



South Staffordshire Council

# Strategies to Provide a Clean and Sustainable Environment

South Staffordshire Council

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# The District of South Staffordshire

Predominantly rural district that borders the West Midlands conurbation, Shropshire, Worcestershire and neighbouring Staffordshire authorities

Small hamlets and large villages with no central town

Divided into five localities and broken down further into 25 Wards and 27 Parishes

Includes the maintenance of just under a million square metres of grassland, over 60,000 square metres of shrubs and over 15km of hedges





## Challenges – Grounds Maintenance

Prior to 2017 the council's ground maintenance functions were performed by an external contractor

The contract was due to expire late 2017 and the council reviewed the future provision of the grounds maintenance functions with an expectation that a new delivery model would contribute towards a council-wide £2.2m savings target

Despite required level of savings the expectation was that the quality, frequency and standards of the function would be maintained





# Challenges - Environment Crime

Prior to 2020 the environment crime function sat with the council's planning enforcement team

Environment crime wasn't directly resourced and had limited impact

The responsibility for environment crime transferred and a business case approved to recruit one new FTE member of staff

A steep learning curve for the team to pick up relevant legislation, monitoring, and a wider strategic approach





## Challenges – Trees

The management of the council tree stock was reliant on external contractors

A need to drive revenue through exploitation of commercial opportunities

Recognition of a more proactive approach to managing the council tree stock required

Limited use of technology and data



# Challenges - Street Cleansing

Road sweeping function performed in-house

Reliance on one appliance and single member of staff

Function had limited resilience causing quality and reputational issues





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# Challenges – Climate Change

Council declaration of climate emergency in 2020

Lack of direct staffing resource

Emerging strategy and action plan



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## Climate Change Strategy

2020

Taking action to protect the environment for future generations



[www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk)



# Developing and Embedding Clean and Sustainable Strategies

Council plan priority:

| Vibrant Communities   |  |
|---|--|
| Purpose   | Outcomes   |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Improve the health and wellbeing of people by providing excellent leisure facilities.</li><li>2. Provide a quality environment that we can all be proud of.</li><li>3. Work with our communities and developers to bring forward new housing opportunities.</li><li>4. Lead, engage and support our communities through the locality + programme.</li><li>5. Utilise digital technology to enhance resident access and achieve service efficiencies.</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Healthier residents due to increased physical activity rates.</li><li>2. Clean streets and countryside.</li><li>3. Right houses in the right places.</li><li>4. Strong community engagement.</li><li>5. Residents will be able to self-serve and efficiency savings are achieved.</li></ol> |
| <b>Key Enablers:</b><br>Local Plan, Housing and Homelessness Strategy, Leisure Investment Plan, South Staffordshire Community Lottery, Waste Strategy   |  |





# Developing and Embedding Clean and Sustainable Strategies

## Delivery arms

- *Financial stability*
- *Embracing technology*
- *Flexible and skilled council*
- *Working with our communities*

Service standards and comms – newsletter & social media, website



# Successes – Grounds Maintenance & Street Cleansing

Successful delivery of in-house grounds maintenance operations delivering savings in excess of £140k per annum.

Increased flexibility through in-house delivery model

Investment within work force and training opportunities

A saving of £16k per annum realised in outsourcing the street sweeping function.

Increased number of sweeps per annum leading to improved resident satisfaction.



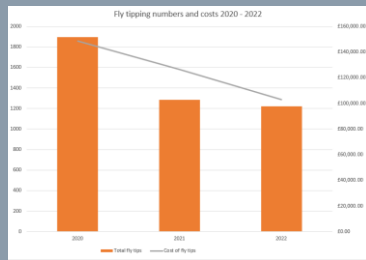
# Successes – Grounds Maintenance & Street Cleansing

Joint working pilot agreement involving South Staffordshire Council, Staffordshire County Council and District and County elected members, South Staffordshire Council's Street Scene Team also undertook several environmental projects on behalf of and funded by County Highways.



# Successes – Environment Crime

Reduction in collected fly tipping (31.5% drop from 2020-21 to 2022-23, and operational saving of over £40k in staff time)



Strong relationships created with the Police, DVSA, housing association and neighboring local authorities  
Much better use of specific legislation to compel people to cooperate with fly tipping investigations.

# Successes – Trees

Commercial income targets exceeded each financial year since inception of the team.

Realised savings in excess of £40k per annum from reducing reliance on external contractors

Investment in district wide tree survey / reporting





# Successes – Climate Change

Delivery of climate change action plan

- ‘Climate change festival 2022’ - outreach involving parish councils, community groups, businesses and schools
- Engagement with landowners and tree planting opportunities (over 1,000 trees each year since 2020)
- Distribution of £4k+ funding to 21 ‘climate prize’ projects across the district



# Future Aims & Ambitions

Continue to review and develop service plans

Tree works – developing commercial work, staffing and training  
Litter strategy

Council ambition to reach net zero in advance of 2050

Continue work with and support volunteers / friends groups

Successfully managing the transfer of the Council's Community Safety function



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# Questions ?

