



## Cabinet Member Report for the Environment

Northampton Borough Council

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2015

### **Environmental Services**

The Administration is committed to a clean and safe Northampton and has worked hard over the last four years to address concerns raised by the public to provide an important service to local people.

The Enterprise contract was signed by the Liberal Democrat administration on 20th April 2011 and began in June 2011. The Administration has addressed a number of challenges within the Enterprise contract during the last four years. The weekly collection of recyclable material has resulted in 118,713 tonnes being collected for recycling since 2011. Food waste was introduced in January 2012 and since then 8,306 tonnes of food waste has been collected which has been diverted away from landfill.

### **Neighbourhood Wardens and Park Rangers**

The Administration re-introduced Neighbourhood Wardens from 2011 when there were 9 wardens. There are now 15 wardens. The Administration remains committed to providing Neighbourhood Wardens across the Borough as an important frontline support to communities, and local parish councils and residents associations.

The Administration introduced Park Rangers to the town's parks and green spaces. Three Park Rangers were introduced in September 2011 and the number was increased to 4 Park Rangers in 2012. The number was further increased in 2013 and there are now 6 Park Rangers.

The Administration has invested over £250,000 additionally to the Neighbourhood Wardens and Park Ranger schemes since 2011 with a further investment planned in the next financial year.

Neighbourhood Wardens and Park Rangers have worked together with local communities to assist with clean-ups and planting days. They also have access to four wheel drive vehicles to help carry out patrols and to make them more visible.

### **Allotments**

The Administration has worked with the Northampton Allotment Association to ensure allotments are provided across the town and to address concerns that have been raised. Over the last four years this Administration has undertaken a number of works including new water tanks, repairs to internal roads, and safety and access improvements.

### **Northampton in Bloom**

The Northampton in Bloom season is always an important part of the town's calendar with flowers bringing the town to life. The Administration has remained committed to the Bloom programme and has sought to involve more schools, businesses, community organisations and neighbourhoods in the annual competition. The Administration has also extended the flower displays to Winter in Bloom and Spring into Bloom, as well as the traditional summer flowers.

The Bloom programme has always sought to reflect other events. In 2013, the programme and in 2014 the theme was “Remembrance and Celebration” to reflect the events taking place in the town including the 825th anniversary of the town’s charter and the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War. This included a floral display on St Peter’s Way supported by The Royal British Legion.

The Administration has continued to invest in Northampton in Bloom each year and was awarded first out of 62 towns, cities and villages for most improved area in 2014, and has extended the programme now through winter, spring and summer.

### **Parks and Open Spaces**

The Administration has committed massive investment in our parks and open spaces since 2011 totalling over £14million.

The improvements included refurbished aviaries in Abington Park opened in May 2012 with new bird sheds, feeding stations, breeding boxes and perches, refurbished toilets in Abington Park opened in 2012 and work was also carried out to the Bandstand in July 2011. The work was recognised with the Park winning its first prestigious Green Flag award in 2014. Delapre Park enjoyed success winning the prestigious Green Flag Award in 2013 and retaining it in 2014.

At the Racecourse the Umbrella Fair Organisation was granted a lease to take control and refurbish the Ground Floor of the Pavilion - refurbishment plans are coming along well and toilets in the Ground Floor are now open to the General Public. The tennis courts at The Racecourse, Abington Park and Becketts Park were all resurfaced in 2014.

Major improvements were also made along the riverside at Midsummer Meadow with new lighting installed in January 2015 connecting the Skatepark, The Ark restaurant and café with Becket’s Park.

In Eastfield Park, work was carried out in February 2014 to install a new pathway from Skiddaw Walk to the lake area and connect to the existing pathway to the rear of Newby Court and Lodore Gardens. As well as the new path, the plans included the addition of a new bench and litterbin at the lakeside and other general environmental improvements around the lake.

The overall investment in the town’s parks and open spaces has meant improvements to Abington Park, Becketts Park, Bradlaugh Fields, Dallington Park, Delapre Park, Errington Park, Far Cotton Recreation Ground, Kingsthorpe Recreation Ground, Lings Park, Midsummer Meadow, Thornton Park, The Racecourse, Upton Park, Victoria Park, West Hunsbury Park, Penvale Park and other green spaces across the town including new play equipment.

### **Green Flag Awards**

The Administration was committed to recognising the fantastic parks and green spaces within Northampton and is pleased that Delapre Park has retained Green Flag status and Abington Park was awarded Green Flag status for the first time in 2014.

### **Fly-tipping**

Administration has maintained a zero tolerance approach to littering and fly-tipping. During the last four years, a total of 79 fixed penalty notices were served and 30 people were prosecuted.

### **Junior Wardens**

The Junior Wardens scheme has continued to expand and has now worked across Northampton in 17 primary schools. The course, run jointly with Northamptonshire Police, allows children to get involved in activities to start them thinking about anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping and litter, health and well-being and personal safety.

### **Park Management Committees**

In keeping with a manifesto commitment, the Administration introduced Park Management Committees for Delapre Park, Abington Park, The Racecourse and Eastfield Park to allow park users and local groups to have a say in the management and future plans for the town's parks and green spaces.

### **Environmental Health**

The Administration has taken environmental health matters seriously and 96 Noise Abatement Notices have been issued since 2011..

### **Licensing**

The Licensing team has undertaken enforcement work with 229 vehicles receiving cautions, 371 vehicles were suspended until defects were rectified including 262 that were prohibited by VOSA since 2011.

The Licensing team have worked in challenging circumstances to ensure that Northampton is safe and taken prompt action, when required, to ensure the licences are properly enforced. In October 2011 we were all shocked and saddened by the tragic incident at Lava and Ignite which sadly led to the deaths of two young women. The Administration pledged that we need to learn lessons from this tragic incident and the Council will continue to work to ensure this case is properly concluded.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Christopher Malpas and members of the Licensing Committee for their help and support during my time as the Cabinet member.

### **Carbon Management**

The Council has also made significant energy savings since 2011 and the Carbon footprint has been reduced by 2,650 tonnes of CO2 since May 2011. The savings made are as a result of energy efficiency measures that have included rationalising office space, insulating building, new LED lighting in car park, upgrading lighting in offices, installing high efficiency water boilers and upgrading computer facilities.

I have been very honoured to serve as the Cabinet member for the Environment since 2013. It has been a busy time and I am very proud of everything we have achieved and I would like to thank Cllr Stephen Hibbert and Cllr Brian Oldham who both served as my Assistant Cabinet member during my time in office and who were a great help to me.

**Councillor Mike Hallam**  
**Cabinet Member for the Environment**