

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 5 November 2019

Subject: Contracts and Technical Services

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nigel Avey

Recommending:

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

Waste Management

Waste and recycling services are performing well. I would like to thank our residents for helping us in achieving our recycling targets.

Members of the Task and Finish Panel visited Biffa's Municipal Recycling Facility (MRF) at Edmonton on the 25th of September to see the reprocessing and sorting operation of our recycling collected in clear sacks from households. Councillors remarked that it was informative and gave a more detailed insight to what happens to our recycling.

The Task and Finish Panel is reviewing preliminary reports for consideration of potential changes to the waste and recycling operations before more detailed work can be carried out. Comprehensive business cases will be prepared before any decisions to make a change to the current collection arrangements are considered by the Council.

Further work has been done on the replacement of the existing paper and glass banks at recycling sites with new 1100 litre mixed recycling banks collecting the same materials as the clear sack household system which will include glass. We are hoping for a roll out of the new systems to sites in the new year.

Grounds Maintenance Service

Grass cutting operations are ongoing and the mild autumn means it is likely our mowing teams will continue to work well into November. The Grounds Service will then move onto their 'winter works' programme, which includes bed maintenance, hedge trimming and shrub pruning as well as the planting of spring flowering bulbs, hardy shrubs.

The tree team will be planting over 100 new trees of varying types in our streets and open spaces this year. Six of these trees have been purchased from the kind donations of residents via the Council's 'Tree Donation' scheme available through our web-site.

The Grounds Service is relied upon each year to provide the saluting dais and floral displays for the Remembrance Day parades that take place in Epping and Loughton. The grounds team work hard to ensure the planted troughs & tubs provide suitable floral displays and that the wooden staging is correctly installed and maintained in good order.

Countrycare

Since the last report the team has project managed volunteer tasks on five sites and included sowing yellow rattle, erecting notice boards, raking, creating footpaths and reed clearance from ponds.

In total 44 volunteer days have been given to Countrycare and we have taken on one new volunteer in this period. Fewer volunteer tasks have been held from usual due to resource constraints and a land rover accident.

Butterfly and reptile surveys are now finished for the season, but the Wetland Bird Surveys are on-going with monthly surveys at Church Lane, Nazeing Triangle and Thornwood Common Nature Reserves.

A Moth Night was held on Weald Common in September which 35 people attended. Most of the attendees were children who were fascinated by the night life. Of the findings Setaceous Hebrew Character was prolific along with many Large Yellow Underwings. A bat survey was also conducted with the children learning how to use bat detectors.

Fleet

The team have been busy carrying out 1700 MOT's in the last 6 months with income up 10% on budget,

A New fleet management system software package is now been used for purchasing, bookings, invoicing and management of stores supplies, the system is performing very well and is starting to produce cashable savings and assisting in reducing administration tasks which was previously carried out on paper less systems.

A second electric van is now in service and the feedback from staff is very positive.

The team have recently submitted a report for a new fleet management strategy and has also produced a new fleet replacement strategy.

Congratulations go to our vehicle apprentice who has recently passed her year two examination and is now into her 3rd year of a 4-year light vehicle apprenticeship.

Procurement and Contract Development

The team are working on several of the Council's high-profile projects at present, including the Accommodation Project, the Housing Repairs IT System and the Development Company. In addition to this, the team are developing training and documentation to help officers with Procurement and Contract related tasks, such as a toolkit and checklist, and a working party is starting in December to provide education, advice and guidance to managers. The main aim is to ensure the Procurement and Contract stages of projects are understood better and compliance with regulatory requirements is ensured.

Car Parking

The Car Parking Contract Partnership board was held on the 21st October. The contract is meeting or exceeding all performance indicators.

Early discussions have been held to look at the possibility of implementing Automatic Number Plate Recognition systems to monitor and manage the Council's car parks. A research visit is being undertaken to Canterbury later in October to explore how a similar system might work in Epping Forest District.

Following vandalism to a wall in Quaker Lane Car Park Waltham Abbey, Officers took the decision to remove the remainder of the wall to eliminate potential safety concerns. Following input from local members, Officers decided not to replace the wall, but the option remains.

Preliminary work has started on the conversion of the run-down car park at Vere Road Debden. It is envisaged that a contract specification will be put out to market in Spring and the work will get underway soon after.

At the NEPP Joint Committee meeting on 3rd October each partner authority could allocate up to 6 parking restriction schemes. EFDC was able to nominate 13 District Wide Traffic Regulation Order schemes were accepted for implementation in 2020. Officers, Members and NEPP officers are meeting early in November to look at the issues in Ivy Chimneys Epping

where there have been many complaints. Similarly, officers are looking at possible solutions to parking problems in Fluxs Lane Epping.

Car Parking officers are supporting the work being undertaken regarding the St Johns Road development.

Leisure Contract

The Leisure Contract continues to perform well above expectations at both Loughton and Waltham Abbey. The Epping and Ongar Centres are holding their own but the age of both centres makes improving take-up challenging for the contractor. A variety of promotional activities at Epping and Ongar are being undertaken in an attempt to drive up usage.

Cllr Avey and Cllr Brookes attended a switching on event of the new Combined Heat & Power Unit (CHP) at Loughton Leisure Centre in September. The CHP will provide savings of up to 50% on energy usage at the centre as well as using less fuel. Similar savings on CO2 emissions are expected.

As and when required, Officers are supporting the work regarding St Johns Road. Contractually, until a decision is made on the direction of travel, the required contract variations can not be started. Work to complete the Ongar Leisure Centre Options Appraisal is progressing well and the options at Ongar may well be influenced by the outcome of the St Johns Road development approach.

The land transfer between EFDC and Fields in Trust with regard to the land behind the old Waltham Abbey Pool at Roundhills is underway. Members will be aware that an area of land at the rear of the new leisure centre at Waltham Abbey is being transferred to Fields in Trust, who have very generously made a £5000 grant available to undertake some community sport activity once the transfer is completed. An update will be provided in the near future.