

Portfolio Holder Annual Report

Portfolio: Local Environment & Health
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Debbie Taylor

Year: 2012/13

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Please provide a summary of services /areas covered within the remit of the Portfolio.

Transport and Supplies.

Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Services.

Waste Management and Cleansing

Climate Change - delivery of climate change strategy to reduce environmental impacts and ensure efficient use of resources across the following theme areas: energy efficiency and renewable energy, water, waste, and transport and increasing biodiversity and wildlife; improve social sustainability through reducing fuel and food poverty, reducing health inequality and access to healthy and local food; and economic sustainability to increase the green economy locally and encourage good sustainable development/regeneration.

Parks and Open Spaces

Health

2. Performance

2.1. Please detail areas of good performance over the past year.

Transport & Supplies

- Successful joint procurement of two new refuse vehicles;
- In house Taxi testing and MOT service is working well;
- Existing vehicle fleet is being maintained to the required standards with all inspection targets being met;
- Stores transformation was started and then subsequently put on hold until the Housing Repairs and Maintenance section transformation had progressed a little further;
- Asbestos survey undertaken at the Crossgate Depot.

Landscape & Grounds Maintenance Services

- Achieved Gold Award standard in the Heart of England in Bloom awards in 2010 - 11 and 2011 – 12;

- Worked closely with Leisure Services to ensure that the Green Flag status of Arrow Valley, Morton Stanley and Overdale Parks was retained;
- Continuation of the Improved Parking Programme at various sites across the Borough and further sites have now been added to the list for future consideration;
- Winyates Environmental Enhancement programme – significant progress has now been made with regard to the removal of the brick bin stores and the legal process that will enable this to take place. When completed this will allow for completion of the enhancement works in that area;
- A pesticide trial has taken place and has now been extended to ascertain if the use of a different chemical regime is more appropriate/effective;
- Continuation of the Capital Landscape Programme which has been undertaking smaller scale capital projects across the Borough;
- Progress has been made on the transfer of assets under Section 106 agreement at Brockhill. The initial transfer of two areas that contain the majority of the POS and drainage features will lead to the ‘unlocking’ of other transfer funds;
- Completion of a major ‘gateway’ project at Redditch Train Station that has transformed the site located between the train station and the Kingfisher Centre/Unicorn Hill;
- Ensured that major events taking place with the town centre/Church Green area have taken place successfully i.e. St Georges Day, Halfords Tour Series bicycle race;
- The major project to install the two new cremators at the Crematorium and the ancillary heat exchanger equipment will be completed by the end of 2012;
- Significant progress has been made with the Housing and Communities Agency with regard to the transfer of the last Community Related Asset package. The negotiations have now been extended as the HCA are looking to include the A435 expansion land on the eastern boundary of the Borough;
- Establishment of the new structures within the service and the development of a shared Arboricultural Service that operates

across Redditch and Bromsgrove as well as a limited shared Operational Service across both towns;

- Commenced discussions/negotiations with Worcs County Council with regard to what services and efficiencies we can share and what we can potential provide on their behalf;
- Initial discussions have taken place with Worcs Couth Council with a view to establishing a Lengthsman scheme in Redditch and Bromsgrove.

Waste Management and Cleansing

- 100% project – extension of AWC across the borough on recycling to further properties;
- Successful O&S scrutiny of recycling identified some actions to help improve recycling rates – being fed into transformation process;
- Shared Services – Appointment of a single management team;
- Two new multi-purpose 26 tonnes RCV's;
- Continued reduction of sickness absence stats at the depot;
- Publicity and awareness campaigns continued with:
Mucky Pup Campaign;
Love Food Hate Waste Campaign;
Recycling/waste minimisation campaign over Christmas period.
- Agrippa advertising on waste collection vehicles continuing;
- Love Where You Live Campaign including:
Volunteers – recruiting local volunteers/community groups;
Tackling cigarette litter;
Tackling litter in car parks.
- Agreed arrangements and improved partnership working to deal with snow clearance and gritting;
- Agreed process and way of dealing with single cars parked for sale on verges;
- Agreed Joint Strategy for dealing with fly-posting;

- Continuation of successful partnership with WCC to deal with graffiti in underpasses;
- Established joint depot Health & Safety meetings.

