

Environmental Services Committee – 26 October 2006

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environmental Services Committee** held on **26 October 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr M G B Starke

Cllr R A Amner

Cllr T G Cutmore

Cllr C J Lumley

Cllr Mrs J A Mockford

Cllr J M Pullen

Cllr C G Seagers

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

VISITING MEMBER

Cllrs A J Humphries, P K Savill, Mrs M A Starke, D G Stansby and Mrs B J Wilkins.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs L Hungate.

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse - Corporate Director (External Services)

A Bugeja - Head of Legal Services

J Bourne - Leisure and Contracts Manager

M Chilton - Recycling Officer

S Worthington - Committee Administrator

366 WASTE COMPOSITION ANALYSIS

The Chairman welcomed Ms S Knapp and Mr B Knapp, of WastesWork Ltd, to the meeting. They had been invited to give a presentation to Members on the process required to conduct a waste composition analysis and the benefits derived from the information gathered from this analysis.

At a meeting of the Waste Management & Recycling Sub-Committee held on 14 June 2006, various proposals on how to spend this year's waste performance and efficiency grant from Defra were considered. One of the options included conducting a waste composition analysis within the district. The Sub-Committee concluded that a presentation should be made to this Committee on how the analysis would be conducted, to which all Members of the Council should be invited.

During the presentation, the following points were noted:-

- Waste analysis was the study of quantities and types of waste or recycling, and looked at all the different waste streams. The household waste analysis proposed for this district would involve collecting waste samples randomly, hand sorting the waste into different categories and weighing and recording the materials.

- There were two different methods of obtaining waste samples: bulk sampling, which involved taking waste from a refuse vehicle and analysing it. This did not yield accurate results and was used mainly at waste management plants. The other method was household sampling, where representative sample areas reflecting the socio demographic composition of the district were chosen. The ACORN system was utilised to divide households up into five different categories ranging from ACORN1, which comprised the most affluent households within the district to ACORN5, which included the least affluent households. Household sampling was proposed for the Rochford district.
- Sampling would take place at the normal collection time and date. Operatives would monitor, in advance, the bins of those households that were to be sampled and would record how full the bins were. After this had been completed, the waste would be collected from the bins by means of a large white bag being placed over the top of each bin, then rolling the bin on its side while keeping the bag upright, thus transferring the bin contents into the white bag with the minimum of fuss and mess and ensuring that the contents of the bin could not be observed. The white bags would be placed at the side of the road ready to be collected by a collection vehicle.
- The vehicle would then transport the collected waste to a sorting site away from the general public, usually a waste transfer station. Here the waste would be sorted out by hand into different categories of material and weighed and recorded. There would be no indication of which waste belonged to which household.
- The results of the analysis will identify waste generation rates, participation rates for recycling and common contaminants in recycling.
- The analysis would provide the Authority with information on whether the message of what can be recycled has been successfully communicated to residents, on what other materials could be included in the recycling service and on what types of households have what types of waste.

In response to Member enquiries the following points were noted:-

- Waste would be collected from every house in a randomly selected street, which could include around 40 houses.
- All waste collected as part of the sampling process would be eventually recycled or disposed of at the end of the sorting process.
- It was now possible to recycle nappies; some were recycled elsewhere in the country and made into flower pots.
- It would not be possible to determine from which individual household waste samples had been taken from. Samples would be taken from grey

bins, blue recycling boxes and red recycling bags/carrier bags.

- The company rarely received objections from residents refusing to allow their waste to be taken; it was not, however, uncommon for residents whose properties had been selected for the sampling to make enquiries about what was happening. Residents tended to be curious about what was happening and interested in what the exercise was likely to achieve.
- Residents were not pre-warned about the sampling as this would result in a dramatic increase in recycling during the sampling exercise. The local Police were, however, alerted as to which streets were being sampled.
- A Council officer was usually on site in the selected streets, who would answer residents' enquiries. The WastesWork operatives also carried letters that were given to residents who enquired about the exercise, which explained what was being done, together with the rationale behind the exercise and contact information for the relevant Council officers. It would be possible, if this was required, to distribute a copy of the letter to all households chosen to participate in the sampling exercise.
- Around 200 households in total would be sampled as part of the exercise.
- The waste composition analysis had been conducted by WastesWork in this district around 9-10 years ago and the company had also conducted the exercise throughout Essex.
- The streets selected for the exercise would ensure that samples from rural, as well as more urban parts of the district were covered.
- Waste analysis conducted nationally to date had highlighted that around 30% of waste by weight was food waste, although very few Councils offered a kitchen waste recycling service. WastesWork would be able to provide Members with information detailing which Local Authorities did operate a kitchen waste recycling service.

Officers advised that the Council's recycling rate was currently between 16-16.5%. It would be necessary to find ways of increasing this rate in future. It was further noted that the Council's refuse collection and recycling contracts were due to expire on 31 March 2008. Information that could be derived from a waste analysis exercise would be extremely useful in the procurement process for new contracts.

It was noted that copies of the presentation would be sent out to all Members of the Council.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm.

Chairman

Date