

Committee(s): Porth Health and Environmental Services Committee	Dated: 24 th September 2024
Subject: Outcomes of new street cleaning resources	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	Providing excellent services
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	£0
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Katie Stewart, Executive Director Environment	For Information
Report author: Joe Kingston, Assistant Director Gardens and Cleansing	

Summary

It was agreed by this Committee in November 2023 to identify funding options to reintroduce street cleansing resources which were removed in April 2021 due to budgetary reductions. Policy and Resources Committee and Resource Allocation Sub Committee approved that funding of £1.413m pa could be drawn down from the On-Street Parking Reserve to help fund these additional resources.

Following this, an intensive period of planning, recruitment, training and scheduling took place, and resources were reintroduced in April 2024. The introduction of resources has been successful with all posts recruited to. Early independent survey results show improvements in Street Cleanliness across all periods of the day. In addition to this a dedicated officer has already delivered campaigns and improvements to data capture and data sharing. Officers will continue to monitor and report performance.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. In the 2021/22 financial year, the Department of the Built Environment was required to achieve a 12% reduction in spending, amounting to £2.4m, alongside an additional £2.2m in efficiency savings due to rising costs and decreased income. After careful consideration, this Committee approved a £760k reduction in the street cleansing service budget, along with the closure of two staffed toilets, four automatic public conveniences and four uri-lifts providing an additional £265k in savings. These measures were implemented in April 2021, with a focus on reducing night and weekend operations when footfall was lower

due to the Covid 19 national lockdown. Despite these reductions, there was no significant decline in street cleanliness standards at the time.

2. However, it was acknowledged that as workers and tourists gradually returned, the adjusted KPIs for acceptable levels of litter and detritus (detritus being the breakdown of organic matter such as dust and leave litter) would likely reflect a lower cleanliness standard as a result of these savings.
3. By the summer of 2023, data indicated that footfall had reached or, in some cases, surpassed pre-pandemic levels, particularly on weekends where visitor numbers were higher than before the pandemic. The nighttime economy recovery was also notable, with restaurants, bars and retail premises, often performing better than they did prior to the pandemic. Footfall from Tuesday to Thursday had returned to 77.5% of pre-pandemic levels, reflecting a strong resurgence in activity within the Square Mile.
4. Despite every effort being made to maintain the previous levels of cleanliness within the new resource envelope, concerns raised by Members & residents led this Committee to instruct the Environment Department to seek additional funding to address the issue. In January 2024 this resulted in additional funding of £1.413m pa being agreed by Resource Allocation Sub Committee and Policy and Resources Committee from the On-Street Parking Reserve (OSPR) to increase the cleansing resources to address these concerns.
5. Given the changing nature of the City, the resources were introduced based on the following priorities (in order):
 - £950k per annum to increase on-street cleansing resources with Veolia, focusing on littering and anti-social behaviour, particularly during weekends, evenings, and daytime hotspots.
 - £62k to establish a dedicated officer role to manage public engagement on littering and anti-social behaviour, including public messaging, data analysis and resource coordination.
 - Allocating £45k per annum to reopen uri-lifts to mitigate nighttime anti-social behaviour.
 - £356k towards the gap between centrally funded inflationary uplift of 3% and contractually required full inflationary uplift paid to Veolia, linked to RPI.

Current Position

6. According to TfL, data based on entry and exit numbers at National Rail and London Underground stations across the City of London, footfall on Tuesday to Thursday in the City has now returned to approximately 80% of pre-pandemic levels. This is based on comparing the first 6 months of 2019 to 2024. Between Monday to Friday overall footfall is at 75%. Entry and exit data at the weekend indicate a 9% increase on pre-pandemic levels.

