

## **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 May 2014 – November 2014

### **Recommendation**

Members are invited to comment on the report

### **Report**

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

- Routine cleansing and grounds maintenance
- Highway weed control
- Rights of Way maintenance

### **Operational Works**

As usual the main focus of the service has been the delivery of routine street cleansing and grounds maintenance across the Area. Our teams have settled following some changes to personnel and the staff have performed consistently well through the year.

One area of work that has received on-going focus has been the highway weed killing operation. The service now has two bespoke weed spraying quad bikes operating, and these provide the capacity for two full applications of herbicide a year across the district. This will make a notable difference to the towns and villages as this operation becomes more and more embedded in the service. We aim to continue spraying throughout the winter period as often as conditions allow.

At this time of year we are focussing on clearing tons of leaves from across the district, using a mixture of road sweepers, leaf suckers and manual effort! This year the leaf fall has been later than normal due to the warm weather, however this is 'normal business' for the service and we are targeting key areas. This year we have made arrangements for the community payback groups to assist in this operation as we work to develop links with them. We have also continued to work in partnership with Martock Parish and Somerton Town Councils, sharing equipment and labour when possible to increase the level of service to the public.

In addition to this, we have also discussed different approaches to managing graffiti in specific locations and carried out some joint training on graffiti removal with Martock, and we believe these will continue to show ongoing improvements to the service in the parish.



<b>AREA NORTH:</b>	<b>Apr 14</b>	<b>May 14</b>	<b>Jun 14</b>	<b>Jul 14</b>	<b>Aug 14</b>	<b>Sep 14</b>	<b>Oct 14</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Seavington	1		1	2			1	5
Shepton Beauchamp	1				1			2
Somerton	5		1	3	2	3	2	16
South Petherton	3	5	2	2	13	4	1	30
Stocklinch								0
Stoke Sub Hamdon	1		1	1				3
Tintinhull	2			2	1		2	7
<b>TOTAL AREA NORTH</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>167</b>

The Parish Ranger Scheme has continued to develop and the service now employs three Rangers across the district. In Area North we have schemes working in the Seavingtons, Shepton Beauchamp, Compton Dundon, Lopen and Martock. We aim to continue to develop the program with more parishes over the coming year.

Our horticultural teams have completed their 14<sup>th</sup> grass cut of the year and they have started the winter work program. Already they are delivering the maintenance of the flood alleviation schemes that we are responsible for managing, and they have also carried out weed removal and arboricultural works around the St Cleers pond in Somerton.

Winter mowing is programmed to start in the second week of January, assuming the weather isn't too wet! This mowing operation is hugely beneficial to the look of the district, preventing long lush growth on highway verges and other grassland. If this operation isn't delivered, when the main mowing season starts in March, there is a huge amount of debris left by the mowers which spoils the look of the district for a number of weeks.

This year we have delivered the grounds maintenance for Somerton Town Council at a number of their sites and also carried out cutting of three areas of Rights of Way maintenance from the County Council, unfortunately we did not maintain the pathways around the Langport area, as these formed part of an area extending through Sedgemoor.

This year the service has renewed the bulb planting scheme to towns and parishes, with the focus this year being a mixture of bulbs including Muscari, Leucojum, Galanthus, Fritillaria, Hyacinthus and Ornithogalum. In Area North we will be providing bulbs for planting at Norton sub-Hamdon, Muchelney, Lopen, High ham, Ash, Long Load, Shepton Beauchamp, South Petherton, Ilton, Seavington, all of which will be planted by local groups.

Looking forwards, the horticultural service will be working as part of a nationwide initiative led by the Friends of the earth to help bees which are in decline across the nation. To achieve this, we will be planting areas of wild flowers, incorporation pollinator species in our planting schemes and erecting bee hotels in various locations. Should members have areas within their wards that would be suitable for these kinds of initiatives, we will be very pleased to hear from you and work with you to develop these habitats.

As well as environmental developments, the major focus for the service will be focussing on improving signage and accessibility on and around our open spaces. A strategy is currently being developed to deliver improvements to our open spaces over the coming years.

### **What's coming next?**

- Winter work programs – completion of ditch maintenance schedules, shrub bed maintenance, winter mowing and bulb & tree planting schemes
- Completion of leaf clearance work
- Litter picking rural roads
- Continued highway weed control

### **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.

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