

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 207

Subject: Improving the Culture and Service Performance of Environmental Services

Date of meeting: 15 May 2025

Report of: Cabinet Member Net Zero and Environmental Services

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Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Key Decision: No

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The Council is committed to delivering an inclusive and fair city, one where everyone can thrive and feel included and valued. This includes fighting discrimination, embracing diversity and working to reduce inequality both across the city and within the council as a workplace. As a learning organisation, we are committed to learning from our mistakes and to creating an environment where all staff feel psychologically safe, and where we look after the health and wellbeing of ourselves and each other. This ambition sits alongside our drive to have a city to be proud of, one that is clean and sustainable and where we work together to keep the city clean and effectively manage our waste.
- 1.2 Just after the May 2023 election, the current Administration received a serious whistleblowing complaint about the culture that existed in City Clean (now called Environmental Services), and the hugely negative implications for both staff and residents in terms of the waste collection service provided to the city. The complaint highlighted issues that had existed for many years / decades, and that had not been addressed successfully by previous administrations over the years.
- 1.3 Following receipt of the complaints, and an assessment of their extreme severity, an independent inquiry was launched into behaviours and activity in City Clean. The complaints contained multiple allegations of sexual harassment, discrimination based on disability, bullying and intimidation. Aileen McColgan KC (Kings Counsel) - an eminent Human Rights Lawyer - undertook the investigation.
- 1.4 This report has been prepared to update members on the considerable progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Aileen McColgan report ('the KC report'), to be candid about issues that still need to

be addressed and to explain to residents the next steps the service propose to take to secure a permanent improvement in service performance and customer satisfaction. The report also highlights how the approach taken is embedding our principles of a learning organisation to create a service that will be well connected to our residents, with staff who are confident in carrying out their roles using new technologies and are innovative in their approach to create an excellent service for the city.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agrees to note this update report, having indicated its support of the further efforts to ensure lasting changes in the culture of Environmental Services so that residents see visible improvements and benefits.
- 2.2 Approves a Service Recovery Programme investment budget of £0.892m for 2025/26 (£0.532m revenue and £0.360m capital), the funding of which is outlined in the financial implications, enabling the service to continue to drive the change needed.
- 2.3 Notes the investment of £3.875m required in 2025/26 to purchase replacement Environmental Services vehicles including vehicles for food waste collection.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The council is determined to deliver a waste collection service that the city can be proud of and is taking actions in all areas of the service to address deep-rooted issues that have existed for many decades. The actions being taken will improve the performance of collections, increase recycling and improve the look and feel of the city. A fundamental and essential part of the change is to transform the culture within the service.
- 3.2 The [outcome of the independent inquiry](#) into the culture of City Clean was received on 13th November 2023 and describes numerous accounts of appalling behaviour faced by staff and managers at City Clean.
- 3.3 Aileen McColgan KC found 'The complaints, which I have concluded were well-founded, contained multiple allegations of sexual harassment, race discrimination, discrimination based on disability, bullying and intimidation. As a result of my investigation I have recommended that the Council consider disciplinary action against a number of named individuals'.
- 3.4 The report goes on to describe the role of some GMB representatives and a small group who were perceived as protected by them. The KC said 'they pressurised crews to refuse to work with staff members who were disliked by the reps / individuals perceived as protected. I also heard accounts of some GMB reps within the Council and / or others described as being particularly protected by them imposing pressure on operatives not to cooperate with

management even if they wished to do so’.

