

## Environment Scrutiny Panel – 11 November 2008

### Update on Streetscene Informal Scrutiny Group Action Plan

#### Report of Head of Environment

Contact: Robert Heathcock 01962 848476.

Email: [rheathcock@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:rheathcock@winchester.gov.uk)

#### Purpose of the Report

This report provides an update on progress with the actions agreed following completion of the Informal Scrutiny Group on Streetscene Services. Members are asked to review the actions taken to date as part of its role in holding the Environment Portfolio Holder to account on the performance of the City Council's streetscene services.

#### Links to the Corporate Strategy

The Corporate Strategy places emphasis on safeguarding our high quality environment for the future. Streetscene services are an essential element of the package of measures to achieve this objective.

#### Executive Summary

In 2007 an Informal Scrutiny Group (ISG) was established by ESP to consider the City Council's performance in relation to Streetscene issues. The study culminated in a report to ESP in January followed by consideration of the recommendation by Cabinet in March 2007. Cabinet agreed all of the recommendations and added several others (as shown in bold on Appendix 1).

This report summarises the progress made since that time which has been successful overall bearing in mind the recent restructuring across the division which impacted upon responsibilities for delivery and completion of other priorities within the Team including roll out of the ABC methodology across the District.

Since the review was completed, the Neighbourhood Warden Team has been transferred to the Environment Team in order to help with Streetscene issues and a new Landscape & Open Spaces Team has been created which will help progress with actions relating to those areas. The action plan should therefore be viewed as work in progress for the remainder of this year and into 2009.

#### **Background Documents**

EN31 January 2007 - Streetscene Informal Scrutiny Group Report  
CAB 1433 – Scrutiny Review – Streetscene Services

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Streetscene Services Action Plan update table

Recommended

That the Environment Scrutiny Panel:

1. notes progress to date with the Streetscene Services Improvement Plan
2. considers whether it wishes to establish an ISG to review public convenience provision and develop an asset management plan for these facilities based on priorities and budget available. .

No.	Action	Progress
(a)	A policy should be produced for consideration by the Environment Scrutiny Panel regarding the Council's options for potential response/guidelines to fly posters for commercial or community events.	Policy not developed due to staff shortages in the Neighbourhood Warden Team. Will be included within service plan for team now that new supervisor in post and team back to full strength. In the meantime the practice to remove blatant commercial advertising on verges and road signs will continue.
(b)	It is recommended that Development Control staff should produce guidelines to ensure that posters displayed by applicants to advertise planning applications are appropriately placed and removed promptly when appropriate.	Not agreed by Development Control as a priority because of the need to meet performance requirements and timetables
(c)	Because of improvements in contract performance it is recommended that a lighter touch be applied to the running of the grounds maintenance contract and any staff savings achieved be considered for Gershon Efficiency purposes.	Approach has been adopted with no significant impact upon service delivery
(d)	Officers should consider additional ways in which the role of 'litter picker' groups can be better recognised and where possible supported with financial contributions. An annual event for recognition of 'Streetscene Unsung Heroes' should be held and publicised.	Groups are still supported through provision of equipment and supplies and staff attend annual meeting of Winchester Litter Pickers. Unsung heroes concept not yet pursued but will be picked up within a forthcoming proposed 'City Pride' initiative tackling Streetscene issues.

(f)	New street scene pages should be developed for the Council's website showing responsibilities and contacts for different issues. The pages should also explain the rationale behind some service standards such as grass cutting frequencies, leaf clearance and methodologies as these are the largest area of complaint.	Web pages not yet developed due to time consuming nature of the task and other priorities. However, it is still proposed to do so and linked to the proposed 'CityPride' initiative
(g)	Reporting procedures for abandoned vehicles should be reviewed in order to achieve improved obtaining of correct information such as registration, location and model.	Procedure much improved and now transferred to the Environment Division from Legal Services. New contract in place for removal and process adapted to take this into account
(h)	The project to refurbish the Abbey Gardens Public Conveniences should be supported by Cabinet and completed by the end of 2007. The project should include improvements to the appearance of the frontage to Abbey House where possible.	Project agreed but delays in commencement of works due to procurement difficulties and higher than anticipated costs. Issues now resolved and work will commence early November 2008.
(i)	The adequacy of the public convenience maintenance budget should be considered at the earliest opportunity and addressed to ensure sufficient funding is available to pay for the annual repair programme.	Has been difficult to secure additional funding in current economic climate but has still been possible to achieve some improvements. <b>It is suggested that a review of Public Convenience provision and asset management should be considered for a future ISG topic.</b>
(j)	The proposed composting facilities at Bar End should be completed in time for the 2007 grounds maintenance programme.	Facilities completed and in use.
(k)	A scheme for monitoring customer satisfaction of open spaces and play areas should be developed in time for trial operation during 2007/08. Once completed the system should be used to provide a 'dashboard' of indicators to measure satisfaction and performance.	Not completed due to restructuring of the team into a new Landscape & Open Spaces Team. Will be considered as an option for the 2009/10 service plan.

