



<b>Service Delivery Committee</b>	<b>Tuesday, 20 November 2018</b>	<b>Matter for Information</b>
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**Report Title:** **Greening of the Borough and Operational Services Update (Q2 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.
<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 by Members.</b>
<b>Responsible Strategic Director, Head of Service and Officer Contact(s):</b>	<p>Anne Court (Chief Executive) (0116) 257 2602 <a href="mailto:anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Avril Lennox MBE (Head of Leisure &amp; Wellbeing Services) (0116) 257 2673 <a href="mailto:avril.lennox@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">avril.lennox@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Brian Kew (Head of Operational &amp; Street Scene Services) (0116) 257 2842 <a href="mailto:brian.kew@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">brian.kew@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Corporate Priorities:</b>	<p>An Inclusive and Engaged Borough (CP1) Effective Service Provision (CP2) Green &amp; Safe Places (CP4) Wellbeing for All (CP5)</p>
<b>Vision and Values:</b>	<p>"A Strong Borough Together" (Vision) Accountability (V1) Respect (V2) Teamwork (V3) Innovation (V4) Customer Focus (V5)</p>
<b>Report Implications:-</b>	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications 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 the Borough Strategy

- 1.1 In line with the aims of the Greening 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 Highway Verges

Leicestershire County Council has been informed about the various matters raised at the last Service Delivery Committee e.g. the tree stumps on Aylestone Lane, the trees on Gartree Road and the trees and pavement on the Oval. As part of Oadby and Wigston Borough Councils annual maintenance schedule, the ground maintenance team has applied weedkill to the moss on the pavements in the Oval. It takes approximately 6 weeks for this to turn brown, at which point it will then be swept away.

County has confirmed that work instructed on the trees in the Oval has already been issued for some modest crown-raising on some trees and removal of a dying birch at the top end. The trees are an important and intrinsic element of the character of this road and other Borough roads, so only limited necessary works have been specified.

### 2.2 High Impact Planting

The Depot took receipt of various shrubberies during the summer which were used to create a new feature bed on the Cleveland open space. Shrubs were also used to revamp areas across the Borough including Peace Memorial Park and Blaby Road Park. Ongoing works continued across the Borough including general maintenance and strimming.

### 2.3 Street Scene Improvements

There have been some minor works carried out to street furniture in the Borough, this includes the fitting of the end panels to the two bus shelters that were installed outside St Peter's Church in Oadby and on Gloucester Crescent in South Wigston. Further details can be found in the Facilities Services report.

### 2.4 Parks and Open Spaces

Work has been carried out on the various parks and open spaces. Maintenance and scarifying to the Borough's three Bowling greens has taken place as well as applying the all-important top dressing and seeding to help regenerate the ground.

Similar work has also taken place on the Borough's two cricket pitches (scarifying, top dressing and seeding). This should ensure these areas are in good condition moving forward. In line with the start of the football season, all pitches have been marked out ready for play from September onwards.

**Save our Parks** - Oadby and Wigston Borough Council can confirm its support for the 'Save our Parks' campaign to central government to save thousands of British Parks and playing areas falling into disrepair or under threat of being sold off.

## 2.5 **East Midlands in Bloom - Oadby and Wigston Scoop Trio of Awards**

The East Midlands in Bloom judging took place on 11 July. The tour commenced in the grounds of Wigston's Peace Memorial Park and concluded at the Leicester Botanic Gardens. Oadby & Wigston Borough Council are extremely pleased to announce that once again the Borough has had another successful year in this competition, including an overall category win for Leicester Racecourse. The quality of horticulture at Leicester Racecourse, Wigston's Pinfold Project, Brocks Hill Country Park and the Aylestone Lane allotments were picked out for particular praise and as valuable assets to the area.

Clean and well-kept streets with little evidence of graffiti and dog fouling, alongside well maintained street furniture were also noted on the judges' report. Three awards in total were awarded as a result of the expert judging undertaken.

- A 'Gold' Award for the Borough as a whole in the 'Small City' Category
- A Judges Award for the 'Muddy Boots' Preschool Playgroup based at the Aylestone Lane allotments, for their commitment to providing fun and educational outdoor learning for families with young children.
- The third award was an overall best-in-category award for Leicester Racecourse, who achieved the prestigious accolade of winning the title: Best Retail/Commercial Premises.

These excellent results could not have been achieved without the positive partnership working between staff at Oadby & Wigston Borough Council, the Pride of the Borough volunteers, the Brocks Hill volunteers, together with the valuable support of local businesses and community groups. Sincere thanks go to all those involved.

