

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Customer and Digital (Introduced by Cabinet Member (Communities, Social Justice and Wealth Building))	Cabinet	Monday, 20 June 2022

## Neighbourhood Services Strategy 2022-2025

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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### Purpose of the Report

- To present the Neighbourhood Services Strategy for 2022-2025.

### Recommendations to Cabinet

- That the report is noted and the new strategy is approved for consultation with community hubs and the Climate Emergency Working Group prior to Executive Member Decision.

### Reasons for recommendations

- To ensure that the Neighbourhood service is fit for purpose, making best use of resources, and managing and meeting customer expectations.

### Other options considered and rejected

- To not develop a strategy for the delivery of the Neighbourhood service. This has been rejected as it would mean that the opportunities for the development and improvement of the service and its future direction would not be set out and agreed.

### Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Thriving communities
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## Background to the report

6. This report presents the new Neighbourhood Services Strategy for 2022-2025 which is available at appendix A. This sets out the priorities, areas of development and areas of service delivery for the Neighbourhoods service over the next three years.
7. The Neighbourhood service represents a large proportion of the council's total revenue budget and staffing FTE. The strategy is therefore important for ensuring a strategic approach and clear action plan for the development of a key area of council service delivery.
8. This report summarises the main themes and areas of development within the Neighbourhood Strategy. The full strategy at appendix A includes:
  - i. Purpose of the strategy
  - ii. Vision
  - iii. Links to current strategies and policies
  - iv. Current service context
  - v. Key focuses for delivery
  - vi. Key measures for success
  - vii. Financing
  - viii. Action plan
9. The strategy presents the core principles for the Neighbourhood Strategy alongside a draft action plan which sets out the expected service delivery work over the next three years. This is an evolving strategy and will be reviewed annually in line with the business planning process to ensure that service delivery remains in line with council priorities and aspirations. Ongoing dialogue with local neighbourhood areas, such as through the Community Hubs, will also contribute to the delivery of the strategy as it evolves.

## Key themes

10. The strategy builds on existing work of the Neighbourhood service and sets out an ambitious programme of work to drive forwards the modernisation of the service. This includes the implementation of new technology to ensure a modern, digitised service which supports the delivery of more efficient and effective services and ensures that the right information and data is in place for robust performance monitoring and informed decision making. The strategy aims to use the efficiencies delivered to focus capacity on enhanced neighbourhood improvements, including working with members and residents to identify and target 'grot spot' areas.
11. Another key driver of the strategy is ensuring that the Neighbourhood service is aligned to the council's ambitions in relation to the green agenda, by ensuring that the service's tools, equipment and resources have a minimal impact on the environment and promoting biodiversity through tree planting and wildflower programmes.
12. Areas of service delivery for the strategy are centred around several key themes which are outlined below:

- **Addressing Climate Change-** to help meet the council's ambitions around the green agenda, the Neighbourhood service will review the fleet, tools, equipment and methods used in service delivery to consider how to reduce environmental impact whilst maintaining service delivery and meeting customer demand.
- **Biodiversity-** the service will deliver a biodiversity programme to support the natural environment including wildflower planting, tree planting, and further improvements to parks and open spaces. South Ribble is currently consulting on a separate Biodiversity Strategy and the outcomes of this consultation will be reflected in the Neighbourhood Services strategy following its conclusion.
- **Neighbourhood Area Improvements-** capacity in the service which is freed up through efficiencies will be re-invested into the service through the delivery of enhanced neighbourhood improvements including enhanced street cleaning and the targeting of grot spots. A review of litter bins will also be carried out to ensure that they are in the right places and that we are using our resources effectively.
- **Modernising technology and information-** the service will implement new technologies and digitised processes to deliver a modern service that maximises its use of resources. This will include increased mobile and digital working to enable efficiencies, the investigation of new technologies and comprehensive reporting on performance.
- **People and culture-** to ensure that the service is sustainable and can meet current and future service demand, the strategy will ensure that the right skills and capacity are in place across the Neighbourhood teams through succession planning and training and development programmes.

13. The expected benefits and outcomes to be achieved through the strategy include:

- **More efficient services-** efficiencies driven through modernisation, new technology and review of service schedules.
- **Cleaner, safer and more attractive local areas-** capacity available for additional and enhanced cleaning in local neighbourhoods and grot spot areas to reflect member and customer requests.
- **Reduced environmental impact whilst maintaining service standards-** this supports the delivery of other council programmes such as the Climate Change and Clean Air Strategies.
- **A flexible and sustainable workforce-** able to adapt to areas of service demand with in-built service resilience to meet succession planning requirements and future need.

### Implementation and monitoring

14. This strategy includes a substantial programme of work which is expected to be delivered over a three-year period from 2022- 2025. A high-level action plan is set out at the end of the strategy and has been developed to identify the expected timescales for the delivery of the work aligned to the key areas of focus.

15. The strategy has been developed in line with service priorities and sets out the work to be carried out as part of the service business plan. As such, the strategy will be refreshed annually throughout the 3-year period through the annual business planning process which will also allow for engagement with staff on the content of the actions plans.
16. It is suggested that an initial review of the strategy is carried out at a 6-month mark to evaluate key outputs, outcomes and benefits realised. This will then be able to inform any changes to the strategy when it is refreshed through the business planning processes.
17. Key corporate and service level indicators are outlined within the strategy to identify how the success of the strategy will be monitored and measured. This will monitor the impact of the strategy on areas of service delivery including grass cutting schedules, street cleansing, litter bins, and service requests.

## **Financing**

18. It is expected that the delivery of the strategy will be contained within existing budgets, with any additional costs identified for further improvements to be subject to an appropriate report which would be submitted if the need for additional budget allocation becomes clear. The service will look to re-invest any savings identified through efficiencies delivered through the strategy to offer an enhanced service for residents such as through additional grass cutting and cleaning and targeting of grot spot areas.
19. £200k in funding has also been identified and agreed through the budget for 2022/2023 to target fly tipping and environmental improvements across the borough to support the delivery of enhanced neighbourhood improvements and enable clean and safe local areas for residents.

## **Climate change and air quality**

20. The work noted in this report impacts on the following areas of climate change and sustainability targets of the Council's Green Agenda: net carbon zero by 2030, reducing waste production, limiting non sustainable forms of transport, working with sustainable and green accredited companies, limiting or improving air quality, limiting water waste and flooding risks, improving green areas and biodiversity.
21. The following remediations have been undertaken to limit the environmental effect:
  - The strategy seeks to review new methods of service delivery to help support the Council's Green Agenda including review of fuel and transport, tree planting and wildflower corridors and review of weed control methods.

## **Equality and diversity**

22. The Equality Impact Assessment indicates that the strategy will help to deliver positive outcomes for all residents through a focus on the green agenda and targeted neighbourhood improvements to 'grot spot' areas.

### **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

23. The budgets and funding detailed within this report are within the approved MTFS.

### **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

24. There are no concerns with this report from a Monitoring Officer perspective. The Strategy is designed to contribute towards a number of key priorities of the council including the council's green agenda.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A- Neighbourhood Services Strategy

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