

MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor David Burn Cabinet Member for Environment	Report Number: CMU19
To: Council	Date of meeting: 26 July 2018

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

1. Overview of Portfolio

- 1.1 The Environment Portfolio covers several distinct service areas. This report provides a snapshot and summary of recent work.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Council notes the report.

3. Key Activities/Issues Over the Past three Months

Waste Service

Education and Promotional Events

- 3.1 The Compost give away event at Needham Market Lake on the 6th May during Compost Awareness Week was again a great success, with over 300 visitors helping themselves to 60 tonnes of compost.
- 3.2 Recycling Officers have continued to make visits to summer shows this year to promote our waste services and discuss the benefits of composting, waste reduction and recycling, with the reduction of plastics being a hot topic.

Suffolk Waste Partnership Projects

- 3.3 The procurement for the MRF (Sorting and Marketing of Mixed Dry Recyclables) contract went live on the 8th June 2018. Tenders will be received and evaluated over the coming months.
- 3.4 The Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP) undertook a waste analysis in 2016 and found that Suffolk residents were throwing away over 52,000 tonnes of food waste each year. This avoidable waste is sent to our Energy from Waste facility costing the Suffolk taxpayer almost £4.5 million in disposal costs.
- 3.5 To tackle this huge cost, the Suffolk Waste Partnership has been working with Norfolk County Council colleagues to devise a unique 2 county project which aims to reduce household food waste by 20% by 2025. This is a far reaching and challenging target but will see Suffolk play its part in supporting the national Courtauld 2025 initiative, of which the Suffolk Waste Partnership is a signatory, led by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP).

- 3.6 The project has been designed as a multi-campaign initiative focusing on the positive benefits of reducing food waste and challenging the behaviours that cause it. We will work with local businesses and community groups as well as undertaking a host of different initiatives with householders. As many national and multi-national companies are also building food waste into their corporate strategies, our project also seeks to draw corporate investment into Suffolk, allowing us to raise the campaign's profile and realise new opportunities.
- 3.7 Suffolk Waste Partnership Members approved the project vision and 2 year action plan in April 2018. Officers are now working to translate the action plan into specific 'on the ground' campaigns and it is hoped that once this process is complete, a full campaign launch will occur in Autumn 2018.

Joint Waste Contract – Contract extension

- 3.8 Serco are continuing the work on their service review and round reorganisation project. Members will receive a full briefing prior to any implementation of changes.

Garden Waste Service – Annual Growth

- 3.9 The table below shows the annual growth in our garden waste subscription service for Babergh (B) and Mid Suffolk (M)

	B	M	TOTAL
Apr-17	13226	13301	26527
May-17	13301	13451	26752
Jun-17	13378	13656	27034
Jul-17	13431	13790	27221
Aug-17	13516	13992	27508
Sep-17	13567	14034	27601
Oct-17	13582	14023	27605
Nov-17	13572	14010	27582
Dec-17	13563	13979	27542
Jan-18	13554	13981	27535
Feb-18	13541	14003	27544
Mar-18	13567	14063	27630
Apr-18	13777	14284	28061
May-18	13899	14484	28383

EU Circular Economy Package

- 3.10 On the 22nd May 2018 the European Council of Ministers adopted the Circular Economy Package. The EU Circular Economy package sets several binding targets including increased recycling rates and the separate collection of bio-waste (end of 2023) and textiles (start of 2025).
- 3.11 Working with Suffolk Waste Partnership, we will need to consider all these measures in due course once more is known about how the Package will be applied in the UK. However, to quote the article, "even though the UK is to leave the European Union, the government has signalled the Circular Economy measures will be adopted within UK legislation at a later date." Further clarity will hopefully be supplied by the UK government when it publishes its new Resources and Waste Strategy later this year.

Changes to Recycling Performance Payments and Inter Authority Agreement revision.

- 3.12 We entered a series of negotiations with Suffolk County Council regarding their proposal to amend the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) to reduce the levels of Recycling Performance Payments (RPP) they make to the Suffolk Waste Collection Authorities. The Inter Authority Agreement was agreed by all authorities for a 5 year period from May 2014 to May 2019.
- 3.13 We had, as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan, allowed for an overall budget impact of £250,000 for each authority from 2019/2020. The proposed changes to Recycling Performance Payments from 2019/20 will also impact on the payments made for bring site recycling. SCC proposed to reduce the Recycling Performance Payments for this recycling from £54.76 to £30.00 per tonne. Following discussions with SCC and the acknowledgment that both authorities pass on monies from bring banks to third parties, SCC will pay both BDC and MSDC a grant of £35,000 (based on 2016/17 third party payments) to mitigate the reduction in Recycling Performance Payments.
- 3.14 The revised Inter Authority Agreement will be presented to Cabinet in the autumn of this year.

