

Report to: Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee

Date: 25th November 2014

Report of: Director of Environmental Services

Report No: ESSC/07/14

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

Tele No: 336301

Report Title: **Departmental Performance Update – Q1 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 Q1 performance for the Environmental Services Department. Headlines are:

- The kgs of waste entering landfill has decreased by 6.11% compared to same period last year
- The recycling rate has increased by 4.8% compared to same period last year
- Launched the new 'Right Stuff, Right Bin' Campaign
- Launched the new 'Slim Your Bin' Campaign
- Cleanliness of the borough shows a slight improvement
- Construction work of the Moss Bank Park Café is nearing completion
- The public realm work is progressing well around the agreed events programme.
- The occupancy rate within Bolton Market is stable and further promotional work is planned to increase visitor footfall
- Implementation of the national Universal Infant Free School Meals Programme, which provides free school meals for children in reception, year 1 and year 2 within infant schools
- Implementation of the Crematorium and Cemeteries Modernisation Programme
- The number of accidents within the department has reduced by 47%, due to increased training and risk assessments

Recommendations:

The Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the 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 1 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 directly supports and provides leadership to both the Council and the Cleaner and Greener Partnership as part of the wider Bolton Vision and the delivery of the Community Strategy. The Department directly inputs and leads on themes around **Waste & Recycling, Cleanliness, Greenspace Investment** and providing a supporting role around the **Regeneration of the Town Centre**. The Department also works jointly with Greater Manchester police through **Be Safe**, the local **Community Safety Partnership**. Key progress on our strategic priorities is highlighted below.

2.2 **Waste & Recycling** - Successful waste management is an essential part of a modern economy. It is both a by-product of economic activity, by businesses, government and households and an input into economic activity – whether through material or energy recovery. As such the management of waste has economic implications – for productivity, government expenditure, and, of course, the environment. The department is continuing to deliver its five year modernisation programme aimed at reducing the amount of household waste ending up in landfill, in order to reduce the additional £7m disposal costs. The performance data for Q1 shows that the improvement initiatives currently being delivered are in the whole, successful. The amount of residual waste collected per household this quarter is 119.5 kgs, which is a decrease of 6.11 kgs compared to the same period last year. The recycling rate for Q1 is 42.45%, which is an encouraging 4.8% increase from the same period last year and has already exceeded the projected annual rate for 2014/15 by 2%.

2.3 **Missed collections** continue to decrease from 5,707 during Q1 2013/14 to 1,800 missed bins during this quarter and **recycling** container requests have decreased from 7671 in Q1 2013/14 to 4588 requests in Q1 2014/15. Managed weekly waste collections were introduced in Q1 2013/14 and account for the high number of recycling bins ordered and the high number of reported missed collections last year. The service has now returned to business as usual. However, the Service is not complacent and continues to strive to make further improvements with initiatives being delivered this quarter which include:-

- strengthening marketing and communication by producing the new **household recycling calendars**, produced an article for the Bolton Scene, which said thank you to residents for the recycling rate for 13/14, reminded them which materials can be recycled and in which container and encouraged them to sign up for recycling/bin alerts.

