



Communities Scrutiny Group

Thursday, 21 March 2024

Streetwise Update

Report of the Director of Neighbourhoods

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report will provide Communities Scrutiny Group with an update of the Council's Streetwise service, the key services delivered, current performance and financial position, and progress since it was insourced back into the Council in September 2022.
- 1.2. Officers from Streetwise will be present at the meeting and will provide the Group with further information about how Streetwise has progressed since its insourcing in September 2022. A presentation will be given, and the Group will be able to ask questions and have specific queries answered.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group consider the information provided and provide feedback on the overall performance of Streetwise.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. Many of the services delivered by Streetwise are key frontline services that significantly affect the overall appearance of the Borough and residents' quality of life. Having been insourced in September 2022, it was felt timely that members of the Communities Scrutiny Group were provided with an update and given the opportunity to scrutinise the overall performance of the Streetwise service.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. Cabinet agreed in February 2022 to insource Streetwise back to the Council, in effect delivering a full 'in house' service as a future delivery model. Whilst Streetwise Environmental Ltd had in general performed well since it was established and outsourced in 2014, the subsequent loss of a key contract, difficult trading conditions and concerns nationally over council owned companies and governance, a decision was made that Streetwise would be insourced from September 2022.
- 4.2. The decision was also based on ensuring that any future direction was primarily focussed on delivering both Council environmental maintenance

services and those of key partners with a focus on the overall 'Rushcliffe place' rather than contracts which were spread over a much wider geographical area, many of which were not covering operational costs or delivering any significant profit. This decision was further supported by a report commissioned and delivered by a third-party industry expert, Kelake. To guide the insourcing change a core set of principles were established and set out in the Appendices of the approved Cabinet Report (8 February 2022). Progress against these principles will be assessed as part of the accompanying presentation to this report.

- 4.3. Since being insourced, Streetwise has seen significant changes in its management and staffing structure. Over 40 employees were transferred to the Council under TUPE regulations, and a great deal of work has taken place to ensure that all staff were given a full induction and introduction to Council policies, procedures and working practices. This has been a significant change for many but has been fully managed with regular staff focus groups, management support and training. The in-sourcing programme was fully overseen by a Council-wide delivery team led by the Chief Executive.
- 4.4. As part of its insourcing, key decisions were made in relation to ceasing operations from the Sproxton satellite depot in Lincolnshire, which was the base for three employees delivering 'external' contracts and would have required considerable capital expenditure and investment.
- 4.5. Other key decisions included an investment into the Bingham based offices and workplace, including new open plan offices which now double up as our emergency planning base, reviewing hire charges and costs of vehicles, and a full review of work schedules to ensure the key areas of Council functions were being appropriately delivered within the available resources including on street bins, litter collection, fly tipping, grounds and sport pitch maintenance, trees work, parks and playgrounds, land drainage and flood response work.
- 4.6. The presentation will also cover key areas of current performance and service improvements. As an example, a full sweep of central reservations and splitter islands has taken place, whilst on-going work has taken place on some A roads across the Borough. These are areas of work not previously carried out and have made a significant difference to the cleanliness of the borough's road network.
- 4.7. In addition, there has been an improvement in mechanical sweeping and detritus standards which should only further improve as the Council will be moving away from hiring mechanical sweeping vehicles and staff and have purchased two sweepers due to be delivered in April 2024. This will allow for greater control and flexibility in how we respond to ad-hoc mechanical sweeping requests whilst still delivering our Borough-wide mechanical sweeping schedule.
- 4.8. Key performance indicators regularly measured and reported on for the service are outlined in the table below illustrating current performance is high.

Performance Indicator	Target	Current Performance
Percentage of streets passing overall cleansing inspections	97.5%	98.2%
Street and environmental cleanliness LITTER	98%	97.4%
Street and environmental cleanliness DETRITUS	93.5%	98.2%
Street and environmental cleanliness GRAFFITI	100%	98.2%
Street and environmental cleanliness DOG FOULING	99%	100%

