

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 27 March 2012

**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 Management**

At the last Council meeting I set out some of the core findings of the resident survey of the waste service. Whilst the outcome was encouraging, and seen alongside very low levels of complaint overall shows a service working well, I have decided to repeat the exercise later in the year, with greater publicity associated with it, to ensure that we get as much feedback as we can. This will be important as we move towards consideration of what the next waste contract might look like and should contain by way of service standards.

We now have a new Sita manager overseeing our contract. His name is Melvin Dhorasoo and comes to us from managing the successful Sita contract at Rochford District Council. Our previous manager, Vlad Velikoselskis has moved on to manage the recycling facility in Barking. I should like to welcome Melvin to the district and put on record my thanks to Vlad for his excellent stewardship of the contract.

The Waste Management Partnership Board met in early March, where we received a healthy set of statistical information on the financial and operational performance of the contract. Now that the contract extension with Sita has been completed, it will be important to continue to develop recycling initiatives, and officers are currently looking in detail at the recycling of street cleansing arisings and more bespoke systems in flats.

Members will be aware of Government monies being made available to enable local authorities to provide weekly collections of waste. We of course already do this through our weekly food and garden waste collection service, but at present this service does not extend to flats and other multi-occupied dwellings. I therefore asked officers to look at whether we could put in a bid for this and I am pleased to say that we have submitted an expression of interest to the government for £290,000. We shall now have to await their decision.

## **Environmental Health and Neighbourhoods**

T29, a local logistics company based on Stapleford Airfield was recently prosecuted at Harlow Magistrates Court in respect of a number of serious breaches of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company pleaded guilty and were fined £5,000 and with £5,000 cost awarded to the Council. As a result of the enforcement action the company has employed their own H&S Advisor and the improvements made following the accident have resulted in the company becoming a member of the UK Warehousing Association and seeking accreditation under ISO9001-2008 quality management systems. This is an excellent example of where taking legal action can result in significant improvements to workplace safety and management.

I reported to an earlier Council that the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (colloquially known as the "scores on the doors") was to be introduced shortly. I can now inform Members that the scheme will

commence in April. "Scores on the doors" is a scheme whereby members of the public can access the rating that Environmental Health Officers give to food businesses following a food safety inspection. The hygiene standards found at these inspections will be rated on a scale ranging from zero at the bottom (which means 'urgent improvement necessary') to a top rating of five ('very good'). In accordance with Food Standards Agency guidance the premises rating will be made available on-line followed by the issuing of Stickers to businesses thereby enabling the users of premises to be aware of hygiene standards. Although businesses are not compelled to display their rating, those with a good rating will find themselves at a competitive advantage by doing so.

Members will recall that the Environment and Neighbourhoods Team operate in three defined areas of the district – east, west and south. Following an analysis of workloads and complaint levels it has been decided to supplement resources in the south area by reallocate one of our Environment and Neighbourhood officers to that area. This reallocation of officer resource will ensure that complaints receive a timely response. The other parts of the district will be served by our remaining officers and secondary cover will be provided by officers from the south if required.