

2015

Improving the Environment in Birkenhead



9QCH-3PU7PO

December 2014 – December 2015

Interim Report (2)

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Contents

| Description | Page(s) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Executive Summary | 2 |
| 2. Site Works | |
| 2.1 Newark Close | 3 |
| 2.2 Marquis Street | 4 |
| 2.3 Old Chester Road/Beaconsfield | 5 |
| 2.4 Bedford Road/Lees Avenue (behind Rock Ferry Merseyrail Station) | 6 |
| 2.5 Balls/Oxton Roads | 7 |
| 2.6 Townfield Lane (former petrol station) | 8 |
| 2.7 Chatsworth | 9 |
| 2.8 Derby/Harland Roads | 10 |
| 2.9 Old Southend Social Club | 11 |
| 3. Planned Site Works: Review | 12 |
| 3.1 68 Balls Road | |
| 3.2 Westbourne Road | |
| 3.3 Holt Road | |
| 3.4 Former HSBC Bank premises | |
| 3.5 Church Road | |
| 4. Developmental Works | 13 |
| 4.1 Supported Volunteering Opportunities | |
| 4.2 Health & Safety | |
| 4.3 Employment Opportunities | |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The service has worked hard to enhance the amenity landscape value of the majority of originally-referred sites. Core delivery has included (1) site clearance (2) waste collection and removal (3) landscape maintenance (4) building informal relationships with site neighbours across the Birkenhead locality (5) promoting and enthusing action(s) to be taken by site landowners.

The key challenges experienced by the Together Environmental team have been:

1. Difficulties in being able to engage with landowners (including corporates) and gaining appropriate access to sites in order to undertake the work required;
2. The prevalence of fly-tipping has meant successive site visits have been required to maintain healthy and safe environments.

HEADLINE FIGURES

Waste Removal

- 11 tons of site clearance waste removed to Bidston Waste Recycling Centre
- 30+ vehicular loads of waste
- average of 3.75 loads per month/ x1 per week

No of Site Visits (Total)

- Team have delivered c.90 service visits across the 9 most active sites to-date
- Based on service visit activity Together Environmental have allocated staffing resources (and equipment hire) of approximately £12,500 to-date
- Total Budget = £14,500

The service has carried out weekly monitoring/audit visits. The team plans to undertake the following priorities prior to project closure:

1. Community consultation/engagement particularly in respect of fly-tipping at the Old Southend Social Club site, i.e. Mersey Walk, and Bedford Road/Lees Avenue (behind 'The Bedford' public house)
2. Landowner engagement, gaining access and undertaking improvement works (if practicable) at (1) Newark Close (2) Westbourne Road (3) Holt Road
3. Ongoing site monitoring and waste removal across all identified sites

Together Environmental (LCT) and Involve Northwest identify the key learning from the Project as being:

1. The importance of management of such urban sites; regular maintenance makes a positive difference in environmental landscape and feelings of local people/communities
2. The importance of informal relationship-building with local people, often on a day-to-day basis
3. The often protracted difficulty in engaging with landowners and gaining approval for works
4. The potential value in Together Environmental/Involve Northwest in seeking additional grant funding, e.g. BIFFA Award, to match existing contractual funds, extending the reach and capacity of the service to deliver higher environmental and social returns on investment

2 SITE WORKS

2.1 Newark Close

BEFORE



AFTER



Work Completed

1. x3 tipper-truck loads of rubbish/waste removed from site
2. Local residents have been leafleted:



'IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT IN BIRKENHEAD' Newark Close, Claughton CH43 9SP

Together Environmental is working with Wirral Council to improve the environment at a number of sites across the Birkenhead constituency.

The un-adopted land behind homes on Newark Close has been identified as a priority. **We want to hear your views on what could be done to improve this local area of land.**

Patrick Roddy (Team Leader) is currently undertaking some clearance work in your area and can be reached at:

Tel: 0151 644 4500
 Mob: 07435 967 336
 Email: patrick.rodny@tctogether.org.uk

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION

- 2.1.1 The Team continue to experience access difficulties in liaison with Magenta Living (gated alleyway)
- 2.1.2 Site clearance has been difficult due to poor access and has led to inefficient removal of rubbish/waste
- 2.1.3 No responses to-date arising from resident leaflet drop

2.2 Marquis Street

BEFORE



AFTER



Work Completed

1. Site cleared of overgrown vegetation and rubbish
2. Our team were going to propose levelling the ground, grass seeding and installing a low fence to curtail dog fouling and create a safe, child-friendly, neighbourhood play space
3. The team had spoken informally with local neighbours
4. Site subsequently advertised For Sale via auction with Smith & Sons (29 April 2015)



2.2.1 The Team undertook substantial clearance works on x4 occasions

2.2.2 Team last assessed site w/c 07/09/2015

2.2.3 Team again note land For Sale by Auction (Smith & Sons)

2.3 **Old Chester Road/Beaconsfield**

BEFORE



AFTER



2.3.1 The site is visited fortnightly; the main work undertaken is litter picking, grass mowing and shrub cutting

2.4 Bedford Road/Lees Avenue

RECENT WORK UNDERTAKEN



- 2.4.1 The team visits the site 3-4 times per month
- 2.4.2 Fly tipping remains a significant problem, making clearance more difficult
- 2.4.3 The Team notes that the site has recently been signed as being 'For Sale by Auction' (Smith & Sons)
- 2.4.4 The Team advises that the erection of suitable fencing would likely have a positive impact on the levels of regular fly-tipping



