

Report to the Council

Subject: Environment

Date: 6 November 2012

Portfolio Holder: Councillor W Breare-Hall

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management

I am pleased to report that there has been some improvement in our recycling figures with the quarter 2 outturn at 62%. This is just a little less (0.2%) than the same quarter last year. In a similar vein, the results for dealing with litter and detritus are also ahead of target.

Members may be aware that one of our refuse freighters was involved in a serious road accident in the early part of September. Whilst it would be inappropriate for me to go into the details, which are the subject of ongoing investigations, I am pleased to report that, although the Sita driver was hospitalised for a short period, there were no serious injuries sustained. I am also pleased to report that despite the accident and the consequential loss of the freighter involved, refuse collection services on that day were not disrupted and arrangements made to ensure that the damaged freighter was promptly replaced.

Environmental Health & Neighbourhoods

Two conditional cautions for minor waste offences have been issued recently, such as placing waste in another resident's communal bins and small deposits of fly-tipped waste that cost the Council additional expenditure to clear. If the Council has incurred additional clearance costs a conditional caution is issued, which requires the offender to pay the clearance and investigation costs. An offender who admitted depositing waste in Oakley Court in Loughton was issued with a caution and required to pay £193.53 costs. Also in Loughton, LuXe was recently issued with a formal caution for breaching a noise abatement notice, after admitting their guilt and taking further positive action to prevent any further breach of the notice.

Key Performance Indicator 24 (How well have we done in both reducing fly-tipping and taking action against those believed to be responsible) has fallen from grade 1 to grade 3 in the last quarter (with the level of fly-tipping and enforcement action statistically staying the same compared with the previous 12 months). Calculation of the grade is not straightforward; it depends on comparing two years of annual data and adding weighting to the size of incidents and types of enforcement action. To reach grade 1 or 2 the amount of fly tipping has to be reduced by more than 5% compared with the previous 12 month period. The level of fly-tipping in the Epping Forest District is affected by wider economic pressures, which inevitably makes its

annual reduction more difficult to achieve. However, the team aim to target fly-tipping on housing land, that could be classed as waste mismanagement by residents rather than typical fly-tipping at remote locations. Measures will include education, enforcement and practical action if it is established that the means to dispose and store waste is inadequate. The team has recently been working with colleagues in Roundhills, Waltham Abbey, to ensure that residents are aware of the correct waste procedure and, wherever possible, store their waste on their own property. It is hoped that this will lead to a reduction in the amount of bagged recycling waste that is left out on the highway and other public spaces, which may be recorded as fly-tipping, especially if the waste is contaminated.

The team also intend to increase the number of checks on local businesses to try and ensure that waste does not get into the hands of unlicensed waste carriers with the intention of disposing of it illegally. In most cases, with routine checks, businesses will be given prior warning and an opportunity to ensure they comply with the law before formal action is considered. The Council recognises that disposing of waste correctly can be a significant expense for businesses, but disposing of waste illegally can simply push the cost of clearance and disposal on to others. Subject to police resources, the team are also looking into re-introducing stop/checks on waste carriers in rural areas.

New CCTV in the Broadway has proved effective in providing a number of leads for fly-tipping investigations. What has become apparent is that a number of people drive to the Broadway and use the communal bins provided for residents. Not only is this an offence, it leads to the bins provided for residents being filled up too quickly, leading to further deposits around the bins and possibly further fly-tipping. We are currently looking at improving warning signs and the possibility of locking communal bins, mindful of the fact that, in the short term, this may lead to more fly-tipping.

Very few new complaints have been received in relation to the Epping - Ongar Railway (EOR). A briefing note has recently been sent to all complainants explaining the law and limitations on possible formal action, but also reaffirming our commitment to investigate complaints. Officers have recently met with EOR and have been reassured that EOR will assist with the investigation of any complaints and, where reasonably possible, will take steps to minimise any disturbance. We have asked interested parties to contact us if they have a specific complaint that they would like us to investigate further.

The team have recently been adding more information to the Council's website on environmental issues and the work they carry out, and hope to enhance this further in the coming weeks and months. New pages have been added on fixed penalty notices and littering. Suggestions from Members for further improvements are most welcome.

The Dog Control Orders (DCO) consultation has been completed and is due to be reported to Cabinet on 3rd December 2012.

Land Drainage

I attended a meeting of the Bobbingworth former landfill site Local Liaison Group on 26 September 2012. I undertook a tour of the site and am pleased to report that it has come a very long way from being a source of pollution. It is now a tranquil and attractive open space for everyone to enjoy and a great testament to the hard work of all those involved in reaching this point. I am also pleased to report that we have been successful in achieving Queen Elizabeth II Field designation for the site from

Fields in Trust. A robust commemorative plaque received from the Trust will be placed on site.