

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. 2014-2015 BUDGET OPTION TO TRANSFER BIRKENHEAD KENNELS TO THE CHARITY FRIENDS OF BIRKENHEAD

The delivery of this exciting budget option is on target to transfer the kennelling service over to the charity Friends of Birkenhead Kennels (FOBK) by the 1 September 2014. This new partnership will deliver a direct annual saving of £40,000 through the transfer of four staff and service responsibilities. The new arrangements will also manage out the existing uncontrollable overspends which are associated with the staffing budget. The contract with FOBK to transfer this service does not include any annual growth as measured against the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or Retail Price Index (RPI), therefore the authority is protected from future increased costs in respect of the grant agreement.

The unique nature of this budget option has realised a number of challenges in which our traditional administrative methods for outsourcing and creating social enterprises have not faced before. However, significant progress has been made to overcome these challenges and fortnightly meetings are being held to ensure the full benefits of this novel partnership are realised by the target date of 1 September 2014. This new partnership will reduce costs and improve the welfare of the animals that the local authority has a statutory duty to care for under the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MODERNISATION

In 2013 the Council's Technical Functions Transformational Project identified potential savings in Environmental Health through a modernisation of the service and through the implementation of work stream efficiencies. Through the implementation of this modernisation work, annual savings of £175,000 have now been achieved and the challenges associated with implementing the new generic structure are now being overcome. As part of this work an additional sustainable income of £15,000 per year was identified and negotiations around our transformational principles with our partners in Merseyside Port Health Authority (MPHA) also led to an agreement for the next three years to reduce the precept payment Wirral pays by £45,000. Therefore

the budget option to deliver a total saving of £215,000 for Environmental Health for 2014-2015 will be achieved.

3. PUBLIC HEALTH OUTCOMES FUND – TAKEAWAY FOR A CHANGE

Wirral is committed to reducing the health inequalities between deprived and affluent areas of the borough; with Public Health funds Environmental Health have been able to support local communities, businesses and families to reduce life impacting child and adult obesity, and achieve the Public Health outcomes. The project was rolled out in Rock Ferry and involved engaging with the primary school, children's centre and takeaways located in the heart of the community. Environmental Health Officers, supported by nutritionalists and health care professionals provided educational and support sessions for families and children; advising, supporting and guiding them to make healthy meal choices and swap for healthier options when in the supermarket or eating fast food. Local takeaway owners were given grants and supported to change cooking practices and ingredients to make their offer healthier; the new meals were then tried (and mostly enjoyed) by the local community via vouchers offering them 'free healthier meals'. The project has been such a success that Environmental Health has been invited to share their work at the Annual Public Health Conference in July 2014.

4. GARDEN WASTE

So far this new subscription year 34,731 households have signed up for the garden waste subscription service, including around 1500 brand new customers. This is over 6000 more than at the same point last year, indicating that the Council will meet its new target of 38,000 customers by March 2015.

Biffa reported a 560t rise in residual tonnages in April and May this year, as the growing season started. However, residual waste (green bin) tonnages over the year have not been significantly impacted by the changes to the garden waste service.

The Council recycled nearly 13,000t of garden waste in 13/14. The percentage of our total waste sent for composting was 11.14%, compared to 15.02% in the previous year when the service was free. This represents a 3.9% loss in Wirral's composting performance as a result of introducing the charge, compared to the 4-6% projected, meaning that those residents who used the service the most when it was free, are the ones that have continued to use it.

5. STREET CLEANSING

In quarter four of 2013/14, The Corporate Indicator for Local Environmental Quality was green, achieving a score of 97% against a target of 96%. The indicator will continue into 14/15 with the addition of monitoring graffiti, as well as litter and detritus. The overall 14/15 target has increased to 93% from 92% in 13/14. Early indications are that this has been achieved in quarter one.

6. ALLEYWAY DUMPING

Cleansing frequencies have now returned to four weekly. Hundreds of Good Neighbourhood Packs have been requested by residents living in terraced housing areas to help them take positive action to improve their alleyways and deter dumping. Further packs will be distributed through targeted marketing. Local Councillors may request packs on behalf of residents from the Waste and Environmental Services Team.

The Waste Investigation Unit have been carrying out baseline audits of alleyways in proposed pilot areas to enable the Council to track the impact of its anti-dumping campaigns. As a result of their referrals, where evidence has been found, the Environmental Enforcement team have written to 109 individuals suspected of dumping household waste. So far, this has resulted in 28 fixed penalty notices being served. The Waste Investigation Unit also leave postcards behind to all residents living by alleyways where evidence has been found, to make sure they are fully aware of the positive action the Council is taking.