

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 September 2016

Subject: Environment

Portfolio Holder: Councillor W Breare-Hall

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.

Unauthorised caravan encampments

Environment & Neighbourhood Officers have been busy dealing with an unauthorised caravan encampment on Council land in Old Shire Lane, Waltham Abbey, and handling numerous calls from concerned residents. Officers obtained a possession order which resulted in the encampment moving from the site. However, the seven caravans then relocated to a nearby private field off Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey. The private land owner is now in the process of starting possession proceedings to remove the trespassers.

There has also recently been a second encampment in Loughton, adjacent to Rectory Lane, involving five caravans and associated vehicles. The encampment is on Loughton Town Council land. Assisted by Environment & Neighbourhood Officers, Loughton Town Council has asked the occupiers to leave the site immediately and will be commencing possession proceedings if the occupiers do not vacate the site.

JSJ Wood Recycling Ltd, Hoe Lane, Nazeing

The Environment & Neighbourhood team have been investigating ongoing alleged illegal waste activities at the site and an alleged breach of a dust abatement notice served on the company. A formal interview under caution has recently been carried out. Officers are currently collating evidence to consider prosecution proceedings for a breach of the dust notice and other waste offences.

The very large wood pile on the site has recently caught alight, causing much concern to local residents. The fire brigade and other agencies have been on site continuously since the fire started on 31 August and will remain on site until they are satisfied that the fire is extinguished.

Officers are investigating if any further legal action can be taken to impose further control on this site in the future.

Fly-tipping at Roding Valley Hall, Buckhurst Hill results in prosecution

£720 in fines and costs were imposed on Mr Alfred Ripsher of Tomswood Hill, Ilford, after a hearing on 21st July 2016 in Chelmsford Magistrates Court. Mr Ripsher pleaded guilty to a waste duty of care offence in relation to some fly-tipped waste found at Roding Valley Hall, Buckhurst Hill.

Mr Ripsher carried out some flooring work at a property in Canary Wharf using a subcontractor who he could not then contact or identify to the Council. The waste was subsequently fly-tipped. Mr Ripsher was ultimately liable as the main contractor. He had failed to comply with his duty of care and ensure that the person taking the waste was a registered waste carrier and he had not exchanged a waste transfer note. The Magistrates found that Mr Ripsher had been negligent when arranging for the disposal of the waste.

ECC Recycling Centres for Household Waste

Essex County Council has taken the decision to stop accepting DIY and construction waste and commercial type vehicles or towed trailers with more than one axle at the Essex Recycling Centres for Household Waste (RCHW), including those in Waltham Abbey and Chigwell, from 31 October 2016.

Whilst the County Council are ultimately able to impose this change without the agreement of the local authorities affected, I have significant concerns about the potential this decision has to increase illegal fly tipping in our district. Accordingly, I have written to the Portfolio Holder at ECC to express my opposition to it and to request that it be rescinded. In my letter I also highlighted my disappointment at the way in which the decision was reached, without the involvement of the Essex district and borough councils affected and counter to the aims of the Essex Waste Partnership Board, on which we are all represented. I shall keep Members informed of developments in this area.

Off-road motorbikes

The Environment & Neighbourhood team are starting a consultation process with a view to introducing a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to prohibit motorbikes from Willingale playing fields in Loughton. It is hoped that a future PSPO will act as a deterrent to the continued use of unauthorised motorbikes in this area.

Recycling at the Civic Offices

The waste and recycling arrangements at the Civic Offices are undergoing a change. The waste contractor Biffa will collect refuse and recycling from the Civic Offices under the same framework as the residential waste across the District. This, as well as improving our recycling, will mean a cost saving over the existing arrangement. With Biffa, there will be separate recycling and waste bins, as well as food waste bins, allowing us to separate more on site. The previous contractor took all non-food waste together and recycled at their plant, which is not as efficient as separating at source.

When the scheme is ready for launch, publicity and information posters will be displayed throughout the Civic Offices.

Waste Management

In my last report I informed members about the work being done to enable a commercial waste collection service for businesses across the District. I am pleased to say that good progress has been made. In conjunction with ECC, the Waste Disposal Authority, and our contractors we will soon finalise the operational and financial arrangements for the establishment of the new service.

A new publicity campaign is being developed for increasing recycling, including of food waste, across the district. This will include information on contamination as well as the diversion of recycling materials away from residual waste. A new system of monitoring will

be introduced, a trial of which was run with the previous waste contractor, on the use of the dry recycling collections by residents. Where appropriate, households will be reminded to make full use of the refuse and recycling services offered by the Council.

The gum cleaning machine is now fully operational and all the high streets across the District will be cleansed. The machine is operating to a cleansing schedule and I have asked officers to publish the schedule in the Council Bulletin.

Earlier this year Country Life magazine in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy launched a 'Clean for the Queen' campaign. This was intended to encourage the public to help keep their local area litter free. The Waste Management section invited all the primary schools (Key Stage 1 & 2 classes) in the District to take part in an artwork competition. The aim of the competition was to understand how children perceive litter and the general cleanliness of our streets and other public places using the theme, 'Clean For The Queen'. There was a good take up, with 9 schools entering the competition. The winning school for Key Stage 1 pupils was Coopersale Hall School and the winning school for Key Stage 2 pupils was Epping Primary School. A selection of competition entries will be displayed in the Civic offices reception and via the reception's TV monitor. The two winning pieces of artwork will also be displayed on the sides of larger street cleansing and waste/recycling collection vehicles for a period of 6 months. One of the winning designs will also feature on the new recycling information leaflet/collection calendar.

The Waste Management section, together with Essex County Council, is holding a 'Restart Party' at Waltham Abbey Library on 15th October 2016. The Restart Party is a free community event for residents where volunteers help people fix their broken devices and small appliances (they can be fixed by the repairers if the residents don't want to do it themselves), to save them from waste. The vast majority of items will be small in size. Residents are invited to bring their broken small electrical items along so a team of experts can show/help repair them. The main focus of the event is on skill-sharing.

The Waste Management section supported 'Recycle Week' from 12 to 18 September 2016. The Council's website promoted and focused on the 'Unusual Suspects'. These are recyclable materials we all have in our homes but that are often overlooked as items that can be recycled.

The Waste Management section will also be talking to the new intake of students at Epping Forest College about our waste and recycling schemes.

Oakwood Hill Depot

The Grounds Maintenance and Fleet Operations services have now moved to the new Council depot at Oakwood Hill. Both services are fully operational at the new depot and staff have given positive feedback.