

Report subject	Cleaner, Greener, Safer
Meeting date	29 September 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>A key building block to a thriving place with satisfied residents and visitors is a streetscene that is clean, green and safe. We want our conurbation to have a clean & sustainable physical environment; to be somewhere where people feel safe and secure; to be an environment that people treat with respect; and to be a place that people have pride in.</p> <p>Launched in December 2020 the Council's Cleaner, Greener, Safer programme is a commitment to ensuring the place based issues that matter amongst our communities are sustainably addressed and engender a sense of pride amongst communities to come together to achieve a better environment for all.</p> <p>This report seeks to secure investment across key themes that supports Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council's Big Plan's vision for a world-class city region and restores a street level sense of pride in our place.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Members endorse the Cleaner, Greener, Safer programme ambitions. (b) Cabinet recommends that Council approve £514k of additional revenue resources to support the Cleaner, Greener, Safer programme in 2021/22. (c) Cabinet approves a £674k Cleaner, Greener, Safer capital investment programme funded from prudential borrowing. (d) Cabinet notes the £3.789m of additional revenue resources requested in 2022/23 and £2.438m per annum from 2023/24 onwards. (e) Cabinet notes the £3.789m of additional revenue resources for 2022/23 and £2.438m per annum from 2023/24 onwards will formally be recommended to Council as part of the 2022/23 budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan Update report in February 2022.

Reason for recommendations	<p>The recommendations seek to secure investment across key themes to support Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole Council's Big Plan vision for a world-class city region. This ambitious programme will restore a street level visible sense of pride and safety in our place and achieve improved delivery within those highly visible services which are of significant importance for our residents.</p> <p>The programme also includes an investment commitment aligned to the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration to protect and enhance our precious greenspaces for our communities and wildlife, increase urban greening and promote and increase health and wellbeing via improved access to greenspace and sustainable travel routes.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	<p>Councillor Drew Mellor – Council Leader</p> <p>Councillor Mark Anderson – Portfolio Holder Environment, Waste & Cleansing</p> <p>Councillor May Haines – Portfolio Holder Communities</p>
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	Recommendation & Decision

Background

1. BCP Council launched its Cleaner, Greener, Safer (CGS) priority commitment in December 2020. Since then, numerous activities have been undertaken to invest and improve our local environment and challenge behaviour including: -
 - a. levelling up of investment in street cleansing across the conurbation
 - b. summer response provision to manage the exceptional demands of the 2021 season
 - c. increased litter bin provision
 - d. tree planting
 - e. ongoing trialling of changes in approach to grass cutting to increase biodiversity
 - f. supporting The Parks Foundation in securing grant funding for Nature Recovery Networks
 - g. increased budget to support the council's Climate Action Plan

- h. partnering with Hubbub & McDonalds to use AI to map litter surveys and public behaviour
- i. funding for additional CCTV to help tackle anti-social behaviour
- j. additional investment in Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) Officers
- k. fly tipping enforcement pilot
- l. launched a CGS partnership panel with Christchurch Town Centre & BID representatives from Bournemouth & Poole
- m. continued investment in transport infrastructure/assets and maintenance of to enhance place, improve accessibility and encourage more active travel

2. This expanded Cleaner Greener Safer programme seeks to build on the foundations of this activity and will see significant investment in our place across three themes;

<p>Theme One - Town Centres Refresh Pilots</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing street, car parks and open space cleanliness including weed growth • Addressing street furniture that is broken, or needs repainting or removing to improve flow moving towards a coordinated public realm visual to reinforce place making • Working with businesses to tackle highway obstructions such as A-boards • Enhancing the condition and quality of greenspace such as planters, , pedestals, shrubbery • Removal of graffiti on public land • Removal of fly-tipping on public land • Addressing areas that need deep cleaning • Enhancing the response to street based anti-social behaviour • Promoting community safety and public safety • Improvements that support feeling safe, such as fixing broken street lights and improving visibility / reducing vegetation overhang in pedestrian areas
<p>Theme Two Conurbation Wide Investment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopted highway and open space cleansing services review • Public highway weed treatment • Public realm asset management capture

