

Item 10 – Concerns re Gunton Warren oil deposits – response from ESC Cabinet Member for the Environment

‘As you can imagine from the nature of the incident we need to deal with the current position, then further investigate and try and ascertain how much oil remains in situ and the subsequent environmental impact should this be exposed on the beach .

We are in the process of commissioning a full specialist survey and once we are in possession of sufficient data about the quantity, location and composition of these deposits we can then understand risks to coastal waters, the marine environment and to people using the beach.

We hope to achieve all this before the end of the summer season.

In the meantime, we are checking the beach regularly for outcrops of wet oil in order that these can be either safely removed or stabilised and left in-situ, pending the results of the survey work.

We are always guided by specific instructions from statutory bodies and yes you might be surprised to hear often this instruction is to allow nature to dispose of the deposits into the sea.

Clearly this is a complicated situation and we are very concerned about destabilising the sand dunes and then causing further problems ‘

I do ask if you could ask all your town councillors along with any responses to the general public to not touch or move the oil and to keep away . Dangerous to pets and spreading the deposits around causes further problems .

And I can reassure all residents and the town council this is priority issue and I want to resolve this with minimum disruption as quickly as possible .

On another note I would be more than happy attend one of your meetings a little later in year where I can discuss my vision for East Suffolk / explain our new Air quality strategy (coming to cabinet next week) and this oil issue - I can attend with my senior officer who deals with environmental protection . And of course listen to the council’s concerns and how I can help , through my role as cabinet member for the Environment .