

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

## Agenda Item 46

**Subject:** City Environment Modernisation Programme Update

**Date of meeting:** 15 November 2022

**Report of:** Executive Director: Economy, Environment & Culture

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**For general release**

### **1. Purpose of the report and policy context**

- 1.1 The Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee last received a report on the City Environment Modernisation Programme at its meetings on 21 June 2022. This report provides a further progress update.
- 1.2 The report also provides updates on other key activities since the last update including latest performance, public toilets, the Carbon Neutral Fund and the outcomes of a public consultation regarding refuse collections in Coleman Street.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Committee notes the report and appendices.
- 2.2 That Committee agrees for the refuse collection arrangements to remain as it is for Coleman Street, pending a wider piece of work as part of the Modernisation Programme.

### **3. Context and 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 forthcoming legislative changes through the Environment Act. Many City Environment services are statutory and 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 being addressed cannot be underestimated. A significant proportion of management time and effort is used to address these issues to build a strong foundation, which is required to ensure visible and sustainable improvements in service delivery for the future. The improvements and modernisation have to be seen as a long-term programme that will deliver change over time. The significant cuts to the service over the last 10 years led to a substantial deterioration in legal

compliance and safety levels, alongside the level of service. The former must be prioritised. The pace of change is slower than desired due to the extent and depth of the problems caused by disinvestment in the service over a long period of time.

- 3.3 Many changes and improvements have been made, but there is still much more to be done. Alongside this, new challenges are arising such as the forthcoming changes through the Environment Act, which are yet to be confirmed by government. These present the biggest changes to waste management for a generation, which has significant and costly implications for the council.

### **Highlights from the Modernisation Update**

- 3.4 Appendix 1 contains an update on each of the key Cityclean projects within the Programme. A green RAG rating means the project is on track, an amber rating means the project is slightly off track and red means the project is off track.
- 3.5 Some key milestones achieved over the last few months include:
- appointed the contractor for phase 1 of the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme
  - appointed the supplier for Digital Cityclean
  - completed the bring site audit data collection
  - commissioned a new round of composition analysis
  - introduced Targeted Action Zones to tackle graffiti vandalism
  - managed the safe disposal of dead birds during the avian flu epidemic
- 3.6 The Modernisation Programme is undergoing a refresh to include City Parks and will become a City Environment Improvement Programme. A more detailed report, summarising the progress from 2018 to date and the new Programme to be delivered, will be brought to committee in the New Year. This will also include information on further modernisation funding for the Programme.

### **Latest performance**

- 3.7 At Policy & Resources Committee on 7 July 2022, Members were presented with a response to a Notice of Motion concerning service delivery. Appendix 2 provides updated figures to those that were provided in July. Some key points to note:
- 20 compliments were received in Quarter 1 and 30 in Quarter 2
  - Missed collection reduced significantly in Quarter 1 but crept up in Quarter 2
  - Volumes of contact remain steady
  - Over 90% of calls are answered, though there is some work to do on call answering times
- 3.8 Whilst the number of corporate complaints has increased, there is anecdotal feedback that complaints sent direct to the Assistant Director and Heads of

Service has decreased, particularly in respect of litter on the beach over the summer, commercial bins on the highway and graffiti.

- 3.9 One of the corporate Key Performance Indicators reported six-monthly to Policy & Resources Committee in the performance update report is the percentage of streets inspected which are found to have widespread or heavy levels of litter.
- 3.10 Prior to this year, this indicator was measure through picking 90 transects (50 metre sections of a street) across Brighton & Hove. Each time, a different set of transects was inspected and at different times of the day. This meant it was difficult to draw any meaningful conclusions from the data. It was neither useful externally nor internally, except at the most basic level of alerting Cityclean to an untidy street.
- 3.11 A review was completed to design the collection of data to make it more useful. After discussions with the Corporate Performance Team, methodology has been changed. Now, 20 key transects, chosen by the Street Cleansing Team will be reviewed each quarter. Maintaining the same transects has the dual purpose of producing meaningful KPIs which can be tested and monitored over time, whilst at the same time providing key data for internal department consumption and service improvement. The 20 key transects were chosen as being high footfall areas with the most public scrutiny.
- 3.12 The transects are measured at three times: roughly 8am, 12pm, 6pm (not on the same day) with the same grading methodology as before: using A, B, C, D to grade the state of each transect.
- Grade A – no litter or refuse
  - Grade B – predominantly free of litter & refuse except for some small items
  - Grade C – widespread distribution of litter and refuse, with minor accumulations
  - Grade D – heavily littered, with significant accumulations.
- 3.13 A further 48 (low footfall) transects in different parts of the city (outside of the centre) are also reviewed each quarter, without the focus of three times in the day. Again, these are graded A to D for condition of littering.
- 3.14 This gives a total of 108 Transects each with a grade A to D for which a percentage is then worked out for each grade, with 3% the target. The result for quarter 1 was 8.3%.
- 3.15 In the first quarter of this year the first check was completed at 5am. Following discussions with the Corporate Performance Team this check was deemed to be unrepresentative of performance as it was conducted before the Street Cleansing Teams had the chance to clean the area. There were consequently a higher number of below-B scores. It was felt that making 8am the first check gave a more realistic snapshot of how the streets looked to the public in the morning and the consequent impact of the Street Cleansing Team.

