

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITIES

COUNCILLOR JIM SMITH

PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
CHIEF OFFICERS: Strategic Director
of Environment & Operations
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Build happier, healthier and safer communities

ENVIRONMENT

PERSISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS (POPs).

From 1st January 2023, and with only 2 weeks' notice of the introduction of the legislation, new legislation from the Environment Agency came into effect regarding the storage and disposal of waste upholstered domestic seating containing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

POPs are poisonous chemical substances that break down slowly and get into food chains as a result. From 1st January 2023 this waste has not been able to be disposed of in landfill and has been required to be incinerated, which occurs via our residual waste contract with Suez. However, there were transitional arrangements allowed to be in place until 1st December 2024, where providing the POPs waste was incinerated, it did not need to be collected separately.

Waste domestic seating is any item of seating of a household type from households or businesses that is waste. Upholstered domestic seating may contain POPs. For example:

Sofas	Stools and foot stools
Sofa beds	Home office chairs
Armchairs	Futons
Kitchen and dining room chairs	Bean bags, floor and sofa cushions

This includes any part made of or containing leather, synthetic leather, other fabric, or foam.

The following items of domestic seating are unlikely to contain POPs: Items that are not upholstered, for example, a wooden chair without a cushioned or textile back, seat, or arms, deckchairs, wastes from manufacturing new domestic seating that the manufacturer can prove do not contain POPs.

Mattresses, curtains, blinds and beds are not domestic seating and are not covered by this guidance.

To ensure the Council is compliant with the legislation, from 1st December 2024, the above-named items will need to be collected separately by the Council. Amendments are being made to the councils bulky waste and flytipping operations to ensure that the Council complies with the legislation.

FOOD WASTE

Progress is being made for the introduction of food waste collections within the borough, in line for the deadline of 1st June 2026. The Council is leading on a joint procurement initiative with 5 other Lancashire Councils for the procurement of kitchen caddies, kitchen waste bins and caddy liners.

CORPORATION PARK TENNIS COURTS

The renovation of 3 tennis courts at Corporation Park by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and their contractors has been impacted over the summer by the weather, with the remaining lining being the only outstanding element to be completed, which is hoped will occur when there is a dry spell of weather. The courts, once opened, can be booked via the Lawn Tennis Associations online booking system, linked to their approved provider in the North West and the Isle of Man, We Do Tennis, to deliver tennis coaching, qualifications and tennis growth at the park.

PUBLIC PROTECTION

Reassurance Visits to Undertakers

Following the shocking findings at undertakers in Hull in March 2024, the Department of Justice approached local authorities across the country and asked them to carry out 'reassurance visits' to undertakers in their areas. The visits were not intended to be regulatory, but to provide reassurance that decent standards of hygiene, care and record keeping are being met.

Environmental Health Officers carried out visits to all the funeral directors in the Borough over the summer; all but 2 are members of the main trade associations, which gave added reassurance. Conditions were found to be good with no concerns about traceability of deceased persons or ashes, the dignity of persons being cared for, or issues with the selling of funeral plans.

LEISURE SERVICES

Attendances and Memberships

In the first 5 months of the year, there has been a 15.9% increase in the number of people attending the Council's three leisure sites, with over 210,000 visits to the sites between April August 2024.

The number of Leisure members who pay either direct debit or an annual one-off payment has increased by 5.8% this year. There is now a total of 6,428 active members across the 3 Leisure centres.

PARKING SERVICES

Pay and Display

We have seen an 8% increase in usage of the Council owned car parks in 2024/25, with many of the car parks close to 100% occupancy during weekdays and at the weekends.

Additional Parking Enforcement

The contract with Marston's for additional parking enforcement support has been extended until the end of December 2024. This has enabled the service to extend its enforcement hours throughout the week, and enabled parking services to put additional resources into Police-led parking operations and additional patrols and enforcement at Blackburn Rovers FC home games.

MARKETS SERVICE

Improvement work

The next stage of improving the physical environment in Blackburn Market will focus on the unused space behind the visitor centre. We are in the process of getting design support and quotations to modify this area to make a more welcoming environment for customers entering the market off Church Street and the possibility of creating a dedicated event space.