



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Streetscene and Engineering Scrutiny Committee

22th July 2020

Report of the Head of Streetcare – Mike Roberts

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All

Title: Current Streetcare Service Delivery Position and Issues

Purpose of the Report:

To provide an overview of the current service position in Streetcare and how service delivery is proceeding as the Council moves towards the recovery phase from the coronavirus emergency.

Executive Summary:

Streetcare Services covers the following main service areas: Waste and Neighbourhood Services, Highways and Drainage Services, Lighting and Building Services, and Crymlyn Burrows Materials Transfer Station.

As a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic some services were temporary suspended or have otherwise been adversely affected, and/or have had to adapt rapidly to new ways of working to meet ongoing service challenges to maintain a level of service continuity.

This report provides an overview of current service provision and issues.

Background:

In March 2020, as part of helping to restrict the spread of coronavirus, Streetcare employees were instructed to work from home where possible, other than key front line workers such as in waste collection where services were prioritised with a view to maintaining essential services during the emergency lockdown period.

As in all other service areas, Streetcare Services has experienced a level of 'Covid related' staff absence. The position to date in Streetcare is shown in appendix A.

Part of the response to the general emergency saw a rapid roll out of new IT and software to facilitate remote working, along with new job risk assessments and mitigation measures such as social distancing to help secure the ongoing health and safety of those at work, particularly staff on the front line.

Some services had to be shut down which had to be done at short notice, but as the situation and legislative restrictions have eased these have subsequently been subject to a somewhat more complex phased reintroduction which is ongoing.

Current Service Delivery Position

The current service position across Streetcare functions is detailed in Appendix B.

Ongoing Issues

The biggest ongoing issue, because of its knock-on effects, is the implications of social distancing measures introduced to avoid more than two employees travelling together in a vehicle cab.

Working closely with the Trade Unions, at the beginning of the Covid emergency this Council, along with most others, implemented measures on the precautionary principle that were beyond guidance to limit the number of staff travelling in a vehicle cab to a maximum of two. In addition, perspex screens were installed between the driver and passenger. The former had implications for some highway teams for example, but in particular had implications for the delivery of waste collection services that are provided by a team of three employees, a driver and two loaders. This meant deploying a second support vehicle behind each refuse freighter and kerbsort recycling vehicle. Whilst the measure has secured delivery of waste collection services, with some 30 recycling and refuse lorries it has had a significant resource implication in terms of additional vehicles and staff being drawn from other service areas, in particular neighbourhood services, a problem compounded by Covid related absence and normal sickness absences. The result is significantly reduced resources available for grass cutting, litter picking, general cleansing and removal of fly tipping, a position that is ongoing. Now the situation surrounding the virus is better understood, guidance is improved, and there is experience elsewhere from where '3 in a cab' has been maintained, this Council as others is looking to dispense with the 'service convoy' approach and to this end dialogue with the Trade Unions has begun. However notwithstanding '3 in a cab' is ongoing following Waste Industry Safety and Health Guidance in Council areas like Newport, Bridgend, and Anglesey, and to some extent in Swansea, Unison in particular has expressed particular concerns about supporting such action, notwithstanding any appropriate risk assessment and mitigation measures being in place. It is however currently early days in talks and dialogue is continuing.

Financial Impacts:

The service, as others, has been impacted financially by the coronavirus emergency and these are being reported corporately as part of the general position.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an impact assessment as this item is for information only.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

Services across the County Borough have been impacted by the coronavirus emergency.

Workforce Impacts:

The degree of Covid related absence can be seen in Appendix A.

Legal Impacts:

None. Service provision is in line with guidance and legal restrictions as exists at the time.

Risk Management Impacts:

Services such as waste collection and emergency response services have been prioritised throughout the pandemic to help minimise community risks.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Graph of Covid related absence in Streetcare Services.

Appendix B – Current Streetcare Service Position

List of Background Papers:

None.

