

COUNCIL - 16 DECEMBER 2013

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Brian Kenny
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Environment and Sustainability
CO-ORDINATION CHIEF OFFICER	Strategic Director – Regeneration and Environment

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

Additional staff within the Waste and Environmental Services team have been trained by Keep Britain Tidy to carry out cleansing audits. Increased monitoring of standard of cleanse carried out by the contractor is now being carried out to reflect the changes to the conditions of contract. Early indications are that Biffa are managing to cleanse to acceptable standards with reduced resources despite areas going longer between cleanses. Currently both the Street Cleansing and alley way cleansing timetables are on schedule.

The leaf fall removal programme is also on schedule, with the Council receiving very few complaints compared to previous years. This is primarily due to the pro-active nature of the programme, driven by intelligence collated over a number of leaf fall seasons. Working in partnership with the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority, the Council is also using its own Ivy Farm facility to "tip off" leaf fall and transfer it to a composting facility, enabling the cleansing crews to work more efficiently. Officers estimate this has saved the Council at least £25K.

A multi-agency and cross-council pilot project is being developed to tackle "alleyway dumping". A report will be presented to Cabinet early in the New Year outlining proposals. The project proposes to re-examine waste collection systems in two terraced areas and undertake extensive consultation with affected residents and property owners in order to improve environmental quality though encouraging communities to take ownership of the public space around their homes and businesses.

2. WASTE COLLECTION (GREEN AND GREY BINS)

All residents have been provided with new calendars showing collection dates (including changes over Christmas for some residents) for the next two years. The booklet also provided reminders of what waste goes in what bin, and tips for reducing waste. Wirral's best ever "compost bin promotion" was also launched in this leaflet and in three weeks over 500 compost bins have been purchased. This is more than has been sold in the

last 4 years. Officers will be following up on all sales to help residents to compost successfully and offering free workshops for those wanting to learn more about composting at home.

3. GARDEN WASTE

Garden Waste subscribers are now in excess of 36,000, with over 350 residents signing up in November as a result of the letters going out to non-subscribers offering to collect their unwanted brown bins. Early indications are that very little garden waste has ended up in the residual waste stream, with the majority of non-subscribers opting to take their garden waste to the household waste recycling centres. There has been an overall decrease in reported green waste fly tips compared to June–October last year. In October, the Council's kerbside scheme yielded 80% of the tonnage collected in the same month last year.

The brown bin take back project concluded on the 1st December. The vast majority of residents have opted to retain their bin to use as storage, for conversion into water butts, or in case they wish to have their garden waste collected at a later date. The Council have been contacted by a number of other Local Authorities, asking for guidance and information around the transition from a free to chargeable service. The Waste and Environmental Services Manager and myself as Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability presented to over 30 Local Authorities at an APSE conference in November.

4. ADOPTION OF NEW BYELAWS IN RELATION TO SKIN PIERCING ACTIVITIES

The Authority is currently in the process of adopting new combined byelaws in relation to tattooing, semi-permanent skin colouring, cosmetic piercing, electrolysis and acupuncture. Skin piercing activities pose a higher risk of contracting blood borne viruses such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and Hepatitis. The new byelaws will allow Environmental Health Officers to enforce a minimum standard of cleanliness for cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin colouring. These statutory powers will ensure that minimum legal standards are maintained in tattoo parlours. However, to try and further improve standards Environmental Health Officers are exploring the possibility and practicalities of introducing a voluntary rating scheme for tattooists.

5. ADOPTION OF THE SUNBEDS (REGULATION) ACT

The Authority is also in the process of adopting the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010. The Act imposes a duty on anyone involved in carrying on a sunbed business to ensure that no person under the age of 18 years: uses a sunbed, is offered the use of a sunbed, or is present in a restricted zone. The health case for this legislation is clear: skin cancer incidence is increasing. The main cause of skin cancer is over-exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays. This may be from natural sunlight or artificial rays from the use of sunbeds and sunlamps. Skin cancer typically takes decades to develop, so may not become apparent until years after the damaging exposure. Significantly, malignant melanoma is the second most common cancer in 15–24-year-olds in the UK.

Adoption of the legislation will allow Environmental Health Officers to undertake test purchasing at premises offering sunbed services to ensure duty holders are compliant with the legislation.