

# REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & OPERATIONS

COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING  
CHIEF OFFICERS: Strategic Director  
of Environment & Operations  
Thursday, 26 January 2023

## **PLACE: Community pride in a vibrant place to live and visit;**

### **Waste and Recycling**

The period of snow and ice in December tested the resilience and planning of the refuse and recycling service, which saw the teams working hard to complete services in at times, treacherous conditions. The services hard work and dedication saw the service complete the majority of collections on time, with just a small number of properties not serviced on their collection day, but collected when the weather allowed access to be available.

Collections during Christmas and New Year have been maintained, with all properties serviced as per scheduled collections.

The Government and their regulatory body, the Environment Agency, issued a directive on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022, that from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023, persistent organic pollutants (POPs) are poisonous chemical substances that break down slowly and get into food chains and can no longer be sent to landfill. The Environment Agency issued guidance, on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2022, regarding the disposal of Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating (WUDs) containing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023 this waste will no longer be accepted at landfill and must be destroyed through incineration. To comply with the guidance, Councils need to make changes to how this waste is collected and disposed/treated.

The overwhelming majority of Blackburn with Darwen BC waste is sent to energy from waste outlets and not to landfill, with waste only sent to landfill as and when the energy from waste outlets are offline for scheduled servicing. The Council is working with its disposal contractor Suez UK on how it can collect this type of waste and transport it to comply with the new guidance. Once a decision has been made, the Council's Bulky Waste Service web pages will be updated.

### **Waste Education and Enforcement**

In November and December, nine schools were visited, with each school receiving the Recycling Heroes session delivered by Sally Booth. In these sessions, the children learn about reduce, reuse and recycle, what each bin is for and where the rubbish and recycling goes. The children play an interactive board game where they match different materials with the correct bin and get to take home a pack full of resources to carry on at home. This includes a bin sticker for children to write their house number on and stick on their bins at home. In December, we also took a year 4 class to the SUEZ depot in Darwen to see the big piles of rubbish and recycling, to enable the class to gain a better understanding of waste management.

We are also working closely with DACA who have set up a food group, after school. This food group made up of students who are concentrating on food waste and how we can help educate about reducing food waste. In the next few months, we're planning on

working together with the food group to create some videos or resources to educate other students and parents of the school.

With our New Environmental Education Officer, we have been working closely with the Envirocrime team to look at working with the back street cleaning team to provide education alongside removing waste to prevent more waste being created.

We have also been working with Red Rose Recovery to create a litter picking group in the Galligreaves area. They litter pick the area once a week and educate if they speak to any residents. Over the last few weeks, the amount of rubbish they are seeing and collecting has reduced, which is a great sign.

The team has also produced what we intend to be our final hard copy Christmas waste leaflet, before we go online with the information, and delivered the leaflet to every address in the borough (end of November/beginning of December) concentrating on reducing waste and recycling at Christmas. A new web page was also created on [www.recyclebwd.org](http://www.recyclebwd.org) to expand on the messages in the leaflet as well as a leftover recipe section and food storage hints and tips.

## **Parks and Open Spaces**

The Council is looking to improve play facilities at a number of parks during 2023, using section 106 and grant funding sources. Improvements are planned for the Whits at Witton Park, Queens Park play area and also Roe Lee Park. These improvements come shortly after the newly refurbished play area at Blacksnape play area in Darwen.

## **Public Protection and Environmental Health**

### **Air Quality Update**

The Environmental Protection Team has successfully bid to maintain its status as Local Site Operator for a DEFRA real time air quality monitor within the Borough.

The real time air quality monitor, which is located in the grounds of Accrington Road Community Centre, is funded by DEFRA and provides background air quality data as part of the Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN).

The Team also monitors air quality using Diffusion Tube technology at 47 locations around the Borough. The scope of the monitoring program in the Borough has assisted the Team in producing a robust Annual Air Quality Status Report for DEFRA.

DEFRA has accepted the findings of the report, and in particular has supported the proposed revocation of Air Quality Management Areas at Intack, Bastwell and Four Lane Ends. Work will now commence on a consultation process prior to any revocation taking place.