

Service Summary Sheet

Directorate	Environment Directorate		
Year	2023-24	Quarter	Quarter 2 (1 st July to 30 th September 2023)

Benchmarking *with local authorities/nearest neighbours*

Energy, Sustainability & Climate Change

Waste PI's are reported quarterly in arrears in line with the national reporting timeframes for the Defra WasteDataFlow data base. Quarter 1 outturns are therefore included in this summary sheet.

- In Quarter 1, Dudley recycled, reused or composted 15,389.14 tonnes (44.8%) of the household waste collected comprising 5,920.93 tonnes of dry recycling (paper, cardboard, plastic, cans and glass) and 9,421 tonnes of green waste. The remaining tonnage relates to items sent for reuse.
- The first quarter of every year has the highest recycling rate due to the start of the "green" waste season. The figures are lower than expected as the grass has been too wet to cut so the recycling volume has been reduced although the residual waste figure has also decreased.
- Improvements in the recycling will be accelerated and show an increase when guidance is published by DEFRA on mandatory food waste collection (and associated new burdens funding), the delayed Deposit Return Scheme & Extended Producer Responsibility.
Consistency of collection has now changed to "Simpler Recycling"
- Dudley's recycling rate of 44.8% at Quarter 1 is slightly higher than the family group average of 44.64%. We continue to educate and encourage our residents to recycle.
- In Quarter 1 Dudley landfilled 1,516 tonnes 4%. This figure states that more material was sent to Landfill than expected. This is in main the result of the HWRC waste being sent to landfill rather than being processed through the EfW plant. The Operator of the EfW controls the input and there is other waste that is prioritised over the HWRC waste.
The EfW contractor has been asked to look at receiving more HWRC waste over other commercial waste, to reduce this figure.

	Q1 2023/24	
	Dudley	CIPFA Family Group Average
% household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	44.8%	44.64%
% municipal waste landfilled	4.0%	8.53%

- Estimated output for Q2 from EfW is 5,232.8 MWh (13,001.8 MWhYTD). Plant shutdown for 3 weeks in August and didn't export any electricity for 11 days due to fault in September.

Transport and Highway Service

- For Q2, the percentage of safer routes to school schemes completed against programme is 16% and the target is 32%. 1 School Zone has been completed. 3 others are currently in consultation. Works around schools are generally restricted to school holiday times, which can delay the delivery.
- For Quarter 2, 60% of capital spend on highways was achieved against a target of 50% resulting in performing above programme.
- For Quarter 2, the percentage of street lighting inventory that is LED is 30% and the target is 35%. From the start of the contract to the end of September 1000 new LED lanterns have been installed. Inventory at the start of the contract was 8,900 LED lanterns out of 32,500 street lights
- For Quarter 2, 22% of gullies were cleansed as per annual programme, against a target for the quarter of 25%. The tanker was taken off the road for a few days so we didn't utilise the contractor for that short period.
- For Q2, Highways Inspections completed on time 11.38% inspections were completed against a target of 5%. Figures have improved significantly this quarter, mainly through the utilisation of the 'pothole' inspector to take some of the strain from the 3 area based inspectors.
- For Quarter 2, the number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) issued for parking offences was 1,549 (3,409 YTD) this has decreased by 508 from same quarter in 2022/23. The Enforcement Service is currently being reviewed and outsourcing arrangements are still being considered.
- For Q2, 677 fly-tip reports were received with 1425 (YTD) reports. There has been an decrease of 71 instances of deposited waste between Q1 and Q2 anecdotally this is a slight improvement as Q2 is an historically busy period and includes the long summer school holiday and an increase would have been expected.
- For Q2, 104 fly-tipping investigations were conducted 212 (YTD). There were 4 less enforcement actions this quarter than last . It is difficult to evaluate enforcement actions and compare with other quarters as the work involved in each report differs greatly. The general level of investigations remains level.