- launched the new '**Slim Your Bin**' Campaign which encourages those residents who are fully recycling, to swap their current grey bin for a smaller one in order to protect the environment and to take up less space at home. 136 households have requested a 'slimmer' bin during Q1, which is an encouraging start to the scheme.
- initiated discussions with SCOPE in order that the Service can partner up around a '**Textile Recycling Month**', where households can fill a collection sack with unwanted clothes and other textiles such as curtains, shoes, handbags, belts, and soft toys. Clothes in good condition are sent to the third world for reuse, whilst the remainder are recycled. Not only does this reduce the need for landfill space but will also support SCOPE in their charitable work.
- continue to work with schools via **outreach programmes** through the use of the new recycling calendars and promoted recycling and food waste presentations. In this quarter alone nine new schools have started to recycle food waste which will hopefully result in the children encouraging their parents to recycle at home.
- launched the new '**Right Stuff, Right Bin**' Campaign in partnership with the Greater Manchester Waste Authority, which aims to place a thank you tag onto bins belonging to residents who are recycling correctly. Those who are not recycling correctly will receive a red tag. The aim is to reduce the number of red tags over the three recycling collections through the use of this very visible measure. Local radio stations promoted the campaign in May 2014 and the Service organised an information roadshow at Morrisons in Halliwell. If performance data during Q2 shows a reduction in the contamination of recycled waste, the Service will roll out it's outreach programme across the Borough.
- continuation of the European funded **Life+ Project** in partnership with Recycle for Greater Manchester, which aims to change the behaviour of residents throughout Greater Manchester on the way they recycle to encourage them to waste less and recycle more. Recycle for Greater Manchester and Bolton Council are looking for new and innovative ways of engaging with different communities (i.e. through the use of local groups, community ambassadors and community leaders) to spread the messages and encourage others to change their behaviour. Activities in Bolton have included; over 300 textile collection bags delivered to students at Bolton University to donate clothes, bags, books, CDs & DVDs to British Heart Foundation, visits to community leaders and volunteers in Halliwell to discuss recycling and back street waste, delivery of a successful Halliwell's Environment Week in June, where residents got involved in litter picking, skip clear outs, recycling presentations and grow your own fruit and vegetables. The Service is now monitoring waste and recycling activity in flats and social housing around the town centre, with a view to rolling out the Life+ Project in these areas.
- produced a new recycling promotional poster in partnership with the Bolton Council of Mosques (BCOM), aimed at advising residents on **food waste recycling during Ramadan**, which was sent to all Mosques in Bolton and was also published in the BCOM newsletter.

2.4

The department has also re-tendered the **Bulky Waste Collection Service** and has awarded it to Bolton Community Transport Furniture Services, which is a registered charity who re-furbish and sells re-used furniture in order to provide transport services for those in need in the borough.

- 2.5 Over the last 12 months, an external organisation had provided a **cardboard collection service** at all bring site across the borough, costing £3,750 per year. After a period of negotiation, this organisation has agreed to continue to collect cardboard at the bring sites at no cost to the Council. This saving will help reduce the Council's overhead and disposal costs.
- 2.6 During Q1, there was 10,782.35 kgs of waste per household in the borough being recycled, re-used or composted, compared to 14,620.27 kgs being disposed of in landfill. Although the recycling data shows significant improvements, further innovative initiatives need to be developed and implemented if the department is to narrow the gap between waste which is diverted into recycling streams and waste which is disposed of in landfill.
- 2.7 **Cleaner & Greener** - A cleaner, greener, more attractive Bolton is key to making our communities more sustainable as well as ensuring they are attractive places that people are proud of want to visit, live and work in. The Department and Partners have been striving towards delivering this agenda since outlining our ambitions in the Bolton Plan of 2007.
- 2.8 The recent **Local Environmental Quality Survey** results, which monitor the **cleanliness** levels, show a litter pass rate of 93% across the borough. The department continues to be encouraged that litter standards remain above a 90% pass rate, particularly given the financial pressures and reductions in staff resources over recent years. Over the summer, the service has also been forced to respond to the unexpected impact the borough has felt around the management of weeds. As per the agreed standards, all areas have been treated twice but, predominantly for weather-related reasons, the applications have not been as effective this year. However, in order to effectively respond to the issue, additional resources have been put in place to increase spraying and remove overgrown weeds for this season and the Service will review the entire operation for 15/16 to confirm that the level of spraying remains appropriate.
- 2.9 Neighbourhood Services is currently managing the delivery of a £2m, three year **Greenspace Investment Programme** to improve facilities for outdoor sport and activities. This Programme primarily focuses on three areas of sporting activity: playing fields, tennis courts and Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs). Officers across the Council are working with the Governing Bodies for a number of sports e.g. British Cycling to identify other opportunities which could be brought to fruition on the back of this investment. As always with landscape and outdoor facility development, the weather plays a significant part in the construction phase of the project. Whilst the periods of very wet weather experienced over the last 15 months have had some impact on delivery, there have been no significant delays as yet.
- 2.10 Parks bring measurable direct and flow-on economic benefits to local, regional and national economies. These economic benefits enable communities to function and prosper, allowing them to build social cohesion, social capital and healthy communities. The construction of the new **Moss Bank Park Café** is a vital element of the on-going developments within Moss Bank Park, to ensure that the park meets the needs of existing and new visitors. The new Café, which is due to open in quarter 2, will provide a place for visitors to stop and have refreshments and will be situated close to the popular children's play area and also close to 'The Hive', where children can learn about nature.
- 2.11 **Supporting the Regeneration of the Town Centre** - The Council remains committed to securing investment, growth and jobs for local people and is particularly focused on ensuring that Bolton town centre remains a great asset through supported economic regeneration. Although the Department does not directly lead on the **Regeneration of the Town Centre**, it plays a key supporting role in supporting this aspiration.