Sustainable Environment Service

Environmental Protection and Environmental Management

Solar PV Bulk Buy

- 3.15 Through its membership of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership, BMSDC will be partnering with the other Suffolk local authorities and i-Choosr Ltd to deliver '**Solar Together Suffolk**', a group buying solar scheme open to all residents in Suffolk. The scheme aims to get the most competitive offer available on solar PV panel installations by consolidating the buying power of residents across the county. This is an "able-to-pay" solar panel buying scheme aimed predominantly at home-owners, but also open to small businesses and community groups, offering them both good value and a quality-assured, Council-backed solar PV scheme. The scheme will launch in July with a direct mail of at least 100,000 letters to targeted properties, together with media releases, bill-boards and posters in public buildings. Installations are planned to commence in October.

Electric Vehicle Charge Point - Highways England Network Funding

- 3.16 This is a BMSDC led project for a network of rapid Electric Vehicle charging points along the A12, A14 and A11 for which the work is currently out to tender. Bids will be received by July after which the prices will be scrutinised along with the fees from UK Power Networks for electrical connection. Highways England will be informed and funds allocated and instructions issued.

Battery Storage

- 3.17 Investigations are proceeding relating to battery storage at our leisure centres. Officers have spoken to some aggregators (the 'middle men' in this arena) and had reassurance that the size of units we are proposing would be of interest. One supplier has confirmed battery size and this has been communicated to our surveyors so that allowance can be made alongside any other works being undertaken.

Streetlights – LED replacements

Work has been completed on replacing Council maintained streetlights with LED lights in a number of locations. Around 20 are of a particular heritage design.

Planning Enforcement Service

- 3.18 A court injunction has been obtained requiring the owners and occupiers of Bridge Field Paddocks, Haughley to comply with the terms of an Enforcement Notice by 21st June 2018, including the cessation of the use of the land for the stationing of caravans; demolition of the stable buildings; removal of an altered access to the highway and reinstatement of the original access.

Heritage Service

Fison's Building

- 3.19 The Council continues to work in both a proactive and robust way with the owners of the Fison's building. There are two main issues the Council is dealing with, a sustainable planning proposal incorporating a grade II listed building and the management of a potentially dangerous structure. The Council is currently in detailed discussion with the owners of the site on a revised pre-application proposal. The Council has also been undertaking significant action on an enforcement front. A detailed structural report has been commissioned and received by the Council. The Council has taken legal advice and is progressing with actions against the owners of the site to ensure the building's ongoing safety.

Food and Safety Service

- 3.20 We have submitted our annual returns to both the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and the Health and Safety Executive.
- 3.21 The team participated in the FSA annual food safety week (week beginning 4th June) which was on the theme of 'the people that keep your food safe'. We used social media (Twitter) to publicise the team and the work we do as part of a national campaign.
- 3.22 The Food and Safety and Environmental Protection Teams have had an intern working for them through the Suffolk Intern Programme from the 11th of June.
- 3.23 The Food and Safety Team have carried out 227 routine food hygiene inspections across both authorities in the first quarter of 2018/19 from 788 scheduled for the full year.

- 3.24 Against the service standards set out in the Food and Safety team service plan, 84% of responses have met targets for the 52 recorded service requests and complaints received by the team. Those responses not meeting the service standard have been due largely to the complexity of the questions involved. It is the intention to incorporate this response measure in future performance reporting.
- 3.25 There are currently two food safety prosecutions in progress, one relating to a café with an initial hearing on the 10th of July 2018 and the second against a hotel with the prosecution file now with the legal services team for their action. In the first quarter of 2018/19 one Simple Caution has been administered by the Corporate Manager for Food and Safety for food hygiene offences by a market trader and another is scheduled for a food mobile operator.
- 3.26 Following the death of a seven-year-old child resulting from the poor management of an inflatable (bouncy castle) in 2016, and the subsequent conviction for manslaughter of the owners, and the more recent tragedy in Norfolk, the Food and Safety Team will be writing to all those who may either operate or hire out a play inflatable (bouncy castles etc.) giving advice on safe operation.

Licensing Service

- 3.27 The Licensing Team are now beginning to revise Mid Suffolk's Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Principles document, that will take effect from January 2019 for a three-year period. This is a statutory requirement and technical piece of work which has been added to the forward plan and service plan. The district's main gambling activity relates to betting premises, gaming machines and small society lottery fundraising for local and national good causes.
- 3.28 Whilst each Council is a separate Licensing Authority and must consult/approve policy separately, this fourth revision Gambling Act policy is essentially the same content for both authorities. Adoption of policy is a matter reserved for full Council and a consultation period and relevant briefings will follow up until the autumn.
- 3.29 Following a Westminster Briefing session attended earlier in the year, as central government are not now planning short-term/wholesale legislative reform in the taxi and private hire sectors, Mid Suffolk and Babergh will progress further policy and procedural alignment through its Licensing and Regulatory Committees. Whilst we already take sufficient safeguards we will look to make some further progress to link taxi and private hire transport functions with visitor economy support and also enhance safeguarding/wellbeing training for operators.
- 3.30 Generally licensing sectors are busy indicating good levels of local economic activity. We will also be sourcing and looking to arrange a licensing training update for Members in 18/19.

