

Decision Maker: ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO
HOLDER AND PDS COMMITTEE

**For Pre-Decision Scrutiny by the Environment and Community
Services PDS Committee on**

Date: 11th March 2021

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SERVICES DRAFT
PORTFOLIO PLAN

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Chief Officer: Colin Brand, Director of Environment & Public Protection

Ward: (All Wards)

1. Reason for report

This report presents a draft Environment and Community Services Portfolio Plan for 2021/22.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 **That PDS Committee reviews and comments on the draft plan and provides feedback to the Portfolio Holder before the final plan is published.**

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: The services delivered by the Environment and Community Services Portfolio are used by all residents, including vulnerable adults and children. Protection is not their primary purpose but adjustments are made, as required, to ensure services are as accessible as possible and all users are safe.
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy
 2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Environment Portfolio Revenue Budget & Capital Programme
 4. Total current budget for this head: £31.32m revenue and £26.2m capital
 5. Source of funding: 2020/21 controllable revenue budget and capital programme funded by capital grants (including TfL), capital receipts and contributions from earmarked reserves
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 145.6 FTEs
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Not Applicable
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Not Applicable
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Whole Borough
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

3. COMMENTARY

Updates on Portfolio Plan 2020/21

3.1 Priority 1

Keeping Bromley's streets clean continues to be a priority for the Council and residents alike with a well maintained streetscene relating closely to how safe residents feel and how satisfied they are with their locality. Street Cleaning teams have continued to routinely visit 3,700 footways and 2,900 carriageways to ensure they are litter free and clean. This cleaning regime is actively monitored and inspections by our Neighbourhood Management team indicate that Bromley's streets nearly always meets an acceptable standard, at 98%.

Public satisfaction with how clean Bromley's streetscene is remains high at around 4 in every 5 residents being satisfied. In comparison to 2019/20, satisfaction with how clean local streets and neighbourhood are has increased. The satisfaction with town centres has decreased slightly but is still high at 85%.

Improvements to the streetscene have continued to be made including through multi-agency clean-ups, engaging with community and volunteer groups where COVID-19 complaint measures would allow to support local clean-ups, scheduling deep-cleaning programmes, removing chewing gum from town centre pavements, and removing graffiti particularly on the skate ramps in local parks. This year, the unusually pedestrian-free streets has provided an opportunity to really focus on deep cleaning the town centres.

With more residents making use of local streets for exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been more reports of graffiti and flytipping, the majority of which have been resolved within the allocated timeframes.

3.2 Priority 2

The Council continues to promote and build on its Friends Groups, with 4032 Snow Friends in 426 Snow Friend groups and over 1,500 Street Friends. The Snow Friends scheme supported the Council this winter by clearing snow and ice from their street. Street Friends also show enormous community spirit by reporting problems such as graffiti and fly-tipping and have assisted in litter picking and graffiti removal. Priority 2

Virtually zero waste is being sent to landfill for the first time this year, with the majority of Bromley's non-recyclable refuse being used to generate energy. This significant achievement increases the sustainability of Bromley's waste management service whilst reducing the cost of disposing of waste.

With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions affecting every aspect of daily life, the amount and types of waste produced by residents and businesses has significantly changed. The total amount of waste managed in Bromley, is at the highest it has been since 2016; with the tonnage of refuse, plastic, glass and cans recycling, and food waste recycling being particularly high. This has had a positive impact on our recycling rate. However, the increase in total waste has also caused an increase in disposal costs.

High staff absence by the Council's Service Provider and adhering to social distancing measures as a result of the pandemic also had an impact on the performance of waste collection contract. During the peak, recycling collection services were suspended and the Reuse and Recycling Centres were closed following Government guidance. The number of household missed bin collections was higher than the service standard at the start of the year. But despite the challenging circumstances has improved and performance is back on target.

The Green Garden Waste Collection Service has seen a substantial increase in subscriptions this year exceeding the target of 35,000 customers by a large margin. Schedule changes were introduced successfully improving service efficiency and allowing continued growth.

Service innovations this year included inducing a temporary booking system for the successful reopening of the Reuse and Recycling Centres, implementing a flats above shops recycling collection pilot and developing schools recycling workshop materials. Priority 3

3.3 Priority 3

Bromley's parks and green spaces have always made the borough a great place in which to live and work. But the pandemic has highlighted the intrinsic value of Bromley's parks, countryside, access to nature and open spaces with these local natural assets having been used more than ever

Following COVID-19 guidelines, the majority of parks maintenance tasks including grass cutting, planting, winter pruning and highway verge maintenance have been completed by the Parks Management service provider without much of a delay. 95% of the inspections by the Neighbourhood Management Team show that these tasks have been completed to an acceptable service standard.

