

To receive a report on town planting and consider any actions and associated expenditure

Report to: Services Committee

Date of Report: 23.09.26

Officer Writing the Report: Town Clerk

Purpose of Report: To inform Members of the weather implications associated with maintaining the Town Council's summer planting displays and to consider future planting arrangements in light of the challenges experienced during periods of prolonged hot weather.

Officers Recommendations

Subject to approval of Agenda Item 16, Members are encouraged to review the future provision and maintenance of the Town Council's planting displays via the Play Parks, Open Spaces and Street Furniture Working Group together with the acting Services Manager reporting back at a future meeting.

Report Summary

The Town Council currently maintains 60 hanging baskets and several planters throughout the town and Waterside areas. Following their installation, and depending on weather conditions, the baskets and planters require daily watering and deadheading to ensure they remain attractive and healthy. This maintenance task typically requires between four and six hours of staff time per day during the period of June to September.

The hanging baskets are planted with seasonal flowering displays, whilst the planters incorporate a combination of seasonal flowers and evergreen planting.

The exceptionally warm weather experienced during the summer highlighted the considerable resources required to maintain the displays. Members are therefore invited to consider whether the current planting arrangements remain sustainable and appropriate for future years.

Consideration should also be given to the impact of any future hosepipe bans or water restrictions, which may limit the Council's ability to maintain planting displays to the required standard.

The total cost of the 2026 summer planting programme, including hanging baskets, planters, compost and bonemeal, was £4,083.80.

As part of this review, Members may wish to explore alternative planting schemes and the potential installation of irrigation systems where practical. Whilst irrigation may not be suitable in all locations, it does not appear that this option has previously been fully investigated.

Members are asked when reviewing the summer planting arrangements for 2027, to consider:

- The significant staff time required for watering and maintaining planting displays during periods of warm weather.
- The ongoing financial commitment to the Town Council and to seek three quotes.
- The potential implications of any future hosepipe restrictions.
- Alternative planting and maintenance options that may provide a more sustainable approach.

Subject to approval of Agenda Item 16, Members are encouraged to review the future provision and maintenance of the Town Council's planting displays via the Play Parks, Open Spaces and Street Furniture Working Group.

Signature of Officer:

Town Clerk