



Sustainable Development Select Committee

Street Environment Services

Date: 15 September 2021

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

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Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to update the Sustainable Development Select Committee on the progress being made on the Street Environment Services operational review, and in the context of the ongoing Waste Strategy, to offer the opportunity for the Committee to consider the Council's approach to its delivery of waste, recycling and street cleansing services.

Sustainable Development Select Committee is asked:

- To note the contents of this report

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

- Report to Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee Sep-21

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report presents an overview of the current level of service delivery and a range of options for consideration of the Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the contents of this report

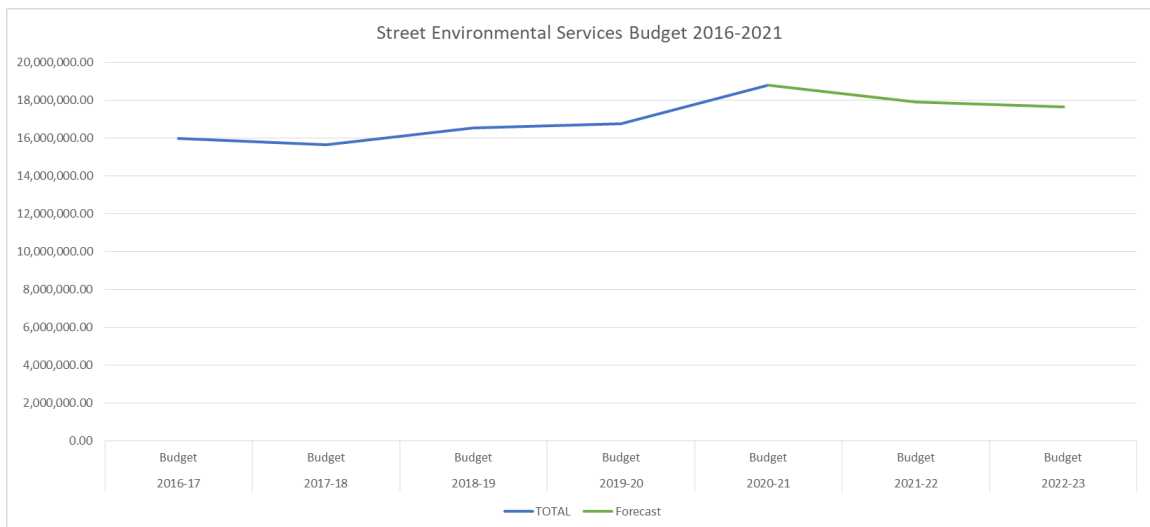
3 Context

- 3.1 The Street Environment service is reviewing and benchmarking its performance to improve resident experience and modernise practices. This includes a review of the waste service, street cleansing and fleet operations. None of the options included in this report affect Lewisham Council's statutory obligations under current environmental legislation.

