closed in late March in response to the pandemic and reopened on 18 May with several changes in place. These changes included:
- Reduced site capacity to allow for social distancing;
  - Reduced opening hours; both sites have now returned to normal;
  - Restrictions on oversize vehicles; these can now enter on Tuesdays and Thursdays; trailers remain banned due to a lack of capacity on site to enable them to park and manoeuvre;
  - Restrictions on pedestrians; pedestrians can now access Hove during normal opening hours; pedestrians cannot access Brighton due to the lack of safe access;
  - Restrictions on cyclists; cyclists may enter sites at any time via the main queuing lane used by cars, but must not overtake customers in front of them because of safety issues;
  - Traffic management was in place at both sites to remove issues caused by queuing on the main roads leading to both sites; this has been removed from the Brighton site.
- 3.28 Cityclean and Veolia are aware of the frustrations caused by these arrangements and thank residents for their patience and understanding during this time. The restrictions that continue remain under review.

- 3.29 The pandemic has had a significant impact on the volumes of waste collected over the last few months. Appendix 5 shows the differences in tonnages for comparable time periods. Of particular note:
- A 7% increase in residual waste during lockdown compared to the same period last year;
  - A 15% increase in recycling compared to the same period last year, continuing to rise by 17% in July when compared to last year;
  - An encouraging 7% increase on garden waste tonnages for this July, compared to last July;
  - A 117% increase in fly-tipping; this is likely to be the result of the temporary closure and restrictions at the HWRS;
  - A 58% reduction in waste collected through the HWRS during lockdown, reducing to a 19% reduction in July compared to last year.

#### Industrial relations

- 3.30 The trade unions, managers and staff worked well together during the pandemic to rise to the challenges presented to City Environment where services remained in operation.
- 3.31 At Cityclean, managers and GMB representatives continue to meet six-weekly for consultation meetings where any concerns are raised, and new initiatives and developments are discussed.
- 3.32 There has been some initial engagement about the expansion of communal bins with the trade unions. At this stage, the GMB are indicating that they have concerns about the expansion will be seeking reassurances around these changes not resulting in a reduction in staff numbers. Should the Committee agree to the recommendations in this report, a programme of further consultation will take place with staff and the trade unions with the aim of understanding and responding to these concerns.
- 3.33 The ballot to take industrial action ended in January 2020.

#### **Investment in IT systems**

- 3.34 Cityclean does not have effective IT systems in place to manage the whole service. Several systems are in use and spreadsheets are also used to manage information and report on service performance, with paper used to pass messages between the Contact Centre and operatives. On 15 July 2020, Corporate Modernisation Delivery Board approved a business case to invest £529,000 in IT systems at Cityclean.
- 3.35 The investment will help further modernise several elements of the service, including: commercial waste, refuse & recycling, street cleansing, customer information, management information and route optimisation. The funding will cover the purchase of the system, resources to implement it and a digital skills training programme.
- 3.36 The anticipated benefits of the investment are wide ranging and include:
- An improvement in customer satisfaction as residents will be able to receive improved information relating to their enquiry;

- An improvement in staff satisfaction and morale as they are given the right tools to complete their job;
- An improvement in the recycling rate as electronic communication to residents will improve and become more frequent, including what can and cannot be recycled;
- Increased accuracy in data capture and a reduction in the missed collection rate due to real-time information exchange between the contact centre, crews and residents;
- Information required to enable efficient round restructuring.

3.37 It is requested that Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee recommends to the October 2020 Policy & Resources Committee that it approve, as part of the TBM05 Budget Monitoring Report, the £529k investment in IT systems funded from the Corporate Modernisation Fund.

### **Performance of commercial services**

3.38 As reported to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee in October 2018, the commercial services were an early focus of the Modernisation Programme. Since then, many improvements have been made to the service including the creation of a dedicated Commercial Team, a more robust trade waste service and a new digital system to manage garden waste.

3.39 In addition, a third garden waste round was introduced in June 2020 and to date, over 1,500 customers have been invited to join the service. The team continues to work through the waiting list. There are currently over 8,800 customers.