(l)	Cabinet should be asked to consider the issue of artificial hanging baskets with varying designs for Council owned buildings in order to meet sustainability objectives and to offer these as an option to those businesses wishing to support these aims.	Not agreed by Cabinet. Additional resources put into floral decorations through the BID process instead.
(m)	The proposed project to collect and re-use rainwater from the roofs of Bar End Depot for watering of floral displays should be completed in time for the 2007 watering season.	Project completed and was well used during the summer of 2008
(n)	Members should consider how it could work with partners such as the Police and Fire Service to provide a programme of work aimed at promoting responsible citizenship within schools aimed at reducing litter, graffiti and vandalism.	Neighbourhood Wardens work closely with these agencies and the army in the delivery of a 'Thinksafe' campaign which delivers responsible citizenship projects to young people.
(o)	Information should be included on the City Council's website to remind residents to be pragmatic to assist with the increasing problem of flooding by promoting simple steps to deal with localised problems. The website information should also set out statutory responsibilities and give associated advice and contact numbers.	Not actioned due to other priorities
(p)	The proposed Local Development Framework (LDF) should consider the issue of redevelopment of gardens in urban areas that can be a contributory factor to increased water runoff and surface water. The framework should also consider initiatives for developments using 'grey water' systems for toilet flushing and other non potable water usage.	Issue will be considered as part of emerging LDF framework which includes a flood risk assessment project.

(q)	<p>Highways maintenance staff within Hampshire County Council be asked to remove poster advertising and minor instances of graffiti on road signs.</p> <p><b>Cabinet addition:</b> include specific reference to removing signs advertising new developments;</p>	<p>Information passed on Hampshire County Council for consideration.</p>
(r)	<p>Lighting staff within Hampshire County Council be asked to repaint lamp standards in high amenity locations within the City Centre streets pending the replacement programme proposed under the PFI initiative.</p>	<p>Lighting columns repainted through partnership working with Hampshire County Council</p>
(s)	<p>Officers should develop ways in which the roles of the proposed Police Community Support Officers and Hampshire County Council Accredited Community Support Officers can link up with existing work of the City Council's Neighbourhood Warden Service to support the Cleaner, Greener, Safer streetscene agenda.</p> <p><b>Cabinet addition:</b> include housing associations in the list of groups the Council should work with to promote improved areas;</p>	<p>Groups listed meet as part of a TCG at the Police Station each week in order to allocate tasks to each agency to address specific issues including identified hotspots where enhanced visibility and action is required.</p>
(t)	<p>Officers should continue to make progress with the Environment Team Biodiversity Action Plan and Streetscene Improvements Action Plan and report back the results to the Environment Scrutiny Panel through the Business Planning and Performance management framework.</p>	<p>Environment Biodiversity Action Plan has been progressed and will now be incorporated within a redraft of the Corporate BAP which is a priority for the newly appointed Landscape &amp; Open Spaces Manager.</p>

(u)	Support should be given to the Winchester BID process as a means of providing additional funding to enhance streetscene services such as street cleaning, pigeon control and floral decorations	BID funding obtained to support floral decorations provided by the City Council and BID staff procured chewing gum removal direct with specialist contractors. Pigeon control not put forward as a priority by the BID Board at present.
(v)	<b>Cabinet addition:</b> inclusion of an additional recommendation to the County Council regarding ensuring adequate maintenance of drains and storm covers to prevent flooding;	Information passed on Hampshire County Council for consideration.
(w)	<b>Cabinet addition:</b> inclusion of another additional recommendation to the County Council highlighting the need to address to current state of highway and path repairs.	Information passed on Hampshire County Council for consideration. Project underway to repave the High Street during 2009.