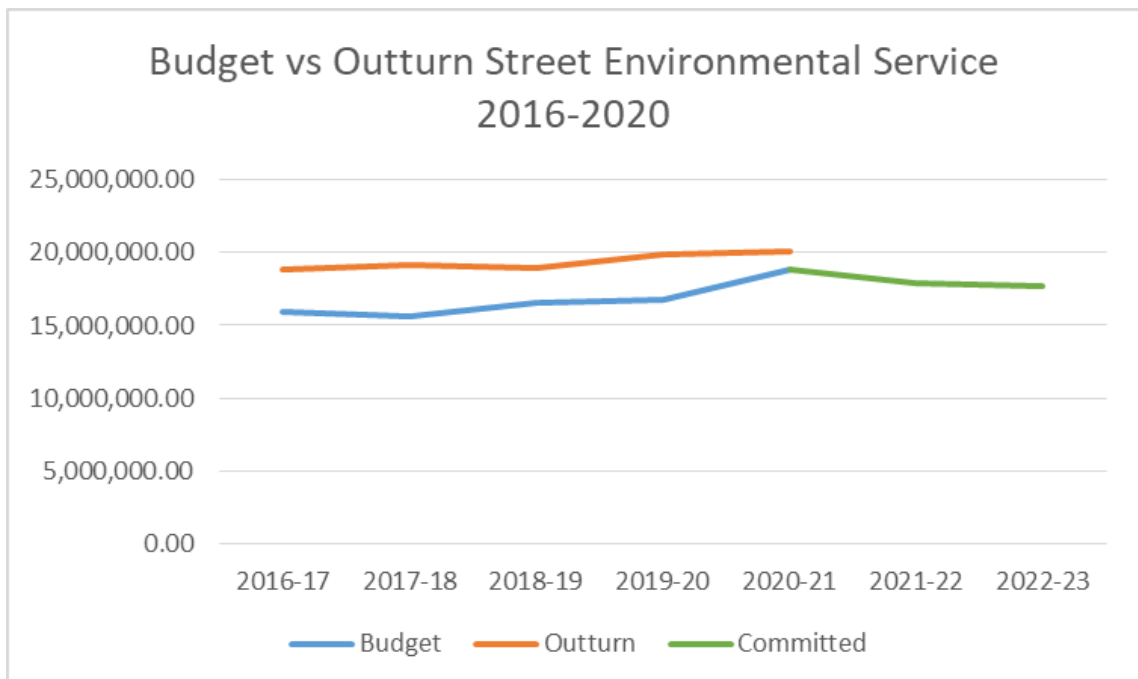
4 Background

4.1 Street Environment Services (SES) comprises services that have a visible and tangible impact on Lewisham’s residents, businesses and visitors, namely: household waste and recycling collection and street cleansing services. The service includes a fleet and garage service that ensures Council-owned vehicles are maintained and are roadworthy.

4.2 Between 2016 and 2020, the service budget increased by approximately £3m due to increases in the street cleansing budget and above inflationary increases with waste disposal costs (see graph below). From FY22/23, the service’s financial envelope will be reduced by £897k, with a further reduction of £250k in FY23/24.

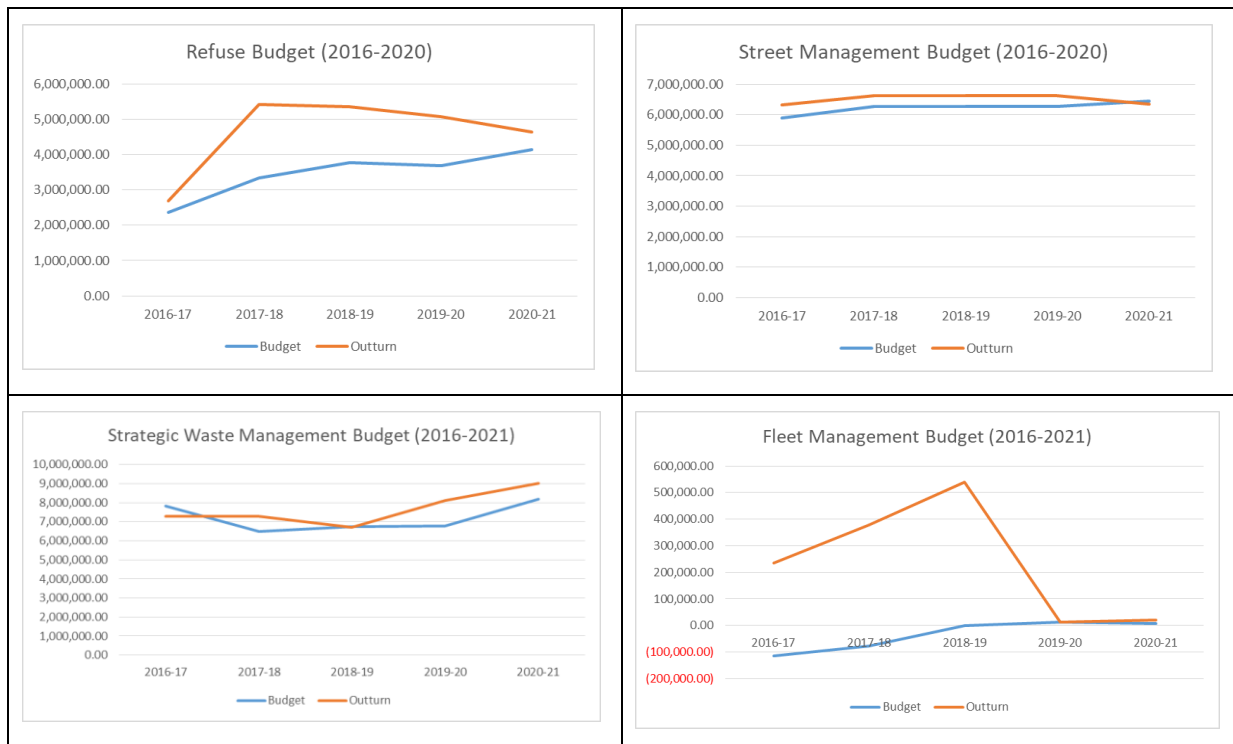


4.3 Although the financial outturn of the service areas has been relatively stable over previous years, the service has historically struggled with delivering a balanced budget. The graph below shows the budget commitment for this year (FY21/22) and next year (FY22/23).



