

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 7th March, 2023
Report Subject	Streetscene Standards Review 2022-23
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy
Report Author	Chief Officer, Streetscene and Transportation
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2012, multiple services were combined to create a new Streetscene and Transportation (S&T) portfolio. At this time, Cabinet approved a set of Streetscene Performance Standards which formed the basis of the new portfolio's quarterly performance report. This was then heavily scrutinised by both the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet at the time. These Streetscene Standards were last reviewed in 2019 and have been subject to minimal change since inception.

This report outlines our intention to review the existing standards and recommend changes that link more closely to the council plan and portfolio business plan. We wish to ensure that the service continues to meet the needs and expectations of the public and residents we serve, whilst making the most efficient use of the available resources.

The impending review of financial settlements, the changing demands of our environmental and climate change agenda and the need to provide clear and measurable performance data, will all influence the way Streetscene and Transportation (S&T) deliver services over the coming years. As a service that touches people's lives every day, it is vital we demonstrate real value to the people of Flintshire, but also measure our performance in a way that is meaningful and enables continuous improvement.

The purpose of this report is to illustrate the inadequacies of the existing document and request support from Informal Cabinet for S&T to review and retire the existing Standards. This would be in favour of a more robust and relevant suite of performance metrics that can be measured, monitored and reported more effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Scrutiny notes the proposal to retire the existing Streetscene Standards document, and supports the intended review to replace them with a revised suite of performance metrics that support service standards in order to measure performance against existing statutory obligations, the Council Plan and existing policies. A further report will be presented once the review has been completed.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND FOR REVIEWING THE STREETSCENE STANDARDS						
1.01	Streetscene & Transportation service delivery teams are responsible for waste and recycling collections, household recycling centres, street cleansing, highways and grounds maintenance, grass cutting, winter maintenance, street lighting and trunk road operations. These services are key to ensuring that Flintshire remains safe, clean and accessible to all. To ensure that resources are allocated and prioritised in the most effective manner, in 2012 a set of 'Streetscene Standards' were agreed and adopted.						
1.02	These Standards have not changed significantly since 2012, despite significant changes to the scope of the portfolio. Some of the Standards are no longer relevant, and some areas of the new Streetscene and Transportation services are not represented at all. In addition, many Standards are now covered by new or existing policies, which now supersede the original 2012 document.						
1.03	In 2019, the updated Council Plan included a new performance measure of Streetscene Standards, under the <i>Safe and Clean Council</i> theme and, as a result, the direct output of the portfolio was reported through the Scrutiny process. This was updated to " <i>A well-connected, safe and clean local environment</i> " in the Council Plan for 2022-2023.						
1.04	<p>Upon review, it has been found that many of the current Standards are covered by either national guidance or existing policy, and in some instances contradict or confuse our obligations and commitments. The Standards describe how services are delivered and provided rather than providing a measure of the portfolio's performance.</p> <p>As a result, the current Standards do not offer sufficient clarity to the service provider or the service recipient, which often causes conflicting priorities for all stakeholders. Service standards are important for customers, members and employees, as well as the management of the service in that they help to define what everyone can expect and they provide a reminder of the challenges and obligations that they face. The Standards will be of little value if performance cannot be measured against them.</p>						
1.05	<p>Appendix 1 provides a list of the current Streetscene Standards for illustration purposes; however, the table below gives examples of some redundant sections of the document: -</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="288 1697 1407 1816"> <tr> <td>Contact Centre Response Times</td> <td>No longer controlled by Streetscene</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pest Control</td> <td>No longer controlled by Streetscene</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Smoke Nuisance – Domestic</td> <td>No longer controlled by Streetscene</td> </tr> </table>	Contact Centre Response Times	No longer controlled by Streetscene	Pest Control	No longer controlled by Streetscene	Smoke Nuisance – Domestic	No longer controlled by Streetscene
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Smoke Nuisance – Domestic	No longer controlled by Streetscene						
1.06	<p>Future Impacts on the Streetscene Standards</p> <p>Even without the proposed revision, the existing 'Standards' may be subjected to change in light of the following:</p>						

- *Future years MTFS Proposals* – Changes to services in light of the current economic climate will need to be considered and some ‘Standards’ may no longer be financially viable in the short to medium term.
- *Waste Strategy Review* - The ongoing review of waste strategy will have considerable impact on the existing standards, particularly if collection frequency or receptacle sizes are to be amended to achieve national recycling targets and avoid fines from Welsh Government.
- *Grass Cutting Policy Review* - The pending review of the Flintshire Grass Cutting Policy and the work being undertaken by the Biodiversity Team could contradict or even undermine the current standards, rendering many more of them outdated.

