

Report to: Environment Committee, 25th January 2022

Report of: Corporate Director - Operations, Homes and Communities

Subject: STREET SCENE ENHANCEMENT

1 Recommendation

That Committee:

- 1.1 Notes the contents of this report and approves the proposed extension to the deployment of the Street Scene Enhancement Team ('hit squad').**
- 1.2 Recommends to Council an additional revenue budget of £80,000 to the Environmental Operations budget in 2022/2023.**

2 Background

- 2.1 During 2021, as part of the city centre enhancement programme, Environmental Operations deployed a service enhancement team to support the Street Scene activities.
- 2.2 This resource has primarily been assigned to the city centre, undertaking street washing, bench cleaning, litter bin washing (washing both the bin housing and the actual bins), dead animal removal and graffiti removal. The street washing activities have been of significant help in managing the problems and mess caused by gull droppings.
- 2.3 In addition to city centre work, the team have worked on arterial routes into the centre; litter-picking, bus shelter maintenance (washing, graffiti removal, weed removal) and leaf clearance.
- 2.4 Other outlying work has included offensive graffiti removal from the skatepark and Rushwick underpass, along with regular washdowns around the riverside and assisting the Place Teams with fly-tip removal.
- 2.5 The 'hit squad' consists of a driver, plus one operative, a caged vehicle and a jet wash, it currently operates five days per week (Monday to Friday). The operatives deployed to this service are full-time employees who have been temporarily seconded, their substantive posts are being filled by temporary, agency, staff.
- 2.6 The results from the deployment of the current enhancement team have been very noticeable; pavement washing and clear-up of gull mess has resulted in much cleaner paved areas, under benches and around trees. The time taken to remove graffiti has improved and the regular litter-bin cleansing has significantly reduced odours. There have been less customer complaints and the Council has received some compliments on the condition of the city from visitors.

3 Preferred Option for City Enhancement

- 3.1 To continue with the deployment of the additional resources for a further year.
- 3.2 To directly employ two operatives on one-year, fixed-term, contracts working with the Place teams, and to continue to second two of the existing, permanent, Place employees to the Enhancement Team.
- 3.3 To continue to hire a caged vehicle for a further year.

4 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 Reduce period of deployment to six months

Advantages:

- Reduces revenue funding requirement.
- Jet washing remains in place during the main gull roost.
- Existing cleansing standards maintained in quarter 1 and 2.

Disadvantages:

- Reduced cleansing support for the autumn/winter months.
- Lower profile of cleansing activities during festive period (visitor perception).
- Reduction in cleansing standards for quarter 3 and 4, compared to 2021/22.

4.2 Cease provision of hit squad resource

Advantages:

- No funding required.

Disadvantages:

- Pre-existing resources would need to be wider spread to pick-up some of the hit squad activities.
- Reduced cleansing support during the gull season.
- Reduction in cleansing standards, compared to 2021/22.

5 Implications

5.1 Financial & Budgetary Implications

The cost of providing this additional resource, 2 operatives (including on-costs and holiday/absence cover), 1 hired caged-vehicle, use of existing jet wash is estimated at £80,000 for 2022/23 financial year.

5.2 Legal and Governance Implications

As Principal Litter Authority, the City Council has a statutory duty under the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to ensure that relevant land in its area is, so far as is practicable, kept clear of litter and refuse.

5.3 Risk Implications

The current standard of street cleansing in the city centre, will likely deteriorate if the resource is withdrawn.

5.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

This programme supports:

- City Plan Theme: People feeling like they are proud of where they live; the city being a beautiful place to be in, whether as a resident or a visitor.

5.5 Equality Implications

There are no negative equality implications envisaged.

5.6 Human Resources Implications

Employment of two operatives on one-year, fixed-term, contracts to 'backfill' existing Place operatives seconded to the 'Enhancement Team'.

5.7 Health and Safety Implications

Sustained cleansing of gull mess will reduce the risk of people slipping.

5.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

Social: Improved street scene, including aesthetic improvements, can improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to the city.

Environmental: Improved cleansing results, on-going removal of gull mess from paved areas. Bins are maintained in cleaner/odour-free condition and, in general, street furniture is cleaner.

Economic: Enhanced cleansing standards improve the Street Scene in the city making Worcester a more attractive location for residents and businesses, and a more inviting destination for visitors.

Ward(s):

All

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Background Papers:

None