



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 29 January 2019	Matter for Information and Decision
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Report Title:

Greening of the Borough and Operational Services Update (Q3 2018/19)

Report Author(s):

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

Purpose of Report:	To provide Members with an update on the Borough's green and natural spaces, including Brocks Hill Country Park.
Report Summary:	This report provides details of the range of work that has taken place across the Borough during quarter three by Operational Services, key Officers and a range of Volunteers.
Recommendation(s):	A. That Members consider the proposal for a Community Garden at Blaby Road Park (as set out in paragraph 5.1 and Appendix 1 of the report); and B. That the contents of the report be noted.
Responsible Strategic Director, Head of Service and Officer Contact(s):	<p>Anne Court (Chief Executive) (0116) 257 2602 anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Avril Lennox MBE (Head of Leisure & Wellbeing Services) (0116) 257 2673 avril.lennox@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p> <p>Brian Kew (Head of Operational & Street Scene Services) (0116) 257 2842 brian.kew@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</p>
Corporate Priorities:	<p>An Inclusive and Engaged Borough (CP1)</p> <p>Effective Service Provision (CP2)</p> <p>Green & Safe Places (CP4)</p> <p>Wellbeing for All (CP5)</p>
Vision and Values:	<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>
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications directly arising from the report.
Financial:	There are no implications directly arising from the report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources (CR1)

Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report. EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from the report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from the report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	1. Proposed Area for Blaby Road Park Community Garden

1. Greening the Borough Strategy

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

The final grass mow of the season took place from 19 - 30 October 2018 by the Clean and Green team, and dead tree branches were removed in Peace Memorial Park, with the cherry-picker.

2.1 High Impact Planting

In line with the maintenance schedule, late October 2018 saw all summer bedding plants removed, with beds tidied awaiting the winter bedding plants. The winter bedding arrived in November 2018 and these were planted in the various flower beds across the Borough.

New daffodil bulb planting areas were identified and prepared on Severn Road flood tank and Meadow Way open space, and bulbs were planted. The Clean and Green team moved onto their winter maintenance works on all the parks, open spaces and Housing areas from November onwards. The team are now working on plans for the 2019 badge-bed at Peace Memorial Park.

2.2. Street Scene Improvements

Replacement litter bins have been installed at Acorn Way, Davenport Road, Willow Park (2), Countesthorpe Road and Blaby Road Park. Replacement Street name plates have been installed at Barnby Avenue, Linford Close, Mill Close, and Stoughton Drive South.

In mid-November 2018 the Clean and Green team provided woodchip for Wickham Rise shrub beds, for the volunteer group to apply. The Pride of the Borough Group carried out a de-littering session in November 2018; all litter bags were then collected and disposed of by the Clean and Green team.

2.3. **Trees and Shrubs**

In October 2018 the Grounds Maintenance team were busy dealing with a number of trees that had been damaged due to the strong gales. They picked up many small broken branches from trees across the Borough. One large willow tree came down in the Pochins Bridge open space area. The team dealt with this particular issue in a timely manner, clearing away all the wood and branches and ensuring the area was clear and tidy.

2.4. **Parks and Open Spaces**

2.5. **Uplands Park Outdoor Gym, Oadby**

A pre-start meeting has been arranged with the contractor for 11 January 2019. Installation of eight items of outdoor gym equipment will then take place in late January/early February 2019, the exact date is to be confirmed. The Clean and Green team has continued to carry out the play areas inspections across all Borough parks, as part of their weekly routine.

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

Brocks Hill Country Park received a Bee's Needs Award in November 2018. The award is for sites that are doing their part for pollinators, by creating and managing suitable habitats, as well as educating and engaging visitors. Brocks Hill was chosen as a winner because of its wide range of bee friendly habitats, including the orchards, gardens and wildflower meadows and the bee and butterfly survey data, which has shown that there have been positive increases of some species, and high abundance and diversity of others.

Three new sponsored trees were planted where there are spaces in the community orchard at Brocks Hill, these include two 'Mulberry' trees and one 'Newton Wonder Apple' tree.

24 new habitat boxes have been installed around Brocks Hill by the Park Ranger. These comprise of 8 bat boxes, 1 owl box and 15 bird boxes. This will greatly enhance the availability of nesting and roosting sites within the park for the resident wildlife.

Winter thinning works in the woodland compartments has continued (duration November 2018 –February 2019) by the Park Ranger with help from the Clean and Green team. Tree thinning allows valuable light and space to be retained and helps the woodland to develop with improved ground and shrub layers as well as dead wood habitats.

2.7. **Volunteer Policy**

The new Volunteering policy was completed at the end of December 2018. It is now due to go out for consultation to Senior Management Team, all staff and the Unions before it is finally signed off.

