

Report for Area West Committee on the Performance of the Streetscene Service

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Purpose of the Report

To update and inform the Area West Committee on the performance of the Streetscene Service in the Area for the period April 2015 – April 2016.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the report.

Report

The major focus of the service so far for this period that affect Area West, are listed below.

- Routine cleansing and grounds maintenance
- Highway weed control

Operational Works

Over the last few months we have focussed on the normal pattern of seasonal matters such as litter clearance, rural road sweeping, ditch maintenance and horticultural works.

During 2015/16 we delivered two applications of herbicide as programmed through the highway weed killing operation. We are currently starting this work program for the 2016/17 season and aim to deliver the same level of service in this financial year.

The herbicide that we use is Round-up pro-biactive which carries no hazard classification and when coupled with an approach of spot spraying individual weeds rather than 'blanket spraying' vast areas, does I believe provide the safest cost effective method of weed control available to us when considering the size of the area that we maintain. We recognise that there are some concerns regarding the use of Glyphosate in some parts of the community and we are consistently monitoring government guidance on this matter and will respond in line with published guidelines.

Since the last Area Report, we have fitted weed removal brushes onto the road sweepers and have focussed on removal of soil & weeds that have built up on kerbed areas of the roads around the Area. This work plan has made a notable impression, we have cleaned the main roads, roundabouts and splitter islands on the A303. The programme has removed many tons of soil build-ups from our main road system and as a result of this work, we are seeing reduced local road pooling due to improved water access to road drains & less weed growth along these routes.

Our work with Chard Towns amenities team continues and in the coming year we will be delivering the road sweeping on behalf of the town, while the Amenities Team will continue to carry out the pavement sweeping. In addition to this, we have recently risk assessed the tree stock of Chard Town Councils open spaces and developed a work program designed to provide proactive tree management.

One aspect of the service that has always been an area of demand has been the calls for additional bins around the district. In response to this we have reviewed our service and made changes that have resulted in an increase in capacity. We are therefore, able to accommodate some additional requests should they be required to address litter and dog waste issues across the district.

As always, we continue to focus on managing the number of flytips found in the district, the chart below shows the numbers of fly tips collected from Area West over the year.

AREA WEST	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTALS
Ashill		1			1		2				1		5
Broadway	2		1							1			4
Buckland St Mary	1	3					1						5
Chaffcombe	1		1			2	1		1				6
Chard	4		8	5	7	3	6		7	1	7		48
Chillington													0
Chiselborough				1						2			3
Combe St Nich	2	2	2		2	1	1	2	1	2			15
Crewkerne	4	3	5	2	1	5	4		1	3	1	2	31
Cricket St Thom							1	1					2
Cudworth		1				1			2				4
Dinnington	2	2	1		1	1						1	8
Donyatt	1					1				2			4
Dowlish Wake	1			1		1							3
East Chinnock	1	1	2	2			3			2		2	13
Haselbury Pluck	1			1									2
Hinton St George				1			1		3	4			9
Horton						3	1	2					6
Ilminster				1	2		2		2				7
Kingstone	1	1	1		2	1			1	2		1	10
Knowle St Giles		2		1	1	3							7
Merriott			5	5	2	1	2	2	1	1			19
Misterton		1			1		1					1	4
North Perrott				1		1					2		4
Over Stratton													0
Tatworth/Forton	9	1	3		1	1		1		2	3	1	22
Wambrook	2			2		1	3		1				9
Wayford							3						3
West Chinnock			1										1
West Crewkerne			1		2	1		2	1				7
Whitelackington		2	1		1			1					5
Whitestaunton			1										1
Winsham		3					1		1				5
TOTAL WEST	32	23	33	23	24	27	33	11	22	22	14	8	272

In Area West we find that the levels of tipping over the year show 272 instances of dumping compared to 256 reported fly tips for the same period last year. Although we are seeing an increase of 6% increase in the Area, we are at the same level of clearance across the district as a whole, as during the previous year when we cleared 948 tips across the district compared to 951 this year.

We recognise that dumping on private land is not included in this recording and in certain locations this is a problem for members of our community. We will be working to develop ways in which we can assist landowners to address these issues over the coming months.

During the autumn, our teams spent a number of weeks removing leaves from across the area and for the coming autumn we are investigating ways that we could use what we collect to recycle as mulch.

Since the last report, we ran a trial of operating a night shift road sweeping round that focussed on sweeping the main roads around the district; while the remaining rounds were re-worked to pick up the cleansing of the towns and villages. After some minor teething issues, we have successfully introduced a system that is both effective and acceptable to the staff involved. The results of this change are very encouraging as they are allowing us to make better use of our machinery whilst sweeping major routes around the district at night that are dangerous to access 'during the day'.

The pavement sweepers that we took delivery of late last year have been deployed and are working their way around the district, The rounds are scheduled to prevent conflicting with refuse/recycling days and we are finding that the quality of cleaning that this equipment provides is of an excellent standard.

Earlier this year the team supported the Clean for the Queen initiative that was taken up by a number of parishes and towns throughout the district. In Area West we worked with The Seavingtons, Haselbury Plucknett and Misterton. Should any other towns or parishes have cleansing or environmental initiatives, we would be delighted to work with them if they are interested.

The Parish Rangers employed by the team have been very busy and feedback on the contribution they have made to their respective parishes continues to be very good and we are continuing to develop the scheme with more parishes as requests are received.

During early January we held the first meeting of Parish Environmental Wardens at Lufton Depot. The idea of the scheme is to develop a network of key individuals in each parish which will develop relationships with the service to work with us to address a wide range of environmental issues – from reporting a problem through to working with our teams to deliver locally important projects. Should members or Parishes be interested in joining this group, please give me a call on the number listed above for a chat or to arrange for us to come and talk with the Parish Council about the scheme.

Our horticultural teams have completed the annual work programmes including the winter ditch maintenance, shrub bed maintenance and hedge cutting programs. We also completed the maintenance of Public Rights of Way in South Somerset in line with the County Councils work program.

The team has also invested in long term maintenance works on a number of ponds and attenuation features across the area with notable works carried out on the attenuation pond at Merriott & landscape works on the Minnows pond in Chard. We will continue to develop these sites over the coming season.

This year we offered free Christmas tree shredding in the towns around the district and we recycled a good number of trees. The scheme received a good response from residents in the towns that took part and we aim to repeat this next Christmas.

Since the summer, the team has been working very closely with the Yeovil Cemetery Team and together we are making notable improvements to the delivery of this service. This is a very specialised area of work and there is considerable expertise available within the service. In order to maximise good practice across the district we are available to work with other burial organisations to compare work practices and ensure that best work and health & safety practice is being followed. Recently we have been working with the Chard cemetery team to share best practice and we are currently looking to develop business continuity plans for both organisations based upon working cooperatively. Should you be interested in discussing this in more detail, please contact us to arrange a meeting.

We continue to develop staff in a range of both operational and managerial areas of work in order to improve capacity, deliver high quality safe services and to equip the team to deal with emergency response works in a professional and safe manner. Recently we have been speaking with both the Chard cemetery team and the Crewkerne Amenities team to share opportunities for training and development.

What's coming next?

- Spring / Summer annual work programmes
- Delivery of the Highway weed control program
- Development of the Parish Warden Scheme
- Ongoing development of our depot facilities

Financial Implications

All of the matters highlighted in the report have been achieved within service budgets.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

Continue to deliver schemes with local communities that enhance the appearance of their local areas.

Continue to support communities to minimise floodwater risks.

Maintain street cleaning high performance across the district.

Background Papers

Progress report to Area Committees on the Performance of the Streetscene service
