

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor Jessica Fleming, Cabinet Member for Environment	Report Number: CMU6
To: Council	Date of meeting: 26 September 2019

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

1. Overview of Portfolio

- 1.1 This report summarises the key areas of activity in the portfolio since the election in May and highlights what is coming up for the next 3 months. The portfolio includes Waste & Recycling, Public Realm, Building Control, Food Safety, Sustainable Environment and Leisure.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Council notes the report.

3. Key Activities since May

Waste & Recycling: Route Changes

- 3.1 The Councils service partner, Serco, have held the Joint Waste Contract (JWC) since April 2007. During this time housing growth has been absorbed into the existing collection rounds with only minor changes to collection routes. During this time housing growth has been absorbed into the existing collection rounds with only minor changes to collection routes.
- 3.2 Housing growth between 2010 and 2019 has risen by 6240 properties across the two districts. The existing collection rounds were becoming unworkable, with housing growth impacting on the ability of rounds to complete their work on the allocated day.
- 3.3 The re-routing of collection routes and the introduction of a new collection round in the summer (vehicle and crew) was required to ensure an efficient and effective service moving forward and able to cope with the new and planned housing growth.
- 3.4 During the service change the missed bin success rate was at a low of 99.37% for week 1 moving to a success rate of 99.81% at week 7. The recognised time for a waste service change to be fully embedded and errors reduced to normal operation is approximately 6 weeks (3 bin collection cycle's). Average missed bins for refuse & recycling collections over Q1 (April – June 2019) were 94 a week a success rate of 99.89%.
- 3.5 Figures published in February 2019 show that the national average for successful collections is 99.8%. Meaning that by week 7 the Councils were back to performing better than the national average.

Public Realm: Civil Parking Enforcement

- 3.6 The work to ensure implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement in Babergh and Mid Suffolk has stepped up a gear. The Statutory Instrument is ready to be laid in Parliament by the Department of Transport.
- 3.7 Ipswich Borough and West Suffolk Councils will be taking on these duties, via a Service Level Agreement, for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils. Recruitment will be starting soon for Civil Enforcement Officers so that training and development can take place prior to patrolling our districts.
- 3.8 We are currently working to a start date of 1st April 2020 across Suffolk and the Districts.

Public Realm:

- 3.9 Work has begun to ensure all of our mapping systems are up to date across both districts so that we can understand the scale of work to be undertaken by both Councils.
- 3.10 Clean Streets funding gained from central government in March 2019 is currently being spent across both districts and is enabling the Councils to better equip our community litter pick/community improvement groups.
- 3.11 Following monitoring the new play facility at Wren Close Stowmarket and MUGA/Skatepark in Belle Vue Park, Sudbury is proving very popular over the school summer holiday and we have had good feedback from residents.

Building Control:

- 3.12 We have continued with our work with the Suffolk group and have been successful in agreeing a service proposal with Concertus which will see most, if not all, Suffolk County projects being handled by the Councils. This is the culmination of 12 months of work and a collaborative effort by our colleagues across Suffolk and the business development officer.
- 3.13 June saw the demise of one of the main competitors in the private building control sector, which has led to 150 projects being handed back to the Councils building control team for approval. Whilst this has put considerable pressure on the service, we have successfully balanced the needs of residents caught up in this whilst maintaining service levels to keep the Councils existing, loyal client base happy. The problems in the private sector have led to questions being asked of its efficacy in the regulatory sector and has consequently led to an increase in enquiries coming to the Councils team.

Food Safety:

- 3.14 Following repeated food safety offences in Babergh and Mid Suffolk, a market trader selling cheese and pastry goods based in Colchester, has had their food hygiene rating reduced to 1 by Colchester Borough following intervention by the BMSDC Food and Safety team and discussions between the two authorities. The trader has stated that they will no longer trade on markets in Mid Suffolk or Babergh and with a rating of 1, most markets will not allow them to trade elsewhere.

The Food and Safety team considered this a more appropriate consequence of the poor standards than a prosecution would have achieved and in line with the public interest test considered when taking enforcement decisions.

