

## **Performance of the Streetscene Service**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

To update and inform the Area North Committee on the performance of the Streetscene Service in the Area for the period November 2014 – April 2015

### **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
- Main Road litter picking
- Working on specific projects

### **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 over the last few months. Unfortunately we have recently experienced some staff sickness which has brought with it some operational challenges, however we are working with these members of staff to get them back into action as soon as possible.

One area of work that has received on-going focus has been the highway weed killing operation. The services' quad bikes are now operating and making good progress, to date Ilminster, Somerton, Huish, Langport and Curry Rivel has been sprayed, Yeovil has been started and the team are now in other large towns across the district. This puts us well on course to deliver two full applications of herbicide across the district as previously planned.

This year we also worked with the community payback groups (essentially the replacement for Community Service) and we have worked to develop good working arrangements with them. Although this relationship has been some time in developing, we are very close to having established processes that will enable us to deploy working parties around the district carrying out work in all wards and parishes. Whilst carrying out these duties, the Payback Team will be easily recognisable as their hi-viz vests have the Payback logo printed on them. As part of this working arrangement, the payback team will store their vehicles and equipment at our depot; this provides the team with secure storage whilst developing better communication and working practice between both parties.

One area of work that we have recently focussed on has been the litter picking on the A303; as usual, our teams have recently completed the winter clearance of the verges. However, in order to improve the cleanliness of this important route we have reorganised one of our teams so they will spend two days a week throughout the year, cleaning this and other major roads through the district. One aspect of cleaning the A303 that has always presented a problem, is the central reservation area. This part of the dual carriageway in particular accumulates litter which is very noticeable.

In order to safely access and clean this part of the road, we have met with Skanska, who are the contractors appointed by the Highways Agency to carry out maintenance of Motorways and major trunk roads throughout this area. We discussed the issue that we are trying to deal with and how best to safely carry out the work. It was agreed that by working together we will be able to deal with the problem and arrangements were made to coordinate our operations with Skanska's maintenance works. This way, our staff can work safely within the traffic controlled areas set up by the Skanska operatives and we can clean sections of the central reservation. This cooperative approach to the work has already started, with a section around South Petherton being the first area to be cleaned. We are very grateful to the help we are receiving from the team at Skanska and look forwards to continuing to work with them.

Our partnership approach to working with Martock & Somerton using the services pavement sweepers has continued and is showing notable improvements in the cleanliness of these towns. My thanks to all those involved in making this a success. The service was successful in acquiring capital monies to replace these aging machines and we will be replacing these with newer models later in the season.

We also continue to focus on managing the number of flytips found in the district, the chart on the next page shows the numbers of fly tips collected from Area North over the year.

Currently we have some cases being pursued through the courts and we expect to hear the outcomes of these in June. Our review of the records, show that the vast majority of these tips are the size of a small van load or less, indicating that most cases are domestic rather than commercial in their source.

<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>Nov 14</b>	<b>Dec 14</b>	<b>Jan 15</b>	<b>Feb 15</b>	<b>Mar 15</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Aller	1	2	1	1					1			1	7
Ash													0
Barrington				1		1					1	3	6
Beercrocombe													0
Bower Hinton													0
Chilthorne Domer	1	1	3							1			6
Compton Dundon													0
Curry Mallet		1			1	1	2	2		1			8
Curry Rivel	1			1	1		2	1			1		7
Drayton									1				1
Fivehead				1		1	1						3
Hambridge & Westport			2				2		2	2		1	9
High Ham	1		1	1		2	1		1	1		1	9
Huish Episcopi	1			1	3	2	1					1	9
Ilton		1	1		2	3							7
Isle Abbotts													0
Isle Brewers	2									1			3
Kingsbury Episcopi		3	1		4				1	1	6	2	18
Langport			1	1		1						1	4
Long Load				1		3				1			5
Long Sutton					1	1		1				2	5
Lopen			1			2	4	1			1	1	10
Martock	1	4		5	5	4	1	1	1	6		1	29
Montacute	1			1	1		1			1	1	2	8
Muchelney				1									1
Norton Sub Hamdon	1							1					2
Pitney					2								2
Puckington													0
Seavington	1		1	2			1	1			3		9
Shepton Beauchamp	1				1							1	3
Somerton	5		1	3	2	3	2	5	4	2		3	30
South Petherton	3	5	2	2	13	4	1	5	1	2	7	3	48
Stocklinch													0
Stoke Sub Hamdon	1		1	1							2		5
Tintinhull	2			2	1		2	2		1			10
<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>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>264</b>

In Area North we find that the levels of tipping are higher than during the previous 12 months, with 223 flytips were cleared for the same period the previous year. We have reviewed the records of what has been deposited and where it has been left. Our enforcement officers are now focussing their efforts on the locations where most dumping has occurred and signage has been erected and cameras have been deployed in an effort to deter the depositing of the rubbish.

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 Montacute, Compton Dundon, Lopen and Seavington St Mary. All of the schemes are receiving positive comments and we aim to continue to develop the program with more parishes over the coming year.

Our horticultural teams completed last years work schedule and are now well underway with this seasons work. In our annual work program we aim to deliver:

- 16 grass cuts on most grassland and 11 cuts of highway verges.
- 5 applications of herbicide on planted areas
- 2 applications of herbicide on designated hard surfaced areas
- 1 or 2 hedge cuts (depending upon plant species)
- 3 pruning operations throughout the year (depending upon plant species)
- Annual maintenance of small trees
- Weekly clearance of flood screens
- Annual ditch maintenance operations on SSDC controlled flood alleviation schemes
- Plus
- Other non-routine works and arboricultural works that are carried out as required.

One example of this kind of non-routine operation would be the bulb planting initiative that we reintroduced last year. In Area North we worked with towns and parishes to introduce plantings of a mixture of bulbs including Muscari, Leucojum, Galanthus, Fritillaria, Hyacinthus and Ornithogalum. These were provided to Chilthorne Domer; Curry Rivel; Fivehead; Hambridge & Westport; High Ham; Huish Episcopy; Langport; Long Load; Martock; Montacute; Norton sub Hamdon; South Petherton; Stoke sub Hamdon; Tintinhul; Curry Mallet and Kingsbury Episcopy , all of these bulbs were planted by local groups of volunteers and we are starting to see the results of these plantings.

The team has also started work on the pond at St Cleers in Somerton, so far the pond has been dredged of silt and the reed mace has been removed. Over the coming months we aim to replant the area with a mixture of suitable plant species; install interpretation boards detailing the wildlife around the pond, plant species growing and install benches for visitors to use while they enjoy the area.

In 2014 the service was successful in tendering for the maintenance of Public Rights of Way in South Somerset, and we delivered the service as specified by the County Councils Officers, in line with the designated work program. This year, the service has submitted tender documents for this and which has been successful and we have been awarded two of the contracted areas, one of which contains parts of Area North.

As well as delivering our operational works, a major focus for the horticultural service will be to improve signage and accessibility on and around our open spaces. These developments will enable greater use to be made of our green spaces for everyone, while making the visiting experience more enjoyable.

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

- Spring and summer work programs shrub bed maintenance, hedge cutting, spraying and mowing
- Ongoing developments to the cleaning systems along the main roads and A303 in particular
- Delivery of the Rights of Way contracted works
- Delivering the years highway weed control program

- Development of signage and accessibility in open spaces

## **Financial Implications**

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

## **Implications for Council 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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