

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 2 November 2010

Subject: Environment Portfolio Holder Report

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mary Sartin

Recommending: That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted

Defra Bid

I am pleased to report that officers have been successful in a further bid to Defra for funding to enable the investigation of contaminated land. The most recent success relates St Paul's Field at Sedge Green, Nazeing, In the early 1990s this land spontaneously combusted, fuelled by ground gas, and smouldered for a number of months. It is believed that the site contains a mix of domestic and industrial wastes. It had originally been intended that the Environment Agency would undertake the investigation, but they were unable to do so. The Agency suggested that we should put a bid to Defra for funding, and we have received £61,000. The work has to have been carried out by March 2011 to secure the money.

We will also be receiving Defra funding of £8,750 in support of local air quality monitoring. It is hoped to use this funding to provide on-line access to air quality monitoring results.

Fly Tipping

Members will have been aware of press coverage on fly tipping over recent weeks. Officers are working hard to counteract this problem. Since January all incidents of fly tipping, where there has been the likelihood of obtaining evidence of the source of the waste, have been passed to Environment and Neighbourhood Officers. In these cases officers have investigated as far as possible, including taking statements from any members of the public who may have witnessed incidents.

There have been four successful prosecutions since January which have resulted in fines and costs being awarded to the Council and there are a number of other cases pending.

Unfortunately, a large amount of material dumped is not witnessed and consists mainly of green waste from which no evidence can be gathered. A new data sharing protocol is about to be started involving Councils in the eastern region along with, among others, trading standards, police and HMRC. It is hoped that data involving criminal activities will assist us in investigations into fly tipping and waste transfer enforcement.

Working with Essex Police, our officers have been carrying out spot checks on waste carrier vehicles to deter and detect those who may be intent on carrying out fly tipping within the District and a further series of checks are planned for the coming months.

Fly tipping is a criminal activity which has an affect on all our lives and it is one which we have certain resources which can help prevent it. That said, it is an area where all residents can help reduce the problem by being alert and passing on information when they see this crime being committed. Landowners can also help reduce the problem by ensuring that they make their property as difficult to access as possible and by clearing up any fly tips as quickly as possible.