

Full Council Meeting – 5 July 2022

Report of Councillor Andy Sully – Environmental Services

It gives me great pleasure to present my report to Full Council on the varied activities of the Environmental Services Portfolio.

Refuse and Recycling (Somerset Waste Partnership)

- Recycle More

Phase four (West Somerset) continues to bed-in following the launch at the end of Feb/start of March. Planning for the Recycle More roll-out to the phase 4 communal properties (end June) and schools (early Oct) was ongoing in May. Communications and engagement for this last part of the project includes a six-week prior to start postcard distributed to circa 5,800 communal properties. SWP are finalising plans for Williton depot refurbishment to start over the summer period.



- Collection Service

The service remains somewhat fragile but the roll-out of Recycle More is almost complete which is allowing more focus on quality issues. Processes have been analysed and reviewed to address key issues such as missed collections and complaint handling which is now starting to see improvements.

- Decarbonising of operations

Further investigation is being completed of dual fuel hydrogen, hydrogen fuel cells, clarified natural gas and HVO (as temporary solutions) and electric vehicles. Testing of numerous vehicles is underway to inform a partial re-fleet. Options will be taken to the partnership board for a steer.

SWP are finalising a power purchase agreement and other contractual matters ahead of installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels at Taunton and Evercreech which should be in place before the end of 2022.

Street Scene and Fleet

- Bin Replacement Programme

The roll out of the new bin infrastructure with recycling compartments has continued with the next 54 bins ready for installation by the end of July 2022 taking the total to over 200. Seven of the new bins were put into Victoria Park,



Taunton just prior to Green Flag judging and the jubilee weekend. The new bins were well received and, following the Jubilee Party in Vivary Park, appear to have proved their worth in keeping the area tidy.

- **Fleet**

The Council has ordered its next batch of electric vehicles as part of its scheduled replacement programme. This batch of small vans and pool cars and are due for delivery in October 2022. The HRA fleet is currently being reviewed to establish the suitability for electrification of its fleet due for replacement this year.



- **Litter enforcement trial**

I am extremely enthusiastic about the introduction of our new litter strategy at SWT. Since April, 346 fines have been issued and we are hoping to change attitudes and behaviour amongst those who think it's ok to litter and don't think there will be any consequences.

The Councils newly adopted litter strategy is a trial in partnership with East Hants Council. Littering is a criminal offence with a maximum fine of £2,500 and a criminal record. However, those caught littering can discharge their liability by paying a Fixed Penalty Notice for £100. The trial employees two full time authorised officers who will issue offenders with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) without fear or favour. We want to education and work with the community as littering damages the local environment and effects peoples sense of pride in our district, and costs the council money that could be better spent. It can have a real impact on residents sense of security, safety and satisfaction within an area. SWT have adopted a zero-tolerance to littering from the 1st April and do not issue warnings. When a person is witness to throw, deposit or leave litter behind they will be issued with a FPN. In the first two months of the trial 346 FPNs have been issued which is in line with the approved model for the trial.



- **Environmental Improvement Team**

The new two person team was introduced in 2022 and have been working on the following:

Weeding - The team commenced weeding of several locations across the district including Taunton Town Centre, Watchet Esplanade and Minehead Quay. The team were also involved in the tidy up of the Councils Car Parks.

Spring Clean - During April and May, the team attended 50 Open Space locations across the district, collecting approximately 3 tonnes of litter and fly tipped items. In

addition to this, they were involved in the clear up of some streams and the strimming of six overgrown pathways. The team also continued to support Community Litter Picks with delivering and collecting of equipment and the litter cleared.

Watering - In June the team started the watering of hanging baskets and bedding which will continue over the summer.

Parks and Open Spaces

- Programmed Works

The team are busy with planting out all the flower bed displays, this has started and is continuing during June. They have planted 140,000 bedding plants and put out the hanging baskets.



During the busy growing season with perfect conditions of rain and sunshine the grass cutting teams are working hard to catch up with the rounds currently one week behind. I have asked that the schedule of works is sent to members on a weekly basis for information.

- Nursery

The Nursery has been busy with deliveries to all our external customers now complete. As part of the new business plan to increase productivity the team have completed the trial of a hired filling machine which saved time and temporary staff hours.

The nursery has produced the following:

- 140,000 Bedding plants (56,000 for SWT and 84,000 for external);
- 22,000 Hanging basket plants;
- 1,800 Hanging baskets (400 for SWT and 1400 for external);
- 50 Large tower planters.

Environment and Coastal

- North Hill, Minehead

Following a procurement process WSP have been appointed to deliver a design for the stabilisation works to North Hill, Minehead. WSP have worked with the Council in the past and are currently the Blue Anchor design team.



The gradient and complex access issues means that rope access will be the most likely method of assessment.

It anticipated that the designs will be finalised in the autumn ahead of a tender process to deliver the agreed scheme.

- Blue Anchor Coastal Defence Scheme

An order has been placed with Kier (our main contractors) for the delivery of 13,500 tons of granite rock armour from the Glensanda Quarry in western Scotland.

Three vessel loads will anchor off Blue Anchor and the rock will be transported to the beach by barge and off loaded at high tide.



Delivery dates have yet to be confirmed (at the time the report was written) but it is anticipated that the rock will be placed in late autumn 2022 with drainage works taking place simultaneously to seek to stabilise the cliff above the armour.

The scheme is designed to protect the B3191 in situ.

- Sand Clearance - Minehead

Whilst the sand has been cleared from the seaward side of the wave return wall the pavements have suffered from sand build up drains full of sand. A programme of clearance has started with test drains being cleared – if the trial is successful then all drains will be cleared which we hope will prevent future pooling of water on the Esplanade

- Exercise Safe Haven

A 'live' training exercise was carried out at Watchet Harbour on 23rd May involving all front line 'blue light services' including the coast guard. The Marine Group were involved too as the incident took place within the Marina. A full rest centre was established using SWT staff and other partners



The scenario was that a gas canister on a fishing vessel had exploded causing fire on board and injuries and trauma to a group of students who had chartered the vessel.

All parties worked together to treat those that were 'injured' and rescue those who were in the water, to bring the fire under control, deal with the public and ensure that the associated pollution incident was controlled.

It should be stressed that whilst this was a 'live' incident there was no danger to any of the participants or the public.



- East Quay Electrics

Following the work to replace the Harbour wall at Watchet in August 2021, further work is required to renew the electrics on the East Quay to ensure compliance.

Detailed designs were drawn up by consultants Houghton, Greenlees & associates.

A Competitive tender process was carried out in February 22 and the contract awarded in March to a company called EX2 who started work on site 13th June 2022 with an expected duration of 6 – 8 weeks. Key stakeholders/ interested parties in Watchet have been informed via email of start date and will be updated on a fortnightly basis of progress.

I would like to give my personal thanks to all the officers in the various teams that make up the portfolio who are delivering exceptional services in challenging times.