- 2.12 During this Quarter, the department has commenced the latest phase of **Public Realm works** in the Town Centre. The works are being project managed around a number of events and other developments; the first section completed on Hotel St was successfully managed before the Food & Drink Festival and work is now continuing on Mealhouse Lane to complete this sector of the Pedestrian Priority Zone. Design and development work is also continuing in preparation for the works to be carried out on Newport Street. These have to dovetail in around the Christmas and other events in Victoria Square and the wider area and other building development proposals on Newport Street itself. The design will also tie-in with the new Interchange, so close co-ordination with TfGM is essential.

3.0 Departmental Strategic Priorities

- 3.1 In addition to supporting corporate priorities, the department has identified a number of internal priorities, which are highlighted in this section.
- 3.2 The refurbishment of **Bolton Market** is not just about ensuring that it is a good place of commerce. A successful market helps grow and connect urban and rural economies. It encourages development, enhances land values and the tax base, keeps money in the local neighbourhood and offers low-risk business opportunities for vendors. The spin-off benefits of Bolton Market are numerous; from increasing access to fresh, healthy food to providing important revenue streams. Bolton Market has a positive impact on local businesses, governments and residents. But, perhaps most important, it serves as a public gathering place for people from different ethnic, cultural, and socio-economic communities.
- 3.3 In **Bolton Market** the occupancy levels in the market are approx. 96%. The public realm and final refurbishment works are due to be completed in September 2014, when footfall and incidental spend are expected to increase. Over the autumn months, the Council will increase advertising, where the market will be included in all Town Centre promotions and the department will continue to promote the market using social media and advertisements in the local press. In addition, Bolton Market featured heavily in **Bolton's Food and Drink Festival** at the end of August. Free cookery demos took place in the Lifestyle Hall during the Festival, where celebrity chefs showed visitors how to produce cheap and healthy meals using produce readily available from the market. During the next quarter, the department will be in a better position to comment on the progress of innovations within the Market and if further interventions are still needed.
- 3.4 School meals provide important health benefits and contribute to educational attainment they also play a valuable role in teaching healthy eating habits which can decrease health inequalities amongst the children who receive them. From September 2014, the national **Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) Programme** will be implemented, which will provide free school meals for children in reception, year 1 and year 2 within infant schools (Key Stage 1). Locally the planning for this fundamental scheme has been underway since autumn 2013, when a Management Team was established to ensure that the scheme is implemented effectively and efficiently. Based on this Government initiative from September 2014, the department estimates that the average uptake for Key Stage 1 pupils will be 70% and 64% for Key Stage 2 pupils (the £1.25 per meal promotion for Key Stage 2 pupils will remain in Bolton during 2014/15.) During Q1, the uptake of school meals in primary schools was 60%, which means that the Service is currently preparing for 10 - 15% increase across the borough, which equates to approximately 350,000 – 400,000 more meals in 2014/15. Capital allocation for re-equipping school kitchens and providing sufficient additional tools and kit for the increased demand has been finalised for approximately 17 school schemes, from simple installations of bigger ovens to large refurbishment projects. Orders have also been placed for equipment such as cutlery, plates etc. at a cost of approx. £15k. The refurbishment programme in schools began on 21st July 2014. Staffing arrangements are in

place based on initial forecasts carried out by the UIFSM Management Team, but until meal numbers are clarified at the end of September, increased labour implications will not be known. The next stage for consideration is the data recording activity, as there is now a third definition of a 'meal consumer', these being Paid Meal, UIFSM and Statutory Free School Meal. The Government is keen to ensure that Statutory Free School Meal is continued to be recorded in order to determine deprivation funding for schools. Testing of the data collection and recording model is currently underway and will be approved by the Council at the end of August 2014.

