

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 September 2011

Subject: Support Services Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Wyatt

Recommending:

That the report of the Support Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Reprographics Section – Savings

The Reprographics Section within the Corporate Support Services Directorate provides a comprehensive service to all Directorates of the Council. Notable amongst the larger jobs regularly undertaken is the production and despatch of Council Tax bills, the production of the Electoral Register and all election materials including notices and ballot papers.

Following a recent procurement exercise through the Essex Procurement Hub a new four year contract for the provision of high speed black and white and colour copiers has been concluded which will produce anticipated savings of £43,300 over the life of the contract.

This equates to savings of around £10,800 per annum.

This is very good news for the Council at a time when it is seeking every opportunity to reduce its operating costs.

Gas Explosion in Rayfield, Epping

During the early hours of Sunday 14 August the Council responded to a request for assistance by the Essex Fire and Rescue Service following a gas explosion in a property in Rayfield, Epping.

The occupant of the property was taken by ambulance to Princess Alexandra Hospital.

The explosion caused severe damage to the roof of the property and blew out all the windows. There was also minor damage to the roofs of the adjoining properties on either side.

John Kershaw Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development attended the scene at approximately 8.00a.m. and at the request of the Fire officer in charge carried out a detailed inspection of all three properties affected to ensure that they remained structurally sound.

Following the all clear the adjoining neighbours were able to return to their properties later in the morning.

Mr. Kershaw using powers under the Building Act 1984 arranged for emergency works to be carried out to board up the windows of the damaged property, make the roof weather tight and a general clear up of broken glass and debris. The costs of these works will be borne by the occupant's insurance company.

Mr Kershaw finally left the site at approximately 4.30 p.m.

The ward Councillors and myself were advised of the incident and of the action that had been taken.

Human Resources

The Council's Human Resources (HR) Team have recently supported St Clare Hospice with a staffing matter and together reached a practical solution. The Council is currently supporting the Hospice's Directors with advice via the telephone.

HR have recently undertaken an in-house Employee Survey, and the results were presented to the August meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee.

HR are working with Housing and its Repairs Contractor, Mears, to possibly appoint two business administration apprentices in Housing Repairs.

The Council's Learning and Development Manager has established two work placements for people with disabilities who would like gain work experience. The placements were publicised on the Council's website and May's Disability Awareness Day held in Loughton. Two people did express an interest and the Council has been able to find two placements which begin within the next couple of weeks.