- 3.5 The report goes on to conclude ‘I am satisfied that managers at City Clean and elsewhere in the Council have, until recently, been unable to respond appropriately to such behaviour by reason of the threat of industrial action and a (reasonably) anticipated absence of political support. Behaviour of the sort described above became normalised as behaviour such as that outlined above has been emulated by other personnel within City Clean. One witness told me that ‘Aggression has become culturally engrained’.
- 3.6 The KC report identified that weapons were held at the depot in the office that the GMB branch had exclusive access to. Following a search of that office (observed by GMB representatives) we recovered knives, nunchucks, baseball bats and a samurai sword. Charges were brought against a former BHCC employee. Charges were dropped by the CPS earlier this year – a decision they have now acknowledged was wrong but irreversible because of the statutory time limits to reinstate the charges. The GMB has never explained to us the reason for the presence of weapons in their office.
- 3.7 The culture change work which we have instigated at the depot has significantly improved matters but there have also been subsequent examples of suspected criminal damage and intimidation which we continue to address. We understand that the GMB investigated messages from the GMB Sussex social media account warning of ‘chaos’ last year directly before acts of sabotage took place, but we have never been told of the results of this investigation.
- 3.8 On the 25th January 2024, the Chief Executive reported the outcome of the inquiry to [the Strategy, Finance and City Regeneration Committee](#) and it was agreed that changes would be made to the Council’s employment arrangements in line with the recommendations in the report and a Culture Change Programme was put in place. At that meeting the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council apologised to staff within the service and to residents in the city for the impact the culture had on the service provided.

Progress of KC Report Recommendations

- 3.9 There were several confidential recommendations, including disciplinary action in relation to the behaviour described in the report. These processes have been managed through the council’s employment procedures, and the outcomes are confidential to those involved. Since the report was published, over 40 staff have left the service, either through disciplinary or capability processes or otherwise choosing to leave.
- 3.10 The [public report](#) contained several clear recommendations, all of which were accepted by the council and have been taken forward. Our principles as a learning organisation have been embedded into all the actions that we have taken, with a commitment to test and learn and review our progress as we go along. The main recommendations in the published report can be summarised as follows:

Removing member appeal panels

- 3.11 The KC report recommended that member appeal panels were removed, and that instead of elected members hearing dismissal appeals, these should be heard by senior officers, consistent with the approach taken in most local authorities.
- 3.12 On 25th January, the then Strategy, Finance and City Regeneration Committee approved a change to the council's employment procedure and the involvement of elected members in dismissal appeal panels and collective dispute hearings ended in August 2024. Dismissal appeals and collective disputes are now heard by senior managers not previously involved in the case. Managers are supported and trained to undertake this role.

A review of alleged agreements that are said to apply in the City Clean service, but which are not written or agreed

- 3.13 The KC report states that 'It seems clear to me that GMB reps within the Council have failed to cooperate in any attempt to achieve clarity as to what agreements exist. When the existence of other agreements is questioned, a number of witnesses told me that the stock response is that 'if you haven't got them that's your problem'. 'One witness told me that when people have persisted, having formed the opinion that there was no agreement, 'all hell breaks loose'.
- 3.14 One such report dated the 17th October 2021 effectively prevented managers from performance managing staff, changing rounds without consultation and prevented missed collections being reallocated to other crews. As a result of the recommendations of the KC report and following consultation with staff, this agreement was terminated in April 2024 enabling managers to begin to engage with its own workforce on modernising working practises to the benefit of residents.
- 3.15 Following the report, it has now been clearly communicated that no agreements exist outside of the council's terms and conditions package and operating procedures for the service. This has provided clarity for both managers and staff and ensured that decisions made on working arrangements are focused on the provision of a great service to residents, and a healthy but highly productive working environment.

A review of all consultation arrangements, and the conduct of industrial relations, including a review of previous agreements which are deemed to be unworkable

- 3.16 Prior to the KC report, City Clean Consultation Group (CCG) meetings were held for 3 hours every 6 weeks, and these meetings were attended by GMB but not UNISON, the other recognised Trade Union at the Council. There was a culture of normal management decisions being taken to the CCG meetings, and managers feeling they were 'hailed over the coals' at the meetings.
- 3.17 In line with the recommendations of the report, consultation arrangements for City Clean have been brought in line with arrangements across the

council. Where there are major changes proposed, then meetings with relevant Trade Union representatives are held. The ambition is to ensure that industrial relations are positive and constructive and are supported by our joint endeavours to provide a great service to residents.

A review of disciplinary and grievance procedures to ensure that timescales are adhered to

- 3.18 The KC report expressed significant concern about disciplinary and grievance processes. In addition to the involvement of elected members, there was evidence of obstructive conduct in relation to meetings, with participants being repeatedly unavailable, and meetings being cancelled at short notice.
- 3.19 The number of calendar days from opening to closing a case is tracked and whilst complex investigations, sometimes involving the police, take time to investigate, the overall time cases taken to close a case has fallen.

