

## **Council – 13 November 2017**

### **Report of Councillor Jones, Portfolio holder for Clean and Green**

#### **Key Achievements**

##### **Over the last 12 months Clean and Green have:**

Delivered changes to the waste collection service, implementing a 4 day working week, (Monday to Friday service) for waste collections. This has reduced vehicle movements on the highway, resulting in financial and operational efficiency savings.

Consulted the public on the introduction of a charge for collecting garden waste and listened to what they said. We have maintained a free collection and increased the season for garden waste collections to 36 weeks, collecting the garden waste every 3 weeks from March to November.

Following NHS England's decision to stop providing clinical waste collections from domestic households within the borough from April 2017, implemented a collection of clinical waste from approximately 465 households, of which 78 receive a routine collection and a further 387 households have an ad-hoc service which may be as infrequent as once per annum.

Successfully undertook a pilot for a separate collection of textiles at the kerbside in partnership with a local textile re-processor. This was completed to assess the feasibility of such a scheme borough wide to be rolled out in 2018.

With fewer resources improved street cleansing within the borough. We have introduced a new regime with the borough that is split into 17 areas, areas are cleansed depending on how quickly the local environment deteriorates to an unacceptable standard. The team remains in each area for 4 days and carries out a deep clean whilst they are there. This includes litter picking, sweeping the roads and paths, removing weeds and cleaning around street furniture. Residents can also view when the service is scheduled via a web page area search, to know exactly when their street will be cleaned during the year.

Awarded a 12 month contract (with the option to extend for a further 12 months), to a specialist enforcement company to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for littering and dog fouling offences in Walsall Town Centre and the district centres. 680 FPN's had been issued up to the end of September 2017, of which 471 have been paid and 41 referred for prosecution. Court fines in excess of £400 per offence have been issued.

Assisted Community Protection (Cllr Shires Portfolio) in securing green space sites from unauthorised encampments, creating additional security measures including barriers, fencing and bunding to deter further incursions.

Supported colleagues in Community Protection gathering data from covert CCTV cameras and fly tipping incidents helping to secure an increased number of convictions with one custodial sentence of 6 months being handed out.

Supported Taxi Licensing and delivered taxi driver driving assessments to provide a tighter control of taxi drivers and an improved service. Each driver is assessed for competence against pre determined criteria including careless, thoughtless or reckless driving, inappropriate speed, failure to look properly, loss of control of vehicle, lack of judgement of own path, failure to give way, poor turn or manoeuvre and inattention or distraction.

Delivered and facilitated over 195 events across green space sites an increase of 20 from the previous year. This included 8 Big Bounce events organised by a private contractor, 42 days of Fun Fairs and 19 days of Circus's. Other events included a Pie and Ale festival at Barr Beacon, a Cultures of Walsall Event at Palfrey Park and Willenhall Music Lock Stock event. There were also 4 Bonfire / Firework displays and numerous Band Stand events at Walsall Arboretum, Willenhall Memorial Park and Palfrey Park.

Successfully retained Green Flag status at Palfrey Park, Willenhall Memorial Park, Merrions Wood, Rough Wood local nature reserve and Blackwood Park, and secured new Community Green Flag awards for the Chuckery and Old Hall Pocket Parks.

In partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council, the Environment Agency, the Canal and River Trust and Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust, contributed to the ERDF Blue Network project to improve nature conservation and public access across the Black Country. The *Black Country Blue Network* aims to increase and improve wildlife habitats close to canals, streams and rivers in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. As well as helping the Black Country's plants and animals, there's also better access for people using the footpaths and towpaths that make up the *Blue Network*. Walsall's contribution focuses on Reedswood Park and £86k is the Walsall component.

As part of a Black Country initiative, we have progressed the application to UNESCO for International Geopark status for the Black Country in recognition of the cultural and geological heritage of the area. The project is in its final stage of the application process and we anticipate receiving UNESCO'Ss final decision in September 2018. The geosites within Walsall are Bar Beacon and Moorcroft Wood.

Continued working in partnership with Public Health to improve the health and well-being of residents of Walsall via improvements with the Lifestyle Contracts. Achieving three outcomes, tackling obesity, increasing physical activity and improving mental well-being.

With the Canal and River Trust and City of Wolverhampton Council, declared the Wyrley and Essington Canal as a Local Nature Reserve. This is the first LNR along a navigable section of canal and means that Walsall achieves the national target of one hectare per 1,000 of its population.

Supported the re location of Park Hall Community Association into a shared facility at the Arboretum Cricket pavilion. The building will be refurbished and developed to support community use and enhanced facilities for visitors to the arboretum.

Worked with bowling clubs outside of the Arboretum and the Staffordshire County Bowling Association to ensure the continued provision of bowling facilities across the borough from 2018.

Completed the Heritage Lottery Funded restoration of Barr Beacon project that has significant community benefits for the local area.

## **Significant Issues**

There are still many issues within the service area, these include Health and Safety, Fly Tipping and Recycling contamination.

Health and Safety remains vitally important and within Clean and Green the number of recorded incidents has reduced. There has been 48 incidents between November 2016 and October 2017 compared with 56 over the same period the previous year. The main categories of incidents are; aggressive, abusive, verbal / physical attacks (which is increasing), slips trips and falls and injured whilst handling/ lifting or moving a load.

Fly tipping continues to be a major concern with the effects on the local environment and the costs of removing and disposing of the waste being a significant demand on tight budgets. 5,009 incidents were recorded in 2016/17 at a cost of £426,098 (based on fly capture criteria) with 2,364 incidents recorded between April and September 2017 at a cost of £221,787.

Contamination in the co-mingled dry recycling collected at the kerbside remains an issue and contamination levels have risen to circa 13%, an increase of around 1.5% from the same period last year. A 1% increase is equivalent to around £30,000 of costs.

## **Major projects / proposals**

In response to public demand, we have improved accessibility to local tip sites during seasonal peaks by opening both sites every day of the week during bank holiday weeks. We propose to further increase opening hours during summer months when

demand is at its highest but reduce winter opening hours when sites are quieter. This will be introduced from April 2018 at no extra cost to the overall HWRC budget.

We are required to re tender our waste disposal contracts, including comingled recyclable materials. New contracts will commence April 2019.

We will continue working with Public Health and other partners to review and update the Green Space Strategy integrating the Play Strategy and Public Health agenda into a new document with a five year action plan. The new strategy is scheduled to be in place by April 2018

**Councillor Jones**  
**Portfolio holder for Clean and Green**  
**3 November 2017**