

Environment and Climate Committee
Mon 13 Mar 2023
Doc 90218

Questions asked by Cllr Hocking with answers

Streetscene Jobs – Before this administration scrapped the Working Groups structure, the Environmental Services team provided graphs of what the “jobs” were and graphic to allow Members to view any spikes or trends in any particular instance. Please provide detail around the 108 jobs and what is being done to address the higher profile issues?

Please see the attached information. This information will be provided at Environment and Climate Committee as part of the Environmental Services Report at all future meetings.

The City Council works with our CCTV team and Wiltshire Council to address fly tipping. The City Council provides evidence where possible to WC to support and facilities enforcement action by WC wherever possible.

The CCTV team to help identify graffiti taggers. Using this information the Council then works with the Police and our City Centre Security Officer’s to disrupt this behaviour and prevent future damage.

As will be seen in the information provided with incorrectly presented marked bags of waste, which are bags of residential waste which must be put out at the incorrect time during a time specified by WC, the Council contact residents to advise of their collection day. Unmarked bags are opened to try and establish where it has come from. The report source is either MyWilts or via the Council’s own team conducting inspections. Enforcement is WC responsibility, but SCC are working to reduce the number of inappropriate black bags of litter left out in city centre.

Venture Security – Given this Administration took the decision, completely against Officers advice, to scrap the Venture Security Contract, it would seem that another U-Turn has taken place and some level of support will now be retained. Pease 1) confirm the current state of the Venture Security Contract, and 2) confirm how long the stated Monday to Friday operations will last and what the contracted hours will be?

The current security contract with Venture concludes on 31 Mar 2023. This was a 3-year contract. This contract provides a 7 day a week service, with 1 officer on Monday, Wednesday Thursday and Sunday, and 2 officers on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.

The new contract from 1 Apr 2023 is a 1 year contract extension which provides 1 officer Tuesday through to Sunday. The contract value is approx.£40,000 with SCC paying £30,000 (as shown in the 23/24 budget details [here](#)) and Salisbury BID contributing £10,000.

Litter Bins – While the installation of new dual litter bins is to be welcomed 1) please provide the evidence that there bis are being used appropriately by the public, 2) what the changes in costs are to the council around emptying and

sorting waste and at a time when everybody else seem to be losing their litter bins, why are so many being installed in such a small area and 3) there seems to be an ever changing number of bins that are being removed, it was 90, then over a 100 now the number is 78, please can the Administration provide the precise numbers?

As reported at E&C Committee, the 20 bins that have been in place since August 2022 have generated 4.252 tonnes of recycling waste. There has been no feedback from the Council's waste contractor that this waste is contaminated and therefore the Council believes the public are using these bins correctly.

The first tranche of recycling bins have been placed in high footfall areas to maximise their impact.

The waste is not sorted by Council operatives. The Council collects bags of recyclable and bags of non-recyclable waste. This is taken to respective collection points and the respective contractors collect the two types of bags from these points. The recyclable waste is hand sorted by the contractor at their facility.

There is no material change in the cost of recycling waste to standard rubbish collection. The recyclable waste is generally lighter than mixed general waste, therefore the cost of disposal of the recyclable waste is less in any given time period as the weight of waste collected will generally be less.

There are over 400 bins within the Salisbury parish area. There were 481 bins in 2022, and this was reduced to 403 by the beginning of 2023.

Due to reduced staff numbers during the transitional period between in house and contracted Street Scene services 78 bins were removed. The Council issued press releases on 17 and 28 Nov 2023 telling the public about this reduction in bins. The Streetscene team, and Parks teams, are coming up to full strength following recruitment during Dec, Jan and Feb.

The Council has taken this opportunity to review the efficiency and distribution of litter bins in parks and on streets across the city. This has meant that the removed bins have not all be replaced without due consideration. The Council has carefully monitored litter issues via reports from our team on the ground on a daily basis, via the MyWilts App and by councillors reporting residents' concerns. When necessary, and in line with the agreed Litter Bin Policy, the Council has replaced bins previously removed where there is evidence to support its replacement. As at 6 Mar 2023, 8 bins have been reinstated.