Officer Contact:

Name: Mike Roberts

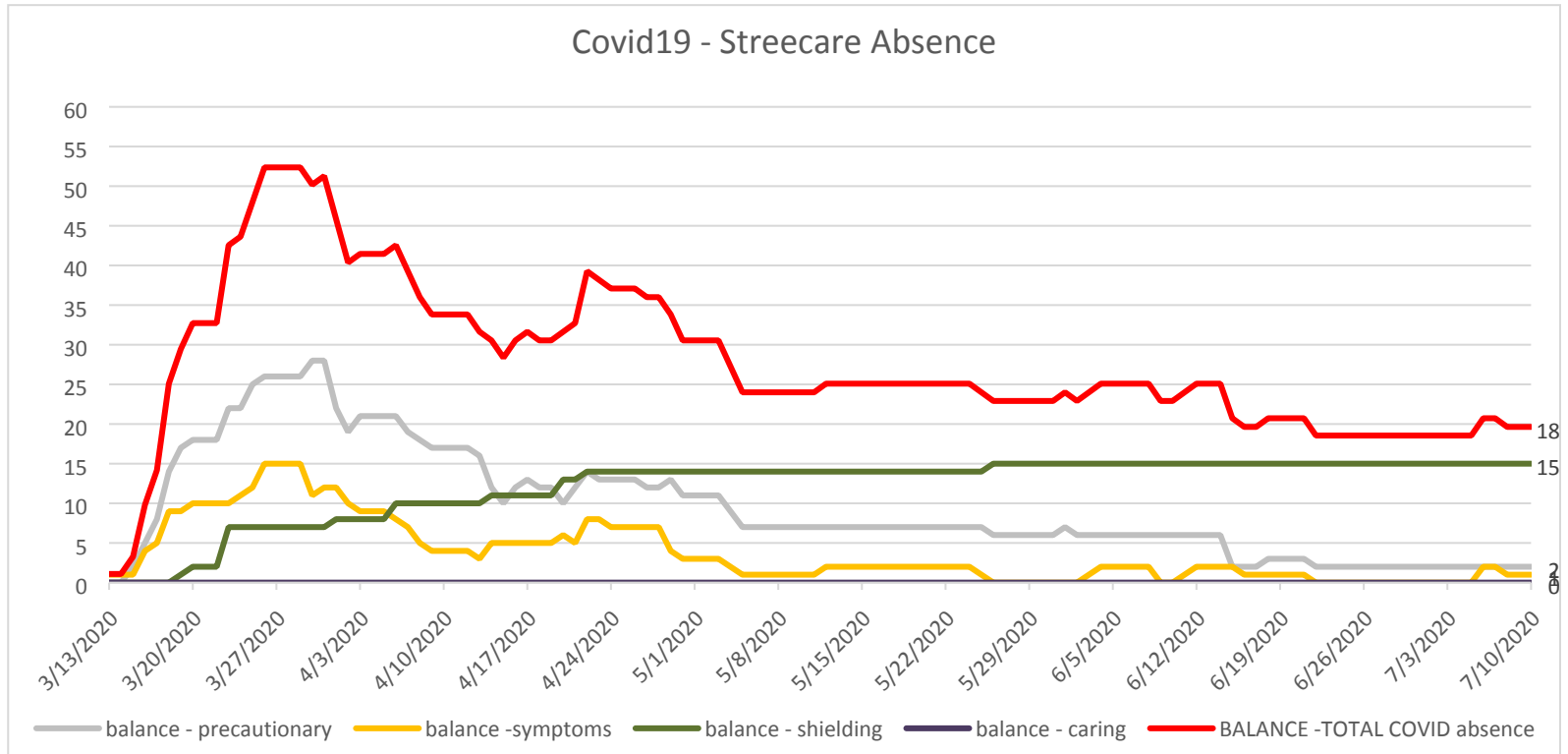
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Appendix A – Graph of Covid related absence in Streetcare





