

Neighbourhood Services

Service Statement

April 2019



Service Director: Paul Jones
Head of Service: Greg Gavin
Lead Member: Cllr Glen Sanderson

Neighbourhood Services

Service purpose and functions

Purpose:

The primary purpose of Neighbourhood Services is to work with local communities and other key stakeholder organisations to improve the physical appearance and quality of life within our communities, making them more sustainable, self-sufficient and safer places.

Primary functions:

- Refuse collection and recycling service
- Bulky waste, hazardous household waste, garden and commercial waste collection services
- Household Waste Recovery Centres (HWRCs)
- Abandoned vehicles
- PFI Contract
- Waste Management
- Closed landfill sites aftercare
- Waste education and awareness raising
- Winter Maintenance (Support)
- Flooding and extreme weather response
- Street Cleansing
- Grounds Maintenance
- Parks & Urban Green Spaces
- Public Rights of Way Maintenance, Management and Enforcement
- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Markets
- Public Conveniences
- Fleet Management
- Security and postal courier service

Service Parameters

Key Service Facts and Figures

Each year we:

- Cut 8.5 million m² of grass.
- Sweep 12,500 miles of road and empty 7,500 litter bins.
- Sweep-up around 377 tonnes of litter and detritus and clear 1,400 fly tips.
- Empty over 7.5 million household waste and recycling bins
- Provide 12 Household Waste Recovery Centres and a network of over 130 'bring' recycling sites
- Reuse, recycle and compost around 40% of our household waste
- Recover energy from waste that can't be recycled and use this to generate electricity for supply to the National Grid, leaving only around 8% of waste to be disposed of at landfill sites.
- Look after 3,000 miles of public rights of way including 637 footbridges.
- Maintain 21 urban and 8 country parks and manage 13 miles of the county's coastline between Seaton Sluice and Amble, and at Beadnell and Berwick
- Maintain 44 playing fields
- Operate 20 cemeteries and 1 crematorium.
- Run 9 markets
- Maintain 700 vehicles and 500 items of plant, ranging from refuse collection vehicles and gritters right through to lawn mowers and strimmers.

Service parameters

Key service facts and figures

Summary of service resources at 1 April 2019:

Function	Number of FTE posts	Staffing expenditure	Non-staffing expenditure	Income	Capital investment
NEAT	246.21	7,019,590	4,589,460	(5,002,630)	0
Countryside	36.30	1,297,890	656,590	(436,420)	2,390,435
Fleet	37.97	1,452,830	5,654,490	(10,385,090)	7,221,500
Waste	166.86	4,660,500	24,809,740	(7,036,440)	0
Business Support	26.66	859,210	224,720	(188,090)	0
Totals for Service	514.00	15,290,020	35,935,000	(23,048,670)	9,611,935

Contribution to the Corporate Plan

Neighbourhood Services will make a significant contribution to the delivery of the Corporate Plan in the period to 2021. The delivery of this service plan will ensure we work with local communities and other key stakeholder organisations to improve the physical appearance and quality of life within our communities, in doing so we will be supporting key themes in the corporate plan including:

“We want you to love where you live” good quality Neighbourhood Services are essential to *“ensuring that all of you live in distinctive vibrant places, which you value and in which you feel proud”*.

We will continue to deliver the ‘Love Northumberland Awards’, a campaign to promote improving the environment in the county. Community groups, schools and individuals can enter their environmental projects and initiatives for this annual celebration of activities which help to keep the county clean and green.

The awards recognise and celebrate work which improves local areas for the benefit of members of the community and culminates in a presentation event at the Alnwick Garden with Her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland.

We will deliver a £1m Country Park Investment Programme to carry out a range of improvements at our Country Parks that will significantly enhance their appeal as great places to visit, while the major improvements will take place at Druridge Bay, Plessey Woods, Bolam Lake and Tyne Riverside Country Parks, a number of visitor access improvements will also be carried out at other country parks across the county.

Improvements include replacing old play equipment with high quality installations, improving the catering offer, wildlife viewing facilities and introducing a new facility at Druridge Bay to meet the rising demand for camping and touring caravan facilities along this section of the Northumberland coast.