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public toilet provision review • Cleansing of resilience network highway signage • Water quality engagement • Strategic greenspace employee resource investment • Grass cutting equipment and seasonal resource investment • Urban greening and development of a BCP Council Tree Strategy
<p>Theme Three - Community and Business Clean Green Safe Partnerships and Volunteering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths based approach to community engagement and ownership of public places • Encouraging clean which leads to clean • Building a sense of place within the community • reducing and designing out opportunities for vandalism and anti-social behaviour • enhancing community safety • commitment from all stakeholders to contribute • working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders • integrating our programmes wherever possible • leading by example • creating a sense of self ownership • fostering community pride • sharing responsibility

3. The following sections outline the programme in detail.

Connection to BCP Council Vision and Corporate Priorities

4. The Cleaner, Greener, Safer programme commitment provides the grass roots foundation for improving public place amenity as a core element in building vibrant, clean, sustainable, and safe communities with an improved sense of ownership and belonging. Directly supporting the Council vision of *‘Vibrant Communities with outstanding quality of life where everyone plays an active role’*.
5. The proposed programme supports the recognised need for improvements whilst complementing long term strategic public realm investment and is a key step in

realising the ambition of a world class city region. The programme will also actively contribute to all 5 of the Council's Corporate Priorities:

- Sustainable environment
- Dynamic places
- Connected communities
- Brighter futures
- Fulfilled lives

Why Cleaner, Greener, Safer is so important

6. Rebuilding a Cleaner, Greener and Safer environment across Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole following the pandemic is vital. Public space has been something many have previously taken for granted and through periods of austerity difficult choices there has been restricted investment in both public and private land. The importance of public space has however never been made clearer than when COVID-19 disrupted daily life. The sudden and profound effect of the global pandemic led to a reappraisal of our wider public spaces across the conurbation and in the value placed upon the immediate public space surrounding our homes and within our neighbourhoods.
7. The health of our communities is an ongoing concern. Obesity is now increasingly linked to inactive lifestyles. It is not however just physical health that is at risk, there are concerns too about mental well-being, the stressful lives that many now lead and the recent and prolonged isolation felt by many throughout the pandemic. Access to good-quality, well-maintained public spaces can help to improve our physical and mental health providing a powerful weapon in the fight against ill-health.
8. Public spaces bring many important environmental benefits to urban areas, including the cooling of air and the absorption of atmospheric pollutants – and more can be done with investment. Vegetation via urban greening also provides an opportunity to protect and increase biodiversity and for people to be close to 'nature', with the associated positive impact that this can bring in terms of mental health and the simple pleasure of experiencing trees, insects and wildlife in an urban setting.
9. High-quality public spaces can have a significant impact on the economic life of our town centres. As towns compete to attract investment, the presence of vibrant town centres, parks, and other public spaces becomes vital. Companies are attracted to locations offering well-designed, well-managed public places and these in turn attract customers, employees and services. In town centres, a pleasant and well-maintained environment increases the number of people visiting retail areas. A good public landscape also offers very clear benefits to the local economy in terms of stimulating increased house prices, since house-buyers are willing to pay to be near green space.
10. Perception of crime and anti-social behaviour and, to a much lesser extent crime itself, can deter people, from using public spaces. Physical changes to, and the better management of public space can reduce attraction for anti-social behaviour, help to allay these fears and ensure that experiences are positive.

Options Appraisal

11. Do nothing - Continue to accept gradual deterioration of public realm infrastructure and consequential dissatisfaction amongst our residents, businesses and visitors.
12. Enhanced CGS Programme - To build upon the campaign foundations and improve the quality and visual appearance of our streets, parks and open spaces across the conurbation, enhancing the quality of life for all who live, work and visit the region whilst key longer term transformational investment and regeneration plans are realised.

Investment Proposals

Theme One - Town Centres Refresh Pilots

13. An essential aspect of recovery for the conurbation following the pandemic is the sustained reopening of our town and neighbourhood centres, ensuring that businesses can thrive, and our residents and visitors are able to enjoy a safe and positive experience.
14. The Council has medium and longer-term plans to regenerate our place including public realm master planning and looking at surface infrastructure investment. These large capital schemes that support improved infrastructure and development are important. Cleaner, Greener, Safer however is an opportunity to focus on the issues we all see every day, know need fixing, can be put right in the short term and are sustained into the future.
15. Cleaner, Greener, Safer essentially covers:
 - Enhancing street, car parks and open space cleanliness including weed growth
 - Addressing street furniture that is broken, or needs repainting or removing to improve flow moving towards a coordinated public realm visual to reinforce place making
 - Working with businesses to tackle highway obstructions such as A-boards
 - Enhancing the condition and quality of greenspace such as planters, hanging baskets, pedestals, shrubbery
 - Removal of graffiti on public land
 - Removal of fly-tipping on public land
 - Removal of fly-posting on public land
 - Addressing areas that need deep cleaning
 - Enhancing the response to street based anti-social behaviour
 - Promoting community safety and public safety
 - Improvements that support feeling safe, such as fixing broken street lights and improving visibility / reducing vegetation overhang in pedestrian areasIssues that we will need to work with others on:
 - Run down and derelict shop fronts and buildings
 - Fly-tipping on private land
 - Overhanging vegetation from private land
 - Litter on private land
 - Graffiti on private land
 - Containment of waste from businesses and householders
 - A public health approach to community safety issues and hot spot areas