A review of recruitment practices at City Clean

- 3.20 Some witnesses in the KC process raised concerns about unfair processes relating to recruitment and to the deployment of agency staff.
- 3.21 Following concerns raised in the KC report regarding recruitment and deployment processes, a project was initiated to improve diversity and inclusion in Environmental Service's hiring practices. The project aims to review and enhance recruitment processes for permanent and seasonal roles, with recommendations based on recruitment data and the KC report. Initial efforts focused on managers involved in seasonal campaigns, with plans for broader implementation based on data findings and priorities.
- 3.22 This is a central part of our inclusive and diverse pillar (described in para 3.23 below). Key actions included analysing recruitment data, which showed lower application rates from women and BME backgrounds compared to the wider organisation. An Inclusive Recruitment Workshop was conducted, diverse marketing materials were created, and managers are now required to complete e-learning and are encouraged to attend further training sessions. Bespoke support from the council's recruitment team ensures ongoing assistance, fostering inclusivity throughout the recruitment process, and ensuring Environmental Services uses the same best practice approaches as the rest of the council. This aligns strongly to our learning organisation ways of working and ambition to be diverse and inclusive.

Ensuring equal treatment of both the council's recognised trade unions and removal of GMB union office and parking space at Environmental Services

- 3.23 GMB are no longer entitled to a parking space at the Depot or a dedicated office. Both unions are consulted through the Directorate Consultative Group, both unions have access to managers and both unions have been provided with notice boards to keep their members informed. Facilities provided to both GMB and UNISON are in line with arrangements across the council.

A requirement that all staff, including trade union representatives, comply with the Council's behaviour framework

- 3.24 Significant action on culture change has been ongoing, and is outlined in detail below. Unions, whilst remaining passionate about supporting their members, are noticeably more courteous in their direct day to day representation of members than used to be the case. This is much more reflective of our Behavioural Framework and aligned to our learning organisation ways of working ambition to be healthy and psychologically safe.

Environmental Services Culture Change programme

- 3.25 As a learning organisation the Council has established a Way of Working, and a Leadership Framework, based on five 'pillars'. These have been used to guide the design of the culture change programme and to ensure work is aligned to the wider development of culture across the Council. The five pillars to our Way of Working are:



- 3.26 The culture change programme has been ongoing since November 2023 when the KC report was published with the purpose of developing the culture in Environmental Services to become a mainstream part of the Council. The culture change Programme implements the recommendations in the report about the working culture, unacceptable behaviours, and other confidential recommendations in the report.
- 3.27 Culture change is 'done with', not 'done to' our valued staff at Environmental Services. It remains the intention that our staff and unions will have a key role in how Environmental Services becomes simply a nicer, kinder, more respectful and dignified place to work, delivering high quality services to residents.

- 3.28 The culture change programme outlined below embeds the changes already made in the service to implement a zero tolerance of poor behaviour and instigate disciplinary processes to address issues of bullying behaviour. The programme has four phases.

Phase 1: Stabilise:

- Ensure all staff and managers have support and opportunity to be heard.
- Ensure the service feels valued and appreciated - not all 'tarred with the same brush'.
- Ensure access to specialist counselling.
- Apply 'zero tolerance' approach to managing poor behaviour.
- Support and development for frontline managers and supervisors to support effective and consistent behaviour management.

Status: All actioned, and ongoing

Phase 2: Creating conditions for culture change:

- Behaviour expectations reset.
- Council and TU relationship and behaviours reset.
- Mandatory behaviour reset learning and development covering bullying, harassment, equality and discrimination with consequences for failure or refusal to engage.
- Continue to apply 'zero tolerance' – informal and formal procedures.

Status: All actioned, and ongoing

Phase 3: Culture Change

- Co-create future vision for service with staff, manager, TU Colleagues, and other stakeholders across the Council
- Using 'Challenge & Collaboration' events to define the future vision and how the service is going to get there.
- Future focused, reestablishing psychological safety, setting clear vision, 'making it real'.
- Support frontline staff and managers to co-deliver on culture change activities.

