

Report to: Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee

Date: 9th June 2015

Report of: Director of Environmental Services

Report No: ESSC/01/15a

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

Tele No: 336301

Report Title: **Departmental Performance Update – Q3 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 Q3 performance for the Environmental Services Department.

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:

- 48% reduction in departmental complaints compare to the same period last year
- 1.9% increase in the borough's recycling rate
- 11.55kg decrease in waste disposed of in landfill
- Borough cleanliness stands at 95% pass rate
- Cleaner and Greener Partnership focuses on 17 multi-agency commitments
- Overall victim based crime is down by 107 crimes
- 9% reduction in anti-social behaviour relating to nuisance from fireworks
- Focus on refreshing health & safety practises and increasing visitor numbers within Bolton Market
- Initiation of the £6.5m major refurbishment programme on the Albert Halls
- Successful implementation of the Winter Service Provision, resulting in 53 priority routes gritted
- Completion of further public realm improvement works in Bolton Town Centre to increase economic prosperity
- £5.5 million investment in LED Street Lights, which when fully operational will save around 59% on our current street lighting energy charges
- Initiated discussions with Wigan Council to deliver, in partnership, a variety of services with will realise £4m joint savings
- Slight decrease in the number of staff sick days
- Over 374 hours of officer time allocated to the Transparency Agenda

Recommendations: The Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to comment upon and challenge the performance update set out in this report

Decision:

Background Doc(s):

Signed:

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Leader / Executive Cabinet Member	Monitoring Officer

Date:

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report summarises the performance outturn for quarter 3 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.

The Cleaner and Greener Strategy

2.2 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.

Waste & Recycling

2.3 The cost of disposing waste is expected to rise by £7m per year in Bolton if successful interventions are not introduced across the service. The main priorities within this service are to encourage residents and businesses to reduce their waste and to divert waste into other, more appropriate waste disposal streams e.g. recycling, complemented by targeted behaviour change programmes.

2.4 Over the past few years, the department has been successful in implementing a wide range of positive interventions to reduce the amount of waste entering landfill which currently stands at 350.17kg; a decrease of 11.55kg compared to the same period last year and to increase the recycling rate within the borough, which currently stands at 40.2%; an increase of 1.9% compared to the same period last year.

2.5 Targeted, high-profile behaviour change programmes are paramount to the sustained reduction of household waste culminating in landfill. The department tributes its success this quarter to the following activity:

- *Marketing & Communications* – The Winter Edition of Bolton Scene included concise information on Christmas and New Year bin collections, top tips for recycling over Christmas and bulky waste recycling. The new 2014-15 Waste and Recycling Calendars were delivered to all households throughout October and November.
- *The Up & Forward Programme 2013-2015* – This two year programme aims to improve recycling rates in hard to reach communities and is the first project of its

kind to be funded in the UK. Up and Forward focuses on improved communications with hard to reach groups across Greater Manchester with the aim to waste less and recycle more. This Programme has now been completed in Bolton and results on its associated successes will be available in quarter 4.

- *Door to Door Engagement* - From October 2014 to the end of January 2015, the service has undertaken a door to door engagement campaign to over 43,000 households as part of a larger £30k Waste Resources Action Programme. An analysis report on this programme will be available in quarter 4; however, to date over 2,000 new waste containers have been requested as part of this campaign.
- *Unauthorised Second Grey Bins* - In October, Recycling Officers visited 517 properties where crews had reported unauthorised second grey bins. 450 unauthorised second grey bins have been removed and affected residents have been encouraged to recycle their waste. It is estimated that over 35 tonnes of waste have been diverted into more sustainable waste disposal streams during this quarter, as part of this activity.

- 2.6 Waste that is too large to be accepted by the regular waste collection provision is known as 'Bulky Waste'. The contract for this service was awarded to Bolton Community Transport Furniture Service (BCTFS) at the beginning of this quarter. BCTFS is a registered charity, selling reused and new furniture in order to provide transport services for those in need in the local community. The number of bulky waste collections has increased from 282 in Q3 2013/14 to 343 in this quarter. This increase is very encouraging as historically, this type of waste would normally be found in illegal flytips around the borough. In addition, the percentage of bulky waste collected which is either reused or recycled has also seen an increase from 25.33% in Q3 2013/14 to 28.18% during this quarter, resulting in less waste being disposed of in landfill or by incineration.

