

Statement by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health, Waste and Recycling

15 December 2020

Waste and Street Scene

The service continues to deliver despite a challenging year. Covid restrictions have been very effective both within the depot and the out on the rounds, allowing refuse and recycling collections to continue throughout the pandemic, while in March and April some services had to be reduced such as special collections of bulky goods, all services are operating as normal. The public continue to be very supportive.

The garden waste collection service has had a busy year due to the effects of Covid and a very mild, long summer. Garden waste collections have now ceased for the winter months, with the exception of a collection for Christmas trees in January. The service will resume in mid-February. This suspension allows the service to carry out vital training and affords time to dedicate to enhanced litter picking along major routes as well as minor roads and villages. Garden waste income is up over 2% from last year.

Fly tipping unfortunately continues despite best efforts. Waste and Street Scene are targeting hot spots with the use of CCTV and signage, as well as working on joint initiatives with North Yorkshire Police and local authority partners to try to target cannabis farm dumping.

A new 'Digital Depot' system has now been launched, enabling depot staff and waste crews to work more effectively together in reducing admin and paper usage and therefore providing a better, more responsive service for customers.

Christmas and New Year collections will be altered, with some collections on Christmas week being a day earlier than normal, residents can find all the changes on the website.

Environmental Health

With Hambleton being in Tier 2 for Covid restrictions, Environmental Health staff continue to implement the latest government guidance and legislation. The team are carrying out unannounced visits to licensed premises in the evenings and at weekends to ensure the correct controls are in place and that premises are complying with requirements.

Staff also participate in joint working on outbreak control in food and other business locations. This detailed, valuable work helps to stop the spread of the virus and enables businesses who have been affected to get back to working as normal.

Outreach work continues with businesses to provide help and support to interpret the legislation and to provide help with measures such as risk assessments.

Alongside the Covid work and business as usual, a project is underway to provide an enhanced digital management system that makes managing cases easier and improves efficiency to create a better experience for customers.

Staff will be working over the Christmas period to be on hand in case of further outbreaks and to support businesses and residents.

Health and Safety

Health and safety monitoring, revision of risk assessments and management inspections of premises are all functioning normally, despite the extra burden all services are facing this year. This year's Health and Safety Plan was approved by Scrutiny Committee on 3 December.

Covid audits have been carried out at all premises including leisure centres and business centres, thus helping to ensure the safety of all our customers and tenants.

Safe working from home procedures have been drawn up including risk assessments, without the need for managers to carry out home visits. Most staff members are working from home, though tier 2 allows for opening of the Civic Centre and the leisure centres. Procedures are in place to ensure that managers are providing as much support as possible.

Emergency Planning

North Yorkshire is in Tier 2 with Covid cases falling over the last three weeks.

A local Covid testing station is up and running in Northallerton at the Forum car park, this alongside weekly mobile testing sites at Thirsk, Easingwold and Stokesley provides a good level of cover for symptomatic testing for the district.

Work is ongoing with the NHS, local authority partners and the military to prepare for large scale vaccinations and community testing across the district.

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Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health, Waste and Recycling