- Community led self help
16. We know that many issues are complex and cross-cutting, and this programme will be mindful of the scope and work of other partnerships. For example, the Homelessness Reduction Partnership, the Community Safety Partnership and R3 driving economic revitalisation and recovery. We will work with our partners to complement the programmes within their scope, and seek their support in realising our CGS ambitions.
 17. Each of our 3 main town centres have many common needs, but equally different ground level priorities linked to previously secured council investment and activities led by Business Improvement Districts directly. Digital street audits will be undertaken to inform, shape and prioritise whilst providing an auditable delivery of the output achieved from this programme of activities.
 18. A phase one refresh investment programme is proposed which can be flexed to respond to the findings of these audits. Phase one will focus on our 3 town centres, from which learning will be used to shape possible future initiative roll out across the 16 other strategically identified neighbourhood centres so we can continue to support our high streets in collaboration with our partners to reignite pride in our high streets and create spaces that are welcoming to all who visit and enjoy.

Enhanced Management of Town Centre Place Safety

19. Crime, anti-social behaviour, and fear of crime are critical issues for our town centres and in ensuring people feel safe to enjoy our public spaces. It is proposed that an enhanced management approach is applied in order to promote safety and to tackle the issues present within our busy urban centres.
20. It is proposed that the council continues to work with local businesses in the development of local Crime Reduction Partnerships, which will bring together stakeholders in a focused, collaborative effort to manage crime and ASB. Key to this is the need to improve reporting of issues and public engagement with public agencies to support action.
21. We will enhance the response to issues within our town centres through a multi-agency street-based response model, improving the co-ordination of resources, ensuring that engagement with our residents, visitors and businesses is at the heart of the approach.
22. The street audit process will be key to identifying areas where contextual safeguarding measures can be taken in order to improve public safety and the feeling of being safe within our town centres. Examples may include additional lighting, alleygating, and additional CCTV cameras. A capital programme to support these additional safety measures is proposed including £100,000 for CCTV and £100,000 for a Safety Improvement Fund.
23. Across BCP, the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) has been successful for a number of years and has been expanded in 2021 to provide additional officers for key areas. It is proposed that this additional investment is enhanced further, to provide an additional 10 officers who are able to provide enhanced management of public places and public safety across our town centres. This cohort of staff will also support the Council's seasonal response work by providing an on-street traffic management presence (including the deployment of towaway signage and cones) and car park entry/exit management at priority locations during peak summer periods. These roles will be key in engaging with local

businesses on matters of crime and ASB, and will work closely alongside the Police and other agencies in providing effective management of place safety.

24. Key to the expansion and development of the CSAS service, the enhancement of CCTV operations and management of the safer programme within CGS, is investment in lead officer resources in order to realise the ambition and ensure that focused leadership is provided. It is proposed that the Head of Seasonal Response role created to lead the 2021 Summer Resilience Programme becomes a permanent role, managing multi agency street based enforcement programmes, co-ordinating the Safer programme, leading seasonal response and managing CSAS and CCTV services. This new and exciting role will lead the development of the Crime Reduction Partnerships within our BID areas, complete a review of enforcement tools and responses (bylaws and control orders) and will be responsible for business engagement within our town centres on safer aspects of the Cleaner, Greener, Safer programme. The role will also be responsible for developing closer working across front line enforcement based staff, in pursuit of improved efficiency of response.

