

## **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE

**DATE:** WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2012

**REPORT BY:** DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT

**SUBJECT:** THE STREETSCENE SERVICE REVIEW

### **1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.01 To update Members on the outcome of the review of the Streetscene service six months after its launch in March 2012.

### **2.00 BACKGROUND**

2.01 In October 2008, the Executive endorsed proposals for Phase II organisational change and re-design of a number of services, based on a recommendation from the Chief Executive. These included integrating services to form a single and consolidated Streetscene operation based in the Environment Directorate.

2.02 On 18<sup>th</sup> January 2011, the Executive approved the outline changes and granted delegated authority to Chief Executive, the Director of Environment and Head of Organisational Development & HR in consultation with the associated Executive Members, to consider any representations made and agree and implement finalised structures.

2.03 Following a period of consultation with Members, Trades Unions and staff, the new Streetscene service was launched on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

2.04 In order to assess the progress made by the service in the period since the launch, feedback and comments on the new service were requested from the following sources

- Members of the public (Through satisfaction surveys)
- Council Members (Through the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment)
- All Streetscene staff
- Trades Unions
- Town and Community Councils (From Senior Managers' visits)

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01 The feedback received on the service was as follows:

- 3.02 From Members – 23 replies were received with a total of 89 comments
- 17 were complimentary about the service
  - 29 suggested areas where improvements could be made
  - 5 were not connected with service
  - 38 referred to waste (Included in the waste review report on the agenda)

- 3.03 From workforce and staff (via Newsletter and through Trades Unions – anonymous comments were accepted) – 6 replies were received from approximately 450 staff

The comments together with Officer response/actions are shown on **Appendix 1**

- 3.04 From Trades Unions – 2 replies received.

A full list of the comments together with Officer response/actions are shown on **Appendix 2**

- 3.05 A full record of the customer survey responses is shown in **Appendix 3**

- 3.06 The comments generally related to four main areas and a series of Action Plans were developed for each (**Appendix 4**). These detail operational changes or amendments to working practises which were identified from the feedback and seen as benefiting the service. In future the Action Plans will be monitored though service Performance Management reports and will also assist in the development of the Streetscene Service Plan for 2013-14.

- 3.07 The Action Plans refer to the following specific areas of the service:

Action Plan 1 – Staffing Structure  
Action Plan 2 – Operational  
Action Plan 3 – Office and Depot Arrangements  
Action Plan 4 – Contact Centre

- 3.08 A number of positives were also highlighted by staff and Members during the review and they are shown, together with staff ideas for future opportunities within the service in **Appendix 5**

- 3.09 The original project had four main objectives:

- Improving Customer Access to the Service
- Raising Public Awareness of the Service
- Operational Changes to deliver a more joined up Service
- Depot Rationalisation

A summary of progress on each objective is as follows:

### **3.10 Improving Customer Access to the Service**

Originally individual Streetscene services were accessed by a variety of different published telephone numbers, with a lack of clarity on which was the correct number to call and no accurate statistical records available for call numbers, number of calls lost etc.

All Streetscene services are now accessed by a single, local telephone number or via a dedicated webpage. The Council's own Contact Centre deals with all calls relating to all of the Streetscene services, with a longer term intention that the Contact Centre is extended to deal with a broader range of Council services

There have been a number of issues with staff leaving the Contact Centre service since the launch in March 2012 which has resulted in insufficient staff numbers available at peak times and on specific days. This situation has been improved by introducing flexible, part time posts to replace full time employees leaving the service. Time specific call volumes and response times are now available for managers which allows them to plan and provide adequate resources to deal with periods of high demand for the service.

The performance of the Contact Centre was the subject of the majority of negative comments from Members following the consultation process and there have clearly been periods since the launch when answer times have been excessive. The majority of Member concerns related to the time taken to answer calls rather than the concept or operation of the new service. The current position is much improved and as further staff training is delivered, the service performance targets set for the Contact Centre by Members will be achieved.

### **3.11 Raising Public Awareness of the Service**

The launch of the new service was well covered in local press and the public survey shows that there is growing public awareness of the service and how it can be accessed. Call volumes into the contact centre remain strong with calls to the original contact numbers reducing.

### **3.12 Operational Changes to deliver a joined up Service**

The new generic operational Streetscene contract delivers a flexible, multi-skilled workforce, capable and able of working across the full service area, delivering far greater coordination and efficiency. The arrangement will lower the requirement to employ agency staff as well as broadening the job satisfaction and content of the operational staff within the service.

New working patterns have now been introduced across the service and these will have long term benefits for the Council by increasing fleet utilisation and reducing operating costs.

Saturday operations, including Saturday waste collections, have been piloted without significant concerns for residents or staff.

### 3.13 **Depot Rationalisation**

A single integrated operational site is currently being developed in Alltami with a planned, satellite winter maintenance and traffic management sub-depot in Halkyn. Operations in Queensferry have ended and all Fleet Maintenance/Repair work now takes place at a single workshop in Alltami.

### 3.14 **Standards**

Members set challenging targets for Streetscene covering every aspect of the new service and performance against these standards has already been reported to the Environment and Overview Scrutiny Committee in September. The report indicated that the standards had generally been achieved and that all would be achieved, once operations had stabilised over the coming months

The new grass cutting standard has been operated through the summer, following the Member workshop which developed the arrangement.

Following the summer trial, the new Grass cutting standard will now be presented to Cabinet for approval as the new Council Policy for Grass Cutting for the County (**Appendix 7**)

- 3.15 Considering the changes made in the service over the last 18 months, the level of response from staff and Members would indicate that the service is now bedding down after its introduction.

Further work will be undertaken over the forthcoming months to embed the "Pride of Patch" culture across the workforce and to ensure we have a consistent approach to service delivery throughout the county.

- 3.16 It is suggested that a further report on the Streetscene is brought to Members of the Committee during the 2013-14 financial year.

## **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.01 That Members of the Committee note the comments received on the service and the progress made during the first six months since its launch.

- 4.02 That Members note the contents of the Action Plans for the service
- 4.03 That Members of the Committee note the Councils new Grass Cutting Policy
- 4.04 That a further report be presented to the Environment and Overview Scrutiny Committee during 2013-14

**5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Streetscene service review enabled delivery of the saving's target for the 2011-12 financial year of £0.250m and £0.500 per annum thereafter

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

No Impact

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

No Impact

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

No Impact

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

The minor changes to the staffing structure will be accommodated from existing posts and budgets

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

None

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

- All Members
- Streetscene staff
- Members of the public
- Town and Community Councils

**12.00 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Workforce Comment  
Appendix 2 – Trades Unions Comments  
Appendix 3 – Public Consultation  
Appendix 4 – Action Plan  
Appendix 5 – Positives / Future development  
Appendix 6 – Proposed Grass cutting Policy

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985**

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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