Status: Ongoing

Phase 4: Embedding culture change:

- Led by leaders and managers using our Learning Organisation ways of working.
- Mechanisms to support this to be defined.

Status: Ongoing

- 3.29 The programme is ongoing as all culture change initiatives are by their very nature iterative. The time it takes to achieve lasting cultural change can vary widely depending on the context, scale, and approach. Some experts suggest that smaller changes can be noticeable within 6 months, while significant shifts may take 18 months to 2 years. However, embedding change into the core values and practices often requires continuous effort and adaptation. Given the endemic and deeply protracted nature of what has been encountered, embedded change will potentially take between 2-5 years to fully secure.

- 3.30 Measuring the success of the programme is an iterative process. Success will be measured through Employee pulse surveys which tell us about what it is like to work in Environmental Services, improved service performance by reducing missed collections and in resident satisfaction with the service.
- 3.31 A cross-council steering group has been set up to drive culture change, and meets fortnightly to ensure delivery of the programme. Coaching has and continues to be offered to senior leaders within the service. Action Learning Sets have enabled managers to begin to articulate how they can support a changed culture and programmes such as “holding difficult conversations” have been effective in ensuring a focus on performance and business improvement.
- 3.32 The Council takes a Zero Tolerance approach to bullying and harassment and a key focus on the culture change programme addresses this.
- 3.33 The widespread and sustained nature of bullying and harassment had a devastating effect on the workforce. Staff did and some still experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. A programme of professional therapeutic support has been provided to those staff.
- 3.34 The behaviour framework has been incorporated into the service and is being used in employee relations case work and performance development discussions and is beginning to be embedded across the service. EDI (Equality, Diversity and inclusion) sessions have been made available to staff with a further tranche scheduled for the autumn as part of a wider programme of ongoing learning.
- 3.35 A further focus has been on Co-Creating a Vision for the Future. A Depot Newsletter is provided to staff each week with regular updates from across the service. A Culture Change Champion staff group has been established to support staff wishing to become ambassadors for the new culture. Plans to establish a management, staff and trade union stakeholder group have not yet been progressed because staff tell us they don’t feel it is psychologically safe to participate because there is not a joint consensus on what happened in the past by all parties. This is explored in the next section of the report.
- 3.36 The culture change work which we have instigated at the depot has significantly improved matters but there have also been subsequent examples of suspected criminal damage and intimidation which we continue to address. We understand that the GMB investigated messages from the GMB Sussex social media account warning of ‘chaos’ last year directly before acts of sabotage took place, but again but we have never been told of the results of this investigation.
- 3.37 Countercultures which challenge dominant organisational values, can create conflict and hinder cohesion. At Environmental Services a persistent counterculture, reportedly driven by a few individuals, has been described as toxic. Ms McColgan stated she was “satisfied that the working environment at Cityclean can fairly be described as toxic,” and that GMB reps protect

particular union members while displaying “significantly less interest” in others. Despite changes in personnel, the Council continues to address the impact of this counterculture on Environmental Services.

- 3.38 Trade unions are organisations that advocate for employee rights and workplace interests by engaging with employers on matters such as pay, conditions, large-scale redundancies, and disciplinary issues. They play an integral role in fostering productive and fair workplaces, with potential benefits including increased efficiency, profitability, and constructive employee relations. Brighton & Hove City Council recognises the importance of trade unions and has established collective bargaining arrangements with GMB and UNISON. The Council believes that Trade Union recognition provides a good indication of a constructive approach to employee relations. Brighton & Hove City Council is a collective bargaining organisation and recognises GMB and UNISON Trade Unions for this purpose.
- 3.39 The Council remains committed to supporting constructive collective arrangements with recognised trade unions while advocating for a positive and collaborative working environment. Staff have expressed a desire to provide quality services to residents and move past these challenges. The focus is on recovery and fostering a culture that aligns with shared organisational goals.

