

## **Contracts Sub-Committee – 13 December 2007**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Contracts Sub-Committee** held on **13 December 2007** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr M G B Starke

Cllr T G Cutmore  
Cllr K H Hudson  
Cllr C J Lumley

Cllr Mrs J A Mockford  
Cllr P F A Webster

### **VISITING MEMBERS**

Cllrs Mrs J R Lumley and Mrs M J Webster.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

G Woolhouse	- Corporate Director (External Services)
R Evans	- Head of Environmental Services
A Lovett	- Street Scene Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

## **16 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **17 BRING BANKS**

It was noted that this item of business would be deferred to a future meeting, as further work was required around budgetary issues. The contracts for bring banks around the district were varied, with differing end dates. An assessment was required of the recyclable materials to be collected at the kerbside under the new contract with a view to rationalising materials at bring banks.

Members observed that it was possible that there was some commercial use of the bring banks. Particular reference was also made of the need to retain bring banks for textiles.

## **18 WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services recommending the development of an action planned approach to the next stage of the communication and publicity campaign. It was important that there be clear publicity to residents in the period leading up to the beginning of the new contracts providing information on collection days, materials to be collected and use of the various wheeled bins.

Officers had held discussions with two communications companies specialising in this type of project who had provided useful information on what had been successful elsewhere. This had been incorporated into the

suggestions that had been circulated to all Members of the Sub-Committee for discussion.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the possibility of obtaining European grant funding, officers advised that European funding goes to DEFRA and is then distributed to Local Authorities by WRAP (waste and resources action programme). WRAP had not yet finalised budgets for next year, however it was likely that their funding would be reduced because of DEFRA's need to divert monies towards flood defences.

Responding to a supplementary question about the current year's WRAP funding, officers confirmed that this had already been allocated to various projects. It would, however, be possible to use any forthcoming recycling road shows to publicise the new recycling contract.

Officers emphasised that funds would be required in the current financial year in order to start a phased communication to residents about the new contracts, with additional effort focused immediately prior to the beginning of the contracts. A sum of £65,000 had been set aside for a grounds maintenance-related survey of grounds around the district. This work would, however, be conducted by the new grounds maintenance contractor, as part of the new contract. Members concurred that there would be merit in a virement of £65,000 being made towards communications work in the current financial year.

Officers indicated that they had applied to the County Council for funding but, although the County Council had confirmed funding was available, this was unlikely to be obtained until such time as there was a substantial increase in the Council's recycling rate. Officers did, however, emphasise that the new waste management contract had the potential to deliver a significant increase in the Council's recycling rate.

Officers further advised that the County Council's recycling funding formula had not yet been finalised or made public. It was broadly based on next year's agreed recycling performance targets. The Kerbside Analysis Tool (KAT) modelling conducted by the County Council for this District had resulted in a target of 37%. On attaining a 37% recycling target, it was likely that the Council would start to receive a financial bonus from the County Council. The Council will receive recycling credits for all recycled materials. It was emphasised that Uttlesford District Council had attained a recycling rate of 55% within 18 months of introducing a similar system to that to be operated in this District under the new contract, but without a green garden waste service.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the new recycling contractor, officers advised that the contractor had agreed to help with publicity for the new service, and had set aside funds for this. There would therefore be merit in inviting the contractor to attend the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

The following Member observations were noted during discussion of publicity for the new contracts:-

- Consideration should be given to monthly press conferences in the run up to the commencement of the new contracts, focusing particularly on the Evening Echo, Yellow Advertiser and Rayleigh Times. They should be provided with very clear, simple briefings and hospitality should be given.
- A key message that required regular reinforcement was that the Council is retaining a weekly collection of kitchen waste.
- Separate recycling newsletters, delivered through residents' letter boxes would be preferable to a special edition of *Rochford District Matters*, as these would focus entirely on the new contract. One could be delivered in late January, with a follow-up one at the end of February, with a big article in the March edition of *Rochford District Matters*.
- The leaflets should be in plain, simple language, for the benefit of those who find it difficult to read.
- The £65,000 identified within the current year's budget would be sufficient to cover the costs of the suggestions circulated to Members of the Sub-Committee for the period to the end of February 2008.
- The specialist consultant identified within the suggestions should be asked to work closely with the officers and the contractor in developing a promotions campaign.
- The initial press launch should take place as early as practicable in January in order that details can be included in an early January edition of the Rayleigh Times. There would be merit in having a further press conference in March immediately prior to the commencement of the new contracts in order to reinforce the messages from the January press launch.
- Stickers on the wheeled bins should include pictures of what can and cannot be placed in them, to supplement any stickers with written instructions.
- It was unlikely that all wheeled bins would be delivered to households throughout the District by 1 April 2008; a phased launch of the new contracts was more probable.
- Although some older residents would not have access to a computer, it was nevertheless important that as much contact information be given to residents as possible for them to address questions, as many younger families would find it quicker to email enquiries and some residents would find it quicker to telephone rather than write in with a question.

- The publicity material to go out to residents should contain the message that 'Essex says no to incineration', as was the case with material distributed by Uttlesford District Council.
- There would be merit in officers contacting Green Recycling to purchase any surplus green bins in addition to those transferring to the Council at the end of the contract in March.

In response to a specific enquiry relating to the issue of wheeled bins, the Chairman advised that a further meeting of the Sub-Committee to be scheduled in January would contain provision for the discussion of items including assisted bin pull outs, provision of additional bins and persistent recycling contamination.

Officers drew Members' attention to the fact that the Recycling Communications Co-ordinator post was only funded until the end of March 2008, via WRAP funding. In order to retain that officer from 1 April funding would need to be sought from next year's General Fund.

Members observed that there would be merit in using some of the £65,000 already identified towards employing a specialist consultant to work closely with the officers, the Executive Board Member with responsibility for the Environment and the contractor in order to draft a detailed communication strategy for consideration by the Sub-Committee at a meeting in January. Members further concurred that officers should liaise with the Executive Board Member with responsibility for the Environment in order to finalise arrangements for a press launch in January. Members agreed that a further meeting of the Sub-Committee be scheduled for 15 January 2008 at 2.30 pm.

On a Motion moved by Cllr K H Hudson, amended and seconded by Cllr T G Cutmore, it was:-

### **Recommended to the Executive Board**

- (1) That a virement of £65,000 be made from grounds maintenance in the current year's budget to communications and preparation for implementation of the new waste management contract.
- (2) That the suggested activities circulated to Members of the Sub-Committee for the period up to the end of February be approved for discussions with the consultants in order to develop a detailed strategy for consideration by the Sub-Committee on 15 January. (HES)

## Contracts Sub-Committee – 13 December 2007

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The meeting commenced at 2.30 pm and closed at 4.40 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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