In terms of dual litter/recycling bins, it is the Council's routine approach to replace any bin with a recycling bin, where funds for these new bins allow. The Council retains a small stock of standard old-style bins to supplement any other bin replacement if recycling bins cannot be purchased. The Council notes the suggestion to put bins adjacent to bus stops where appropriate.

In areas where fly tipping is known to occur, the Council has placed CCTV recording warning stickers as deterrence against further littering. The Council has two fully redeployable cameras that are moved around the city to identified anti-social

behaviour hotspots as and when required. These cameras could be deployed to the fly tipping and littering locations if needed.

The Council follows the DEFRA Code of Practice for Litter and Refuse 2006 which sets out sets out grades of cleanliness as follows (Para 7.0)

For litter and refuse:

Grade A: No litter or refuse

Grade B: Predominately free of litter and refuse apart from some small items

Grade C: Widespread distribution of litter and/or refuse with minor accumulations with minor accumulations

Grade D: Heavily affected by litter and/or refuse with significant accumulations

Further details are available on the government' s website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-on-litter-and-refuse>

The Council aims that all areas within the ring road will to be Grade A and all other areas Grade B, with any areas graded C and D scheduled for urgent attention. The Council will soon be using an app-based system to improve the recording of cleanliness to enable the best use of resources where most needed.

As Idverde, our previous contractor, and Wiltshire Council prior to the transfer of street cleaning to the City Council in 2017, the City Council cannot give a detailed forecast of precise timings for the cleaning of individual streets. As councillors will appreciate whilst the Council does have proposed and planned schedule this is subject to continuous, and at times urgent, change as the Council must prioritise tasks such as clearing broken glass, dog foul, offensive graffiti, spillages and other hazards. However, each street in the parish will receive cleansing attention at a minimum of 3 times a year.

Residents are encouraged to report any Street Scene issues on the MyWilts app and to do their part by taking their litter home with them if a bin is not immediately available.

Litter Enforcement – Although the service is due to be scrapped, while it is still in operation, please can statistics be provided as per precious presentations.

Please see the attached information. This information will be provided at Environment and Climate Committee as part of the Environmental Services Report at all future meetings as appropriate.

Streetscene Recruitment - The increase in the Council precept seems to be funding an ever-increasing recruitment process for Streetscene, and other personnel. Given at the start of the Streetscene options process triggered by the end of the IDVerdi contract with Wiltshire Council, the expected number of additional operatives was as I recall about twelve, at what point will the final structure of Streetscene become fixed and firm thus allowing for a full public audit of the paper, Doc83654, presented to this Council in September 2021 which stated that the insourcing option would cost less (£1,400, 191.43) than maintain IDVerdi as a contractor (£1,501,173.35)?

As part of the evaluation of the options post contract the Environmental Services Manager (ESM) in post at that time developed a spreadsheet (Doc 83743) shows 23.92 FTE Idverde staff were being used to deliver SCC's contract in his estimation. Therefore, the ESM at that time used this figure to forecast the likely cost of bring this staffing structure in house based on the same level of activity. This figure prepared by ESM was a key part of the options analysis and scrutinised by the project sponsor.

Thereafter, the staffing costs/FTE/roles shown in this spreadsheet were considered by the current ESM when he reviewed the staffing arrangements needed post TUPE. He developed a proposed staffing structure that was different in detail (different job titles, FTE etc) to previous ESM's but overall had the same number of FTE and same approx. costs.

This new staffing structure was presented to Personnel Committee on 12 Oct 2022 and agreed at that meeting.

