

**Meeting of the Highways and Environmental Services Select Committee –
2nd August 2023**

Report of the Acting Service Director – Neighbourhood Delivery

Developing the Neighbourhood Approach

Purpose of report

1. To provide an update on developing the neighbourhood approach in the Environment directorate.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended:-
 - That the Highways and Environmental Services Select Committee note the content of the report
 - That the committee provide any views on the way Officers and Members can work together to ensure a neighbourhood delivery model is a future success.

Background

3. On 1st January 2023, the phase 1 restructuring of the former Public Realm Directorate was implemented. This phase 1 implemented a number of significant changes, including:
 - A change in name from the Public Realm Directorate to the Environment Directorate to better reflect the role the Directorate has in both the strategic environmental stewardship of the borough, as well as its responsibilities for the operational delivery of neighbourhood services

- A new senior management structure, which saw the creation of four distinct divisions, namely:
 - o Neighbourhood Services
 - o Transport and Highways
 - o Waste and Fleet
 - o Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change
4. Alongside a change in the senior management structure, the directorate also set about delivering:
- A refreshed approach to service planning, with accountabilities clearly set out in the Directorate Plan
 - A leadership development programme to encourage the upskilling of managers
 - Greater financial transparency and accountability
 - Modernised working practices
 - A recruitment exercise to introduce the required skills into the directorate
5. It was always intended that a 'Phase 2' would follow on from this senior management restructure and this report provides an update on progress with developing the neighbourhood approach.
6. On 7th July, staff were informed that consultation on Phase 2 of the restructure of the Environment directorate would begin. Staff were informed that those affected by the change proposals would be invited to an individual or group consultation meeting to discuss the proposals and to obtain their feedback. Following the consultation period, a final decision would then be made on the structural arrangements.

A Neighbourhood Approach

7. As part of Phase 2 of the restructure of the Environment directorate, the Neighbourhood Services division aims to provide *'Modern, value for money and customer-focussed services for all of our residents, that support the Council's ambitious carbon reduction aims'*.
8. The neighbourhood approach aims to provide customer focused services that are tailored to specific neighbourhoods and deliver value for money. Through the restructure of the division, it is intended to create increased capacity to work closely with communities and partners to create thriving neighbourhoods and improve the quality of life for the people living in them.

9. Through the neighbourhood approach Officers will work to ensure the right services are delivered to suit each neighbourhood, as well as making these services more accessible to our residents. In delivering services, best use will be made of the buildings and depots accommodating staff and fleet vehicles, to ensure efficiencies and help us to reduce carbon emissions.
10. One of the most significant changes proposed as part of Phase 2 of the restructure is through the amalgamation of the operational teams of Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing to form a Street Scene team. As part of the proposal, no longer would these services be seen as separate, but instead be integrated around neighbourhood priorities, which inevitably vary in different parts of the Borough.
11. Whilst subject to the outcome of the current consultation, the Street Scene team will be responsible for ensuring the Borough is clean and tidy on a day to day basis. Amongst other things, this includes the sweeping of channels and footways, clearing graffiti, picking up dead animals, the emptying of 3,000 bins, the mowing of grass and cutting back of vegetation on highway verges, housing sites and parks and open spaces, treatment and removal of weeds, planting of trees, the maintenance of playing pitches from football through to bowls.
12. It is intended that the teams be aligned to the Council's Community Forum areas, with clear accountability and responsibility for the leadership and management of defined geographical areas of the Borough. These areas will align with those of partners such as Housing and the Police to ensure clear lines of communication and to allow a better and more joined up response to activity.
13. Through the restructure it is proposed to:
 - Create five Street Scene Neighbourhood Manager posts, aligned to the Council's Community Forum areas, with each area containing two Street Scene Neighbourhood Supervisor posts.
 - Create ten teams of 16 frontline operatives. As part of the creation of these teams, generic job descriptions will be introduced, replacing some 25 job titles that currently exist and which limits what duties staff can be deployed to undertake. The opportunity will also be taken to review shift patterns and working hours to enable a 7 day a week service.

Finance

14. The current budget for the Neighbourhood Services Division is £10.495m.

The proposed structure is £10.387m resulting in a saving of £108k.

This saving will be used to fund the additional posts within the Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change team.

No redundancy costs have been built in, and until the consultation process is concluded these will not be known.

Law

15. The Council may appoint staff as it considers necessary for the discharge of its functions under Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Risk Management

16. There are no direct risk management implications arising from this report.

Equality Impact

17. Equality Impact Assessments will be completed as required throughout the restructure and service redesign.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

18. Human Resources and Organisational Development have been part of the proposals for the restructure and we have the Directorate Human Resources and Organisational Development Business Partner supporting the process.

Commercial/Procurement

19. There are no direct commercial or procurement implications arising from this report.

Environment/Climate Change

20. The restructure of the Environment Directorate has seen the creation of a dedicated Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change division to deliver the Council's ambitions in this area.

Council Priorities and Projects

21. The restructure of the Environment Directorate will support key Council priorities

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'N.M.P.' followed by a small flourish.

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