

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 20 April 2010

Subject: Environment Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mrs Mary Sartin

Item: 6(d)

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted

Waste Management Service

Having come through the problems which the winter weather caused, the food and garden collection service is working well. Recycling rates are continuing to exceed 50% on a monthly basis and is expected that there will be a rise in these figures as we move into the growing season.

The review of the winter operations is currently underway and a report will be going to the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Panel on 1 July. Any Member who has not already submitted comments to be considered as part of this review can still do so by contacting Mr Kim Durrani but I would ask that this is done as soon as possible.

With other member and officers, I visited the in-vessel composting plant where our food and garden waste is being taken. While there a delivery of material from our collections in the Epping Forest District arrived and we were able to see it being unloaded. It was pleasing to note the quality of the material which is being put out by our residents, there being little evidence of contamination through ordinary plastic bags being used for food material and other items getting into the bins.

The current contract with Sita comes to an end in November 2011 but has a facility for a two year extension. While this might seem a considerable way off discussions have begun as a new procurement exercise would have to be begun in this calendar year if it is decided not to continue the contract to 2013. I am happy to take forward Members' views on operational changes, including issues such as Bank Holiday working.

Regulatory Services Partnership

Discussions are currently taking place at officer level between districts and the County regarding the formation of a regulatory services partnership. Initially it is hoped that this will provide some efficiencies through shared knowledge, access to specific expertise and additional resources. Essex County Council is currently providing support funding for a Partnership Co-ordinator post.

Bower Hill, Epping

I am pleased to be able to inform Members that we were successful in our application to Defra for grant funding in support of contaminated land investigations which are urgently required on the former gas works site in Bower Hill in Epping. This funding of £58,300, will enable the Council to immediately undertake these important

investigations without prejudicing the Council budget for investigations required on other sites in the forthcoming year.

A considerable amount of work went into applying for this grant and I would like to record my thanks to the officers responsible for this. As can be seen from the above, this does mean that money will not now have to be diverted from other planned work in order to carry out this investigative work.