Environmental Services Culture Change and Service Performance

- 3.40 Following the publication of the independent KC report in November 2023, the City Clean refuse and recycling service improved. Missed kerbside refuse collections reported via the council's website went from 2552 instances in the first two weeks of August 2023, to 205 in the first two weeks of December 2023. A reduction of over 90% in four months. Missed kerbside recycling collections dropped by 68%.
- 3.41 However, since January 2025, a significant setback in performance has occurred and there have been significant issues related to the reliability of the service which is compounded by paper-based systems and ageing fleet and equipment that has caused repeated vehicle defects. The service has also seen significant issues with staffing availability and increase in sickness and difficulties in securing agency staff because of council spending controls. Potentially some of the service issues may stem from intentional counter-cultural behaviours by a very small number of individuals and the service remains very alert to this. This includes sabotage of vehicles.

Average missed collection reports	Rolling 3 months to 16 th Dec 24	Rolling 3 months to 28 th April 25
Full communal bin RECYCLING	4	3
Full communal bin REFUSE	10	9
Missed GARDEN WASTE	63	299
Missed RECYCLING	222	246
Missed REFUSE	273	709
Total	573	1369

- 3.42 Unfortunately, there has continued to be some toxic behaviours impacting the service, including ongoing sabotage of Council vehicles, damage to managers', who are involved in disciplinaries, property including twice slashing tyres, ongoing intimidatory acts both in the workplace and at managers' homes and a death threat was made as recently as January 2025. Recent sabotage has of course been reported to the Police and managed through the council's disciplinary processes, where evidence exists. A team has been mobilised to monitor and document all suspicious activities taking significant time from other important service improvement work.

Performance Improvement programme

- 3.43 Many of the changes described in this section have been made possible by the removal of agreements in the service, that previously prevented performance management, flexible working and reallocation of missed collections, for example Appendix 2 of the 17th October 2021 agreement to end a collective dispute which was in place until 22nd April 2024. Establishing this change, and ensuring staff understand the new way of working has taken time but has been an essential part of making sustainable change for the future. Introducing digital initiatives, such as in-cab technology that allow for the effective management of the service have previously been stalled by historic ways of working and the industrial relations culture. Other changes relate to systemic under-investment in the service, and making the changes needed for long term sustainable improvement.
- 3.44 In recent weeks, to help increase the reliability of the service four additional mechanics have been recruited into our workshop area to ensure a faster turnaround of vehicles needing regular servicing, maintenance or repairs. In addition, three drivers and four loaders joined the service at the beginning April and are now fully operational. It takes four weeks to take drivers through their assessment and training process. At the beginning of May 2026, a further four drivers and four loaders joined the service and at the time of this report were undertaking their training and assessment process. This additional capacity will be deployed to improve the reliability of all our recycling and waste streams across the city.
- 3.45 The service has outdated paper systems which do not interface with multiple stand-alone digital systems. This month a Lead Operations Manager (Data) has been appointed with an immediate task of supporting collection improvement. Additional operations managers will also be appointed to support collection service recovery.
- 3.46 An area of particular concern is vehicle reliability on our communal recycling rounds. Root cause analysis shows that the Council's older communal bin-stock leads to frequent defects. Replacing non-standard community recycling bins which cause repeated vehicle defects to lifting mechanisms will take place over the summer of 2025.

