

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 Area North for the period November 2015 – May 2016.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the 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

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. Our horticultural teams completed the annual work programmes including the winter ditch maintenance, shrub bed maintenance and hedge cutting programs. Currently we are in peak growing season with mowing and weed control keeping us fully engaged, whilst routine litter control, bin emptying and fly tip removal continue as normal.

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 completed the sweeping programme for removal of soil and 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 localised pooling of water on roads due to improved water access to road drains and less weed growth along these routes.

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 North over the year.

AREA North	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTALS
Aller		1											1
Ash									2		2		4
Barrington											1		1
Beercrocombe													0
Bower Hinton													0
Chilthorne Domer	1					1		2				2	6
Compton Dundon	1	1											2
Curry Mallet	1	1	3	2				1	1	1	2	1	13
Curry Rivel	1	4						1	1	3		3	13
Drayton			1	1		3							5
Fivehead		3		3	1	1	1		4		1	2	16
Hambridge & Westport				2	1	1					1		5
High Ham			1				1		2	1	1	6	12
Huish Episcopi				1	2	1	1		2		2	2	11
Ilton					1			3				1	5
Isle Abbotts	1		1					1				1	4
Isle Brewers													0
Kingsbury Episcopi	2		2		2	1			1	2	1	1	12
Langport		1									3	1	5
Long Load				2			1					1	4
Long Sutton				1			1					2	4
Lopen							2						2
Martock	3	2		2	4	1	3	1	1		1	1	19
Montacute	1	2	6	2			3				2		16
Muchelney								1	1				2
Norton Sub Hamdon	1						1		1				3
Pitney										2		1	3
Puckington													0
Seavington		1		2	1	2					1	1	8
Shepton Beauchamp							1					1	2

Somerton	1	1	1	1	1	3		1		1	1	7	18
South Petherton	3	1	4	3	8	4		3	2	7	12	10	57
Stocklinch											1	1	2
Stoke Sub Hamdon				1					1		1	1	4
Tintinhull	1		2	2	6				2	1	4	1	19
TOTAL AREA NORTH	17	18	21	25	27	18	15	14	21	18	37	47	278

In Area North we find that the levels of tipping over the year show 278 instances of dumping compared to 264 reported fly tips for the same period last year. Although we are seeing a small increase in the Area, we are finding a reduction in numbers across the district as a whole, as during the previous year when we cleared 1157 tips across the district compared to 1083 this year.

Having analysed the figures, we believe that the reduction is due to the street cleaning teams collecting single black bags of rubbish as routine litter rather than recording it as small fly tips. 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.

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 North we worked with Curry Rivel, South Petherton and Somerton. Should any other towns or parishes have cleansing or environmental initiatives, we would be delighted to work with them if they are interested.

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

The team was also involved in works at Langport to clean out the ditch which runs alongside the very attractive riverside walk. Here we used a small boat to access the litter that had been blown or thrown into the water to leave the area clean, whilst our arboricultural team did some work on the overhanging trees to improve the views along the route. We also worked with a number of volunteers to litter pick the town and local footpaths enjoyed by residents. My thanks to Cllr. AparicioPaul for mustering the volunteers and liaising between us all to make the works run smoothly.

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. We have recently worked to support the Turnhill Ranger Scheme and have started some drainage related works with South Petherton. We are continuing to develop the scheme with more parishes as requests are received.

We have continued to liaise with the Parish Environmental Wardens across the district. 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. We will very soon be holding an open day/evening for the Wardens to see the range of work that the team carries out which will help us explore options for improvements together.

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 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.

Last year the team submitted a bid for capital expenditure to improve access for all into and around our open spaces. I am delighted to inform you that phase one of a three phase program was agreed and we will be installing a tarmac pathway around Minchington recreation ground in Norton-sub-Hamdon. We will be submitting a further bid later in the year to extend this work and make our parks and open spaces more useable.

Fortunately this winter we did not suffer from the flooding that has affected the area in the past, however we have focussed on training our staff to work in and around water in order to meet our health and safety responsibilities. This training has presented some challenges to the way that we have always traditionally operated and we are currently reviewing our working practices to ensure that we can operate as safely as possible in response to flooding and other water related works.

What's coming next?

- Spring / Summer annual work programmes
- Highway weed control program
- Ongoing development of the Parish Warden Scheme
- Ongoing development of our depot facilities
- Review of working in water practices

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.
