

# Council – 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022

## **Report of Councillor Andy Sully – Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services**

It gives me great pleasure to present my report to Full Council on the varied activities of the Environmental Services Portfolio.

### **Refuse and Recycling (Somerset Waste Partnership)**

- Collection Service

SWP have continued working hard with their contractor, SUEZ, in order to reduce repeated collection failures. There were several collection issues through August, with recycling rounds un-deployed. This has been attributed to shortages of drivers caused by high annual leave, sickness, Covid-19, resignations, suspensions and poor Agency supply. Current forecast is for this situation to improve in the coming days / weeks.

The Transfer Station at Walford Cross, Taunton is complete, except for a permanent power supply and is operated via a generator. Work commenced at the Williton Depot on 10/08/22. This means that all Williton based recycling vehicles have now commenced tipping at Walford Cross while the works are completed.

### **Street Scene and Fleet**

- Litter Bin Replacement Programme

The roll out of the new bin infrastructure with recycling compartments has continued. Our contractor has installed another 30 of the new bins around the SWT area. There has been a slight delay from the contractor, and they have advised that they intend to install all the remaining bins by the end of August.

- Fleet

The first batch of 22 electrical vehicles for the Councils fleet following the 2 vehicles taken on the fleet for testing last year are due for delivery in October 2022. These are vehicles which are due for replacement this year and the additional cost of EVs compared to fossil fuel vehicles was funded through the savings made from the new fleet contract which started in 2021.

- Environmental Improvement Team

The new team which started in 2022 have been working on the following since the last update:

#### Watering

The Watering programme commenced at the end of May. Watering was being carried out in Wellington and Taunton Town Centres and Vivary and Wellington Parks . As the prolonged hot spell continued, it was increasingly difficult to keep pots, tubs and flower beds moist. Due to the water shortage a

decision was made in to remove the hanging baskets a week earlier than planned.

### Street Washing

A programme of works will start in September to replicate that done in 2021 in the town centres.

- Litter enforcement trial

The one-year trial has continued, and the first quarter outcomes are shown below. The model has so far been cost neutral and is delivering lots of added extra benefits such as the education work set out.

Somerset West and Taunton – Quarter 1 (1st April – 30th June 2022)

- 502 Fixed Penalty Notices issued since the start of the trial
- 498 Cigarette butts and 4 pieces of litter
- The officers have completed 96 patrols
- Average FPN v Working day is 6.1
- Average payment rate is 60%

FPN Break down by Area:

- 60 FPNs issued in Minehead
- 412 FPNs issued in Taunton
- 2 FPNs issued in Watchet
- 27 FPNs issued in Wellington
- 1 FPNs issued in Wiveliscombe

Education:

- The team are working with the following Businesses and Organisations to change Behaviour as part of the litter strategy
- Working with McDonald's Taunton, Hankridge and Minehead to improve behaviour around littering and also add in extra bins.
- The team have meet with Operations team of Taunton First Bus. They are communicating to staff on how not to litter. They are looking at Stubby Pouches for staff and commuters and posters for Buses
- The Team meet with the manager of Minehead Butlins. The Manager confirmed they would be advertising in the welcome pack not to litter. Also, they will be putting up posters on how not to litter.
- The are working with Arc (Lindley House) with Taunton and surrounding areas

### **Parks and Open Spaces**

- Scheduled works

The Grounds Maintenance Team have been working hard to keep up with the cutting rounds in the early summer period. They have started to undertake pruning and other works whilst the grass cutting demand has slowed up.

- Nursery

The Nursery has just taken delivery of the winter plug plants and production has started. The Autumn order's for internal and external customers include 54,000 plants all grown in peat free compost

## **Environment and Coastal**

- **Blue Anchor**

The 13,500 tonnes of granite to provide the rock armour protection for Blue Anchor is on order and we await delivery in September 2022. The rock is being transported from the Glensanda Quarry on the Scottish west coast. It will largely be in the 3 to 6 ton range and will be placed against the cliffs at Blue Anchor to prevent further erosion.

Work is taking place to refine the designs for the upper slope which must take place only after the rock is placed. This will take place in late autumn 2022 or spring 2023.

- **North Hill Stabilisation**

The designs for this project are expected to be completed within the next 4 weeks and will be shared as soon as available

- **Norton Fitzwarren Playing Fields**

The work to establish a new playing field has been frustrating. We have a design and contractor but the last-minute requirement for an ecology report delayed our planning submission and then we had to undertake newt and reptile surveys – it was found in both cases that there was a low possibility of Great Crested Newts using the site and few reptiles present.

It is expected that this will proceed to planning committee in September with work to start as soon as possible thereafter.

I would like to give my personal thanks to all the officers in the various teams that make the portfolio who are delivering exceptional services.

Cllr. Sully