3.40 Furthermore, the financial performance of both the trade waste service and the garden waste service has shown improvements, leading to a surplus of £161k in 2019/20:

Year	2018/19	2019/20
Trade waste	-£24,000	-£105,000
Garden waste	£19,000	-£56,000
Total	-£5,000	-£161,000

3.41 This surplus is being invested back into waste and recycling services.

### **Performance**

3.42 Appendix 6 has been prepared to provide Members with an update on several elements of Cityclean performance as the City Environment Modernisation Programme has been designed to address many elements of service delivery. While there is some way to go, the information in the appendix helps to demonstrate some of the progress made to date.

## **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1 The City Environment Modernisation Programme is developing a sustainable future for the service in Brighton & Hove in the context of reducing council budgets, increasing customer demand and an expanding service offer. Within this, work is taking place to improve performance on refuse, recycling, garden



and trade waste collections, and street cleansing, as well as adopting a more commercial approach to income generating services. Without the continuation of the Programme, there is a risk that improvements will not be delivered and there will be further pressures on the City Environment budget.

- 4.2 If investment is not made in IT systems, the service will struggle to modernise in terms of being able to effectively communicate with residents and poor communication channels will continue between the contact centre and crews.
- 4.3 If consultation on the expansion of communal bins is not approved, some streets in the city will continue to experience issues and blocked pavements.

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 This report is seeking permission to undertake resident consultation on the introduction of communal collections in new areas of the city. The results of the consultations will be brought back to future Committee meetings for approvals to proceed.
- 5.2 Previous community and consultation activities in relation to City Environment are detailed in the committee reports listed as Background Documents below.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 This report provides Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee with a progress report on the Modernisation Programme and other areas of Cityclean service delivery. Improvement and modernisation work continues to be delivered, but there is still some way to go.
- 6.2 If the recommendations are approved, they will lead to significant improvements for Cityclean, particularly in terms of the service offered to residents where it is proposed to introduce communal bins, as well as residents across the city in terms of the IT investment in back-office systems.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The proposed expansion of the communal bin system is currently assessed to be revenue neutral (as set out in paragraph 3.13 of this report). Purchase on the bins will be funded from capital investment.
- 7.2 The immediate financial impact of Covid19 on City Environment services has and continues to be monitored and reported as part of monthly budget monitoring. The medium-term financial impact is under review as part of annual budget setting and the parameters of this have previously been reported to Policy & Resources Committee (for example, the General Fund Budget Planning and Resources update report to the 9 July 2020 meeting).
- 7.3 The proposed investment in IT systems (as set out in paragraphs 3.34 to 3.37) will be funded from the Corporate Modernisation Fund (subject to October 2020 Policy & Resources Committee approval).

Legal Implications:

- 7.4 So far as the report's recommendation regarding the expansion of communal bins is concerned, the Council, as waste collection authority, can specify what receptacles are used for the collection of household waste, where the receptacles are located and what substances or articles can be placed in the receptacle or in separate compartments within that receptacle (s46 Environmental Protection Act 1990).
- 7.5 Save as above there are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

Equalities Implications:

- 7.6 Any resident unable to easily access refuse or recycling collection services can apply for an assisted collection.
- 7.7 Equalities implications relating to other City Environment projects within the Modernisation Programme are detailed in the committee reports listed as Background Documents below.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.8 The City Environment Modernisation Programme is seeking to increase recycling rates and improve street cleanliness.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. City Environment Modernisation Programme update
2. City Environment Modernisation Programme dependencies
3. Keeping the city clean report
4. Expansion of communal bin system
5. Covid-19 impact on waste tonnages
6. Performance report

**Background Documents**

1. Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2019/20 to Audit & Standards Committee on 21 July 2020
2. Fleet Procurement Options to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 26 November 2019
3. City Environment Modernisation Update to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 8 October 2019

4. City Environment Modernisation Update to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 25 June 2019
5. City Environment Modernisation Update to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 22 January 2019
6. Environmental Enforcement Framework Report to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 27 November 2018
7. Graffiti Reduction Strategy Report to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 27 November 2018
8. Public Convenience Report to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee on 11 October 2018
9. City Environmental Management – Modernisation Programme Update Report to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 9 October 2018
10. City Environmental Management – Modernisation Programme Update Report to Policy, Resources & Growth Committee on 12 July 2018
11. Update on Chargeable Garden Waste Collection Service Report to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 28 June 2016
12. Proposals for a Chargeable Garden Waste Collection Service Report to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 13 October 2015
13. Cityclean Service Plan and Priorities Report to Policy & Resources Committee on 9 July 2015

