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| Briefing Paper  to  Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Place)  on  20th July 2021 |
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| **PARKS AND STREET CLEANSING UPDATE** | |

**1. SUMMARY**

1.1 This briefing paper gives Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Place) an update on the Council’s Parks and Street Cleansing services during Quarter 1 2021/22.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 The service updates in this paper are for the key Parks and Street Cleansing activities which have taken since the last committee meeting on 13th April 2021.

**3. Overview**

3.1 As we enter the start of the summer season and the busiest period for grounds maintenance, the teams are working hard to catch up following the impact of altered working schedules during the pandemic. As of May, Parks & Street Cleansing staff who were supporting the Waste & Recycling crews, have now returned to their substantive roles. However, there are occasional days where last minute support is required which can have an impact on the productivity levels of the service.

3.2 Covid-19 control measures and safe working practices remain place however, we were pleased to ease restrictions regarding vehicle sharing in June, allowing teams to return to travelling and working together.

3.3 There continues to be a rise in levels of fly-tipping and litter across the district, both on the streets and in parks.

3.4 Events and community activities are starting to take place again and we look forward to being able to offer more opportunities for people to get together and enjoy themselves.

**4. Parks**

4.1 Staffing Update

Following the retirement of the Playgrounds Inspector (Grade 2), a recruitment round is underway to appoint a replacement with interviews due to take place 15th July 2021. Recruitment of a Gardener Driver (Grade 3) is also underway with interviews due the end of July. 6 Grounds Maintenance Operative posts are currently being filled by 6 Agency staff. It is envisaged that this temporary staff resource will remain in place until September to help meet seasonal demands for work.

4.2 Grass Cutting

Following a good start to the grass cutting season in March, May and June saw significant rapid growth and inevitably caused maintenance issues and concerns from residents.

On average, it takes the Area Teams of six operatives 2.5 weeks to complete a grass cut of the entire district. In early June this was in the region of 3-3.5 weeks due to the rapid growth.

To enable our teams to get back on track, six agency staff have been sourced to support the Area Teams. They will continue working until the end of the season in September. A contractor was also brought in to provide additional resources including equipment, for a one-off cut of the grass verges on the Kings Walk estate in Berry Hill Quarry, enabling the Area Team to move onto the Bellamy Estate more quickly.

In the meantime, the Fleet Manager has been successful in trialling and hiring 2 large pieces of machinery (flail and rotary ride on mowers) specifically to cut long grass. These are modern and more powerful than our existing kit and can easily cope with current conditions. Reports from the operatives have been extremely positive with regards to the ease and capability of the machines. Moving forward, the asset list will be reviewed and consideration given to adjusting the mix of equipment to add similar machines to the inventory.

By the end of the first week of July, the grass cutting schedule was back on track across the district.

4.2 Weed Control

MDC is contracted on behalf of NCC to provide weed control on adopted highways. Three rounds of weed-spraying are undertaken each year between April and September.

In line with Procurement rules, the Contract for weed spraying went out to tender earlier in the year. Due to procurement timescales, the first spray this year was undertaken by the previous supplier, Dobsons, in April.

A new contractor, Complete Weed Control, has now been appointed and is to start the second round of spraying week commencing 12th July. It is expected a complete spraying round of the district will take 14 working days, subject to weather conditions which is marginally quicker than previous rounds. This contract will remain in place to complete the 2021-22 sprays, and could be extended into 2022-23 subject to performance and continuation of contract from County.

4.3 Green Flag Awards

The first on-site judging in 2 years took place on 2nd July at Yeoman Hill Park with judge Eddie Curry (Head of Public Realm, Nottingham City Council). As it was a Friday afternoon, the Bowls club were out in force, The Friends Group joined us and the park filled with children on their way home from school. All in all, a very positive and much welcomed joyous experience for everyone involved.

The remaining 6 Green Flag site (The Carrs, Carr Bank, KGV, Peafield, Titchfield & Quarry Lane) will be mystery shopped. All results are expected the end of August.

4.4 Other Service Updates

4.4.1 Parks Concessions

Following a number of enquiries from local business, in line with advice from Procurement, expressions of interest have been received from food venders to provide refreshments for parks visitors. These will also generate a small income. Those awarded so far are:

* The Carrs – Della’s, £2,000 per annum
* Manor – Loscalzo. £1,500 per annum

Yeoman Hill Park and King George V are to be confirmed.

Interest has also been received regarding the old changing rooms on The Carrs in Warsop with a view to transforming it into a dog grooming business.

4.4.2 Bee Kind

Wildflower planters acting as pollinators and the Bee Kind trail are in place, most are doing well, some have been subjected to ASB in localised areas but overall feedback has been positive.

Following on from this initiative, a green space audit is planned for this autumn to identify suitable areas of grassland which can be left to naturalise and allow native flora and fauna to flourish. The benefits of these areas include:

* reduced carbon footprint
* mitigating droughts and floods
* improved biodiversity and wildlife habitats
* contribution to climate stability
* protection of soil from erosion

Mown paths around and through the naturalised areas provide access for dog walkers and other parks visitors. Good examples can be found in Yeoman Hill Park, Berry Hill Park, Kings Walk Open Space and Oak Tree Heath. This will not include any grass verges, which belong to County and any changes to their maintenance regime will be led by them.