- 3.15 Following changes to animal welfare licensing legislation and guidance requiring any officer involved with licensing work to undergo specific training before the end of 2021, three members of the team completed the necessary training in August and now are required to produce case studies to demonstrate competence.
- 3.16 For a second year, all businesses considered to be likely to use inflatable play equipment (bouncy castles) were contacted with safety advice at the beginning of the holiday season.

Sustainable Environment:

- 3.17 In July 2019, Mid Suffolk Councils passed important Climate Change motion. The Joint Task Force that will see the work behind these motions taken forward is due to begin in October 19.
- 3.18 The team participated in a commercial vehicle 'Stop & Search' event on 23rd July with the Police, VOSA, Environment Agency and other partner agencies involved in detecting and preventing crime involving vehicles. The Councils remit was to inspect for compliance with waste carrier licensing regulations, as unlicensed carriers are often involved in fly-tipping offences. We inspected 12 vehicles, gave advice to a number of businesses and are investigating one for involvement in potential offences associated with waste licensing and disposal.
- 3.19 Progress is being made on plans for a CIL-funded Electric Vehicle Charging Point in the centre of Eye and it is hoped that works will commence in Quarter 3.

4. Future Key Activities

Waste & Recycling: New Depot Scoping

- 4.1 Starting in October, we will be working with colleagues from Suffolk County Council, to look at opportunities for a new depot site.
- 4.2 The current depot at Creting Road, shared with our collection partner Serco, is working at capacity. It has absorbed increased staff and vehicle need from our housing growth. However, it will soon become too small for the size of operation we need.
- 4.3 With this opportunity comes the ability to create and new, efficient and environmentally friendly building. As well as the ability to share the site with other partners.

Waste & Recycling: National Waste Strategy

- 4.4 The Suffolk Waste Partnership continue to wait patiently for further information of the possible implications of the emerging National Waste Strategy.

- 4.5 Early indications show that Government will increase responsibility for manufacturers to reduce non-recyclable packaging. But will also push Council's to work towards collecting the same types of recycling consistently across the UK. This could see an increase in our districts of the types of recycling kerb side collections.

Public Realm:

- 4.6 The current grounds maintenance contract for Babergh expires October 2021. This gives an opportunity to look at the grounds maintenance function across both districts to ensure we are giving a good standard of service for residents and getting value for money.
- 4.7 Analysis will take place from April 2020, once the mapping exercise, mentioned within 3.9 of this report, has been completed.
- 4.8 Cabinet received a report in February 2019 asking for permission to consult on the draft Area Parking Plan. Consultation has finished and the plan has been amended. The Area Parking Plan will come back to Cabinet by the end of 2019 for final sign off.
- 4.9 The Tree for life scheme is in year 2 in Mid Suffolk – collection of trees to commemorate birth of new babies in the district will take place between November and January.

Food Safety:

- 4.10 Postponed from last year, the team will be undertaking a campaign to improve warehouse health and safety in autumn 2019.
- 4.11 Through the New Anglia Better Business for All programme, in conjunction with the HSE a small business advice event for Norfolk and Suffolk had been planned for September. Due to concerns that business capacity would be stretched by Brexit concerns, this has been put back to spring 2020.
- 4.12 Following a health and Safety investigation at a charity shop, one of the teams Food and Safety officers will be attending the Coroners Court in September to give evidence in the case of a fatality.

Sustainable Environment:

- 4.13 As mentioned above, the Joint Climate Change Task Force will see a cross party panel of members joint together to help tackle this issue for our Councils.
- 4.14 The Task Force will compile baseline data for our Councils to understand our current emissions and carbon usage. It will then seek expert guidance and advice on how we can work towards our goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- 4.15 The Task Force will report back to Cabinet in Spring 2020.
- 4.16 Through our membership of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP), we will shortly be launching a further offer to residents and businesses to have solar panels installed on their premises at a significantly discounted rate. The first round saw 177 Babergh and Mid Suffolk households and businesses benefit from a 20% discount through our 'Solar Together Suffolk' bulk-buy scheme. We will shortly commence marketing across Suffolk with solar panel installers being invited to bid in October.