Neighbourhood Services

- For Quarter 2, 26.24.% of trees have a valid tree inspection against the target of 16%.
Higher than target figure due to employment of contractors to survey Nature Reserve trees

Overview of service delivery

Waste Management and Transport Operations

- Pop-up site at Lister Road Depot is on Saturday, 8.00a.m. to 3.30 p.m. every fortnight from 1st April 2023.
- Waste Care Team are awaiting for Guidance from Central Government in regards to consistency in collections, however a recent announcement from Central Government has removed the consistency in collections and replaced it with Simpler Recycling.
- HWRC - Various options being considered on future provision. Extension of 6 months has been offered to HW Martin.
- Weekly Food Collections will be introduced for most households across England by 2026.

Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change

Power Purchase Agreement - Market prices in September softened, however there was still considerable volatility in the markets. Gas maintenance remains a consideration, although we are likely at its peak, so should see impact of this shortly. Oil prices have ramped due to supply restrictions but to date this appears to have had limited impact on gas and electric pricing. Strong wind generation at the end of September curtailed gas demand, and increased confidence in an El Nino forecast for this winter that could cause milder temperatures for Q4.

Our current position is that we have effectively hedged against recent drops, and we have benefited from trading at market highs seen in April. When looking at Winter 2023 in isolation, the average market price over the trading period has been £131.06 whilst the trades completed average £133.31. If the market maintained its current price, by the deadline day the trading period average would be £129.77 versus a fully closed Winter 2023 achieved price of £132.55.

End date for the current recycling contract is October 2024, with work starting on what this may mean. Legislation has changed and Consistency of Collection is now "Simpler Recycling". Awaiting more details on what this means.

For Award Waste Upholstered Domestic Seating (WUDS) contract -Full tender written for the collection of WUDS from Dudley controlled depots. Items maybe collected from fly-tips, house clearances or from pop-up events. Affects other service areas and Directorates. Bulky service to be retained by Council as part of MyDudley self-serve package.

Approval to Procure submitted and Exemption being applied for to bridge gap in award, due to implementation of legislation.

The power of the sun will help a borough leisure centre save on its energy usage when new solar panels are installed later this year. Dudley Council is investing more than £150,000 to add 416 solar panels to the roof of Duncan Edwards Leisure Centre in Dudley.

Once installed the panels are expected to save nearly 40,000 kg of carbon a year, equivalent to planting 2000 trees. The panels will also generate an estimated 200 MWh every year, which based on the cost of energy would generate a large enough saving to cover the initial cost of the solar panels within five years. Work on the installation is expected to take place later in the autumn.

Neighbourhood Services

The improvement work with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is near completion and the courts should be re-opened towards the latter end of October. The online booking system has been developed and the system should be ready to go once the courts have been handed back from the LTA.

The contract for the improvements at Wordsley Park has been awarded to Wicksteed Leisure. We are currently in discussion with the ward members and the Tenants Resident Association regarding the location of the new toddler play area, which is the second phase of the works.

18 (YTD) school visits have taken place at Nature Reserves. A target of 22 was set for 2023/24.

4,398 (YTD) volunteer hours have been recorded across Parks and Countryside Services. A target of 8,000 hours has been set for 2023/24.

Transport and Highway Service

- DMBC involved in regional meetings to support Local Transport Plan development and providing pipeline project and scheme details to support the Area Strategy development.
- DMBC solicitors have agreed to review the legal elements only – structures team will finalise the rest of the report. Completion date is on target.
- Development of the Dudley Local Transport Plan (LTP) – The Dudley Transport Strategy will commence following the completion of the West Midlands Area Based Strategy work which is expected March 2024. The target completion for the Dudley Strategy is Sept 2024.
- A number of changes to the parking service approved in the Council's budget continue to be explored including the outsourcing of the Enforcement Team and review of car parks maintenance.

- Enforcement Officers continue to respond to fly-tipping reports, carrying out investigations where evidence permits. During Quarter 2, Street Cleansing removed 677 fly-tips and 104 fly-tip enforcement actions were carried out. 13 Fixed Penalty Notices and 15 Legal Notices were served for fly-tipping offences during the quarter.

Service Achievements

Waste and Transport Operations

The pop-up tip in Dudley borough continues to prove popular among residents with around 269 tonnes of waste been disposed of at the facility on Lister Road since it switched to opening twice a month at the start of April.

