

FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL
ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

WEST SUFFOLK WASTE AND STREET SCENE SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Friday 15 January 2010 at 10.00 am
in the Conference Chamber West (F1R09), West Suffolk House, Western Way,
Bury St Edmunds

PRESENT: Forest Heath District Council
 Councillor Roman
 Councillor Simmons

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

23. Substitutes

No substitutions were declared.

24. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

25. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26. Declarations of Interests

Members' declarations of interest are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

27. Maintenance of Waste Collection and Street Scene Services During Recent Bad Weather

The Committee expressed its thanks to relevant members of staff in both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council for the efforts made in maintaining Waste Collection and Street Scene Services during the recent period of adverse conditions of heavy snow and ice.

28. Update on Joint Communications Projects

The Joint Committee received and noted Report A432 (previously circulated) which gave an update on progress on the delivery of joint communication campaigns across West Suffolk.

In the delivery of statutory duties relating to waste management and street scene services, the Partnership was able to utilise a range of promotional activities and enforcement tools 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 included the following campaigns:-

(a) 'No Excuses' Campaign

The first phase of this campaign, intended to promote awareness of local environmental quality issues, had been completed. Events had been run throughout 2009 which targeted specific types of environmental crime. Subsequently, information had been sent to all Parish Councils and a selection of community groups summarising the campaign aims and offering further support for events in the form of promotional material, posters and support for local litter picks.

The second phase of the campaign was now being developed which would focus on the raising of awareness of the potential penalties that can be imposed for certain acts of environmental crime, such as littering, and the enforcement of these penalties. These powers had been made available by the Clean Neighbourhood and Environmental Act (CNEA) in 2005 and provided an increased ability to use Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) as an alternative to prosecution. The FPNs provided a quick, visible and effective way of dealing with low level environmental crimes. All local authorities in Suffolk had agreed the level of penalties that should be used when issuing FPNs. These were detailed in Appendix A to the report. The guidelines and risks associated with the application of FPNs were set out in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the report.

As part of the development of the campaign the following key actions would be undertaken:-

- (i) 'hot spot' locations for litter would be identified across both Councils' areas;
- (ii) a programme would be developed to increase the presence of Enforcement Officers along with the uniformed presence of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in these locations. This would involve publicising days when the specific locations would be targeted and raising the profile of litter enforcement and the issue of FPNs where appropriate; and
- (iii) a communications plan would be developed that would include clear messages in Forest Heath News, Community Spirit and the local media to raise awareness of the potential fines that can be imposed.

Additionally covert surveillance equipment would be deployed to support enforcement intervention and capture the evidence required to support a successful prosecution. A programme for deployment of cameras into appropriate known problem areas had been developed.

The Committee was advised that prosecutions would be initiated under authority delegated to officers. Unless the situation involved a gross contravention the matter would be dealt with by the issue of a FPN. Legal action had to be proportionate to the seriousness of the offence and prosecutions were only likely to be undertaken with Member involvement. The Joint Committee asked that it be provided with periodic reports on prosecution cases and their outcomes.

(b) 'Love Food, Hate Waste' campaign

This campaign aimed to raise awareness of the need to reduce the amount of food thrown away, as a benefit to consumers and the environment. Wasting food cost the average family with children £680 a year and had serious environmental implications.

The Partnership's support for the national 'Love Food, Hate Waste' Campaign had been launched during the European Week for Waste Reduction, 23 to 29 November 2009. A joint event was held at Bury St Edmunds' Market on 25 November 2009. This event included a market stall in the town centre, with officers attending to provide help and advice.

Future events and activities were planned to coincide with Valentine's Day and the publication of a 'Food Lover's Guide'.

(c) Seven Suffolk Streets Waste Reduction Initiative

This initiative had been made possible through a successful bid for £10,000 to the Business Resource Efficiency and Waste Programme. The aim of the initiative was to work with all occupants of a designated street including residents, businesses and schools to help them to reduce residual (black bin) waste by half during a single fortnightly collection period during March 2010.

Suffolk County Council was targeting the funding to a street within each of the seven districts and boroughs. Forest Heath District Council had chosen Crown Street in Brandon and St Edmundsbury Borough Council would be working with Abbotts Green in Bury St Edmunds. A questionnaire had been sent to residents inviting them to take part in the initiative. Participation was voluntary and Waste Reduction Advisors would be on hand to give support and advice.

The waste produced at each participating property would be weighed prior to the selected collection period and participants would then be challenged to reduce that waste by half. Waste would be weighed again during the collection period to see how well the households were meeting the challenge. A dedicated website was available to provide information and advice.

The Joint Committee was advised of the response rates to date from residents of the streets involved. Members expressed the view that wide publicity afterwards would be critical to the effectiveness of the project.

