

# Bolton Council

**Report to:** Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015

**Report of:** Director of Environmental Services

**Report No:** ESSC/08/15

**Contact Officer:** Stephen Young, Assistant Director, Highways & Business Development

**Tele No:** 336301

**Report Title:** **Departmental Performance Update – Q2 2014/15**

---

**Confidential / Non Confidential:**  
(delete as approp)

(**Non-Confidential**) This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

**Purpose:**

This report provides the Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee with an update on Q2 performance for the Environmental Services Department.

Headlines are:

The Environmental Services Department remains on track to deliver its strategic and operational priorities for the Council. Highlights of the report can be found below.

- 663.67 tonnes less domestic waste collected.
- 761 households have swapped their large grey bin for a smaller grey bin, as part of the 'Slim Your Bin' Campaign.
- 26% increase in food waste recycling in schools.
- 41% reduction in youth related anti-social behaviour in Bolton.
- establishment of a Market Traders' Association.
- temporary closure of the Albert Halls due to refurbishment work.
- 50% reduction in the number of staff related accidents across the department.
- Completion of the public realm improvement works in Bolton Town Centre
- Severe Weather Plan Review and Highway preparations for winter in progress
- Introduction of a £9.2m investment programme to replace all the current street lighting stock throughout Bolton with a more effective LED lighting
- Slight reduction in the number of Freedom of Information Act requests
- Slight increase in the number of sick days
- Identification of specific road user groups which may be more prevalent in the road casualty figures

**Recommendations:**

The Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee is requested to note performance update set out in this report

**Decision:**

---

**Background Doc(s):**

**Signed:**

---

Leader / Executive Cabinet  
Member

---

Monitoring Officer

**Date:**

---

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This report summarises the performance outturn for quarter 2 of 2014/15 for the Environmental Services Department. The report summarises delivery against both qualitative and quantitative indicators, recognising the balance between hard and soft outputs taking into account the current financial pressures facing the organisation.

1.2 Within this report, progress is reported against:

- major strategic priorities for which the Environmental Services Department is responsible within the Council;
- progress around our operational priorities as the provider of a number of large front line and support services and
- conclusions and key messages.

## **2.0 Supporting the Council to deliver its strategic priorities**

2.1 At a strategic level, the Department supports the Cleaner and Greener Partnership, the BSafe Partnership and the Town Centre Regeneration Programme, as part of the delivery of the Community Strategy. Key progress on our strategic priorities is highlighted below.

### **Waste & Recycling**

2.2 The cost of waste disposal is expected to rise by £7m to £23m per year in Bolton. The introduction of managed weekly waste collections in 2013 is part of a strategic waste diversion programme, where the primary aim is to divert residual waste from being disposed of in a landfill site. There are many ways in which waste can be diverted including composting and converting waste into energy. Landfill diversion can also occur through recycling. By recycling materials such as glass, paper, metal, plastic, wood, textiles and electronics, we can reduce the amount of waste entering the local landfill sites and preserve our natural resources. This, in tandem with targeted behaviour change programmes, is one of the department's main strategic priorities.

2.3 The performance data for Q2 shows:

- 663.67 tonnes less domestic waste collected compared to the same period last year.
- Over 9,800 recycling containers delivered to residents so far during this financial year.
- 1076.72 tonnes more food and garden waste collected compared to the same period last year
- 278.44 tonnes more glass, cans and plastic bottles collected compared to the same period last year
- 120.50 tonnes more pulpables collected compared to the same period last year.
- An increase in the recycling rate of 2.3% compared to the same period last year. The recycling rate currently stands at 41.9%
- 761 households have swapped their large grey bin for a smaller grey bin, as part of the 'Slim Your Bin' Campaign, which was launch in July 2014.
- 16 waste audits carried out on properties which require further support in order to recycle further.
- 125 properties having been assessed and no longer require an assisted collection.
- 12 community information roadshows carried out by staff
- 53 schools currently receiving food waste collections. This is a 26% increase from April 2014.

2.4 The data clearly shows that the targeted behaviour change programme and the high profile promotional programmes are having a positive impact on the amount of household waste being diverted from landfill. Whilst this is encouraging, the department must continue to develop new, innovative ways to reduce and divert waste, if it is to reduce the £7m estimated disposal costs in the near future.