The report to this committee (Doc 88192 exempt) shows in the appendices the existing and proposed staffing structures. From this it can be seen that:

No. FTE in Street Scene and Grounds Team (not including ESM)		
• Existing Staff Structure	= 16 Grounds + 2 Street Scene	= 18 total
• Post TUPE Structure	= 22 Grounds + 20 Street Scene	= 42 total

So increase due to bringing services in house =24 FTE

This confirms the number of FTE proposed by previous ESM from 2020 onwards (23.92 FTE) have carried forward into the current post TUPE staffing structure (24 FTE).

There has been no increase in staff numbers since the project was agreed by Full Council in Nov 2021.

Staff costs have risen due to pay rises and costs of pension, with NI rises in alignment to this.

The costs quoted in Doc 83654, which is an exempt document, included the cost of equipment, for example leased sweepers & mowers, plus the cost of fuel, insurance, additional waste disposal and other ancillary material costs

Poultry Cross – please confirm the final cost of the refurbishment will be in line with the increase agreed at the previous F & G meeting?

At the F&G meeting on 17 Oct 2022, it was agreed that £40,000 – 50,000 was to be allocated towards additional repairs on the Poultry Cross whilst the scaffold was in place. It is estimated that the cost of these additional repairs will be £29,520 plus a proportion of the weekly hire of the scaffolding. The final cost of these repairs, when final invoices are paid, will be reported to E&C in due course.

Accessibility to Play Parks – From the minutes of the last AIG Working Group it clearly states that Consultants are to be hired to carry out an audit of the play parks is Churchill Gardens, Victoria Park and QE Gardens, and, having spoken to members of the Disability Inclusion Group Salisbury (DIGS) who are furious that they have been side lined from the debate, 1) please advise the costs of the Consultancy service that has been commissioned to carry out the work, and, 2) why does this Administration feel that, with all out Parks experience, input from our local disability groups and a bit of searching for kit on line, it is unable to work out for itself what we might be able to do?

The cost of the audit of the 3 parks is approximately £2,500. This audit has not yet been commissioned following the Chairman of the Council's direction that Cllr Hocking's questions to Full Council which are related to this matter be passed to the Chairman of the Accessibility and Inclusion Task Group for this group's consideration at their next meeting.

Officers are not qualified to advise on every aspect of an access and inclusion audit, and whilst the City Council is very pleased to work with interested volunteers and community groups on such issues, these volunteers cannot be given an unreasonable burden by the Council. Therefore professional assistance is required to complete this task in a timely and effective manner which addresses all aspects of accessibility and inclusion.

Masonry Gang – Further to me e-mail of 3rd March, under the last Administration WC provided a masonry Gang who fixed among other things pavements, under the direction of the City Council. Please advise whether they are still in operation?

The masonry gang is still in operation. This WC Team is tasked, where possible and appropriate, and monitored by the SCC's Streetscene Team. For example, they have just concluded pavement repairs on Catherine Street.

Tollgate Road Depot refurbishment - At the time this was agreed it was felt that the "third room/building" that was taken as part of the site would be available for sub-letting and thus generate income from the Council. My understanding is that this is no longer the case as it is filled with event equipment. Please advise on the current position?

At a meeting of Full Council on 15 Nov 2021, in a report (Doc 84077 which is exempt) the potential for income from Unit 1 was noted.

Part of Unit 1 is currently being used as storage for the Events and Markets Team as they have vacated their depot at Harnham.

Building works are going to take place at Units 2 and 3 this year, and there will be significant disruption on this site during this time. Once building works have concluded, the use of Unit 1 will be reviewed.

CCTV Volunteer hours - given the recent change in CCTV Staffing, please advise 1) what the hours actually are for both volunteer and paid staff, and 2) historical evidence to show viewing hours are the highest they have been?

Please see the attached information. This information will be provided at Environment and Climate Committee as part of the Environmental Services Report at all future meetings.

