

Portfolio Holder Report – Council 19 February 2014

By Cllr Mike Fairhurst – Operational Services

Since my last portfolio report operational services have responded to the flooding issues in various areas across the Borough caused by the recent storms which started before Christmas and are still going on. This has involved frontline staff working in extreme conditions, often at night, to minimise the effect of wind, rain and wave action on property - particularly in Hayling Island and Emsworth. A number of individual letters from members of the public thanking the efforts and dedication of our staff, and a small thank you party was held in the mayor's parlour, but I would like to publically add my thanks to the teams involved.

Waste & Recycling Strategy & Management

Collections during and after the Christmas/New Year period were carried out with our usual efficiency. There were very few problems reported although as always there were a number of residents who either didn't see or didn't remember the many messages across a number of media that we issued in advance. Sufficient resources were in place to ensure that any missed collections, however caused, were collected within 24 hours of a report.

Streetcare

After several months of consultation, members of the Street Cleaning team have commenced '5 over 7' working (ie working any 5 days out of the week). This has resulted in reduced operational costs and an improved weekend service in our 3 town centres.

Open Spaces

New cricket nets at Waterlooville recreation ground have now been installed. These were funded by the club from its resources and successful bids for external funds, but we have supported the bids, leased them the land and helped with some work in kind rather than cash. This follows on from the club's successful project last year to refurbish the artificial pitch on the square.

Other schemes (either fully or partially funded by the borough) that are due to start this year are:

- Purbrook Cricket Club artificial pitch project
- Playground refurbishments at Elizabeth Road open space and Cowplain recreation ground
- Re-location and refurbishment of the playground in College Road open space
- Bidbury Mead playground refurbishment

PCC have confirmed a start date of 14 February for the playground refurbishment in St. Clares Open Space (Warren Park), supported by a friends group. HBC are

contributing £3K towards a particular item of play equipment that is being supplied and installed as a memorial to a (local) little girl.

The Cemetery friends group display in the Spring Centre finishes on 27th February.

Coastal Recreation

A number of beach huts were destroyed and a great number were displaced during the recent storms. We will be offering assistance to owners by moving the displaced huts back to their original location, when the weather and our hard-stretched resources allow.

Vehicle Workshop & Fleet Management

Throughout 2013/14 the Vehicle Maintenance Workshop has continued to undertake work on behalf of other organisations i.e. East Hants District Council, Chichester District Council, Horndean Parish Council and local schools.

Fleet Management System is currently undergoing an external Audit from the Freight Transport Association (FTA). This is a requirement as part of our continued efforts to retain our 'Van Excellence' award which we have held for the past three years.

We bought the following 7 new vehicles during this financial year; all these vehicles replaced existing fleet vehicles and have contributed to the continuing reduction in fleet carbon emissions.

Sustainability

The Switch Hampshire Domestic and Business scheme closed on the 17th February 2014. An auction was held yesterday (18th February) where energy suppliers bid against each other to offer their best tariffs. Contact will be made with residents in early March with details of the winning offer and if they can save if they switched. Residents will have until 31 March to decide whether or not to switch. I hope all councillors took advantage of this and encouraged residents as well, as the more people who sign up the less people have to pay.

We are still awaiting a decision from the Department of Energy and Climate Change on a joint bid with East Hampshire District Council for £1 million to support roll out of the Green Deal locally.

The local Friends of the Earth group hosted a talk from Giles Redpath, the Chief Executive of Hive Energy, the company behind the proposed 200-acre solar farm planned at a site north east of the village of Southwick that will supply energy to over 12,000 homes. It was an interesting and informative talk, and helped scope possible rather smaller solar power schemes in the borough that we are examining.