- 4.9. As a result of the changes made, including investment and reviews of current work schedules, Streetwise are regularly receiving compliments for the high standards of work carried out for internal Rushcliffe work areas such as sport pitches and Rushcliffe owned trees, parks and play areas and litter and grounds maintenance works. In addition, the service regularly receives compliments from both residents and councillors, and these are shared weekly with Streetwise staff. This was particularly evident during both Storm Babet and Henk when Streetwise staff were at the forefront of delivering the Council's response.
- 4.10. It is pleasing to note that as a result of the insourcing and how this was managed, staff appear to be fully engaged with the new policies and procedures, and working arrangements put in place. The increased investment in newer vehicles and plant, and additional training for all have been very well received. Feedback from the Council's own internal staff survey (November 2023) was extremely positive with staff in the Streetwise team commenting that this is a good place to work, they are proud to work here, and that overall Rushcliffe is a good employer.
- 4.11. Whilst maintaining its key focus on delivering Rushcliffe works, a business growth strategy has been developed and the future direction of Streetwise will continue to build on the good work recently completed working with key 'Rushcliffe place' partners including town and parish councils, VIA and Nottinghamshire County Council, some local schools and leisure providers. This will help supplement the costs of the delivering the service by generating additional income streams, covered in 6.1 financial implications below.
- 4.12. Moving forward, the Streetwise business growth strategy will continue to develop and reflect Rushcliffe's current transformational plan of cost reduction whilst maximising income generation. In 2024/25 the service will continue to explore further improvements including more use of new technologies, work with internal services to create a marketing and sales strategy for Streetwise, and further improvements to customer experience by adding value where possible.

- 4.13. Streetwise already employ one office-based apprentice and remain keen to further explore apprenticeship options across all frontline service areas.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

- 5.1. There are no specific risks or uncertainties involved in bringing this Streetwise Update Report to the Communities Scrutiny Group for discussion. However, there are significant risks to the Council in not developing and reviewing services that meet resident needs and it is important that regular monitoring of such key services and performance standards are met.
- 5.2. The Council has a statutory duty to deliver some of the services currently delivered by Streetwise as outlined in 6.2 below.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

- 6.1.1. The current budget for Streetwise for the year 2023/24 is £1.654m. This includes delivering £0.1m transformation budget savings as part of the Council's overall transformation savings plan. Whilst it is projected that there will be an overspend of approximately £0.2m in its first full financial year of operating, this is in the main down to continuing to hire in vehicles whilst trialling, procuring, and awaiting delivery of replacements, as well as significant additional costs involved in the emergency planning response to both storms Babet and Henk.
- 6.1.2. Income for 2023/24 is anticipated to be £0.460m against a budget of £0.433m. This income includes work for Rushcliffe internal services such as Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium and external income from town and parish councils, VIA and some private works carried out for Rushcliffe residents.
- 6.1.3. The 2024/25 net budget is £1.617m and includes a further £0.1m transformation budget saving meaning the service will have delivered the planned savings of £0.2m as outlined in the initial business case and Cabinet report in February 2022.
- 6.1.4. Budgeted income for 2024/25 is £0.447m. It is hoped that this can be exceeded in line with the business growth strategy which has already seen additional work start to come online from April 2024.
- 6.1.5. When extrapolating the costs of the outsourced service, had it remained outsourced, the cost to the Council for 2024/25 would have been circa £1.9m which is further evidential confirmation of the positive decision taken by the Council.

6.2. Legal Implications

- 6.2.1. Section 89(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on certain bodies, including District Councils as the primary litter authority to

ensure that their land (or land for which they are responsible) is, so far as is practicable, kept clear of litter and refuse.

6.2.2. Part 1 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 also contains a Code of Practice issued under section 89(7) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. This enables duty bodies, such as Rushcliffe, to identify when and where the greatest litter problems are likely to occur, and to put into place procedures to ensure that these do not build up and that acceptable standards are maintained.

6.3. Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications contained within the recommendations of this report.

6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

In addition to ensuring that Rushcliffe’s public spaces are tidy and well cared for, which helps to create an important foundation for a positive community safety feeling, the Streetwise service includes several functions such as fly tipping removal which have a direct impact on crime and disorder investigation and prevention.

6.5. Biodiversity Net Gain Implications

The Streetwise service regularly carries out work for internal services and this includes liaising closely with colleagues from the Council’s Communities team. Considerations are therefore regularly taken into account when carrying out works such as weed spraying, grounds maintenance work on areas of sensitivity such as The Hook, and Streetwise have been heavily involved in the creation of and maintenance of Council No Mow areas.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

The Environment	The core service functions of the Streetwise service, including cleansing and grounds maintenance have a significant and positive impact on the Borough’s environmental quality. In addition, the operation and delivery of the service to meet environmental standards and the Council’s carbon management commitments will be of paramount importance.
Quality of Life	A clean, tidy, and well-maintained public realm is a key foundation that should positively enhance our local residents’ quality of life.
Efficient Services	The current Streetwise service is organised and resourced in an efficient and effective manner to maximise their service delivery impact whilst taking into account service costs incurred.

Sustainable Growth	Streetwise will continue to explore opportunities to work closely with other public and private sector partners as part of its business growth strategy, to deliver environmental services which support sustainable development and growth and help to generate additional income.
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8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group consider the information provided and provide feedback on the overall performance of Streetwise.

For more information contact:	Dave Banks Director of Neighbourhoods Tel: 0115 9148438 dbanks@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	Report to Cabinet 8 February 2022. Future Delivery Model for Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing services.
List of appendices:	None