Quarter 2 activity includes:

- production and distribution of the waste and recycling calendar for 2014/15
- media coverage on the new bulky waste collection and top tips to make school uniforms last longer
- continued partnership work with Bolton University through the Life+ Project
- targeted community work to reduce fly-tipping and back street waste
- consultation with residents living in apartments and flats re. future food waste recycling
- a successful bid for WRAP funding to enhance the communication programme for the door stepping campaign from 20,000 to 43,000 households
- identification and assessment of households which currently have two grey bins
- initiation of Christmas Recycling Campaign

### **Community Safety**

2.5 An effective Community Safety partnership is essential in enabling local communities to feel safe and strong and free from crime and the fear of crime all of which directly supports the development of a more cohesive, confident and thriving community. During this quarter, the Bsafe Partnership's priority was to deliver the annual 'Safe 4 Summer' Campaign, which is a Greater Manchester partnership-based approach, aimed at keeping people of all ages safe and addressing community concerns about youth-related crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) during the summer months. The programme focused on school engagement, diversionary activities and community outreach activities.

2.6 The headline messages for this year's campaign are positive. Good reductions were seen across all types of the anti-social behaviour categories examined, as well as both primary and secondary deliberate fires when compared to last year's figures. The main increase of note was in criminal damage offences reported to the police.

2.7 The headline performance data for 2014 compared to 2013 for Bolton is listed below:

- The number of general anti-social behaviour incidents has reduced by 26%. This is the highest percentage reduction in Greater Manchester.
- The number of youth related anti-social behaviour incidents has reduced by 41%. This is the highest percentage reduction in Greater Manchester.
- The number of neighbour nuisance incidents has reduced by 25%. This is the highest percentage reduction in Greater Manchester.
- The number of deliberate primary fires has reduced by 32%. This is the highest percentage reduction in Greater Manchester.
- The number of deliberate secondary fires has reduced by 26%.
- There were no cases requiring Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service to perform a rescue from water. This is the lowest in Greater Manchester.

### **Bolton Town Centre Regeneration**

2.8 Town centres are a key element of the economic and social fabric of the nation, acting as centres of employment and services for local communities and a focus for civic activity.

Bolton Council wants to see town centres reach their full potential and to support local economies through these challenging economic times. **The public realm improvement works** on Hotel Street and Mealhouse Lane have been completed and work has commenced on the new 1,275 square metre skate park on Great Moor Street which is due to complete the week before Christmas and is on budget. Work is also continuing on Newport Street, including early draft designs and the removal of street furniture such as a number of trees and the charity canopy. Work is programmed to begin on Newport Street early in the New Year.

### 3.0 Departmental Strategic Priorities

#### Highways

- 3.1 Consideration of **road casualty** figures is carried out by assessing one quarter against the previous. It is not unusual for there to be significant variations on a quarterly basis. Even looking year on year does not give a true picture of the trend with road casualties and it is therefore normal that the figures are assessed over a minimum 3 year period. There is however concern being expressed at a Greater Manchester level, through the Greater Manchester Road Casualty Reduction Partnership, that the number of **Killed and Seriously Injured** may be on the increase. It is accepted however, that statistics may need to be collected for a longer period to fully identify any possible trend, although work is being carried out to identify specific road user groups which may be more prevalent in the road casualty figures. Current data can be found below in Table 1.

Table 1

	Killed	Serious	KSI
1 <sup>st</sup> April 14 – 30 <sup>th</sup> June 14	1	21	22
1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 14 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 14	2	17	19
1 <sup>st</sup> Oct 13 – 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2014	2	13	15
1 <sup>st</sup> July 13 – 30 <sup>th</sup> Sept 13	2	28	30
1 <sup>st</sup> Apr 13 – 30 <sup>th</sup> June 13	1	13	14
1 <sup>st</sup> Jan 13 – 31 March 13	2	18	20
1 <sup>st</sup> Oct 12 – 31 Dec 12	1	17	18
1 <sup>st</sup> July 12 – 30 Sept 12	1	15	16
1 April 12 – 30 June 12	2	15	17
1 Jan 12 – 31 March 12	3	14	17

- 3.2 Bolton Council is facing serious challenges in terms of managing rising energy costs, meeting carbon reduction targets and future carbon tax issues. This is compounded by the current national austerity agenda. In addition to accounting for £1.8m of the council's energy charges, the **Street Lighting Service** remains the council's biggest single producer of carbon emissions. The department has a key role to play in the delivery of the council's Carbon Management Plan. The primary aim of the plan is to address Government policy to reduce carbon emissions, with local authorities tasked with reducing their emissions by 34% before 2020, rising to 80% by 2050.
- 3.3 The department is in the initial stages of delivering a street lighting energy reduction programme, which involves the introduction of new technology aimed at controlling the light levels from a central point and an investment programme of £9.2m to replace all the current street lighting stock throughout Bolton with a more effective **LED lighting**.
- 3.4 The use of LED lighting will provide a number of key benefits:

- A reduction in energy
- Reduced maintenance costs
- Increased life expectancy of the product up to 100000 hours or 25 years
- Cleaner white light
- Dimming facilities

3.5 The department is currently preparing for the winter ahead and is reviewing its **Severe Weather Plan**, which provides a framework for the activation, allocation and deployment of council resources in the event of severe weather. The annual **Highways Winter Service Plan** has been produced, which details how the authority will keep the borough moving in the event of a severe winter with possibly prolonged spells of icy weather or snow. The highways team has 4,500 tonnes of salt ready to use and are routinely checking and filling the borough's 533 grit bins. There are 10 full size gritters available for use for this winter and snow ploughs will also be available. The 510 km (51% of the network) of gritting routes are continually assessed to ensure that major bus routes, certain school routes and strategic vehicle routes are treated.

