

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 23 November 2004

Minutes of the meeting of the **Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **23 November 2004** when there were present:-

Cllr P K Savill (Chairman)
Cllr K H Hudson (Acting Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn
Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr C A Hungate

Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr Mrs M A Starke
Cllr M G B Starke

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs Mrs R Brown and C J Lumley.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P A Capon.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr G A Mockford.

OFFICERS PRESENT

R Crofts	- Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)
J Bourne	- Leisure & Contracts Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

REPRESENTING SERVICETEAM

D Lester
G Such

495 SERVICETEAM UPDATE

The Committee welcomed D Lester and G Such, who were in attendance to provide an update on the expanded recycling service.

The Serviceteam representatives advised that contractors had been engaged to deliver the timetable leaflets, blue boxes and red bags. These should have been delivered in the 2-week period prior to the first kerbside collection taking place. It was clear, however, that it would normally be anticipated that, during the first two weeks of operation of a new kerbside recycling service, up to 3,000 calls would be received from members of the public. In this particular instance, however, more than 6,000 calls of complaint had been received. The tonnage of recyclables collected on the first day of operation was good. However, on the following 3 days tonnages were considerably lower,

indicating a problem. Serviceteam addressed the situation by using sub-contractors and Serviceteam staff to deliver red bags, blue boxes and leaflets to those residents who had reported problems. Two additional crews were sent out to deal with green waste. It emerged that those residents who had been on the old recycling round had continued to put out plastic and cardboard materials, leading to contamination of recyclables.

In week 3 of the new kerbside recycling scheme, 80 tonnes of recyclables were collected, a 100% increase on initial estimates for the scheme. Items in the press had a positive impact in terms of educating people as to what items could be placed out for recycling. Contamination levels in week 3 were low.

Responding to a Member concern relating to the volume of complaints received about residents still not having received the red bags, the Serviceteam representatives advised that 40,000 red bags had been ordered from the supplier and that 34,000 bags had been delivered to date. The recycling crews were experiencing difficulty in finding secure places to put the red bags once emptied, particularly in the case of residents who had not put out blue boxes with the bags. There were many instances of red bags blowing away.

In response to a Member concern about Serviceteam operatives informing residents that papers could not be left out in ordinary carrier bags, the Serviceteam representatives confirmed that this was untrue. The new recycling vehicles had bays specifically adapted to take carrier bags. In response to an additional concern raised about the red bags being too heavy to lift when filled with papers, particularly given the lack of handles, the representatives said that carrier bags would always be collected, provided they were placed beside the blue boxes and not in the vicinity of the grey bins.

Responding to an enquiry relating to tins and jars, the Serviceteam representatives advised that these should be emptied and cleaned before being placed out for recycling, as otherwise contamination levels would be too high.

In response to a further enquiry relating to green waste, it was confirmed that, currently, green waste should be placed in the grey bins.

Responding to a further enquiry relating about arrangements for ensuring that the blind or partially sighted received the necessary information relating to recycling collections, officers confirmed that no provision had been made, but that this issue would be addressed. Officers also noted the point that the leaflets made no allowance for those who were colour blind.

The Serviceteam representatives advised that the issue of those properties currently not on a kerbside recycling round, ie, farms, flats, caravans and properties on Foulness Island would be addressed in the New Year. One of the vehicles would have the facility to deal with these properties.

In response to a concern raised relating to the non collection of recyclables because of contamination, the representatives from Serviceteam confirmed that all kerbside recycling operatives would receive a talk about contamination and about how to deal sympathetically with residents.

It was noted that DEFRA would be providing funding for more participation surveys, but that this was unlikely to be available until some time after Easter.

In concluding the debate, officers advised that it was imperative that, in order for the scheme to be a success, the support of as many residents as possible was sought. To this end, it was vital that all instances of non delivery of timetable leaflets, blue boxes, red bags and any other difficulties experienced by residents with respect to the kerbside recycling scheme were reported to the recycling officers. Serviceteam was rectifying any such problems as and when they were reported. As a result, the office was no longer being inundated with telephone calls.

There was a general consensus that this approach should continue, as it would cause more confusion among residents to conduct a repeat delivery of leaflets to all properties. There would also be merit in informing residents via the website and *Rochford District Matters* that ordinary carrier bags could be used as an alternative to the red bags for putting out papers for recycling.

On a Motion moved by Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn and seconded by Cllr Mrs S A Harper it was:-

Resolved

That officers would bring back a report to a future meeting of the Committee on the possibilities, with costings, for providing residents with disposable bags for putting out papers.

It was further:-

Resolved

That Serviceteam provide Members with a further update on kerbside recycling in late January. (CD(F&ES)

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Chairman

Date