This total includes 74.2 tonnes of wood, 54.2 tonnes of bricks and rubble, and 34.7 tonnes of mattresses and other furniture. 4,888 bookings have been made at the site since April, with 3,420 places (70%) reserved by residents from the north of the borough.

The ward with the most users of the pop-up tip in this period is St Thomas's, where 1,286 spots were booked 1 July – 30 September.

Residents in Sedgley saw a different vehicle doing the rounds in August as the Waste Care Team trials a new upcycled electric vehicle for waste collection. The authority is trialling a new electric refuse vehicle for one day, to test the vehicle's capabilities and its suitability for refuse collections. The vehicle is a previous diesel vehicle which has been upcycled to run on electricity, and the pilot is part of the authority's commitment to invest in renewable energy.

Local charity Provision House accepted donations from residents at two sessions of Dudley's pop-up tip. Users of the waste disposal site on Lister Road donated their unwanted items on 2 and 16 September. The charity is on the look-out for soft furniture and domestic goods like kettles, toasters, microwaves, lamps, power tools and toys.

Based in Dudley town centre, Provision House supplies essential household items to people who have faced difficulties like domestic violence, poverty, homelessness, and modern slavery.

Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change

Energy, Sustainability and Climate Change Team's work to maximise energy from waste has earned it a top regional award. DMBC were named the winner of the Technology and Innovation Category at the Nachural Business Awards in July.

It won for its work to put in place a new contract to manage its energy from waste plant.

The new contract gives the council greater flexibility in shaping its energy, heat and waste strategy. The council appointed Urbaser Environmental Ltd to manage the day-to-day running of its Lister Road energy from waste plant, where it disposes its household and trade waste.

As part of the new contract, the council will benefit from being able to sell the energy produced at the plant back to the national grid, which has the potential to generate substantial income for the council.

Solar panels at a borough school have saved enough carbon to do the job of more than 700 trees since being installed last summer. Councillor Dr Rob Clinton met the school's eco warriors, who are part of a club to help drive environmental projects at the school.

Dudley Council has invested £130,000 of its grant from the government's public sector decarbonisation scheme to install 194 solar panels on the roof of a school. They were installed last summer and in 12 months the school has saved nearly 12,000kg of CO2 emissions, which would be equivalent to planting more than 700 trees.

Neighbourhood Services

A newly painted activity trail is set to help children as they learn to ride their bike in the safety of a borough park. In a project joint-funded by Dudley Council and Friends of Hurst Green Park, a new street-themed cycle trail has been laid on an area of hard-standing in Hurst Green Park. It includes a zebra crossing, island and road junctions.

Following a project to resurface the hard standing area of the park for play in 2020, the park is already popular with roller skaters, people riding scooters and children learning to ride their bikes. It is hoped the new trail, which is a first in a borough park, will help children practice their cycling proficiency as it allows them to simulate actions such as riding on the road.

The total cost for the project is £4,000.

Transport and Highway Services

School Crossing Patrol celebrated 70 years since the service was first introduced nationally in July. The school crossing patrol service was officially created by the School Crossing Patrol Act in 1953 when the government recognised the value of having a service that helped children cross the road at busy and difficult locations. In Dudley, the service was operational from 1989 and since then hundreds of school crossing patrols have worked in the borough helping children and young people to and from school safely.

During the event held today (July 12) at Priory Hall, each member of staff was presented with a certificate and commemorative badge. There are 35 school crossing patrols working across the borough.

A three-year programme to convert around 24,000 borough street lights to LED got underway in August. After successfully converting 7,100 lights on the borough's main roads, Dudley Council has awarded the contract to Fitzgerald Civil Engineering Contractors to convert the remaining street lights over the coming three years.

Energy efficient LED lighting costs less to run, is considered more effective and is also flexible, so levels can be adjusted to suit the area, or dimmed at certain times of the night.

As it moves through the programme of replacement, the team will also be assessing whether the level of lighting is suitable for each area to meet the needs of residents and making changes where needed. Lampposts will also be assessed as part of the programme and replaced where necessary.

