

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

### **1. Area Care**

Extensive amounts of fly tipping were found on an area close to the Riverside, Newport. Evidence was obtained and Enforcement Officers are carrying out the appropriate investigations to try to identify the persons responsible. Teams from the Area Care Department pooled resources to carry out removal of the fly tipping which were complete by week ending 27<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and the area will be monitored over the coming months. We are also examining ways in which the area can be target hardened to discourage such disgraceful behaviour.

As reported in a previous report I am determined to make improvements to the cleanliness of the back Alleys across the town. As such I am now chairing a multi-agency approach that will form a 'Back Alley Action Plan. A range of council departments along with various other agencies are currently attending meetings to look at a more proactive and coordinated approach to enforcement in regards to the maintenance of back alleys which it is envisaged will result in better standards throughout .

The 'Walk the Ward' meetings, attended by local Councillors and Senior Area Care Managers are still ongoing with twelve out of the twenty wards now complete. The meetings have been well received and proved a useful tool in allowing Councillors the opportunity to highlight any issues within their ward whilst actually being in-situ.

### **2. Waste Services**

A quality refuse collection service is so important to the residents of the town. We are currently reviewing our waste collection arrangements to further improve what is already a well delivered service. A review of current refuse rounds and days is ongoing and will look at how all refuse wagons can logistically work together over the four day collection period to improve efficiency and help reduce the amount of delays. It is envisaged that the new rounds will be active from the beginning of April. Clearly, I will inform all councillors of proposed changes and ensure that a robust communication strategy is in place to inform residents of potential changes.

All refuse & recycling collections were completed on time over the Christmas period with collection teams doing a tremendous job to ensure that all excess waste and Christmas trees were collected in addition to normal refuse and recycling.

### **3. Waste Policy**

As part of the Councils Customer Strategy, residents and Councillors will see new advertising panels on the side of some of the refuse and recycling vehicles which promote the use of the Council website in accessing refuse and recycling collection days.

The Council's Recycling Reward scheme continues with a number of successful residents winning vouchers in January. The scheme will continue to work across all wards with all residents having the opportunity to win providing their recycling bin is out on time and free of contamination.

#### **4. Middlesbrough Bus Station – Quiet Room**

I was delighted and honoured to be part of the opening of the Bus Station Quiet Room. A small opening ceremony for the Quiet room in Middlesbrough Bus Station was hosted by Middlesbrough Mayor Dave Budd who has made it a priority that the town works towards a better understanding of dementia and the issues around it.

The Bus Station is particularly important to those who suffer from this debilitating illness as it provides safe access to the town centre for those using the bus network. The quiet room provides a safe space in the busy bus station for when the busy concourse of the station becomes a little too much. Dementia sufferers and their carers expressed how useful the room is.



#### **5. Bereavement Services**

As part of the ongoing commitment of the department to the council's ambitions of being Dementia friendly staff within Bereavement Services have gained Dementia Friendly Status. Dementia Friendly Middlesbrough delivered the last of its 3 training sessions for Bereavement Services staff in December and all who attended the training found the sessions to be informative and helpful. The service was also delighted to be able to make a donation of £4337 to the charity from its latest share of funds from the national Metal Recycling Scheme.



Funeral directors and families have continued to express their delight at the improvements to the Chapel and to the surrounding grounds. As reported previously St Bede's Chapel has been improved by widening the automated catafalque, by improving the quality of the lighting and the sound systems and by decorative and upholstery improvements throughout.

Plans for Phase 2 of the programme are being progressed later this year and will include improvements to toilets, heating and ventilation. Further to this we will be looking to make improvements to St Hilda's Chapel.

It is crucial that Bereavement Services provides a high quality service for families and friends at what is a most difficult and trying time.



Volunteers have been working with Bereavement Services and Area Care support to enhance our cemeteries. The Baby Memorial area in Linthorpe Cemetery was enhanced by the planting of 10,000 snowdrop bulbs by volunteers in October, and work has now commenced to replace the wooden framework around the baby graves. The TS1 volunteers together with Friends of Thorntree Cemeteries have also carried out several phases of planting and tidying at Thorntree Cemetery.

## 6. Middlesbrough House

Property Services has commenced work on the refurbishment of the ground floor of Middlesbrough House to create the new Customer Contact Centre. As part of the Council's objective of providing an enhanced customer experience the Customer Centre will provide customers with a physical means of a self-serve single point of access for all customer interfaces with the added advantage of customer liaison officers to provide guidance and assistance.

The new contact centre will promote an increased accessibility for customers to undertake transactions through an online digital platform either within the customer hub, at home or through the use of computers located within community hubs / libraries.

