

## MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

<b>From: Councillor David Burn Cabinet Member for Environment</b>	<b>Report Number: CMU28</b>
<b>To: Council</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 25 October 2018</b>

### 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 – July to September

##### ***Waste Service***

##### Suffolk Waste Partnership Projects

- 3.1 Negotiations for the tender of the MRF (Sorting and Marketing of Mixed Dry Recyclables) contract are continuing and will be concluded in November, with the new contract commencing in May 2019.
- 3.2 Working through the Suffolk Waste Partnership, officers have been developing a Waste Planning Guidance document to form a part of Suffolk Design Guide now under development. SWP officers held a training workshop with planners from Babergh and Mid-Suffolk and Ipswich in June, the session was well received and will help further development of the document.
- 3.3 The Suffolk Waste Partnership along with its counterparts in Norfolk have launched their joint Food Waste Reduction initiative working with environmental charity 'Hub-Bub' on the 2-year project.

##### ***Sustainable Environment Service***

##### **Environmental Protection and Environmental Management**

##### Solar PV Bulk Buy

- 3.4 More than 2,800 Suffolk residents have so far registered for this council-led group buying scheme for solar panels in partnership with iChooser, the group buying specialist. The successful contractor for this scheme is EEC Ltd, a renewable energy specialist which has installed more than 15,000 renewable energy systems over the last nine years. The project has 'morphed' into a joint scheme with other Essex and Norfolk local authorities and more than 5,000 households over the three counties have registered. The expected outcome is 2.5 MW of installed solar power, which will save some 880 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Registration remains open to households until 19<sup>th</sup> October. It is free to register and there is no obligation to buy. Registrants will also be invited to information events being organised throughout the three counties.

#### Electric Vehicle Charge Point - Highways England Network Funding

- 3.5 This is a BMSDC-led project for a network of rapid Electric Vehicle charging points along the A12, A14 and A11 for which the tender process has recently been completed. Installations will be subject to UKPN mobilisation and all work needs to be complete by March 2019.

#### Battery Storage

- 3.6 The project to install battery storage at our leisure centres is continuing. Hopefully officers will be able to present final proposals to the task and finish panel in early November.

#### ***Planning Enforcement Service***

- 3.7 Work is continuing on transferring all the planning enforcement historical data to the new Uniform system. This has been a protracted issue that, along with problems in recruitment has seen an increase in the number of enforcement cases currently under investigation by the team. From 2014 to 2017 cases were consistently held at/around 180-200 at each authority. Due to the IT problems the reporting tools in Uniform do not currently function as required and so the estimated number of cases is around 220 in Babergh and 250 in Mid Suffolk. However, the Data Information team have now recruited additional staff to complete transferring the Planning Enforcement team's data.

#### ***Heritage Service***

#### Business as Usual

- 3.8 Up to the end of September we received 1,322 consultations, enquiries and service requests and processed 1,354 consultations, enquiries and service requests, as detailed in the table overleaf. In considering the 'balance' between incoming work and work undertaken, it should be noted that many work requests are carried forward from one reporting period to the next or have consultation timeframes that span the quarterly periods.

	<b>Received since 01.04.18</b>	<b>Processed since 01.04.18</b>
Consultations on applications for planning permission and Listed Building Consent	997	1,016
Consultations on applications to discharge planning conditions	164	161
Pre-application enquiries (charged for service)	68	75
Defending appeals against refusal of planning/listed building consent	23	19

External consultations (e.g. applications to change to colour of listed buildings)	37	39
Miscellaneous enquiries/requests	33	44

### ***Food and Safety Service***

- 3.9 Partnership work between the Food & Safety team, the Public Health team and the other district and borough councils saw the launch of the Take Out Eat Well award (TOEW) in September. This extends the current healthy catering award scheme to fully include take-aways as part of a Suffolk strategy to combat the growing obesity problem. The Chinese Chequers in Stowmarket and Pizza Rosso have been involved in the development of the scheme.
- 3.10 The prosecution of the (now closed) Cat Café in Needham Market has been adjourned again and The Limes hotel were prosecuted after submitting a guilty verdict in the Ipswich Magistrates Court on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018.
- 3.11 Changes to Animal Licensing Legislation come into effect on the 1st of October 2018 with The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018. These regulations update and bring together licensing legislation relating to Pet Shops, Riding Establishments, Breeding and Boarding activities and Performing Animals. New standards and model conditions have been created alongside the regulations themselves. Performing Animal licensing comes to district councils when previously it was a County Council function. As is often the case with legislative changes, much of the detail has been published at a very late stage so that the full implications of any changes are still being assessed by the Food and Safety team.
- 3.12 A warehouse safety campaign, identified and planned through the Food and Safety service plan, will begin in October and run through until the end of the financial year. Part of the work will be to update records and identify more of the warehouse businesses that come under local authority health and safety jurisdiction in the two districts.

