

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 5 December 2023

Waste and Cleansing Services on Housing Land

Executive/routine
Wards

Routine
All

1. Recommendations

1.1 Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

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Waste and Cleansing Services on Housing Land

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report sets out the range of services provided by Waste and Cleansing on the Council's housing estates in response to a Motion to Committee on [9 May 2023](#) by Councillor Campbell.

3. Background

- 3.1 This report is provided to Committee in response to Councillor Campbell's Motion on 9 May 2023 relating to the provision of Waste and Cleansing services on Council housing estates.
- 3.2 Waste and Cleansing services are general fund services and cover adopted, public land. This will include roads and footways and some green or open space areas.
- 3.3 Land that is a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) asset is maintained from HRA funds and paragraph 4.1 outlines the existing funding transfer arrangements for certain services. Where work is required on HRA land that is not covered by the work outlined in paragraph 3.6, the Housing and Homelessness service will arrange work directly through third party contractors or concierge services.
- 3.4 The Key Performance Indicator for the cleansing service is the Local Environmental Audit and Management System (LEAMS). The Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (CoPLAR) is a statutory guidance document for organisations to keep their land clear of litter and refuse.
- 3.5 All Council land, including HRA land, is zoned for cleansing routines according to footfall levels. Subject to whichever zone a piece of land falls within, the response time to standards of cleanliness differ. The CoPLAR zoning map is available on the Council's website (<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/litter-flytipping/litter-zones>). Given the changes in behaviour that have developed as a result of COVID-19, zoning for the city does need to be updated. Although It has not yet been possible to complete this it is expected to be completed before the end of this financial year 2023/24).
- 3.6 The approved motion called for access to an interactive map detailing housing land. This is not currently available but will be developed for circulation to all Elected Members.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The Waste and Cleansing service sits within the Council's wider Neighbourhood Environmental Services area, which delivers a range of services to Housing and for which an annual recharge is made to the HRA. The services provided and the most recent recharges are:

Service Provided	2022/23 Recharge Value to HRA
Grounds Maintenance	£1,725,880
Forestry	£124,959
Bulk uplifts from bin stores	£162,901
Pest Control	£335,055
Garden Aid	£399,137
Total	£2,747,932

- 4.2 As noted in this table, the only payment received for Waste and Cleansing relates to the bulk uplift of waste from bin stores. In 2022/23, this amounted to £162,901 and provides for dedicated resources on planned routes.
- 4.3 The payment for grounds maintenance services covers a range of activities. In the peak summer months this includes grass cutting, weed treatment, and path edging work. In the winter months work will focus on hedge cutting, cutting back overgrowth, pruning, and flower bed maintenance and preparation.
- 4.4 The Garden Aid payment is largely a pass-through cost. The internal charges cover the service payments to the contractor and one member of staff who oversees and administers the service and is based with the parks service.
- 4.5 Payments made to external contractors from the HRA amounted to £514,071 in 2022/23. The works carried out typically comprise a mix of environmental improvement/project works and more general clean up works (for example: clearing out dumping in back plots and dealing with dumping/fly tipping and overgrown housing land) and are commissioned directly by the Housing and Homelessness service.
- 4.6 Housing concierge staff also provide services in respect of general litter picking and uplift of dumped items. This is being reviewed to ensure consistency across the city.
- 4.7 For cleansing purposes, as outlined in paragraph 3.5, all Council land is zoned in respect of CoPLAR. Some of these areas include restricted access areas (drying greens) and open space, grassed areas. When grass cutting is taking place on the latter, a pre litter pick will take place.

- 4.8 Currently cleansing staff work on pre-defined routes however, work is underway to review these routes with a view to providing an increased service to areas of higher deprivation, to reflect CoPLAR zoning and recognising that these areas will have a history of lower LEAMS scores. The data gathering for this is now complete, and it is anticipated that new routes will be introduced around the turn of the calendar year. This however will focus largely on the adopted road and pavement network, (as it has previously) and will not address land that is an HRA asset for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.3.
- 4.9 There are occasions that one off, significant, deep cleans are arranged. These are typically multi-service involving Housing, Waste Collection, Waste Disposal and Street Cleansing. The most recent examples were carried out in West Pilton Crossway where shared common spaces were prone to significant dumping, general waste and litter issues. Where a job is significant and may impact upon core services this will be undertaken on overtime with a recharge made to the HRA.
- 4.10 In 2022/23 funding was made available within the Council's budget for a deep clean of the city. The funding was initially made available for a one-year period, although a proportion was carried forward into 2023/24. Officers from Neighbourhood Environmental Services and Housing and Homelessness have been working together to identify areas within each Locality that require significant intervention. This includes grass cutting, hedge and overgrowth removal, removal of dumped items and general tidy up. Once completed, these areas are intended to become part of the normal maintenance regime where appropriate.
- 4.11 These projects are resourced as a result of the additional funding provided by the Council and are replacing some of the services provided by external contractors. Should the Council wish to deliver these services 'in-house' on a longer-term basis, a full financial assessment of resourcing would be required but may present an opportunity to transfer HRA expenditure from external contractors to another Council service.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The impact and reach of the projects outlined in 4.9 will be reported back to Committee. This will include a longer-term assessment of the implications of insourcing these types of works in future years.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 At this stage there is not deemed to be a financial impact. The activities referred to in 4.9 are contained within one-off Council funding. If successful, future activities would need to be funded by the HRA. As noted above, an assessment of the cost of insourcing this activity (which is generally delivered by external contractors) will be undertaken.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 It is recognised that areas of higher deprivation will also have a history of lower LEAMS scores. The Council is currently reviewing its cleansing routes in recognition of this.
- 7.2 In addition, targeted deep clean activities are being progressed following discussion with Housing officers to improve areas which are prone to dumping, general waste and litter issues.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 As a public body, the Council has statutory duties relating to climate emissions and biodiversity. The Council

“must, in exercising its functions, act in the way best calculated to contribute to the delivery of emissions reduction targets”

(Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019), and

“in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”

(Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004)

- 8.2 The City of Edinburgh Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and committed to work towards a target of net zero emissions by 2030 for both city and corporate emissions, and embedded this as a core priority of the Council Business Plan 2023-27. The Council also declared a Nature Emergency in 2023.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 There has not been any consultation with the public on the contents of this report.
- 9.2 There are no key risks anticipated for the Council in noting the contents of this report.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 None.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 None.