- 3.5 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. Quarter 1 total crime figures are generally on a par with Greater Manchester. Robberies and thefts were seen as challenges in 2013/14. Quarter 1 has seen a decrease in the number of these crimes reported. The integrated offender management (IOM) spotlight programme which focused on offender management during 2013/14 appears to be having an impact. The number of reporting levels around historic sexual offences has continued to increase from the previous year. The Partnership, whilst not complicit, still remains confident this is more linked to a number of high profile media and celebrity cases than any underlying trend with the expectation being that over time the reporting levels will return to a more normative level. There has been an increase of the number of hate crimes and domestic abuse reported. The partnership are viewing this increase as a positive as it is believed the increase is due to the growing confidence of reporting these types of crimes and not necessarily that the number of crimes committed. **Anti-social behaviour** has seen a 19% decrease this quarter compared to the same period last year. The Bolton Division has surpassed the reduction in ASB experienced across Greater Manchester by 13%.
- 3.6 Over the past four years, the department has implemented a substantial modernisation programme within the borough's **crematorium and cemeteries** to enrich the experience of mourners, to deliver a service of the highest standard and to comply with new environmental legislation to substantially reduce emissions. The Service carries out over 4,000 cremations and burials per year and has seven operational cemeteries.
- 3.7 Although the charges have increase this quarter, they continue to be in line with neighbouring authorities in Greater Manchester. At the end of 2012, all crematoria across the UK were required to install mercury abatement equipment, in order to reduce the amount of pollutants being released into the air. Local authorities are required to carry out at least 50% of cremations using this equipment. During Q1, 356 cremations have been abated, which makes 1,739 in total since the scheme was started in 2013 and is well within the Government target.
- 3.8 The improvement works within the chapels at **Overdale Crematorium** have been well received by the public, following informal consultation. The final stages of the improvement works will be implemented in Q2, which includes; the installation of the new state of the art music system and facilities to carry out webcasts during services.
- 3.9 The **Social Needs Transport Service** provides a borough-wide demand responsive transport service in line with the Government's Transport Efficiency Programme and the objective of the Transport for Greater Manchester's Integrated Social Needs Transport Review. During Q1, the Service has supported over 1,000 vulnerable people, has carried out over 120,000 journeys and has delivered over 23,000 meals, as part of the Meals on Wheels Scheme. In addition, the Service has implemented new routing schedules for learning disability clients from 14 April 2014, in line with the re-location of clients, following a reduction in learning disability day centres.

- 3.10 **Heaton Fold** provides a care, training & development service for adults with a learning disability within a horticultural nursery and garden centre environment. It is a priority for the department to further develop Heaton Fold to continue to support vulnerable adults and to ensure its long term financial viability. Plans are currently being produced to refurbish the kitchen and dining areas to provide a café facility for the public. Discussions are currently being held between Children & Adults Department to begin accepting new referrals to Heaton Fold.
- 3.11 Bolton has made excellent progress in reducing **Killed and Seriously Injured** casualties, with the 2012 figure of 68 being the lowest number recorded within the borough. Whilst this may be the case, the total KSI figures for 2013 showed an increase to 79, with January – March 2014 showing a recorded total of 19, this being one less than for the same period in 2013. Overall investment in road safety has diminished and therefore figures will need to be monitored over the next few years to establish whether the reduced investment is having an impact on casualty numbers. The Council does however continue to deliver road safety education and training within primary schools in Bolton. This comprises ‘Step Outside’ pedestrian training which aims to provide children with skills and knowledge necessary to ensure they can operate as a pedestrian in safe and effective manner. In addition national standard ‘Bikeability’ cycle training was provided to 1962 year 5, 6 and 7 pupils during 2013/14 and it is anticipated that a similar number will be trained during the 2014/15 financial year. In terms of engineering the Council has implemented a 20mph speed limit scheme within Horwich centre funded by the Greater Manchester Casualty Reduction Partnership Award Fund. It is anticipated that further two schemes funded by the Partnership will be implemented during 2014/15. All three of these schemes target KSI collisions and will help in addressing particular identified areas of concern.

