

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 15 March 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **15 March 2005** when there were present:-

Cllr P K Savill (Chairman)
Cllr P A Capon (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr C A Hungate
Cllr R A Oatham

Cllr Mrs M A Starke
Cllr M G B Starke

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs H L A Glynn, Mrs S A Harper, K H Hudson and R A Oatham.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr G A Mockford

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
J Bourne	- Leisure and Contracts Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

REPRESENTING SERVICETEAM

G Such

112 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

113 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr P A Capon declared a personal interest in item 8 of the agenda by virtue of being a Member of Stambidge Parish Council.

114 SERVICETEAM PROGRESS REPORT – REFUSE COLLECTION, RECYCLING AND STREET CLEANSING

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services), to which was attached an update from Serviceteam on the progress and development of the refuse collection, recycling and street

cleansing contracts.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to the recycling of paper, officers advised that various options were being explored with Serviceteam for the collection of paper, including the possibility of using different bags in which paper could be placed.

In response to a concern expressed by Members that paper tonnages appeared lower than might be expected the Serviceteam representative confirmed that monitoring would take place of what was actually being left out by residents in the blue boxes and establish how much paper was actually being left in the boxes. In tandem with this, Serviceteam would be conducting an audit of what receptacles for paper collection were used by other Local Authorities that they worked for, together with comparisons of paper tonnages. Officers would also evaluate what other Local Authorities within Essex were doing with respect to paper recycling and also compare tonnages. All information gathered would be taken into consideration when assessing the various options for paper collection.

It was noted that officers would provide details relating to comparisons between paper tonnages for the previous kerbside recycling scheme and the current one, comparisons of paper tonnages for the bring banks before and after introduction of the new scheme and details of what other Member Authorities of the Thames Gateway Joint Committee were doing with respect to recycling to the next meeting of the Waste Management and Recycling Sub-Committee.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to the type of paper that residents could leave out for collection, the Serviceteam representative confirmed that the only items that Aylesford Paper would not accept were Yellow Pages and Next directories. Shredded paper should, however, be placed in an envelope before being placed out for collection.

The Serviceteam representative noted a Member concern that, in the event of any future decision being taken that paper should be placed in the blue boxes, with the bottles and cans, that there should be sturdy lids for the boxes to prevent papers being blown away.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to residents placing paper in the grey bins rather than in the blue boxes/red bags, the Serviceteam representative confirmed that there had certainly been such instances in the early days of the new kerbside recycling scheme. However, operatives had not noticed any obvious occurrences in recent weeks.

Members concurred that there would be merit in residents being given the message that it was financially beneficial for them to use the bring banks and the kerbside recycling service.

In response to a query relating to plastic bottles being left for collection in the

blue boxes, the Serviceteam representative advised that when the current kerbside recycling service was first introduced there had been high levels of contamination. Contamination leaflets had, however, been left for residents and there were now very few incidences of contamination. In the case of some plastic bottles being left in the blue boxes, mixed in with glass bottles/jars and cans, operatives would be expected to collect the glass and cans and to leave behind the plastic, together with a contamination leaflet. Serviceteam planned, once the kerbside recycling service had been in operation for some months, to put signage on the recycling vehicles advertising what had been recycled already and illustrating what items could be recycled in the District.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to incidences of residents having surplus materials for recycling, the Serviceteam representative confirmed that operatives would take away any surplus bottles or cans left beside the blue box in carrier bags.

In response to a query about how long it would take to clear any refuse that had been fly-tipped, the Serviceteam representative advised that fly-tipping should be cleared within 24 hours of it being reported to the team.

The Serviceteam representative noted a Member concern that grey bins, once emptied, were often left blocking driveways, which could lead to instances of residents having to leave their car on a busy main road in order to clear the bin from their driveway. The representative confirmed that operatives would be instructed to place grey bins at the side of driveways.

Resolved

That the report be received and the information and answers provided by Serviceteam's Regional Manager be noted. (CD(F&ES))

115 BEST VALUE REVIEW ACTION PLAN – PUBLIC REGULATION, INSPECTION AND PROTECTION

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care updating Members of progress to date with implementation of this action plan.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to the reinstatement of reciprocal free access arrangements to civic amenity and recycling centres by Southend on Sea Borough Council, officers advised that discussions had not yet taken place between the County Council and Southend on Sea Borough Council, but that they would urge the County Council to progress this matter.

In response to a Member concern about dog fouling on pathway 22, officers confirmed that there were usually some dog fouling bins in stock and that this matter would be investigated. In response to an additional point raised by

Members relating to the provision of dog fouling bins at the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park, officers advised that provision had certainly been made for these.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to the costs of graffiti removal, officers confirmed that they would establish whether costs charged by local contractors for removal was competitive with national rates.

In response to a query about the policy and service review relating to gypsies and travellers, officers confirmed that there were a number of issues relating to policy and operational matters, which were yet to be considered by the Gypsy/Traveller Sub-Committee.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to the vacant arboricultural officer post, officers advised that this had been re-advertised. Officers further confirmed that the post was necessary as, due to the volume of work in that area, an external contractor had had to be used. The post would not offer new, but additional expertise, which would help greatly in dealing with the volume of work.

Resolved

That progress to date be noted and that a further update report be made in November/December 2005. (HHHCC)

116 CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT CODE OF PRACTICE AND LOCAL AUTHORITY GUIDE ON ODOUR NUISANCE FROM SEWAGE WORKS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care on a consultative report issued by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

During debate, Members expressed disappointment with the DEFRA draft Code of Practice and, in particular, with its failure to address the need for nationally recognised objective standards for odour assessment and lack of guidance on the best methodology to be used.

Resolved

That, subject to the following comment from Members, this report forms the basis of the Council's response to the consultation on the Draft Code of Practice and Local Authority Guide on Odour Nuisance from Sewage Treatment Works:-

- There is a need for recognised national standards for odour assessment. Although the DEFRA document is a useful tool, much more work is required. (HHHCC)

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The meeting closed at 9.06 pm.

Chairman

Date