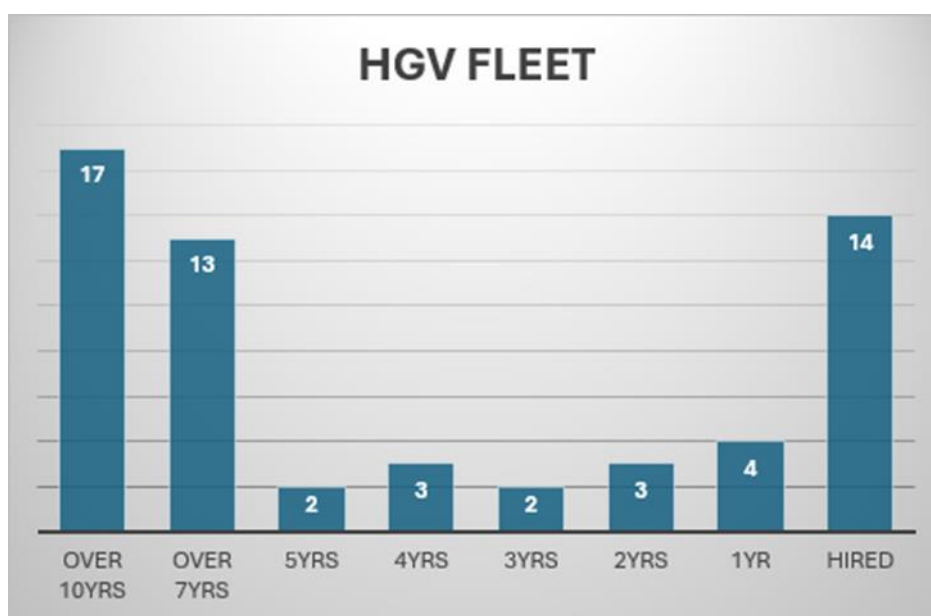
- 3.47 A lack of information about missed collections causes extensive frustration to the relatively small but very significant number of residents who experience it. The service does not seek to minimise the impact this has and has recently provided clarity by asking residents to leave their bins out for 48 hours after collection to enable recovery rounds. Missed bin reallocation takes place constantly across the day and crews must now call in, if they find they have spare capacity. Our missed bin information is often imperfect and changes quickly. We will shortly start to publish the latest information we have on missed collections each day on our website with information about any plans we have to recover the missed collection. This will provide more certainty to residents and save them having to report missed collections we already know about and are taking action to recover.
- 3.48 The Digital Environmental Services (City Clean) programme commenced in 2021 against a timeline that has proved challenging. The purpose of the programme is twofold, to provide a more reliable and efficient service giving us live information on whether crews will complete their rounds. The software will automatically reallocate potentially missed work to other crews. Rounds vary each week due to traffic conditions, the availability of access to properties, the volume and weight residents throw away and the amount of time they need to wait to tip vehicles in the middle of rounds. In-cab technology will support drivers to work to the most efficient route and ensure we keep rounds more evenly balanced across crews. The programme is already deployed and working well in our Trade Waste Service, the plan is to extend this to Garden Waste in June and Refuse and Recycling early in the Summer.
- 3.49 One of the things that frustrates residents and indeed our staff too, is not being able to give accurate information on what happens when a round is delayed. This is because we are often gaining information over our radio systems or waiting for crews to return with round information on paper sheets at the end of the shift. We are working with our customer service team to ensure more accurate information is provided on-line and to callers too. We expect at a later date to be able to provide real time updates by email to customers with a MyAccount. We plan to roll the technology out to our street cleaning teams after we have successfully completed deployment in the waste service.
- 3.50 The programme will be a massive cultural change for our drivers too and we are taking the time to work with them and ensure the new technology is introduced in a way that assists them to do better. Extensive driver and operational manager training and briefing at each phase of the programme is critical to securing the benefits of the investment in the service.
- 3.51 Councils that have already introduced the technology find they have a far more reliable, efficient and resident friendly service and we expect Brighton and Hove residents to be sharing the same benefits soon.
- 3.52 To deliver this Service improvement the following investment is being made through the flexible use of capital receipts to temporarily increase capacity to

sustain the service whilst improvements are made. The commitment investment is as follows:

