

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL – 28th JUNE 2010

Agenda Item 9(i)

CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Roger Walters & Cllr Robert Mitchell

CABINET PORTFOLIO: Environment & Sustainability

Portfolio covers:

- Waste Strategy
- Environmental Strategy
- Highways (parking, signs, etc.)
- Climate Change
- Emergency Planning

REPORT COVERS ACTIVITY DURING PERIOD COMMENCING 31st MARCH 2010 AND ENDING 14th JUNE 2010

CAR PARKING

Rural Car Parks

Transfer of the 4 rural car parks is progressing well, with Sible Hedingham having transferred from 1 April 2010.

Meetings have taken place with each of the remaining Parish Councils and officers are currently investigating various issues in relation to land ownership, condition of infrastructure, rights of way, introducing charges and associated enforcement etc. When all the information is available, the Council will put a formal proposal to each Parish for their consideration. Clearly the Parish Councils will be looking to the Council to bring the car parks up to a transferable standard prior to transfer or allocate sufficient funding for them to carry out this work (anticipated to be in the region of £86,500).

Parking Charges

Following the increase in parking charges from 1 April 2010, a petition was received objecting to the increased charges for permits at Lockrams Lane car park at Witham. This is being referred to Witham Local Committee on 13 July 2010 prior to being considered by Cabinet in September.

HIGHWAY RANGERS

Officers met with their counterparts from Essex County Council recently to review the work of the Highway Rangers. Agreement has been reached to continue providing the service until 31 March 2011, with Braintree continuing to manage and operate the service on behalf of ECC. Requests for the Ranger Service are coming through from Parish and Town Councils and they have carried out a varied programme of work, as follows:-

Strimming back overgrown areas **17**

Cutting vegetation/trees/hedges/removing soil **15**

Cleaning and repainting fingerposts 14
Renewing/repairing/cleaning signs 24
Moving Speed Indicator Devices 3
Clearing existing grips in verges 3

WASTE STRATEGY

Recycling

I am delighted to inform Members that the Council is expected to exceed its recycling target of 48% for 2009/10. We are waiting for the figures to be formally audited by the County Council, but early indications are that we will achieve a minimum of 50% of waste diverted from landfill. This can be attributed to the increase in recycling in the third and fourth quarter of the year, where we achieved an all-time high of over 53% for each period. This, in part, reflects the impact of the recession on residents' shopping/eating habits, as they are throwing away less waste and more of what they are throwing away is being recycled. It also demonstrates high participation by residents in the recycling collection service and, in particular, the recent introduction of food waste collections within the green bin.

Missed Bins

I am pleased to report that the number of missed bins has settled down following the re-routing exercise last Autumn and is on track to fall back to around 45 per month. The number peaked in October at 829 which is when the new routes, wheeled bin roll-out and collection of food waste commenced, with a further blip in December as a result of the adverse weather. Since then, there has been a steady decline and the number fell to 52 in April 2010. This is testament to the efforts of the collection crews, supervising officers and back office staff, who have worked hard to resolve problems promptly and ensure that residents receive a regular collection of their waste in accordance with the scheduled timetable.

Inter Authority Agreement

I attended the last meeting of the West Essex Waste Management Committee where it was recommended that Districts/Boroughs agree to the dissolution of the Committee and create a Waste Member Partnership Board and Inter Authority Member Working Agreement that will oversee the governance of the County's IAA which Braintree has signed up to. I have agreed this on behalf of Braintree District Council using my delegated powers and I will be the Council's representative on the new Partnership Board (with Cllr Robert Mitchell as my Deputy).

CLIMATE CHANGE

Following a water efficiency audit of Causeway House by Anglian Water, officers are pursuing their recommendation of looking into constructing a bore hole to tap in to the **artesian aquifer** below Causeway House. Using the stored water to supply the majority of the water currently consumed will create a saving on the water bill.

Following a meeting with British Gas, the Council is exploring a public/private partnership project to **install solar panels onto the roof of Causeway House** to provide free green electricity for the Council to reduce our energy bills. If this project proves successful, other BDC sites will be considered for different renewable technologies.

The team has **attended a number of events** with their energy saving and climate change advice stand and displays: Gt Saling village fete, John Ray Celebrations in Braintree.

The team is in discussion with various firms and inviting quotes on the installation of various energy saving measures for Causeway House.

Two historic building specialist firms have carried out site assessments and been invited to quote for **the installation of energy efficient replacement / secondary glazing to the Town Hall**.

A Green Travel Plan is being drafted for the Council staff survey to go out in June. This will address reducing transport related carbon emissions and future car parking provision.

A printer cartridge firm is the first business in the District to have its energy/water/waste/transport audit under the new **Green Heart of Essex business support initiative**, which offers businesses a free audit and 6 months' support.

Green driver training was provided to all fleet drivers in Operations; also staff of Building Control, Planning i.e. starting with those staff who clock up the most miles. This driving instruction is designed to achieve a 15% reduction in fuel usage across the Council.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Officers from the team ran a **Parish Emergency Plan Awareness evening** which was fairly well attended by the parishes; the main topic for discussion was developing a parish emergency plan, which will promote self resilience and less reliance on the statutory services.

The **proposed Riverside development in Braintree** (site of the old swimming pool), has been carefully scrutinised and a detailed Flood Risk and Drainage assessment has been carried out by officers which will inform and highlight the risks to the development.

A business consultant from South Africa, Mr George Lianos has been in contact with our Emergency Planning team. Part of his consultancy involves doing Business Continuity Planning for small businesses in South Africa. He approached us for permission to use our Business Continuity Book which he found on the Council's website.

Inception Meeting for the Essex Flood Partnership on 27 May

The Flood and Water Management Act, passed on April 8 2010, has made ECC the Lead Local Flood Authority and therefore responsible for strategic local flood risk management. The County can't deliver this alone and therefore have created a partnership with all interested parties (inc LAs). At a recent inception meeting, this brought together for the first time all the organisations affected by the new Act to discuss its implications and how they can work together to ensure flood risk is minimised, successfully managed and serious flooding incidents are mitigated or averted in Essex.

The new legislation has put extra responsibilities on all organisations, but the partnership is confident that, through working together, all parties will be able to provide the capabilities and resources to meet the new responsibilities and challenges.

Town Centre Evacuation Plans

Officers have met with the local police to discuss evacuation plans for the main towns should there be a major emergency.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING:

Cabinet Member Cllr Roger Walters Tel: 07860 304784

Deputy Cabinet Member Cllr Robert Mitchell Tel: 07854 558478