Climate Change

- Crematorium Energy Recovery Project;
- Phase 1 of the Solar PV project (Commercial buildings);
- Agreement to have a Graduate Placement; and
- Preparation for the upcoming Green Deal – we are ahead of other Councils.

Parks and Open Spaces

- **Achieved Green Flag status for Arrow Valley Country Park, Morton Stanley Park and Overdale Park**
A great success for a Borough Council emulating the status of much larger authorities with far greater resource, all three parks achieved a high band score placing this achievement alongside those of the most recognised parks in the country .A great selling point for the Borough alongside the ‘in bloom’ success, providing great opportunities and quality facilities for our residents and customers.
- **Completed full site inventory/assessment for green/open spaces**
The inventory ensures that the service complies with Health and Safety requirements and effectively manages the liability of the authority through effective recording and monitoring, vitally important in regard to play areas and increasingly so in relation to public space in the current climate of no win no fee compensation, the inventory/assessment provides the reassurance for our customers that the authorities green spaces are welcoming, clean and safe.
- **Improved stewardship projects and developed action points for improvement**
With 50 hectares of land currently in either entry or higher level agreements improvements ensure a maximum return on grant funding and ensures improvements to the borough and county’s biodiversity actions. Our current actions to increase the amount of land in stewardship/ move all agreements to ‘higher level’ status and focus on nationally threatened habitat have been applauded by Natural England.

- **Undertook leasing/booking arrangements for third party hire of parks**
 The booking process has increased the provision of sport and physical activity within parks and green spaces and ensured the relevant insurance and competencies are held by third parties. The system has ensured a modest income stream and increases the range of activities on offer to our residents and customers in parks and green spaces.
- **Developed a monitoring process for s106 agreements**
 The monitoring process has enabled officers to effectively track 106 agreements, monitoring developments and trigger points to enable faster invoicing and effectively matching receipts to local need. The process enables a strong audit and project delivery process.
- **Developed Borough wide Green Space Forum**
 The green space forum is effectively the Parks and Green Spaces service key customer consultative body, the forum brings together our many friends group who have specific interest in local spaces and also recreational groups such as anglers, ramblers, volunteers and local historians. The forum in the past have conducted surveys on our behalf and work with our partners such as Natural England on important wildlife and habitat improvement projects.
- **Partnered Butterfly Conservation Trust in regard to habitat management for the Brown Hairstreak Butterfly**
 An important project that has emerged from our relationship with Natural England and the Butterfly Trust, which involves the mapping of habitat and the recording of butterflies in the south of the borough, the project benefits our forum group who will receive the necessary training to identify eggs and egg laying sites.
- **Increased voluntary hours within green space to 5040 hours per annum**
 Our two volunteer groups continue to play an important role within our management of green space undertaking numerous projects throughout the borough. Many of our volunteers contribute to our Green Space Forum and assist the service with recording of flora and fauna. Our regular voluntary days with HMP Hewell have continued and our projects have featured on the national agenda in regard to the restorative justice programme.
- **Achieved two public art features with partners in Arrow Valley Country Park and Overdale Park**
 Public art plays a significant role in providing green space with identity, two art features have been installed recently at two key green space venues. The arts project at Overdale Park was

undertaken in partnership with HMP Hewell and was a significant initiative that focussed on the restorative justice programme and recognised nationally as a progressive 'good news' story.

- **Undertook project with St Stephens School to provide an outdoor learning classroom**

The recent project at St Stephens School was supported through our volunteer programme with HMP Hewell, the parks and green spaces service provided project supervision, labour and materials to install a valuable outdoor space.

- **Increased allotment occupancy rates**

Our occupancy rates within allotments have increased to the highest ever at 98.5%, we are currently looking at maximising the opportunity to increase allotment provision on a site by site process, matching local demand to supply.

- **Supported the Winyates Green Allotments lottery bid providing a resource room and disabled access toilets**

Our relationship with Winyates Green Allotment Association is a very positive one, officers supported their recent lottery bid to provide a resource room with disabled access toilet. The site is at full occupancy and has formed part of the 'in bloom' tour for the last few years.

- **Supported Dolphin Road Allotments lottery bid providing a disabled access toilet**

The allotment association committee at Dolphin Road has seen significant change over the last year; officers have supported the new members of the committee in producing generic site paperwork and their recent successful lottery bid.