Neighbourhood Services

- 2.7 The way streets and other public spaces are cared for has an impact on every household within the borough, the success of businesses operating in the locality and the attraction of visitors to the area. The quality of the local environment, in particular the standard of street care and the maintenance of green spaces, is one of the main barometers used by the public to judge how well an area is being managed and its suitability as a place in which to live, work or visit. Research has shown that there is a strong correlation between the standards of cleanliness in the local environment, fear of crime and satisfaction and also suggests that through using enforcement combined with a series of public education campaigns and improved operational methodologies, a successful integrated approach to improving the environmental quality of the public realm can be achieved. Accordingly this is reflected as a key priority in the Council's Community Strategy.
- 2.8 The recent Local Environmental Quality Survey (Sept – Dec 2014) results, which monitor the cleanliness levels, show a litter pass rate of 95% across the borough. Each survey is a snapshot of the cleanliness of the streets, with a 50 metre transect surveyed from a random sample of 10% of the borough's streets. Each transect is graded on the presence of litter on a scale from 'A' to 'D' as detailed in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (England 2006). It is encouraging that litter standards remain above the 90% target pass rate, particularly given the financial pressures and reductions in staff resources over recent years. However, given the on-going financial constraints over the next few years, maintaining this level of cleanliness will be a challenge. In order to tackle these challenges, the Service will focus resources on the following activities:

- Continuing to deliver the Behaviour Change Programme, a multi-agency programme delivered through the Cleaner & Greener Partnership aimed at influencing people's behaviours and reducing the levels of unacceptable litter.
- Intelligence gathering to ensure resources are targeted appropriately
- Robust enforcement and education to improve residents awareness of issues e.g. £75 fines for dropping litter, the Big Bolton Tidy Ups, and volunteering opportunities

2.9 In addition, during 2015/16, the Cleaner and Greener Partnership will focus resources on delivering and supporting the seventeen cleaner and greener commitments pledged by delegates at the Bolton Vision Conference in December 2014.

Community Safety Partnership

2.10 An effective Community Safety Partnership (Be Safe) 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. Overall **victim based crime** is down by 107 crimes comparing Q3 to Q2. This includes reductions in theft (-165 crimes), domestic burglary (-95 crimes), burglary other (-79 crimes) and vehicle crime (-91 crimes). Increases were seen in violence (+70 crimes) and alcohol related crime (+52). Operation Sherry covered the crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) associated with the town centre over December to deal with threats during the Christmas period. This is a long standing operation and again delivered reductions during the month of December. ASB saw an increase during this period of 361 incidents however this is offset by significant reductions on the 12-month year to date figure (as at 31st December 2014) which highlights a staggering reduction of 2,675 fewer anti-social behaviour incidents. During quarter 3, Be Safe's priority was to deliver the seasonal Treacle campaign aimed at reducing ASB incidents associated with Halloween and bonfire night. The multi-agency Treacle operation was put in place to minimise the seasonal peak and the evaluation from this period highlights the following:

- Overall ASB: reduction of 2%
- ASB involving young people: reduction of 38% (this is the highest percentage reduction in Greater Manchester)
- ASB relating to nuisance from fireworks: reduction of 9%
- Bolton was the only GM area to show reductions in the above Treacle indicators during this period (compared with last year)
- Other indicators covered deliberate primary fires which saw a reduction of 24% but there was an increase in secondary fires 32%.
- During this period there were 0 fire fighters attacked in Bolton that is a 100% reduction. This is the highest percentage reduction in GM.

2.11 There has been an increase in the number of hate crimes (13) and domestic abuse (80) incidents reported. The partnership is viewing this increase as a positive as it is believed the increase is due to the growing confidence of reporting these types of crimes. A hate crime e-learning package has been developed for agencies to support front-line staff. During November the Domestic Abuse and Violence Partnership coordinated a programme of activities linked to 16 days of activism against gender violence. This also included supporting the White Ribbon campaign aimed at men supporting ending male violence against women. During November changes in legislation introduced new anti-social behaviour powers designed to give the council and its partner's greater flexibility to deal with the all aspects of anti-social behaviour. Included within this legislation is the requirement on councils to conduct Anti-social Behaviour Case Reviews (when a locally defined trigger has been met). The Community Safety Partnership has developed a local

policy to manage this change which has been agreed by Greater Manchester Police and Registered Social Landlords.

