

<b>Committee:</b> Environment, Enforcement and Housing Committee	<b>Date:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Chairs update	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
	Public
	<b>For Information</b>

### Summary

This report sets out the updates from officers as set out below.

### Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- That Members note the updates from officers below

#### 1. WEEE Recycling Programme

Brentwood Council have engaged with Lighthouse to see how it can aid this Charity to set up a successful Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) recycling Facility in the Brentwood Area. A WEEE facility enables residents to drop off small electrical equipment which is still useable in order that it can be refurb, re-used and ultimately put back into use. We have held two very positive meetings and are working with the Brentwood Centre to assist the provision of a WEEE at this location. Discussions continue and we hope to have assisted Lighthouse and the Brentwood Centre to open a WEEE site by the end of November 2019.

#### 2. Revised Recycling Scheme

Since the agreement to move ahead with the revised recycling scheme the Council has engaged in a procurement process to purchase the Hessian Bags. Following this procurement exercise the earliest that these bags can be delivered is in December 2019 and January 2020. This is longer than had been expected or previously informed to us. This we are informed is partly due to a significant increase in demand in the bags and that we are less in control of this commodity as it is delivered from abroad, china or India? Example drawings of the bags will be available soon which will be circulated to Members for information

The result of this delay is that the revised scheme will unlikely start until Feb 2020. We will of course be seeking to introduce the scheme as earlier as possible however this would seem the most likely start date and is also supported by experts

who advise to avoid the winter months as the take up will be reduced in poor dark winter weather conditions.

On a positive note the Depot are working on a scheme that will ensure better quality paper and fibre is collected from commercial sites and that possibly this take up could be encouraged by a reduced cost in the service. Figures are still being worked up at this stage. This we envisage will encourage businesses to take up the scheme in greater numbers.

Promotion on the scheme will start in the autumn 2019.

### **3. Procurement of Food Recycling Bags**

Following information passed onto the Depot regarding the quality of the food recycling bags the Depot will identify how these bags can be improved to make them sturdier. The present stock is expected to be depleted before the end of the year. We will revise our specification and increase the micron thickness to strengthen the bag, however please note that food waste bags are designed to decompose which does not allow them to be as strong as standard plastic bags.

### **4. Green Agenda Update**

A report was tabled to the PRED Committee on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019 at which the Committee agreed to note the information provided on local green businesses and the lighting solutions and further agreed to:

- Promote and reduce the use of single use plastics by Brentwood Borough Council will be implemented.
- Following procurement, delegate authority to the Interim Chief Executive and S151 Officer in consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair of the PRED Committee and Leader of the Council to approve a provider of a pilot scheme to introduce electronic vehicle (EV) chargers to the Town Hall Car parks which will also include the delivery of a feasibility study to consider the delivery of EV charging points across the borough.

Work on the procurement of the EV Chargers has begun and when we have firm timelines we will inform committee via the Chairs update.

### **5. Countywide Bus Shelter Project**

Officers at Essex County Council intend to seek approval for the strategy and investment for the bus shelters project at Cabinet in late Autumn now, rather than September, this is largely due to the scale of the work involved to achieve this.

To ensure sufficient time is allowed to prepare all the legal documentation, including the partnership agreement; have sufficient time to run a proper and full procurement; and allow for any further risks to be managed, the Officers intend to extend the timeline by a 3 month period. This would mean the new contract commencing on or

around 1 July 2020, in the meantime the status quo of responsibilities remain and the provision shall stay as is.

Officers from Brentwood Council continue to meet with counterparts at Essex County Council and further updates will be provided to members as the project progresses.

## **6. Empty Homes**

Members received an update on the current level of Empty Homes in the Borough. It was noted that the number of long-term empty properties (over 6 months) reported to Central Government in October 2018 had reduced from 359 to 271, the lowest level since 2015 and that Brentwood now had the third lowest number of empty homes in Essex.

It was however recognised that the number of empty homes in Essex was still continuing to increase and that staff resources available in Brentwood had meant that there had been little progress in actively engaging with owners to encourage re-use. The Chair met with officers to prepare a presentation for Essex Chief Executives which has been successful in raising awareness and a positive response to working collaboratively across districts to seek joint resources and solutions.