

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

FAECAL SAMPLING

Environmental health officers from the business compliance team have been dealing with two outbreaks of diarrhoea and vomiting in separate residential care homes within the Borough. Outbreaks of this nature are a high priority to the service because of the vulnerable nature of the residents. Officers have been working in partnership with the Health Protection Agency undertaking sampling to determine the cause of the outbreaks. The sampling has ruled out a food related cause to the outbreak which is now believed to be viral in origin given the onset and duration of the symptoms.

FORMAL ACTIONS

A range of formal actions including the closure of a food premises for a cockroach infestation have been undertaken by the business compliance team. In total five health and safety improvement notices and two food hygiene improvement notices have been served this month.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Simon Kirby, Environmental Health Officer working in the Environmental Protection team has been awarded the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Graduate of the Year Award after completing a Council funded degree course at Salford University in 2009. The award comes with a £2,000 cheque. Simon was chosen as the winner at a London event earlier this month where he had to do a 10 minute presentation and take part in a question and answer session. He started work for BwDBC in 1996. Since then he has worked in Public Protection, previously Environmental Health, and he deals with issues like nuisance neighbours, traffic pollution and industrial emissions.

AIR QUALITY

Over the last 100 years there have been big changes in the sources of air pollution affecting people in our Borough. Pea-soup fogs and huge chimneys belching black smoke are a thing of the past. Today, road traffic is the most significant source of outdoor air pollution within our Borough.

Poor air quality reduces the life expectancy of everyone in the UK by an average of seven to eight months and up to 50,000 people a year may die prematurely because of it.

Vulnerable residents, such as those with asthma, who live in air pollution hotspots could be dying up to nine years early.

The Council is required to undertake a continuous cycle of air quality measurement and modelling to determine whether the pollutant levels meet the national air quality objectives. These objectives have been set for seven

key pollutants that are known to harm health. We have a problem with high levels of nitrogen dioxide from cars and the Public Protection Service currently measure pollution at 45 sites across the borough.

Within the borough we have nine of these pollution hotspots:

Five locations have already been declared as Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs): Intack, Bastwell, Witton, Earcroft and Darwen Town Centre.

Four additional hotspots are under investigation and may need to be declared as AQMAs: Four Lane Ends, Blackamoor junction, Livesey Branch Road / Moorgate Street junction, and the junction of Burnley Rd and Accrington Rd (this last junction won't be a problem if the East Lancs Rapid Transport Project goes ahead).

WASTE AND RECYCLING

There has been a 4% decrease in waste to landfill and a comparable tonnage for kerbside commingled recycling for the financial year to date compared with the previous year. The recycling performance at the two Household Waste Recycling Centres has also improved by over 1% with recycling of materials at the sites now at an all time high of 69.84% excluding construction and demolition waste which is recycled separately.

Charges for the collection of bulky household waste and replacement bins have been introduced in September and October.

GREEN SPACES

Work on preparation for Remembrance Sunday is continuing, which includes for the replacement of the stolen lion's heads from Corporation Park memorial.

Vandalism to Council play areas within Parks and other open spaces continues although it has slowed in comparison with the summer months. All instances of damage and vandalism are reported to the Police for their attention.

Winter crown green bowling is available at Corporation Park, Olive Lane, Green Park and at Roe Lee Park. Roe Lee Park also has disabled access facilities.

DOG KENNELING

An East Lancashire out-of-hours dog kennelling contract has been awarded by the 5 district councils and Blackburn with Darwen BC. The contract, which is administered by Blackburn with Darwen BC., Regeneration and Environment Department, will deliver savings for the Council and is the first time this service has been jointly tendered.