3.0 Departmental Strategic Priorities

Bolton Market

3.1 Bolton Market is not just about ensuring that it is a good place of commerce. 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 both local businesses and residents alike. The Council's £4.5m investment in Bolton Market has enabled a diverse shopping offer, which aims to ensure that customers keep coming through the doors. In order to build on the successes of the market upgrade, the Service has targeted resources on the following activity during this quarter:

- **improving on-site health & safety** – improvements continue to be made to ensure that the Market is a safe, healthy place to work and visit and the Markets Team is working closely with traders to ensure that individual stalls adhere to contractual obligations. Statutory requirements such as fire evacuation plans, trading standards, safety assessments on electrical and gas equipment, public liability insurance etc. are currently being refreshed.
- **increasing visitor numbers** – The current shopping experience is a positive one at the Market, which experiences high levels of loyalty from existing shoppers. However, awareness of the diverse shopping offer across the wider general public is relatively low and high profile promotional activity is required over the next 12 months, to ensure that the Market is a major retail contender. The Service has delivered a successful 'family fun day' & trader events throughout the Christmas period and although footfall and visitor numbers at the Market are not monitored by the department due to the associated costs involved, informal feedback from stall holders has been positive, where traders stated they experienced higher visitor spend. In addition, the Service is making better use of social media to interact with frequent and new shoppers and is encouraging traders to embrace e-commerce and make use of the free Wi-Fi, which has been made available through the refurbishment works.

Albert Halls

3.2 During 2015/16, a £6.5m major refurbishment programme on the Albert Halls is planned to bring them up to the standard of the rest of the town hall; which has already undergone a £3.5m investment to upgrade the working environment of Council staff; and to provide a retail venue including a restaurant, which represents a significant investment into the centre of Bolton. Whilst the improvement works are carried out within the Albert Halls, all service based staff have been allocated temporary secondments. The Service still has on-going responsibility for Queen's Park and Moss Bank Park Pavilions, as well as the six Community Centres, Mere Hall, the Albert Halls asset inventory and supporting Corporate Property Services with the handover of the Albert Halls to the appointed contractor.

Depots Management

3.3 The department is implementing an internal **depots modernisation scheme**, which aims to improve services, reduce their carbon footprint and make a saving in maintenance, transport and running costs. The new state of the art vehicle wash at Wellington Street Depot is near completion and should be available to be used by the councils' fleet of 252 from late February subject to successful testing and commissioning. Recent changes to

Mayor Street Depot's overall security measures have been made to reduce the risk of unauthorised access. Access at the depot is now only permitted via the cotag system. There is an intercom system on entry should visitors need access, however, visitors are encouraged to direct their business and queries through Access Bolton.

Highways & Engineering

- 3.4 The **winter service provision** is planned to ensure that adequate resources are available at all times during the winter period to respond to adverse weather conditions, to ensure key corridors of the highway network are operating satisfactorily to support residents, businesses and other service providers. The service carries out gritting on 510kms (317 miles) of main traffic routes, which represent 51% of the overall total road length across the borough. During the adverse winter weather this quarter, all ten gritters have been deployed onto the 53 priority routes and carried out approx. 40 days' worth of gritting, using over 2,700 tonnes of salt and grit.
- 3.5 It remains a clear priority for the council and its partners to maximise **economic prosperity** in Bolton ensuring economic growth, development, regeneration and job creation. A clear a strong strand of this particular priority centres around the continued support and development of the town centre shopping offer so to ensure it is vibrant, relevant and supporting strong footfall numbers. As part of our work in this area, the department has recently completed the first phase of an extensive **public realm project** in and around the town centre, with the aim of improving the retail environment. The next phase of this work will focus on the entire length of Newport Street from Victoria Square up to the site of the new interchange, in order that this part of town will be able to operate as a gateway for people arriving in Bolton on public transport linking the shopping offer and the Market Hall into the Interchange. It is planned that this space will be completely redesigned in order to deliver a modern and vibrant mixture of shopping and event space with new benches, lighting and stonework running the full length of the street. This next phase of development will also be complimented with an extensive shop front improvement scheme involving all the businesses currently trading along Newport Street. To date, an architect has been appointed to help develop the scheme and a programme of proprietary work is underway. It is envisaged the process of clearing the street furniture can begin in the next few weeks once the programme of works has been agreed. Once completed this area will not only be an attractive and modern entrance to our shopping offer but will also provide areas which we can animate with events throughout the year with all of the physical works planned to be delivered by the Highways Department.
- 3.6 The Council currently faces serious challenges in terms of managing rising energy costs, meeting carbon reduction targets and future carbon tax issues emanating from the street lighting stock. The delivery of the initial phase (April – Dec 14) of the **Street Lighting Energy Efficiency Programme** consisted of implementing technology across the existing estate starting with the lights that burned the highest amount of energy and produced the greatest concentration of carbon emissions. Over 6,754 units were replaced during this period. The final phase of the programme, due to be implemented in 2015/16, will replace remaining street lighting stock throughout Bolton with a more effective LED lighting option, which have built in dimming facilities, extending the lamp life up to 10,000 hours or 25 years. It is estimated that this project will realise a 60% reduction in energy consumption and a reduction in on-going maintenance costs from £590k pa to £290k pa.
- 3.7 Going forward, the Council has also entered into a longer term partnership arrangement to retro-fit the remaining untreated street lighting columns with modern centrally controlled LED units. This project went live before Christmas and is due to commence roll out in the next few weeks and represents an investment by the council of £5.5 million which when fully operational will save around 59% on our current street lighting energy charges year on year and represent a carbon emissions reduction of around 1,879 tonnes per year.