The conversion programme is part of the council's invest to save project, with the cost of the initial outlay being part covered by the savings on electricity.

The new LED bulbs will almost halve the energy used by the bulbs they are replacing and, once complete, will reduce consumption by approximately three million kWh per year.

Fly-tippers hit Dudley borough more than 240 times a month prompting the service area to call on the public for their help in catching them.

Dudley Council has had to deal with 1,425 incidents of fly-tipping in the past six months (April-June 2023).

The fly-tippers have targeted roads, alleyways and other areas across the borough with items ranging from kitchen appliances, black bags, tyres and vehicle parts. It has cost DMBC thousands of pounds to clear the rubbish left by other people.

The public have been asked to be vigilant and share any evidence such as vehicle registrations and images of perpetrators with the council. If people are caught they face fines ranging from £75 to £400 and potentially hundreds more through the courts.

Over the past six months Dudley Council has fined 38 people for fly-tipping and waste that had been illegally disposed

More than £80,000 is being invested in improving rights of way across Dudley borough to make them more accessible. Eight key sites are being targeted to encourage people to walk, jog and cycle along the routes. Work includes widening pathways, improving surfaces, removal of trip hazards and cutting back trees and bushes.

DMBC hopes the work will help encourage people to leave the car at home for local trips. Priority sites have been identified including Summerfields Avenue to Narrow Lane, Halesowen, Saltwells Road to Lincoln Road, Netherton, Leys Road to Nanaimo Way, Brockmoor/Kingswinford, Maybank Road to Saltwells Road, Netherton, Ratcliffe Close to Tipton Road, Sedgley, Mousesweet Close to Withymoore Road, Netherton, Hockley Lane to Knowle Hill Road, Netherton, and Greenhill Road to Mucklow Hill, Halesowen.

Improvements to a school crossing outside a borough primary school will help families as they make their way to and from school. The team recently completed the upgrade to a zebra crossing outside Wallbrook Primary School in Coseley.

Improvements include repainting the zebra crossing, a new anti-skid surface laid on the approach, new flashing halo beacons and improved road markings.

Other road safety improvements across the borough include an upgrade to a zebra crossing on Richmond Street in Halesowen as well as new speed humps and a new zebra crossing installed on Bromley Lane.

Work is also underway to install a new pedestrian crossing on Summerhill Road in Coseley to provide a safer place for residents to cross the busy road.

Dudley Council launched a two-week consultation in September about its proposals for new cycle infrastructure in central Dudley. The local authority has been granted funding from the Department for Transport to design and install cycle lanes on the A4123 Birmingham New Road from Tipton Road Junction to Castle Road Junction. Proposed work includes a segregated cycle route, new crossing points and alterations to the Canal and Caverns Trust entrance.

Dudley Council launched two other cycling and walking schemes in 2022 following the receipt of funding from the Department for Transport via the Active Travel Fund. The schemes were implemented along a section of the Birmingham New Road (A4123) and along a section of the A456 at Halesowen.

Opportunities for improvement

- Heads of Service and Group/Team Managers have worked together to deliver Phase 2 of the restructure for the Environment Directorate.
- Sickness absence levels, both long and short-term, continue to be higher than the Corporate target for quarter 2 and remain a priority for the Environment Directorate to address. Heads of Service are working closely with their managers and HR colleagues to address the high sickness absence rates in order to seek future improvement.
- Environment Directorate received 1,210 enquiries through the Councillor / MP Contact System during Quarter 2 (431 enquiries in June, 393 in July and 386 in August 2023).
This is a decrease of 61 compared to Q2 in 2022/23.

Any additional information relating to performance

- Environment Directorate Leadership Team have worked together to deliver Phase 2 of the restructure for the Environment Directorate. Phase 2 should be implemented by 1st November 2023.
- There continues to be significant financial pressures in the Directorate, caused by a number of factors including:
 - Inflationary pressures such as fuel and utility / energy costs
 - Costs arising from staff absences. This can be due to sickness absence or the requirement to cover annual leave with agency workers in some front-line services.