

Portfolio for Environment and Climate Change Councillor H E Skinner

Report to Council – 9 October 2024

Environment

The Environment team continues to work hard to deliver on its commitment to 'Protect the Environment for the future', engaging with residents on sustainability issues as well as working on ways to enhance biodiversity and increase carbon capture using the Borough's natural assets. I will now highlight some of the key projects that have or will be taking place.

Waste and Recycling

At the last full Council meeting on 10 July 2024, I said that I would provide a full briefing on the work that has been undertaken by the Waste and Recycling Engagement Officer, on the different methodologies the team have been utilising to increase recycling and reduce the level of contamination.

There have been three trials in total and I will now provide a brief summary of the actions taken and the results for each of them.

Trial 1 Contamination Trial – Beeston Central and the Rylands area

In August 2023, Beeston Central and the Rylands, were identified as having the highest level of contamination across all recycling bin collection rounds. This round, comprising of over 1,000 properties had an average contamination rate of 16.9% (This was across six samples). Two of these samples were above 20%.

Recycling contamination is defined as materials going into the recycling bin, that cannot currently be recycled.

Since February 2024, the round has been sampled on six occasions and up until June 2024 still had a high contamination rate. However, in July the round received its lowest contamination rates to date, achieving rates of 6.5% and 11%. This is very positive.

Glass initially was one of the key contaminants, with 7% of the green lidded bin being contaminated with this material. In July, the rate dropped to 0.56%. Since the start of the trial, the glass set out rate for this round also increased by 2.52%.

The refuse and recycling team that undertakes collections in this area, has doubled the number of bin inspections and bin rejections. This is compared to the previous year. Supporting this has been the amendments to the contamination bin labels, which were suggested by the teams. They asked for smaller/simpler contamination bin tags, so that they could carry these in their trouser pockets, rather than going back to the cab each time there is a problem with a recycling bin.

Further adjustments will be made to this tag before it is used by the rest of the teams.

Since the start of the trial the recycling rate has been monitored and although the recycling rate fluctuates, it is noted that regular communications with residents have a positive short term influence on recycling. The team are now working on a waste and recycling communication plan that could be rolled out across the whole of the Borough.

In October, the Council will continue to work with the University of Nottingham's Student Ambassadors to support engagement with students on waste and recycling issues. It is expected that the recycling and contamination rate will be impacted by their return in September. This is because students coming from different parts of the Country will be used to recycling differently at home.

Residents in this trial area will be issued with a final leaflet in October to summarise the positive progress they have made.

Trial 2 - Kimberley Communal Bin Stores – Alma Hill, Almond Close, Cornfield Road.

The Environment team wanted to look at the impact that different housing types have on recycling and selected an area that consisted of blocks of flats owned by Places for People (Housing Association). These flats have shared bin storage areas.

There is a long term problem with fly tipping and bin contamination in this area and the collection teams regularly have to report and miss collections at multiple bin stores as they cannot either access them due to the amount of fly tipped waste or the bins are missed due to being badly contaminated.

The Council held an Action Day on 22 May 2024, where Refuse and Street Cleansing teams litter picked, emptied all the bins, provided more bins and cleared out debris, litter and fly tipping from all the bin stores.

Unfortunately, regular reports of fly tipping continue in this area so the Environment team is working with the Housing Association to run another Action Day in November.

Trial 3 - Eastwood Glass Recycling

The purpose of this trial was to increase the number of glass bags and bins put out for collection, which in turn would reduce the amount of glass going in the general waste and recycling bins. The methodology behind this trial was using nudge techniques to try and change householder recycling behaviour. An average bin collection round was selected in Eastwood, which had no new developments or student housing.

A letter was sent to all householders in June 2024 encouraging residents to recycle their glass. The letter also included a recycling survey, which was sent to gain insight into residents recycling habits.

Since the start of this trial, the glass set out rate has increased by nearly 2% and the green bin recycling rate has increased by 1.6%!

The survey was completed by 275 residents (approximately 25% of householders on the bin round) and this has helped to give insight on resident's waste and recycling habits and will help the Council to tailor communications and operations accordingly.

The survey highlighted that 88% of residents get their recycling information from the bin collection calendars.

80% of residents use the kerbside collections for their glass recycling, but only 47% put their glass out every month for collection. The other 53% put their glass out for collection less frequently. This information provides a great baseline for future recycling projects.

This round will continue to be monitored and will receive an update letter with round specific information at the end of September.

Free bulky waste days

In December 2023, in response to an item raise 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 already undertaken three events, with a further three planned for the following locations:

Wednesday 9 October 2024

9am-12pm Inham Nook/Ulldale Court – Chilwell

Wednesday 13 November 2024

9am-10.30am Church Walk, Brinsley
10.45am-12pm Brinsley Parish Car Park

Wednesday 11 December 2024

9am – 9.45am Ludlow Close car park NG9 3BY
10am – 10.45am Boundary Road NG9 2RB
10.50am – 11.30am King Street NG9 2DL
11.35am – 12.15pm Ryland Close NG9 1LT (Beeston)

Further dates and locations are being planned for 2025. To encourage as much participation as possible, please can Members encourage their residents to bring their bulky waste items for collection.

