

Members Briefing Pack

Neighbourhood Services and Enforcement Committee



18 April 2023

Title	<i>Road channel sweeping</i>
Purpose of the report	To note
Report Author	<i>Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services Darren White Operations Manager Neighbourhood Services</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	<i>Not applicable</i>
Corporate Priority	Environment
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Note the report
Reason for Recommendation	<i>This report has been requested by the Neighbourhood Services and Enforcement (NS&E) committee</i>

1. Summary of the report

1.1 A member of the NS&E committee has requested this report based on street sweeping and parking be available for open discussion at a future meeting. The terms of the report were agreed at the committee in January, and it was agreed by members that the report should focus on identification of roads with high levels of parking. The report will also include the leafing schedule and any additional costs associated with potentially increasing road street sweeping over and above the schedules already conducted by Neighbourhood Services.

2. Key issues

2.1 Keeping our streets clean is a key concern for Spelthorne residents and for many of them it is the one Council service that affects their quality of life daily. The Council has recognised this and makes cleanliness one of its key priorities for the borough.

2.2 Streets including roads in the charge of the local authority, are a public right of way. Residents do not have any priority right to the stretch of road (which includes the footpath/grass verge and carriageway) in front of their property. The property effectively in the resident's possession and control extends to its boundary with the public path or road. This boundary runs along the edge of

the footpath that joins the outer face of the residents front wall/fence and continues along the end of their driveway. If car parking is permitted on the road, all motorists, including visitors, have the right to park outside the resident's property provided their car is not causing an obstruction.

- 2.3 All residential streets in the borough should enjoy high standards of cleanliness irrespective of where they are located. To achieve this requires a flexible approach to street cleaning, which can respond better to the varying demands of various locations.
- 2.4 Street character types set out not only the basic parameters of streets, such as carriageway and footway widths, but also the street's relationship to buildings and the private realm, and other key details, such as parking arrangements, street trees, planting, and lighting.
- 2.5 Whilst some streets are more important than others in terms of traffic flow, some are also more important than others in terms of their place function and deserve to be treated differently. The varying schedules of sweeping which are explained within this report allow the Council to treat its different roads within the borough in this way and be more flexible and efficient.
- 2.6 It should also be noted that cluttering tends to take place over time by the incremental addition of signs to serve a particular purpose without regard having been given to the overall appearance of the street and subsequently the ability to be able to conduct an effective mechanical cleansing service.
- 2.7 All adopted highway roads are swept regularly on a schedule. Busy high streets are swept more regularly than residential roads.
- 2.8 The street cleansing team consists of seventeen operational employees who conduct the following tasks: -

Litter bin clearance	3 employees & 2 vehicles (small RCV)
On foot Beat sweepers	8 employees,
Mobile beat sweepers	1 employee & 1 vehicle (small van)
Mechanical sweepers	5 employees & 5 vehicles (1 large sweeper, 2 channel sweepers, 2 footway sweepers)
- 2.9 Street trees are a feature in most roads in the borough, however some roads have a much greater quantity of street trees than most. This creates increased leaf fall on the footway and the road channels, to tackle the issue of fallen leaves in the streets with a higher number of street trees we conduct an annual leaf clearance programme which can be found on the Council web site.
- 2.10 The annual programme is conducted during the autumn but with changing seasons the date is not set as we rely on the weather pattern and the first hard frosts which is when leaves start to fall.
- 2.11 To manage this annual leafing programme all mechanical sweeping operatives are diverted away from their scheduled programmes and redirected as a group to manage this programme of work. Where staffing allows, we would supplement this with additional staff on foot.

- 2.12 One cycle of the leafing programme takes approx. 2 weeks to complete and depending on weather we may have to complete the whole cycle 2 or 3 times during the autumn.
- 2.13 At all other times of the year road channels are swept mechanically by the channel sweepers on varying schedules which can range from daily to weekly or on a 20-day schedule. Most residential streets are swept on a 20-day schedule whereas high streets, shopping centres & car parks are swept daily or more frequently depending on the location.
- 2.14 Access to channels due to parked cars (resident and commuter parking) create large pockets of the borough where sweeping cannot be conducted successfully. Sweeping schedules have built into them periods of spare days where drivers can use their own initiative and experience to go back on roads where sweeping has not been effective due to parked cars.
- 2.15 There are rare occasions where roads such as Guildford Street in Staines are swept within a parking suspension organised and enforced by our parking team. This involves parking officers placing signage on lamp columns within a specific road advising that parking is not permitted on a specific day and on a specific time. Parking officers are then tasked with patrolling during the parking suspension period and will issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to any cars who have ignored the suspension.
- 2.16 This is a time-consuming process for parking officers and is not always successful. Our ability to create these parking suspensions will cease at the end of March as Surrey County Council (SCC) have ended the agency agreement and will take back on street parking enforcement. Enquiries have been made to SCC in relation to potential costs for creating and managing a street parking suspension, post March 23, to date we are still awaiting a response which is due to management and implementation of the new on street parking contract.
- 2.17 The large sweeper sweeps on varying schedules and most of the work conducted by this machine is on the main and high-speed roads across the whole borough. A lot of this work is on a 20-day schedule but there are more frequent schedules for main shopping areas which vary from daily to weekly.
- 2.18 The footway sweepers also work to schedules but they are more flexible as they are also required to be very reactive in dealing with issues such as spills, litter issues, dog fouling etc. They also sweep the pedestrian areas of large and small shopping areas. These sweepers provide a service that is based on need.
- 2.19 Neighbourhood Services do not carry a surplus of street cleaning staff who are able to step in to cover any absences of the drivers. Due to the extremely prohibitive cost of leasing/owning/maintenance of sweeping vehicles we do not carry spare vehicles to cover breakdowns or general maintenance.
- 2.20 All street cleansing and sweeping is subject to operatives and machinery being available on the day. If we have an urgent reactive issue to deal with that cannot wait, we will redirect other staff from their duties to manage the issue.
- 2.21 To assist members to understand the frequencies of channel sweeping and leafing conducted by the Street Cleansing team a spreadsheet is attached at **Appendix 1**.

