

Report to the Council

Subject: Environment

Date: 27 September 2012

Portfolio Holder: Cllr W Breare-Hall

Item: 6

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management

The first quarter performance figures for recycling are a little disappointing, in that we failed to reach our 60% target. This is hopefully just a blip in performance relating to the very poor summer weather and will pick up again through the year. There are also a number of initiatives in the pipeline, including the recycling of street cleansing arisings and food waste recycling in flats. I hope that these will also bring a boost to performance.

I am also considering a plan to reinforce the food waste service, since it appears that we are still only collecting half the food waste in the waste stream, with residents still placing food waste into their residual bin. We need to understand why this is happening, especially since we collect the food and garden waste wheelie bins all the year round on a weekly basis.

Finally, I have asked officers to keep a careful watching brief on developments in European law, which could result in the Council having to collect its dry recyclables separately in the future. This would have a very significant effect on our collection systems and of course costs, and will need to be incorporated into the next waste management contract.

Environmental Health & Neighbourhoods

Consultation is currently underway regarding the adoption of Dog Control Orders (DCO), to control dog fouling over the whole of the district in any public areas, restricting the number of dogs that a person can have in their control in any public areas to four and putting a dog on a lead when requested by an authorised officers. The full details of the consultation, due to end on 2 October 2012, are available on the Council's new website. The results of the consultation are due to be reported to Cabinet on 24 October 2012. An early analysis of the responses indicates that the majority are in favour of adopting the three DCO as proposed.

The Environment & Neighbourhood Team have recently concluded a number of investigations resulting in a formal caution for a minor fly-tipping/littering offence and successful prosecutions.

On 20 July 2012 a resident of Parklands, Coopersale who chose to have his case heard in the Crown Court pleaded guilty to two offences of fly tipping and was fined £500 for each offence, together with a £15 victim surcharge and £1500 prosecution costs.

On 24 July 2012 a resident in Limes Avenue, Chigwell was prosecuted for two fly-tipping offences resulting in a fine of £250, together with a £15 victim surcharge and £617.48 costs

The number of specific complaints in relation to the operation of the Epping to Ongar Railway has decreased, however all interested parties are waiting for Counsel's legal advice before reviewing the current position and the extent to which the Council can control alleged disturbance from the operation.

Essex County Council is in the final stages of establishing an Essex County Traveller Unit (ECTU), to oversee Gypsy, Traveller and Roma issues for any local authorities who have decided to join the unit. EFDC officers have continued their "watching brief" and have been contributing their experience to the discussion and development of an updated "Code for Travellers in Essex". Most local authorities in Essex appeared to be committed to signing up to the unit and contributing financially, although many have expressed their wish to retain overall control of enforcement action on their own land. Southend and EFDC have both confirmed that they will not be joining at this time.