



<b>Service Delivery Committee</b>	<b>Tuesday, 11 September 2018</b>	<b>Matter for Information</b>
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**Report Title:** **Greening of the Borough and Operational Services Update (Q1 2018/19)**

**Report Author(s):** **Avril Lennox MBE (Head of Leisure & Wellbeing Services)**  
**Brian Kew (Head of Operational & Street Scene Services)**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To provide Members with an update on the Borough's green and natural spaces, including Brocks Hill Country Park, and work undertaken by Operational Services.
<b>Report Summary:</b>	This report provides details of the range of works that have taken place across the Borough by Operational Services, key Officers and a range of Volunteers.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<b>That the contents of the report be noted.</b>
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<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	<p>Green &amp; Safe Places (CP4)</p> <p>Wellbeing for All (CP5)</p> <p>An Inclusive and Engaged Borough (CP1)</p> <p>Effective Service Provision (CP2)</p>
<b>Vision and Values:</b>	<p>"A Strong Borough Together" (Vision)</p> <p>Accountability (V1)</p> <p>Respect (V2)</p> <p>Teamwork (V3)</p> <p>Innovation (V4)</p> <p>Customer Focus (V5)</p>
<b>Report Implications:-</b>	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources (CR1)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable.

Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
<b>Statutory Officers' Comments:-</b>	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
<b>Consultees:</b>	None.
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None.
<b>Appendices:</b>	None.

## **1. Greening of the Borough Strategy**

In line with the aims of the Greening of the Borough Strategy, the following work has taken place across the Borough under three key work streams: Improved Visual Impact; Environmental Sustainability; and Engagement.

## **2. Improved Visual Impact**

### **2.1 Highways Verges**

Leicestershire County Council has carried out their survey of Highways trees within the Borough, over £40k worth of works are to be carried out addressing Health and Safety issues and statutory clearances, where any trees are being removed replacements are to be planted. The works are due to take place from Winter 2018 onwards, further information will be made available on the Council's website soon.

### **2.2 High Impact Planting**

Colourful and interesting summer bedding plants have been planted at a number of locations across the Borough including Burton's Corner in Oadby and Blaby Road Park. In addition, and with design input from one of our local Councillors, planting took place on the badge bed at Peace Memorial Park to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First World War.

2.3 The recent hot weather impacted on some of the planned work in June e.g. there has been a hold on the shrubberies works due to the drought situation and irrigation of the Borough's bowling greens had to be increased due to the lack of rain. The conditions also resulted in a reduction on planned grass mowing, so more time was dedicated to other operational jobs such as cutting back hedges in the Borough, particularly those overhanging pathways.

### **2.4 Street Scene Improvements**

During the first quarter of 2018/19 it is pleasing to note that Oadby and Wigston Borough Council achieved an average rating of B+ in performance for Street cleaning, which is really positive news. Using the ENCAMS litter grading sheet, a selection of roads and streets are assessed each month by the supervisor. Grade A means no litter; Grade B means predominantly free of litter except for some small items; and Grade C means widespread distribution of litter. Two sweepers go out on a daily basis, and the Depot team cover the

Town Centres 6 days a week.

## 2.5 **Trees and Shrubs**

No tree planting is undertaken at this time of year, normally this takes place over the winter months, however the Grounds Maintenance team has been watering newly planted trees up to twice a week.

## 2.6 **Parks and Open Spaces**

While the significant lack of rainfall continued throughout June, the Ground Maintenance team has utilised this time to catch up on general maintenance works at the Borough's Parks and open spaces. For example the area to the rear of Parklands Leisure Centre, which has been difficult to access recently, due to the ground works being carried out on the overflow car park.

2.7 Tree surveys continue to be carried out across Council owned land, arising works are being programmed or instructed where appropriate and budgets permit. The below information confirms those locations where surveys have been completed.

