

<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>	
MEETING	<b>Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>
MEETING	<b>14<sup>th</sup> March 2022</b>
TITLE:	<b>Investment in Neighbourhood Services – Priority proposals</b>
WARD:	<b>All</b>
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	

## **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 The Climate Emergency and Sustainability PDS panel considered a presentation by the Director of Place management at their meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 detailing proposals for investing further in Neighbourhood Services.
- 1.2 £950K one off funding for 2022/23 financial year, was subsequently agreed at the Council budget setting meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (see background papers) and 11 priority areas for this spend are now presented to the 14<sup>th</sup> March CES panel for consideration.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Panel review the 11 priority activities listed in section 3 below.
- 2.2 The Panel consider how we can communicate and engage with communities further on our Clean and Green activities.

## **3 THE REPORT**

The Council made clear it's intention to invest one-off funding to priority areas within Neighbourhood Services at its Cabinet meeting in July 2021 (see background papers). After consulting with local ward members, the following have been agreed as priority areas for action by the Cabinet member within the one off £950K allocation agreed in the Council budget for 22/23.

### **3.1 Mechanical Weed Removal - £101K**

- As we no longer use weed killing spray (glyphosate) on our pavements a dedicated resource of a further 4 staff will be put in place for a 6-month period April to September.
- An additional compact sweeper will be hired in, dedicated to weed removal and sweeping
- An additional 3 x mechanical push along weed rippers will be purchased for existing cleansing crews to use
- The dedicated crew will work in one specified ward each day. They will be supported by existing cleansing teams and response crew, to tackle other requests submitted through the Council's website.

### **3.2 Community weed ripping equipment to loan - £9K**

- Working with #NoPlaceforLitter (the volunteer network for litter clearance) a range of equipment will be purchased and tested to establish which will be most effective for volunteers to use. hoes, brushes, weed grabbers/pullers.
- Volunteers will be provided with garden waste sacks or wheeled bins so weeds can be composted
- Areas of demand for equipment will be reviewed new volunteer hubs set up in areas of high demand, with local councillors

### **3.3 Additional Graffiti Removal - £100K**

- One additional Graffiti removal officer, with specialist equipment will be employed for 12 months.
- Graffiti removal will be provided free of charge to domestic properties. A new service for commercial buildings will be launched, chargeable at cost rates, but priority will be given to domestic properties.
- Removal will include painting over, if more cost effective and appropriate.
- The impact of removal on any heritage properties will be considered before any removal is confirmed.
- We will work with other 3<sup>rd</sup> party companies where removal is outside our ability, due to specialist equipment requirements.
- To ensure fairness, expenditure for a single domestic properties will not exceed **£1.5K**.
- New on-line forms will be developed for residents to apply, and complete disclaimers upfront.

### **3.4 New Response Team to work across Parks, Cleansing & Highways for 12 months - £100K**

- The team will consist of two multi skilled operatives, a response vehicle and specialist equipment
- The team will be trained and qualified to work on the highway, and will hire in additional traffic management as required to complete tasks
- They will respond to reports of overhanging vegetation and sign removal/washing in the first instance, but also other needs as they arise.

- The team will respond to member priorities and requests from the public through the Council's website.

### **3.5 Additional Enforcement Resource – To give further focus to Dog Fouling, flytipping and littering offences - £40K**

- An additional Education and Enforcement officer will be employed for a 12-month period to supplement the existing team of 3 officers on the ground.
- The team will carry out education and enforcement activity in areas where dog fouling is a high prevalence, responding to information from the Dog Warden, Ward & parish Councillors, residents and Volunteer litter picking groups.
- We will provide additional information to businesses such as vets & puppy training classes to provide educational information to attendees at early stages of owning a dog.
- We will continue with at least the same level of activity investigating fly-tipping and littering offences as in 2021/22.
- Additional covert cameras with appropriate signage will also be installed in heavily littered laybys on main roads. This additional enforcement resource will assist with investigating the camera footage.
- We will also investigate the technical ability for members of the public to upload dashcam footage of littering for us to take enforcement action with littering offences when good camera footage is available.

