

REPORT FROM: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES MANAGER

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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FOR INFORMATION

LOCAL IMPACT OF NATIONAL DRIVER SHORTAGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide for information an overview of the impact that the national shortage of large goods vehicle drivers is having on the delivery of frontline services within Pendle.

1. The HGV driver crisis, which has rumbled on throughout the summer, shows little sign of abating. There is reportedly an estimated shortage of 90,000 HGV drivers nationally.
2. Government actions to date have included temporary work visas for qualified EU nationals, relaxation of drivers' hours legislation which governs the length of time which HGV drivers are legally allowed to work, and encouraging holders of heavy goods vehicle licences to come back to the sector.
3. Pendle has recently lost three Cat C drivers who have gone to jobs in the private sector. The immediate impact on services has been masked through the use of frontline supervisors who were redeployed to drive refuse collection vehicles. As the situation continues staff have been asked to return from leave to cover critical services and street cleansing activities have been reduced. This has impacted on the mechanical street cleansing schedule and the removal of fly tipping and bulky DIY's.
4. In addition we have at times deployed non LGV vehicles rather than LGVs into rural areas due to a lack of drivers.
5. In response to the vacancies which have occurred we have successfully recruited two drivers and four labourers. We have agreed for funding to be provided to cover Cat C training for four current frontline members of staff and will pursue driver goods vehicle apprenticeships for new staff members when opportunities arise. We additionally have three staff members already working through the DGV apprenticeship scheme though this has been impacted by the pandemic and subsequent delays in obtaining licences, medicals and vocational training.
6. Our latest attempt at recruiting Cat C drivers has however been unsuccessful. It is also proving more difficult to take on temporary agency staff.

7. Nationally, there have been reports that waste collection councils have been forced to reduce or suspend services e.g.
 - Derbyshire Dales District Council has been forced to suspend all food waste collections and has warned residents some recycling and domestic waste collections will be missed.
 - Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has moved its weekly bin collections to fortnightly for most households and suspended all green waste collections.
 - Derby City Council has also been forced to delay some collections and suspend its garden waste collections as well.
 - Both Reading Borough Council and Doncaster Council have temporarily suspended their garden waste collections to focus on maintaining statutory refuse and recycling collection services.
 - Somerset's Waste Partnership has experienced disruption to waste collections which it expects to continue indefinitely.
8. Across Lancashire the position is broadly similar to Pendle with other staff redeployed to drive and increased training of non-driver staff to get licences. So far services have by and large been maintained.
9. The situation, however, remains critical. More drivers may be attracted to jobs in the private sector with better pay and inducements. As winter approaches more sickness absence is inevitable, in particular due to flu and Covid, which will exacerbate the problem. Due to these factors there is a risk further disruption to services will occur.
10. A further report will be submitted to the Committee should things deteriorate significantly.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: None arising directly from the report

Financial: None arising directly from the report

Legal: None arising directly from the report.

Risk Management: The loss of CatC drivers could impact on the delivery of critical, statutory and income generating services.

Health and Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Sustainability: None arising directly from the report.

Community Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Equality and Diversity: None arising directly from the report.