1.07

Desired Outcome

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the intended review of the standards and allow the portfolio to produce a suite of operational indicators and measures, which will demonstrate our performance against statutory obligations and Council policies.

Each ‘Theme’ within the Council Plan is supported by specific policies and it is our performance against these policies which should be measured. The metrics need to demonstrate to the public that we are meeting our commitments, whilst also driving operational improvements.

In addition, we must establish a priority matrix which allows teams to schedule work according to impact and available resources, giving staff and customers a clear understanding of how and when services will be delivered.

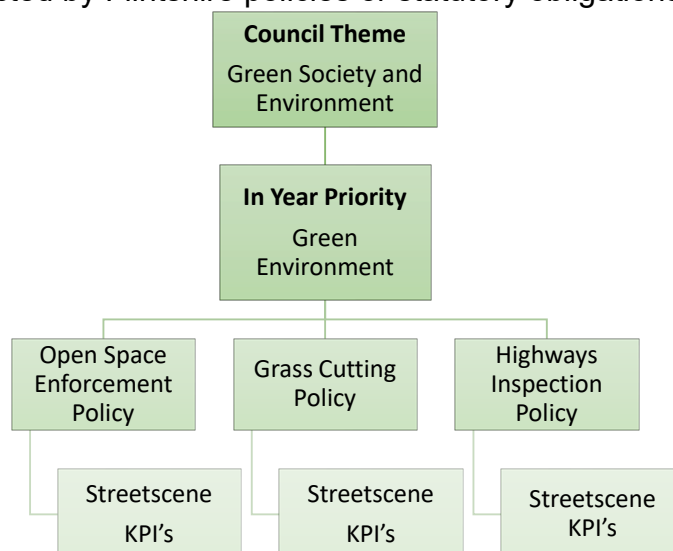
One option could be to mirror the Housing Repairs priorities to give consistency across the authority. For example:

Emergency	Urgent	Standard
Up to 24 hours	Up to 5 Days	Up to 28 Days

1.08

The Structure of Delivery

The intention is that the new metrics, or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), will be operational tools to measure our effectiveness in delivering the services expected by Flintshire policies or statutory obligations.



The image above illustrates where the new metrics would sit in the hierarchy of Flintshire’s service model.

1.09	<p>Benefits of change</p> <p>Replacing the 2012 Standards represents a proactive and future focused mind-set, demonstrating our desire for continual improvement. It gives opportunity to ensure that our Standard Operating Procedures are reviewed and stress tested against the current financial and social climate. It will also instil confidence that we are delivering on our statutory duties in the most efficient and effective way and confirm that performance is being achieved and sustained consistently.</p> <p>As part of the review, areas of the business that are not currently being measured will be identified and the change will bring focus on work streams that can be improved or streamlined.</p> <p>Where we are able to identify strong performance, we will be able to promote and enhance the reputation of Streetscene & Transportation and the authority as a whole by sharing relevant data with members and the wider public.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	In order to measure and record performance, the portfolio will need to fully review historic working practices and introduce new ways of working at all levels of the business.
2.02	The new standards are intended to have a positive impact on resources within the service allowing a more efficient distribution of work through clearly defined priorities and structured working practices where performance is measured and reported on internally and externally.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	By continuing with the existing 'Standards' we are effectively making commitments we are not able to deliver. In addition, we risk reputational damage by placing measures on business functions that are no longer controlled within the portfolio.
3.02	The impact of failing to measure the business correctly can have an impact on our ability to demonstrate true value for money and be able highlight efficiencies over the medium to long term.
3.03	It is intended that a further report will be presented to Cabinet following completion of the review and recommendations made as to how the new metrics and Standards should be measured and reported.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Regional Transport Strategy
4.02	Trade Unions
4.03	Senior Management Team and Operational Managers

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Streetscene Standards 2019 pdf

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Christopher Goddard – Service Manager Streetscene Telephone: 07867 192311 E-mail: Christopher.Goddard@Flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	None