## 2.6 **Country Parks and Access to the Countryside**

A great deal of work has taken place over the second quarter of 2018/19. This has been achieved with valuable support from a range of volunteers including Brocks Hill's five Lead volunteers and staff at Oadby & Wigston Borough Council. 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. The following provides an update on works carried out during July to September:

- The ground works under the new ice-cream hatch, the main path to the play areas and the sun-dial area were fully completed at Brocks Hill in July; this has improved the access to key parts of the site.
- The meadows at Brocks Hill were mown in late August by the local farmer; this important annual task takes place later in the summer to allow plants and insects to

complete their lifecycles. Certain areas are always left uncut to allow refuge areas for species such as spiders, grasshoppers, birds and butterflies.

- A new area of meadow is being created across 1 hectare at Brocks Hill with the help of the local farmer. The former arable field left unseeded was managed for ragwort in summer to improve this field as a hay meadow, a proportion of it is being seeded with a seed mix suited to the area and soil.

This will include bird's-foot trefoil, common knapweed, oxeye daisy and lady's bedstraw. The first year will involve establishment and the second year should see the plants begin to flower. This is an extremely important piece of habitat creation and will provide much-needed habitat for pollinators and other grassland species, providing the meadows continue to be managed effectively with an annual hay cut.

There have been a number of positive messages from visitors commenting that the Country Park is looking good and appreciating the work recently done to improve Brocks Hill.

The following range of tasks provides a flavour of the work carried out by the Brocks Hill volunteers:

- Cutting meadows (carried out by Lead volunteers with brushcutters)
- Raking grass from meadows
- Pulling ragwort in meadows
- Maintaining the raised beds by the Lead gardening volunteer
- Gardening the beds around the centre and preparing for East Midlands in Bloom
- Weaving and pruning willow sculptures in the play area
- Carrying out Bee and Butterfly Surveys
- Painting benches
- Litter-picking

In addition, a group of school children from All Saints CofE Primary School in Wigston came to Brocks Hill in September and assisted with litter-picking; learning how much of a problem it is and how we can do our part to reduce, reuse and recycle.

Volunteers have also assisted with litter-picking, path maintenance and meadow maintenance at Pochin's Bridge and litter-picking and path maintenance at Fludes Lane.

## 2.7 Volunteer Policy

The new Volunteering policy is due for completion by the end of December 2018.

## 2.8 Volunteering Hours

The below volunteer hours reflect the change in staffing levels since the end of the Heritage Lottery project. The previous years, which show higher volunteer hours, were as a result of the number of officers and the team involved. This has now changed, so the volunteer hours have reduced, but this does not mean important jobs aren't getting done.

A large number of volunteers still come and help with many jobs and the focus is on the management tasks being completed, and not necessarily how many hours are completed.

Month	2015	2016	2017	Target for 2018	2018
January	269.3	272	229.25	250	188.25
February	275	330.45	447.75	250	201.25

March	292.15	323.05	493.50	200	193.25
April	266	331	238.7	80	77.25
May	388.3	516.2	236.25	140	180.75
June	485	347.3	448.25	140	182.75
July	312.45	280	256.50	140	70
August	212	268.5	274.00	140	157.50
September	216.5	232.75	265.75	140	148.9
October	170.05	223	307.50	140	-
November	243	323.4	299.75	140	-
December	153	121.5	142.50	100	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,282.75</b>	<b>3,569.15</b>	<b>3,6397</b>	<b>1860</b>	<b>-</b>

As referenced in the Heritage Lottery end of project report, there were a number of issues encountered throughout the course of the funded Volunteer Project relating to the high ambitions referenced in the original project bid.

There was no proper plan or strategy of how to continue the level of volunteering post-project, particularly in view of the Volunteer Project Officer's fixed-term contract coming to an end, in line with the funding. Therefore the number was capped for health and safety reasons.

The current level of volunteers, supervised by the Ranger, is appropriate for the range of tasks at Brocks Hill and the off-site locations.

## 2.9 Walks and Lanes

At Fludes Lane, volunteers have continued to litter-pick and maintain path-side vegetation to ensure access along the narrow parts of paths.

## 2.10 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. Regular de-littering continues across all town centres, with assistance from volunteer groups such as the Pride of the Borough, working in partnership with OWBC Officers. Rubbish collected is bagged by the volunteers and then arrangements are made for the Council's Clean and Green team to remove them.

More recently there has been a problem with graffiti on litter bins, bench seats and on the green telecom boxes, particularly in the Oadby area. The Council's Cleansing team is working hard to remove the graffiti, as well as working together with the Police to address this matter.

## 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. The group aims to meet quarterly. The Green Infrastructure (GI) is the network of natural and semi-natural

features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities; providing habitat corridors, foraging grounds and their many services to people and nature. For more information see: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52013DC0249>

The GI working group provides an opportunity for attendees to discuss topics applicable to the Districts/Borough's within the County. Working with the Woodland Trust, the County Council are offering contributions towards tree and hedgerow planting, as well as tree disease packs, District and Borough Councils can then opt-in to subsidise the remaining cost. These are generally more applicable to farmers and rural land owners; it is therefore less applicable to residents of OWBC. Rural skills courses are also subsidised by County Council and have been advertised on OWBC's website.