Appendix B – Streetcare Service Delivery Position 13th July 2020

Service Area	Comments on Existing Status
Abandoned Vehicles	Operational (no local door knocking – only posting of notices. Removal by contractor)
Allotments	Allotments are open. Dealing with the admin side (waiting lists etc.) remotely. No inspections to ensure plots are being cultivated
Beach Cleansing	Operational as normal
Building Works Contractor (In House)	Operational as normal.
Bulk Refuse Collections	Service operating as normal. Booking slots being limited to 2 weeks in advance.
Bus Shelter Maintenance	Emergency work only
Canals (where Council involvement)	To date this has been water management only – levels & sluices. Env maintenance – litter, reed cutting etc. due to restart on a limited basis from 14 th July.
Cemeteries	Operating as normal (depth of 4 burial option at Margam suspended), avoiding meeting with public on site where possible.
Coastal Defence	Contractor projects ongoing.
Community Recycling Centre Management	HWRCs opened 26 th May on a booking system that is working well. Van permits reintroduced from 13 th July and waste presentation areas being reintroduced from 3 rd August.
Culvert cleansing/maintenance	Ongoing.
Cycle Way Maintenance	Work limited to emergencies and an element of flailing.
Dead Animals on Highways	Ongoing
Directional / Street Signs	Emergency response only - replacement of signs on hold due to resources.
Ditching	Resources mainly focused on culvert and gully clearance but can be diverted to other priorities as and when required
Drains (Surveys etc.)	Ongoing
Drainage & other Highway Related Schemes	Design of grant funded major capital schemes ongoing. Design of grant funded small-scale schemes ongoing. Construction commenced on two out of 3 schemes. Remaining scheme to commence shortly. Construction of some programmed capital drainage schemes has commenced.
Flooding/Emergency Response	Ongoing – as and when required
Flood Risk Management	Ongoing. Capital schemes and revenue works progressing.
Fly tipping removal	Being removed by cleansing teams as soon as limited resources allow
Gnoll Park	Park opened on 4 th June with few facilities. Toilets opened 13 th July, café take-away service opened 13 th July with card payments only. Car parking charges to be reintroduced from 1 st August.
Gritting	Review ongoing in line with new guidance
Gulley Pot Cleansing	Ongoing
Gulley Grating Clearance	Ongoing
Grass Cutting	As and when resources allow – focus will mainly be on safety cuts for time being
Highway Capital works (in-house)	Ongoing

Highway Day to Day Maintenance	Ongoing – although some reduced capacity in 'hit squads'
Highway Inspections	Ongoing - 2 weekly and 4 weekly single occupant driven inspections have replaced monthly and three monthly driven routes respectively. Six monthly walked inspections ongoing. Monthly and three monthly walked routes undertaken as usual.
Highway Regulations/Enforcement (e.g. Skip, Scaffolding, Café Permits)	Ongoing
Hygiene Waste Collection	Operation as normal
Land Drainage	Ongoing
Litter & Dog Bins	Ongoing as far as resources permit
Network Management	Ongoing – Working remotely and Office Rota – 1 employee on 'track and trace'
Open Spaces	Litter, grass etc as resources allow
Overgrowth Clearance	Emergency works only
Parks	Opened 4 th June
Pest Control	Operational
Playgrounds	Currently closed – plans to open sometime from 20 th July.
Pot Holes	Ongoing – some reduced capacity on 'hit squads'
Public Lighting Repairs & Maintenance	Operational
Public Lighting Design & Major/Minor Projects	Operational
Reactive Safety Fence Repairs	Ongoing - Emergency work only
Recycling / Waste Collection & Disposal	Ongoing, but still heavily reliant on resources from Neighbourhood section
Road Markings inc. 'H' Bars	Ongoing
Seafront Maintenance	Ongoing
Sports Pitches (where commissioned)	If requested and resources allow
Stray Dogs	Ongoing
Stores & Purchasing	Stores open and staffed as usual. Purchasing operations ongoing – Office rota system in place
Street Cleansing/Litter Picking	Reduced service, concentrating on priority areas like town centres
Street Signs / Nameplates - Non Illuminated	Sign manufacturer on stop so any work is on hold at the moment
Streetworks (e.g. supervision of utilities)	Ongoing
Trade Waste	Ongoing, currently liaising with businesses on the effects of closures etc.
Traffic Signals	Operational
Tree Maintenance	Ongoing. Additional service pressure to cut back overgrown trees along highways due to additional double decker buses.
Volunteer / Keep Wales Tidy Co-ordination	KWT have furloughed their staff
Waste Enforcement	Operating on reduced capacity, one member of staff shielding, unable to carry out interviews at this time and a 72 hour delay before opening bags.
Waste Management – (*)	Ongoing
Weed Removal / Herbicide Treatment	External contract ongoing as normal. Activity restricted in-house due to other pressures/priorities
Land & Highway Drainage Development Control	Input to DC ongoing remotely.

(*)=Includes Crymlyn Burrows Material Transfer Station