

Title: Street Cleansing Review

Committee: Operational Services Committee

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1.0 Issue

- 1.1. To update the Committee on the outcome of the Street Cleansing service review.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1. That Committee notes that the existing street cleansing specification, with the inclusion of the updates as set out in sections 4.4 and 4.5. is fit for purpose and no further changes are required.
- 2.2. That the Committee instructs the Director Operations to include this specification within the broader ECSS service contract currently being renewed in 2026 to support the roll out of new bin collection service.

3.0 Background / Options

- 3.1. In anticipation of changes brought about by the Environment Act, and the end of the existing Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with East Cambs Street Scene Ltd (ECSS), a Strategic Service Review was commissioned in the form of a cross-party Member Working Party (WP). The aim was to agree what the future waste and street cleansing service would look like.
- 3.2. This led to approval from Full Council to implement recommendations from the WP including the continuance with East Cambs Street Scene Ltd (ECSS) as the Council's service provider.
- 3.3. Also agreed was the retention of the street cleansing specification until April 2026. Various options with associated increases or decreases in both cost and performance were reviewed by the WP. Overall, it was noted that the service was and continues to achieve an improved performance and so changing the existing specification was not necessary at that time.
- 3.4. Council instead agreed for ECSS to implement changes to their ways of working, with a review carried out after a year to see if these enabled a further improvement in their performance, or if changes to the specification were still required.
- 3.5. Most of the suggested improvements have been implemented. However, ECSS have yet to implement a minimum resource level to mitigate staff absence (through sickness and holiday entitlement), and the service continues to divert cleansing

operatives to cover the waste and recycling collection service. In addition, the new digital system to monitor the use of street bins continues to be mobilised.

- 3.6. ECSS will be introducing a minimum resource level in April 2026. Whilst they employ enough to deliver the service, the number of employees allowed for in their existing budget does not factor in annual leave, or absence through sickness. Therefore, most days the service operates below the minimum number of staff needed and this has led to some drop in performance in previous years.

Performance Management

- 3.7. Performance data has been gathered and analysed against the Key Performance Indicators as agreed by the Committee. The number of service requests or complaints from customers have also been reviewed.
- 3.8. ECSS' performance is now additionally overseen by the Council's client team to monitor performance, challenge any shortcomings and assist in developing any required improvement plan. This was put in place in January 2025. The client team also investigate complaints regarding the service as well as the strategic direction, allowing ECSS to now fully concentrate on the operation.
- 3.9. Formal reporting of performance is also made on a quarterly basis to the Operational Services Committee. During the past year the performance of the service has seen significant improvements and the reports have been noted without major concern.
- 3.10. Graph 1 Appendix 1 show a comparison of performance data for each quarter for the years 2023/24 and 2024/25. Graph 1 is the grading of a road by ECSS Supervisors within 24 hours of it being cleansed by ECSS operatives ('A' being no detritus and litter). This shows a consistent achievement of the required standard of cleanliness.
- 3.11. Analysis was also carried out to look at the outcomes for the customer. Issues that are reported around litter picking, sweeping, full bins and removal of graffiti and fly tipping were reviewed, and ECSS' response time to rectify them. These are outlined in graphs 2 and 3 in Appendix 1.
- 3.12. Overall, reported issues have been decreasing, especially regarding litter and detritus (graph 2). Response times (graph 3) have improved and are generally good since the service challenges of 2022 when round reconfiguration and HGV driver shortages placed significant pressure on services. There does, however, remain scope to improve further.
- 3.13. The removal of fly tips within 48 hours remains challenging for ECSS to achieve. This is shown in graph 5. Further analysis has shown that the KPI is not achieved where the fly tip requires specialist removal equipment. This is typically when the fly tip is excessively large, inaccessible or too heavy. Frequently, these will require a grab truck, and in other cases specialist contractors need to be brought in via third party agreements and are typically charged on a day rate; this is used to clear several fly tips at the same time.

