

Portfolio for Environment and Climate Change Councillor H Skinner

Report to Council – 10 July 2024

Environment

The Environment team continue to deliver on its commitment to 'Protect the Environment for the future'. In this report I will now highlight some key initiatives that have contributed to the Council's on-going commitment.

Recycling

Last year Broxtowe residents threw away just over 40,000 tonnes of waste. This marks a 0.3% reduction on the previous year, which is a positive result. However, the Borough's recycling rate has unfortunately decreased by just over 1% and currently stands at 36%. Additionally, the contamination rate of dry recycling in the green lidded has also seen an unfortunate increase to 16%. These trends are not isolated to Broxtowe and are reflected nationally.

In response to these challenges the Council's Waste and Engagement Officer has been actively leading a number of trials in the Borough to address these issues. One on-going trial in Beeston Central has shed light on the primary sources of contamination allowing us to take targeted action.

To combat these negative trends, the team have:

- Worked with student ambassadors from the University of Nottingham
- Provided comprehensive training to our refuse teams
- Revised bin tags
- Distributed leaflets
- Analysed the impact of communication strategies on recycling behaviour. Notably, regular communications have shown a positive increase in recycling participation.

Originally envisioned as a short term initiative, the project has shown some interesting results and it was therefore decided to extend the project until the end of the year.

The team are also investigating and evaluating recycling at a number of different housing types and the impact that extra cleansing, bin provision and signage are having. They are also looking at the impact nudge techniques are having on changing recycling behaviour.

I will provide a comprehensive update on these outcomes at the next full Council meeting.

Free bulky waste days

In December 2023, in response to an item raised at full Council, I indicated that a number of free bulky household waste collection days would be delivered in 2024. This year, the Environment Team have arranged four events to be undertaken in the following areas: Kimberley, Eastwood, Stapleford and Chilwell. This is where the Street Cleansing teams have reported particular difficulties with fly tipping and street cleanliness. These events already have budgeted resource within the Clean and Green budget.

One event in Kimberley has already been undertaken but there are three other events planned for the following dates and locations:

Wednesday 10 July 2024, 9am-12pm – Eastwood

- Greenhills Road/Princes Street

Wednesday 11 September 2024 9am-12pm – Stapleford

- Montrose Court/Victoria Street

Wednesday 9 October 2024 9am-12pm – Chilwell

- Inham Nook/Ulldale Court.

Refuse teams will be on hand to collect the following:

- Furniture.
- Mattresses.
- Electricals including TVs, kitchen appliances.
- Broken toys and play equipment.

If you would like further information regarding the waste days, please contact environment@broxtowe.gov.uk

Moving forward, subject to resources being available, we will look to run further events across other areas of the Borough.

Parks and Open Spaces

Programmed works

I am pleased to announce that work on Bramcote Hills Park has commenced and works will be finished by the end of July. A wide range of new inclusive and accessible equipment will be installed, including new climbing units, a zipline, a large group swing and wheelchair accessible roundabout.

Works on Queen Elizabeth Park in Stapleford have now also been completed which also includes more accessible and inclusive equipment.

All path works on Coronation Park, Eastwood have also been completed, along with upgrades to the entrances with the addition of self-closing safety gates.

Grass cutting

Grass cutting is now well under way, with grounds maintenance teams out working in all-weathers.

To make Members aware there are five cuts on the highway verges every year. This work is undertaken on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council. The Council also undertakes garden maintenance works for 500 Council properties located throughout the Borough. This is for tenants who are elderly, disabled or vulnerable and are unable to maintain their gardens themselves.

Hedge Cutting

The Environment team are responsible for cutting the hedges of 450 tenanted properties across the Borough. Hedge cutting is completed in June and September each year (two cuts per year). Once hedge cutting commences, it takes three weeks to complete all the works.

The Environment team are also responsible for hedge cutting at 195 outlying sites across the Borough. As with the residential properties, hedge cutting at all sites is undertaken in June and September. Together, these hedges cover 95,000m².

If Members have any queries regarding hedge or grass cutting, please contact the Environment team.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Nottinghamshire

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a new statutory system of strategies aimed at helping nature's recovery throughout England. Nottinghamshire County Council has been designated as the responsible authority for producing the Strategy, with Nottingham City Council, the seven districts and Natural England.

Once complete, the LNRS will provide a decision-making tool for planning, identifying areas for Biodiversity Net Gain.

Progress so far includes preparatory mapping work to produce a Local Habitat Map, key species identification for conservation efforts and the establishment of cross-boundary working with neighbouring authorities.

