

Council Meeting: 10th October 2013

Councillor M.A. Vivona will ask the **Executive Member for Recycling and Street Services** the following question:-

RECYCLING

Could the Portfolio Holder for Recycling & Street Services please indicate what assessment he has made of the Borough's current recycling levels?

OBSERVATIONS

Following the introduction of the new kerbside recycling service in 2012/13 recycling rates have steadily increased. I'm please to inform Members that we have moved from a recycling rate of around 37% in quarter 4 of 2011/12 to 54.8% in Quarter 1 of 2013/14 (provisional).

With the rollout of the new service to 11,000 flats continuing, it is likely that these figures will improve further. However, officers continue to monitor recycling yield closely in order to avoid contamination of existing streams and maintain the high quality of our recycle.

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Councillor S.A. Kulka will ask the **Executive Member for Recycling and Street Services** the following question:-

RECYCLING

As we are part of a Surrey County Council commitment to recycle 70% of domestic waste by 2014, could the Executive Member for Recycling and Street Services please update us on the strategy to increase Reigate and Banstead's quota to a fair proportion of that target and in what time frame will that be achieved?

OBSERVATIONS

Members will recall that prior to the phased introduction of our new recycling and refuse service beginning on 23 July 2012 officers brought forward a number of reports indicating anticipated recycling yield. It was clearly stated that the new kerbside service was likely to contribute towards a 57% recycling rate on completion of full rollout in 2015.

The recycling rate achieved in Quarter 1 of 2013/14 was 54.8% (provisional).

Surrey County Council's target of a 70% recycling rate by 2014 is aspirational. It relies on the development of improved recycling infrastructure, such as the Eco Park at Spelthorne, and identification of additional recycling streams.

Surrey Waste Partnership are committed to work towards Surrey County Council's target.

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Councillor Mrs P. Shillinglaw will ask the **Executive Member for Leisure, Councillor A.J. De Save** the following question:-

WAR GRAVES - FIRST WORLD WAR

As the Council has signed the Community Covenant this year, recognising the role, value and importance of the Armed Forces today for the safekeeping of our Country and our World, that we pay tribute to their contribution and sacrifice.

Can the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Councillor A.J. De Save please inform this Council how we will be commemorating the First World War?

In particular can he explain how we will be maintaining any war memorials and war graves in light of the additional contribution (above their normal annual contribution) from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to clean and replace any damaged war graves from the First World War?

OBSERVATIONS

A range of WW1 commemorative events and activities are currently being scoped and will be the subject of a report scheduled to go to Leaders on 28th October for discussion. In addition, a condition survey of the war memorials in the borough has been commissioned, with a view to implementing any necessary repairs or maintenance works in the spring of 2014.

We have a group of 20 war graves placed together in Redstone Cemetery, from the Second World War.

Elsewhere in Redstone Cemetery and in Reigate Cemetery there are a number of individual war graves. Those in Reigate Cemetery are from the First World War.

All these war graves have headstones that are provided and maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC).

The CWGC monitor and maintain all these headstones, including cleaning and repairs as and when necessary. We do not do any work to them. The group of war graves in Redstone Cemetery includes planted beds which are also maintained by the CWGC.

We do not receive any contribution from the CWGC, as they carry out all maintenance themselves. However, it is highly likely that the CWGC will make additional funds available in 2014 to ensure that all war graves are in optimum condition.

Council Meeting: 10th October 2013

Councillor C.T.H. Whinney will ask the **Executive Member for Property and Regeneration** the following question:-

OLD TOWN HALL CLOCK

The celebration of the 150th anniversary in granting the Charter to Reigate & Redhill has been enjoyed by residents and they and I would like to thank all those involved in organising the events including John Capon with his knowledge and enthusiasm.

In Reigate the Victoria arch is rather tucked away in Tunnel Road whereas the iconic clock on the Old Town Hall - the east face which is the first emblem seen when coming into Reigate has not been working for well over 3 months.

Scaffolding is now up so could the Executive Member for Property and Regeneration, Councillor Mrs. N.J. Bramhall, please state when will this clock face be working, what are the costs and can anything be done now to ensure no repetition?

OBSERVATIONS

The faulty clock face was not the main problem. The frame was badly corroded and had caused the back glass to the dial to break which also prevented the hands from turning.

Closer inspection revealed all the dials were in a poor state of repair and required complete restoration. Initially, broken glass was made safe and investigations started to resolve the problems.

The nature of the works and their location meant consultation with English Heritage, the Conservation Officer, Surrey County Council Highways, specialist contractors and extensive pre design of the scaffolding were needed.

The Dials will be removed and taken to the factory on the 22nd October for 4 weeks, during which time timber remedial works and mechanism repairs will be carried out. The dials will be returned week commencing 25th November and the scaffolding will come down over the following two Sundays with contract completion week commencing 16th December.

The works will have a 12 month warranty and a new service contract will be entered into by the Council.

The cost of the works is approximately £31,200. Future maintenance inspections and the service contract should prevent a reoccurrence.

Council Meeting: 10th October 2013

Councillor J.C.S. Essex will ask the **Executive Member for Housing and Welfare, Councillor J.M. Ellacott** the following question:-

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - DISCRETIONARY FUND

Could the Executive Member for Housing and Welfare, Councillor J.M. Ellacott confirm how many households in the Borough are receiving support from the discretionary fund (established as part of the Council Tax Support Scheme), and how many households are waiting to downsize to new properties so that they will not be subject to the Bedroom Tax?

OBSERVATIONS

Dealing with the Council Tax Support Scheme first, Councillors may remember that this scheme was introduced in April and for many residents it replaced the former Council Tax Benefit Scheme. Under the scheme some residents are contributing up to 10% of the cost of their Council Tax which before might have been covered in full.

When we introduced the scheme we set aside a budget of £50,000 as a discretionary fund to help households facing particular hardship. We don't necessarily expect to spend this budget in full but it remains as a contingency. In any event, we wouldn't expect to have spent very much of the budget in the first six months of the year and have so far helped four families to a total spend of £668.

We would anticipate helping other families where there are liability orders and they are actively working with Council officers and debt agencies to secure their accommodation.

Moving now to the second part of the question. Changes made by the Welfare Reform Act mean those tenants whose accommodation is larger than they need may lose part of their Housing Benefit. Those with one spare bedroom will lose 14% of their eligible rent and those with two or more spare bedrooms will lose 25%.

All households in social housing looking to downsize are now placed in Band A of the transfer list. There are seven other reasons why a household may be placed in this band - including urgent medical need; decants caused by demolition; and households releasing properties which have been adapted for residents with special needs.

I am able to advise Cllr Essex that on the 1st of October there were 98 households in Band A, many of whom will be looking to downsize - either as a result of the bedroom tax or for other reasons. Applicants looking to downsize aren't required to

explain what has motivated their wish to move and I am unable to say how many of the 98 are looking to downsize purely or mainly as a result of the bedroom tax.

We have been able to offer a measure of short-term support to some families affected by this change, including committing a total of £17,692 of Discretionary Housing Payments to (53 families).