This forum also shares good practice and provides information from other projects such as the Swift Partnership Project, which aims to increase the Swift population which is currently in decline. This is being achieved through a County-wide campaign to identify and record nest locations. Other discussions relate to future projects e.g. the proposed commissioning of a reptile survey by another District in Leicestershire.

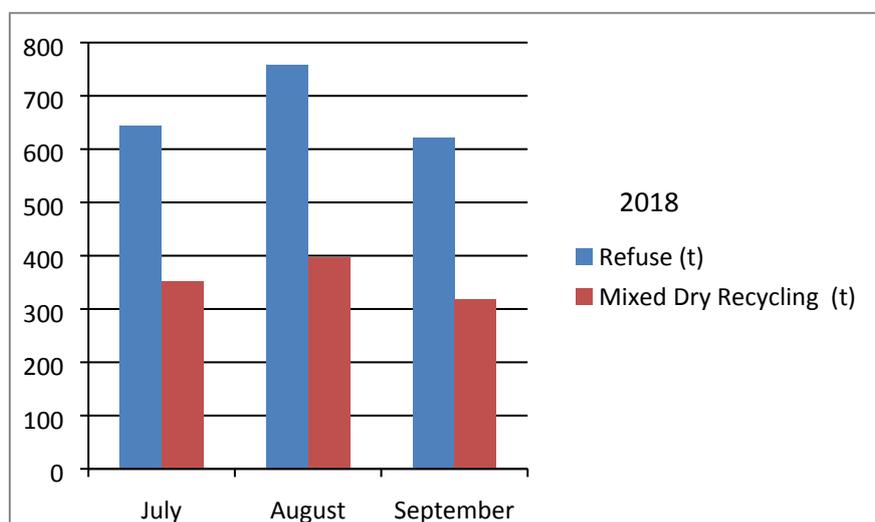
### 3.2 Refuse and Recycling

The following information shows the comparison of tonnages of refuse and recycling collected during the Quarter two (July to September) between 2017 and 2018.

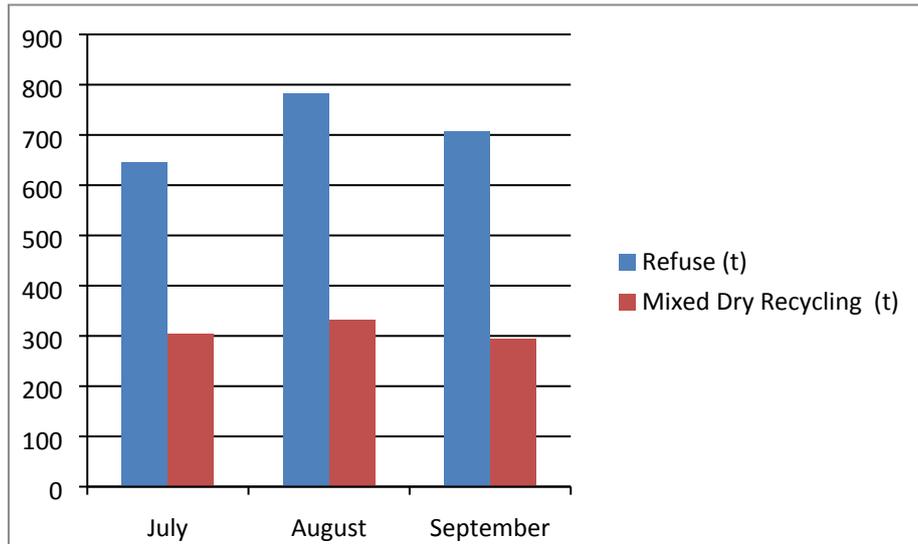
Q2: 2018			Q2: 2017		
	Refuse (t)	Mixed Dry Recycling (t)		Refuse (t)	Mixed Dry Recycling (t)
<b>2018</b>			<b>2017</b>		
July	644.56	351.44	July	646.66	303.72
August	757.38	395.8	August	783.62	331.66
September	621.96	318.78	September	707.92	294.28

It is pleasing to note the increase in mixed dry recycling in 2018 during Q2, as well as the decrease in refuse collected. The distribution of recycling bins commenced in June 2018; by the end of September 2018 approximately 80% of households were using recycling bins. There was an increase in the recycling collection tonnages since the introduction of the recycling bins.

#### Tonnage collected during 2018



## Tonnage collected during 2017



## 4 Engagement

### 4.1 Consultation

The Facilities and Administration team has recently carried out a consultation exercise about what type of new equipment residents and users want to see in Uplands Park. This will replace the existing gym equipment which has come to the end of its natural life. The consultation process finished on 30 September. Further information including full details of progress with the project can be found in the Facilities Services report.

The Tree Strategy consultation, which went out to public consultation during April and May 2018, has now completed. There were no additional comments received by Councillors, following the last Service Delivery Committee. The Tree Officer is now in the process of drawing up the final version of the Tree Strategy, based on all feedback received.