
REPORT OF THE CONTRACTS SUB-COMMITTEE – 13 DECEMBER 2007

1 WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Contracts Sub-Committee on 13 December 2007 to the Executive Board with recommendations relating to an action planned approach to a communication and publicity campaign for the new waste and recycling contracts. A copy of the officer's report to the Sub-Committee is attached at appendix 1.
- 1.2 Officers advised 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.
- 1.3 It was stressed that, although Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) budgets had not yet been finalised for next year, it was likely that funding would be reduced because of DEFRA's need to divert monies towards flood defences. The current year's WRAP funding had already been allocated to various projects, but it would be possible to use any forthcoming recycling road shows to publicise the new recycling contract.
- 1.4 Officers indicated that a request for funding had been made to the County Council, but funding was likely to be dependent on a substantial increase in the Council's recycling rate and this would not be available to help with the substantial set up costs. It was, however, emphasised that the new waste management contract had the potential to deliver a significant increase in the Council's recycling rate.
- 1.5 Officers drew attention to a sum of £65,000 that had been set aside for a grounds maintenance-related survey of grounds around the District. Members concurred that, given that this work would now be conducted by the new grounds maintenance contractor, as part of the new contract, there would be merit in a virement of £65,000 being made towards communications work around the new waste management contract in the current year.
- 1.6 It was observed that £65,000 would be sufficient to cover the costs of the suggestions circulated to Sub-Committee Members relating to communication for the period to the end of February 2008 and there would thus be merit in these suggestions being discussed with the consultant in order to develop a detailed strategy for consideration by the Sub-Committee at its next meeting. The suggestions are as follows:-
- Engage consultants to prepare a draft Recycling Communication Strategy and Action Plan.
 - Seek advice from WRAP and other agencies over possible external funding opportunities.

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- Design and prepare newsletters, posters, leaflets, information packs, vehicle livery and other promotional material.
 - Engage temporary staff to respond to customer enquiries.
 - Arrange high profile press launch.
 - Continue road shows and schools programme of recycling awareness and education.
- 1.7 The new recycling contractor had agreed to help with publicity for the new service and had set aside resources for this. The contractor would accordingly be invited to attend the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 1.8 It was observed that 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. The press should be provided with clear, simple briefings and hospitality provided. A key message that required regular reinforcement was that the Council was retaining a weekly collection of kitchen waste.
- 1.9 The Sub-Committee considered that 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. The language used should be plain and simple. Stickers on wheeled bins should include pictures of what can and cannot be placed in them, to supplement any stickers with written instructions. Publicity material should contain the message that 'Essex says no to incineration'.
- 1.10 It was emphasised that 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 therefore more probable.
- 1.11 Members felt that 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.
- 1.12 Officers drew attention to the fact that the Recycling Communications Co-ordinator post was only funded until the end of March 2008, via WRAP funding. Funding would need to be sought through the budget making process in order to retain this officer after the end of March 2008.
- 1.13 The Sub-Committee 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.

1.14 It is proposed that the Executive Board **RESOLVES**

- (1) That a virement of £65,000 be made from grounds maintenance to communications and preparation for implementation of the new waste management contract.
- (2) That the suggested activities identified at paragraph 1.6 above be approved for discussions with the consultants in order to develop a detailed strategy for consideration by the Contracts Sub-Committee on 15 January.

Sarah Fowler

Head of Information and Customer Services

Background Papers:-

None

For further information please contact Sonia Worthington on:-

Tel:- 01702 318141

E-Mail:- sonia.worthington@rochford.gov.uk

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