In addition to the work of our service providers, the Council has 49 active Friends of Parks Groups with over 3,500 members who have contributed where COVID-19 compliant measures have allowed providing valued voluntary work.

The pandemic has had an impact on events including markets and outdoor amateur sports fixtures that could be held in the boroughs parks had to be cancelled where lock-down restrictions were imposed as well as the BEECHE education programme, which at the beginning of the year had to cease all education sessions. Technological innovations have enabled on-line environmental education sessions to be provided virtually since October.

With the increase in use of parks, the Council through its parks security contractor has continued to work to ensure they are safe places for the enjoyment of all residents through reducing antisocial behaviour and raising awareness where COVID-19 guidance was not being followed. The service continues to ensure regulatory measures are adopted when required and as a result a professional dog walking licencing scheme was introduced in January 2021. We also work closely with the Police to tackle any antisocial behaviour offences – including dealing with unauthorised access to green spaces and illegal gatherings. .

Over the last 12 months, a public consultation and stakeholder consultation exercise was undertaken to assist with the development of a ten year Open Space Strategy to formulate how the Council's approach to conserving and enhance its natural assets for the health and wellbeing of our Park visitors, and make the most of the environmental benefits that these open spaces provide. Alongside this the redrafting of Bromley's Biodiversity Plan has been undertaken working in partnership with key stakeholder groups

A number of community led projects in the borough's greenspaces have been completed this year including the Kingsmeadow Play Improvement Project, where a new play and recreation area has been created to provide traditional play values combined with imaginative features, and improvements to the Locksbottom Cricket Pitch. 3.4

3.4 Priority 4

While highway and street lighting maintenance are key services, the initial Covid-19 lockdown had an impact on how the contractor could operate while maintaining social distancing. This resulted in KPI's being suspended until October 2020, although levels of service were

maintained at acceptable levels during this time. Covid restrictions also delayed planned maintenance and traffic scheme implementation in the spring and early summer.

Planned footway and carriageway resurfacing schemes have been progressing, and are due to be completed by the end of March. Traffic schemes are also being implemented within the agreed timescales.

The investment project to convert street lights on busy traffic routes to low energy LED has been completed, and the roll-out of LED's on our residential roads will commence in March.

Utility companies have continued to work during the lockdown periods, with reduced planned works, and permits have been processed as required. The quality of works have also been monitored with defects and fixed penalty noticed being issued when justified.

As the Lead Local Flood Authority the team have been working with residents and developers in the Seymour Drive area to alleviate serious flooding to properties in this road. We've also been working with Thames Water and the Environment Agency to identify other flood risk areas in the borough.

While we enjoyed a mild start to the winter, recent snow events have been a challenge to manage due to vehicle reliability. Replacement gritters are due to be procured in readiness for the 2021/22 winter season.

3.5 Priority 5

Recently completed new walking and cycling schemes for 2020/21 include Crystal Palace Park Road Toucan Crossing, Albemarle/Bromley Road Experimental Cycle Route, and Zebra Crossings in Bromley Road, Beckenham Lane, Kings Hall Road, Kent House Lane and Homesdale Road.

Due to schools being closed in 2020 which affected the academic year as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic the team have not been able to collect data from schools for indicators of children travelling to school by foot, cycle or scooting (%). In 2018/19 there were 40% of children walking to school, which has been carried over the 2019/20.

The School Travel Plan indicator was also frozen for the academic year 2019/20 due to schools being closed from March to July 2020 when the Plans are accredited. Therefore, levels are shown as the same as they were for academic year 2018/19. There are currently 90 schools accredited and the target will remain at 90.

The following cycling training has been delivered since the initial lockdown in 2020; Level1/2 training has been delivered to 179 children in 10 different schools, Level 3 training has been delivered to 6 children all at Secondary School; 329 Adult Cycle Training sessions have been delivered to 163 unique adults; 64 Family sessions have been delivered incorporating 40 adults and 51 children; 19 Doctor Bike Sessions have been delivered at Norman Park; and 2 Doctor Bike sessions have taken place at schools

Road safety education programmes continue to target vulnerable road users and road safety improvements are targeted at collision cluster sites where investment will maximise the number of casualties prevented. We seek to continue to drive down the number of people killed or injured on our streets.