<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Locations</i></b>	<b><i>Outcome</i></b>
<b>22/06/2018</b>	Walnut Close, Ellis Park, Oadby Cemetery	Works required
<b>12/06/2018</b>	Two Steeples square, Milton Close, Aylestone Lane Park, Fludes Court	TPO and works required
<b>15/05/2018</b>	Uplands Park	No works required
<b>14/05/2018</b>	Stoughton Road	No works required
<b>02/05/2018</b>	The Oval TPO, Eden House, Stoughton Road	TPO requires updating
<b>27/04/2018</b>	17 Granville Avenue	TPO confirmed
<b>26/04/2018</b>	Wigston Delivery Office	TPO confirmed
<b>21/04/2018</b>	Coombe Park	Minor works required
<b>19/04/2018</b>	Blaby Road Park, Ellis Park	Works required
<b>16/04/2018</b>	Brocks Hill County Park	Works suggested
<b>11/04/2018</b>	Oadby Cemetery, The Yews, Freer Close, Ashurst Close, C4503	No works required

## 2.8 **Green Flag**

Peace Memorial Park in Wigston and Oadby's Brocks Hill Country Park have both been recognised by the Green Flag Award Scheme. The two parks are among a record-breaking 1,883 UK parks and green spaces that received a prestigious Green Flag Award – the mark of a quality park or green space. This award, now into its third decade, is a sign to the public that the spaces boasts the highest possible environmental standards, are beautifully maintained and has excellent visitor facilities.

2.9 In the future, the Council will be working towards Green Flag status for Blaby Road Park in South Wigston. A full Management plan will need to be produced and submitted, as a result a Consultant will be commissioned to produce the plan, with input from Ground Maintenance. The plan must cover a range of topic areas including the park's history; compartments/habitats; management descriptions and schedules; as well as community

involvement and preservation of biodiversity. Details of the site manager, number of staff on site and details of budget will also be required. Each area requires a description with photographs and needs to be linked to the website. A dedicated budget will be required to support the proposed Green Flag action for Blaby Road Park.

#### **2.10 East Midlands in Bloom**

The East Midlands in Bloom judging took place on 11 July, with results expected at the end of September. The initial comments from the judges were positive. Oadby and Wigston has a successful track record of achieving success in the East Midlands in Bloom competition, this is down to the hard work and dedication of a range of volunteers and partner organisations as well as Council officers. Sincere thanks go to all those involved. The forecast is to once again achieve Gold Award status.

#### **2.11 Country Parks and access to the Countryside**

A great deal of work has taken place over the first quarter of 2018/19. This has been achieved with valuable support from a range of volunteers including Brocks Hill's five Lead volunteers. The volunteers have helped with improving the accessibility to Brocks Hill, preparing the park for the Green Flag and East Midlands in Bloom awards and helping to maintain the off-site locations at Fludes Lane and Pochin's Bridge. The volunteer input is very important in maintaining Brocks Hill and the off-site natural green spaces.

#### **2.12 Lead Volunteers**

Lead volunteers have assisted with, and led a range of tasks, where they supervise other volunteers on specific projects. One of the Lead volunteers who specialises in gardening projects, has led a number of sessions with South Leicester College, helping the students grow their own vegetables and maintaining the raised beds at Brocks Hill. Some of the projects completed this quarter, with input from volunteers include:

- Path maintenance to improve gravel and woodchip paths;
- Garden maintenance to enhance and maintain beds around Brocks Hill Centre;
- Growing fruit and vegetables on the raised beds with the South Leicestershire College students;
- Bird, butterfly and bee surveys taking place either monthly or once a week;
- Litter picking;
- Trimming back vegetation to improve access to paths;
- Information on noticeboard to educate residents and visitors about seasonal wildlife and work at Brocks Hill; and
- Improved access including the sun dial area and area under the new ice cream window.

#### **2.13 Volunteer Hours**

It is pleasing to note the number of volunteering hours provided during the first quarter of 2018/19. A total of 440.75 volunteering hours were achieved, which exceeds the predicted figure of 360 hours for the first 3 months of the year.

<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>
77.25	180.75	182.75

#### **2.14 Walks and Lanes**

At Pochin's Bridge and Fludes Lane local volunteers have improved the appearance of these

areas, through litter picking and maintaining the paths, whilst recording wildlife during visits.

## **2.15 Town Centres**

It is noted that the town centres enjoy a high footfall of residents and visitors. These areas are being kept clean and tidy by various teams and volunteers. Watering the trees in town centres has been a priority due to the hot spell, particularly the newer trees, since they have been formally adopted. The installation of three World War 1 memorial benches, and bins have been installed in each of the town centres. Further details can be found in the Facilities Services report.

