

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

Portfolio Holder: Jo Roundell Greene – Environment Portfolio
Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess – Operations and Customer Focus
Assistant Director: Laurence Willis – Environment
Lead Officer: Chris Cooper, Streetscene Manager
Contact Details: chris.cooper@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462840

Purpose of the Report

To update and inform the Area West Committee on the performance of the Streetscene Service in the Area for the period April 2014 –March 2015.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the report.

Report

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

- Routine cleansing and grounds maintenance
- Highway weed control
- Rights of Way maintenance
- Main Road litter picking

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.

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 service now has two bespoke weed spraying quad bikes operating, and these now 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 recommence spraying throughout the district as soon as the litter picking of main roads is completed and as weather conditions allow.

This year we also worked with the community payback groups 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 deploying working parties around the district carrying out work in all wards and parishes. As part of this working arrangement, the payback team will store their vehicles and equipment at our depot; again we believe that this will develop better communication and working practice.

We have also continued to work in partnership with Chard Town Council; sharing equipment when possible to increase the level of service to the public. We believe that these

T/worth & Forton		1	3	2		2	2	4		2	16
Wambrook	1	11				1		3	1		7
Wayford		1	1	1		1			1		5
West Chinnock					1	1	1	1			4
West Crewkerne		1	1	6			1	3	2	2	16
Whitelackington											0
Whitestaunton		2						1			3
Winsham					1						1
TOTAL AREA WEST	30	24	27	32	22	24	29	27	20	21	256

However, in Area West this trend is reversed as 319 flytips were cleared between April 13 and Jan 14. This shows a reduction of 63 instances compared to the same period of the previous year. Analysis of the figures shows that this is primarily due to a considerable reduction in the numbers of flytips reported in Chard.

The Parish Ranger Scheme has continued to develop and the service now employs three Rangers across the district. In Area West we have schemes working in Chiselborough, Buckland St Mary, East Chinnock, Merriott and Tatworth. We aim to continue to develop the program with more parishes over the coming year.

Our horticultural teams have completed their 15th grass cut of the year and they are nearing completion of the winter work program.

In 2014 the service was successful in tendering for the maintenance of Public Rights of Way in South Somerset, and this year we have delivered the service on behalf of the County Council, in line with the work program specified by the Rights of Way officers.

This year the service also renewed the bulb planting initiative, working with towns and parishes to introduce plantings of a mixture of bulbs including Muscari, Leucojum, Galanthus, Fritillaria, Hyacinthus and Ornithogalum. This year we provided bulbs to Misterton, Merriott, Wambrook, Horton, Ashill, Wayford, Chaffcombe, Ilminster and East Chinnock all of these bulbs were planted by local groups of volunteers.

The horticultural service is also 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.

In Websters Way, Chard, our arboricultural team recently found a bees nest in a tree that was programmed for removal. In line with this initiative, we worked with a local bee keeper to move the nest and retained the main stem of the dead tree for habitat – a great success!

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 which we believe will provide great improvements to our open spaces.

What's coming next?

- Spring and summer work programs shrub bed maintenance, mowing
- Completion of 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
