

COUNCIL

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CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	COUNCILLOR BRIAN KENNY
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. STREET CLEANSING

After successfully implementing the reduced street cleansing frequencies in July to realise the £1M saving, Biffa have just completed the first 12 week cycle of cleansing in those areas that used to be cleansed monthly. Weekly work, that is now cleansed every 4 weeks, is just starting its 4th cycle of cleanse, with the exception of alleyways which are approximately 1 week behind schedule. This is due purely to the high volumes of waste (with some alleyways requiring a whole day to be spent cleansing just one entry, due to the excessive fly tipping and Section 46 contraventions that are occurring). Biffa have committed an extra alley way team next week to get back on schedule.

Joint inspections resumed with Biffa throughout September and the results are positive, with 95% of streets being cleansed to standard, exceeding the target of 92%. The LEQ corporate indicator for Quarter 2 has also shown improvement and met the Quarter 2 target.

The team have identified around £40K of existing budget to purchase litter bins, in order to increase capacity in secondary retail areas. In conjunction with the Love Wirral Campaign, the Council is about to write to all secondary retail outlets to request their support in helping to keep their shop fronts clean and tidy between scheduled cleanses (that are now twice per week as opposed to every day). Shops will be invited to place a window sticker and other promotional material in their shop asking customers to take their litter home. They will also be encouraged to join the Tidy Business Awards scheme. This first wave of correspondence will be followed up by further information in about 6 months time.

The Waste and Environment Team are currently drafting a Litter Reduction Strategy. The Strategy will be a framework for how Wirral Council will tackle behaviour change in order to encourage people to stop throwing litter and

engender pride and ownership where they live and work. Tackling dog fouling and smoking related litter and litter arising from fast food outlets will be a key focus. The 5 year strategy (with a two year review) will focus on engaging with schools, communities and businesses and reflect neighbourhood priorities. Some consultation with schools has already been carried out to inform the strategy. Wider consultation will be carried out later this year.

2. GRAFFITI

The Graffiti contract with Lairdside Together has been extended for six months until 31st March 2014. The tender process for a new contract will be initiated no later than January.

3. GARDEN WASTE

35,200 Subscribers have now joined the service. The waste collection contractor (Biffa) have overcome most of the operational challenges of mobilising the new service and collection reliability has improved considerably in the last month.

The brown bin take back project is about to go out to tender. The preferred bidder will collect unwanted bins from households during a two week period mid to late November. Residents will be notified one to two weeks prior to their scheduled extraction day. Residents will be instructed to present their bins empty and bins containing rubbish will not be taken, as the company collecting the bins are not likely to be "licensed waste carriers". Residents ignoring this instruction will be informed that they forfeit their rights to a free collection of their brown bin. Consideration will be given to a second wave of extractions, but only if the volume of bins returned is high enough to raise the income to deploy the contractor again.

Home composting sales have increased by 480% (based on purchases made through the Merseyside Home Composting Framework). There have been 49 reported fly tips of green waste between June and August, compared to 43 the previous year. The residual waste tonnages presented in our green bins has increased by 1% through this peak season. Further waste composition analysis is due to be carried out in October to identify the levels of garden waste in the green bins. Overall across the borough, garden waste "recycled" by the public through the kerbside service and that received at Household Waste Reception Centres (HWRCs) combined is down by 7.34% in the first three months. However, more analysis need to be carried out over a longer period to determine the real effect, as tonnages can vary considerably due to seasonal variations.

We have had a lot of interest from other Councils who are seeking to implement charges for Garden Waste. Tara Dumas and myself are presenting our "model" at the annual APSE conference for Environmental Services on the 6th November.

4. WASTE STRATEGY

Wirral Council continues to take the lead on behalf of the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership. Quarterly joint meetings of Directors responsible for waste are being conducted and issues around waste strategy, procurement and efficiencies are tabled regularly at the meeting of Chief Executives and LCR Cabinet.

A joint procurement for the future processing of garden waste is underway, led by Sefton Council. A capability and needs assessment has just been launched on the CHEST to identify potential interested bidders and help inform the process. Further information on this, and the implications for Wirral Council will be presented to Cabinet in November 2013.

5. COASTAL STRATEGY

The long-term planning for the defence of the coastal environment and the associated infrastructure remains an important part of the Council's responsibilities as a maritime authority. At its meeting on 7th October, Cabinet will consider a report setting out a management strategy for coastal defence for the next 100 years, including improvements that will need to be undertaken within the next 20 years. I am proposing that the Council explore funding opportunities to maximise the government grants and other income that can be secured to undertake this important work.