2.22 **Appendix 1** shows that we have 845 roads in the borough and of that 845, 229 of those roads are heavily parked during the day. This is broken down as follows: -

	20% PARKED	50% PARKED	80% PARKED	100% PARKED	Total
Ashford	27	43	69	75	214
Staines	29	38	43	33	143
Shepperton	50	34	41	28	153
Sunbury	18	61	50	45	174
Laleham	10	3	17	10	40
Stanwell	15	21	46	39	121
Total	149	200	267	229	845

2.23 To mitigate the issues related to these heavily parked roads we have built spare capacity within the 20-day schedules for the drivers to return to areas where accessing the channels to sweep has been difficult.

3. Financial implications

3.1 Members of the Neighbourhood Services & Enforcement committee requested that as part of this report we provide an idea of potential increased costs should members decide that they would like to make recommendation from this report to increase both its fleet of sweeping vehicles and its number of operatives. The cost per year to have one extra sweeping vehicle and two vehicle drivers are anticipated to be as below: -

Driver (including oncosts) x 2 £65,000 (working on a shift pattern over 7 days but does not allow for driver absence)

Sweeper(diesel) x 1 £45,000 (sweeper vehicles are priced on driver hours)

Maintenance £5000

Running costs £5000

Total approx. £120,000 per year

3.2 When leasing sweeping vehicles, the minimum cost-efficient term of a lease would be four years.

3.3 **Appendix 1** identifies a very high level of roads that are either 80% (267) or 100%(229) parked for most of the time.

3.4 One consideration to address this subject of parked cars, as requested by a member of the NS&E committee is given in **3.1** above. Another alternative consideration which would incur additional costs (over and above 3.1) would be to create a parking suspension every working day of the year for 100% parked roads, or once every two years if including the 80% parked roads.

- 3.5 This would have additional financial & staffing implications over and above that detailed in 3.1, related to engaging with Surrey County Councils new parking contractor to create and enforce daily suspensions in 229 roads.
- 3.6 Spelthorne has significant budget gaps in future years and any proposed additional spend would need to be offset against savings within the relevant service. The committee would need to identify where these savings could be achieved from to progress and fund this potential increased level of service.

4. Risk considerations

- 4.1 This is a to note report only and at this stage the only risks associated with increased street maintenance are the financial risks related to potentially increasing the Councils budgets when it is already facing a particularly challenging financial future.
- 4.2 There is also the risk that sending sweepers out during the early mornings at weekends could result in an increased level of customer complaints due to noise.

5. Procurement considerations

- 5.1 The Council has recently carried out a procurement exercise to replace its existing fleet of waste and cleansing vehicles and if the Council decides it chooses to include this additional sum of money to its future budgets we could approach our suppliers to seek costs to add an extra sweeping vehicle on to the new contract which is effective from June 2023.

6. Legal considerations

- 6.1 At this stage there are no legal considerations to consider. The NS&E committee are not able to spend money not already budgeted for and if they wished to make a recommendation to take this forward it would follow the rules of the committee process.

7. Other considerations

- 7.1 The current sweeping and leafing schedules have been carried out very successfully this way over several years with changes made to adapt to changing circumstances without incurring additional service costs. This subject of street parking is one that is recognised across all authorities. Where cars are parked, it is not always possible to sweep or cleanse around them, where there is a risk of damage to the parked car.

8. Equality and Diversity

- 8.1 This information is to note and will not have any direct equality and diversity impacts. However, it could be said that any increased level of service especially when considering street services will provide an improvement for those who are elderly or have a mobility disability.
- 8.2 This is mitigated within the current service level by providing both an initiative-taking and reactive service within the current structure to deal with relevant issues if they arise.
- 8.3 It should also be noted that extra cleansing services could have a negative impact on some residents if Council resources create a schedule where specific streets have additional resources over and above the current schedules.

8.4 The rationale behind our current cleansing programmes is that it provides a consistent approach, with the same service being provided for all wards and streets. Some wards will inevitably be cleaner than others and remain clean for longer.

9. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

9.1 Adding additional diesel vehicles to our streets has a negative impact on climate change. Most street litter is collected by mobile street cleansing operatives and is disposed of appropriately.

10. Contact

10.1 Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services 01784 446418

Background papers: *There are none.*

Appendices:

Appendix 1 STREET SCHEDULES