### ***Licensing Service***

- 3.13 The Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Principles document is now out to consultation and will be reported back to Licensing Committees before going on to Full Councils in December 2018 for adoption.
- 3.14 Applications for Premises licensing are high at the moment with around 18 new MSDC premises licence applications and also full variations, events and diversification applications coming in over the past few months.
- 3.15 The Licensing Team reported to Licensing and Regulatory Committee on a revised Mid Suffolk's *Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Principles* document, that will take effect from January 2019 for a three-year period.

- 3.16 Changes to the Policing framework in Suffolk from 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 2018, that will affect Mid Suffolk and Babergh, including the Licensing Service, were discussed between the Licensing Team, Environmental Protection and Suffolk Constabulary on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018 so that our approach and processes integrate seamlessly into the local working arrangements and processes.
- 3.17 The Gambling Act 2005 statutory policy revision is now out to consultation and will be reported back to Licensing Committees before going on to full Councils in December 2018 for adoption.
- 3.18 Mid Suffolk DC (Strategic Asset Management Team) now hold a flexible premises licence for the former NatWest Bank building in Stowmarket, which has been purchased by the Council. This will add value to the asset and enable flexible licensable uses in support of the local community and economy.

### ***Building Control Service***

#### Fison's Building

- 3.19 Following Counsel advice, preparations are underway to obtain a court order under Section 77 of The Building Act 1984, ordering the building owners to undertake crucial works to ensure the building's ongoing safety. Meetings with legal teams and expert witnesses and contractors are being held to finalise details and an initial court hearing has been granted for the end of October to review the submission and set a further court hearing.

#### Collaborative working across Suffolk

- 3.20 The Suffolk-wide collaborative working development plan continues to be developed. A successful bid was made to the Transformation Challenge Award (TCA) fund to support the implementation of the development plan. Recruitment for a project manager is currently underway.
- 3.21 Following the publication of the Hackitt review on building regulations and fire safety the Government has issued a statement fully supporting the recommendations of the review and announcing that a detailed implementation plan will be set out in the autumn. This is likely to involve changes to the law. There is talk within the industry, and particularly in local authority building control, about the implications that will need to be considered.
- 3.22 Implementation of the ISO9001 quality management system (QMS) is currently underway procedures will need to be aligned with those of the QMS. This is being implemented across Suffolk as part of the collaborative working. Competency levels of the surveying staff will need to be assessed in line with the competency matrix of the QMS which are in line with the recommendations of the Hackitt review.

### ***Public Realm Service***

- 3.23 The locations in which to plant a memorial avenue of Oak trees, one in each District, to commemorate the end of the 1914-18 Great War have been agreed. They are The Meadow in Debenham and Beaumont Park in Hadleigh.
- 3.24 A Public Conveniences Strategy was agreed by both councils in July.

- 3.25 The Litter Innovation Fund pilot period has been extended into September. Initial feedback has indicated that since the level of rubbish in bins has been monitored this has greatly assisted the teams to deploy staff resources where they are actually needed. Several parish Councils have expressed an interest in buying the special bins as the new design is encouraging more people to place their rubbish *in* the bins rather than around them.
- 3.26 Fly Tips collected during this period are as follows:
- MSDC:
- |           |    |
|-----------|----|
| July      | 28 |
| August    | 16 |
| September | 19 |
- 3.27 **MSDC: Wren Close, Cedars Park, Stowmarket:** the play site here requires a complete refurbishment since its installation in 2002 and a consultation event was held in August to seek local views on the equipment required. It is hoped that the play site will be installed by the end of March 2019.
- 3.28 **Grass Cutting:** following the cessation of grass cutting in both Districts during July and most of August grass cutting has started again following the rain (albeit a small amount) experienced at the end of August. It is amazing how quickly the grass recovers and the grass cutting on the usual 3-week cycle is now back in full swing.
- 3.29 **Tree for Life:** plans for a fruit tree to be gifted to every new born child in Mid Suffolk are now in full swing. This scheme is a Green Party initiative, giving parents of born and adopted babies the opportunity to apply for a tree for them to plant at home. They will be provided with planting and aftercare guidance. If they do not have the space at home the Council will provide information as to where trees may be planted such as local community orchards and public open spaces.

Authorship:

Cllr David Burn

October 2018