

Report to the Council

Subject: Environment Portfolio

Date: 5 November 2013

Portfolio Holder: Councillor W Breare-Hall

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management

The process of procuring the next waste contract remains on track, with Cabinet at its last meeting on 21 October selecting the five contractors to go forward to the next stage of the process, as well as agreeing on potential service changes. Cabinet also agreed to retain the Grounds Maintenance service in-house on the basis that the submitted tenders could not demonstrate a clear financial and quality advantage from outsourcing at this time. The next phase of the process, known as "Invitation to Submit Detailed Solutions", is now underway. This phase will see the second round of tenders submitted just before Christmas, with Cabinet considering the final three contractors at its meeting on 3 February 2014.

Members may be aware, through the national press, of a letter sent to all waste collection authorities by Lord de Mauley, a Minister in Defra. In that letter he reminded authorities of the requirements of the revised European waste directive, and suggested that we should consider most carefully the commingling of recycled materials. Surprisingly, his letter failed to refer to a Judicial Review on this matter, which earlier this year Defra successfully defended. In that Judgement it was held that, provided an authority considered its circumstances on their merits, and was satisfied that the quality of recyclates collected and then traded-on were of a high standard, the requirements of the waste directive would be met. Whilst we are of the view that our current approach remains appropriate, we shall be discussing this issue, in detail, with contractors during the next phase of the procurement, with a particular emphasis on the quality of the sorting and treatment facilities to be used in processing the materials collected.

At the last Council meeting I mentioned a meeting I would be having with the County Council regarding the Inter Authority Agreement. With the Leader of Council, I met with the County Cabinet Member with responsibility for waste on 24 October. It is clear that the County Council, in endeavouring to meet its very significant savings targets over the next three years, will expect its waste management budget to contribute. To that end, it is negotiating with the districts and boroughs reductions in the financial support it currently provides. Whilst it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the detail of these negotiations at this time, it may be the case that our funding support will reduce over the next three years. However, as part of our negotiations I shall also be discussing with the County ways by which flexibilities around disposal can be achieved which will provide opportunities for us to reduce our collection costs through the procurement exercise currently underway. I will keep Members informed as these negotiations proceed.

Environmental Health & Neighbourhoods

Last month it was reported that the Environment & Neighbourhood Team successfully extended an ASBO on Mr. D. Bicker of 5 Clifton Road, Loughton. Subsequently, Mr Bicker breached the terms of the ASBO and was remanded in custody. Since then he has been found guilty and was jailed for 26 weeks.

During the week of 21 October officers participated in a vehicle stop check as part of an on-going police operation. The checks included issues such as vehicles having the correct documentation if found to be carrying waste.