* + 1. Destination Parks

MDC has been indicatively awarded £2.94m of Towns Funding for Berry Hill Park. It is hoped that as the plan for the park becomes clearer, further funding bids can be submitted to match against the towns fund and help maximise the benefits of the grant. A working group has been established to produce a business case and masterplan for the site.

Our ambition is to improve the health and well-being of the local population by supporting more residents to be physically active such as through walking and cycling and other activities in an attractive park setting. Plans will look to enhance facilities and improve cycle connectivity in the area including to King George V Park and the Bellamy Estate.

* + 1. Pitch n Putt

The golf course on KGV Park has fully re-opened to the public again. During the summer, extra staff support from the Palace Theatre has meant we can remain open over the weekend with the added opportunity for visitors to borrow a club and golf ball if they wish. Feedback from visitors and staff has been very positive, take-up encouraging and we have seen an increase in takings during recent week.

**5. Street Cleansing**

5.1 Staffing

A recruitment round earlier in 2021 secured two additional members of staff. Recruitment is now underway to appoint a Sweeper Driver and three Driver Cleansing Operatives. Interviews are due to start week commencing 22nd July 2021.

5.2 Street Cleaning Waste

The tables below show the tonnage of waste that has passed through the Waste Transfer Station to date. Comparison with data from the previous year shows an increase of 91.73 tonnes during Qtr 1, which given the lifting of Covid restrictions and increased footfall and traffic, is to be expected.

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| **Tonnage of Street Cleansing Waste** | | | | | |
| 2021-2022 | | | | | |
|  | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4 | **YTD** |
|
| Street Sweepings (litter, weeds, detritus) | 257.4 |  |  |  | **257.4** |
| Street Cleansing (litter bins & fly-tipping) | 212.98 |  |  |  | **212.98** |
| Property Services | 6.34 |  |  |  | **6.34** |
|
| **Grand Total** | **476.72** | **0** | **0** | **0** | **476.72** |

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| **Tonnage of Street Cleansing Waste**  2020-2021 | | | | | |
|  | Qtr 1 | Qtr 2 | Qtr 3 | Qtr 4 | **YTD** |
| Street Sweepings (litter, weeds, detritus) | 206.22 | 265.44 | 315.98 | 206.52 | **994.16** |
| Street Cleansing (litter bins & fly-tipping) | 168.21 | 174.44 | 192.52 | 193.98 | **729.15** |
| Property Services | 10.56 | 8.24 | 58.40 | 4.28 | **81.48** |
| **Grand Total** | **384.99** | **448.12** | **514.34** | **404.78** | **1,804.79** |

5.3 Fly-tipping

The table below shows the quarterly breakdown of fly-tipping incidents attended to and the removal costs.

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| **Fly Tipping** | | |
|  | **No. of incidents** | **Cost £** |
| **2021/22** | | |
| Qtr 1 | 459 | 22,044 |
| Qtr 2 |  |  |
| Qtr 3 |  |  |
| Qtr 4 |  |  |
| **Total** | **459** | **22,044** |
|  | | |
| **2020/21** | | |
| Qtr 1 | 405 | 23,393 |
| Qtr 2 | 567 | 32,652 |
| Qtr 3 | 493 | 26,816 |
| Qtr 4 | 602 | 32,457 |
| **Total** | **2,067** | **115,318** |
|  | | |
| **2019/20** | | |
| Qtr 1 | 301 | 13,817 |
| Qtr 2 | 398 | 18,782 |
| Qtr 3 | 326 | 16,783 |
| Qtr 4 | 382 | 20,594 |
| **Total** | **1,407** | **69,976** |

In comparison to the previous year, there is an increase of 55 incidents during Qtr 1 but a decrease in cost. This could be attributed to the increase in the amount of household waste and a decrease in the size of the fly-tips e.g. Transit van load. Household waste is cheaper to remove and dispose of than for example a van load of rubbish dumped in a lay-by. A detailed breakdown and comparison of incidents costs is at Appendix 1.

5.4 Tidy Together

As part of this year’s Tidy Together campaign, from 1st – 25th June, 13 members of the Street Cleansing team targeted the Oak Tree, Bellamy and Ravensdale estates and removed:

* 92 tonnes of detritus and street sweeping
* 37 tonnes of fly tipping, discarded waste, litter and general street cleansing.

This is the equivalent of 13 full refuse vehicles and approximately 10 tonnes per man. Moving forward, the team are planning regular action days to target hot spot areas, which will also link into the Safer Streets project.

5.5 Safer Streets 2021/22

A second, £20m round of the Safer Streets Fund was launched by the Government in January 2021. This aims to build upon the momentum instilled by the first round of funding, offering Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Local Authorities the opportunity to invest in new hotspot areas.

The results of a resident survey undertaken in Mansfield identified 1 in 10 people stated ‘*Poor environment e.g. Poor Lighting overgrowing Trees Bushes, Potholes, Litter and Graffiti’* as a priority for the PCC led partnership to tackle.

The top 10 hot spots have been identified, mainly in the Town Centre and Safer Street inspections completed. Moving forward, a work plan is to be put in place to make the locations feel and look safer.

**6.       COMMENTS OF HEAD OF SERVICE**

6.1      The teams are now working hard to get core services back to the standard we would expect, and we have brought in additional resources to support this where necessary. The weed spraying contract is about to commence and as such residents should notice improvements over the coming weeks.

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**Appendix 1**

Breakdown of Fly-tipping Incidents & Costs

April – June 2021

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April – June 2020