### **3.6 Increased routine street cleansing in wards and on our highways network, with additional Clean and Green community Action days - £300K**

- Main road litter picking continuing at twice per year (winter & spring), with more regular cleaning of priority stretches of the A37, A39 and A4 dual carriageways (4 times per year)
- Continuing with an additional cleansing crew of 3 operatives and a vehicle for another year (to supplement the baseline of two crews).
- Offer "Clean and Green" action days across all of our wards, with an additional team of 3 cleaners (with van) to spend time in each ward throughout the year focussing on issues identified by ward councillors.
- To give maximum impact the intention is to cluster wards, so that we aim for 18 clusters to be visited twice per year. The crew will concentrate in these clusters for a week (a clean and green week) twice per year culminating with the Clean and Green action day, working with local community volunteer groups, parish, Town and ward councillors.
- 2 x Clean and Green coordinators will be employed to carry out all administrative organisation including customer liaison, promotion, supervising, co-ordinating and carrying out activities at the action days and coordinating the weed removal community scheme with #noplacelitter, volunteers, community groups, residents and ward councillors.
- The existing Highways Media and Communications officer will prioritise communications with members about works being undertaken in their wards.

### **3.7 Additional gulley emptying - £100K**

- To carry out a further 11000 gulley emptyings in priority locations (we currently empty 22,000 per year). The priority is to move the majority of rural gullies that are emptied every 2 years to once per year, and to prioritise main roads in rural areas where gullies get blocked with run off from fields ( plus other high risk urban gullies

### **3.8 Replacement of worn-out highway signs and street name plates - £30K**

### **3.9 Increased investment in repairing roads and pavements - £85K**

- To supplement the base budget of funding that exists for repairs.

### **3.10 Increased line painting on the highway - £80K**

- This doubles the existing budget so allows much more work to be done, improving the visual appearance of our highway network.

### **3.11 Additional filling of grit bins - £5K**

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council has statutory duties as a Principal Litter Authority, and the Highway Authority.
- 4.2 The Council has statutory duties under the Health & Safety at Work Act.
- 4.3 There is specific guidance involved with working on the highway from within the Traffic Signs manual (chapter 8) and New Roads and Street Works Act.

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 5.1 There will be the requirement to recruit 13 staff across the Neighbourhoods operational teams. Due to the timescales involved this will be a combination of agency and fixed term contracted staff.
- 5.2 Additional gulley emptying and highway works will be commissioned through our highways maintenance contractor, Volker Highways.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The ability to employ sufficient suitably skilled staff including drivers, within the current labour market comes with risk. We will work with recruitment agencies to ensure we are as successful as possible in attracting appropriately skilled staff.
- 6.2 Risk assessments will be completed for all individual elements of work in accordance with our statutory obligations.

## **7 CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 7.1 All the proposals will be carried out using the most efficient vehicles available to us, to reduce our impact with fossil fuels.
- 7.2 Cleansing waste will be recycled as far as possible.

## 8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The items detailed in section 3 were drawn up by members in consultation with officers. The PDS panel is invited to put forward other options for consideration if deemed a higher priority than those listed.

## 9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The funding has been consulted on and agreed through the Council's budget process.

<b>Contact person</b>	Carol Maclellan 01225 394106
<b>Background papers</b>	<p><a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=636&amp;MId=5980&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=636&amp;MId=5980&amp;Ver=4</a> CES PDS 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 Item 21 Development of Neighbourhood services</p> <p><a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&amp;MId=5524&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&amp;MId=5524&amp;Ver=4</a> Cabinet 20/07/21 Item 49 minutes. Investment proposal noted</p> <p><a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=272&amp;MId=5490&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=272&amp;MId=5490&amp;Ver=4</a> 16/02/22 Council meeting. Budget and Council Tax</p> <p><a href="https://newsroom.bathnes.gov.uk/news/cabinet-will-consider-major-investment-social-housing-improved-transport-recycling-and-cleaner">https://newsroom.bathnes.gov.uk/news/cabinet-will-consider-major-investment-social-housing-improved-transport-recycling-and-cleaner</a> 02/02/22 News article on budget including £950K investment in Neighbourhoods</p>
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