Table 1 – Investment and funding	Revenue £'000	Capital £'000
Expenditure		
Employee Relations: Employee relations manager for 14 months to drive historic casework forward and reducing sickness absence (includes employee on costs)	70	
Customer Relations and Performance: Additional funding to accelerate the in-cab project	40	
Efficient use of vehicles- standardised vehicle tracking and monitoring software to be fitted to all refuse collection vehicles	147	
Data Analyst Manager: Data Analyst Manager for 14 months to review data from customer, fleet, and HR systems supporting customer and performance improvement. (includes employee on costs)	85	
Additional Operations Managers: An additional two Operations Managers to temporarily increase operational capacity ahead of change programmes reducing current ratio of 1 manager to 37 staff in waste and 1:78 in streets	140	
Driver Development Initiatives: driver development initiatives to improve road safety and reduce vehicle downtime and repair costs.	20	
Training Relief HGV Drivers: Funding is sought to train three relief HGV drivers at a cost of £14.5k12 additional CPC costs to be met by service.	15	
Accountant Support: Funding 50% of an accountant post for 6 months to deliver the budget transformation.	15	
Communal Recycling Bins: Replacing non-standard communal recycling bins which will significantly reduce vehicle defects due to damaged lifting gear		360
Total Expenditure	532	360
Funding		
Mitigation – Revenue funding from Environmental Services improvement budget	250	
One off - service Improvement programme to be funded from capital receipts	282	
PWLB Borrowing (supported by annual revenue costs)		360
Total Funding	532	360

Modernising the fleet

- 3.53 A new Head of Fleet was appointed in January 2025 and immediately reduced the average number of 22 vehicles off road each day to 14. This is still too high. It means more vehicles are carried as spare than need be. Sometimes vehicles critical for a particular waste stream are still not available for protracted periods of time whilst parts are remanufactured and sourced from overseas.
- 3.54 Work has continued at pace to seek to understand and plan to renew the waste fleet. Site constraints at the Hollingdean Depot mean that many vehicles are double shifted and in use 16 hours per day. HGV fleets need regular planned maintenance and servicing every few weeks. The age profile of the fleet has increased, and most of the fleet is well beyond the optimum 7-year replacement cycle. This is partly a lag due to global supply chain issues which developed from Covid and attempts to move to a fleet which met net zero aspirations.



- 3.55 Wider electrical network supply issues beyond the depot mean that the depot is currently operating with the maximum number of electric vehicles that it can manage. Electric vehicles are typically twice the cost of Euro 6 Diesel alternatives. Cost constraints from the cost-of-living crisis impact the Council just as they impact residents creating difficult choices. To bring the age profile of the fleet back on track it will be necessary to purchase Euro 6 diesels this year and next year. This will be reviewed as fleet and market conditions change.
- 3.56 The service is proposing to purchase the following Euro 6 Diesel vehicles using the remainder of the 2024/25 capital allocation of £1.050m together with the 2025/26 capital allocation of £2.5m at a total cost of £3.102m:
- 5 x 26t Refuse Collection Vehicles
 - 2x Luton Vans
 - 4x 12t Diesel Minimatic Refuse Collection Vehicles

- 1x 7.5t Mini Matic Refuse Collection Vehicle
 - 1x Single Cab Caged Vehicle tipper Tail Lift
 - 2x 7.5t Sweeper Vehicles
 - 2 x Single Cab Tail Lift tipper (POPs)
 - 1x Crew Cab Caged Vehicle tipper x 1
 - And in addition the following vehicles are on order at a cost of £458,000 from the Council's 2024/25 capital allocation for replacement vehicles.
 - 2 x Electric Crew Cab Caged Vehicle
 - 1 x Electric Single Cab, Tail Lift, Caged Vehicle
 - Electric Crew Van
 - 5 x Jetwash electric Vans x 2
- 3.57 The current capital programme provides for £2.5m spend per annum to replace vehicles in Environmental Services. As service reliability improves, electrical supply capacity increases and the cost of electric vehicles falls there can be a return to the purchase of electric vehicles.
- 3.58 To provide the food waste service five 16-ton food waste vehicles are also being purchased using a capital grant provided by DEFRA at a cost of £772,500. Lead times for new waste vehicles are typically 8-12 months.
- 3.59 Further significant investment will be required in the coming years to rectify the age profile of the fleet.

Other work being undertaken by the Service

- 3.60 The Hollingdean Depot's operational configuration dates back to the 1880s being the site of the City's "Dust Destructor" and is no longer fit for purpose. The site is not optimised to properly support the fleet operating from it, most staff are working in portacabins which are well beyond their planned lifespan. The site makes meeting health and safety responsibilities more challenging than they need be. Separate programmes are in train to improve security at the depot from internal and external threats, increasing electrical infrastructure and developing a masterplan leading to a phased programme of site and building works designed to make the depot more effective

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 A do-nothing option is not possible because bullying and harassment must be investigated, and the recommendations identified in the KCs report must be addressed. Because of the toxic culture at the depot, long standing service development issues have not been prioritised and the stabilisation of the service now means they can be addressed. Not to address them would lead to a service unacceptable to residents.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The Culture change programme will evolve with engagement with staff and will continue with the full involvement of the services culture change champions (see paragraph 3.36 above).

