

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor Jessica Fleming Cabinet Member for Environment	Report Number: CMU15
To: Council	Date of meeting: 23 January 2020

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & COMMERCIAL PARTNERSHIPS

1. Overview of Portfolio

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

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Council notes the report.

3. Key Activities since September

Waste & Recycling:

- 3.1 *New Recycling Facility:* The new recycling centre at Masons MRF has started to process the district's kerbside collected waste following a £15 million investment in the old facility. The major refurbishment started in May this year and was recently completed during November. The new facility has a dedicated education room to enable community learning and site visits this will be open during 2020.
- 3.2 *New Depot Scoping:* Initial work has started on the scoping of a new operational depot; a project team established, potential sites being explored, scoping of operational requirements and preliminary costing – more detail will follow as the project becomes more developed over the coming months.
- 3.3 Work continues on the National Waste Strategy; officers are working on options appraisals on potential new service delivery models, accessing future infrastructure needs and financial impact assessments on service changes. We expect further consultation to start in 2020 as government thinking becomes more refined following the first round of consultation carried out in May 2019.
- 3.4 *Food Savvy:* Babergh and Mid Suffolk are supporting the countywide Food Savvy project through our membership of the Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP). In Suffolk over 50,000 tonnes of food waste is thrown away by residents each year costing the local taxpayer approximately £4.75 million.

A full impact report outlining Food Savvy's achievements in year one has now been published. The report outlines the many innovative ideas undertaken already.

This includes ideas such as Pumpkin Rescue, Christmas Savvy (currently being repeated for 2019), Banana Drama and Travellers Checks, a campaign which sought to encourage residents to share food when going on holiday. As well as these campaigns, Council officers have spoken with over 12,000 residents at multiple events and the project has brought external funding into Suffolk supporting, amongst others, the creation of a community kitchen and Suffolk's first community fridge. If you would like to learn more, the full report can be found here - www.foodsavvy.org.uk/about-1

Year two of the project is now underway and Officers are working with Hubbub to develop new ideas, repeat those initiatives that worked well in year one and further promote our overarching aims to residents. This will include new schemes focused on reducing the wastage of individual types of food i.e. potatoes or bread, the expansion of Suffolk community fridge network and an exciting partnership with the East of England Co-op.

Public Realm:

- 3.5 The work to ensure implementation of Civil Parking Enforcement in Babergh and Mid Suffolk continues. The Statutory Instrument is ready to be laid in Parliament by the Department of Transport in January 2020.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 This is the 2nd year of Tree for Life project in Mid Suffolk. Applications are flooding in; with 3 weeks to go to register there were 220 applicants in Mid Suffolk. This is over the estimated take up (based on last year's figures) and equates to 26% of births and adoptions in Mid Suffolk (last year it was 21%).
- 3.8 We are working with a group in Elmswell (known as Elmswild) to agree a number of Mid Suffolk owned sites where a scatter orchard might be located in Elmswell with wildflower planting beneath. The group hope to plant 5 trees in each of 8 potential sites.
- 3.9 A consultation has taken place with residents of Ash Close in Onehouse for a potential "half mow" site. The results will be collated, and a decision made in the next few weeks. We hope to identify a number of potential half mown sites across the joint district.
- 3.10 Public Realm Officers are working with colleagues in the Communities' Team to advise a number of Town and Parish Councils with regard to current play refurbishment projects

Building Control:

- 3.11 The Suffolk Group collaboration had suffered a minor setback in that the Business Development Officer post became vacant. However, a successful recruitment took place before Christmas. Our relationship with Concertus continues to improve due to work undertaken as a Suffolk group which we will be looking to replicate elsewhere.

Following all the groundwork put in over the last 11 months the intention is to now increase marketing activity to raise awareness with the public around what we do and what we offer.

- 3.12 The situation with the private sector and issues over insurance has yet to be fully resolved. We are currently managing the additional workload from private sector failures and are now seeing more work being handed back to us where private bodies are either unable or unwilling to complete. We will continue to monitor the situation and deal with each instance as it occurs accordingly.
- 3.13 We are also expecting a fundamental change to the Building Act coming in next year which will address issues around regulations affecting Approved Inspectors, time limits for enforcement, possible charging for demolition notices as well as a general update.

