

Portfolio Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Chris Goodwin
Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham

This report provides an update on the main activity since the last Council meeting relating to portfolio responsibilities.

Greenspace: The Council's tree planting programme continues to prepare for the 2024/25 season – 650 new trees will be planted between October 2024 and March 2025 across the borough. This work is being delivered in partnership with, and supported by, the 'City of Trees' as part of the 'Trees for Climate Change' project. The other main source of trees is the Northern Forest Initiative and use of S106 Funding that the Council secures for environmental improvements.

In addition to the tree planting, the Service will also aim to deliver a further 2.5 hectares of new woodland across the borough during the 2024/25 planting season. This programme is consistent with the aim of increasing woodland and tree planting year on year.

The programmes aim to continuously increase green coverage across the borough, using Council resources and by working closely with partners and environmental groups across Oldham and the Greater Manchester region. All tree and woodland planting support the environmental challenges of climate change / adaptation and deliver the recognised benefits that are brought about by sustainable tree planting and increasing woodland and green coverage.

After numerous attempts to secure a weeding contractor for this year's programme, we have successfully trained our own team and works are weed treatments have now completed in Saddleworth W and Lees, Shaw and Crompton and the teams will soon be seen in Waterhead, St Mary's, Coldhurst and Chadderton. We continue to apologise that the service could not commence earlier in the year, however with trained operatives now within the team, we will be able to deploy our teams where they are needed without worrying about external companies workloads or contractual obligations.

Fleet Management: The service continues to assist Council departments with the specification and purchase of vehicles as part of the fleet replacement programme – this ensures that the vehicles meet Service needs and provide value for money.

The service area also maintains, repairs and provides ongoing support for all council owned vehicles – this ensures that the council continues to meet legal obligations and is able to continue to operate goods vehicles and complies with the Operators Licence meaning that the Council can deliver waste collection and other highways maintenance operations using large plant, machines and vehicles.

The Service provides MOT and compliance testing for all Council Licensed vehicles (Taxis & Private Hire). To continue to support the trade, the Service is installing an additional MOT testing bay so the additional demand can be met.

Play Areas: Play area and park development continues across the borough. The following sites that will undergo improvements in the near future:

- Waterhead Park: Surfacing improvements
- Moor Street: Play area improvements
- Churchill Playing Fields: Woodland walks improvements, trim trail, and outdoor gym
- Salmon Fields: Path network improvements
- Clayton Playing Fields: New changing rooms
- Shaw Memorial Gardens: Infrastructure improvements
- Royton Park : Multi site improvement works
- High Crompton /Dunwood Park: Tennis court Refurb – improvements
- Bullcote Park, Shaw Road End, Dogford Park: Gym equipment installation
- Royton Park and Dunwood Park: Growing hubs
- Big Local – Arundel Street MUGA: Multi-use games area
- Beckett Meadows: Cricket wicket improvements
- Whitehall Lane: Play area improvements
- Non-Turf Cricket Pitch Installations: New Barn, George Street, Heyside, and Oldham Edge, funded by ECB (£58,786)

Highways and Engineering: The Highways Service continues to deliver on the agreed boroughwide maintenance and re-surfacing programme. All 14 schemes agreed for delivery in the 2024/25 programme are progressing and are either in the planning, development, or delivery stage. Work is being timed to ensure minimum disruption to residents.

Members and residents will also be aware of significant work being undertaken across the borough by Utility Companies – this in the form of planned maintenance and also emergency repairs. We understand that this work, both planned and emergency, causes disruption to residents. For all planned work, the Council coordinates between different companies to ensure the impact is minimised and where roads are being closed, partners can bring their work forward or delay it so works can be done at the same time by different utility companies – unfortunately, this cannot be done in all instances or when the work is urgent. This said, I am pleased to share that the major sewer repair works on Park Road were completed by United Utilities and the road is back open having been inspected by Council Engineers.

Highways Engineers work closely with utility companies to ensure that the work is done correctly and as quickly as possible, with regular inspections to the site. This takes place during the works to ensure disruption is minimised and upon completion – this is to ensure that the highway has been repaired correctly to minimise costs to the council.

Recommendations: Council is requested to note the report.