

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT TEAM UPDATE</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>PLACE SCRUTINY</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2023</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>UPDATE</b>

**1. PURPOSE:**

To provide an update on the Community Improvement Team. A proposal to disband the Community Improvement Team (CIT) as part of 2023 budget proposals was rejected and the funding was secured to maintain this function. The report gives a background to the team and progress over 2023.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

2.1 The report is an update for information

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 The CIT team was established in 2008 using external grant funding from Welsh Government through Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) and Tidy Towns. Working with day release clients from HMP Prescoed as part of the partnership working eligibility criteria for the grant.
- 3.2 The Tidy Towns initiative was launched in 2008 working in partnership with Keep Wales Tidy to support communities in taking responsibility for their local environment.
- 3.3 The project was relaunched in 2011 to coincide with the Single Use carrier bag charge as part of a Keep Wales Tidy campaign with a greater focus on tackling litter and flytipping issues.
- 3.4 The Tidy Towns funding ceased in 2018/19 and was merged with other programs to tackle litter through Keep Wales Tidy including Caru Cymru.
- 3.5 The Tidy Towns and Caru Cymru project provided support for the hundreds of litter champions throughout Monmouthshire and we are very grateful for the work that these volunteers do in enhancing the environment and keeping Monmouthshire beautiful. The volunteer support is now embedded as a core function of the Grounds and Cleansing section at all levels.
- 3.6 Over the last 15 years the CIT team has continued to carry out projects that enhance the local communities and have been involved with many projects across the County.
- 3.7 The teams original focus on litter and flytipping issues has diminished since three dedicated environmental protect act (EPA) teams were formalised in 2019, following a restructure of Streetscene. The EPA teams have been operational since the mid-nineties but were integrated with waste and were regularly utilised for collecting domestic waste.
- 3.8 The restructure in 2019 moved cleansing including EPA into Grounds to form Grounds and Cleansing and ensured that litter and flytipping became a primary focus with a sufficient dedicated resource to tackle the issues. The Keep Wales Tidy, Local

Environmental Audit Management System LEAMS report for 2022 showed improvement across Monmouthshire for cleansing and other LEQ measures.

- 3.9 As such the CIT teams focus became community and town centre projects and in 2022 with the growing number of Town Teams across Monmouthshire and some challenges in resourcing two teams with HMP Prescoed one of the CIT was disbanded. This provided an in-year saving and support budget recovery.
- 3.10 The one remaining team has continued with the support of clients from HMP Prescoed and has been busy trialling new methods of working. In 2022 we made a commitment to reduce glyphosate as a treatment for weeds and have been trialling different methods for weed removal. The CIT team as been used to trial different ways of working before the processes are rolled out across the grounds and cleansing workforce.
- 3.11 The team also carry out work that would not be prioritised by the core workforce and projects where there is no council or legislative duty to carry out the work.
- 3.12 The team also support events like Usk Show but with the huge challenges on budgets it is becoming increasingly difficult to justify projects and events and the focus is likely to shift to carrying out core and legislative duties.
- 3.13 The Chepstow, Abergavenny and the newly formed Caldicot and Magor Town Teams work closely with Town and Community Council to prioritise works that are improve the environmental quality in their local communities. The town teams are paid for through precept and managed by MCC. This approach empowers and gives more control to the local communities and allows the teams to focus on delivery of projects that are important to them.
- 3.14 Discussions with Wye Valley Community Councils, Monmouthshire Town Council and Usk Town Council about establishing the Town Team approach in their communities will be a key priority in 2024.
- 3.15 In 2024 we will continue to work with HMP Prescoed and develop more opportunities for clients to integrate with Town Teams to compliment existing resources. We will also investigate how Town Teams may be able to assist with a wider range of local priorities eg potholes.
- 3.16 The future of the CIT will continue to be reviewed as we move forward in 2024 and will continue to evolve as new projects and budget challenges present themselves. Our focus remains to improve the local environmental quality.
- 3.17 A Members workshop is planned for January/February to discuss litter, flytipping, town teams and potential for enforcement for litter and dog fouling. The workshop will be used to inform the work programme for 2024.

#### **4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

As this is an update and no proposal to change to services there are no equality and future generations evaluation issues.

#### **5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

N/A

**6. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

N/A

**7. REASONS:**

Update requested by Place Scrutiny

**8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no resource implications at present and monitoring and review of CIT will continue throughout 2024.

**9. CONSULTEES:**

N/A

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

N/A

**11. AUTHOR: Nigel Leaworthy**

**12. CONTACT DETAILS:**

**Tel:**

**E-mail: [nigelleaworthy@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:nigelleaworthy@monmouthshire.gov.uk)**