

FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL
ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

WEST SUFFOLK WASTE AND STREET SCENE SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Friday 12 June 2009 at 10.00 am
in the Conference Chamber East, F1R10, West Suffolk House, Western Way,
Bury St Edmunds

PRESENT: Forest Heath District Council
 Councillor Roman
 Councillor Simmons

St Edmundsbury Borough Council
 Councillor Farmer
 Councillor P A Stevens (Chairman)

1. Substitutions

No substitutions were declared.

2. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

3. Election of Chairman: 2009/2010

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:-

That Councillor P A Stevens be elected Chairman.

4. Appointment of Vice-Chairman: 2009/2010

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:-

That Councillor N A Roman be appointed Vice-Chairman.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Arising on the minutes the Head of Waste and Street Scene Services, St Edmundsbury Borough Council, referred to minute 26 wherein it had been agreed to extend the service level agreements for Vehicle Maintenance and A14/A11 Litter Cleansing for a further year from 8 June 2009, subject to the approval by the Joint Committee of any additional costs. He advised that officers were now recommending an increase in costs chargeable to Forest Heath District Council and a paper listing the proposed revisions was tabled. The Joint Committee considered these proposals and also noted that a saving of £2,798.31 in the overall budget 2008/2009 was due to be paid to Forest Heath District Council.

RESOLVED:-

That the revised charges for the Budget Year 2009/2010 be approved, namely:-

- (i) Vehicle Maintenance
 - (a) Fixed Annual Charge to Forest Heath District Council to increase from £41,784 to £43,034 per annum.
 - (b) Hourly rates for fitters to be increased to £45.76 for standard hours and £49.10 for overtime hours.
- (ii) A14/A11 Cleansing

Annual charge to Forest Heath District Council to increase from £23,125 to £23,819.

6. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Farmer advised that as a consequence of his recent election as a County Councillor he had a prejudicial interest in items 9 and 12. He also indicated that as potential conflicts of interest were likely to be regular he would be standing down from this Committee. Members noted this situation and expressed their thanks to Councillor Farmer for his work on the Joint Committee since its inception.

7. Performance Update: 2008/2009

The Joint Committee considered Report A31 (previously circulated) which gave information about the performance of Waste and Street Scene Services against national and local indicators.

By way of background the report drew attention to the situation that performance reporting was not only a statutory duty of a local authority but was an important element of monitoring and measuring the quality of services against national and local trends. Every tonne of waste collected was recorded and a summary was analysed on a monthly basis to help identify any anomalies and ensure that targets were being achieved.

The cost of waste collection per household for 2009/2010 was £48.85 for Forest Heath District Council and £46.99 for St Edmundsbury Borough Council. With the need to ensure that costs were kept as low as possible, but with an aim to improve performance year on year, it was critical that opportunities for increases in waste diversion through existing infrastructure were identified and that potential for improvements in cleansing not requiring additional resources were investigated. The report provided an analysis of performance and the trends that had emerged.

The Joint Committee was advised that improvement in performance in relation to trade refuse presented the greatest challenge. A Member referred to the initiative of Cheltenham Borough Council of a 'Scrap Shop' facility whereby commercial waste was moved around amongst business sites with a view to recovering material with a recyclable or re-usable value following which the residue was declared trade waste. Officers advised that similar schemes operated locally to reduce trade waste, for example Eastern Exchange, which operated across the region and offered items such as office furniture and other materials for re-use. A Green Business Forum also existed which was actively seeking ways to reduce trade waste.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the performance for 2008/2009 be noted; and
- (2) 2009/2010 performance be reported to the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee on a quarterly basis.

8. Update on Joint Educational Campaigns

The Joint Committee considered Report A32 (previously circulated) which provided an update on progress and outcomes of joint educational and communication campaigns which had taken place across the area of the partnership.

The partnership relied upon a range of promotional activities to influence the behaviour of service users and residents. In order to ensure that clear and consistent messages were targeted at relevant stakeholders, officers from each authority had worked together to devise a joint approach to promote awareness of local waste related issues. The key outputs from this collaboration had been the 'No Excuses' campaign and the Joint Communications Plan.

The 'No Excuses' campaign was intended to promote awareness of local environmental quality issues. The launch of the campaign, which had focussed on food and drink related litter, and subsequent events had been successful and well received and it had been agreed that a similar flexible approach should be used to deliver the remaining themes. There had been some initial discussions with other local authorities which had indicated that there may be interest in buying into the 'No Excuses' branding for their own litter campaigns. Officers were therefore proposing to investigate the potential to market the 'No Excuses' branding to other authorities, possibly through utilising organisations such as Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) or Environmental Campaigns (ENCAMS), formerly Tidy Britain Group.

'Smoking Related Litter' had been scheduled to be the second theme of the campaign. However, an opportunity arose to attend a 'Paws in the Park' event at Brandon Country Park, which focused on dog walking. Officers had agreed that the dog fouling theme should be jointly launched at this event and promoted during May 2009.

The Joint Communications Plan outlined events and activities taking place throughout the year that, subject to resource availability, would be used to promote messages on environmental crime, waste minimisation, re-use, recycling and home composting and the report detailed promotional work which had been undertaken to date.

