

## Portfolio Holder Report - 27<sup>th</sup> March 2007

### Street Scene & Parks and Open Spaces

- Kingsthorpe Cemetery Extension has been completed, providing burial provision for a further 3 to 4 years. Before the extension was completed there was approximately 9 months provision left at this cemetery. Further Extension to this cemetery will take place in 2 years time.
- A Tree Policy written and soon to be taken forward for cabinet approval.
- A new allotment strategy has been written, and is to be presented to Cabinet in April 2007. This has been developed through a very close working relationship with Northampton Allotment Network.
- We have received a Silver award for the Britain in bloom contest, (City category), for town centre and various projects around the borough. We were highly praised for the work done with the community.
- Bradlaugh Fields has been entered for a Green flag award. This is a very successful park, where there is heavy community involvement. The Park has also been forward for a Queen's award due to the Community involvement. We also work in partnership with the Wildlife Trust and BCTV in this park.
- Elpi 5 - is the BVPI for fly tips, has ran consistently above 99% for whole year with cumulative figure to date of 99.78% this is top quartile performance.

- New changing rooms are now under construction at the Racecourse. This is a joint initiative between Northampton Borough Council and the Football Foundation. New facilities are also soon to open at Far Cotton Rec.
- A Racecourse Improvement Board has been set-up. Due to problems on the racecourse a board of interested parties has set up a group to look at the issues and problems, and how they can and are being resolved.
- Sponsorship is being sought for flowerbeds, hanging baskets and planters around the town. 120 letters have been sent out to local businesses and organisations seeking their sponsorship for these that will hopefully enhance our success in this years Britain in Bloom Awards.
- Consideration has been given to the re-scheduling of cleansing rounds and the grounds maintenance programme following budget reductions so as to minimise impact on services and standards.
- Work is well under way in planning and programming a Zero Tolerance Campaign towards litter. This is a two week campaign that will commence on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

## **Legal & Democratic Services**

There has been significant development in the Council's approach to communications over the past month. Strategic capacity has been put in place to boost the communications function and new strategies have been developed to improve the council's approach to internal and external communication. We have already developed some new methods of communication internally, including regular all staff e-mails on key issues, a weekly communication brief from the Interim Chief Executive and are working on a branded campaign to

support the "turnaround" of the Council. There is still much to do but I am confident that this positive start will result in positive benefits for the council and will support the change that we need to demonstrate to our external monitors by June.

## COMMUNITY CENTRES

A project group is to be established including Community Development, Asset Management, Legal Services and Neighbourhood Management to address the ownership, costs and function of community centres generally and to establish what outputs the Council would expect in return.

Far Cotton Community Facility This Building is due to be handed over to the Council prior to the end of March

Brookside Community Centre -Options under consideration

Alliston Gardens -Need recognised to complete a formal management agreement with minimum term of years to permit external funding to be sought.

## MONEY 4 YOUTH

Money 4 Youth is a national project whereby money has been made available to young people in Youth Forums to spend on setting up youth projects. Through partnership working more than 20 projects have been set up in this financial year.