

Report of BALC meeting held 17th January 2024.

This meeting was held at Witham Town Council and was attended by Cllr McCoyd in person and myself via zoom.

Guest speakers for the evening were Cllr Graham Butland of BDC and the CEO of BDC Mr Dan Gascoigne.

The meeting largely consisted of a question and answer session.

Questions centred around:

- Support for parishes who were being asked to take on more responsibilities.
- Budgets for street cleaning, particularly in Sible Hedingham, will it be paid next year.
- Green Waste collection.
- Planning Enforcement.
- S106 agreements.
- Wethersfield asylum seekers and future prison.
- Black bin collections and closed lid policy.

Answers: Braintree District Council will have a 2.5 million pound deficit after four years if budget cuts are not made so support for parishes is unlikely.

The green waste collection registration has had a 51% take up raising £900K so far. This is far in excess of the projected take up which was only 10%. Green waste is not a statutory duty.

There is a lack of personnel in planning enforcement but an additional £200K was put into the budget for enforcement last year.

The CEO agreed to look into S106 agreements with a view to making them less prescriptive.

There are now over 600 people housed at Wethersfield and the home office target is 1700. Recent problems appear to have been alleviated by the appointment of a new programme manager there. Cllr Butland complained about the lack of communication from the Home Office. It was noted that the plans for a prison on the site have not gone away and that the Ministry of Justice has spent 15 million pounds on the site so far.

There will be exceptions to the plans not to collect black bins which are so full the lid doesn't close. Eg. if you have a lot of small children there will be leeway, however its not clear how this will be policed. But Braintree is sending too much to landfill, and this is an attempt to make people recycle more effectively.

Cllr Butland and Mr Gascoigne left after about 90 minutes and the rest of the meeting was general business.

Cllr Garry Warren