- **Resurfaced Mayfield's Park and Rowan Crescent Play areas**

Two play areas have seen improvement over the past year with resurfacing to play surface.

- **Developed weekly 'Park Run' event at Arrow Valley Country Park with 120 current active volunteers**

Park Run is a national event, staffed by volunteers and supported by the Parks team, a weekly 5km run in green space venues throughout the country.

- **Fields in Trust Dedication**

5 green spaces have been proposed for dedication under the QE 2 criteria; Batchley Pond, Green lands, Headless Cross Green, Morton Stanley Park and Overdale Park. The dedication celebrates the Diamond Jubilee and holds the title and purpose of the green space in perpetuity.

Health

- The Health and Well-Being Sub-group (a multi-agency sub-group of the Redditch Partnership) has been implementing its action plan with the following three priorities.
 - reducing obesity levels in Redditch;
 - reducing the number of people smoking in Redditch;
 - reducing levels of alcohol misuse in Redditch.

The Plan takes into consideration the needs identified through the Redditch Health Profile.

- Opportunities arose in late 2011 through the newly formed Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The Group identified a funding pot for Redditch and Bromsgrove of £250,000 for new health improvement projects. The CCG approved the following projects for the Borough following which a project plan for each individual initiative has been developed:
 - child accident prevention
 - healthier catering options
 - Worcestershire Works Well
 - Healthy eating and cooking
 - Mental health well-being
 - Cycling enterprises
- The Areas of Highest Need Project (Winning Winyates) secured an additional £50,000 of funding from Public Health. The funding has enabled the Raising Aspirations Project to be developed which works with local high schools, Barnardo's and Skill Force. The initiative aim is to reduce and prevent "risky behaviour" in 13-24 year olds, and improving both and health and well being, especially with reference to alcohol and substance misuse. It aims to raise aspiration, motivation and enhance the skills base in this population range in the Winyates Target area.

2.2. Please detail any areas of concerning performance in the year.

Climate Change

- Difficulties in accurately attributing emissions to each Council during the process of shared services. Suggest a 're-base-lining' of CO2 targets from 2012/13;

- Delivery of green deal and HECA may overtake other projects. Resourcing is tight.

Health

The initial predicted outcomes for the Areas of Highest Need 'Raising Aspirations Project' have been a difficult to achieve. This has been due to increased competition from other funders and funding streams, targeting exactly the same young people. The project is being re-examined to assess feasibility and may have to move remaining funds to the lower age group.

Landscape & Grounds Maintenance Services

- Need to address issues regarding the annual scheduled maintenance work to improve performance – this will be part of the Transformation process.
- Review of the extent of the shared service arcs two towns to ensure we make best use of the resources available – in terms of staff and assets.
- Need to establish detailed maintenance schedules for work in Bromsgrove to a) establish its true extent and b) establish exactly what resources are required to manage the areas effectively.
- Church Green – little progress has been made due to the complexity of the site and the involvement of numerous partners. The overall control of the proposed improvement plan sits with Planning but we are working very closely to try to make progress especially with St Stephens Church as any potential re-ordering of the church may significantly impact on what we do.

3. The Year Ahead

3.1 Please detail the Portfolio Holder's main areas of focus in 2012/13.

Transport & Supplies

- Stores transformation will continue;
- Investigate the use of fuel cards to purchase petrol;
- Remove the storage of petrol at the Crossgate Depot;
- Transformation within the workshop;
- Replace the existing security fence along one boundary at Crossgate Depot;

- Fire alarm upgrade to take place at the Depot;
- Undertake asbestos removal identified within the recent survey;
- Increased use of framework agreements for procurement has shown savings; and
- Implementing the e-procurement system within Stores.

Landscape & Grounds Maintenance Services

- Transformation of the Service;
- Creating efficiencies and improvements via shared services;
- EEP works at Winyates;
- Completion of the instillation of the new cremators and heat exchanger at the Crematoriums.
- *Choose How You Move 2*: The following are some of the individual projects to be delivered in the short-term:
 - Delivery of personalised travel plans to residents;
 - Launch of workplace pilot with New College, Redditch;
 - Results of schools survey expected;
 - Walking and Cycling improvement schemes to be delivered;
 - Evesham Road corridor (Headless Cross) improvement scheme to be implemented;
 - Installation of transport kiosks;
 - Artwork implemented at local bus shelters and potential themed bus shelter for the Choose project;
 - Continuation of Individual Travel Marketing (ITM). The Choose travel advisers will be visiting every neighbourhood in Redditch to engage with households and sign people up to participate.

