

**FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT OF THE
CONSORTIUM OF ESSEX WASTE COLLECTION AUTHORITIES**

A DISCUSSION PAPER

Background

Chelmsford Borough Council have most magnanimously provided the administrative and secretariat support for the Consortium since its inception over three years ago. This has, at times, been an arduous undertaking. Even without the pressures of special events such as public inquiries, three years is overlong for one authority to carry this substantial additional burden alone. It is now appropriate for the Consortium to consider fresh and possibly alternative arrangements.

Chelmsford have twice asked for another council to volunteer to take over but without avail. It is still possible that a single authority will come forward to take over the whole task but it would seem more likely that volunteers can be found if the task can be split into a number of discrete functions. This would be much less of a burden to each authority.

Purpose

The purpose of this discussion document is to set out the possibilities that exist for the provision of future secretariat support for the Consortium with particular reference to dividing responsibility by function.

Possible Future Arrangements

1. Secretariatship to be rotated strictly annually

This will have the advantage of cohesion albeit with the distraction of an annual rotation. It may, however, be less attractive to many authorities having to find the effort of three or four part time officers for a year.

2. Split secretariatship functionally on medium term basis

This will be less cohesive but offer greater continuity. It may also be more acceptable to member authorities who will only have to find the part time of one officer. It may be possible to divide up the functions between authorities to match the particular strengths of individual officers.

The split of responsibilities might be:

A. Internal arrangements i.e:

Notifications of meetings, agendas, minutes and any correspondence or action arising. Financial matters (or is that a further separate function?).

B. Provision of meeting place. It is suggested that for obvious geographic reasons this should remain with Chelmsford.

C. External matters and relations - mostly of a political/lobbying nature.

D. Technical matters i.e.

Waste management practice and issues and, increasingly, contractual issues. This role will involve relationships with ReMade Essex and possibly with consultants. Clearly this role might be split into two if that helped.

3. Split Secretariatship but rotating annually

As for 2 above but rotating annually. This would offer much less cohesion and continuity but might be more acceptable to certain members.

4. Member authorities fund a semi-permanent secretariat

The cost of, say, two officers split between eleven authorities may possibly be a more appealing solution to some. It would offer continuity. The employment status of the officers would need some thought, however, as would their reporting responsibility.

Conclusion

None of the solutions set out are a perfect answer to the problem. It is thought that the splitting of responsibilities in some way may prove the least unattractive to most member authorities. Concomitant with new arrangements for the secretariat would go a re-evaluation of the method of selecting and appointing the Chairman and any other elected member office which it may be necessary or advisable to introduce.