

Neighbourhood Services Strategy

2022-2025

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Purpose

The Neighbourhood service is responsible for ensuring that the borough's streets and local areas are clean, safe and well-maintained and the team delivers a range of services including street cleaning and sweeping, grass cutting, litter and fly tipping, trees and hedges, and plants and wildflower planting.

South Ribble Borough Council's Neighbourhood Services Strategy will build on existing work conducted in the Neighbourhood services teams and transform the service to ensure that it is modern, efficient, and delivering an excellent service for residents. The 2022-2025 strategy will seek to review and modernise the service, implementing new technology whilst looking to support the green agenda and minimise impact on the environment. To do this, the strategy sets out the vision for Neighbourhood services for 2022-2025 and outlines the actions required to enable us to meet our key objectives.

Vision

Our vision is to **'deliver modern, effective and green Neighbourhood services that work to improve local areas and protect the natural environment.'**

The following aims outline how we will achieve our vision:

- Transform and review Neighbourhood services so that they can deliver more for local areas.
- Invest in enhanced neighbourhood work to tackle key grot spot areas.
- Introduce new technologies to improve the management of the council's assets and deliver service efficiencies.
- Develop technology, data and information for recording and reporting on performance and productivity, enabling informed decision making that supports the continual improvement of the service.
- Deliver a biodiversity programme that aligns with the council's ambition to protect the local environment.
- Make service changes, including a review of equipment and resources, to support the council's mission to reach carbon net zero by 2030.

Strategies and Policies

The Neighbourhood Services Strategy links to existing strategies and policies across the council and aligns closely to the ambitions of the corporate strategy:



The Neighbourhood Services Strategy also links closely with the council's ambitions to support the green agenda. South Ribble declared a climate emergency in July 2019, pledging to work to make the Borough carbon neutral by 2030. The current climate emergency action plan relates directly to several areas of work conducted by Neighbourhood Services, including the planting of 27,500 trees each year. A consultation into a Biodiversity Strategy is also currently being carried out by the council. This strategy will be updated following the conclusion of the consultation to ensure that any outcomes in relation to Neighbourhood Services are reflected in the strategy.

Where are we now?

Technology

The service has a range of systems and databases in place to help support service delivery, but some of the key processes are paper based and system limitations mean that the service does not have quick access to all of the information that it needs to operate efficiently. We now need to look to continue to develop our use of technology so that we can modernise the Neighbourhood service, including digitising services wherever possible so that we can complete processes quickly and effectively.

Assets

Our assets are currently recorded within a database, but work is required to verify our data and ensure that we have access to all required information. To ensure that we are making best use of our technology, tagging and verifying all current assets will need to take place to establish a clear understanding of the volumes and scope of maintenance. This will also help to enable route optimisation to make sure that we are maximising our resources through the most efficient work routes.

Service Delivery

Despite the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Neighbourhood teams have continued to deliver an excellent service across the borough. They have maintained high levels of productivity, achieved awards for our green spaces and continued to respond to customer requests and feedback. Examples of this include:

Environmental:

Created 31 wildflower meadows, with 11 more added in 2021.

Planted over 60,000 trees

3 new ponds created in 2021 to support natural habitats

Work with Parishes

The Neighbourhood service has continued to support parishes to deliver improvements to local neighbourhood areas.

Awards

Green Flag Awards for 3 of the borough's parks: Leyland's Worden Park, Longton Brickcroft Nature Reserve and Hurst Grange Park in Penwortham



Delivery of the Strategy

Key Areas of Development

The following areas of development outline the focus of the Neighbourhood service and what we aim to achieve over the next three years:

Modernising Technology and Information: A key part of the strategy is modernising the service and ensuring that up to date thinking, technology and latest methods are applied in practice to continue to deliver an excellent service. The strategy will consider ways to

modernise technology, including tagging all assets on internal systems, digitised processes, and the use of personal handsets to support effective mobile working for staff out in the community. Modernisation will put in place the technology and information required to ensure a more efficient and effective service and will support the Neighbourhood team to deliver more for our local communities.

Addressing Climate Change: Part of the action plan for the Neighbourhood Services Strategy includes re-evaluating the tools, equipment and processes used by the Neighbourhood teams to ensure that they have a minimal impact on the environment and climate change.

Biodiversity: The Neighbourhood services teams will deliver a biodiversity programme to expand on existing measures to support the green agenda. This will cover a wide range of different environments and methods including parks and open spaces, wildflower planting and corridors, and tree planting.

Neighbourhood Area Improvements: Service modernisation and efficiencies, alongside £200,000 in additional budget, will enable additional service capacity to be focused on delivering targeted improvements to grot spot areas and enhanced neighbourhood cleaning to local areas across the borough.