Theme Two Conurbation Wide Investment

Adopted Highway and Open Space Cleansing Services Review

25. Key investment to uplift cleansing resource and standards in Christchurch to that historically afforded in Bournemouth and Poole has been provided, however since BCP Council formation and the disruptive impacts of the Covid pandemic, cleansing services by in large remain delivered via separate teams and associated skills, varying equipment base and contractual arrangements.
26. To achieve full harmonisation of standards across the conurbation a comprehensive review is required as committed to within the Corporate Plan to inform future resourcing level needs to fulfil the Council's requirements as laid out in the Code of Practice for Litter & Refuse. A review will include re-zoning of the conurbations highways and open spaces in accordance with the Code of Practice, determining the most appropriate equipment and operating practices and necessary variances to support the needs of differing locations, consideration for investing in new cleansing technologies routing software, and how to digitally improve our customer contact interaction to align with both the Council's operating model, design principles and the ambition of a world class city region.
27. A cleansing review will furthermore lead to the development of a litter strategy to determine types, and provision of litter bins and a litter education and enforcement strategy. To support this review, it is proposed to invite the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) to provide constructive challenge to see how well BCP Council performs against other local authorities and propose options to improve service delivery. A cross party Member Working Group together with key stakeholders will be established and an annual public satisfaction/service prioritisation survey will be undertaken to inform future service delivery options.

Public Highway Weed Treatment

28. Untreated public highway weeds are generally regarded as untidy and a sign of poor maintenance and of increasing concern amongst our residents.
29. To improve weed treatment throughout the conurbation a £200,000 revenue budgetary investment is proposed to procure services from a specialist company contracted to apply a spot treatment application twice year weed spray usually in Spring and Summer, with the potential option of a third treatment should conditions necessitate it.

30. Weeds are generally controlled for the following reasons:
- Weeds will cause structural damage to the footways, carriageways and cycleways if they are allowed to grow freely. Hence in the long term, the risk to the authority is much greater maintenance costs will result from an inadequate weed control strategy.
 - Weed growth in visibility areas can become a safety issue and trip hazards to pedestrians
 - Weed growth is visually intrusive and heavy growth can give the impression that the highway network is being poorly maintained
 - Weed growth in the carriageway channel will cause a build-up of detritus which will impede the effective drainage of the highway.
 - There is also an expectation from the public that paved areas should be kept in a tidy manner
31. Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole is a diverse conurbation with rich and widespread green-spaces and some unique habitats. BCP Council is committed to striking a balance that ensures the area is at its best for people who live and work here, for visitors and for our plants and wildlife too. This means we have to balance our work to combat weed growth with the need to protect and preserve our rich environment. Herbicides will continue to not be used within parks and open spaces but used to spot treat only on highway and footpath weed growth.
32. Current marketplace knowledge indicates there is no direct effective chemical replacement for glyphosate and alternative treatments such as hot foams, acid, electricity and flame throwers are far less efficient in terms of material cost and labour involved applying them. Glyphosate is by far the most efficient and cost-effective method for the broad-spectrum treatment of common weeds. Some alternative methods do see specific niche use, but none can approach the value and efficacy of total systemic herbicide (specifically glyphosate), particularly when addressing the scale of treatment required for street pavements. Moreover, alternative methods (eg steam) often come at the price of a significantly increased carbon footprint.

Public Realm Asset Management

33. Since the formation of BCP Council it has become evident that infrastructure asset data across the 3 towns has not in some instances ever been captured and where it has the data has not been maintained.
34. In the future to ensure we have public realm infrastructure that is of the right type, right location and of an acceptable condition such as litter bins, benches, roadside gullies and signage, an extensive asset capture and condition survey is required to inform maintenance needs, identify opportunities for service efficiencies, future litter strategies and memorial and sponsorship policies. Wider work to define appropriate design and materials can then be undertaken specific to location.
35. An asset capture programme that will link to the council's digital transformation programme and operating model will help our services to work SMART and enable QR codes or similar technology to be applied to each located asset. Each QR code would have the asset number embedded so when the database is completed, scanning the QR code will bring back the street name automatically in a web form enabling members of the public to report overflowing bins or damaged bins, benches or signs via the councils CRM system with reports in the future digitally pushed out

to teams for actioning and enabling teams to on site update action taken live directly to the reporter.