Public Protection:

- 3.14 An Electric Vehicle Charging Point in the centre of Eye has been installed utilising CIL funding. It went 'live' in late November and is being used.
- 3.15 Through its membership of the Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP), a further offer to residents and businesses to have solar panels installed on their premises at a significantly discounted rate has been made. 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. This time round there have been 1,048 registrants of interest across Suffolk. The winning supplier is Greenspace, an Ipswich-based business with accreditation from SCC Trading Standards, Which? And Trusted Trader. An average 32% saving on the typical market price of panels has been negotiated. Installations should start in the New Year.
- 3.16 The Food and Safety team have been surveying the main industrial estates across the districts to establish information about warehouse activities that are under the jurisdiction of the local authorities for health and safety. General health and safety advice has been given to relevant businesses with more than 100 contacted so far.
- 3.17 Having investigated the health and safety issues surrounding a fatality in a charity shop, one of the councils' Food and Safety Officers attended the coroners court inquest in September to give evidence. The coroner concluded that it was an accidental death. The family of the deceased thanked the Food and Safety Officer for his thorough investigation.
- 3.18 The Food and Safety team have started to promote food businesses achieving a 5 star rating on the councils' social media platforms under the label Friday 5s.
- 3.19 A prosecution for food safety offences is in progress relating to a market trader operating in Stowmarket.

- 3.20 Two prosecutions for fly tipping were concluded in September with fines of £720 and £1,000 imposed as well as costs being awarded to the councils. These both followed failures to pay fixed penalty notices. Ten further fixed penalty notices were served by the Environmental Protection team up to the end of September and a Simple Caution was administered to another person for failing to meet their legal 'duty of care' to ensure that waste from their household was transferred to a licensed waste carrier.

Corporate Health & Safety:

- 3.21 On 10th December an Avian Influenza outbreak was declared at a commercial poultry farm in Athelington north east of Eye in Mid Suffolk. As part of the multi-agency response MSDC were placed on alert to potentially assist with signage and monitoring within the 1Km restriction zone.
- 3.22 Officers participated in the multi-agency teleconferences and briefed Senior Management. The coincidence of this incident with the build up to the general election added a degree of complexity and business continuity arrangements were considered.
- 3.23 As the incident progressed MSDC were not required to assist with the incident. Subsequently the birds at this unit have been culled, the site has been cleansed and at this point no additional cases have been reported. We are awaiting confirmation on the duration of the restriction zone which remains in force at this point.

4. Future Key Activities

Waste & Recycling: New Depot Scoping

- 4.1 As work on the depot project moves forward; sites are identified, preliminary costings are finalised and discussions with potential partners are developed we will be able to firm up a detailed proposal and time frame for the project.

Waste & Recycling: National Waste Strategy

- 4.2 We expect further consultation to start in 2020 as government thinking becomes more refined following the first round of consultation carried out in May 2019. We will respond to consultations as they become available and as we find out more information be able to prepare for the future changes to our Waste services.

Waste & Recycling: Alternative Fuel Waste Vehicles

- 4.3 Most of the Waste Services vehicles are due for replacement during 2023, while a way into the future we will start to explore options with our service partner Serco for alternative fuelled waste collection vehicles; trialling of demonstrator vehicles and detailed options appraisals.

Public Realm:

- 4.4 Over the next few months all mapping data held by the Council will be checked and updated. This will include checking whether areas maintained are accurately mapped. This will give accurate information on the quantity of work the Council needs to complete and most importantly how this is spread out over the District.

This information is very important if the Council is to review these services in order for members to make the best decision on how these services are managed in the future.

4.5 The Tree for Life scheme will close on the 31st Dec 2019 and now comes the important work of distributing the trees. Two distribution sessions are being organised for Jan and Feb 2020.

4.6 Early in the new year plans are being made to replace or refurbish play sites at Chilton Fields, Kite Close, Curlew Close and Partridge Close in Stowmarket.

Building Control:

4.7 Recruitment of a Suffolk wide marketing/business development post to continue the good work already done and to further promote the service.

4.8 Changes in legislation and standards, particularly Parts F (ventilation) and L (energy efficiency), to be published late March early April with a few being in force in early October.

4.9 Changes to the Building Act to address issues with private sector provision – possibly 2 tier insurance structure for private sector.

4.10 Await legislation to implement recommendations of the Building A Safer Future (Hackitt/Grenfell reports).

Public Protection:

4.11 The Suffolk Climate Change Partnership is seeking to invest in the installation of solar panels on the roofs of suitable business premises. We have already installed one array at the University of Suffolk and are in negotiations with a leisure centre provider to install a second array. These projects are on an 'invest to save' basis, with the income generated being used to sustain the work of the partnership. However, the Partnership intends to revise its business model to significantly expand its offer to Suffolk businesses to help them reduce their energy bills and become 'carbon neutral'.

4.12 Information gathered from surveying warehousing businesses will be used to develop more targeted health and safety interventions in 2020 for those identified as having some of the more significant risks such as the use of forklift trucks and high racking.

4.13 Licensing training for members of the licensing committees is being planned for March 2020.