Waste Management and Cleansing

- Transformation across waste, grounds and cleansing;
- Route Optimisation and 'in cab' technology to improve efficiencies of vehicles and resources;
- Switch to 'all grey/all green' waste collection across the Borough – will improve our ability to communicate with customers/ improve publicity;
- Recycling of Street Sweepings;

- Procurement of new large sweeper;
- Procurement of new vehicle to deal with graffiti – partnership funded with 'Choose How You Move' project;
- Partnership working with WCC to improve environmental maintenance operations on high speed roads.

Climate Change

- Phase 2 of Solar PV project (Sheltered Housing Schemes);
- Green Deal – national retrofitting scheme for energy efficiency. HECA now puts an obligation on us to participate.
- Underspend on HRA solar pv budget of c£95K – identify alternative projects e.g. biomass boiler to replace existing gas boilers on communal schemes. Await launch of Renewable Heat Incentive (the feed in tariff for heat) in late 2012;
- Round 3 of Salix fund – identification of new projects. One scheme we would like to proceed with is replacing all the Palace Theatre Auditorium lights with LED versions at a cost of £2000, although payback will be within 2 years;
- Water Management internally needs to be looked at if time allows including how we can contribute to reduced drought conditions next summer;
- Choose how you Move – led by planning but has input from Climate Change team;
- Retender energy management service to allow us to monitor consumption in real time;
- Graduate placement scheme!
- Consider whether or not we wish to sign up to Climate Local (replacing the Nottingham Declaration);
- Completion and promotion of finished Crematorium Energy Recovery Project;
- Smart metering – role of LA's in roll out?
- Review Climate Change Strategy.

Parks and Green Spaces

- **Produce Green Space Strategy**
The Green Space Strategy will serve to drive the improvement of the boroughs parks and green spaces by matching people to place, providing quality spaces that match the needs of our residents and customers.
The focus of the strategy will concentrate on the function of space and bring together key aims of improving well being, sport, recreation and to affinity to space.
- **Achieve Green Flag Status**
It is an aspiration of the service to continue to improve the quality of key green space venues and remain within the top band of high scoring parks in the country. The Parks and Green Spaces team are currently looking at including one additional green space into our Green Flag application.
- **Allotment Report and Future Management Model**
The allotment report will evaluate our current usage and explore the opportunities for improvement and bench mark our current provision against national standards and regional provision. The report will also present to members a new pricing and concessions model.
- **Parks Forum / Friends / Partners**
The Parks service will produce a database of volunteers and enable the current parks forum to take a greater part in the consultative process. Through the BRAVO programme volunteers will have access to training opportunities improving their skills base and widening the opportunities for specialised activities.

Health

- Following the Worcestershire Health and Well-being Board setting its five priorities for the County, the Redditch Health And Well-Being Sub-group will be focussing on these priorities at a local level. The priorities being: Older people and management of long term conditions; mental health; obesity; alcohol; and Acute hospital services;
- The six CCG projects identified in 2.1 above will begin to be implemented during the year with the aims for each project identified as follows:
 - Child accident prevention initiative: To reduce the risk and occurrence of accidents and injuries occurring in children under 5 years old, particularly those living in the most deprived areas;

- Healthier catering options: To influence food choices towards healthier options at canteens and mobile catering services located on or delivering to industrial estates in order to reach the target group of routine and manual workers;
 - Worcestershire Works: To support businesses and employees to maximise their contribution to society by improving health, reducing work related sickness absence and thus increasing productivity;
 - Healthy eating and cooking: To enable organisations within Redditch to deliver healthy eating and cookery sessions to those living in the most deprived areas;
 - Mental health and well being: To improve the mental wellbeing of the general public and those with low level mental health needs;
 - Cycling enterprises: To develop a skilled base of young people to manage and operate the scheme which will introduce a recreational exercise activity for visitors to the Arrow Valley Park and to reintroduce cycling as a positive activity and as a sustainable mode of transport.
- The Areas of Highest Need project will continue to develop and build on the health related initiatives for the Winyates areas. This includes: the work club, money management project, Christmas parcels and environmental enhancements.