Parks and Open Spaces

Update on Blue/Green infrastructure

The refresh of the Blue/Green infrastructure strategy is currently in progress and the Environment team are currently in the process of undertaking a procurement exercise to identify an appropriate consultant to support the project. I will keep Members updated on progress.

Bramcote Bio-blitz

On 25 August 2024, working in partnership with a number of experts, including Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, the Environment team undertook a bio blitz at Sandy Lane Local Nature Reserve in Bramcote. Residents were able to get involved with a number of surveying activities including the netting of insects, dragonflies and

spiders. There were a number of stalls available where you could learn more about bats, amphibians and birds. The Friends of Bramcote Ridge were also there to assist at the event. The day was well supported by residents and over 74 different species were recorded on site during the day.

Unauthorised Encampment upgrades and progress

Work is continuing on all our high priority sites to ensure the security of our parks and open spaces from unauthorised encampments. The Environment team have been working with a local fabricator to reinforce existing infrastructure, install new gates with shrouded locks and add new disc locks, which are built to withstand attacks from power tools. A number of sites will also receive new overhead barriers at the access points. It is expected that all these works will be completed by the end of September.

Pride in Parks programme

Works on the Pride in Parks programme is continuing with a number of projects either completed, out for costings or awaiting a start date.

Hall Park path resurfacing works has now been completed included the re-topping of path surfaces with consolidated stone and repairs to the steps leading up to the football pitches.

Surface repairs and improvements to the tarmac paths at King George V Park and Eastcote Avenue, Bramcote, and Colliers Wood, Newthorpe have been measured and are waiting for contractor pricing.

Further works at Colliers Wood will include the removal of the current dipping platform, a re-profile of the pond bed (At present the platform sits over the dry pond bed in summer as the water level recedes) and the installation of a new floating platform. Works on site will be finished in October.

As part of a programme of wider works, Colliers Wood, will also benefit from improvements to the performance area.

Blue infrastructure audit.

During the summer, the Environment team undertook an inspection of the Borough's Brooks.

From these inspections, reports have been created documenting the condition of the watercourses and include any remedial works that also need to be undertaken.

A programme of works from these audits has been created including the removal of vegetation and the clearance of any potential blockages obstructing the water waterway.

As part of a wider exercise to promote responsible land ownership, all riparian owners will be written to reminding them of their responsibilities to ensure that

watercourses stay clear and free of any potential obstructions. These letters will be sent out by the beginning of October.

Winter works planned by Grounds Maintenance

The Grounds Maintenance teams are currently gearing up for autumn and winter, although grass growth may have slowed down, autumn and winter maintenance works are just beginning. This includes:

- Pruning and planting shrubs and trees.
- Sweeping paths and car parks.
- Weeding.
- Repair work, including mending fences, tying back climbing plants, repairing holes and bare patches in grass areas.
- Sports pitch maintenance.

Brinsley Headstocks update

I am pleased to update Members on the progress regarding the Brinsley Headstocks. A site investigation team has approached the Coal Board to conduct a ground survey, ensuring that the ground for new Headstocks is stable for the new structure. The Environment team are also in the process of procuring an Engineer to develop the necessary design and bill of quantities.

In the autumn, various biodiversity works will be undertaken on site including:

- Widening the pond in collaboration with the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to attract the endangered Water Vole.
- Creating a hay meadow
- Planting a woodland memorial copse, featuring heritage fruit tree varieties, including damsons and apples.

Groundworks are anticipated to start in April/May 2025, with construction completed by October 2025 (although this timeline is weather dependant).

The Environment team are also in discussions with a sculptor to incorporate wood from the previous Headstocks into memorial plinths, honouring those miners who lost their lives at the site.

Climate Change

Carbon progress to date

There are 1,178 days remaining for the Council to achieve its Carbon Neutral target by 31 December 2027.

The Council's carbon footprint for 2023/24 has been calculated at 2,343tCO₂e, a 37% reduction since the 2018/19 re-baseline and a 1% reduction on the previous year. The trajectory towards carbon neutrality has slowed slightly over the last couple of reporting years; however, the recent transition to HVO is expected to result

in an acceleration once again, with at least 700 tonnes CO₂e savings to be reported for 2024/25.

As approved at Cabinet on 3 September 2024, a new baseline for 2022/23 has been agreed and now incorporates the Council's scope 3 emissions. The Council's total operational carbon emissions for 2022/23 has been calculated at 22,990tCO₂e. Following the re-baselining, a net zero target and roadmap highlighting potential budget implications will be brought back to Cabinet.

Free trees 2024/25

Preparations are now underway for this year's free trees offer to our residents. This is now in its fifth year.

There will be a selection of fruit trees on offer, as well as soft fruit plants, available for those residents who have limited outside space.

This offer will be launched in October on a first come first served basis and will again be tied into Green Rewards.

Green Rewards

There are currently 2,923 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 gaining our 3,000th member to join the Green Rewards, the Environment team is offering a £50 gift voucher as an incentive to sign up.

I am also pleased to inform Members that the latest ward to win the Green Rewards Biodiversity Ward prize is Watnall and Nuthall West. Users of the Green Rewards platform within this ward were asked to vote on their preferred biodiversity project for the area and they chose the installation of bird and bat boxes at Watnall Spinney. Local bird and bat groups will be hand making these boxes and installation will be taking place in November.