

## **Review Committee – 10 March 2009**

---

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **10 March 2009** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr T Livings

Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill

Cllr M Maddocks

Cllr P R Robinson

Cllr M J Steptoe

### **VISITING MEMBER**

Cllr M G B Starke

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs C A Weston.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

R Evans

A Lovett

P Gowers

M Power

- Head of Environmental Services

- Street Scene Manager

- Overview & Scrutiny Officer

- Committee Administrator

### **ALSO PRESENT**

S Holgate

G Edwards

P Pamment

- General Manager SITA UK

- Contract Manager SITA UK

- SITA UK

### **62 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **63 SITA UK**

The Committee welcomed Steven Holgate, Gary Edwards and Peter Pamment from SITA UK who gave an update in respect of the waste management and street cleansing contracts.

In response to questions, the following answers from SITA representatives were received:-

- Following a report that oil drums had been dumped in London Road, Rawreth, it was confirmed that if a drum is empty it will be collected by SITA. If oil is present, officers refer the matter to a specialist contractor who is also used by Essex County Council. Residents can report instances of fly tipping either on-line or by telephone to Rochford District Council.

- Instances of contamination of recycling bins caused by residents presenting their recyclable waste in black plastic bags had increased over the last two months; in extreme cases, it might be necessary to issue fixed penalty notices. If a bin was contaminated, SITA staff would report the bin as 'left'; this non-collection of bins often resulted in residents telephoning SITA to complain. These calls were often lengthy, which increased the volume of calls being taken by SITA, which resulted in other calls not getting through. The forthcoming issue of Rochford District Matters will include a comprehensive article about recycling, including the contamination of bins and an explanation that black bags could not be collected by SITA because the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) would not accept them.
- The issue of large families producing too much dry recyclable waste to fit into just one bin, collected fortnightly, was a growing problem, due to the increased volume of waste being recycled under the new system. SITA was discussing possible solutions to the problem with the Council. Residents still in possession of the old blue recycling box could use this for additional dry recyclable waste. The option of providing a second bin on request cannot be adopted due to cost. The provision of a second or larger bin for larger families was still under review and individual cases will be considered on their merits. The option of using a clear plastic sack for additional dry recyclables would continue to be available over the Xmas period.
- It was noted that there had been several complaints from residents of waste collection lorries driving over grass verges and making a mess of them.
- In respect of the initial deterioration in the level of street cleanliness it was confirmed that the resourcing levels and criteria for cleaning had not changed. In agreement with Council officers, SITA had however rescheduled some of the street cleansing arrangements. It was agreed that Hockley should be treated as a litter 'hot spot' in much the same way as Market Square, Rochford and that additional bins might be required. The Council's Street Scene team would deal with the issue.
- In respect of issues surrounding SITA's call centre, an examination of the IT system was being undertaken and a procedure for logging calls and monitoring progress had been established and was currently being reviewed by the Council. All calls were recorded. Over the past few months some staff changes had been made and an additional full-time administrator had been employed in the call centre to resolve issues of public dissatisfaction with the level of calls being answered within an acceptable time-frame. Customer care training would be given to both supervisory and operative staff. At peak times, when the call centre resource was stretched, the answerphone would continue to be used. Answerphone messages were picked up on a very regular basis and calls returned as quickly as possible; the situation continued to be monitored.

A system was in place whereby the staff member retrieving the message would take ownership of the issue and deal with the matter to its conclusion.

- Focus would now be on the Street Cleansing contract and an action plan put in place to resolve any street cleansing issues.
- SITA would investigate the report that kerbs along a stretch of road from the Castle Pub in Little Wakering towards Barling were not being cleaned because of parked cars.
- A procedure was in place to ensure safe operating practice in the event of a spillage occurring during bin collection.
- A full-time member of staff would be employed to complete the database, which numbered all bins in the District and identified to which properties they belonged.
- The issue of operatives failing to replace bins in the correct place on residents' properties was being addressed and the situation was improving.
- Although SITA operated both the phased roll-out of contracts and the 'Big Bang' approach across the country, it had been found the latter was operationally easier to introduce, less confusing for the public and ultimately more successful.
- The level of vandalism at the toilets in Back Lane, Rochford was extremely high and the issue was being discussed in partnership meetings with the Police. A number of measures were being investigated to combat the issue, including the installation of a steel door within the next few weeks. The Crime and Disorder Action Group had suggested additional lighting in Back Lane as a useful measure and, in addition, covert camera work was being undertaken.
- Partnership Board meetings would be held quarterly; the next meeting is scheduled for early April.
- The issue of finding outlets for bulky waste items was being investigated.
- Because of issues of durability it was not practicable to introduce the advertising screens for the refuse vehicles as originally planned. New vehicle livery boards had been constructed and would be in use shortly. Although the direct telephone number of the depot was not included on these boards, all residents had received this information through Rochford District Matters and the various newsletters.

## Review Committee – 10 March 2009

---

It was noted that the street cleaner in Market Square, Rochford provided an excellent service.

### 64 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee reviewed the Forward Plan.

#### **Item 12/08 Potential of shared service working – Revenues & Benefits**

It was requested that the Portfolio Holder for Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions and the Head of Community Services be invited to attend the first meeting of the Review Committee in the 2009/10 municipal year to provide an update on Forward Plan item no. 12/08 and also to provide information on the Council establishing a Choice-Based Lettings scheme.

#### **Resolved**

That the Portfolio Holder for Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions and the Head of Community Services be invited to attend the first meeting of the Review Committee in the 2009/10 municipal year to provide an update on Forward Plan item no. 12/08 and also to provide information on the Council establishing a Choice-Based Lettings scheme.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

If you would like these minutes in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.