2.8. **Volunteer Hours**

The target for Quarter 3 (October, November and December 2018) was 380 hours. Actual volunteering hours achieved were as follows: 164 for October, 183 for November and 117 for December, giving an impressive total of 464 hours for this period.

Volunteers and Lead Volunteers have assisted with the following tasks:

- Pond clearance of the small pond by the centre;
- Scrub cutting to open up the spinney pond near to the boardwalk;
- Planting small trees throughout recently thinned woodland compartments at Brocks Hill

- to diversify the species mix and age structure;
- Clearing branches and woodchipping;
- Litterpicking;
- Maintaining the raised beds with the Lead Gardening Volunteer;
- Key Volunteers have summarised all the data they have collected during their weekly butterfly surveys at Brocks Hill. The volunteers have displayed images and information on the notice board in the visitor centre;
- Charnwood Foods visited for a Corporate Volunteer day and helped with pond clearance on the larger pond at the front of the centre;
- Little Fishes Pre-school came to do a litterpick and ramble for Children in Need at Brocks Hill in November 2018;
- Scrub cutting and litterpicking on Fludes Lane has been carried out; and
- Small tree felling and litterpicking has taken place at Pochin's Bridge.

2.9. **Volunteer Action Plan**

A volunteering action plan is currently in the planning stages, to increase the support and development of volunteers.

2.10. **Walks and Lanes**

At Fludes Lane, volunteers have continued to litterpick as well as cut back scrub overhanging paths and lay a small section of hedge.

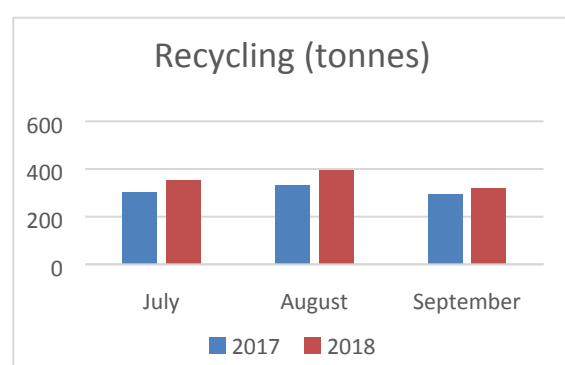
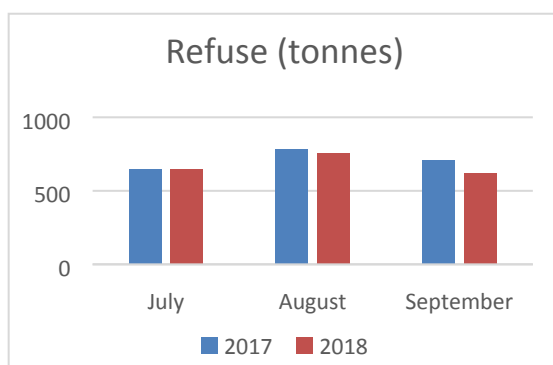
2.11. **Town Centres**

The beginning of December 2018 saw the Clean and Green team carry out staining of the benches in Oadby town centre. They also delivered a real Christmas tree to The Parade, Oadby. The end of December 2018/beginning of January 2019 saw a big tidy-up of all the Town Centres following the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

3. **Environmental Sustainability**

3.1 **Refuse and Recycling**

Since the distribution of wheeled bins for recycling which commenced in June 2018, there has been an increase in recycling across the Borough:



3.2. **Promotion**

A recycling stand was held at the Wigston Farmers Market in September 2018 in conjunction with Leicestershire County Council to raise public awareness and the importance of recycling. The OWBC team engaged with just under 60 members of the public, they were invited to complete a recycling challenge activity sheet testing their

knowledge of what can and cannot be recycled in their recycling bin.

3.3. **Route Optimisation**

Consideration is currently being given to change refuse and recycling collections over 5 days. The planning and implementation of this scheme is being carried out in conjunction with an outside contractor. The crews have been consulted regarding the new collection rounds and are currently progressing with finalising the scheme.

3.4. **Incabs Technology**

This software provides real-time information and visibility of the delivery and collection process from the point of despatch. Units have been installed into the refuse and recycling vehicles. Using this technology, the driver will be able to send real-time information to Customer Services, this will greatly assist in providing a highly efficient service in advising residents of any issues regarding non collections. Training for drivers will be undertaken and it is anticipated that the system will go live by the end of January 2019.

4. **Engagement**

Posters were displayed on Borough noticeboards by the Clean and Green team, to promote the Remembrance events planned for 11 November 18. The team's pre-event preparations included cleaning the streets, general tidying all the areas, as well as providing crowd barriers on the day. The Clean and Green staff also assisted as marshals for Remembrance Sunday.