- 5.2 Service improvements will continue to be identified using data collected from customers, and identifying the improvements required to ensure a safe and reliable service to the residents of the city.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The report sets out the agreed investment to improve the Culture and Service Performance of Environmental Services. This constitutes short term investment to deliver the performance improvement programme of £0.892m as set out in table 1 of the main report. Of this investment £0.532m is considered to be revenue and £0.360m capital expenditure.
- 6.2 The revenue investment will be funded using existing revenue budget of £0.250m and £0.282m of capital receipts through the councils Transformation Fund. There is a risk that there would not be sufficient capital receipts to be able fund the £0.282m, if this was to materialise then any shortfall in funding would need to be managed within City Operations TBM position for the financial year.
- 6.3 The capital investment of £0.360m to replace communal recycling bins would need to be met from council borrowing, included in the corporate borrowing budgets already is the cost of replacing communal bins capital budgets. Should that specific capital programme underspend in 2025/26 then the revenue costs associated with the new budget will be met from this. However, if that is deemed unavailable other opportunities will need to be explored including the use of reserves (in particular the Waste PFI reserve) or to meet the cost of borrowing from unsupported borrowing within service budgets, as such this would form a pressure in the City Operations budget position for 2026/27, with a potential impact in 2025/26. It is estimated that the annual revenue cost would be £0.081m assuming an interest rate of 4% and a 5-year borrowing term.
- 6.4 The vehicle replacement programme is managed through the council's capital programme, for 2025/26 there is budget available of £3.550m for the replacement of the general fleet and £2.444m available for the food waste programme. The general fleet budget is funded through service borrowing for which there is a growing revenue pressure which is anticipated to be £0.777m in 2026/27 and will need to be addressed through the budget setting process. However, DEFRA have provided funding for the delivery of the food waste programme which will cover the costs in full meaning there is no associated revenue cost with the food waste vehicle investment.
- 6.5 The council's financial management tool, referred to as TBM, will report on the financial impact of this investment on a quarterly basis to Cabinet, any significant variations will be highlighted through that report.
- 6.6 Any borrowing requirement associated with the capital investment will be undertaken in line with the council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2025/26.

Name of finance officer consulted: Craig Garoghan Date: 02/05/2025

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 This report details the strategic response of the Council to the serious issues identified across an area of service delivery of significance to the residents of the city. It outlines in a detailed way the actions taken and still underway, as well as the resources invested in remedying the situation, and is properly a matter for Cabinet.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted 30.4.25

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 The KC investigation, subsequent actions to implement the recommendations and the culture change programme enable the Council to meet its equality duties and responsibilities. The work to improve the culture of Environmental Services is fully aligned to the Council's co-created [Fair and Inclusive Action Plan](#), with actions focused on ensuring our workforce is representative of the city we serve, our workplace is based on a sense of belonging for staff, and the services we provide are accessible and fair for all residents. Improving the service with digital transformation to enable clear and effective information for residents will support this aim.
- 8.2 Improvements that these changes enable in the service will benefit vulnerable residents who we know are adversely affected by an unreliable collection service.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Environmental Services has experienced an unprecedented level of bullying and harassment from a group of staff. Their influence has been reduced but it has not gone away. Steps will be taken to continue to eliminate their impact. A culture change programme is supporting the vast majority of hardworking and committed staff and managers who are passionate about delivering good services to residents. The culture change programme has been recognised as being effective by the external LGA peer review. The focus of the programme is about tackling the service improvement that matters to residents, a more reliable service with transparent information about its strengths, successes and weaknesses. Service management remain fully committed to not going back to the chaos and confusion of the past and to embedding our learning organisation ways of working.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. None