The Hirst Park Revival project has been successful in securing a £2.29 million ‘Parks for People’ grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and we are now delivering the project that will ensure this valuable local asset is rejuvenated. The park will be landscaped, a new play area developed and greenhouses and buildings restored to

provide much improved public spaces. New training facilities for the community, to be operated in partnership with Northumberland College, will also be created.

“We want you to feel safe, healthy and cared for” good quality, well maintained public spaces are a significant factor in ensuring *“that all of you feel safe, valued, and part of your community”* and *“will help you achieve and maintain positive and healthy lifestyles in a way which suits you”*. We will continue to maintain and enhance our rights of way network, ensuring access to the countryside. We will also continue to maintain and enhance our playing fields and pavilions, which are heavily used for both recreation and sport.

“We want you to have access to the things you need” Neighbourhood Services have led in the council becoming CLOCS Champions in December 2018. CLOCS (Construction Logistics and Cyclist Safety) brings the construction logistics industry together to revolutionise the management of work related road risk (WRRR) and ensure a road safety culture is embedded across the industry. By working together we can help protect pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and other road users who share the roads with construction vehicles, further *“encouraging regular walking and cycling”*. As a CLOCS Champion we have committed to promote the CLOCS Standard throughout our own fleet and throughout our supply chain, which will ensure that safety improvements will be cascaded through the construction industry.

Work will continue work on the creation of the Northumberland stretch of the England Coast Path, which is set to become the longest managed and waymarked coastal path in the world, offering walkers the opportunity to experience some of the country’s most varied coastline. In Northumberland the coast path will follow a route from the Scottish Borders right down the coastline via Berwick and Bamburgh and on to Seaton Sluice.

“We want you to achieve and realise your potential” Neighbourhood Services will build on its successful use of apprenticeships, helping inject new energy and ideas into service delivery teams and ensuring that people *“have the right qualifications and skills to secure a good job that pays well and provides the prospect of a rewarding career”*.

Maintaining a *“high-quality rural setting”* will also support attracting ***“more and better jobs”*** and key projects, including the Hirst Park Revival and the Country Parks Improvements Plan, involve the generation of new jobs.

The Market Strategy 2018 - 2023 recognises that Markets can help shape distinctive vibrant places which people value and reasonably priced market stall pitches are often the first opportunity an entrepreneur will have to create a thriving business.

External Validation

In 2018/19 we have:

- Secured the prestigious 'Green Flag' awards for 9 of our parks.
- Achieved 2 Gold Awards in the RHS Britain in Bloom Awards for Morpeth and Ponteland.
- Supported our communities to secure a range of awards in the celebrated 'Northumbria in Bloom' competition with towns and villages in Northumberland achieving 8 Gold awards, 7 Silver Gilt awards, 2 Silver awards and 1 Bronze award.
- Achieved the 'Northumbria in Bloom' Best Park award (Gold) for Carlisle Park, Morpeth and Best Conservation award (Gold) for River Wansbeck, Morpeth.
- Represented in two categories at the national Keep Britain Tidy Network Awards 2019. Finalist for our 'Love Parks' campaign which recognised the outstanding campaign activity that ran during Love Parks Week 2018 with a "It started in a park" theme, and winner of the #Litterheroes award which recognised the work of local environmental champion Dai Richards in partnership with Neighbourhood Services in Morpeth.

Benchmarking

All statutory Waste Disposal Authorities are required to submit returns on their performance, the 'Waste Data Flow' statistics are for all unitary waste disposal authorities in England.

From APSE data we also benchmark how we are performing in regards to the numbers of missed bins in our waste collection service. We are currently performing better than the average for England.

A review of the Local Environment Quality (LEQ) inspection methodology was undertaken and data reporting recommenced during 2018/19.

The Fleet Management Service has processes in place to continually assess the cost of hire rates for vehicles and plant against the external market ensuring the internal provision of vehicles remains the best option for the council. Appraisals are also undertaken on a quarterly basis to compare the cost of annual financial rates

when purchasing assets against the option to rent the vehicles on an Operating Lease.