### **Community Services**

- 3.6 The main internal refurbishment of **Bolton Market** has been completed and the market's priority action plan has been revised, focusing on a number of key areas. Improvements to building security with the implementation of the new cotag system for tenants and traders, has been introduced. Internal and external cleaning issues are being addressed and improvements have been identified to the basement area and the waste collection and recycling processes. Increased and sustained occupancy in terms of filling vacant units in the Lifestyle Hall, the Fruit and Veg Hall, the shuttered units on Ashburner Street and the shop units, are also a priority along with a more robust process for the collection of rent going forward. Externally, the car park has been completed but there are some residual works to be carried out such as bollards, line marking for coaches, pavement markings and fencing off the compactor unit. Positive trader relationships are being developed with the establishment of a Traders' Association and a marketing strategy is in place to re-launch the refurbished market.
- 3.7 In preparation for the temporary closure of **Albert Halls**, significant progress has been made in managing the staff that are affected by the refurbishment works. Temporary secondments are currently being identified across the Council for staff based within the Albert Halls. The Dido Restaurant and the Community Meals Service have been affected by the temporary closure. However, the Community Meals Service will continue through other means.
- 3.8 The department is currently looking into introducing a new **School Meals Management Information System**, which aims to streamline kitchen-based administration and information management. This new system will process and store data and transactions provided by schools, kitchen units and central services, using electronic devices. The aim is to reduce the amount of paper-based reporting and monitoring which, in the longer term, will assist the department to deliver a more effective and efficient service.

## 4.0 **Supporting the Council to deliver its operational priorities**

4.1 This section gives an update on some of the major operational priorities.

### **Managing the Department's Budget**

4.2 The Department was tasked with finding £3.385m of savings and efficiencies. 100% of this target was achieved. Revenue expenditure is projected to underspend against the budget by £44,000 after planned reserve movements. The main variances are in the Albert Halls, School Meals and Markets. Capital expenditure for the quarter was £2.839m against a programme of £28.129m. The highways capital programme at quarter two has an available budget of £18.376m. This comprises of £9.949m approved in the Capital Programme report to Cabinet on 17th February 2014, £4.594m brought forward from the residual 2013/14 programme and £3.833m of new additions in year. The non-highways capital programme for 2014/15 has an available budget of £9.753m which comprises of £4.817m approved in the Capital Programme report to Cabinet on 17th February 2014, £2.519m brought forward from the residual 2013/14 programme and £1.33m of revisions reported in quarter one. In quarter two, an additional £1m budget has been included for the Albert Halls refurbishment which was approved by Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2014 and is due to commence early 2015.

### **Health & Safety**

4.3 Good health and safety management is vital for financial, moral and legal purposes. Services within the department, by their very nature, are front line, operational services which carry with them a high risk threshold. The department is continuing to deliver a programme of training and site assessments to ensure that all services operate in a safe environment. The department continues to reduce the number of staff related incidents, which currently stands at 39 during this quarter. This is a reduction of 7% compared to Q1 and a 50% decrease compared to the same quarter last year, which highlights the importance of tailoring mandatory health and safety training to meet departmental needs.

### **Managing Sickness**

4.4 Staff absence within the Department in quarter 2 is 3.6 days per FTE, compared to 3.2 days in the previous quarter and 3.1 during quarter 2 in 2013/14.

Table 1: Average days sickness per FTE

Average Days Sickness Per FTE in 2014/15				
Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Cumulative 2014/15
3.2 days per FTE	3.6 days per FTE	N/A	N/A	6.8 days per FTE

4.5 The increase has been largely seen in Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services with a number of staff absent with Musculoskeletal / Neck or Back problems and Stress related issues. However attendance is being monitored closely by the management team.

