



Cabinet Member Report for Environment

Northampton Borough Council

16 September 2019

Environmental Services Contract

Refuse and recycling collections go from strength to strength with improvements in recycling rates and a decrease in the number of missed bin collections.

Street cleansing is also seeing improvements with the main issue in the summer being around weed spraying. Whilst, the warm and wet weather was not a good mix – the previous weed treatment sub-contractor has now been replaced and a more robust inspection regime put in place.

Despite the very challenging weather, grass cutting has gone well and the mowing schedules have been kept up to date – with only the occasional slippage at the start of the season when the wet weather took the crews off the road completely.

There are a number of projects ongoing in the section at the moment, including reviews of various operational policies, along with improvements to Westbridge operations depot.

We are currently also preparing for transfer approximately 3000 properties from sacks to bins in late September/early October– this will introduce wheeled bins to those properties that were missed out under the previous Enterprise contract bin roll out.

We are working with NPH to assist in tidying up areas Housing Land thus creating environmental improvements for residents.

Investigations are ongoing to upgrade the Towcester Road Cemetery Chapel to include a multi faith area and hygiene facilities, existing and provisional plans have been drawn up.

Parks and Open Spaces

The MUGA (multi-use Games Area) at Victoria Park has been re-lined, as the basketball and football markings had worn off. Also, the adjacent tarmacked area has had a children's train track and hopscotch game permanently marked out. New "Welcome" signs have also been installed at the main entrances.

The Racecourse has had a replacement bird's nest swing installed after the original one was damaged.

St Crispin's Allotment – A low level fence and gate has been erected within the allotment to create an enclosure adjacent to the residential home. This is so the gardening group with in the home are able to be part of the allotment. The works also include a new footpath.

Neighbourhood Wardens

The Neighbourhood Wardens are still as busy as ever and have carried out the following:

- They have investigated 158 incidents
- They have issued 207 Statutory notices
- Issued 12 Fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping
- Issued 12 fixed penalty notices to businesses under the Environmental Protection Act - Duty of Care, for not having the appropriate documentation for their waste disposal
- They have removed 26 illegal vehicles off the road

Enforcement

The total number of fixed penalty notices issued by the environmental enforcement team during August was 274. Notices were issued during the period in Kingsley, Kingsthorpe, Riverside, Semilong and Castle Wards.

As I confirmed at a previous Full Council Meeting, Kingdom have kindly agreed to extend their sponsorship of the drop in the Bulky Waste Charge from £25 to £15 from the initial period of 3 months to the rest of the Financial Year. The funding has also enabled us to increase the number of time slots available for collection by around 50%.

On 17 July, officers from the environmental protection team executed a warrant and seized stereo equipment and speakers from a property in the east of Northampton. This type of sanction is used relatively infrequently and in this case it has proved to be effective in dealing with a noise problem.

Environmental Health

Work is progressing on the technical work required to define the precise boundary of the proposed air quality management area in the town centre. Once completed a report will be presented to Cabinet to seek the formal approval of the designation of the area.

Air quality monitoring continues at over eighty sites across the town. The raw data up to the end of July is published on the Council's website

Recent reports in the press spotlighting premises with poor food hygiene ratings have highlighted the work carried out by officers from the food and safety team. When inspections highlight poor standards of hygiene and management, advice is given and where appropriate enforcement action is taken to ensure that safe food is provided. I am pleased to report that over 95% of the food businesses in Northampton are broadly compliant with food law requirements.

Climate Change Forum

The first meeting of the Climate Change forum was well received by all those who attended and a date for the second meeting will be set and circulated shortly.

Councillor Mike Hallam
Cabinet Member for Environment