

Area North Committee – 28 November 2012

## 10. Performance of the Streetscene Service

*Strategic Director:* Vega Sturgess, Operations & Customer Focus  
*Assistant Director:* Laurence Willis, Environment  
*Service Manager:* Chris Cooper, Streetscene Manager  
*Lead Officer:* As above  
*Contact Details:* chris.cooper@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462840

### 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 March 2012 – November 2012.

### 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.

- Lean Thinking process for Street cleaning and Environmental Enforcement
- Spring & summer maintenance operations
- Olympic torch preparation

### Operational Works

What a year this has been so far! We have experienced the wettest summer for 100 years! Not the best conditions for the delivery of our services, not just the mowing and herbicide applications, but also road sweeping is harder as the sweeper fills with water and bin emptying is considerably more difficult when the bin bag holds several litres of liquid. However, despite these challenges, we have managed to tackle some major events.

First and foremost was the royal visit. Our team was heavily involved in preparing for the event, working with the town councils involved, followed by the subsequent clear up of the locations where the crowds collected. The team were simply magnificent, with key works being delivered in the weeks leading up to the event, then working through the night before the visit, erecting crowd barriers and other infrastructure as directed by the police.

Later in the summer, the subsequent jubilee celebrations were supported by the service, often with regards to pre and post celebration cleaning or mowing of the targeted areas.

### Street Cleaning works

In addition to these 'one off' events, the team has been involved in cleansing arrangements following carnivals held across the district and is sharing sweeping

equipment with the staff employed by Martock P.C. and these arrangements are showing noticeable benefits to the town.

Our street cleaning teams continue to clean the Area on a daily basis, and we have a work schedule designed to litter pick along the districts rural roads. We will be rolling this work schedule out in December when the grass on the verges has died back allowing our teams to spot the litter more easily.

Along with this work program we will also be working to ensure that all kerbed areas of roads are clear of soil and detritus & where possible, areas of road and pavements which have walls against them are cleared of soil build-ups. We believe that this will both improve the look of the area and ensure that we get maximum surface water drainage performance.

The team continues to focus on managing the number of flytips found and reported across the district, and this number has continued to rise slightly, in Area North this year we have had 199 flytips reported between March and October this year, compared to 192 last year for the same period. The highest percentage of these consists of household waste, this does not include calls for missed refuse or side waste, but is household waste which has been moved and dumped. In response to this we have diverted more enforcement time to tackling this issue and indications are that we are now seeing a decline in the number of cases; this is very encouraging but also very time demanding

### **Horticultural works**

Our horticultural teams have just completed the summer maintenance of grassland, hedges & shrub beds. This has been a challenge throughout the year due to weather conditions; however the teams have persevered and delivered services well in spite of these difficulties.

The teams are currently carrying out the winter ditch maintenance on SSDC managed watercourses and continue to maintain the trash screens that are vital in preventing flash flooding on our own land. In addition to these works, the team will be removing marginal vegetation which is overtaking the 'pond' at St Cleers in Somerton.

Recently the Environment Agency (EA) restructured their operations and took the maintenance of critical ordinary watercourses (COW's) 'in-house' and this affects some of the major watercourses in the District. In Area North, this means that Hele Lane Stream in South Petherton and Wagg Rhyne in Huish Episcopi will be the responsibility of the EA as will the trash screens associated with these watercourses.

The horticultural teams have started the winter maintenance of shrub beds across the area, and these works will be completed by April. The service has recently designated one of our members to focus solely on weed control throughout the year, and we are expecting this to provide an improvement in service delivery as a result. With regards to weed control, we are currently trialling a new herbicide that is for use on non-productive porous surfaces, such as gravel paths, around obstacles, etc, and we are hopeful that this will perform successfully and be an additional 'tool' for us when maintaining the district. Unfortunately this product is unsuitable for the treatment of street weeds so the team will continue to use Glyphosate to address this issue.

We aim to carry out winter path maintenance works to the open space at St Marys Park in Huish Episcopi which will enhance the area and improve access through that part of the town.

This winter our teams will once again be planting spring bulbs with parish councils, with sites at Ash, Chilthorne Domer, Curry Rival, Curry Mallet, Fivehead, Hambridge and Westport, High Ham, Langport, Long Load, Martock, Montacute, Norton, the Seavingtons, Shepton Beauchamp, Somerton, South Petherton, Stoke Sub Hamdon, Tintinhull, Kingsbury Episcopi, between 1,000 and 2,000 bulbs are being planted in each of these locations.

In addition to these plantings, we will also be planting bulbs on land which we manage in line with site improvements. If any members have suggestions regarding this topic, please contact either myself or Steve Fox at Lufton Depot.

The tree risk assessment process continues to be carried out, works identified and addressed so we maintain a safe and healthy tree stock. The service and other associated services are currently ensuring that we are consciously checking for any traces of the 'new' fungus which has devastated Ash tree species across parts of the continent in order to minimise the chances of this contaminating our tree stock.

The team is eagerly awaiting the arrival of our two new apprentices who will be joining the team in December, and I will update you on their progress in due course.

During the winter period, our teams will again be carrying out risk assessments of all the open spaces that we manage, rectifying any issues that are identified such as replacing damaged fencing or levelling surfaces.

### **Lean Thinking**

As part of the Councils Lean Thinking program, the 'Lean Team' has been working with the Streetscene team looking at the processes used to deliver the street cleaning and enforcement services. These processes have now been reviewed and we will soon receive the final report on the service, its resources and processes. I would like to pass our compliments to the lean team for their approach to the review, and thanks for the suggestions that arose from the review.

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

- Completion of the ditch maintenance program
- Litter clearance on roadside verges
- Completion of the bulb planting program
- Leaf clearance
- Completion of the program of deep cleaning of car parks
- Deliver a program of heavy soil removal from identified kerbed areas of roads
- Continue with highway weed control operations
- Conclusion of the Streetscene 'Lean' process

### **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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