

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 17 February 2009

**Subject:** Environment Portfolio

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Mary Sartin

**Item:** 7(f)

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **Waste Management Service**

Following the meeting of Cabinet which took place on 19 January when decisions were taken on the way forward for the Waste Management Service, officers and SITA management have begun work on the setting of the new service.

At that Cabinet meeting it was agreed that a food waste collection service should be introduced using a second wheeled bin. This was based on Option 1 in the residents' questionnaire and the decision was taken in the knowledge that just over 62% of those responding had indicated that they would be in favour of a second wheeled bin, either through Option 1 or Option 2. Option 1 will give a weekly collection of food waste co-mingled with garden waste in a second wheeled bin although there is likely to be the option of only putting out a smaller kerbside caddy containing food waste at times when residents do not have any green waste or do not want to make use of the green waste service. As a result of the introduction of a co-mingled collection residents will then have a weekly garden waste collection instead of the current fortnightly service.

At this point in time a number of operational decisions have still to be taken and I will keep members informed as and when decisions have been made. Officers are already working on ways in which the new service will be introduced to residents and they will be available to talk to anyone who has individual concerns about their personal circumstances.

## **Essex Wood Recycling, Nazeing**

Members will be aware, from media reports, of the fire which took place at this site in January. This raised a number of questions from members and residents in the Nazeing area regarding environmental health issues. At the time of the fire a number of officers were on site monitoring the situation and continued to monitor air quality for a considerable time afterwards. There was not considered to be a health issue for local residents but householders were advised that they should keep their doors and windows closed at the time of the fire.

For members' information, I would just give a little background to this site as far as involvement with our Environmental Health Service is concerned. The first complaint was received in July 2005 and related to windblown wood dust caused by the shredding of timbers. When officers visited the site no activity was taking place but they did investigate the possibility of the need for a permit to allow shredding to take place under the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations 2000. After proceeding down this route it then transpired that no other such operations in the country had been required to have such a permit and Defra's advice was that this activity did not fall under the remit of this regulation. Officers did, however, advise that dust suppression measures would be required to prevent a breach of the nuisance provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Following further complaints regarding dust which were investigated by officers an Abatement Notice was served which required the company to take immediate steps to suppress the emission of dust. The company did not appeal against this notice and further visits did not reveal anything which constituted a breach of the Abatement Notice. However, in February 2006 further complaints were received and this resulted in legal proceedings being commenced with a Magistrates' Court hearing. Following an adjournment the company went into liquidation and so no further action could be taken.

During 2007 discussions were held with the new owners of the site regarding possible ways of dealing with the wood stored on site but the use of a proposed air curtain incinerator was thought to be inappropriate technology by the Environment Agency. Further concerns from residents in 2008 regarding health issues were referred to the Health Protection Agency who decided that this was not a matter for their involvement. Diaries were left with local residents who had made complaints to record details of alleged nuisance but none of these were returned to the Council. Without necessary evidence officers were unable to recommence any action through the service of a new Abatement Notice.