Public Toilet Provision Review

36. A conurbation-wide evaluation of existing facilities including Changing Places facilities is necessary, to inform the development of a strategy for the future provision of this service. The review would include a gap analysis to highlight any location shortfalls of existing public toilet infrastructure and the opportunities to meet predicted future demand including via the Corporate Landlord Model, the Community Toilet Scheme and privately operated investment.
37. A 12-month fixed term resource investment including consultancy expertise to undertake this important service transformation review is needed to realise this ambition, to be supported and informed by the establishment of a cross party working group.
38. Publicly accessible toilet provision across the conurbation is regularly communicated as a concern amongst our communities and is within the Corporate Plan as a key activity to review. Publicly accessible toilets provide a role in ensuring equitable access to public outdoor spaces. Their provision allows for a space to become a destination for extended periods.
39. The Council, other organisations and businesses have the ability to provide public access to toilets and play a key role going forward in providing public toilets that are safe, accessible and clean to ensure public toilet provision addresses the current and future needs of our communities.

Cleansing of Resilience Network Highway Signage

40. Reductions in historical cleansing of network signage has resulted in many main road signage becoming ever greener and dirtier across the conurbation, not aligned to that of a welcoming destination. Safe cleansing of these roadside signs is expensive and involves the deployment of high-speed traffic management to protect both staff and road users.
41. To cleanse and improve the appearance of strategic network signage (appendix 5) an investment is proposed to undertake cleansing and any necessary replacement of signs in a poor condition that cleansing alone would not achieve an improvement. Dependant on the length of ability to remain clean highway signage cleansing would be extended beyond the strategic network in future years.

Water Quality Engagement

42. Water quality is a growing concern for our local environment and in turn residents, businesses, and tourism. The Council has been meeting regularly with Wessex Water and the Environment Agency as the regulator to raise concerns and to seek to secure the investment needed in the infrastructure both within BCP, and feeding in to our rivers, harbour and sea. This is a growing area of service delivery that is cross cutting as it pulls together regulatory, seafront and engineering specialisms. Although not the Council's statutory responsibility, there is a commitment to engage and influence to deliver improved outcomes for our communities and our environment and to do this dedicated resource is needed.
43. A staff resource investment is proposed to promote the improvement of water quality within the harbours, rivers and sea bathing waters for the benefit of water-based businesses and users; facilitate engagement between public service providers, including Wessex Water and the Environment Agency, businesses, water-user

groups, other stakeholders and the community; develop comms plans and campaigns to inform public understanding; lobby Government and service providers to influence positive change; act as the focal point between service providers, stakeholders, Council services and ward members for the dissemination and interpretation of data and information.

Strategic Greenspace Investment

44. Natural capital accounting creates a framework to link natural assets with the value of services they provide to people. It has been independently calculated that Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole's parks provide approximately 1,900 hectares of public open spaces and receive an estimated 9.7 million recreational visits per year, resulting in £231 million per year in gross benefits to local communities. £209 million per year results from health benefits, including improvements in mental wellbeing (60% of the gross value), and increases in the quantity and quality of life from physical activity (30% of gross value).
45. To fully capitalise on this vital public health and wellbeing value, resource investment is needed to build upon the existing small strategic greenspace team under pressure to deliver extensive programmes, mitigation works, policies and strategies in relation to greenspace and heathland functions. The creation of 8 x additional positions across a variety of roles including a Landscape Architect, Greenspace Project Delivery Officer, Greenspace Volunteer Officer, Geographical Information Officer will drive forward key greenspace and biodiversity projects to ensure our parks and open spaces thrive, meeting the needs of the Corporate Plan, of future generations and the environment.
46. A forthcoming Green Infrastructure Strategy that will set out a proposed strategic vision for our green sites and corridors, and the ways in which they can be created, managed and maintained to provide maximum benefits to the people who live, work or visit BCP realising our net gain responsibilities will shortly be consulted on and once live will require resource to bring the strategy to life in addition other connecting strategic reviews and projects including:
 - Play Strategy
 - Allotment Strategy
 - Tree Strategy
 - Reviewing wildflower and grassland management plans
 - Review of Public Space Protection Orders
 - Bringing forward open space project ambitions some already linked to secured CIL or grant funding including: Hicks Farm Throop Nature Park SANG, Hengistbury Head master planning, BCP natural burial ground, Baiter Park master planning, Stour Valley Partnership as examples.
47. Considered through the perspectives of health, transport, housing and climate change, as well as the more traditional lens of sport, recreation and conservation, the case for investment in green infrastructure is compelling. We can work towards creating better parks and green spaces by ensuring that investment decisions take fuller account of the wider social, economic and environmental value they provide including more connected and active communities; happier, healthier and more productive workforce; and lower costs for health and social care locally.