4.6 The Department continues to experience issues with long term absence, the principal causes of which are Stress related and Musculoskeletal / Neck or Back problems. At

present there are 56 ongoing long term absence cases most of which are within the front line operational services within Neighbourhood Services plus Highways, Waste, Cleaning & Catering services, although there has been an increase in the number of office-based staff affected within Regulatory Services. The Department has undertaken significant management action on attendance during the quarter:

- 129 informal counselling meetings have been held compared with 81 in the same quarter last year
- 58 OH referrals
- 1 dismissal has been made

4.7 All current cases, both long and short term are being managed in line with this framework.

### Departmental Complaints

4.8 During quarter 2, 107 formal complaints were received by the department, 96 (90%) of which were responded to within standard (14 calendar days).

4.9 12 of these progressed to appeal during the quarter and there were a further 4 appeal cases on-going from the previous quarter.

Division & Service Area	Number of complaints received	Number answered in standard	Number progressed to appeal
<b>Community Services</b>			
Social Needs Transport	1	1	0
<b>Highways and Business Development</b>			
Highways and Engineering	14	11	1
Parking Services	11	11	9
<b>Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services</b>			
Neighbourhood Services	30	26	2
Regulatory Services	6	5	0
<b>Waste and Fleet Management</b>			
Waste and Recycling	44	41	0
<b>No Division Identified</b>			
No Service Area Identified	1	1	0
	<b>107</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>12</b>

4.10 Approximately 41% of the complaints received in quarter 2 (44 complaints) were attributed to Waste and Recycling. 35 of these related to unsatisfactory service; 2 of the complaints were upheld (i.e. the investigating officer found in favour of the customer) and 13 were partially upheld. As a result, a number of site visits were undertaken and information was updated on the Bartec system. The majority of the remaining complaints were attributed to

Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services (34%), and Highways and Business Development (23%), respectively. 10 of the 30 complaints received by Neighbourhood Services related to service levels; 2 complaints were upheld and 7 were partially upheld. Learning from these included changes to the way information is recorded to reduce administration errors and an amendment to the grass cutting frequency in one area. 8 complaints related to policy and a further 5 were the result of dissatisfaction with a decision; none of these were upheld as the policy had been correctly applied on each occasion and this was explained to the complainant. Regulatory Services received 6 complaints; 1 complaint was upheld and a refund issued. A further complaint was partially upheld and the complainant was advised that work is underway to provide Customer Services Officers access to additional information to enable them to provide more timely updates. As in the previous quarter, the complaints received by Highways and Business Development related in the main to dissatisfaction with the condition of the highway and the outcome of inspections, and challenges to Penalty Charge Notices. 1 complaint was upheld which resulted in additional works being carried out to improve the road surface; 3 complaints were partially upheld resulting additional monitoring. One complaint was received by Community Services, this related to Social Needs Transport. The complaint was upheld and the staff member apologised. In total, 12 of the complaints received in quarter 2 progressed to appeal during the period; in 5 of these cases the decision made in the original complaint investigation was upheld and 7 cases are still on-going.

### **Freedom of Information Act Requests**

- 4.11 Freedom of Information Act is an Act of Parliament that creates a public "right of access" to information held by public authorities. The Council has a legal deadline to answer all requests within 20 working days, unless clarification or consideration of exemptions is required. The Department received 77 Freedom of Information Requests during quarter 2, which is a slight reduction from 109 in the previous quarter. The department was also involved in 27 cross cutting requests. 96% of requests were answered within the legal deadline. The remaining requests were complex requests which warranted a high level of officer dedication and therefore required additional time to respond. Working on an average of 4.3 officer hours per request, the department has allocated over 447 hours of officer time on Freedom of Information Requests during this quarter.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The Environmental Services Department remains on track to deliver its strategic and operational priorities for the Council. Highlights of the report can be found below.
- 663.67 tonnes less domestic waste collected.
  - 761 households have swapped their large grey bin for a smaller grey bin, as part of the 'Slim Your Bin' Campaign.
  - 26% increase in food waste recycling in schools.
  - 41% reduction in youth related anti-social behaviour in Bolton.
  - establishment of a Market Traders' Association.
  - temporary closure of the Albert Halls due to refurbishment work.
  - 50% reduction in the number of staff related accidents across the department.
  - Completion of the public realm improvement works in Bolton Town Centre
  - Severe Weather Plan Review and Highway preparations for winter in progress
  - Introduction of a £9.2m investment programme to replace all the current street lighting stock throughout Bolton with a more effective LED lighting
  - Slight reduction in the number of Freedom of Information Act requests
  - Slight increase in the number of sick days
  - Identification of specific road user groups which may be more prevalent in the road casualty figures

5.2 While the difficult economic climate has continued to present challenges to the Department and in particular around our public interface, continued re-engineering of service provision and challenging of procurement approaches has enabled us to stabilise and mitigate the full impact. The department will however, continue to closely monitor this situation against the backdrop of emerging government policy and guidance.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1 The Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the performance update set out in this report.