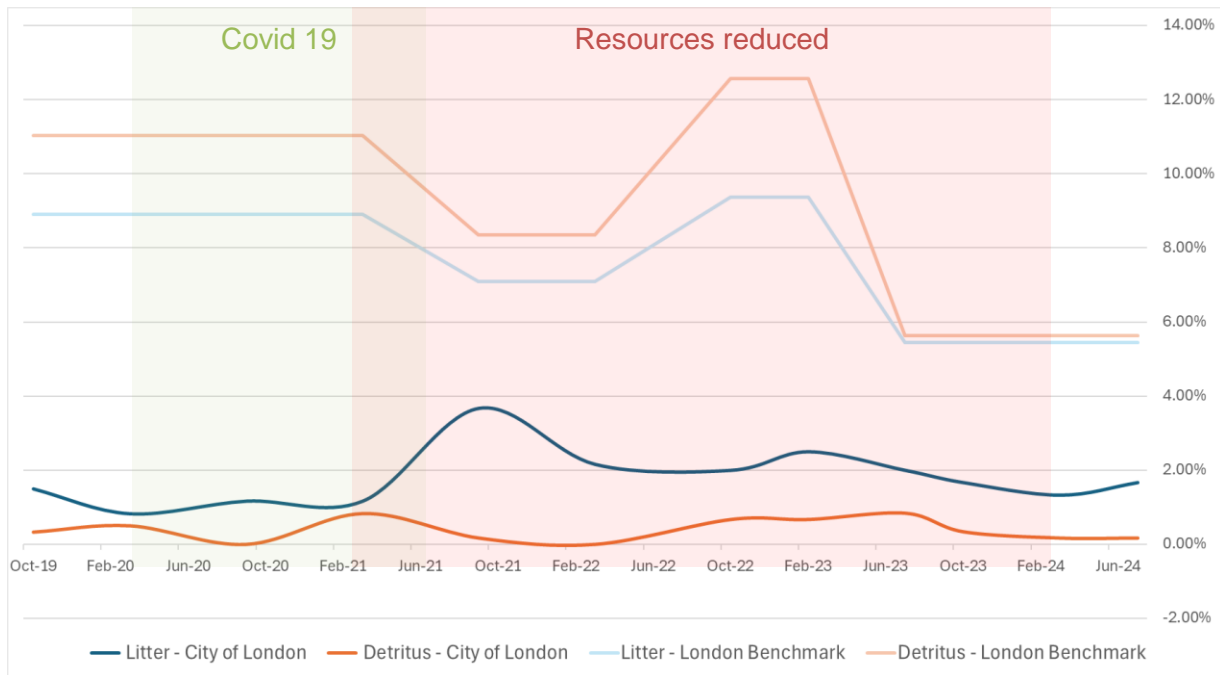
Resource Mobilisation

7. Between December 2023 and February 2024 officers worked closely with Veolia to design an optimised service model utilising the additional resources. This involved the remapping and digitisation of all manual sweeping beats and a significant amount of scheduled work.

8. The additional funding has facilitated the creation of approximately 25 full-time equivalent roles and changes to current resources shift patterns to align with the new resources. Enhanced supervision during nights, afternoons and weekends, as well as the procurement of additional vehicles and equipment, has also been necessary to support these changes.
9. The mobilisation and deployment of these new staff went well, with many being recruited from previous agency staff. New contracts commenced from up to two weeks before the official start date (01 April 2024) to ensure that all necessary training and induction procedures had taken place.
10. Training sessions were conducted with Veolia managers and the City of London client team to establish a common approach to standards and further increase collaboration, with the aim of ensuring the continued success of the contract moving forward.
11. Re-introduction of resources at this level (roughly a 20% increase in workforce) has presented challenges in several areas. This includes; the recruitment of suitable staff to roles which are working unsociable hours, the training needed to get the staff up to the required standard and the logistical issues involved in re-routing complex work schedules. Managing this transition has been demanding but overall has been successful, roles are all fully staffed and are being deployed daily.

Results So Far

12. The City of London measures the standard of street cleanliness across the Square Mile using a Local Environmental Quality standard formerly known as NI195. This has been the case for the past 15 years and allows us to benchmark standards both historically, locally and nationally. Surveys are conducted three times a year, although this was reduced during the pandemic.
13. Values provided in the graph below are the percentage of streets reaching an unacceptable level of street cleanliness, therefore the lower the figure the better.
14. Surveys of the weekday service were most recently conducted in July 2024. The results of these surveys are shown below and highlight that, following reintroduction of resources, levels of litter and detritus have returned to standards experienced before the removal of resources in 2021. Whilst results for July 2024 were slightly worse than April 2024, generally scores tend to be higher during the summer months and scores in July 2024 are an improvement on July 2023.
15. In addition to this, our performance remains well below that of the London Benchmark.



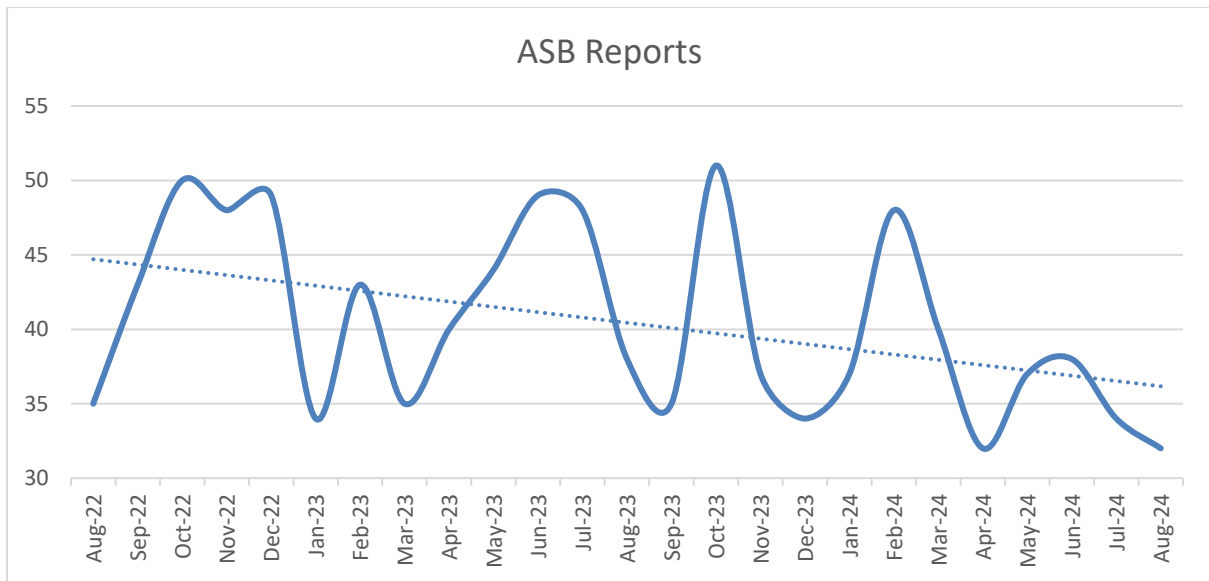
16. Given the increasing challenge post-pandemic of keeping the City clean out of hours, for the first time we have also commissioned independent surveys at nights and weekends for before and after the reintroduction of the resources to help assess the changes. Rather than being random across the City, these inspections have been undertaken at areas known to be busier at these times, meaning we would expect them to show higher figures than the daytime surveys.

