

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

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Purpose of the Report

To update and inform the Area South Committee on the performance of the Streetscene Service in the Area for the period June 2016 - 17

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the report

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

- Routine cleansing and grounds maintenance
- Christmas tree shredding
- South West in Bloom
- Yeovil Town agreement
- New paths in parks
- 50,000 Bluebells planted in Bluebell Road
- Staff training
- Annual work schedule
- Health and Safety
- Annual budget

Operational Works

Since the last report, the service has delivered the annual work schedules and once again we are pleased to inform members that this was delivered to plan. We are now managing the 'spring rush' of work which is now the main focus of the teams.

The service is also pleased to report that once again it ended the last financial year within budget targets, as did the Yeovil Cemetery where we found considerable savings while maintaining an exceptional level of service.

We also reduced our staff sickness levels to 9.4 days per Full Time Employees (FTE) from the previous year's level of 14 days per FTE. We aim to reduce this further to a target of 8 days per FTE.

In addition to these improvements, we have recently analysed the complaints that we handled and found that across all of the service that make up 'Streetscene', 52 complaints were reported and handled, but only 27 of these, were genuine service related complaints, whilst the others were passed to the relevant authority such as the Waste Partnership or County Highways. The detail of these is attached at the end of this report.

In the last financial year we delivered two applications of herbicide as programmed through the highway weed killing operation. The quality of the control was excellent and we aim to maintain this level of service in the coming year and spraying is currently underway.

This year the team has purchased an additional quad bike and has trained more staff to be able to operate this equipment, to enable us to improve our service even more in the future.

Last year we worked with Glastonbury Town Council to investigate non-chemical options of weed control using a hot water system and we carried out trials using a number of different methods. Unfortunately the hot water system was very costly to employ and gave limited weed control as it is only effective on annual species of plants, unless high frequencies of application are employed, we simply do not have the required resources available to operate in this manner. However, the system would be very useful in specific situations and we could draw on this if required.

Managing the Health & Safety of the workforce is a critical part of our work and having reviewed and reworked our 'working around water' safe systems of work, we have since carried out a review of working alongside the highway, using a health and safety specialist to offer advice and guidance to the team. The outcome of this approach has resulted in the development of flow-chart type guidance for staff of volunteers to enable them to make informed, consistent decisions regarding the safety measures needed in any relevant situation. We are currently finalising a similar format to provide guidance staff and volunteers who may find they are working around water in both ditch maintenance and flooding related situations.

I have attached a draft chart at the end of this report which shows our new approach to interpreting health and safety information on issues where traditional information may be ambiguous. We believe that this is a major step forwards in health and safety management.

We continue to invest-in and develop our team, last year undertook extensive training on a wide range of customer focussed, health and safety and service related aspects of work.

The service also contains a number of apprentice positions, and once again a 'home grown' apprentice has been recruited into a permanent position within the unit having shown great potential and we are now interviewing to recruit our next apprentice in the horticultural service, with our operational staff carrying out the interviews, thus further developing their ownership of the service.

The Parish Ranger Scheme continues to flourish, with a number of parishes using the scheme to add an enhanced level of service to their parishioners. Should any members wish to find out more about the scheme or any other of the services that we offer, we will be delighted to discuss their needs with them.

This year we once again offered our 'Christmas Tree Shredding Service' which proved to be a great success with approximately 3,500 trees being recycled from 43 towns and parishes across the district. As a result of this, the tree chippings were re-used and a notable lack of 'dumped' Christmas trees in lay byes and hedges was seen. We received very little in the way of fly tipping in the areas designated for recycling, which was very welcome and we aim to offer this service to the public again in 2018.

Each year we aim to improve our open spaces, and this year we installed tarmac footpaths and carried out tree planting at Milford and Alvington open spaces enhancing these areas and making them more accessible to the public.

We also planted 50,000 native bluebells, under the trees, along Bluebell Road and we will continue with this theme throughout the whole area over the coming years.

In the South West in Bloom competition last year, Yeovil once again received a Gold award which delighted us! In addition to this our Yeovil in Bloom Officer, Lesley Jellyman has also been asked to act as a national judge in the Britain in Bloom competition and we are very proud of her achievement. The team has recently installed the summer bedding displays and erected the baskets for this years initiative and we are confident of further success in 2017.

We have also worked with Yeovil Town to review and update the service level agreement between the town council and the Streetscene service for the management of the towns green areas and open spaces.

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 South over the last financial year.

AREA SOUTH	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16	Sep-16	Oct-16	Nov-16	Dec-16	Jan-17	Feb-17	Mar-17	TOTALS
Barwick	6	2	4	1	1	2	12	1	2	8	1		40
Closworth				1		1							2
East Coker	1		1		1		4	1	1	2		2	13
Hardington Mandeville		1	1		1	1		3				3	10
Odcombe	1	2	1	1		1		5	2	2	2		17
Stoford													0
West Coker			2	1	2			1				1	7
Brympton/Yeovil Preston	6	7	4	3	5	1	4	10			1	19	60
Yeovil Central	5	2	2	6	1	11	11	6	2	22	10	7	85
Yeovil East	4	4	6		7			7	2				30
Yeovil South	2	3	4	1	7				1				18
Yeovil West	1		1		1			1					4
Yeovil Without	4	2	3	3	4	2		12	7	1	2	5	45
TOTAL AREA SOUTH	30	23	29	17	30	19	31	47	17	35	16	37	331

Unfortunately we are seeing a notable increase in the numbers of incidents across the district as a whole. For example during the period 15/16 we cleared 951 flytips which compares to the same period in 2016/17 when we cleared 1108 tips at a cost of £62,541.

Having analysed the figures, we believe that the changes involved with the introduction of the SWP 'vehicle and trailer permit scheme' controlling access for small vans and trailers at HWRC's has led to the rise in figures. This conclusion has been reached after analysing the fly tipping data which shows the increase in fly tipping numbers being in the size of load of a small van.

Following the Clean for the Queen initiative was taken up by a number of parishes and towns last year, with East Coker taking part, my thanks to those who helped with this initiative.

This year has seen the establishment of effective working arrangements with Community Payback groups being directed to carry out 'deep cleaning' operations across the town which involves weed and leaf removal, hand sweeping and litter picking. Areas cleaned are noticeable on a Monday morning as the black bags of waste collected is laid out ready for collection by our core team. Great credit should go to the Streetscene Coordinator Nick Allen for his work with this group to make these arrangements effective on an ongoing basis.

This year the team has also started working with the charity Key4life who arrange work placements for young men who have come out of prison and in order to help them integrate into society again, we are working with them to enable these individuals to gain experience and skills to help them in their futures. We believe that indications are that this is a very successful charity with excellent results from their approach and we are delighted to be working with them.

What's coming next?

- Summer delivery of the annual work programmes
- Continued development of the workshop as an MOT station

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.