2.5 Balls/Oxton Roads

BEFORE



AFTER



2.5.1 The site is earmarked for commercial development as an Aldi supermarket

2.5.2 The team undertaking grass strimming, tree/shrub clearance (especially along Balls Road East highway frontage) and cutting back of overgrowth, removal of large domestic items from fly-tipping and general tidying up

2.5.3 The team continues to maintain the site in a tidy state, usually visiting on a fortnightly basis subject to team capacity

2.6 **Townfield Lane**

BEFORE



AFTER



- 2.6.1 Site litter-picked, grass mown, rubbish removed on a fortnightly basis until June-July 2015
- 2.6.3 The old petrol station building(s) has been demolished; the team has been advised not to undertake further works



2.7 **Chatsworth**

BEFORE



AFTER



2.7.1 This site is on the Wirral Council website has being maintained by the Authority; grass cutting undertaken currently, presumably by Council contractor(s)

2.7.2 Waste and rubbish previously removed by Team

2.7.3 Shrub beds opened up; mulch wood chippings from works undertaken on Old Southend Social Club site

2.8 Derby/Harland Roads

BEFORE



2.8.1 Introductory letter sent to land owner 24/04/2015; Site Meeting on 13/05/2015

2.8.2 Quotation for site works sent 03/06/2015

2.8.3 **The Team has not received a reply from the landowner to-date**

Property at junction of Derby & Harland Roads (CH42 0LU)
'Improving the Environment in Birkenhead'

I hope you're well. Further to our site visit on Wednesday 13 May, I'm writing to provide a costing for the fencing works we discussed. Please know that our team will provide labour free-of-charge. I'm sure you may give consideration to sourcing the materials at a reduced cost through your corporate suppliers.

To supply good quality timber-constructed fencing to perimeter of land to height of 1.8M

| Item | Cost (£) |
|----------------------|----------|
| Fencing Timbers | 357.11 |
| Aggregates | 47.50 |
| Hire: Cement Mixer | 26.00 |
| Hire: Posthole Borer | 80.00 |

Sub-Total: 510.61

To supply good quality timber constructed gate 3M x 1.8M at Harland Road site entrance

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Timber Gate | 470.84 |
| Posts & Fittings | 148.46 |

Sub-Total: 619.30
Total: 1,129.91
VAT @ 20% 225.98
Grand Total: **£1,355.89**

2.8.4 The Team have undertaken the following site works:

- Wall-growing Buddleia removed by Team following neighbour concerns
- Litter picking
- General site tidying

2.9 **Old Southend Social Club**

BEFORE



IN PROCESS



- 2.9.1 Team has undertaken regular vegetation clearance (1-2 weeks) and removal of substantial fly-tipping waste
- 2.9.2 Pedestrian-facing banks have been strimmed regularly
- 2.9.3 Systemic herbicide has been applied
- 2.9.4 Honda Brushcutter (36") will soon be brought on-site and upper site gradient will be mown/shrub removal

3 PLANNED WORKS: REVIEW

3.1 68 Balls Road

Wirral Council Empty Property Strategy Team to work in partnership with Magenta Living to identify options.

3.2 Westbourne Road, Oxton

BEFORE



3.2.1 The team spoke informally with the landowner on-site who appears disgruntled by the rejection of a residential planning application and was not willing to provide a contact telephone number

3.2.2 We have only recently written to the landowner requesting an on-site meeting and to discuss potential ameliorative works

3.3 Holt Road

3.3.1 The Team has written to landowner to progress appropriate works;

3.3.2 Response currently awaited.

3.4 Former HSBC Premises

3.4.1 The Team require a site visit with Andrew Brannan, Birkenhead Constituency Engagement Officer, to co-assess potential ameliorative works.

3.5 Church Road

3.5.1 The Team are approaching HMRI to gain clarification for appropriate site works;

3.5.2 This area/site appears well maintained by, presumably, Council/HMRI contractor(s).

4 DEVELOPMENT WORKS

4.1 Supported Volunteering Opportunities

From week commencing 21/09/2015 Together Environmental will be offering volunteer opportunities in partnership with Involve Northwest's Supported Volunteering Project (Wirral Council Contract Reference: 9QZP-NR6KIT):

"The Supported Volunteering Project will form a vital role in testing new approaches to tackling issues of entrenched worklessness. It is a key project within Phase One of Wirral's Health Related Worklessness Programme which is one of 4 Public Service Transformation Network (PSTN) programmes in the borough ... The Supported Volunteering Project will provide key research and evidence for Phase One of the Health Related Worklessness Programme by delivering a small scale pilot to test the use of genuine supported volunteering as a step towards employment for DWP Employment Support Allowance claimants with a history of multiple barriers and entrenched worklessness. The Supported Volunteering Project is fully funded through the DWP Flexible Support Fund"

NB: One Supported Volunteer is due to start on 23/09/2015, initially at one day/week.

4.2 Health & Safety

Together Environmental is undergoing significant re-development in terms of policy, procedure and working protocols. Involve Northwest is co-developing and implementing refined, fit-for-purpose health & safety arrangements for the Environmental Team, for example:

- 4.2.1 Risk Assessments (Generic & Specific), including COSHH
- 4.2.2 Tool Box Talks
- 4.2.3 Staff Training Needs Analysis
- 4.2.4 Policy & Procedure, e.g. Sharps Removal, Lone Working, Tools & Equipment

4.3 Employment Opportunities

Involve Northwest intends, as far as practicable, to recruit & retain participants on the Supported Volunteering Project to fill any forthcoming Together Environmental Landscape Operative positions. The Team believe this will maximise social return on investment through contractual works, whilst enhancing the capacity to deliver services effectively and efficiently.