

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 25 April 2019

Subject: Contracts and Technical Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor N Avey

Recommending:

That the report of the Contracts and Technical Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Grounds Maintenance

With the GM winter work programme now fully completed and the new mowing season upon us, the Council's gardening teams are now busy cutting the numerous Council owned verges and open spaces across the district. As well as verge maintenance, hedges too must be regularly clipped to keep vehicle sight-lines clear and pedestrian footways accessible and this all forms part of their summer work schedule.

The GM service planted a total of 120 new specimen trees over the winter period, which included a number donated via our Tree Donation Scheme. These were used to replace any lost throughout the year and also enhance existing sites. To ensure new trees establish, a 2-year programme of aftercare is carried out, which includes essential watering during the dryer summer months.

Parking

Tariff Change:

The revised car parking tariffs in all Council car parks came into effect on 4 March 2019. It is too early to assess the impact of the new tariffs and as agreed by Cabinet in March I will review within a year of the implementation of these changes.

Contract performance:

The last Parking Partnership Board meeting with our car parking contractor NSL took place on 11 April. The contract is performing well and all contractual performance indicators for this year have been achieved.

Loughton Broadway Parking Review:

At the last meeting with local Members and officers of the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) a revised strategy was agreed. NEPP will now prepare plans according to the changes agreed.

Epping Town Parking Review:

Since the implementation of the Epping Town Permit scheme on 21 January which included Controlled Parking Zone, Business Permits and Pay and Display. By catering for the needs to residents, businesses, visitors and shoppers the scheme has enabled best use of public highway. As a result road safety and traffic flow has significantly improved.

There has been some displacement into surrounding roads and to deal with this new Traffic Regulation Orders are being prepared to introduce similar restrictions on the few roads identified.

Leisure Management

The last Leisure Management Partnership Board would have taken place on 13 February. I am pleased to report that Waltham Abbey and Loughton Leisure Centres are performing exceptionally well, Epping is doing reasonably well however Ongar is fairly static. The St John Leisure Centre project is progressing well and I will be able to provide an update following the decisions at Cabinet on 11 April.

Waste Management

The last Waste Management Partnership Board with Biffa took place on 29 January. I am pleased to report that the contract is working very well with performance indicators being met. The challenge around dropping value of recycling materials in the resale markets has continued and this means the Councils share of the income from sales is on a downward trend.

I reported at the last meeting that Biffa are considering rationalising collection routes. These changes will result in a small reorganisation of collection routes (around 2,300 properties or 3.86% of all properties in the district). This could mean a change in the collection day for the affected residents. Members will be made aware of the relevant roads through the Bulletin. Affected residents will be informed through bin hangers which will give them details on the new collection arrangements.

Members may be aware through media coverage and information relayed through Council Bulletin about the governments Resource and Waste Strategy. This is a comprehensive review of the way waste and recycling is collected and managed in the country. Links to the consultation documents have been circulated in the Council Bulletin. Neighbourhood Select Committee received a presentation at its meeting on 19 March on the four-ongoing consultation by DEFRA (Department of Environment Food and Rural affairs). Officers are preparing responses to the consultations.

Shonks Mill Flood Storage Area - Stanford Rivers/Stapleford Tawney

For several years the Environment Agency (EA) has been working on an updated hydraulic model for the River Roding and the viability of a flood storage reservoir at Shonks Mill. The EA has confirmed that the scheme has a viable business case and that the project is to be progressed.

The EA will be writing to a number of properties about the scheme directly. They also intend to hold community drop in sessions after the May elections. The three parishes that will be involved are: Navestock, Stapleford Tawney and Stanford Rivers.

Relevant information on the project will be made available to Members through the Bulletin.