Grass Cutting Equipment and Seasonal Resource Investment

48. Grass cutting is regularly communicated as being important to our residents. Communication usually falls into three categories: people who are concerned about road safety issues caused by tall grass growth; people who want us to cut more as they see growth as untidy; and people who want us to cut less to allow wildflowers to grow.
49. Balancing these viewpoints can be challenging, but through a range of measures and management techniques depending on the area, we are working to refine our approach to ensure we find the right balance between safety, tidiness and allowing wildflowers to flourish.
50. Wet weather followed by a warm spell creates the perfect condition for prolific plant growth evident this year, possibly affecting our amenity areas and the safety of our highways. There is a balance required to ensure that our highways are managed safely and that areas look well cared for with the need to protect our wild spaces and to encourage wildlife, particularly insects.
51. To support the service an equipment investment to facilitate an increase in 'cut and collect' mowing is required. This is where teams collect the vegetation clippings instead of letting them decompose into the soil. Collecting the grass clippings reduces the soil fertility, resulting in lower growth rates, longer periods between cutting and a far better environment for wildflowers to establish and thrive.
52. For locations whereby routine grass cutting has been determined appropriate a seasonal increase of 10 x Grounds Maintenance Operatives April – October is proposed to place the Council in a stronger position to respond to grass and vegetation growth rates such as those experienced during 2021.

Urban Greening & Development of a BCP Council Tree Strategy

53. The council recognises the importance of trees, the benefits they afford us and the increasingly important role they can play in mitigating the effects of climate change, flood amelioration and pollution control.
54. An increase to the tree maintenance revenue budget is required to support the ongoing safe management of the Council's tree stock and address funding shortfalls from disaggregated local government reorganisation budgets.
55. Furthermore, development of a Tree Strategy for BCP Council via a cross party working group is a priority to support the Councils Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration. Addressing future planting requirements for both public amenity and privately owned trees including planning control and planning policy.
56. To facilitate this strategy a temporary Arboricultural resource for 12 months is required alongside to support the Green Infrastructure Strategy and commencement of an urban greening planting programme.

Theme Three - Community and Business Clean Green Safe Partnerships and Volunteering

57. Community and business belonging, and ownership are central to the CGS campaign which goes beyond the Council providing traditional universal services to public places. If community and business members adopt sustainable practices, engage with, use, and respect public places, the council's role can shift from reactive cleaning and maintenance to a focus on betterment and building stronger communities. The 4 P's principles for Cleaner Greener Safer being:

Place	Protect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraging clean which leads to clean • building a sense of place with the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing and designing out opportunities for vandalism and anti-social behaviour • enhancing community safety • commitment from all stakeholders to contribute
Partnerships	Pride
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders • integrating our programs wherever possible • leading by example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a sense of self ownership • fostering community pride • sharing responsibility

58. National research suggests increasingly widespread view that if a strong sense of community exists then other local environmental factors will naturally improve and individual responsibility will increase, reflecting greater respect for the place and pride in an area. To support this work a Communications Officer resource and communications budget is required to support the Head of Seasonal Response and the Head of Community Engagement to work build lasting partnerships with business and increase community self-led action.

Communications Strategy

59. A vital part of the programme is demonstrating the effectiveness of the council and showing value for money by highlighting the work that is being delivered. A communications strategy focuses on evidencing clearly the work of the programme, showing the organisation is tackling the issues that matter to many people. The communications strategy and action plan in place to support the cleaner, greener, safer programme, has objectives to:

- Instil confidence and pride amongst stakeholders, in particular residents, businesses and frontline staff
- Act as a call-to-action to communities to report issues, request activity and take part
- Deliver a creative comms campaign to support on-the-ground operations that clearly show the actions being delivered through the programme

60. A campaign look and feel has been developed and used extensively across platforms since spring 2021 to give a bright, positive feel to the comms activity. 65 content items (approx.. 2.5/week) have been generated, reaching 247,631 people (unique views) across Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram, and have been viewed over 278,500 times. Facebook is by far the most successful online platform for this campaign, with 12,000 people interacting with these posts (liking, commenting or sharing) across the six months.



