

## **Waste Management & Recycling Sub-Committee – 27 April 2006**

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Waste Management & Recycling Sub-Committee** held on **27 April 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr P K Savill

Cllr T G Cutmore  
Cllr C A Hungate

Cllr Mrs J A Mockford  
Cllr M G B Starke

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr C J Lumley.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

R Crofts	- Corporate Director (External Services)
G Woolhouse	- Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
J Bourne	- Leisure & Contracts Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

### **33 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **34 WASTE MANAGEMENT & RECYCLING DEVELOPMENT FOLLOWING AUDIT COMMISSION ENVIRONMENT INSPECTION OF JANUARY 2006**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) highlighting the key recommendations made in the recent Audit Commission Environmental Inspection, the exempt appendix to which included initiatives and proposals for addressing them, thus developing the Council's overall waste management and recycling services.

Officers advised that the Audit Commission's final report highlighted three main recommendations which required plans and actions to be developed in order to address them.

#### **Recommendation One**

It was noted that this recommendation focused on the expiry in 2008 of contracts for waste and recycling collections and the need to explore all possible options to ensure continuity of these services, particularly in the event of the Essex joint waste management procurement process not being completed by Spring 2008.

Members concurred that timescale was the most crucial element of the process for this Council and for Southend on Sea Borough Council, given the expiry of their waste management contracts in 2008. Members further considered that it was important that the Council developed its own

procurement process in the event of the Essex joint service procurement process not being completed by then. It was therefore critical that work should be conducted between now and early next year on a potential tender specification; this could potentially include discussions with Southend on Sea Borough Council, or also with Basildon and Castle Point Councils. It was possible that a joint tendering process by 2 or more of the Thames Gateway Joint Committee Authorities would result in economies of scale and thus lower prices for waste collection and recycling contracts.

It was noted that Tendring and Maldon Councils had recently developed new waste management contracts. Members concurred that there would be merit in establishing how these Authorities had drawn up tender specifications, particularly with respect to waste disposal and linking into the joint Essex procurement process.

Officers advised that modelling work was about to be undertaken by the County Council on analysing costs and performance of optimum collection and recycling methods. It was felt that this work would prove useful to this Authority in developing its own procurement process in terms of what kind of recycling should be specified in any tender process.

Members concurred that it was vital that this Authority continues with the Essex joint procurement process. The County Council would require information about this Council's refuse and recycling collection systems and tonnages in order to ensure that adequate disposal and recycling facilities were made available.

### **Recommendation Two**

It was noted that this recommendation related to the Council's waste management and recycling forward plan to 2008, with respect to this being further developed with progress against targets within the plan being closely monitored, reported and acted upon.

Officers advised that in future all relevant staff performance development review (PDR) would include objectives linking in with the Forward Plan. During debate, there was a general consensus that there would be merit in the Sub-Committee meeting every six weeks, in tandem with the meetings of the Thames Gateway Joint Committee meetings.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the proposed trial round of cardboard collection, officers confirmed that this had not yet started. It had emerged, through discussion with Serviceteam, that a similar trial in Stroud had not been entirely successful, with insufficient materials being collected. Staff were therefore exploring the possibilities of introducing other materials to the kerbside recycling scheme.

Responding to a Member query about the new recycling vehicle, officers advised that the new vehicle was due to be delivered that day. It was

therefore likely that the kerbside scheme would be rolled out to outstanding households at the end of May, once leaflets had been delivered and the service promoted.

Members were advised that extensive consultation had taken place with residents of flatted properties on kerbside recycling. There had been a good level of response to the consultation and a lot of interest in the scheme. It appeared likely that some of the flats within the District could use the same blue recycling boxes as for houses. Other properties in more densely flatted developments would need communal bins; this would necessitate a weekly recycling collection to minimise the risk of contamination.

### **Recommendation Three**

This recommendation focused on the need for the Council to adopt a clear strategy for promoting recycling and educating residents about the clear benefits of recycling waste, as well as exploring the possibilities of introducing environmental enforcement.

Members were pleased to note that a finalised plan, with detailed costings, would be presented to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee for a targeted education / awareness campaign to be conducted on an ongoing basis.

Officers advised that applications had now been received for the Street Scene Manager post. Short listing would take place next week and it was hoped that interviews would be conducted within the next fortnight.

During debate Members concurred that, subject to staff resources being available, known environmental hot spots should be targeted twice a year, and on ad hoc occasions, when a particular black spot was drawn to officers' attention. Two members of staff would be stationed in these locations with the aim of pursuing a prosecution for offences such as litter dropping or dog fouling. All such prosecutions would be heavily advertised by the Council with the aim of deterring would be offenders.

