

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	16 March 2010
Subject:	Winter Leaf Fall - Impact on Environmental Services
Responsible Officer:	Divisional Director Environmental Services, John Edwards
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out to detail the process of Streetscene leaf collection and a brief update on changes made this year taking into account lessons learnt from last year.

Recommendations: (for information)

The Committee is requested to note the report.

Section 2 – Report

Introduction:

A request was made from the 3 Sept 2009 Overview & Scrutiny Committee to provide an update regarding the Council's leaf collection programme to Spring O&S.

Extract from minute 599 of the O&S meeting on 3 September 2009

“A Member questioned whether the Council was prepared for the winter leaf fall which put considerable strain on Environmental Services. She recommended that an update be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in Spring in order to reassess the situation. The Portfolio Holder stated that there were approximately 19,000 street trees in the borough and leaf fall was understandably a concern for residents. However, she assured the Committee that resources were in place to deal with the yearly leaf fall and that the resulting waste would be composted. She added that the Council had invested in new technology to deal with the issue”.

Current Situation:

The Borough contains 300,000 trees across the Borough, 19,000 of which are street trees. The greater majority of tree species are deciduous trees which shed their leaves during the autumn period primarily between October and December. This period links directly with the cessation of grass growth and in previous years the leaf clearing operation had been carried out primarily by the grounds maintenance teams with assistance from street cleansing crews to act as a reactive resource based on customer complaints.

This year our systems further increased the co-ordination and incorporation of the street cleansing teams to provide a planned co-ordinated removal regime across the Borough to utilise staff most efficiently manner.

1. Cleansing shops crews covered their areas using our manual beat sweepers to gather all the leaves, mobile crews then removed them at the end of the day
2. Mobile teams were also deployed to remove leaves from the major routes.
3. The routine residential 'day pack' crews removed leaves from all the residential roads as they carried out their scheduled cleaning. The residential crews were issued with large ton bags, which they filled, and these cleared by a large capacity grab lorry.
4. Grounds maintenance crews removed leaves from the major routes, housing sites and parks, this was a combination of hand sweeping and the use of 'amazone' cut and collect mowers. The mowers were

adapted to collect leaves by raising the cutting deck and were effective in compacting the leaves for collection.

5. We also used an evening 'Twilight' team to remove leaves from industrial sites and to deal with complaints that came through Access Harrow that we considered could not wait until the next scheduled collection.
6. The Blitz also took part in the leaf removal dealing with complaints and also alley ways and traffic islands.

Complaints this year were significantly reduced from previous years.

The leaf collection programme is carried out within our existing resources and is planned to provide the most efficient mechanism to remove leaves whilst maintaining operational service standards.

Leaves collected by the ground maintenance teams and residential day-packs have been composted as a part of our green waste composting provider.

Pedestrian teams such as the shops crews previously used plastic bags to gather leaves which made recycling difficult. A new initiative introduced this year was to trial compostable bags for leaf collection, which has proved successful.

Section 3 - Contact Details and Background Papers

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