



<b>Service Delivery Committee</b>	<b>Tuesday, 04 June 2019</b>	<b>Matter for Information</b>
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**Report Title:** **Greening of the Borough and Operational Services Update (Q4 2018/19)**

**Report Author(s):** **Avril Lennox MBE (Head of Community & Wellbeing 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, in line with the Greening the Borough Strategy.
<b>Report Summary:</b>	This report provides details of the range of work that has taken place across the Borough during quarter four by Operational Services, key Officers and the range of Volunteers.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<b>That the contents of the report be noted.</b>
<b>Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):</b>	<p>Anne Court (Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service) (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 Community and 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 (Depot Manager) (0116) 257 2842 <a href="mailto:brian.kew@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">brian.kew@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Corporate Objectives:</b>	Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities (CO1) Providing Excellent Services (CO3)
<b>Vision and Values:</b>	<p>"A Stronger 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:	Click to select or insert narrative.
Corporate Risk Management:	No corporate risk(s) identified
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.

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

## **1. Improved Visual Impact**

### **1.1 Highway Verges**

County Council Highways have finished their works in the borough, including replacement planting of any trees that required felling. A few verges/pavements where tree numbers are dwindling have been proposed for further planting in 2019/20.

### **1.2 Street Scene Improvements**

A number of improvements have taken place across the borough, as follows. Perch seats have been installed in bus shelters in the following Wigston locations: Station Road, Launceston Road (x2), West Avenue, Holmden Avenue, Rolleston Road (x2), Aylestone Lane and Leicester Road.

Street name plates have been replaced at Ashdown Road, Milverton Drive and Milverton Close, Wigston. A litter bin has been installed next to the bus shelter at The Firs, Oadby Road, Wigston.

The car park at St Peter's Church Hall has been re-lined. Kirkdale Road car park has been cleaned, railings and lamp columns re-painted and the parking bays re-lined. The car park at Brocks Hill Country Park has also been re-lined.

### **1.3 Parks and Open Spaces**

A number of winter maintenance jobs were carried out by the Ground Maintenance Team during quarter four e.g. cutting back shrubbery, carrying out tree works and general maintenance on parks, open spaces and housing communal areas. Some of the locations covered were William Peardon Court, Blaby Road Park, Boulter Crescent and Uplands Park.

The team also marked out the football pitches, and are continuing to maintain them to a good standard. Regular play inspections have also been taking place, as programmed.

Mowing started from 22 March which included the parks, open spaces, housing communal areas and bowling greens. A programme of mowing works is now in place until the beginning of October; however this is dependent on the weather.

The badge-bed design for Peace Memorial Park has been ordered and will arrive mid-June. Summer bedding has also been ordered for the in-fill of beds across the Borough.

In preparation for Holocaust Memorial Day, the Clean and Green team tidied up the areas around the Council Offices, then cleaned and secured the sculpture ready for the memorial event on 28 January.

Other works across the parks and open spaces include the re-painting of four benches and a notice board at Peace Memorial Park in Wigston. In addition two litter bins have been replaced at Willow Park; one along the footpath from Central Avenue into the park and one inside the park itself.

#### **1.4 Trees and Shrubs**

Tree risk assessments and associated works continue to be carried out, any replacement trees required are to be reserved ready for delivery and planting this coming autumn/winter. The Council is also looking to trial the use of proprietary watering systems to help assist with establishment and cut down on work hours.

**Summary:** Over 2018/19 there has been arboricultural input on 155 applications, including 88 applications for TPO or Conservation Area tree works and 67 consultations towards other planning applications. Replacement planting requirements have generally been adhered to; enforcement action has so far been effective at securing replacements where required. Four tree related enforcement cases have been opened, three of which are now resolved with one on-going. Nine new TPOs have been made and confirmed, with a total of 136 trees.

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

The tree thinning for the winter of 2018/19 has been completed at Brocks Hill Country Park, with approximately 1.5Ha of woodland thinned. The majority of woodland compartments have now received an initial tree thinning after a few years of neglect. Tree thinning must carry on each winter as the trees continue to grow and develop to ensure good growth and healthy crown development. Some oak trees with squirrel damage have been pollarded to remove damaged branches and allow regrowth. Areas of hazel coppice have been cut and will provide useful and sustainable materials for the country park.

Plans are being made with the Friends of Brocks Hill to develop some new interpretation for the country park. A new map is on display in the centre and this will be used on the interpretation boards alongside photos and illustrations of the site and its wildlife.

Overall the past year at Brocks Hill and the other natural green spaces has been challenging with a reduction of officer hours compared with previous years. The increasing visitor numbers in fine weather have placed additional strains on greenspaces with higher amounts of litter and vandalism to deal with.

The habitat management at Brocks Hill over the past year has been very beneficial to the site, with tree thinning and crown raising creating open, sunny areas and paths maintained after becoming eroded. Garden areas have been improved with additional planting and the raised beds have continued to be looked after by students from South Leicestershire College (SLC). The meadow management has continued to be successful after the original management plans were made in 2017: these are some of the most important areas of Brocks Hill and should be viewed as equal to woodland in terms of biodiversity and value to wildlife. 97% of wildflower meadows have been lost across the UK, and Brocks Hill's are so important that they contributed to the achievement of a Bee's Needs Award.

## 1.6 Walks and Lanes

The old wall that runs alongside the footpath from Chestnut Avenue to Sandhurst Street has been repaired along the length that borders Sandhurst Street Car Park.

At Fludes Lane, volunteers have cut back scrub overhanging the paths, as well as continuing to litterpick, with a large amount gathered on some visits, particularly in January.

