

CLEANSING SERVICES

STORY SO FAR

Plymouth is a growing city and the most significant urban area in the South West Peninsula, covering approximately 85 km² with an average population density of 3,284 people per km². The council's cleansing services span the city and focus particularly in the city centre and waterfront growth areas, the nine district centres, 37 local centres, 169 playgrounds and playing fields, 22 formal parks, and 26 car parks. Services provided include boots on the ground litter picking and weeding, small and large mechanical sweepers, quad and knapsack weed spraying, sharps and dead animal clearance, hot washing, graffiti clean ups, and dedicated fly-tip clearance teams.

Three crews are dedicated to clearing fly-tipping in communities, aided by domestic collection crews reporting incidents via in-cab technology whilst out on their rounds. The Street Services Information Management System (SSIMS) is expected to be in place for the fly-tipping crews in early 2020.

Significant progress has been made in terms of developing a scheduled programme for the emptying of litter bins across the city, with a continuous review of locations informed by hotspots.

A review of cleansing delivery has resulted in new efficient schedules and changes to how people, vehicles and equipment are deployed across the city. There are an increased number of manual litter picking operatives in hotspot areas and a focus on district shopping centres with the introduction of an annual deep cleanse.

There is a dedicated team using a quad vehicle to undertake weed spraying on the open areas and highways, with staff with back pack manual sprayers doing the tighter areas on foot, such as shop fronts and pedestrian zones, wherever there is weed growth. Two chemical sprays are used – Round Up and Monsanto.

A further review of cleansing and weeding provisions is underway in order to bring about improvements between now and mid-2020.

KEY FACTS

The service has 56 FTE staff overall, with seasonal changes in demands meaning there is often cross working between teams. Therefore, the breakdown below is indicative as follows and does not include team leaders:

ASSETS

- HMPE footways, PCC parks and other assets (e.g. The Hoe Promenade)
- 857.67km of HMPE carriageways
- 3 large mechanical street sweepers (2014 registration and one hire)
- 9 small mechanical street sweepers (2014 registration)
- 9 barrows (with a hoe for manual weeding)
- 1 hot wash vehicle
- 1 quad bike
- 3 x 3.5 tonne tipper vehicles for fly tip clearance
- 10 x 3.5 tonne tipper vehicles for litter collection
- 1 x 12 tonne refuse vehicle for litter bin emptying
- 1 x 3.5 tonne graffiti vehicle
- 1,006 street litter bins emptied (some three times a day)

PEOPLE

- 3 FTE operating large mechanical street sweepers
- 9 FTE operating small mechanical street sweepers
- 9 FTE for the barrows
- 1 FTE for hot wash
- 3 FTE for weed control (2 knapsack spraying)
- 6 FTE for fly-tip clearance
- 3 FTE for litter bin emptying
- 60 FTE in the Grounds Team (cross working)

FINANCES

The total amount of the budget attributed to cleansing services is £2.796 million in 2019/20. The budgets for staff costs and vehicles for cleansing services are as follows, with the actuals for 2018/19 and the budget for 2019/20:

	2018/19 ACTUALS	2019/20 BUDGET
Total staff costs – Basic, NI, Super, pension, overtime and temporary agency staff	£1.26m	£1.66m
Vehicle maintenance costs	£367K	£63K
Vehicle hire costs	£541K	£280K

KEY STATS – PERFORMANCE

Customer reports – April to August 2019

- 323 customer public bin reports received – 72.3% closed within the service standard of two days (increase from 54.7% in April to August 2018)
- 1,125 fly-tipping reports (non-hazardous) – 96.7% closed within the service standard of 10 days (increase from 95.3% in April to August 2018)
- 784 street cleaning reports (non-urgent) – 86.9% closed within the service standard of seven days (increase from 85.2% in April to August 2018)
- 174 dead animal reports – 73.1% closed within the service standard of one day (decrease from 80.5% in April to August 2018).

Complaints – April to August 2019

The categories which had the highest number of complaints upheld (represented a fault with the service delivered) between April and August were:

- Street cleaning (31)
- Public pathway (15)
- Fly-tipping (13).

Street Cleanliness – April/May 2019 inspections

- 85.0% of streets inspected were of an acceptable standard for litter and detritus – 6.4 percentage points below the APSE average (91.4%)
- 55.0% of streets inspected were of an acceptable standard for hard surface weeds – 29.7 percentage points below the APSE average (84.7%).

CHALLENGES

- Litter and fly-tipping is avoidable. An estimated 62% of people in England drop litter (28% admit it).
- Social risk factors for poor street cleanliness; low income, child density, number of young-adult households.
- Physical risk factors for poor street cleanliness; housing density, no/small gardens, disused properties.
- Reactive work deflecting resources away from scheduled teams.
- Aging fleet – 1 x 12 tonne refuse collection vehicle (2012 registration).

OPPORTUNITIES

- In-cab technology and routesmart to increase efficiency and monitoring of activities.
 - Efficiency gains as a result of the automation of the customer report through to the operational crew (i.e. reduction in manual triage).
 - Identification of improvements and optimisation of scheduled work and rounds using the visibility provided by the new system.
- Increase signposting for customers to speed up action and reduce the demand for incidences outside of jurisdiction to private land/amenity owners.
- Side waste and fly-tipping enforcement.
- Strategic approach to weed and litter control across the city.
- Joined up working with Highways.

DELIVERY AGAINST KEY PRIORITIES

Progress has been made this year in delivering against key priorities, included in both the Corporate Plan and a number of pledges. For example, Plymouth City Council supported Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean (22 March to 23 April), with a local campaign promoted via social media, Newsroom, web, partners, and local press channels.

Progress against the three pledges relating to cleansing services is given below:

NO. PLEDGE

- 91 We will trial all-electric road sweepers, which can reduce both air pollution and operating costs.
- 92 We will work with responsible dog owners to campaign for zero tolerance of dog mess on our pavements and fine those owners who do not clean up after their dog.
- 94 We will raise recycling rates and tackle fly-tipping through a combination of positive campaigning and enforcement.

UPDATE

The trial took place on 17 September, 2019, leading to the scheduling of a further trial of a small sweeper to consider inclusion in the future fleet replacement programme.

A campaign working with local dog owners to help tackle the issue of dog poo in the city was launched last year to raise awareness of new enforcement measures. A series of short videos were produced with local dog walkers and Councillor Sally Haydon. Combined, these videos had the following reach:

- 12,795 video views (combined Facebook and YouTube)
- 509 Facebook shares, 'likes' and comments
- 13,764 Twitter impressions, engagements and re-tweets
- Media coverage in the Plymouth Herald and Plymouth Chronicle.

Street Services enforcement videos have been produced to encourage more awareness of and reporting by residents of environmental crime, including fly-tipping, contamination of bins, recycling centres, and dog poo. These have had a large reach across the online community. As of September 2019, the combined videos had received:

- 45,560 video views (combined Facebook, YouTube and Twitter)
- 991 Facebook shares, 'likes' and comments
- 43,575 Twitter impressions, engagements and re-tweets.