

Street cleansing consultation FAQs

The council has a responsibility to keep land free from litter and refuse as far as reasonably practicable, and individuals have a duty to ensure that they dispose of all waste responsibly and legally. Council budgets are under pressure and costs of delivering services increasing which means that some of the street cleansing services delivered by the council now may not be possible in future.

North Somerset Council's contract which delivers street cleansing services is coming to an end in April 2021. These services include mechanical road sweeping, litter bin emptying and maintenance, removal of fly tipping, street sweeping and litter picking in the main towns and larger villages, intensive cleaning in heavily used areas, beach cleaning, weed spraying and removal, seasonal removal of leaf fall, graffiti removal and removing dead animals, drug paraphernalia, clinical waste and debris from road traffic collisions.

This consultation is asking for your views about how clean your area currently is, which services you feel are most important for the council to provide, which of the services provided are most important to you, and what else could be done locally to improve the cleanliness of the neighbourhood.

Your responses will be used to decide what is included in the new cleansing service and will also help to inform other policy decisions such as the approach the council takes to enforcement of litter and cleansing offences.

On the following pages you'll find answers to commonly asked questions about the street cleansing service that may come up as you go through the consultation questions.



Does the council have to provide a street cleansing service?

The council has a duty, so far as reasonably practicable, to keep their land (or land for which they are responsible) clear of litter and refuse. This consultation is seeking ways to improve delivery of the street cleansing services which will improve individual neighbourhoods and North Somerset as a whole. Increasing costs and reducing budgets mean that less costly ways need to be found to keep land clear of litter and refuse.

What street cleansing services does the council currently provide?

The services include:

- mechanical road sweeping
- litter bin emptying and maintenance
- removal of fly tipping (including asbestos and other hazardous materials)
- street sweeping in Weston town centre and, to a lesser extent, some main towns and larger villages
- beach cleaning and cleansing of Weston seafront during peak season
- weed spraying and removal
- seasonal removal of leaf fall
- power washing
- graffiti removal
- response to removing items such as dead animals, drug paraphernalia (including used needles), clinical waste and debris from road traffic collisions. The service has an out of hours response team, so cover is available 24 hours, seven day a week.

Which parts of the current service are essential for the council to deliver?

The essential elements of the service are those which help maintain the highway network and protect public health. These will be prioritised in the new service and will include mechanical sweeping of the major road network, emptying bins and sweeping/litter picking in high footfall areas, weed control, cleaning the beach and seafront area, removal of fly-tipping and response to other events where, if left, there is a danger to people or road users.

What services do town and parish councils currently provide?

Many town and parish council provide bins, collect litter and have an important role locally in keeping your neighbourhoods clean and tidy. North Somerset Council is keen to work closely with local councils and local residents to improve the cleanliness of neighbourhoods and support local initiatives.

Why does the council currently have a contract to deliver street cleansing services?

We have used contractors for the last 30 years and there can be benefits in doing this. Employing companies that have national experience of street cleansing can make efficiencies and improve delivery. This consultation is about asking residents and businesses for their ideas about the service required for the future and the results will inform how the future service is delivered.

How can we improve cleanliness in neighbourhoods if the council doesn't have enough money?

Through this consultation there is an opportunity to change the way these are delivered in the future and potentially provide higher-quality services in areas where they are poor at the moment. This could be done through partnership arrangements and increasing social responsibility with the council facilitating such initiatives.

The cost of street cleansing would be greatly reduced if there was less litter, fly tipping and other environmental nuisance that required cleaning. Changing the way that people behave, including reducing littering and fly tipping, could have a significant impact on the cleanliness of our neighbourhoods. This consultation is also looking for views on how people might change their behaviour.

What could communities do to help?

There is already a great network of communities carrying out cleansing work in North Somerset who are really making a difference and keeping areas clean. These range from town and parish councils, individual community groups such as 'turn the tide' in Portishead or 'Friends of Grove Park' in Weston-super-Mare. There are also many individuals who carry out litter picking within their area or organised group litter picks which take place regularly. We want to encourage this community involvement and to facilitate the development of this where we can.

How can I get involved in volunteering work?

During the consultation period, we will provide details of volunteering opportunities at a group and individual level. If you want to provide your details, we will also contact you once the consultation has finished and the results published.

Can I keep the area outside my house clean?

Yes, you can - removing the odd piece of litter from outside your home can make a real difference to how a street can look.

Could fines help to improve the cleanliness of an area, or are they about making money for the council?

Littering, allowing your dog to poo in a public place, fly-tipping and overflowing bins all make a neighbourhood look worse and are irresponsible behaviours which impact on other people and spoil their enjoyment of an area. The ability to use on the spot fines or prosecution of individuals will help to deter littering and other anti-social behaviour and will help improve the cleanliness of a neighbourhood.

The environmental offences mentioned are all criminal offences, and fines can be issued to allow the offender the opportunity to avoid court action. Usually, the money received from fines only just covers the cost of issuing them as the enforcement officer must compile enough evidence to prosecute the offences if the fines are not paid. The money received from the fines is therefore not an income stream for the council.