- 3.14. The WP recognised that the response time of 48 hours is unachievable for ECSS and agreed (providing the fly tip is not hazardous or dangerous), a new KPI of 10 working days be introduced in the new specification.
- 3.15. It is acknowledged that the longer a fly tip is left, the more likely it is that the Council will receive complaints about it. To reduce this likelihood and provide customers with reassurance, Officers have improved the processes in managing fly tips across a range of means, including:
- Use of photos of before and after a fly tip has been cleared.
 - Encouraging residents to use What3Words to help better identify fly tip locations.
 - Using stickers and tape to provide reassurance that the Council is aware of and dealing with the fly tip.
 - Implemented an improved reporting and tracking process when a flytip happens.
- 3.16. When analysing requests into the service for everything else, and through the work of the WP, there is room to improve litter picking of 'fast' A roads (such as the A10, A142 and A11 / A14) that carry more risk to operatives working on them without traffic management (such as coning off lanes or signage) in place.
- 3.17. ECSS has previously employed a specialist contractor that provides traffic management as well as trained operatives to complete this work. As this comes at significant cost, this is carried out once per year. This was not specified in the previous MoA and needs to be included in the new specification, not least as the cleansing of such roads remains a statutory duty of the Council.
- 3.18. Additionally, there is no capacity to provide a seasonal service for clearing autumn leaves, or a program of work to cleanse roads that have cars permanently parked on them. Both issues are routinely reported by customers and ECSS provide a reactive service only.
- 3.19. The Council's website currently gives basic information regarding the street cleansing service and customers are sometimes unsure when their road will be cleaned which can generate more enquiries. With the changes highlighted in this report in place, Officers can give more information on the Council's website and social media channels. Whilst a specific day is not possible, more can be done to explain the zoning of the district and the frequency cleansing is carried out. This information can also be provided to Parish Councils ahead of time.
- 3.20. Officers have also been investigating options to increase awareness of the effect of littering. Currently this involves National Highways moving their own signage to different points along these roads, but this is limited in its effectiveness. Officers will be exploring options to make more effective use of this such as signage in laybys, where this is possible within landownership and National Highways regulatory framework.
- 3.21. Once the new collection service has been embedded, Officers will develop a wholistic street cleansing campaign to improve the visibility of the service to customers and help combat environmental crime.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 In the current Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse, the government makes clear that it believes better standards of street cleaning can be achieved without additional cost by more effectively deploying suitable resources at appropriate times and combining this with education and enforcement.
- 4.2 With the current outcome-based specification, ECSS are given the flexibility to deploy their resources based on whether a road needs cleaning, rather than if it is scheduled for a clean.
- 4.3 ECSS cannot fully achieve this due to the current resource level to proactively deploy operatives and reach these areas when needed. When understaffed, ECSS are under pressure to ‘catch up’ on the work programme. Anecdotal analysis shows that when the service is fully resourced, the quality of the service is much higher, and reaches acceptable levels of performance.
- 4.4 To embed resilience and give ECSS the confidence of having the resource available, the new contract will require ECSS to embed a ring-fenced minimum resource level to accommodate absence.
- 4.5 Additionally, there are a few minor changes to the scheduling of street cleansing and improved programs of work. This will help to reduce customers reporting issues in the first place and ensure areas that have been raised as a concern will no longer receive a reactive service. These are:
 - i. Non-hazardous fly tips to be removed within 10 working days.
 - ii. Once per year cleansing of named A roads using out-sourced traffic management.
 - iii. A program of works relating to autumn leaf fall and heavily parked roads.
- 4.6 Combined with this, the introduction of a waste team within the Council provides opportunity to develop campaigns and education to have an influence on public behaviour and satisfaction. There is therefore every reason to believe that the key aims of keeping costs low and improving performance and customer satisfaction can be achieved without materially changing the specification.

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

Financial Implications NO	Legal Implications NO	Human Resources (HR) Implications NO
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) NO	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) NO	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) NO

5.1 Legal Implications

The specification for the street cleansing service will form part of the new contract arrangement with ECSS in 2026. The new contract, including all service specifications will be considered for approval at full Council in February 2026

6.0 Appendices

7.0 Background documents

[Waste and Street Cleansing Service Proposals](#)

[Street Cleansing considerations](#)

Notes of Waste Service Review Working Party meetings held between November 2023 and June 2024

[Achieving improvements in street cleansing & related services](#)

Options Appraisal Street cleansing

ECSS Performance reports March 2024 - June 2025