

Melksham Area Board 9 March 2011

Chairman's Announcements

Waste Consultation Results

Those of you who attended area boards during the summer will recall the presentations about the council's proposal for changes to Wiltshire's Waste collection and recycling service.

The consultation finished on 20 August 2010. We would like to thank all the area boards for their support throughout the consultation period.

There is a report on the full results of the consultation that can be seen on

<http://www.intelligencenetwork.org.uk/environment/> . There is a link from the council website. Or if preferred, hard copies can be made available.

In brief over 10,000 people responded and just over 70% were in favour of the proposal. However the results show that support was varied across the county, with some areas showing a lower level of support.

A report on the consultation was considered by cabinet on 19 October 2010. Cabinet resolved to go ahead with the proposal, subject to the detail in the Comprehensive Spending Review. In approving the proposal cabinet acknowledged that support levels varied and that major and targeted communications will be essential to inform and reassure those residents that have concerns.

The proposed service changes are planned for **Autumn** 2011, and residents will be kept informed throughout the process. We envisage that as with the consultation the area boards will be asked to once again assist us in providing key messages in their areas, to this end we will be putting together an area board communications plan for the service change roll out to ensure messages are timely and relevant for each area board, we will share this with you all in due course.

Local Flood Protection

In the event of flooding the Council's priority is to the elderly or infirm when assisting people and the protection of commercial property to prevent environmental pollution. Although we will do what we can for affected householders we urge those in areas of risk to take precautions themselves.

In order to help communities protect themselves from flood risk, Wiltshire Council is introducing a scheme to supply gel sacs, these are similar to sandbags but inflate when in contact with water. The sacs are filled with a gel that expands when wet, but when dry they are virtually flat. This means they are simple to store and far easier to distribute in an emergency. They inflate when immersed in water, allowing a protective flood barrier to be built quickly to protect doorways and airbricks. When the flood has abated they can often be emptied, dried and reused.

In some places where there is a known flood risk, the Parish or Town Council may already hold a limited supply of sandbags for distribution in times of emergency, and the gel sacs can be used to augment these supplies.

Local communities are encouraged to appoint a local Flood Warden who can co-ordinate their response and be the main contact with the council's duty officers. Those parish and town councils with flood wardens or local flood working groups can seek advice from them on the numbers of gel sacs likely to be required for specific locations.

Parish and Town Councils will be able to:

- Purchase a stock which they can hold in the community for distribution during a flood event or
- Having identified properties that are at risk, or are known to flood, purchase the gel sacs on behalf of the householders

By buying in bulk Wiltshire Council was able to negotiate a discount which would not be available to individuals. The gel sacs are available to Parish and Town Councils for £2.50 each.

Town and Parish Council's wishing purchase gel sacs should complete and email the attached form to Sarah Peterson (sarah.peterson@wiltshire.gov.uk, telephone 01225 713377)

Localism Bill - Proposed Changes to Arrangements Governing the Conduct of Councillors

The Government's Localism Bill, published on 13 December 2010, makes significant changes to the current arrangements governing the conduct of councillors in Wiltshire. The proposals in the Bill include:

- removing the requirement for councils to adopt a national code of conduct for councillors;
- abolishing Standards for England, the national body responsible for overseeing the current standards regime in England;
- introducing new arrangements for the registration and declaration of personal interests, backed by the criminal law;
- giving councils a duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by councillors;
- enabling councils to adopt a voluntary code of conduct.

Councils, including unitary, town, parish and city councils will be expected to establish a committee to oversee the council's arrangements for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct.

We will be monitoring the Localism Bill as it proceeds through Parliament. The Bill is expected to become law in the Autumn 2011. Further details on the arrangements will be provided in regulations.

In the meantime the current arrangements for standards, including the local assessment, consideration and determination of complaints under the model code of conduct adopted by councils, will continue to apply. We anticipate that the new arrangements will not come into effect until the Spring 2012.

We will be providing updates on the progress of this legislation to towns, parish and city councils.

If you need any further information on this matter please contact:

Ian Gibbons, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer
01225 713052 E-mail ian.gibbons@wiltshire.gov.uk; or

Nina Wilton, Head of Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer
01225 713078 E-mail nina.wilton@wiltshire.gov.uk

Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Local authorities have a duty, under the Childcare Act 2006, to assess the sufficiency of childcare in their area and produce a report. Wiltshire's second report has now been drafted and it is out for consultation on the Wiltshire Council website: <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/schoolseducationandlearning/earlyyearsandchildcare/childcaresufficiencyassessment.htm>.

Any comments should be forwarded to the early years team using the response sheet provided on the website by 20 March 2011. The final report will be published on the website before 1 April 2011.

Further information is available from:

Email: earlyyears@wiltshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01225 785674