



Council 29 June 2010

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Written report by Cllr Peter Stevens, Environment & Street Scene Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- Maintenance of the urban realm;
- Street naming and numbering;
- Grounds maintenance;
- Waste management and recycling;
- Abandoned vehicles;
- Cleansing;
- Environmental sustainability;
- Environmental management systems;
- Nature conservation;
- Climate change and energy action plan; and
- Public Toilets.

1. Waste and Street Scene Services

1.1 Waste Collection Round Review

- (a) The major project that is occupying much of our attention is the joint waste collection round reorganisation. This project is underway because the County Council are changing their contract for the disposal and transfer of residual (black bin) waste, which means that the place that the Borough and Forest Heath District Councils are currently tipping will change. The new rounds have been modelled upon cross border working, are scheduled to go live from the 28 June 2010.
- (b) The communications phase to this project is hugely important as it involves notifying all 78,000 households in our joint area. The general messages have already begun to be publicised and our residents' specific changes will be communicated to them by letter just before the new rounds begin.
- (c) One of the main anticipated benefits of the review will be a reduction of our carbon footprint. This is expected to be achieved through an increase in the efficiency of our waste collection, a decrease in our mileage which will reduce our fuel consumption.

1.2 Partnership Working

- (a) Our partnership working continues to be successful under the Interim Joint Waste Structure, and the round review project is helping to accelerate this. Our experience of partnership working is now helping inform the other shared services work with Forest Heath District Council as we are able to share our experience of working towards common policies and procedures in areas such as health and safety and how we manage our staff.

1.3 **Composting and Recycling of Street Sweepings**

- (a) We have started a trial of composting our street sweepings, whereby approximately 2,000 tonnes of this material per annum will be saved from landfill.

2. **Environmental Sustainability: Supporting our supply chain**

2.1 The Borough Council, along with Ipswich Borough and Suffolk Coastal District Councils, will be leading a nine month project to improve the Councils' resource efficiency and also that of local small and medium sized businesses in our supply chains.

2.2 The Supply Chain Network project, which is funded by East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and run by Resource Efficiency East, aims to improve the sustainability and resource efficiency of all the organisations within the supply chain. The project should also realise economic benefits both to the Councils and the participating suppliers through:-

- (a) reduced waste disposal costs;
- (b) lower maintenance and operational costs;
- (c) avoidance of risk in supply chains;
- (d) lower cost feedstock and materials;
- (e) reputational benefits;
- (f) marketing benefits; and
- (g) increased sales and profitability.

2.3 The Supply Chain Network will provide the opportunity for sharing experiences and ideas through formal networks, meetings, training workshops, collaboration and discussions all supported via Resource Efficiency East.

3. **Environmental Management Systems**

3.1 **Annual reporting of environmental performance**

(a) For the first time, the Council is publishing an annual statement of its environmental performance within the Financial Statement of Accounts. A snapshot of performance against the Council's Corporate Environmental targets during the last year is given in the report and summarised below.

(b) Highlights include:-

- (i) moving into new offices West Suffolk House in April 2009 and being awarded Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) "Excellent" for the building's environmental credentials;
- (ii) implementing our travel plan for staff working at West Suffolk House;
- (iii) reducing the number of desktop printers from 140 to nine multi-functional printing devices;
- (iv) delivering basic awareness training to staff focussing on climate change and energy; and
- (v) installing automatic meter reading of gas use in our main buildings.

- (c) The Council also:-
- (i) started a fundamental review and reorganisation of our household waste collection rounds with our partner, Forest Heath District Council. We are optimistic that when complete during 2010, we should realise at least 10% fuel and mileage reductions;
 - (ii) increased office waste recycling rate from 45% to 49%;
 - (iii) reduced our peat use to 7,200 litres from 49,603 litres in 2003 when we first started to measure its use; and
 - (iv) increased the amount of natural green space managed by the Borough Council from 235 to 276 hectares.
- (d) We faced certain challenges during the year; in particular, we experienced commissioning difficulties with innovative heat pump systems in West Suffolk House and Homefield Road depot. We have also seen our water use remain static rather than reduce. We have taken steps to address these areas and look forward to seeing improved performance both in reducing our carbon emissions and water use.

3.2 Independent scrutiny of Council environmental performance

- (a) During the last 12 months, all local authorities have been subjected to performance assessment of their use of natural resources by the Audit Commission. This forms part of the value for money assessment carried out annually.
- (b) In May 2010, the Commission concluded that the Borough Council is *'performing excellently on natural resources and has a very good understanding through 1990's baselines and good monitoring systems across a full range of services'*. They go on to state that the Council's *"long-established environmental management system is linked to a strong strategic approach"*.
- (c) The Commission highlighted key examples of excellent practice:-
- (i) the Council *'was the first LA in Suffolk, and one of the first in the region, to review climate change impact and energy dependency'*;
 - (ii) *'capital projects consider energy efficiency and climate adaptation routinely'*;
 - (iii) the Council *'offers good incentives to make staff sustainable'*; and
 - (iv) the Council is very effective in working with partners having *'an excellent track record of partnership working to reduce impacts and has made major progress on reducing its own carbon emissions'*.

4. Public Toilets

- 4.1 The new staffing arrangements at the public toilets commenced on 5 April 2010 in Bury St Edmunds and on 1 June 2010 in Haverhill. Also on 1 June the remaining staff transferred to Ocean Group Holdings Limited, the successful tenderers for the Facilities Management Services contract. Initial reports are that the new arrangements are working well but they will continue to be monitored.