People and Resources: The strategy will streamline the Neighbourhood services team and empower employees with the right skills and tools to ensure a resilient culture that can work flexibly to meet changing demands. The Neighbourhood Services Strategy will deliver specific training and development to reflect the needs of Neighbourhood staff including health and safety, and employee wellbeing. A review of succession planning and the use of resources for income generation will also help to ensure future resilience and stability for the service.

Action Plan

The following key actions set out how we aim to achieve our vision through our main areas of focus:

Neighbourhood Area Improvements:

Investing in enhanced improvements in areas across the borough to ensure clean, safe and well-maintained neighbourhoods

- Implement a process of identifying and targeting grot spots and areas for enhanced street cleaning and improvements.
- Review the effectiveness and resourcing for the enforcement of crime and grime.
- Review the inspection programme and work schedules for play areas.
- Carry out a review of litter bins to ensure that the right bins are in the right places to enable effective waste disposal and recycling.
- Review grass cutting schedules to ensure that they are efficient and make best use of resources in key areas.

Addressing Climate Change:

Reviewing service methods and resources to ensure that they have a minimal impact on the environment whilst maintaining service delivery and meeting customer demand

- Review of weed control methods.
- Travel and fuel review- investigate alternative forms of power such as electric powered fleet vehicles or biofuel.
- Review of power tools to evaluate whether battery operated alternatives are viable.

Biodiversity:

Delivering high quality and attractive green spaces across the borough and supporting wildlife and biodiversity through a focus on natural environments:

- Deliver further improvements to our parks and green spaces including identifying new areas for Green Flag awards.
- Enhancing wildflower meadows including bulb planting in line with the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- Review and consult on 'No Mow May' to understand its suitability for South Ribble.
- Tree planting in line with the council's commitment of 27,000 this year.

People and Resources

Ensuring that the Neighbourhood service has the flexibility and resilience to meet changing service need and future demand

- Streamline the structure of the service to ensure that it is sustainable, future-proof, and provides flexibility to respond effectively to customer requests.
- Develop service succession plans, identifying development needs and rotating staff through teams to ensure skills across service areas.
- Deliver HGV training to develop service resilience and capacity to support external contractors for the Waste Service.
- Develop a programme to support staff wellbeing and resilience.
- Carry out a review of the office environment to ensure a modern working environment, with the technology and resources to support staff to work effectively.
- Investigate opportunities to use current resources for income generation such as through non-repair MOT testing.

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Modernising technology and information:

Making best use of technology and information to support efficient and effective service delivery and continual service improvement

- Carry out a review into new technologies to support a modern and efficient service with optimised work routes and schedules.
- Investigate opportunities to improve technologies to ensure that service requests are seamlessly passed directly to the relevant teams.
- Carry out a review of processes to ensure that all forms and service requests are streamlined and digitised wherever possible, allowing services to be delivered quickly and effectively,
- Investigate the use of CCTV to tackle fly tipping in hotspots.
- Explore opportunities for the improved use of personal devices to support effective mobile working for staff in the community.

Key Measures

The success of the strategy will be monitored and measured through corporate and service level indicators, which aim to reflect the improvements to the service and the changes to working:

No	Description	Target
1	Grass cutting schedule work completed on time	To be baselined in 2022/23
2	Street cleansing schedule routes completed on time	
3	Scheduled litter bins emptied on time	
4	Grounds maintenance service requests completed on time	
5	Streetscene service requests completed on time	

The strategy action plan will also be refreshed annually through the council business planning process and will allow for regular monitoring and evaluation of service delivery against the strategy's objectives.

Financing

Costs for the delivery of the strategy will be contained within existing budgets as far as possible, with any additional costs identified for further improvements to the service through 2022-23 to be subject to an appropriate report which will be submitted if the need for additional budget allocation becomes clear.

£200k additional investment has also been identified in the Council's budget for 2022/2023 to help target fly tipping and environmental improvements across the borough and enable clean and safe local areas for residents.

High Level Timescale

	Task	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Addressing Climate Change				
a.	Review and resolution of weed control methods in line with the Biodiversity Strategy	Q1-3- Review options	Q2-Ongoing- Implement recommendations and monitor impact	
		Q4- Develop recommendations		
b.	Review use of alternative fuel methods to replace current vehicles	Q1-2- Soft market testing	Procurement of replacement vehicles	
		Q3-4 - Develop recommendations		
c.	Research into battery operated hand tools	Q3- Carry out research	Implement recommendations	
		Q4- Develop recommendations		