61. A high level work stream programme mobilisation plan has been produced as item Appendix 4.

Summary of financial implications

- 62. The report seeks to secure a significant uplift in existing resource, revenue budget and capital investment to achieve sustainable improvements to public realm and associated environmental quality standards.
- 63. The proposal seeks both one-off and ongoing revenue funding as well as capital investment to deliver the strategy. The table below summarises the expected funding requirement across the Medium-Term Financial Plan:

Figure 1: Summary of the Cleaner, Greener, Safer Financial Implications

Cleaner, Greener, Safer Financial Implications

Theme	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24
	Revenue £'000s	Capital £'000s	Revenue £'000s	Capital £'000s	Onwards Revenue £'000s
Town Centre Refresh Pilots	262	226	1,234		399
Enhanced Management of Town Centre Place Safety	0		628	200	628
Adopted Highway & Open Space Cleansing Services Review			20		0
Public Highway Weed Treatment	0		200		200
Public Realm Asset Management	18		25		0
Public Toilet Provision Review	52		102		102
Cleansing of Resilience Network Signage			200		200
Water Quality Engagement	0		36		36
Strategic Greenspace Investment	82		290		290
Grass Cutting Equipment & Seasonal Resource Investment	0	248	208		208
Urban Greening & Tree Strategy	100		736		236
Community & Business Partnerships & Volunteering	0		41		41
Revenue implications of capital investment			69		98
	514	474	3,789	200	2,438
MTFP Pressure			3,789		(1,351)

64. Council is asked to formally approve the extra £514k of additional revenue resources being requested for 2021/22. As the request is outside the approved 2021/22 budget framework of the council the resources will need to be allocated from the Councils Financial Resilience Reserves.
65. Based on the June MTFP Update report the Council had £20.870m available in its Financial Resilience Reserves not previously committed to either the 2021/22 or 2022/23 budget of the council. Of this amount £4.2m is committed to this and other 2021/22 resource requests through the September 2021 reports to Cabinet. Further requests are likely to come forward as part of the 27 October 2021 reports to Cabinet.
66. Cabinet is asked to only note the £3.789m of additional revenue resources requested to support the Cleaner, Greener, Safer programme in 2022/23 and £2.438m per annum from 2023/24 onwards. This is on the basis that Council will formally be requested to approve these resources as part of the 2022/23 budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update report in February 2022.
67. In considering investing in the Cleaner, Greener, Safer programme members will need to reflect on their responsibility to both current and future taxpayers and its fiduciary duty to be prudent in the administration of its funds. In that regard members should consider the financial sustainability of the Council in the context of the funding gaps in the MTFP and that any drawdown from the Councils Financial Resilience Reserves will reduce the Councils flexibility in managing these future years deficits. It should also be borne in mind that the funding gaps in the MTFP are

after a number of risks including an ambitious £42.4m in annual additional transformation savings in the period before 31 March 2024

68. Capital investment of £674k is proposed as part of the strategy – with £474k in the current 2021/22 financial year and a further £200k in 2022/23. The proposed expenditure includes £248k for grass cutting equipment, £150k for 3 additional tippers, £100k for additional CCTV, £100k additional street lighting, £18k for planters and £58k for a new pressure washer. It is proposed that this investment is funded from prudential borrowing in the first instance although alternative funding sources including the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), developer contributions and new government grants will continue to be explored.
69. Prudential borrowing for these items is permitted under revised HM Treasury PWLB guidance as the capital investment is for service delivery and infrastructure improvements. Annual borrowing repayments are calculated at 3% (low risk BCP Invest to Save Framework rate) over the estimated useful life of each asset acquired. Annual borrowing repayments (commencing the first full year following year in which borrowing is taken out) is initially estimated to be £69k in 22/23 rising to £98k per annum from 23/24 onwards. It should always be borne in mind that the council is required to repay principal and interest on any loans before it can determine the resources available annually to support service delivery.
70. A detailed financial summary is provided in Appendix 3.

Financial risks

71. In addition to funding risks associated with the strategy, there is risk around cost estimates provided within the strategy. The council is already dealing with significant cost pressures from current Covid & Brexit-related market conditions.
72. The strategy also seeks to increase the council's workforce with new permanent employees. There is therefore risk of new redundancy pressures should the staffing base be reduced in later years.
73. The ongoing revenue implications of the strategy will need to be properly understood. As well as ongoing staff costs there will likely be increased annual maintenance obligations (including tree maintenance) as a result of this strategy.

