

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 16 December 2014

Subject: Environment

Portfolio Holder: Councillor W Breare-Hall

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management

1. I am pleased to inform Members that the handover in November of the waste management contract, from Sita to Biffa, went smoothly, with collection and street cleansing services continuing as before.

2. The next phase is the relocation from Langston Road Depot to Biffa's two depots in: Waltham Cross and Edmonton. This is planned for March 2015. It will be followed by the introduction of a four day (Tuesday to Friday) collection service in 2015. I would like to remind Members that, whilst the collection arrangements will not change, some residents will have a change in their collection day. It is essential that residents are fully informed of these changes so I have asked officers to prepare a detailed communication strategy and publicity campaign. I shall be keeping Members updated on further developments.

Flooding and Drainage

3. Prolonged rainfall in the eastern region on Sunday 23rd November gave rise to a small number of localised incidents in the District. The Council's Duty Officer responded to a number of calls from residents affected by localised flooding. Fortunately there were no incidences of internal property flooding but the event served as a timely reminder, especially in the run up to what many are predicting will be a wetter than average winter, that all residents and businesses in the District need to consider their own situations and take steps to ensure that, in the event of flooding, they will be prepared.

4. With the above in mind, Officers are ensuring that the Council's own drainage assets are as prepared as they can be for the winter, and response plans, developed in conjunction with their Emergency Planning colleagues, are in place.

5. The Council's flood storage area at Thornwood Common again served to provide protection for downstream properties on the 23rd, and the newly installed telemetry and camera facilities enabled officers to remotely monitor the water levels. The installation of this new equipment is part of an improvement programme for the flood defence assets that the Council took over from the Environment Agency. The next stage will include installation of similar equipment at Thornhill in North Weald, where new equipment is due to be commissioned by the end of the year.

Noise abatement notices

6. Noise abatement notices have recently been served on the occupiers of a residential property in Queens Road, North Weald, to control excessive disturbance from renovation/DIY work on the householder's property.

7. Despite attempts to resolve the matter informally, the duty noise officer witnessed noisy work taking place after 9pm on a Sunday evening. Noise abatement notices have now been served on the occupiers to control the future level of disturbance to a reasonable level. The notices are still in a period when an appeal may be received.

8. Similarly, a noise abatement notice has been served on a resident of Copperfield, Chigwell, to control noise from music and amplified sound.

Fly-tipping

9. Incidents of fly-tipping in remote areas continue to be a problem, with little chance of catching the fly-tipper in the act. The Environment and Neighbourhoods (EN) team are keen to use the full range of powers available to investigate incidents and follow up on any evidence found in the fly-tips.

10. However, it is often difficult to go any further with tracing the fly-tipper if the person who produced the waste failed in their duty of care and did not check and record the details of the person they gave their waste to.

11. The EN team are keen to encourage anybody who disposes of waste to take responsibility for handing it to an authorised waster carrier, thus reducing the chances of that waste getting into the hands of rogue traders who fly-tip for profit. Articles have previously been publicised in The Forester magazine and One Business briefing and officers are now in the process of designing a leaflet to promote compliance with the duty of care, to encourage residents to carry out some simple checks and record who they give their waste to.