Further action to improve the service is outlined in the service statement and consideration is being given to participate in APSE or other benchmarking services.

Customer perception

A Resident Perception Survey was undertaken on behalf of the Council by Ipsos MORI in 2015. Three quarters of residents (77%) were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, an increase in two percentage points since the last survey.

Each year a range of waste service customer satisfaction surveys are undertaken. The latest results are for 2017/18 and the survey results for 2018/19 will be available in June. The results for the 2017/18 survey show satisfaction levels as follows:

- 85% satisfaction with overall waste collection service (an increase of 8% compared to 2016/17)
- 89% satisfaction with Household Waste Recovery Centres (no results for 2016/17)
- 81% satisfaction with the garden waste service (an increase of 4% compared to 2016/17)
- 97% satisfaction with the hazardous waste collection service (static to 2016/17).

In 2018/19 we handled 306 stage one complaints and received 255 compliments about our services. 1 complaint was made to the LGO, however the LGO made the decision not to investigate the complaint.

Priorities for 2018 – 21

Priority Area	Key Milestones
1. Ensuring that people love where they live	Work with partner organisations and communities to identify and develop initiatives and projects to improve the environment and quality of life in their local areas.
	Deliver the capital programmes for the enhancement of parks including the HLF funded Hirst Park Revival and the Country Parks Investment Programme.
	Monitor park visitors customer satisfaction levels
	Support the Council's litter prevention and enforcement campaign and expand the Autumn Litter Prevention Campaign
	Submit the campaign for a Keep Britain Tidy Award
	Undertake a waste minimisation, education and awareness raising programme to help reduce waste generation levels and increase recycling performance.
	Conclude the review of public toilet provision and develop with partners a Public and Community Toilet strategy for Northumberland.
	Increase the numbers of volunteer and parish groups involved in community clean up events, 'Friends of' groups and the maintenance of community assets such as parks and the Rights of Way network. Engage further with Community Pay Back teams to assist in supporting the frontline services Countywide.
	Deliver a programme of improvements to public rights of way (footpaths and bridleways) across the county to ensure that local communities and visitors can enjoy improved access to Northumberland's countryside.
2. Making people feel safe, healthy and cared for	Review and improve our plans for responding effectively to winter and severe weather events.
	Actively support the roll-out of a joined up approach to enforcement across Local Services and the council, including improving how front line teams gather evidence.
	Work with the Public Protection service to ensure that licensed taxis undergo robust and independent safety/compliance checks in order to ensure public safety.
	Undertake routine health and safety compliance spot checks with staff whilst they are undertaking their duties; plus annually review and update the suite of health and safety operational procedures, risk assessments and staff handbooks and reissue to staff if changes are required.
	Deliver the HAVs Action Plan
	Monitor and review staff compliance with Fleet/Transport legislation and the Council's policies and procedures ensuring appropriate action is taken to address any issues identified.
	Introduce DVLA driver licence checks corporately for all areas

	of the council
	Promote and support staff health improvement activities as part of the Council's wider 'Healthier Together' workforce programme and ensure sickness absence is effectively managed.
	Undertake an annual review of monitoring results from NCC closed landfill sites to identify any remedial works required or changes to pollution control and aftercare programmes.
	Undertake an inspection programme for NCC trees and ensure that any works required to ensure health and safety are undertaken within agreed service standards and timescales.
	Undertake the rolling programme of NCC headstones and memorials and ensure that any works required to ensure health and safety are undertaken within agreed service standards and timescales.
	Ensure Policy Alignment between the County Councils Waste Strategy, the Governments Resources and Waste Strategy and the Governments 25 year Environment Plan
	Identify costed options for increasing recycling rates in Northumberland via detailed modeling of alternative collection and treatment methods.
	Model and introduce a kerbside glass collection pilot
	Proactively work with volunteer groups to increase the number of park runs in Northumberland to support Health in all Policies
	Improve the playground inspection and maintenance programme, including the introduction of standardised auditable recording methods
3. Maximise opportunities to work in partnership to support achievement of our priorities	Develop existing and implement new service enhancement partnerships with Town & Parish Councils. Monitor and maintain relationships with the 4 largest partnerships.
	Secure the development and growth of our markets, to include: review the Markets Strategy and implement the updated action plan.
	Increase income from undertaking grounds maintenance, tree work and cleansing services for 3rd party organisations.
	Increase the market share of the trade waste service
	Increase take up of the garden waste collection service and actively promote to residents
	Increase the amount of income generated by the fleet management service through increased MOT testing and provision of fleet and vehicle maintenance services to 3rd parties.
	Maintain the existing contractual arrangements and seek new income generation opportunities with social housing providers and other organisations for grounds maintenance and cleansing services, where this will help to improve the overall environmental standard and visual appearance of the county.

