Report to the Council

Committee:	Cabinet	Date:	28 June 2011
Subject:	Environment Portfolio	Item:	6(c)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor John Knapman		

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted

Waste

I am pleased to be able to inform members that based upon the provisional data issued by Essex County Council, we are now the second highest performing authority in Essex for recycling, with an outturn of 59.14%. Given the difficulties over the winter period this is an excellent result and I would like to thank our residents for their continued enthusiasm for recycling.

We shall shortly be undertaking a resident satisfaction survey in respect of our waste services. The outcome of this will be important as we move towards developing the next waste contract.

Environmental Health

At the meeting in March the then Portfolio Holder informed Members of the need to put into place new arrangements for the provision of a pest control treatment service for our residents following the collapse of our service provider. Members will be aware that the Council has entered into a contractual relationship with Rentokil, who are providing a subsidised service to our residents with additional discounts for those on defined benefits. Despite the fact that the treatment of all pests is now being charged for, the new arrangements have been reasonably well received and are working well. The contract will need to be renewed early next year which will provide a further opportunity to review the level of service provided.

As part of their overarching responsibility for food safety throughout England and Wales, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) undertook a review of the Council's food safety service. Whilst it found the inspections and investigations to be well undertaken, they did raise concerns around some of the Council's record keeping and administrative systems. I am pleased to report that a recent re-inspection by the FSA has shown a considerable improvement, with some of our processes now considered to demonstrate 'best practice'. The full inspection report will be presented to the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Panel at a future meeting.

Neighbourhoods

The Council's Environment & Neighbourhood Officers have recently been out in Loughton High Road, targeting littering offenders. In three hours the officers witnessed 11 littering offences, and subsequently issued Fixed Penalty Notices for the offences. Prior to the operation the officer visited the area and asked a number of shops to put up some "No littering" posters. It is important to note that cigarette butts and chewing gum deposited on the street are also classified as litter under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and, along with 'normal litter', can attract fines of up to £2,500 if the case goes to court.

This activity will be repeated on a quarterly basis with areas being targeted. It is also intended to authorise Police Community Support Officers to be able to issue fixed penalty notices for littering.

To date 17 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued, of which 14 were for littering. One went to Court attracting a fine of \pounds 80 and \pounds 150 costs and another is proceeding to Court. Most however have been paid by the recipients.