Bolton/Wigan Partnership

- 3.8 Both Bolton and Wigan Council's Environment Directorates have already made significant budget cuts over the last 4 years from a combined gross expenditure base of circa £180m. Budget savings targets over the next two years are just as significant, standing at £4m. It is proposed that the majority of services within the department are delivered on a joint basis with Wigan MBC. The detail of each service and precise scoping will be subject to further analysis and a proposal will be submitted for consultation in July 2015.
- 3.9 Joint delivery will achieve savings from a combination of:
- Trading growth
 - Reducing dependency and managing demand
 - Optimisation of staff resources
 - Standardising processes and removing waste
 - Cost savings, e.g. reductions in combined fleet size, buildings and back office support costs
- 3.10 Initial discussions between Bolton and Wigan Environmental Directorates are exploring a variety of service delivery models not only because of the demographic profile and geographic proximity of the Boroughs but also because the Environment Directorates have a number of similarities including range of services, scale of activities, service ethos and ambition for growth and the combined service offer provides a range of potential income generation and cost saving opportunities.

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 £75,000 after planned reserve movements. The main variances are in the Albert Halls, School Meals and Markets. Capital expenditure for the quarter was £6.810m against a programme of £19.915m. The highways capital programme at quarter three has an available budget of £14.763m. The non-highways capital programme for 2014/15 has an available budget of £5.152m. The Department has a projected general reserve of £75,000 at the end of the year.

Health & Safety

- 4.3 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. This quarter has seen a 56% increase in incidents within the department compared to quarter 2 (Q2- 39 incidents; Q3 – 61 incidents). Community Services has shown the largest percentage increase this quarter, which currently stands at 33 incidents compared to 17 incidents in quarter 2; the main area of concern is within the School Meals Service. However, the figures reflect the normal trend over this period as school services (1000+ employees) do not work during Q2. The year on year trend which currently stands at 33 incidents compared to 17 incidents in quarter 2 (2014) compares to the previous year which shows 23 incidents in quarter 3 increasing from

15 in quarter 2. There is always a significant spike at this point between sequential quarter reports and year on year trends are more realistic performance measures.

- 4.4 In 2014 quarter 3, the increase of 21% on the previous year can mainly be attributed to the School Meals Service but there are valid reasons to report an industry-wide increase for this particular quarter. The government's introduction of the UIFSM saw a huge growth in the service across England, all resulting in previously unknown levels of production. In Bolton the number of burns/scalds was 6 and the number of minor cuts was 5 out of 500 staff; this is not a pattern which would give rise to major concerns. However, management is re-assessing all risks and issuing regular reminders to staff who know the accident statistics. PPE is under review with reminders about arm protectors and a focus on correct knife and blade procedures. The Schools Meals Service is very good at reporting all incidents and the vast majority of them were of a very minor nature.
- 4.5 Across the industry, there was a rise in health and safety incidents generally reported at the NW Forum in December 2014, due to the introduction of the Universal School Meals Initiative which saw large increases in orders for meals and therefore increased demand in the kitchens. In perspective, out of almost 500 staff there were 20 non RIDDOR incidents over a period of a very busy 13.5 weeks including 6 minor burns or scalds, and 5 minor cuts. This does not mean the service will become complacent however and these minor cuts and scalds will continue to be addressed through awareness raising.