Members drew attention to the need for Town or Parish Councils to work closely with the partnership on any campaigns they were staging themselves to avoid duplication of effort. Co-operation which had taken place with Newmarket Town Council, with a clear up campaign for the town, was mentioned in this respect.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) progress with the 'No Excuses' campaign be noted;
- (2) progress of the educational work undertaken in line with the Joint Communications Plan be noted; and
- (3) officers investigate the potential to market the 'No Excuses' branding to other Councils and organisations.

9. Update on Joint Contract for Hazardous Waste Collection and Disposal

(Councillor Farmer declared a prejudicial interest because of holding office as a County Councillor and withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item.)

The Committee considered Report A33 (previously circulated) which updated Members on the development of a new joint contract for the collection, re-use/treatment and safe disposal of household hazardous waste and sought approval for Suffolk County Council (SCC) to act as contracting authority on behalf of the Suffolk Waste Partnership (SWP).

Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, local authorities had a duty to collect household waste. This included certain 'hazardous' wastes such as paints and pesticides, which due to their nature, were unable to be placed in the wheeled bins. For the collection of these wastes alternative arrangements were required and a Council could charge residents directly for the service.

At present, Forest Heath District Council provided all residents with a non-chargeable doorstep collection service for hazardous waste items arranged by SCC using their household hazardous waste disposal contractor. Since April 2008 St Edmundsbury Borough Council provided residents with its own doorstep collection service for hazardous waste items for which a sliding charge was made depending upon the quantity of items collected.

It was the duty of SCC, as the Waste Disposal Authority, to arrange for the disposal of household waste. It currently contracted out the collection and disposal of household hazardous waste on behalf of the SWP. The present contract term was four years and was due to come to an end on 11 May 2009. A three month extension had been agreed with the present contractor (Enviroco) under the existing terms and conditions to allow time to update the service specification and undertake a procurement exercise.

Discussion and consultation had been undertaken with each District/Borough Council to identify future service needs in respect of hazardous waste collection services. Based on these discussions SCC were proposing to tender for the provision of collection, re-use, recycling, treatment and/or safe disposal services for hazardous waste over a period of two years, with the option to extend the arrangement by a further two years. The contract would run for a minimum period from August 2009 to July 2011.

All District/Borough Councils had indicated a wish to remain part of the joint contractual arrangement with variances on collection arrangements from authority to authority.

Members sought clarification on the definition of 'hazardous waste'. Officers advised that the Environment Agency, acting on the European Directive regarding this subject, had 14 categories in identifying waste as 'hazardous'. Currently there was considerable debate whether compost was to be regarded as 'waste' or a 'product'. Difficulties in dealing with collection of paint were discussed. Whilst there were initiatives such as the paint bank at the Foxhall Household Waste Centre which offered scope for taking tins of paint out of waste collection there were difficulties in operating such a facility.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the work undertaken to develop a Joint Service Contract for the collection, recycling, re-use, treatment and/or disposal of hazardous waste, be noted;
- (2) the procurement exercise with Suffolk County Council acting as contracting authority on behalf of the Suffolk Waste Partnership be approved; and
- (3) authority be delegated to Suffolk County Council to tender for a Joint Service Contract for the collection, recycling, re-use, treatment and/or disposal of hazardous waste.

10. Policy and Legislation Issues

Officers reported orally as follows:-

(i) Landfill Tax

This had been increasing annually by £8 a tonne up to a ceiling of £48. This maximum had now been reached and there had been an announcement in the Budget that increases of £8 per tonne would still continue to be applied up to a revised ceiling of £72 per tonne. The County Council would be responsible for meeting the increased cost and it would be looking for ways to divert further biodegradable municipal waste material away from landfill but no details had yet been identified, although food waste, aluminium, glass and wood were felt to be the likely waste streams.

(ii) DEFRA: 10 Year Strategy on Packaging

This recently published strategy was proposing that packaging material should be refillable or reusable and made from recycled materials. It drew attention to: (a) the need to raise customer awareness of enforcement action regarding disposal of packaging material; (b) the situation that there was often over-packaging; and (c) the intention to review the Packaging Waste Regulations.

The Committee discussed the implications of these developments for the partnership and noted that discussions with Suffolk County Council regarding the reduction of landfill waste were continuing.

11. Future Meetings

The following dates were confirmed:-

23 October 2009;
15 January 2010;
19 March 2010;
11 June 2010.

All meetings on Fridays and to commence at 10.00 am.

It was requested that the arrangement for a briefing session for Members held beforehand be continued.

EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED:-

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

12. Partnering/Operational Review Update

(Councillor Farmer declared a prejudicial interest because of holding of office as a County Councillor and withdrew from the meeting for the consideration of this item.)

The Joint Committee considered Exempt Report A34 (previously circulated) which provided information on progress in developing the partnership towards a single service entity and on progress in reviewing operations in terms of more effective ways of working.

In relation to the last-mentioned aspect a decision was sought to suspend work on refuse collection reorganisation pending completion of the Suffolk County Council waste disposal procurement later this year. Officers outlined the consultation which had taken place with relevant staff regarding this matter and steps to be taken to keep them informed of progress by letter. There was also an intention to issue a press release. Members of the Joint Committee asked to be supplied with copies of both communications.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the Partnering/Operational Review, be noted; and
- (2) the decision to suspend work on refuse collection round reorganisation pending completion of the Suffolk County Council waste disposal procurement later this year be approved.

The meeting concluded at 11.20 am

**P A STEVENS
CHAIRMAN**