

## **Cabinet Member for Environment Report to Scrutiny Committee**

### Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing

This year we will see the most significant changes to the waste and recycling service in over a decade. The kerbside collection of mixed plastics and cardboard for recycling which is being rolled out this month will be followed by the weekly collection of food waste and introduction of a chargeable garden waste service in the autumn. Members may be interested to read the report being presented to the Managing the Environment Policy Development Group on 9 June (attached).

Stuart Noyce our Waste and Transport Manager and his teams of staff have now been working hard over a number of months to ensure the successful introduction of these changes, which are expected to result in ongoing costs savings of circa £450,000 per annum once the schemes have been rolled out. A project team, which includes staff from IT, finance, customer services and communications in addition the waste and recycling, is overseeing the changes as they are planned and introduced. A successful trial of the new scheme was carried out on an urban and rural round in February. Looking to the future work needs to be undertaken to further improve recycling rates particularly amongst those who do not take advantage of our kerbside recycling.

Street cleansing – we continue to work hard to keep our streets clean, with the limited resources available and to work with voluntary groups as well as town and parish councils. It is our intention to review street sweeping rounds and introduce revised rounds using route optimisation approaches. Litter and dog fouling in public places are unfortunately problems which need to be addressed, but I do not think Mid Devon is any worse than other areas of the country. We must not however be complacent and deal with these issues both by enforcement and improving litter collection particularly along the roadside and in rural areas.

### Grounds Maintenance

Devon County Council Highways have been forced to make budget cuts and have reduced the amount they spend on grass cutting, in mid Devon the majority of this work has been carried out by MDDC under contract from Highways. Highways now only contract us to cut grass on visibility splays and where there are safety reasons. Our grounds maintenance teams' cut grass across the district, including public open spaces for which we are responsible and our parks, as well as the work carried out on behalf of Highways. As an authority we have for a number of years, effectively subsidised the grass cutting undertaken on behalf of Highways, for this year we are continuing to cut highway grass but cannot afford to continue doing so in future years. We are therefore going to be contacting town and parish councils to see what levels of service they wish to receive in their areas and seek financial contributions to cover the cost of maintaining existing Service levels.

## Car Parking

Our main car parks in town centres continue to be well used and the introduction of the £1 fee for five hours parking in our long stay car parks in Tiverton, Crediton and Cullompton has proved very popular. The policy development group set up a working group a few months ago to look at car parking and to review the various car parks we have across the district including car parks in villages and out of town centres. Following the recent election I am anticipating the PDG will re-establish the working group and that they will make recommendations to the PDG later in the year. It is important to gain a greater understanding of what use is made of some of car parks, particularly those which are used free of charge and I want ward members to be involved in that process.

Cllr Neal Davey  
Cabinet Member for Environment  
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