Building Control Service

- 3.31 The Suffolk wide collaborative working development plan is continuing on from the ground work laid down last year. Following work to identify key areas in the market place a proposal is being drawn up to present to Chief Executives of the Suffolk authorities to provide the necessary expertise and resource we need to promote and increase service resilience.

- 3.32 Work will soon be under way to implement our new ISO9001 quality management system. This is being done in conjunction with LABC (Local Authority Building Control) and in-line with the review into building control standards. Work is due to begin July.

The full report from the Hackitt Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety has now been published and there are some significant challenges ahead for us should the recommendations be employed in full and may lead to further collaborative working with our counterparts in Suffolk.

Public Realm Service

- 3.33 Consideration is being given to plant a memorial avenue of Oak trees, one in each District, to commemorate the end of the 1914-18 Great War. A number of possible park and open space venues are being considered. This will be presented to the Task and Finish Group in July for their consideration.

Public Realm Transformation

- 3.34 Following consideration by Cabinet Members from both Councils in March a cross party Task and Finish Group has been set up to explore a number of the recommendations considered in each report. Tasks being progressed are:
- A new policy and action plan for the future management of public conveniences across both Councils.
 - Performance standards for both grounds maintenance and street cleaning including the development of Key Performance Indicators.
 - A new policy and procedure for the adoption and transfer of Council owned open spaces and other public realm assets.
 - A new policy and procedure for Council owned trees and woodlands.
- 3.35 The first worked up proposals to be formally considered have been ones for Public Conveniences considered by Cabinet in both Councils at the beginning of July.
- 3.36 For the second year running Somersham Primary School has won Mid Suffolk District Council's annual Litter Awareness Poster competition. A pupil at the school produced the winning design and was presented her first prize certificate by Cllr David Burn, on Wednesday 27th June 2018. The school also received the prize of a 'Froggy' litter bin which will complement the 'Monkey' bin they received last year. Four other pupils from the school each received a Highly Commended certificate for their designs.
- 3.37 The winning design will be displayed on the side of one of the council's litter collection vehicles, where it will encourage residents to bin their rubbish for the next year. Pupils were asked to think about the impact that littering has on the environment and the knock-on effects for both people and animals. It is hoped that by engaging with children of this age group they will not become litter droppers of the future.

Litter Innovation Fund

- 3.38 Central Government gave local authorities the opportunity to bid for funding to combat roadside littering in 2018. The project is supported by all 7 Suffolk local authorities. £10,000 funding was secured from Central Government and each authority also put in £500 and agreed to pledge officer time for monitoring the project.
- 3.39 The following actions were collectively agreed:
- Trial a new style and colour of bin at known hot spot areas – these bins were in addition to bins already in places like lay-bys – monitor use and litter.
 - Place additional wheelie bins in other locations (to see if it was the new style bin that made a difference or any bin) – monitor use and litter.
 - Monitor control lay-bys where nothing had changed.
 - Trial bin fill devices (fitted to the lids of wheelie bins and send a message to phone/computer when a bin is nearly full – we are trying to find out if the cost of the devices is outweighed by not having to visit bins so often if they do not need emptying.
 - Advertising campaign at petrol stations – targeting the pumps themselves.
 - Advertising campaign across the whole of Suffolk with each authority having a number of banners, signs and posters to deploy in key locations and known litter hotspots.

A full update will be provided for Members once the trial monitoring period is over in July.

- 3.40 54 incidents of fly tipping were dealt with between the 1st April and 30th June 2018. Each incident is investigated for evidence and when found this is passed back to Environmental Protection for legal action against the individual.
- 3.41 The Chernobyl Children's' Lifeline visited Needham Lake on Friday 6th July. This is an annual event. 15 children and their helpers enjoyed a morning of countryside activities with us. They spent time pond dipping in the lake, finding a whole host of fascinating creatures. We then collected butterflies, crickets, grasshoppers and a multitude of beetles in the meadow. The children are hosted by a network of local families and supporters. They enjoy activities and experiences as well as slightly less pleasant treats such as a visit to the dentist.
- 3.42 A programme of environmental activities is being planned through a partnership with Kinetic Sciences, a company based in Stowmarket. They will be paying the Council a site hire fee at locations like Needham Lake for children's activities and events over the summer.