Members were advised that further recycling participation monitoring had taken place. This was not yet completed, but it appeared that the current recycling participation rate was at around 74 – 75%, which was an increase of around 10% since the last monitoring was conducted. This level of participation was very good in comparison to other Districts. It was noted that 100% participation would almost certainly never be achieved, given patterns of people taking holidays and people waiting to accumulate a large number of recyclable materials before placing them out for collection. It was, however, recognised that efforts should be made to identify any pockets of the District where households weren't recycling. Improved education and promotion of the scheme would help to increase participation.

Officers confirmed that an update would be provided at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee on take-up of the green waste collection service.

### **General Issues from the Audit Commission Executive Summary**

It was noted that the executive summary of the Audit Commission environmental inspection report made specific reference to the fact that the Authority does not charge residents for the removal of bulky, household items. Officers confirmed that the majority of other Local Authorities did charge residents for this service. Bulky items currently went to landfill, while white goods were collected separately and dealt with appropriately.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to the possibility of recycling any furniture items collected, officers advised that this would be difficult to achieve, as upholstered furniture had to comply with health and safety guidelines relating to fire and it would be difficult to know whether or not items left out for collection were made of a flame retardant material. Officers did, however, advise that the Council actively promoted an organisation, the Hamelin Trust, based in Southend, which collected furniture from residents and distributed to those with limited income who were in need of furniture.

During debate, although some concern was expressed about the possibility of an increase in fly tipping in rural areas with the introduction of a charge for the removal of bulky items, Members concurred that there would be merit in imposing a £10 charge for the removal of up to three items, as this would create income for the Council which could be used for further development of recycling services.

It was noted that Serviceteam believed that there were in excess of 340 second grey bins around the District. It was clear that additional grey bins should not be encouraged as this was not going to help raise levels of recycling. During debate, Members concurred that there would be merit in establishing specific set criteria for households to qualify for a second, smaller (140 litre) grey bin instead of an additional 240 litre bin, to try to encourage waste minimisation. Members further felt that the criteria set out in paragraph 5.17 of the exempt appendix to the report should be adopted. Officers confirmed that households would not be charged for the second bin, but would have to satisfy the Recycling Officer that they met the set criteria and that they were also recycling.

It was further noted that households who qualified in future for a second bin according to these criteria would probably also require additional blue recycling boxes.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That a targeted education / awareness campaign be presented to the next meeting of the Waste Management & Recycling Sub-Committee.
- (2) That overall proposals for spending the allocated Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant funding be presented to the next meeting of the

Waste Management Sub-Committee.

- (3) That known environmental hot spots should be targeted twice a year, and on ad hoc occasions, subject to staff resources, when a particular black spot was drawn to officers' attention, and any subsequent convictions should be widely advertised.
- (4) That specific action plans be developed that include actions, costs and timeframes for each of the three Audit Commission recommendations.

It was further:-

### **Recommended to the Environmental Services Committee**

- (1) That the Council continue to be part of the Essex Waste Procurement process, exploring possibilities of joint working but to run its own procurement process in the event of Essex timescales not meeting this Authority's requirements.
- (2) That regular monitoring be undertaken of the Council's waste management and recycling forward plan, by means of 6-weekly meetings of the Waste Management & Recycling Sub-Committee, as required, with measurement against statutory targets, and that this be one of the key headline performance monitoring issues for the Policy, Finance & Strategic Performance Committee.
- (3) That the making of a charge of £10 per collection for up to three items at one time for bulky items and white goods be included in the budget setting process for 2007/08, together with additional administration costs.
- (4) That collections of second wheeled bins be discontinued from those households that do not meet the criteria below, from September 2006, but that collections be honoured for those who have purchased the three year collection service:
  - Households would be visited and assessed by the Recycling Officer to ensure they are recycling.
  - Following an assessment, the household would be required to complete a detailed questionnaire, which would be reviewed on a 5-year basis, to ensure that the provision of a second bin is still appropriate.
  - Households should have 6 or more occupants.
  - Households could also qualify where there are specific medical reasons for an additional bin.

- If a request of an additional bin is not upheld, households would be advised that their case would be monitored for 3 months, with a further review carried out by the Recycling Team to see if they are still experiencing difficulties. (CD(ES))

### **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **Resolved**

That the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

### **35 ESSEX JOINT PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

The Sub-Committee received a verbal update from the Leisure & Contracts Manager on the Essex Joint Procurement process.

It was noted that, although steady progress was being made, it was disappointing that there had not yet been a response from Defra with respect to the PFI bid for waste disposal.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 12.50 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....