

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 4 November 2014

Subject: Environment

Portfolio Holder: Cllr W Breare-Hall

Recommending:

That the report of the Environment Portfolio Holder be noted.

Waste Management

At the time of this meeting the handover of waste management services from Sita to Biffa will have taken place. The coming weeks and months will see a number of significant changes, which I am keen to ensure are implemented smoothly and without disruption to residents, namely: the introduction of the service improvements associated with the new contract; relocation from Langston Road Depot to the Biffa depots in Waltham Cross and Edmonton; the purchase of a new vehicle fleet, and the move to a four day waste and recycling collection service next year.

Flooding and Drainage

The inclement weather of Monday 13th October caused some serious isolated flooding in Nazeing, Sedge Green and Bumbles Green, plus some wider highway flooding issues. Some properties flooded internally while several other properties were at risk of internal flooding. Our officers worked late into the evening and issued sandbags at two locations. Elsewhere contractors cleared debris from a number of storm grills to facilitate the passage of high volumes of water after the rain had ceased. Affected residents were given advice during follow up site visits.

The Council's flood storage area at Thornwood Common coped well with high volumes of flood water. The bunded area stored water at the time of peak flood and released it overnight and the following day.

There were also a number of enquiries relating to surface water sewer flooding, the responsibility for which generally rests with the public utility company. Officers were, however, able to offer some limited assistance, and directed residents to the relevant organisation responsible for the asset.

Bobbingworth Nature Reserve

The EDWT team, in conjunction with its partner contractor Veolia, will shortly be creating a new wetland habitat at the Nature Reserve to further enhance the biodiversity of this award winning site. The wetland area will serve a dual purpose in that it will also help to manage the surface water run off and ensure the surface water management system at the site continues to perform at the desired level.

Environmental Health & Neighbourhoods

Essex Litter campaign

Final results from the Essex wide 'Love Essex' litter campaign have recently been received and they indicate a reduction of over 40% in fast food litter across the county.

The campaign, which ran throughout the summer, saw Essex local authorities join forces with Essex County Council, RP2 media, The Highways Agency and fast food partners, to raise awareness of the issue of litter and the risk of fines for those that offend.

It also gained national support from the Keep Britain Tidy campaign, which undertook a review of the initiative, including the monitoring of specific sites over several weeks. Its findings show a 21% overall decrease in the amount litter across the county, with a 41% decrease in branded fast food litter.

The Environment and Neighbourhoods team participated in the campaign. Officers visited Epping, Loughton and Ongar with the Chairman and Cllr. Mary Sartin and full size versions of the campaign material, designed to educate the public and deter littering.

Officers also spoke to over 1700 children across the whole of Essex as part of the Crucial Crew week, challenging them to “make the right choice” regarding litter and other issues.

Noise

Prosecution for loud music

At a hearing on 9th October, the Council prosecuted Phillip Appleby, of Fairways, Waltham Abbey, for the breach of a noise abatement notice on 20th April 2014. Mr Appleby pleaded guilty. The Magistrate gave Mr Appleby a one year conditional discharge and ordered that he pay £230 towards the Council's costs.

Noise abatement notice served

A noise abatement notice has recently been served on the Pastor of the Higher Ground United Reform Church, Smeaton Road, Chigwell, to control music and amplified sound from the Church.

Despite repeated advice, excessively loud live amplified music and amplified singing was witnessed from a neighbouring residential property. Officers are continuing to offer advice to enable the Pastor to comply with the notice, which comes into full force on 7 November 2014 and is currently in a period when an appeal may be received.

As with most noise abatement notices, the notice does not prohibit live music and singing, but restricts the volume to a level that does not cause a statutory nuisance to residents.

Environmental Health

On 29th September, Chelmsford Magistrates Court condemned food that had been seized by Environmental Health Officers from branches of Belgique in Epping and Theydon Bois in May of this year.

The business had removed “Best Before” labels and replaced them, in some cases several times, with their own date labels and were unable to tell officers when the food had first been displayed for sale or when the manufacturer's date had expired.

Food Hygiene Improvement Notices were served on both branches of Belgique, requiring them to review their procedures for the storage and labelling of foods. Although the company complied with these Notices they also formally appealed against them, delaying a resolution of the case.