## 1.7 Town Centres

Patch repairs have been carried out to pot holes in the following town centre car parks: Paddock Street and Aylestone Lane in Wigston and Sandhurst Street and East Street, Oadby.

On the Cleansing side, the de-littering team and the sweepers have been keeping the borough streets, roads and parks clean.

## 2. Environmental Sustainability

### 2.1 Environment Agency

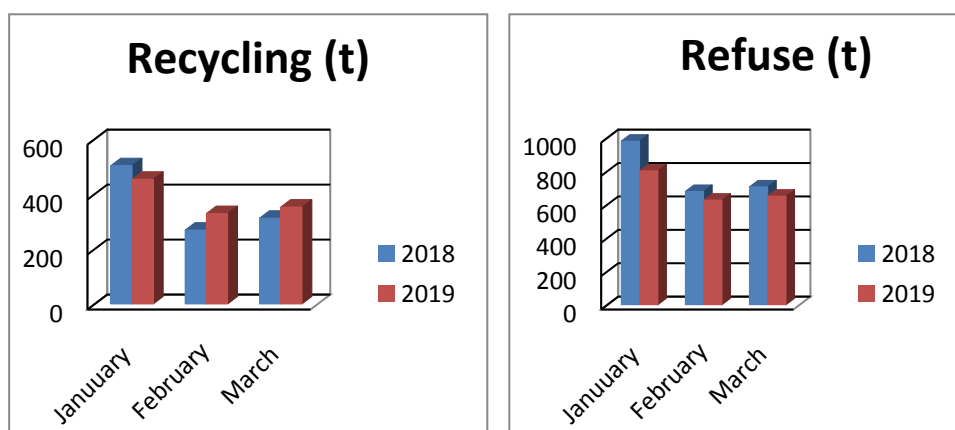
In February the Council's Depot in Oadby received a visit from the Environment Agency to ensure the Depot was compliant with the site permit. This inspection, which takes place annually, includes general housekeeping, health and safety measures and checking that any waste coming into and out of the site is being recorded correctly. The visiting Officer was satisfied that everything was in order and commented on how the clean the site is being kept.

### 2.2 Education

The Environment and Waste Technician, from Leicestershire County Council, (who carries out recycling workshops for all districts) attended the three Oadby and Wigston Residents Forums during quarter four, to raise public awareness and importance of recycling and to answer any questions the public had about recycling.

### 2.3 Refuse and Recycling

The charts below shows the tonnage comparison of refuse and recycling collected in 2018 and 2019 during quarter four. With the exception of January 2019, there has been a positive improvement on recycling rates. It is also pleasing to note that Refuse rates have consistently reduced during quarter four of 2019, in comparison to 2018.



## 2.4 **Black Wheeled Bins**

A total of 26,000 wheeled bins for household waste were ordered and received in March, these were distributed to all households throughout May onwards.

## 2.5 **Route Optimisation**

Following consultation with the crews the proposed route optimisation has been approved. The new rounds will commence in June 2019, all households will have been notified of their new collections days prior to the commencement of the new round.

## 2.6 **Incab Technology**

All drivers received training on how to use the Incab units, which went live in January 2019. On the whole this has proved to be successful; in that where an issue has arisen (i.e. damaged bins, incorrect items etc) this has been logged into the unit and this information is then relayed to Customers Services in real-time, thereby allowing Customers Services to update residents immediately as opposed to waiting until the crews finish their rounds. There have been some minor technical teething issues which have in the main been resolved. The crews have adapted well to utilising the new system.

# 3. **Engagement**

## 3.1 **Working with External Organisations**

The Tree Council, working with FERA Science Ltd and DEFRA released the Ash Dieback Action Plan Toolkit in March of this year. While OWBC will generally follow the Leicestershire County Council Action Plan (which the Tree Council helped create) a more concise assessment of the potential impact to Oadby and Wigston will be undertaken. This will include potential costs, identifying corporate risk, health and safety issues, economic impacts, environmental impacts, engaging with colleagues, private tree owners and volunteers, as well as a recovery strategy.

## 3.2 **Working with Volunteers and Non-Profit Making Organisations**

Volunteers from the Pride of the Borough group worked together to clear brash from Hill Way roundabout, as well as de-littering the area.

## 3.3 **Brocks Hill**

At Brocks Hill, Volunteers and Lead Volunteers have helped with a range of tasks including:

- Woodland clearing following on from tree felling: branches have been chipped and a number of dead hedges have been constructed from logs and branches in areas less accessible for woodchipping. Dead hedges create valuable dead wood habitat, providing food for invertebrates and animals further up the food chain;
- Apple trees in the orchard have been pruned this winter: this is an annual task that helps trees produce more fruit. Volunteers used the skills learnt the previous year from Leicestershire Heritage Apples;
- Charnwood Foods came for a corporate volunteering day in March: they assisted with footpath maintenance, helping to spread woodchip on areas of the path that become muddy in winter;

- SLC students and one of the Lead Volunteers have prepared the raised beds for the coming growing season, adding compost and planning a planting programme;
- Scrub cutting and litterpicking have been carried out on Fludes Lane; and
- Small tree felling and litterpicking have been carried out at Pochin's Bridge.

### 3.4 Volunteering Hours

The volunteer hours provided by the Brocks Hill volunteers has once again improved many aspects of Country Park and other natural green spaces. It is pleasing to note that the predicted number of volunteering hours, in comparison to the actual achieved for 2018/19 (shown below) were once again exceeded.

	2018									2019			
	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	Total
Target	80	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	100	140	140	140	1580.00
Achieved	77.25	180.75	182.75	70	145.5	148.9	164	183	117	110	130	146.5	<b>1655.65</b>