Biodiversity

a.	Identify improvements to parks and green open spaces.	Q1- Identify improvements		
		Q2-4- Implement improvements		
b.	Evaluation of the success of the current wildflower meadows and wildlife corridors	Q1-2		
c.	Review and consult on 'No Mow May' (a campaign to avoid grass cutting during May to allow for improved biodiversity) to understand its suitability for South Ribble	Q1-4- Review and consult	Q1- Implement any changes to service	
d.	Annual perennial planting in wildflower meadows	Q1	Q1- Review and expand if approved	
e.	Annual bulb planting in wildflower corridors.	Q3	Q3	Q3
f.	Tree planting in line with corporate commitment.	Q3-4	Q3-4	Q3-4

h.	Work with Wildlife Trust to create ponds within the borough to support natural habitats for Great Crested Newts	Q1- ongoing		
People and Resources				
a.	Review service structure including proof of concept.	Q2-3- Review structure and develop initial recommendations	Q1- Implement review	
		Q4- Report on recommendations		
b.	Recruit new seasonal resources to support enhanced neighbourhood improvements	Q2- Plan for recruitment		
		Q3/4- Recruit new posts		
c.	Review of office environment including technology	Q1-4		
d.	Develop a programme to support staff wellbeing and resilience	Q1-4	Ongoing	

	including health and safety training			
e.	Develop service succession plans, training and accreditation in new skills and rotating staff through teams to ensure skills across service areas.	Ongoing	Ongoing	Ongoing
f.	HGV training to develop service resilience and capacity to support external contractors for the Waste Service.	Q 3-4 – Review training requirements	Q1 – Implement training	
g.	Review of income generation opportunities and use of existing resources		Q2 - Develop opportunities and generate proposals	
g.	Joint procurement and sharing of best practice with Chorley Council to support cost efficiencies	Q1- Establish regular meetings with Chorley Council to identify best practice and opportunities		
		Q2- Identify areas for joint procurement such as PPE, tools and equipment		

h.	Review of policies in line with changes to service delivery and technology delivered through the strategy and audit findings	Q1- Ongoing in line with changes delivered through strategy		
Neighbourhood Improvements				
a.	Review scheduled and ad-hoc working patterns to assess success in response to customer feedback.	Q4 – Review schedules	Implement recommendations	Continuous review
b.	Establish a process that works with councillors and residents to identify and target grot spot areas	Q2-3 Identify and communicate process for grot spot areas	Q1-2 Carry out enhanced improvements to grot spot areas	Continue to embed process
c.	Review effectiveness and resourcing for enforcement of crime and grime	Q1-3- Review	Q1-3- Implement actions	
		Q4- Implement actions		
d.	Review data collection and monitoring to identify future service improvements.		Q1- Review data collection and performance management	Evaluate impact of recommendations
			Q2-4- Implement recommendations	

d.	Litter bin and recycling review to ensure that the right bins are in the right places to promote high street waste and recycling	<p>Q3- Work with waste services to review current litter and recycling bins and schedules</p> <p>Q4- Plan delivery of changes</p>	Q1-2- Deliver recommendations	
e.	Establish a policy for new litter bins to set out clear guidance for the assessment of new bins	Q3		
f.	Review of street signage to ensure that they are clear and well maintained	<p>Q1- ongoing</p> <p>Review street signage</p> <p>Repair or replace signs</p> <p>Continued programme of replacement with existing budgets</p>		
g.	Closed cemetery audit to ensure clear policy and inspection arrangements in place.	<p>Q1- ongoing</p> <p>Update policy and budget include: regimes, inspections and repairs.</p> <p>Working through findings of the Insurance Audit.</p>	Implement systems of works and inspection (new technology)	

h.	Complete and implement a review of the Council's car park service	Q1-4		
i.	Renew and update the Council's kennelling contract	Q1		
j.	Review the inspection programme and work schedules for play areas, in line with the recent investment in playgrounds across the borough, to ensure that they are clean and well maintained.	Q1-4- Review and adapt work practices for play areas	Q1-4- Utilise tagging and new technology to implement a programme of inspection and monitoring	
k.	Review of by-laws for parks and recreation grounds to ensure that they are updated and enable clean and safe spaces for all.		Q1 – Review	
			Q2- Report and implement recommendations	
Modernising Technology and Information				
a.	Investigate opportunities to improve technologies to ensure that service requests are	Q2-3- Identify opportunities and develop recommendations	Q1- Deliver changes	Review of changes and further improvements as required

	seamlessly passed directly to the relevant teams			
b.	Complete implementation plan for asset management and route optimisation including Parish maintained services	Q1- Validate assets on database and ensure fit for purpose	Monitor route optimisation technology	
		Q2-3- Deliver route optimisation technology		
c.	Carry out a review of all processes to ensure that they are automated, streamlined and digitised wherever possible	Q3-4- Review processes and identify recommendations	Q1-3- Deliver recommendations to automate and digitise processes	Review of changes and further improvements as required
e.	Investigate the feasibility of installing static columns in known fly tipping hotspots to facilitate portable CCTV to aid enforcement.	Q2- Investigate options	Q1- Implement recommendations	
		Q3- Report and recommendations		
f.	Comprehensive reporting on performance using system data and information		Q1-4 following roll out of new technology	Ongoing
g.	Increased mobile working, ensuring that all staff have the	Q1-4		

	right technology to be able to work effectively from anywhere			
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