



Cabinet Member Report for the Environment

Northampton Borough Council

10th March 2014

Environmental Services

The Borough Council is continuing to work with Enterprise to monitor the collection of refuse bags. There continues to be some small areas of poor compliance, and Environmental Protection are considering enforcement action in appropriate cases. Planning is now in underway for the distribution of the next supply of green bags in the areas where they are still in use. Where possible, the Borough Council is working to have bulk bins installed at blocks of flats for the collection of bagged waste. Our Neighbourhood Wardens are continuing to help with education and enforcement to assist with the changes to refuse collections.

Parks

Work to lay a new cross park pathway through Eastfield Park is currently underway. The 400 metre long path will run through the middle of the park, connecting one side of the park to the other and improving access to the lake for anglers and other park users. For the past seven years the Friends of Eastfield Park group has been asking for a wheelchair and pushchair friendly path through the park to improve accessibility so that the park can be enjoyed by local people all year round. Currently there is no pathway to the lake which means that it is underutilised as a recreational resource. The improvement scheme will cost around £30,000 and be paid for out of s106 monies.

Work is underway to install a new children's playground at Briar Hill Park. The Borough Council has worked with The Children's Centre, PCSOs, Neighbourhood Wardens and parents of the school children at Briar Hill Primary to make sure the playground is appropriately designed with suitable facilities for local residents to use and enjoy. The new play equipment being installed includes; a wobble board, an adventure course with a rope bridge, a team swing, City Spinners, an Air Rider, toddler swings and a new bench. Work to install the new equipment is expected to be completed by the end of February.

Bloom

Community and voluntary groups, businesses, schools, churches, allotment holders and keen gardeners have been invited to take part in this year's Bloom competition. More groups than ever before took part in Bloom in 2013, but we would like even more people will take part this year. The theme for 2014 is remembrance and celebration, as this year marks the centenary of the outbreak of World War One and the 825th anniversary of our town charter.

Environmental Health

Our Environmental Crime Officers and Neighbourhood Wardens have worked together to pursue two successful prosecutions. One Town Centre resident was found guilty of fly tipping a sofa and fined a total of £620, and another resident was fined £585 for dumping bags of refuse.

Licensing

Eight taxis were taken off the road immediately or given a delayed prohibition in the latest round of spot safety checks in the town on 17th January. Officers from our Licensing Enforcement Team, the Police and Vehicle & Operators Services Agency carried out the safety checks as part of their on-going public safety campaign. During the six hour operation, 37 vehicles were stopped and inspected to check that they were roadworthy and met public safety standards. Six Private Hire Vehicles and two Hackney Carriages were taken off the road because they failed to meet safety standards. Offences included dangerous tyres, mechanical faults and lighting offences. Another 21 drivers were issued with advice or warnings about parts that were wearing to the point of failure.

Work has been undertaken to address illegal taxi ranking to ensure the smooth operation of the North Gate Bus Station, and two flagging operations have been undertaken for private hire vehicles which resulted in two drivers being caught illegally taking fares.

Carbon Management

We have received confirmation that the Borough Council is under our energy usage threshold for the second phase of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Saving Scheme. This will result in a significant financial saving in future years.

Councillor Mike Hallam

Cabinet Member for the Environment