

## **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN  
DATE: 28 JANUARY 2021**

### **WASTE AND RECYCLING**

General waste from householders burgundy bins has increased because of the pandemic, with more residents being at home, the 'lockdowns' and the increased use of takeaway meals. For the months of October and November, in 2019, we disposed of 4,876 tonnes of general waste and for the same period in 2020, we disposed of 5,678 tonnes, an increase of 16%. The collection of this waste has been achieved by the hard work and effort from our collection teams, who have continued to maintain full collection services throughout the pandemic.

The recycling tonnage is now split with paper and cardboard collections in the blue bins, and glass, cans and plastic bottles/containers and certain packaging collected in the grey bin. The key issue for recycling is the quality of the material collected having to meet the stringent standards set by the companies who process and use the materials we collect.

On a positive note, we have seen the level of contamination in our recycling bins reduce from 35% to the latest figure of 12%, which has been consistent for September, October and November 2020 with the results for December expected by late January. This compares well with the average for Lancashire Councils who currently have a contamination figure of 19%.

In terms of specific data for the recycling, 2,702 tonnes of recycling from blue and grey bins was collected in October and November 2020 of which 324 tonnes of recycling was rejected. For the same period in 2019, 2,926 tonnes of recycling was collected, of which 1,024 tonnes of recycling was rejected. This demonstrates that the new collection system is providing a better quality product with more material being recycled and less being rejected.

To help tackle contamination, the leaflet distributed to every household in early December again highlighted which items can and cannot go into which bin. The leaflet also included competition details for the Council's recycling website [www.recyclebwd.org](http://www.recyclebwd.org). The competition included prizes supplied by our waste and recycling partner, Suez UK, with a first prize of £500 and 5 prizes of £100. At the time of writing, we have had over 3,000 entries to the competition, the winners will be announced late January 2021.

### **BEREAVEMENT SERVICES**

The Council's cemeteries and crematorium continue to work within the restrictions placed on them due to the pandemic, with mourner numbers limited. The crematorium is closed to all but cremation services and only those attending a funeral or visiting a loved ones graveside are being allowed to visit the cemeteries. The portfolio has decided not to increase the fees and charges for cemeteries and crematoria in 2021 in the midst of this pandemic.

### **PARKING SERVICES**

The following Council Owned Car parks have been allocated to support the vaccinations programme in the Borough

**Simmons Street** - has been allocated as a car park for anyone using the vaccination centre based within Barbara Castle Way Health Centre.

**Weir Street and Penny Street** - both of these car parks have been allocated as car parks for anyone using the vaccination centre based within Blackburn Cathedral.

**Bank Bottoms** - this car park has been allocated as a car park for anyone using the vaccination centre based in Darwen Health Centre.

### **PUBLIC PROTECTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

Public Protection has continued to focus heavily on Covid secure enforcement in the period October-December 2020, responding to changes in legislation and intelligence provided by police and partners. Work with the police has been particularly close, and partnership working has been excellent.

Each time legislation changes officers are sent into the field to inspect and advise, and then intelligence is used to target resources where more formal enforcement is required. In the period October to December 2020, Public Protection staff carried out over 2000 compliance checks. In addition, the Health and Safety Executive have contacted and advised 360 businesses at our request, and community organisations have supported 200 small businesses to be covid secure.

Compliance has generally been good, although eight £1000 fixed penalty notices have been issued for breaches of covid-secure legislation, and closure directions were served on two premises for breaches of covid legislation. One remains in place.

In addition to enforcement work, during this period PP officers have carried out 415 personal visits to individuals who have tested positive but have failed to respond to the local test and trace staff, and have visited and advised 40 business premises, which had experienced clusters of covid-19 cases.

A covid marshal presence has been maintained in Blackburn and Darwen town centres, and other outlying areas to a lesser extent. The covid marshals are having a positive impact on mask wearing.

In addition to the covid secure work, the Service is making efforts to recommence food inspection visits, inspections to Houses in Multiple Occupation and market surveillance on product safety (there is the potential that Brexit could affect product safety standards in the marketplace).