4.0 Supporting the Council to deliver its operational priorities

- 4.1 This section gives an update on some of the major operational priorities.
- 4.2 **Managing the Department’s Budget** - 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 £108,000 after planned reserve movements. The main variances are in the Albert Halls, School Meals, Trade Waste and Markets. Capital expenditure for the quarter was £0.573m against a programme of £27.042m. The highways capital programme at quarter one 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 £8.666m 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 £2.91m of new additions in year with £1.58m re-profiled to take place in subsequent financial years.
- 4.3 **Health & Safety** - Good Health and Safety practices are not just about being socially responsible but they are also important in the wider financial sense. This is particularly true regarding the services provided by Environmental Services, which by their very nature are front line, operational services which carry with them a high risk threshold. During 2013/14, the department focussed on improving health and safety practices and increasing mandatory training to all staff which resulted in a 27.5% decrease in the number of accidents reported between 1st April 2013 and 31st March 2014. The department continues to assess all working practises, particularly those relating to operational/frontline services,

the success of which is evident in the Q1 data. There has been a 47% decrease in accidents within the department between April 2013 and June 2014, which highlights the importance of tailoring mandatory Health and Safety training to meet departmental needs.

4.4 **Managing Sickness** - Staff absence within the Department in quarter 1 is 3.1 days per FTE, compared to 3.5 days at quarter 1 last year. The Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services has 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. 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 64 ongoing long term absence cases most of which are within the front line operational services within Neighbourhood Services plus Highways, Waste, Cleaning & Catering services. The Department has undertaken significant management action on attendance during the quarter, which includes:

- 97 informal counselling meetings have been held compared with 66 in the same quarter last year
- 50 OH referrals
- 11 warnings were issued compared with 2 the year before and
- 1 dismissal has been made

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

4.6 **Departmental Complaints** - During this quarter, 95 formal complaints were received by the department, 83 (91%) of which were responded to within standard (14 calendar days). 9 of these progressed to appeal during the quarter and there were a further 5 appeal cases ongoing from the previous quarter.

Division & Service Area	Number of complaints received	Number answered in standard	Number progressed to appeal
Community Services			
Bereavement Services	1	1	1
Social Needs Transport	1	1	0
Highways and Business Development			
Highways and Engineering	18	12	2
Parking Services	8	8	1
Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services			
Neighbourhood Services	28	23	2
Regulatory Services	3	4	1

Waste and Fleet Management			
Waste and Recycling	34	33	1
No Division Identified			
No Service Area Identified	2	1	0
	95	83	9

- 4.7 Approximately one third (36%) of the complaints received in quarter 1 (34 complaints) were attributed to Waste and Recycling. The majority of these, 26 in total, related to unsatisfactory service; 3 of the complaints were upheld (i.e. the investigating officer found in favour of the customer) and 15 were partially upheld.
- 4.8 Learning from these included ensuring that Customer Services Officers in Access Bolton were providing accurate information to customers, the provision of clearer information to crews and updates required to the Bartec system. Of the remainder, 7 related to policy, which it was found had been correctly applied in each case; 1 complaint related to a staff member and an apology was given. The majority of the remaining complaints were attributed to Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services (33%), and Highways and Business Development (27%), respectively. 9 of the 28 complaints received by Neighbourhood Services related to policy; none of these were upheld as the policy had been correctly applied on each occasion and this was explained to the complainant.
- 4.9 **Freedom of Information Requests** - The Department received 109 Freedom of Information Requests during quarter 1, which is a slight reduction from 125 in the previous quarter. 95 of requests this quarter were for the department alone and 14 were cross cutting across the Council. During this quarter, there were two services in particular which received the highest number of requests, these being Neighbourhood Services and Highways and Engineering Services. 85% of requests were answered on time, which is slightly down from the previous quarter and were complex requests, which warranted a high level of officer dedication. Working on an average of 4.3 officer hours per request, the department has allocated over 460 hours of officer time on Freedom of Information Requests during this quarter. The growing number and complexity of requests is recognised as an area of concern corporately.

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.
- The kgs of waste entering landfill has decreased by 6.11% compared to same period last year
 - The recycling rate has increased by 4.8% compared to same period last year
 - Launched the new 'Right Stuff, Right Bin' Campaign
 - Launched the new 'Slim Your Bin' Campaign
 - Cleanliness of the borough shows a slight improvement
 - Construction work of the Moss Bank Park Café is nearing completion
 - The public realm work is progressing well around the agreed events programme.

- The occupancy rate within Bolton Market is stable and further promotional work is planned to increase visitor footfall
- Implementation of the national Universal Infant Free School Meals Programme, which provides free school meals for children in reception, year 1 and year 2 within infant schools
- Implementation of the Crematorium and Cemeteries Modernisation Programme
- The number of accidents within the department has reduced by 47%, due to increased training and risk assessments

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

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