4.4 The financial performance of the four service areas in the service vary,

- Collection services have worked consistently to achieve budget, narrowing the variance between budget and outturn each year.
- Street management services (cleansing) have been relatively stable. While outturn has narrowly exceed budget, the service was on budget in FY20/21 after achieving an in year saving of £200k.
- Strategic waste management (contracts) have experienced above inflationary cost increases from contracts especially on contract renewal extension. The current increases were addressed in the FY21/22 budget process.



4.5 The services are generally considered to be well delivered although there is a need to ensure that services continue to deliver outcomes for residents, business and visitors within an increasingly constrained financial envelope. The principle mechanisms being used to achieve budget outcomes are:

- Greater oversight and control of overtime, vacancy management and use of agency staff
- Non-public facing efficiencies
- Improved productivity
- Adjustments to reporting lines
- Procurement efficiencies

5 The Waste Strategy

- 5.1 The waste strategy has committed the council to adopt new ways of working and procedural changes to deliver of £250k arising from the Waste Strategy. These savings can only be achieved with the Council adopting, through the Waste Strategy, a set of waste objectives and policies that encourage waste reduction and encourage recycling
- 5.2 The Waste Management Strategy – currently in consultation – is a unique opportunity for the Council to set out a clear, ambitious and courageous vision for waste management in the borough. In the context of the Council’s Climate Emergency declaration, there is a need for residents to play their role in ensuring society take responsibility for producing less waste, ensuring all wastes are sorted separated for recycling or reprocessing, and seeing that every citizen contributes to the greener, cleaner Lewisham. It also focuses the Council to consider the environmental, behavioural and financial consequences of future actions.
- 5.3 There is a direct correlation between the behaviour and actions of residents and business and the costs incurred by the Council for waste, recycling and street cleansing services. For example, the more materials recycled, the greater the income to the authority and the less demand for refuse collection and expensive disposal at South East London Combined Heat and Power plant. The less contamination of recycling or green waste bins by resident, the more efficient services will be per collection round and savings to the Council will be made from the avoided costs incurred through dealing with contamination.
- 5.4 The waste strategy, together with the financial benefits that will need to accrue from it, will undoubtedly stimulate the need for a policy-driven review of service delivery. Without prejudice to the waste strategy that will shortly come before the Council for adoption, the waste strategy may prompt, for example, a further fundamental review of the street cleansing operations, variation in waste collection and recycling services, and a review of fees and charges or policies that stimulate reduction in waste volumes and increase recycling capture rates, and modification to the Council’s waste enforcement approach.
- 5.5 To this end, the Sustainable Development Select Commitment are invited to discuss and explore it’s visions for waste and recycling in Lewisham, and the extent to which a set of clear and enforceable policies on all aspects of waste and recycling are desirable to:
- Achieve the council’s ambitious and courageous waste reduction and recycling targets
 - Stimulate the need for a step change in resident waste reduction and recycling behaviour
 - Achieve behaviour- led transformation in waste and recycling services by reducing demand for some waste services, increasing revenue from discretionary non-statutory services and tackling both waste crime and non-compliance.

6 Features of waste strategies in high performing Councils:

- 6.1 When comparing performance amongst local authorities in England it should be remembered that every authority will be different in terms of socio - demographics, topography, collection frequency, budget and resources, disposal outlets and public support.