## **3. Environmental Sustainability**

### **3.1 An Environmentally Aware Borough**

Leicestershire County Council has re-established the Green Infrastructure working group, bringing together officers from different Districts and Boroughs to discuss works and aims throughout Leicestershire. The Council's Tree Officer has recently joined this group and will report future matters discussed, relevant to Oadby and Wigston. The first meeting was held in March 2018, which set out the parameters and terms of reference for the group, future meeting dates are to be confirmed.

### **3.2 Reducing Travel**

The new formal access path from Wigston Road to Parklands Leisure Centre and Brocks Hill Centre and Park has been installed. Further work will be carried out on the installation of knee rails along the footpath to provide a barrier between the path and parking vehicles. These works are due to be completed by the end of September. Access from Tendring Drive to Brocks Hill is still work in progress. Sign off from Leicestershire County Council is awaited before this matter can be progressed. An outside company has been employed to look at route optimisation, for the most cost effective way of completing the refuse and recycling rounds. All newly purchased vehicles include the requirement for low emissions, to aid air quality. The above actions highlight the Council's commitment to reducing travel and CO2's.

### **3.3 Diversion of Waste from Landfill and Waste Collection**

The 1st quarter, April – June 2018 was a very busy time for the Depot team as they commenced the rollout of the new recycling wheelie bins across the Borough. Leaflets were produced and delivered to all residents advising them about the new recycling bins coming into force and what can be placed into them. Other promotional opportunities have taken place, including attending the local Farmers Market to promote the new initiative, in order to maximise residents' participation. Officers from the Waste Management team visited 150 properties to provide additional advice to residents, including where they should place their bins for collection, without obstructing pathways. A number of solutions were identified, included using a smaller bin for those with limited storage space/access.

Only 61 households declined a wheeled bin for recycling, opting to make their own arrangements for disposing of their recyclable items. However these residents are aware that bags are no longer provided. There has been positive feedback received from residents since the introduction of co-mingled recycling, using the new bins. However, there has an increase in applications from residents that previously could manage to put their recycling 'bags' out for the crews to collect, but are now unable to wheel their recycling bin out, and thus want to go on the 'assist list'. As a result, more time had to be allocated to visit these residents for assessment purposes, before they are added to the 'assist' list. There has been a real team effort across a number of OWBC departments in communicating and actioning

the transition from bags to the recycling wheeled bins.

This has been coupled with the particularly hot weather experienced by those teams working outside, including the waste collecting team and ground maintenance, thanks go to all of those who have continued to deliver an excellent service. The Pride of the Borough group also acknowledged the hard work that has taken place, praising the recycling crews who were working well beyond their work hours in order to complete their rounds. The rounds were taking longer than expected initially due to the new way of working, which was not helped by the weather. However, this will improve in time.

## **4. Engagement**

### **4.1 Consultation**

The Tree Strategy went out to public consultation for a 4 week period during April and May 2018. The draft strategy sets out the Council's proposed approach for the future management and enhancement of the Borough's trees, as well as providing guidance to others who also have a responsibility for trees across Oadby and Wigston. The initial findings from the consultation are as follows.

A total of six consultation responses were received, two from adjacent Council Tree Officers and four from Oadby and Wigston volunteer Tree Wardens. The feedback is varied, although generally positive and represents a step in the right direction. The response from the Officers, confirmed the strategy is a useful document although it is more of a summary and position statement than a strategy, and should be setting out objectives, goals and how they will be achieved. It is also emphasised not to be too restricted by our policy in achieving those targets.

The response from the volunteer Tree Wardens was very positive, answering people's questions regarding trees and encouraging engagement with the use of photographs making the document more accessible. If some of the feedback is to be implemented it would be a considerable revision, however if some carefully considered changes are made it should be adequate to progress the strategy towards approval, the document can then be revised as required, Members' views on the strategy are now being sought; the deadline for comments direct to Michael Bennetto, OWBC Tree Officer, is 1 October 2018.

Following Members' feedback, the final analysis will be carried out and presented at the next Service Delivery Committee meeting. The draft document is available to view on the Council's website or by using the below link:

[www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/draft\\_tree\\_strategy](http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/draft_tree_strategy)

### **4.2 Working with External Organisations**

The Depot team is currently working with Leicestershire County Council (recycling disposal company) about how OWBC can reduce contamination and improve the grade of recycling collected. However it is pleasing to note that Oadby and Wigston Borough Council had the lowest contamination rate in June across Leicestershire. A further meeting is planned with Leicestershire County Council in October.