



Cleaner Streets – Appendix 2

Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1 Key Themes and Learning

Service Delivery

- 1.1 The street cleansing, graffiti and litter service teams need to have **access to quality and real time intelligence** about where problems are or are likely to happen. This means the service can deliver a targeted proactive schedule but also ensure they are responding quickly to emerging issues and complaints. Derby highlighted the transformative impact since the Whitespace digital platform was introduced for their service in 2020. Management is better informed about demand (both immediate and as trends) and to service plan; front line staff are also able to report issues they encounter for response and be tasked without having to return to the depot. This leads to a more effective and efficient service. Birmingham is currently trialling this technology and is scheduled to roll this out citywide soon.
- 1.2 A focus on **reducing complaints** and in particular repeat complaints needs to be a service priority. Less complaints should indicate the overall cleanliness of streets is improving and build confidence in citizens that the Council is responding to this challenge. Rochdale highlighted this has been a key step they have undertaken to deliver improvements in their borough. They explained that this was led by management and supervision (in particular around repeat complaints) who would regularly check these locations to ensure work had been completed and problems did not re-emerge.
- 1.3 Areas had different approaches when issues were on non-Council land, although there was **an emphasis on minimising the challenges land boundaries may pose for the overall benefit of the neighbourhood**. Rochdale applied a 'do and then work it out later' style approach. Therefore, Rochdale would work on private land and then recharge afterwards. All areas highlighted the need to work closing with other major landowners. Derby had a service contract in place with Derby Homes to maintain their land; Rochdale had introduced better communication between the housing provider and themselves to ensure the overall impact on residents was seamless. They had developed a plan for who did what and when.
- 1.4 New approaches towards service delivery were highlighted. Examples include:
 - Derby had introduced **a different approach to remove graffiti** on private land. They no longer request permission of the landowner in advance of the removal. Instead, they remove the graffiti without permission. This approach has led to very few complaints and has meant that graffiti has been removed quicker. Derby introduced a revised training package for their staff to support the roll out of this approach; this ensures all graffiti removal is completed at the highest standard and reduces the risks around complaints.



- The **prevention and removal teams and enforcement arm work side by side** with each other in Wigan ensuring there is a seamed up and joint approach towards tackling issues. This reduces the barriers of silo working.
- Some **street cleansing staff in Rochdale now start their working day when they leave their house**, so they are immediately working. This means they are able to start addressing issues straight away, which means the service can do more.

Working in Localities

- 1.5 The value of service **teams aligned to localities** was identified as a way to improve service delivery by all three areas, although this operates differently in each area. This was particularly referenced in Rochdale, where they operate around the [‘township’](#) model. Staff working regularly in the same areas enables better understanding of local issues and also encourages ownership in delivering area improvements. Staff can see the impact of their work more clearly as they are not spread over too wide an area.
- 1.6 **Members can play an active role in influencing service delivery** in their wards. The role of Members was acknowledged as a valuable source of intelligence about hotspots and complaints in their wards, which in turn informs service delivery and deliver area improvements. Rochdale highlighted how they had introduced a programme of fortnightly walkabouts between service teams and local ward councillors. Members are able to show officers issues in-situ and receive direct feedback on how these issues are being resolved.
- 1.7 **Community Involvement and volunteering is critical** way to improve the quality of the street scene. All areas highlighted the valuable contributions of a wide range of community groups including ‘Friends of’ groups and Street Champions and emphasised the importance of sustaining and encouraging them. This can be achieved through provision of equipment, training and celebrating their contributions. Derby highlighted how they encouraged volunteers to feel ‘part of the team’.
- 1.8 **Enabling local areas to respond to issues themselves** was also identified as an important mechanism, which improves neighbourhoods and build a sense of ownership in the community. Both Derby and Wigan referred to borough wide programmes whereby funding is allocated to ward boards (or similar). In the case of Derby this is £15k per ward and had been recently increased from £10k. The individual criteria for this funding varied between the two areas, however examples could be replacement street signs or new bins.

Equipment

- 1.9 **Bins need to be in the right place with the right schedule** in place to empty them. Both Wigan and Derby have undertaken a review to consider the location, type, and quality of bins, and have used service intelligence to inform a revised bin collection schedule. Wigan’s review has been based on key findings from Keep Britain Tidy, Members, and other service intelligence. Rochdale have introduced solar bins following a trial of different models. They are not using the type operating in Birmingham, as they had found it poor performing.



- 1.10 **No areas have adopted a complete pesticide free approach to weed removal.** Rochdale have introduced a part approach, which means they no longer use chemicals within 50m of schools or in parks and open spaces. They instead use a handheld tool for these areas.

Workforce Culture

- 1.11 **A motivated and well-trained workforce** is vital to delivering change. Derby described how the engagement of staff throughout the implementation and roll out of the digital platform had been critical to its success. Rochdale highlighted the benefits delivered from a workforce who feel pride in their work. They had improved the communication between staff and management through regular briefings and team meetings, and also in promoting their activity in external briefings to showcase and celebrate their work. Wigan described how they emphasised what an important role staff play – ‘you are not just emptying a bin; you’re making this neighbourhood a better place’.

Behaviour Change

- 1.12 **Targeted and accurate communications** was identified as a critical success factor by Wigan in encouraging behaviour change amongst residents. They outlined local campaigns which reinforced the financial impact of removing litter and fly-tipping to get across the message to residents in a meaningful way. For example, the cost of removing the rubbish from this location could have been spent on a new swing in the playground. All three areas also highlighted the value of quality information to residents about services; all cautioned that information should be accurate and the service able to keep these promises.
- 1.13 Wigan have also **incentivised residents** through the [Wigan Deal](#). This is a strategy for the borough based on a contract between residents and the Council. For example, they have highlighted if residents play their part, the Council will be able to play its part. In relation to Cleaner Streets and in simple terms, residents understand if they do not fly tip or drop litter, the Council will be in a better position to keep Council tax down.

One Organisation

- 1.14 A **collaborative effort from across the Council** as a whole was acknowledged by Wigan as a critical success factor in their service improvements. They described the challenge for the Council to make the streets cleaner as a collective and joint priority, and outlined key contributions from other service areas, for example, Communications and Highways. This meant they did ‘not feel on our own but we worked together as one team.’ The introduction of a new Litter Prevention strategy is seen as a further step to reinforce this partnership working.
- 1.15 A tangible example of this is Wigan’s ‘Our Town’ campaign, which is now in its second year. This campaign aims to bring intensive resources in to raise the standard of a local area to where it should be, and then the emphasis moving forward is on maintaining this through mainstream activity. The campaign includes:



- Members and services identify high footfall areas outside of the town centre requiring improvements
- A plan of visual street scene improvements is developed through feedback from Members, stakeholders, and services. This may include removal of fly-tipping, replacement of broken street furniture and re-planting of shrubs.
- A period of intensive activity takes place to deliver this plan.

Measuring Impact

1.16 Different measures were identified through these three areas. However, it is **not clear whether they fully capture the resident experience**. Common areas included:

- APSE and LAMs inspections
- Number of complaints
- Number of compliments
- Sickness levels of workforce

1.17 Derby highlighted how they are currently exploring if they can use other street-based staff (for example, Highways Inspectors) to also assess street cleanliness.