17. Although it is very early to be drawing conclusions by comparing just two surveys, the results show that levels of cleanliness at both nights and weekends have improved. At weekends detritus dropped from 0.83% to 0% and Litter dropped from 5.83% to 5%. Nighttime results also show a marked improvement with litter scores dropping from 5.56% in April 2024 to 3.33% in August 2024, whilst detritus remained at 0%.

18. Officers have continued to work closely with Veolia to monitor standards and quality of their work across the contract through a suite of KPIs. Performance against these standards had been below the original contract targets, largely due to the previous reduction in resources and subsequent onboarding of untrained staff. The current suite of KPIs is robust and will be used to implement financial penalties should the City not be provided with the appropriate levels of service going forward now that these extra resources are in place.

19. A review of KPIs to ensure they are fit for purpose is being undertaken as part of ongoing contractual management.

20. In addition to litter and detritus, there was also a focus on services being reintroduced to deal with issues surrounding Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) which tends to occur at night. Reports of "Bodily Fluid Cleansing" are decreasing. In the four months since the introduction of the new resources we have seen an 11.3% decrease in ASB reports compared to the four months prior. This is particularly encouraging as we would normally expect an increase in ASB at this time of year. It is 22% down on the same period (April to July inclusive) in 2023.



21. The additional funding agreed by committee was also used to create a new officer role to manage public engagement on littering and anti-social behaviour, including public messaging, data analysis, and resource coordination. This post has been filled and has begun delivering on-street campaigns such as encouraging City Workers to take their litter back to their offices so it can be recycled, and discouraging smokers from using drains to dispose of their cigarette ends, this project is being run in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy and Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge.
22. The new Officer post is also working closely with members of the Safer City Partnership to share ASB data in order to create a more holistic picture of ASB through the City of London.
23. Key to understanding problems and adapting service provision is the reporting of issues, and to this end Officers have been working closely with colleagues from Town Clerks, the Contact Centre, Highways and IT over the past year to improve the City's online reporting tool. This is now live on the City's website and can be saved to the home screen of any smart phone to function like an app. Officers will shortly be conducting a Member briefing to demonstrate its functionality.

Options

24. Members are asked to note the report.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

25. **Strategic implications** – The new resources set out in this report support the outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2024-29 to lead sustainable environment, provide excellent services and maintain flourishing public spaces. They also support the delivery of the Climate Action Strategy, Single Use Plastic Policy, the Air Quality Strategy, and the Local Plan.
26. **Financial implications** – none
27. **Resource implications** – none.
28. **Legal implications** - The City remains in compliance with its statutory obligations under the Environmental Protection Act.

29. Risk implications – none

30. Equalities implications – Officers conducted a test of relevance with regards to the City's duties under the equalities act which concluded a full equalities impact assessment was not required.

31. Climate implications - the City continues to meet its statutory obligations under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 with current resources, any increase in litter has environmental implications, particularly as the City is a riverside authority and items, especially plastics, dropped on land can result in marine litter. Increases in detritus and reduction in carriageway cleansing can also contribute to poor air quality, particularly in enclosed and built-up areas.

32. Security implications – none

Conclusion

33. The deployment of reintroduced resources has so far been successful, all the required staff have been recruited and deployed on street. Early independent survey results are positive and show an improvement in street cleanliness. Officers will continue to monitor cleanliness standards and contractor performance and report back to committee via business plan updates.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

DBE Service Changes & Budget Proposals – PHES 20 January 2021
Street Cleansing Resources – PHES 14 November 2023

Joe Kingston

Assistant Director Gardens and Cleansing

T: 077 2558 0829

E: joe.kingston@cityoflondon.gov.uk