

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 18 February 2016

Subject: Environment

Portfolio Holder: Councillor W Breare-Hall

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management

As Members will be aware, a special meeting of the Neighbourhoods and Communities Select Committee was held on 17 December to review the performance of the new waste management contract, particularly the period following the switch to a four day collection service in May 2015.

The meeting was open to the public, two of whom were present, and attended by senior management from Biffa as well as WYG, the consultants who advised us during the procurement process. Members took the opportunity to ask probing questions with a view to better understanding the circumstances surrounding the difficulties experienced following the switch, and what lessons could be learnt. The outcome of the review will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Essex County Council, through the Waste Partnership Board on which I represent the Council, continue to seek ways of reducing the cost of waste collection and disposal across the county. Whilst some of the ideas suggested would be neither applicable to nor in the best interests of Epping Forest, others, such as better education aimed at reducing the amount of waste generated, are welcomed. I will keep Members updated as these discussions progress.

Clean for The Queen

Clean for The Queen is a campaign launched by Country Life magazine in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy to clean up Britain in time for HM The Queen's 90th birthday. It aims to attract volunteers across the country to clean up their local areas, with a special clean-up weekend on March 4-6 2016.

We will be sending a letter to Parish and Town Councils informing them of the campaign and inviting them to join the District Council and organise a litter pick in an area of their choice, under their own supervision.

EDFC will offer support such as:

- * Provide litterpickers and sacks,
- * Provide fluorescent jackets.
- * Collect all waste/recycling at the end of the planned activity.
- * Provide posters tailored to their event with their logo as well as ours.

* Provide advice on working on the highway.

I intend to lead a litter pick made up of volunteers drawn from amongst both Members and senior management at the Council, so I encourage anyone interested to contact me for further information.

Fly tipping

Evidence gathered by the Council's Environment and Neighbourhood team led to a prosecution in Chelmsford Magistrates Court on 10th December 2015. Mr Terence Sullivan, of Morris Court, Waltham Abbey, was fined £120 and ordered to pay a contribution towards the prosecution costs of £200 after pleading guilty to an offence of depositing fly-tipped waste on 16 March 2015 in a bin store at Springfields, Waltham Abbey.

The fly tipping of waste in the bin store serving properties in Springfields was witnessed by a member of the public and subsequently reported to the Council. Environment and Neighbourhood officers were able to trace the vehicle used in the fly tipping back to Terence Sullivan, who, when interviewed under caution, admitted being responsible for its deposit.

CO levels tested

The Public Health team have been testing Carbon Monoxide levels to help protect residents from exposure. Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless, gas which is lethal and can cause asphyxiation. There have been a number of well publicised deaths from CO exposure in recent years which were attributed to faulty gas heaters, boilers and, somewhat surprisingly, the use of barbeque charcoal in restaurants.

When charcoal cools, CO gasses are produced. These gasses can potentially permeate neighbouring accommodation as well as remain within the restaurant itself, which could have tragic consequences for neighbouring residents and the restaurant's employees.

There has been an increase in the use of open barbeque equipment in restaurants around the district and, if CO levels are not monitored, this could pose a significant risk to residents and employees. Accordingly, the Public Health Team have undertaken CO sampling in 12 of the districts barbeque restaurants. CO data loggers were fitted in each business over a weekend to establish exposure levels. Of the 12, most were found to be below the legal workplace exposure limit. 5 were identified as having CO levels with room for improvement, but these were swiftly and easily dealt with using simple and cost effective solutions.

A further project is planned to establish whether restaurants in the district that use Tandoor ovens are operating with safe levels of CO. Tandoor ovens traditionally use charcoal and even though many are now gas fired, officers have found that the current trend is for charcoal fired tandoor ovens.