4.1 **Consultation**

On 25 October 2018 there was a Tree Warden meeting hosted by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and chaired by Samantha Village from Leicestershire County Council, who acts as the Tree Warden Co-ordinator throughout the County.

Consultation comments for the Tree Strategy have been compiled and final amendments are being made prior to publication by March 2019. Since the last quarterly report, two Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) have been served for Sycamore Close, Oadby and The Broadway, Oadby to replace the old County Orders, leaving two remaining County Orders at The Oval, Oadby and Leicestershire Golf Course, Oadby. Other TPOs served during this quarter include trees outside of The Firs on Oadby Road and trees on the southern boundary of Rosenfels at the University of Leicester.

5. **Proposed Blaby Road Park Community Garden**

A request has been received from the South Wigston Local Area Coordinator (LAC), for approval to use a section of land on Blaby Road Park, as a community garden. The full proposal can be found below at paragraph 5.1. A map showing the proposed location for the community garden is attached at **Appendix 1**.

5.1 **Proposal from the South Wigston LAC (Reproduced)**

To turn an area at the Lansdowne Grove end of Blaby Road Park into a community garden with permission of Oadby Wigston Borough Council. This would enable us:

- To provide an opportunity for residents in South Wigston to have access to an opportunity to garden and use a Green Gym.
- To connect people in the community through the common interest of growing. Meets all the 5 ways to wellbeing, connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, and give.

- Green Gym provides moderate physical activity. People who are regularly active at this level are 50% less likely to suffer from a heart attack/stroke.
- Being physically active in green spaces can relieve stress and help combat depression
- Reduce social isolation.
- To use local resources to benefit local people.

Target Audience

- Individuals and families who don't have access to a growing space.
- Older people living alone.
- Lonely, isolated individuals.
- People living with learning disability or mental health problems.
- Asylum seekers.

Evidence of Need

- Frequent requests from Residents to have access to a growing space.
- Being outside and feeling the earth has a positive impact on mental health.
- More activities and opportunities needed for people to engage with others, volunteer gain experience to support returning to work.
- Health Indicators (ONS Census, 2011) shows that the general health in South Wigston is significantly worse compared to averages in England.

Activity

- Garden will be open to all to enjoy.
- Groups will be able to access to take part in sessions – groups already identified, mental health support groups, learning disabilities, young children and youth clubs.
- Also available are Green Gym session where people taking part will be led through warm up activities, gardening session and warm down activities.
- Sensory garden to support people with sensory needs or impairments to enable them to get the most out of the garden and to facilitate intensive interaction.

Stakeholders

- LAC
- Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
- Timebank Volunteering
- Voluntary Action Leicestershire
- Leicestershire Adult Learning
- Health Visitors and Early Years team
- Supporting Leicestershire Families
- LCC Public Health
- South Leicester College

Resources

- Steering group made up of representatives from stakeholders
- Volunteers
- Access to water and electricity

- Equipment (To be determined)
- Shed/storage for equipment

Budgetary elements

- Paid member of staff on part-time wage
- Advertising/marketing
- Equipment
- Insurance

Summary

It is proposed that the project runs for 18 months with a Part-time paid member of staff (We will apply for funding to cover this). Long-term sustainability of activities will be maintained through this member of staff, volunteers and community connections with local businesses, clubs and initiatives. Initially the project will be overseen by Paula Harris – The conservation Volunteers community Development worker and Mary Flynn – Local Area Co-ordinator for South Wigston until it becomes sustainable without their support.

The Blaby Road Community Garden will link in to the objectives of the Health and wellbeing targets of the Oadby and Wigston Health and wellbeing board. It will provide a green outdoor resource for all members of the community. We have a volunteer who is willing to train as a Green Gym instructor to lead sessions – where people can be referred to by their GP or self-referred We have volunteers who will plan and develop the garden ensuring that it is accessible to all.

5.2 Feedback from Oadby and Wigston Officers

Whilst there are no concerns with the aim and objectives of the overall project, the Head of Operational and Street Scene confirmed the following:

- There must be access for the OWBC Clean and Green staff of 2.5 meters around the edge of the proposed garden area for mowing purposes;
- Access to electricity and water will not be possible;
- Concerns around the proposed plans to erect a shed/storage area and water butt. This will also need consideration in regards to security/safety of such items; and
- Confirmation will be required in relation to the area being put back to its original good standard, once the 18 months project has concluded if it's not self-sustaining.

Member's views are sought on the proposed plans at Blaby Road Park from the South Wigston Local Area Coordinator.