

Committee	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date	9 March 2023
Title	Street Cleanliness
Cabinet Member	Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones
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Purpose	Ensure Clean and Tidy Communities

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We recognise the importance of creating a feeling of pride in our surroundings by ensuring that the communities of Gwynedd are clean and tidy. A poor-quality local environment has negative, far-reaching effects. It affects well-being, prevents people from using green spaces and it is even associated with higher rates of offending and anti-social behaviour, and it also affects the economy and tourism.
- 1.2 As part of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council has a statutory duty to ensure that main roads and other public spaces are free of litter. In order to secure high standards of cleanliness, we provide a wide range of services which ensures that our streets and public open spaces are clean.
- 1.3 This report will outline the main developments from the smart bins pilot, the street cleaning vision and the progress made after the Tîm Tacluso 'Ardal Ni' were founded.

2. Background and Current Situation

2.1. Street Cleaning

2.1.1 Street cleaning is something that happens throughout the year and the activities include:

- clearing litter
- disposing of dead animals
- cleaning dog-fouling
- removing anything that has been fly-tipped
- emptying litter bins and dog fouling bins
- removing anything else that has been discarded
- cleaning public places - cyclic routes
- sweeping roads and pavements - cyclic routes.

- 2.1.2 The Service cleans all public sites and adopted roads that are managed by the Council. Areas have been split into zones according to their use. The High-use zones are the town centres mainly; the Medium-use zones comprise of residential areas mainly, whilst the Low-use zones comprise the less intensive areas which include rural County roads.
- 2.1.3 In the past, the elements of street-sweeping and the emptying of public waste bins were incorporated in the Waste Collection and Recycling Service, with one manager responsible for all the activities and the internal business units providing additional services. Following the Cabinet's decision in September 2022 to transfer the elements of collecting, recycling and handling waste to the Environment Department, the Street Cleaning Service stood independently.
- 2.1.4 This reorganisation gave the Department the opportunity to explore how all Street Cleaning Services are operated in practice. As a result, a high-level review of the Service's activities was carried out to identify the barriers to running it effectively and efficiently, and to offer recommendations for improvements going forward.
- 2.1.5 Back in January last year, we reported that our cleaning rotas and routes required updating in order to respond to the additional pressures in light of increased tourism but also alternative arrangements of collecting waste.
- 2.1.6 As well as raising a number of other matters, the review confirmed the need to review the current street-cleaning and bin collection routes in order to determine whether they are fit for purpose or if financial and efficiency savings can be made. Work has already begun on re-examining these routes.
- 2.1.7 Our work team is to be commended for their dedication and for the work that is carried out by them. However, we have identified a weakness in communication with the team, and this will be addressed in order to ensure that they have input on any proposed changes.

2.2 Tîm Tacluso 'Ardal Nî'

- 2.2.1 As a department, our priority is to ensure Clean and Tidy Communities. We have five 'Tîm Tacluso' in operation since September last year, and they undertake work that contributes to improving the appearance of our streets and environment.
- 2.2.2 We are pleased to report that the Teams are busy enhancing our County and making a visible difference.
- 2.2.3 In order to realise what was promised within our Cabinet report and make the best use of IT, we have introduced a digital form in FFOS for receiving requests for work from local members. We have received several requests and the Project Officer/Team Leader is responsible for responding to them and forwarding them to the relevant Teams' portable tablets. The portable tablets enable the teams to update the requests and attach photographs of their work whilst out working within our communities.
- 2.2.4 There is a new development taking place within the members' portal which is a 'hub' for the Teams. The FFOS form will be uploaded there as well as the teams' routes on an interactive map. We intend to add to this hub by uploading a customer satisfaction questionnaire together with photos/details of the teams' work.

- 2.2.5 The work of the teams will go a step further than the department's maintenance work and will focus on deep cleaning. To realise this, a specialist street-cleaning and gum removal machine and specialist graffiti removal equipment will be purchased.
- 2.2.6 They currently use diesel vehicles to transport their equipment and materials. However, there are plans afoot to replace these with bespoke electric vehicles.
- 2.2.7 Since the Teams were introduced, we have been promoting their work on social media. We intend to expand on this work in order to demonstrate the value of the Teams and the difference they make within our communities.

2.3 Street Services – Street Cleanliness / Smart Bins Trial

- 2.3.1 Litter accumulates in the different zones over various timeframes. An area's cleanliness is assessed against a standard as noted below:
- Grade A – no litter or refuse
 - Grade B – predominantly free of litter and refuse apart from some small items
 - Grade B+ – no more than three small items of litter
 - Grade C – widespread distribution of litter and/or refuse with minor accumulations
 - Grade D – heavily affected by litter and/or refuse with significant accumulations.
- 2.3.2 The results of an independent survey by Keep Wales Tidy were received which show what percentage of the County's streets are clean in comparison with the national figure. As part of the 2022/23 survey, 141 individual cross-sections were examined. Grade B or higher was awarded to 95% of these streets, namely streets deemed as having an acceptable level of cleanliness by the public.
- 2.3.3 In order to secure high standards of cleanliness, we invested in sensors and smart bins to experiment with modern technology. As part of this trial, five 'Brighter Bins' sensors were installed which monitor the capacity of our bins. These sensors are very useful in that they create an automatic request for work for the unit when the bins require emptying. In addition, five smart bins were purchased through the 'Caru Cymru' grant last year. These bins operate on solar energy, and they compact the contents between 7 and 10 times before sending out a sensor message to inform the works unit that the bin is full.
- 2.3.4 Several of these types of bins would reduce the need to empty bins as frequently. Therefore, we hope to add to the numbers of smart bins in future and look at replacing all the bins in one town/village in order to measure their efficiency.
- 2.3.5 There will also be an emphasis on introducing recycling bins on the street so as to ensure we give the residents and visitors of Gwynedd the opportunity to recycle while out in our communities.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 No-one likes to see litter or mess on our streets, or anything that affects the County's image. Unfortunately, some still cause harm to our environment by not disposing of their waste responsibly which is an eyesore and has a detrimental effect on the environment.
- 3.2 We will introduce a behavioural change campaign in order to achieve environmental benefits in the long term.
- 3.3 Educating our children is essential and raising awareness of the effects of litter. Therefore, we will develop a program to visit schools.
- 3.4 Volunteers are very important and there are already campaigns underway across the County for picking-up small items of litter and arranging events for clearing items that have been disposed of unlawfully.
- 3.6 Our vision therefore is to bring all of this together by:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Schedule</u>
Firstly, reviewing our arrangements for the cleaning rotas, ensuring that they respond to demand, and looking again at our resources for carrying out this work	By the end of this summer.
Coordinating work by volunteers when they undertake minor litter-picking.	By the end of September 2023.
Working across sectors for holding campaigns.	A long-term project which has begun.
Addressing litter on rural road verges.	Work will commence this Spring.
Introducing recycling bins on the street in order to maximise recycling of materials	Medium term.
Taking advantage of information technology developments e.g. smart bins.	Medium term.
Adapting as a new code of practice is published	Medium term/long term.