

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: MARTIN EDEN
DATE: 28 JULY 2022**

Waste and recycling

Nationally, Councils still await clarity from government on proposals within the Environment Act for the compulsory collection of food waste, extending collections of recyclables through 'extender producer responsibility', deposit return schemes and implementing consistency in recycling collections across all Council areas in England. Until government announces firm proposals, the Council cannot make firm plans for the future. However, we are due to provide the annual calendar pack to all households within the borough late July/early August, with the pack containing information and advice to households on reducing food waste. Food waste constitutes about 44% of the contents of the burgundy bin, with half of food waste still being edible and in date. This means that households are buying additional food that they do not consume which costs each household an average of £800 per annum. Reducing food waste would also provide residents with more room in their burgundy bin.

Environmental Improvements

The additional funding provided by the Council from April 2022, provides a separate team tackling the ash dieback disease which is killing ash trees across the country. To combat this, the Council now has a tree contractor tackling the problem on its land by cutting back or felling diseased trees. A new Arboricultural Officer commenced in post from early July, the officer will be responsible for identifying trees with the ash dieback disease, as well as producing a Tree Strategy for the borough to assist with tree planting targets. The additional funding has also provided a new team to tackle overgrown shrubs, with the team progressively moving around the borough. Further resources have also been provided for litter picking on the main arterial routes within the borough, additional mechanical sweeping on main roads, additional litterbin emptying and also designated staff within the larger parkland sites.

PARKING SERVICES

Parking Services Income

The ability for Parking Services to generate income over the last two financial years has been severely hampered due to the series of lockdown measures placed on society due to the Covid pandemic. However parking services is starting to see income levels raise but still not to pre-covid levels.

Over the first quarter of this financial year, income from Pay and Display is c. 86% of what it was pre-covid, with the number of vehicle movements being around 82% of pre covid.

Council Owned Car Park Covid Testing Sites.

The three Council owned car parks, which have been used as sites for testing centres for the majority of the covid pandemic have now been handed back to the Council at the end of June. The three sites were:-

- Old Bank Lane
- Penny St
- Railway Road, Darwen

These sites will now revert back to Pay and Display.

Licensing Reviews and Appeals

Following the conviction of a business on Bank Top, Blackburn for fraudulent trading in relation to illicit tobacco, Trading Standards submitted a review of the premises alcohol licence. On 17th May 22 the General Licensing Sub Committee revoked the owner's licence to sell alcohol. A Proceeds of Crime application remains outstanding in this case and is expected to be heard in January 2023.

The Licensing Team and the General Licensing Sub Committee have experienced an extremely busy first quarter to 2022-23. In addition to the above, six new taxi driver licence applications were referred to the Committee, and six existing drivers referred for various matters as well. The street trading permits for three ice cream vendors were also reviewed due to concerns over customer safety.

Two appeals against Committee's refusal to grant a taxi driver licence have been heard by the Magistrates' Court, with the Committee's decision being supported on each occasion. Three further appeals have been scheduled to be heard by the Magistrates' Court in the coming months