

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 25 July 2023  
**Subject:** Contracts, Service Delivery, and Improvements  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Ray Balcombe

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**Recommending:**

**The report of the Contracts, Service Delivery, and Improvements be noted.**

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## **Leisure Management:**

### Free Summer Swimming Pass

Places Leisure are offering a 'Free Summer Swimming Pass' for children receiving free school meals.

Schools will be emailing a letter to all parents/carers of children receiving free school meals in the district. To activate their 'Free Summer Swimming Pass' all they need to do is take their letter to their nearest Places Leisure Facility (*Loughton Leisure Centre, Ongar Leisure Centre, and Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre*) and presented at the facility to redeem the offer. The facility will then set them up with a membership that will allow their child to enjoy free swimming from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.

In addition to the free swimming, each child who receives a free-swimming pass will also receive a free pair of Zoggs goggles (subject to availability). These will be issued when they come in to set up their free pass membership.

### Energy Saving Initiatives

Working in partnership with Places Leisure, the Council is lowering its carbon footprint in its leisure centres by introducing new energy saving initiatives which include:

- Installing pool covers at Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre and Ongar Leisure Centre
- LED conversions at Loughton Leisure Centre and Ongar Leisure Centre
- New Building Management System and variable speed drives at Loughton Leisure Centre

Leisure centres are one of the Council's major assets and one of the largest contributors of the Council's carbon footprint. Decarbonising leisure centres is an important step to achieving the Council's Climate Change Action Plan. These measures will reduce carbon emissions and operational costs, resulting in more sustainable facilities. All energy saving initiatives have now been successfully installed.

### Epping Leisure Centre

The new Epping Leisure Centre will provide a vital community asset, such as swimming pools, sports hall, gym, and exercise studios. The facility will provide widely accessible opportunities for local communities to get involved in sport and physical activity.

The building will achieve BREEAM excellent rating, which will result in an energy efficient building and support the Council's commitment to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.

Places Leisure and EFDC have made a head start with Pellikaan (Contractor who will build the new facility) via a Pre-Contract Services Agreement (PCSA) for services including programme preparation, Value Engineering, and design development.

## **Waste Management**

### Future Delivery of Waste Service

A council owned company is to be created for the collection of household waste and recycling in Epping Forest District. It will also provide street cleansing. The decision follows a review of all the options by Optimum Professional Solutions Ltd (OPS) for Epping Forest District Council.

Councillors met in a private Cabinet meeting, to allow free discussion of commercially sensitive information. Like many councils, EFDC has contracted refuse and recycling collections out since the early 1990s. A wholly owned company signals a major shift in the Council's policy towards household waste collection, recycling and street cleansing.

The Council plan to take full management control includes:

- A council owned operating company.
- Buying, or leasing and maintaining its own vehicles.
- Building a new operations hub at North Weald to support the vehicle fleet and crews.

Councillors will not extend the current contract beyond the November 2024 break point. Jobs will be protected. Many of the current waste and recycling staff will transfer under the TUPE regulations. Additional recruitment opportunities are also expected for other people wishing to join the new operation.

Refuse and recycling collection costs are going up. Based on current market trends and discussions with waste contractors, the Council's current £6.6 million budget could go as high as £10 million a year for a new commercial contract.

Residents of Epping Forest have achieved some of the highest recycling rates in the UK. The council owned company is also expected to pay climate change dividends. The Council is moving away from diesel, looking at ways to procure a greener, cleaner fleet powered by more sustainable fuels.

The company will have more freedom and flexibility to try out and expand other forms of collection, including new wheelie bins and co-mingled waste. New vehicles able to collect different types of materials could lead to less lorries on the road or shorter journeys.

The current contract provides services to November 2024. Council officers and councillors are working hard to achieve a smooth transfer.

### Missed Collections

Epping Forest District Council and Biffa would like to apologise for the missed collections with its waste collection services. We are still experiencing issues with vehicles and staff; investment has been made in replacing vehicles and recruiting staff. We are working closely with our waste contractor to resolve the issues as swiftly as possible and while there are missed collections still occurring on the scheduled collection day, we are doing all we can to make sure that the waste is collect within that week. We would like to thank residents for their patience and understanding.

If residents experience a missed collection, please leave the waste out as we will do everything that we can to collect at the next available opportunity within the week that it was missed.

## Food Waste Project

Working with Essex County Council (ECC), Epping Forest District Council are introducing new ways to help people reduce their food waste.

From July, (ECC) will be sending eligible households tools to help them recycle food at the kerbside. This includes a sticker for their general rubbish bin, caddy liners and a leaflet. Households in Braintree, Colchester and Epping Forest will receive these first. This project will then expand to other areas of the county.

Currently, 26% of food waste in Essex ends up in the general rubbish bin. These tools have helped other authorities increase food recycling by up to 20%. It has also reduced the amount of food waste sent to landfill.