

## ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 27 September 2011

**Subject:** Environment Portfolio

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor John Knapman

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### **Recommending:**

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

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### **Waste**

At the last Council I made mention of a study being undertaken by consultants on the extension of or procurement of a new waste management contract. In addition the consultants also reviewed the Council's in-house grounds maintenance service. I am pleased to be able to inform Members that this external evaluation described the grounds maintenance service as providing a high quality and cost effective service, which was unlikely to be bettered by seeking competitive tenders. I would like to congratulate the grounds maintenance team for providing a service to such a high standard. I shall however be keeping the service under review as part of the Council's assessment of all of its key front line services. A decision on the waste management contract is to be considered by Cabinet at its September meeting and I shall provide Members with a verbal update on its decision.

### **Environmental Health**

We have now received confirmation of our grant from the Food Standards Agency for the introduction of their national "Scores on the Doors" scheme. Unfortunately we did not receive as much as we had originally envisaged, £5,000 instead of £11,000, but we shall continue with the scheme since it will be of considerable benefit to residents and visitors when they shop for food or eat out in the district in the future.

### **Transfer of Private Sector Drainage to Utility Companies**

As we approach the deadline for this transfer, we still await guidance from Government as to exactly how this is to be implemented. At Cabinet in September I presented a report which recommended the retention of one officer for the first twelve months after the transfer to ensure that this Council continues to be in a position to advise and guide residents whilst the new arrangements settle down.

### **Visit to a Transfer Station**

A number of Members joined others from the County Council and Essex districts and boroughs in visiting a modern transfer station in Cambridgeshire. I was unable to attend due to my holiday but I understand that Members and officers found it to be

interesting. An understanding of what transfer stations are, what they do and how they do it will be important in the future as the County, as part of the Essex Waste Plan, seeks to provide them throughout the County.

### **Fly-tipping**

Some Members may have seen in the local and national press reports of the successful prosecutions and I hope that such prosecutions will send a strong message that the Council will actively investigate fly-tipping and will always prosecute where sufficient evidence exists. I would ask Members to remain vigilant and ensure that the Environment & Neighbourhoods Team in the Environment & Street Scene Directorate is informed of fly-tipping and that you provide as much evidence as you can to assist them in their investigations.