Parks Survey Standard

To make Members aware, the parks standard survey will be running from the 8 July until 30 August 2024. This year 12 parks will be surveyed and these are the following:

- Long Lane Recreation Ground - Attenborough
- Dovecote Lane Recreation Ground - Beeston
- Weirfields Recreation Ground - Beeston

- Alexandrina Plantation/Sandy Lane - Bramcote
- Inham Nook Recreation Ground - Chilwell
- Beauvale Park, Dovecote Road - Eastwood/Greasley
- Coronation Park - Eastwood/Greasley
- Mansfield Road Recreation Ground - Eastwood/Greasley
- Hall om Wong Open Space - Kimberley
- Central Avenue Recreation Ground - Stapleford
- Hemlockstone Open Space - Stapleford
- Banks Road Open Space – Toton.

Climate Change

Green Festivals

I would like to inform Members that the Green Zone at this year's Hemlock Happening was a resounding success, with 12 participating stalls showcasing all things environmental under a unique feature archway dressed by a local artist. Originally intended to be a trial, the archway proved to be such a hit that the Environment Team have decided to acquire one for future Green Events.

I would also like to remind Members of the upcoming Green Festival event, scheduled to take place on the 21 September 2024, at Coronation Park in Eastwood. An impressive 20 stalls have already signed up and there are six schools taking part in the Green Festival arts completion. These initiatives highlight our ongoing commitment to promote, engage and educate on sustainable practices.

Green Rewards

There are currently 2,900 residents signed up to the Green Rewards platform. Since the launch of platform, Nottinghamshire residents have collectively avoided emitting over 1,000 tonnes of CO₂. (That would be enough gas to fill 1,000 hot air balloons).

As we are so close to achieving the 3,000th person to join the Green Rewards platform, as an incentive the Environment Team are offering a £50 gift voucher to the 3,000th sign up.

I am also pleased to inform Members that the apple trees planted in Eastwood as part of the winning Ward prize for Green Rewards, are now fruiting. These trees will not only help to support carbon sequestration efforts, but will have a positive impact on local biodiversity, as well as providing free fruit for the local community.

Home Energy Advice Team events

Nottinghamshire Energy Partnership (NEP), in collaboration with the Council, have organised the next Home Energy Advice Team (H.E.A.T) event following on from the success of first event that took place in Beeston in March.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet home energy experts and ask questions on fabric first approach to retrofit, insulation materials for conservation retrofit, solar panels and battery storage, and heat pumps.

The next event will take place on Saturday 13 July between 10am-12pm at Rumbletums Café in Kimberley. If there are residents wishing to sign up to the event, please contact the Environment team for more information.

I am pleased to share with Members that further energy saving solutions are being made available to our residents. The Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS), delivered by EON offers all eligible homeowners across the Borough free cavity wall insulation. Information about this scheme and the criteria for qualification is available on the Council's website.

School SEED funding for Climate Change projects

In the face of climate change challenges, engaging schools with the Climate Change and Green Futures programme is important. Many schools lack the necessary funding or support to help them deliver on actions and activities that will reduce the school's (and Borough's) carbon footprint and therefore help to mitigate against the worst impacts of climate change.

It is therefore proposed as a trial, to offer seed funding to three local secondary schools located within the Borough, which will allow them to support the setup or the provision of equipment to support an eco-teams group within the school. It will thereby help to address a vital demographic that is often challenging to engage. Initially the focus will be within a secondary school setting but if the trial is successful the expansion into primary schools can be explored in the following financial year. This phased approach allows the team to learn from the initial rollout and refine accordingly.

The proposal entails offering secondary schools in the Borough an opportunity to apply for a climate change seed fund, valued at £200 each. This modest investment is intended to jumpstart eco-teams or other environmental activities which will function as a platform for students to learn about, discuss, and take action on climate change and sustainability issues.

To ensure the success and sustainability of the scheme, the schools will be encouraged to utilise the expertise of the Council's Environmental officers. This collaborative approach will help to ensure that the activities of the eco-teams are well-guided and effective in achieving their goals.

A deadline has been set for applications and funding will be allocated to on a first come first served basis.

HVO transition completed.

I am pleased to report to Members that the transition to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) for the Council's fleet is now complete. It is expected that the resulting carbon savings will reach 777.5 tonnes (which is more weight than 194 Asian Elephants). The Environment team will be taking a report to Cabinet in the early autumn to provide a full update on the transition.