Since July 2020, Bromley's main Civic Centre car park has been enhanced to be operated by Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)

Draft Portfolio Plan 2021/22

- 3.1 **Appendix 1** sets out the draft Environment and Community Services Portfolio Plan for the 2021/22 financial year. There are 5 priority areas identified within the draft plan. Committee is invited to comment on the proposed plan and suggest any changes it considers appropriate.
- 3.2 The Plan uses the recently developed Corporate Template which is aligned to the ambitions of the updated Building a Better Bromley (BBB) document which is yet to be signed off by Executive. BBB is therefore subject to change. Should the overarching BBB document be updated, the Portfolio Plan will be amended accordingly.

Priorities

- 3.3 **Priority 1: Keep our Streets Clean.** Satisfaction with the street environment has a significant impact on residents' confidence in the Council. We need to ensure that we deliver a Neighbourhood Management approach that supports consistent street care, ensuring that people are happy to live in, work in and visit our Borough. We need to focus on promoting behaviour change, working with community and volunteer groups and taking appropriate action to ensure the street environment meets local needs.
- 3.5 **Priority 2: Minimise Waste and Maximise Recycling.** Reducing the amount of waste generated is not only better for the environment but also minimises disposal costs. Bromley's recycling performance remains significantly above average compared with other London boroughs, at 50%. However, our recycling rate has plateaued. Therefore, we will continue to work with residents and local businesses to waste less and recycle more, providing a high quality waste service that is financially and environmentally sustainable.
- 3.6 **Priority 3: Enhance Bromley's Parks and Green Spaces.** We need to conserve and enhance Bromley's parks and green spaces through the Fully Managed Parks Service in order to support biodiversity, enhance our air quality and improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and visitors. We will work in partnership with the volunteer community and our Service Provider, idverde to deliver vibrant green spaces that people want to visit.
- 3.7 **Priority 4: Maintain our Transport Infrastructure and Public Realm.** Satisfaction with the condition of roads and pavements is important to residents, so we need to maintain their condition. Utility works can cause disruption and congestion unless this activity is coordinated and inspected by the Council to protect the Council's asset. In addition to providing Winter Services, localised flooding is likely to become more frequent and problematic and practical inter-agency solutions are needed.
- 3.8 **Priority 5: Improve Travel, Transport and Parking.** Rising numbers of cars, as the number of residents and households increases, leads to congestion, parking issues and a reduction in air quality. Lack of connectivity and investment in transport prevents access to opportunities and services. We will seek to address these issues by promoting sustainable and active travel, improving our road network and managing on and off-street parking to balance the needs of motorists, residents and businesses.
- 3.9 **Priority 6: Overarching Portfolio Themes.**

Both the Council's Council's Net Zero Carbon Action Plan and Air Quality Action Plan are included as overarching portfolio themes given their strategic importance. The theme directly supports the Council's long held focus on a "safe, clean and green environment great for today and the future".

Whilst many of the performance indicators within priorities 1 to 5 either directly or indirectly support one or both the Council's Council's Net Zero Carbon Action Plan and Air Quality Action

Plan, the overarching Priority 6 themes section recognises the overarching and strategic importance of both plans for the Portfolio, the Council and the Borough as a whole. In recognition of their importance, both the Council’s Net Zero Carbon Action Plan and Air Quality Action Plan have their own separate long-term plans and progress in achieving the aims of these plans and the action taken will be outlined at least annually to the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee as part of the scrutiny process.

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

4.1 Services delivered as part of the Environment and Community Services Portfolio affect the daily lives of all Bromley residents and tend to be universal in nature - rather than being directed at particular groups within our community. Where vulnerable adults or children may be affected by service delivery, the issues would be covered in the relevant report and not in this business management overview.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The activities in this report reflect the Council’s priorities and aims as set out in:

- [Building a Better Bromley 2016-18](#) ('Quality Environment' & 'Excellent Council'). Note that this document is being updated and will be published shortly.
- Plans and Policies as specifically referenced within each Priority area of the Portfolio Plan.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Financial, Personnel, Legal, Procurement
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Environment PDS Committee agendas and minutes Environment and Community Services 2020/21 Portfolio Plan Building a Better Bromley (2016-18) Air Quality Action Plan Net Zero Carbon Strategy - Report Number ES19094