- 3.16 The preliminary figure for quarter 2, without including the 5am check is 1.0%.
- 3.17 It is also important to note:
- Litter is seasonal; higher footfall generally leads to higher levels of litter, therefore caution should be taken when comparing Q1 with Q2 and so on
  - The reported figure for quarter 1 is the first time the new methodology has been used, therefore caution should be taken when comparing quarter 1 this year with quarter 1 last year
  - As litter is seasonal and the target is static all year round, caution should be taken when comparing quarterly data to the target
  - A few years worth of data, using the new methodology, is required to truly understand what this KPI is indicating about service performance

### **Public toilets**

- 3.18 Public toilet opening times normally change during the winter season, which runs from 1 October to the following Good Friday. Four toilet blocks always close for the winter season, and opening hours are reduced across all sites. This year, Cityclean has also had to alter opening hours and close some low footfall toilets for the winter season. This is due to substantial cost increases in energy, consumables and maintenance caused by inflation. The staffing costs have also increased. The service redesign following the insourcing in April is now in place. This has led to increased pay and improved terms and conditions for all the staff who transferred into the council from a private business.
- 3.19 The refurbishment of four toilet sites is due to start. The length of these closures is to be confirmed following conversations with the recently appointed contractor.
- 3.20 Conversations about phase 2 of the programme have started. The Royal Pavilion Garden toilets are unlikely to be refurbished in the next phase. There are very high levels of anti-social behaviour and drug use in the toilets which makes it unsafe for members of the public and our staff. These problems also make it much harder to maintain and keep the toilets clean. The site has been reviewed alongside a Public Conveniences Problem Reduction Guide produced by Hertfordshire Constabulary. This document highlights the best crime prevention practice in toilet design, such as ensuring the entrance is visible and in areas of high passing footfall. Using this guide, there are concerns about whether the location of the building is suitable for a public toilet. Discussions have also taken place with the council's Head of Architecture & Design and Community Safety Teams, as well as Sussex Police, to identify options to reduce the risk to the site, staff and members of the public and the options are limited. Therefore, before the money is spent on refurbishing the facility as-is, it is now preferable to close these toilets while works continue to resolve the risks of drug use and anti-social behaviour in the area and also reconsider the design and

possibly the location of this toilet facility, to make it safe for the public and staff.

### **Carbon Neutral Fund**

3.21 Following the allocation of the Carbon Neutral Fund at Policy & Resources Committee in October 2022, City Environment has secured c£2.000m to deliver projects to support the council's target to become carbon neutral by 2030.

### **Outcomes of consultation with residents of Coleman Street**

3.22 In June 2022, ET&S Committee approved for a public consultation to take place with the residents of Coleman Street about their preferred method of refuse collection. This followed a similar exercise for neighbouring Washington Street where residents' preference was to move from a communal refuse collection to having an individual wheelie bin. This was approved by this committee in January 2022.

3.23 31 responses were received from 95 questionnaires sent: a 33% response rate. The results of the consultation were:

- Which method of refuse collection do you prefer?
  - 87% (27) communal refuse bins
  - 10% (3) individual refuse wheelie bin
  - 3% (1) either
- I am willing to have a communal bin outside my house:
  - 6% (2) yes
  - 87% (27) no
  - 6% (2) blank

3.24 The results are clearly very strong in support of remaining with communal refuse bins and this is the recommendation to committee.

3.25 There are 95 properties in Coleman Street. Using the capacity calculator to determine appropriate communal refuse containment, the street should be served by two 1100 litre bins, emptied on a daily basis (15400 litres per week). Instead, there are eight 1100 litres bins, emptied on a daily basis (52800 litres per week). This is considerably more refuse provision than any other area of the city.

3.26 Only two of the bins are on Coleman Street, with four on Islingword Road and two near The Greys pub. This is likely why they are being overused as being away from Coleman Street suggests they are not just for the use of Coleman Street residents.

3.27 Communal bins work best when the whole area has this method of collection, not only one street. Remaining with communal refuse presents an anomaly in the operations of Cityclean. Its the only street in HEG with this setup, except Newhaven Street which also seems to be an anomaly.

- 3.28 It could be argued that by providing significantly too much refuse capacity, residents are not recycling all that they can as it is easier to dispose of any waste in these bins rather than the correct waste stream.
- 3.29 Due to the results of the consultation, communal refuse will remain the method of collection for now. However, as stated in the letter to residents, a full-scale review of waste management for Hanover & Elm Grove will be completed as part of the City Environment Modernisation Programme to determine how best refuse, recycling and glass can be collected in the future.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 The Modernisation Programme is developing a sustainable future for the service in Brighton & Hove in the context of reducing council budgets, increasing customer demand and forthcoming legislative changes through the Environment Act. 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.

#### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The results of the consultation exercise with residents of Coleman Street are detailed in section 3.
- 5.2 Previous community engagement and consultation activities in relation to the Programme 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 The report also provides the outcomes of a consultation with residents of Coleman Street on their refuse collections. Committee is recommended to continue with communal refuse collections, based on the results of the consultation and pending full-scale review of waste management for Hanover & Elm Grove.

#### **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 This report is an update report on progress on existing initiatives which are funded from existing resources. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation of this report. Costs associated with the consultation are maintained within existing City Clean Budgets. Any

significant variations to budget will be reported as part of the council's monthly budget monitoring process.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 01/11/22

## **8. Legal implications**

8.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Alice Rowland Date consulted (dd/mm/yy):  
11/11/22

## **9. Equalities implications**

9.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from the report's recommendations.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

10.1 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from the report's recommendations. Many of the projects within the City Environment Modernisation Programme have sustainability implications, including the new Carbon Neutral Fund projects.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **Appendices**

- Programme Update
- Cityclean customer feedback and contact

### **Background documents**

- [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 22 June (item 8)
- [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 21 September 2021 (item 41)
- [City Environment Modernisation Update Report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 29 September 2020 (item 29)

