

**Council Meeting:** 13th December 2012

**Councillor J.C.S. Essex** will ask the **Executive Member Recycling and Street Services** the following question:-

### **RECYCLING SERVICE**

We note the excellent increase in doorstep recycling from 37 to 52% with the introduction of the new recycling service. We note that residents have generally adapted well and appreciate the improved service.

We also note that some residents are not fully aware of what can now be recycled, and some bins are not being collected as they are contaminated with non-recyclable materials.

Please could you tell us the extent of this problem, and what steps you are taking to address it?

### **OBSERVATIONS**

The communication plan for the new service has been very successful and we have included a series of visual aides on the Council's website to assist residents with clearly identifying what "can and cannot" be placed in the wheeled bin for recycling.

Collection crews are monitoring and recording wheeled bins that are rejected, where possible, and a letter is sent to the resident.

Collection calendars for 2013, that include Christmas and New Year, are currently being sent to all residents of the Borough. This calendar is accompanied by a letter which re-enforces the communications message not to contaminate the mixed recycling wheeled bin and thanking the residents for their support. We are also launching our 'Rethink your Rubbish for a Better Christmas' PR campaign and using this to build messages about 'recycle it right'.

We are working closely with our recycling contractor on identifying the levels of contamination that they are processing, as we are experiencing a higher level of contamination from objectionable waste, rubbish sacks and electrical goods. This increase in contamination has been apparent in the loads sent for processing in November. The unacceptable materials are being sent to "Energy from Waste Plant" for disposal.

Our food waste, paper and cardboard and garden waste recycling continue to be of the very highest quality and continue to be accepted by our contractor as usual.

**Council Meeting:** 13th December 2012

**Councillor B. Truscott** will ask the **Executive Member with responsibility Human Resources** the following question:-

### **MINIMUM WAGE**

We note with interest the reference to the "Reigate and Banstead minimum wage" in the Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel included with the agenda for this meeting. This is set at £7.35 an hour, which is above the national Minimum Wage and 5p below the national Living Wage.

Could the Executive Member please confirm whether it plans to apply this minimum wage to all Council employees, and to include it in our procurement standards?

### **OBSERVATIONS**

The Council has the need to employ staff with varying levels of experience, and qualifications to provide the diverse services it undertakes.

The payscales reflect this and allow the Council to recruit and retain appropriately qualified and experienced staff to carry out its variety of services.

The £7.35 Reigate & Banstead minimum wage referred to relates to the bottom pay point on the Councils payscales.

Currently only two employees earn this rate of pay due to the type of work they do and their short length of service with the Council.

This figure is well above the National Minimum Wage which is currently £6.19 per hour.

There are no plans to apply this figure to any procurement standards as the National Minimum Wage legislates for a minimum earning rate.

**Council Meeting:** 13th December 2012

**Councillor C.T.H. Whinney** will ask the **Leader of the Council** the following question:-

### **MAINTENANCE OF THE PRIORY, REIGATE**

Madam Leader, you are well aware of the considerable concern of residents at the level of maintenance of the Priory, a Grade 1 listed building in Priory Park, which you have described as " the jewel in the crown" of the borough.

The museum attached to this building has been closed for well over a year and anyone walking around the building will see numerous markers suggesting extensive maintenance is required. I received written advice from Surrey County Council Monday week ago that there is budgetted to be spent for this coming financial year £ 1/2 m and the same amount for the following year on maintenance.

Could you please re-assure the residents of this Borough that Surrey County Council have the liability of a full repairing lease and that you will ensure SCC will give top priority to undertake all and every aspect of the maintenance required.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

Surrey County Council does have full repairing obligations under its lease of the Priory and is aware of those obligations. SCC has been carrying out background work on ground conditions and structural investigations to investigate why the damage to the museum area of the building has occurred and there is visual evidence of this around the building.

It is clearly disappointing that this process is taking so long but SCC is trying to ensure that the work that is carried out addresses any underlying problems, rather than just carrying out a repair that may not have lasting effect. Some delays are also inevitable because the site is Scheduled Ancient Monument, which means that specific approvals are needed for some of the investigative and repair work, and because some of the investigations cannot be carried out during school term time.

However, SCC is now making good progress, is liaising with English Heritage to obtain their approvals for their proposed works, and is hoping to have completed the repairs by summer next year.

It is very encouraging that SCC also now has a five-year maintenance programme in place and that they are planning a condition survey of the building next year to inform a longer term maintenance programme for the building. Property Services will continue to oversee the programme to ensure that the building is preserved for future generations.