6.2 The top ten recycling authorities in England 2019/20 (latest figures available)

Rank	Local Authority	Recycling, Reuse and Composting Rates
1	Three Rivers District Council	64.1%
2	South Oxfordshire District Council	64.0%
3	Vale of White Horse District Council	63.3%
4	East Riding of Yorkshire Council	63.3%
5	St Albans City and District Council	63.0%
6	Surrey Heath Borough Council	62.9%
7	Derbyshire Dales District Council	61.9%
8	Rochford District Council	61.3%
9	North Somerset Council	60.6%
10	East Devon District Council	60.5%
11	Stratford-on-Avon District Council	60.5%

Source: Defra

- 6.3 The common theme running amongst those local authorities with the best recycling performance (aside from them all being District Councils) is that they have clear policies, aligned to their waste management and climate change strategy, that promote responsible waste management that incorporates waste reduction, re-use and recycling and the circular economy. These policies ensure protocols for kerbside collection services and resident collections service are defined, communicated and implemented.
- 6.4 The exchange of information and feedback on performance is used to encourage participation and congratulate good behaviour for without the support of local people the rates achieved wouldn't be so high. Campaigns, communication and clarity are also evident from their websites, which is clear and easy to understand and provides information on the collection days and procedures, user responsibility and penalties for waste crime.
- 6.5 The campaigns are engaging and relevant to specific topics and seasonal variations (recycling over Christmas – cards, trees, food waste for example).
- 6.6 Adequate resources for regular and frequent household and commercial collections are key as are the resources (financial and human) required for promotion/campaigns/data capture etc.

7 Street cleanliness

- 7.1 There is no longer a requirement to undertake and provide performance indicators for street cleanliness and environmental quality to measure and compare the cleanliness standards achieved nationally. As a result, identifying and benchmarking high performing authorities is problematic.
- 7.2 Many local authorities have moved away from the traditional manual beat sweeping and either replaced or supported reduced beat sweeping with mechanical sweeping machines, and/or mobile sweeping teams that can remove litter sacks/small fly tips

during their visit to the street. Changes to approaches and methods are achieved by adopting policies that stimulate service transformation.

- 7.3 This modern approach to street cleaning is cost effective and efficient but requires capital investment in equipment on an invest to save basis as over 5 years.
- 7.4 Authorities that have invested in a quality built street environment also had the foresight to invest in equipment that would enable pavements to be regularly washed, detritus/weeds to be cleared away, and fly posting and graffiti to be cleaned before it became a significant problem requiring more attention and expenditure.
- 7.5 The Camden Boulevard project from 2000 is a good example. The project was a 4 year capital programme rebuilding the street scape in several town centres but also investing in cleaning equipment and resources to maintain a clean street environment to be enjoyed by residents, visitors and businesses. In the context of our Council's financial situation, this might not be feasible.
- 7.6 20-years later, in Camden the same method of cleanliness is in use and the streetscape is still maintained to a very high standard.
- 7.7 An investment in cleanliness should be considered when any regeneration project involving the streetscape is planned – quite often it is overlooked to the detriment of the long term viability of the 'feeling of well-being' created by clean, well maintained public spaces.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 In the context of the Council's financial constraints, the service is seeking to modernise and is looking at:
- a programme of multiple work streams including mechanisation of street cleansing,
 - resident-led approaches that reduce the need to intervention,
 - behavioural changes through the waste strategy and,
 - developing a waste strategy the enables Lewisham to be the best in class.

9 Financial implications

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with considering this report. Any proposals or projects arising from this paper will be detailed in future reports and will include the relevant financial implications.

10 Legal implications

- 10.1 There are no direct legal implications associated with considering this report. Any proposals or projects arising from this paper will be detailed in future reports and will include the relevant legal implications.

11 Equalities implications

- 11.1 An Equalities Analysis will be carried out to identify any evidence or views that suggest that different equality or other protected groups could be adversely and/or disproportionately impacted by the proposal.
- 11.2 The majority of the proposals will make a positive impact on the Borough, which will be beneficial for all, regardless of their background.

12 Climate change and environmental implications

12.1 Moving waste up the waste hierarchy by ensuring more waste is re-used or recycled rather than sent for incineration or landfill contributes to the Council's efforts to mitigate the impact of climate change by reducing the carbon footprint of the council waste management service.

13 Crime and disorder implications

13.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

14 Health and wellbeing implications

14.1 There are no direct health and wellbeing implications associated with this report.

15 Background papers

Waste Strategy – July 2021

16 Glossary

Term	Definition
SES	Street Environment Services

17 Report authors and contacts

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Appendix A – London Councils League Tables 2019-20 Overall Performance

(<https://www.letsrecycle.com/councils/league-tables/2019-20-overall-performance/>)