EPAP - EM2 state “SCC use 100% renewable energy across all sites” This is either false, as when it is not windy or sunny the whole country’s energy supplies comes mainly from gas fired power stations, or, misleading as it is suggested that only renewable energy is used when actually all our sites might use renewable energy when it is available. Unless each site is fully self-sufficient, i.e. has its own wind turbine, solar panels or nuclear reactor, the Council has no idea where its electricity comes from. Please confirm the actual position, including percentages, around renewable energy supply / usage?

This can be amended to read that the Council is on 100% renewable tariffs if that helps to clarify. A 100% green tariff means that all of the electricity that SCC buys is 'matched' by purchases of renewable energy that the Council's energy supplier makes on the Council's behalf. These come from a variety of renewable energy sources such as wind farms and hydroelectric power stations.

EPAP - TT2 states 10 electric vans on order (leased) and due for delivery in 2023. 8 of these are to facilitate bringing the IDVerdi contract in house and 2 are replacements for our existing diesel stock. With reference to Doc83654 earlier, please confirm if these vehicles were included in the costings that stated that insourcing would be cheaper than remaining with IDVerdi?

3 vehicles are replacements (2 for Parks and 1 for Events/Markets). These were not in the original costings and have been procured as part of a replacement programme of the Council's aging diesel fleet. Since the EPAP was reported to committee on 13 Mar 2023, the Council has been informed by the provider that 5 of the vehicles on order will not meet our previously agreed specification. Therefore the order for these vehicles is cancelled and work begins again to source suitable vehicles. In the meanwhile leased diesel vehicles will be used to deliver grounds maintenance and Streetscene services.

These EV vehicles were not allowed for in the original costings. However, the EPAP, which sets out the Council's commitment to its Climate Change declaration of June 2019, states that the Council will purchase EV's vehicles where possible.

EPAP BM! - Preliminary ecological surveys (PES) for Harnham Slope, Chisel bury Grove and The Folly received with management plans to be produced by the Parks Manager in the New Year. Next sites identified for this PES – Fisherton Grazing Paddocks (Plot 5 & 6), Harnham Recreation Ground & Greencroft. These are booked in for March. Please advise if this PES was carried out in-house or whether Consultants were commissioned, and if so at what cost?

As detailed and reported in the EPAP updates at E&C Committee, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust (WWT) have carried out/are carrying out these surveys for SCC. The total cost is approximately £2,000.

The reason for using WWT and not doing these surveys inhouse is because the Council does not have ecologists in the inhouse team. To produce an effective management plan, and in some areas look to achieve Green Flag status, this detailed and specialist information is needed. Both the creation of management plans and working towards Green Flag status are agreed in [the Council's Strategic Plan](#).

BM2 – Tree and ecosystem Strategy - final draft. Please confirm whether this was undertaken in-house, free, or if Consultants were used, how much this a cost the council in fees?

The Tree & Ecosystem Strategy cost £24,540 and was produced by Johns Associates - <http://www.johnsassociates.co.uk/>.

This work was requested by Council, is detailed on the EPAP and funds were available from the Environmental Support budget.

The Tree & Ecosystem Strategy gives the Council information on its current stock, identifies suitable land for planting and advises on suitable native trees for planting and helps consider a wider range of nature benefits including increased biodiversity, carbon capture, natural flood management, air quality, pollination, amenity, landscape, heritage, shade and cooling and health & wellbeing benefits. All of this set within the context of adapting and increasing resilience to climate change. All of the data collected will act as a living data set which will be transferred to the Environmental Services Teams new software platform <https://www.pssltd.co.uk/> and can be added to as the council plant new trees.

This strategy is a detailed and technical resource which will be made available to all interested parties in Salisbury to improve the biodiversity, air quality and natural resilience of the City. The document will remain a robust and useful resource for many years. The strategy has been endorsed by the Woodland Trust. The Woodland Trust are leading body for trees and their management.

With the strategy near completion, the Council are now working with colleagues at Wiltshire Council to submit a significant application to the Urban Tree Challenge Fund <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/urban-tree-challenge-fund> to kick start SCC's tree planting programme.

A Child
City Clerk
24 Mar 2023