Managing Sickness Absence

- 4.6 Staff absence within the Department in quarter 3 is 3.5 days per FTE, compared to 3.9 days at quarter 3 last year. Please note that the figures in Table 1 below may show a variance from previous published figures, due to the methodology used within the reporting management system.

Table 1

Average Days Sickness Per FTE in 2014/15				
Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Cumulative 2014/15
3.2 days per FTE	3.7 days per FTE	3.5 days per FTE		10.4 days per FTE

- 4.7 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. 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 36 on-going long term absence cases, 23 of which are front line operational roles and 13 are office based staff. The Department has undertaken significant management action on attendance during the quarter:
- 82 informal counselling meetings have been held compared with 69 in the same quarter last year
 - 44 OH referrals
 - 1 dismissal has been made

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

Requests for Information

- 4.9 Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and the Environmental Information Regulations Act (EIR), are Acts of Parliament that creates a public "right of access" to information held by public authorities. The Council has a legal deadline to answer all FOI/EIR requests within 20 working days, unless clarification or consideration of exemptions is required. The council also responds to Subject Access Requests (where an individual requests to see information held on them), within 40 days.
- 4.10 The Department received 62 FOI/EIR requests during quarter 3; a reduction of 15 from the previous quarter and a reduction of 29 from the same period in 2013/14. The department was also involved in 25 cross cutting requests. 100% of requests were answered within the legal deadline. Working on an average of 4.3 officer hours per request, the department has allocated over 374 hours of officer time on requests during this quarter.

Departmental Complaints

- 4.11 During quarter 3, 69 formal complaints were received by the department. It is encouraging to see that the number of complaints has reduced by 48% compared to the same period last year. This is due to the introduction of a more robust monitoring system, which encourages services to learn from previous actions.

Division & Service Area	Number of complaints received	Number answered in standard	Number progressed to appeal
Community Services			
Markets	1	0	0
Highways and Business Development			
Highways and Engineering	11	10	0
Parking Services	8	6	1
Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services			
Neighbourhood Services	19	17	0
Regulatory Services	8	4	2
Waste and Fleet Management			
Waste and Recycling	22	21	0
	69	58	3

- 4.12 Approximately 39% of the complaints received in quarter 3 (27 complaints) were attributed to Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services. 5 of the 19 complaints received by Neighbourhood Services related to service levels; 1 of these was upheld (i.e. the investigating officer found in favour of the complainant) and 2 were partially upheld. Of the remaining complaints, 3 were upheld; these related to delays in providing information, or

incorrect information being provided due to enquiries being passed between teams and the customer not being updated.

- 4.13 Regulatory Services received 8 complaints, 1 of these was partially upheld and as a result the service will communicate via email where possible to speed up processes. Several of the complaints were complex and required additional time for investigation; this was explained to the complainants and revised response dates provided.
- 4.14 The majority of the remaining complaints were attributed to Waste and Recycling (32%), and Highways and Business Development (28%), respectively. 17 of the 22 complaints received by Waste and Recycling related to unsatisfactory service; 5 of the complaints were upheld and 9 were partially upheld. As a result, a number of site visits were undertaken and Team Leaders issued reminders to crews.
- 4.15 As in previous quarters, the complaints received by Highways and Business Development related in the main to challenges to Penalty Charge Notices, none of which were upheld. The remainder of complaints related to highways safety concerns and to road closures; 1 such complaint was upheld and resulted in a review of the processes around communicating temporary road closures. 1 complaint was received by Community Services; this related to the Markets Service and was not upheld. In total, 3 of the complaints received in quarter 3 progressed to appeal during the period; in all of these cases the decision made in the original complaint investigation was upheld.

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:
- 48% reduction in departmental complaints compare to the same period last year
 - 1.9% increase in the borough's recycling rate
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 - Borough cleanliness stands at 95% pass rate
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 - Slight decrease in the number of staff sick days
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6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to comment upon and challenge the performance update set out in this report.