Value for Money

74. The proposed strategy will address sustained restricted investment in public realm asset management, support our climate emergency declaration response and provide informed future capital and revenue needs to maintain and improve services.
75. High-quality and safe public spaces can have a significant impact on the economic life of town centres. As towns compete to attract investment, the presence of good town centres, parks, and other public spaces become vital. Companies are attracted to locations that offer well-designed, well-managed public places and these in turn attract customers, employees and services. In town centres, a pleasant and well-maintained environment increases the number of people visiting retail areas. A good public landscape also offers very clear benefits to the local economy in terms of stimulating increased house prices, since house-buyers are willing to pay to be near green space.
76. Investing in maintenance activities will both improve the appearance and importantly prolong the life of existing assets

Summary of legal implications

77. BCP Council has a legal duty under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Code of practice on litter and refuse as a litter authority must 'have regard to' the [code of practice on litter and refuse](#) which explains how different types of land should be kept clear. This means they must consider the code, and they must follow it unless there are clear, justifiable reasons not to do so in specific circumstances. Under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 BCP Council has a statutory duty to maintain a public highway in a safe manner for all users. Neglecting this duty can lead to claims against the Council for damages resulting from a failure to maintain the highway.
78. Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act 2005 provides local authorities with more effective powers to tackle poor environmental quality and anti-social behaviour. In particular the Act includes sections on nuisance and abandoned vehicles, litter, graffiti, waste, noise and dogs. Many of the new provisions relate to powers not duties. Councils can decide which powers they will use.
79. The use of chemical herbicides is carefully controlled by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). All works and herbicides used are in accordance with the Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986, the current edition of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations and Pesticides, Code of Practice for using plant protection products 2006 and take into account the Health and Safety Commission's Approved Code of Practice on 'The safe use of pesticides for non-agricultural purposes'.
80. The forthcoming Environment Bill will place responsibilities on BCP Council it aims to establish a new framework for environmental governance and to meet the ambitions of the Government's 25-year environment plan. The aim of the 25 Year Environment Plan is to set out a comprehensive and long-term approach to protecting and enhancing our natural landscapes and habitats in England for the next generation.

Summary of human resources implications

81. At present the service demand is overstressing available resource. These outcomes are not possible to deliver without additional capacity. If approved a recruitment exercise would be required and due process to secure specialist support.

Summary of sustainability impact

82. A full Decision Impact Assessment has been completed available in Appendix 2.

Summary of public health implications

83. National research shows a clear link between the quality of public realm, access to green spaces and overall public quality of life and wellbeing. The importance of public space is clearer than ever following the Covid 19 pandemic, and plays a crucial part in our recovery.
84. This programme seeks to support the improved health of our communities by providing vibrant places for everyone to enjoy. Access to good-quality, well-maintained public spaces can help to improve our physical and mental health providing a powerful weapon in the fight against ill-health.

85. Public spaces bring many important environmental benefits to urban areas as noted in the report, and this is also of benefit to the health of our communities.
86. As well as physical improvements, this programme aims to also improve public safety and enhance the response to crime and ASB. By taking a public health approach to these matters, which seeks to improve the health and safety of all individuals by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence, we can realise significant health and wellbeing benefits.

Summary of equality implications

87. An EIA conversation/screening document has been completed and approved by the EIA panel and available in Appendix 1.
88. The Cleaner, Greener, Safer programme seeks to improve local environment quality and community safety for the benefit of all. The Council has medium and longer-term plans to regenerate our place including public realm master planning and looking at surface infrastructure investment. These large capital schemes that support improved infrastructure and development are important. Cleaner, Greener, Safer however is an opportunity to focus on the issues we all see every day, know need fixing, and can be put right in the short term and are sustained into the future for generations to come creating inclusive environments.

Summary of risk assessment

89. All the proposals within this report aim to improve current standards and safeguard the environment. Failure to invest in public realm improvements will see continued decline in provision and detrimental appearance of our public spaces and public satisfaction.
90. A decision not to support increasing employee resources will impact Environment & Communities Services ability to deliver Corporate Plan priorities, service reviews, the creation of new policies and greenspace projects.
91. Inability to support in year budget growth demands related to the report will delay commencement of activities until April 2022.
92. The Council cannot resolve raising the condition of the street scene alone, it will require engagement and investment from partners, private landowners and the general public to achieve sustainable improvements.
93. Marketplace recruitment is currently challenging amongst frontline service roles. Inability to recruit to any approved funding will adversely impact realisation of ambitions.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 Decision Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 Financial Detail Summary

Appendix 4 Summary CGS Mobilisation Plan

Appendix 5 Map of Resilience Highway Network