	Explore with North of Tyne partners synergies in Waste Strategies and areas of potential collaboration, including food waste collections and treatment infrastructure.
4. Develop the organisation through the modernisation of Local Services	Implement budget savings proposals for 2018/19 and 2019/20. Develop MTFP proposal for period leading up to 2021.
	Undertake the fleet replacement programme to deliver modern vehicles, plant and equipment that meet future service needs.
	Review customer contact systems and processes and their interface with back office systems to reduce repeat and avoidable customer contact, including requests for callbacks
	Complete cemetery / burial capacity study, identify long term burial strategy and progress the agreed action plan.
	Invest in our workforce to ensure staff have the opportunity to develop their capabilities and can fully contribute to the delivery of our goals and ambitions, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual staff performance appraisals & 6 monthly review ● Individual staff training plans ● Succession planning arrangements ● Apprenticeship programme
	Modernise services and adopt new ways of working to improve service standards, levels of effectiveness, customer satisfaction and to deliver efficiencies, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maximise opportunity with Microsoft 365 and Total Mobile as catalysts to change ways of working. ● Implement new electronic payments system for markets ● Complete the roll-out of the new GPS/telematics system across all fleet vehicles ● Introduce in cab technology to waste services that improves connectivity between the service and its customers ● Improve fleet utilisation, driver performance and compliance in all user departments to improve and sustain a high level of compliance with driver and fleet management requirements.
	Deliver the external improvement project for Cowley Road Depot and develop schemes for future depot improvements including the internal space at Cowley Road, Stakeford, Coopies Lane and Tyne Mills and Astley Park.
	Develop a business plan for maximising the benefits of an electric fleet of vehicles and secure approval for improving infrastructure for electric vehicles at Depots

Performance framework

Measure	Outturn 2016-17	Outturn 2017-18	Outturn 2018-19	Target 2019-20	Target 2020-21
Percentage of sites falling below standard - Litter	N/A*	N/A*	2.35%	5%	4%
Percentage of sites falling below standard - Dog Fouling	N/A*	N/A*	0.19%	4%	3%
Percentage of sites falling below standard - Detritus	N/A*	N/A*	9.16%	8%	8%
Number of parks achieving 'green flag' status across the county	10	8	9	9	10
Proportion of fly-tips removed from public areas within 3 days	87.93%	89.65%	96.17%	90%	95%
Number of missed collections per 100,000 collections of household waste	49	35	32	35	35
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	38%	36%	36%	36%	37%
Percentage of municipal waste land filled	14%	15%	9%	10%	10%
Kilograms of household waste generated per household	1005	997	996	1002	1002
Percentage of bulky waste collections undertaken on the agreed day of collection	98.5%	99.4%	99.6%	99%	99%
Average waiting time (working days) for a bulky waste collection	N/A**	9	8	8	7
Percentage of recycling and composting at HWRCs	68.4%	67.8%	66.1%	68%	68%
Workforce Accident Incident Rate	14.71	11.31	17.54	11.00	10.00

* Changes in LEQ Inspection methodology mean that comparators can not be drawn between previous years actual performance, a review of the indicator collection methods was undertaken and performance reporting recommenced from April 2018.

** New indicator introduced in May 2017