29. Improved Efficiency in Bulk Refuse Collections: Update

The Committee considered Report A433 (previously circulated) which provided an update on the recent trial aimed at improving efficiency across the Partnership in respect of bulk refuse collections. It also sought approval of a proposed revised pricing policy for Bulky Refuse and Household Hazardous Waste Collections.

On 23 October 2009 the Committee had been advised in relation to bulk refuse collections that a Project Team had been established to review potential areas of further joint working, demonstrate and deliver quick wins, resolve specific operational problems/constraints and improve service efficiency. Members had also been advised that bulk refuse collections had been identified as a potential efficiency opportunity and that a three month trial had been started with the aim of reducing personnel and vehicles used for bulk waste collection and bin deliveries. In addition, it had been mentioned that a consistent approach to collections over the Christmas period to free up capacity for other duties would be adopted.

The trial carried out involved reducing the total number of vehicles utilised by the two Councils for bulky collections from four to two (one at each Council) and involved reducing the number of personnel engaged on this task from six to four (two at each Council).

Over the three month period the trial had proved successful and bulk collections had also been suspended between 22 December 2009 and 5 January 2010 without detriment to the service.

Whilst it was considered that the Partnership was not yet in a position currently to develop a joint policy on bulk refuse collections it was an appropriate time to adopt a revised pricing policy across the two authorities. At present the two authorities had slightly different pricing policies. It was proposed that each authority adopted the following pricing policy for 2010/2011, which would ensure a consistent approach and a more realistic cost recovery:-

- (i) £25.00 for up to 5 items;
- (ii) £3.00 for each additional item up to a maximum of 10 items; and
- (iii) 50% discount for those residents in receipt of benefits.

The increase in charges might also encourage those producing the waste to consider and pursue alternative opportunities such as re-use, re-sale or taking advantage of the collection services of retailers if replacement white goods, e.g. fridges and washing machines, are being purchased.

With regard to Hazardous Household Waste Collections, Suffolk County Council had recently advised that, following the award of a new hazardous waste contract, Suffolk authorities would now be charged £32, previously £30, for each collection from individual residents. There would continue to be an option for each authority to carry out its own collections and store hazardous waste within a secure licensed store whilst awaiting collection.

At present Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) did not recharge residents for arranging collections through the Suffolk County Council contractor and had no facility to store any hazardous waste collected. St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) currently operated a hazardous waste collection service for which a charge was made dependant on quantities collected and this varied from £15 to £30.

It was proposed that the option of FHDC collecting directly from residents be explored with a view to the waste being stored at the SEBC licensed store pending collection by the contractor. Should this option be viable FHDC would make a collection charge in line with the SEBC current charging policy for hazardous waste. Should this not be viable then it was proposed that, where collections were arranged through Suffolk County Council, the full costs be recharged to the resident.

Where hazardous waste was collected directly by FHDC/SEBC the proposed pricing policy was as follows:-

- (i) £15 for 1 - 10 items;
- (ii) £25 for 11 – 25 items; and
- (iii) £30 for 26 – 40 items.

Where collected by the Suffolk County Council Contractor the charge would be £32 per collection.

Officers advised that there was no means of disposing of waste engine oil other than by County Council's contractor.

In agreeing the revised policy it was requested that 'user friendly' publicity be given to the charges which highlighted the difficulties experienced by the Partnership in collecting hazardous household waste.

RESOLVED:-

That the revised Pricing Policy for Bulky Refuse and Household Hazardous Waste Collections, as contained respectively in paragraphs 10 and 15 of Report A433, be approved.

30. Dates of Future Meetings

It was considered that there may be a need to change the date of the next meeting scheduled for 19 March 2010 and Members would be notified in due course.

The remaining meeting date of 11 June 2010 at 10.00 am was confirmed.

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 paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

31. Update on the Impact of Revised Residual Waste Tipping Points in the West of Suffolk

The Joint Committee considered Exempt Report A434 (previously circulated) which provided a further update to Report A266 considered on 23 October 2009. Its purpose was to outline the interim arrangements proposed by Suffolk County Council (SCC) for the transfer and disposal of residual waste for the west of Suffolk and the potential impact that this might have on Waste and Street Scene Services provided by Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC). The report also gave details of the preparation of a project to redesign waste collection rounds across the two districts.

Report A266 had outlined the current arrangements and contracts for the collection and disposal of waste collected by FHDC and SEBC. It also advised that SCC was in the process of re-tendering the arrangements for the transfer and disposal of residual (black bin) waste collected within west Suffolk. The Joint Committee had noted that the re-tendered contract involved residual waste only and therefore excluded waste from compostable waste (brown bin) and recycling waste (blue bin) collections which would continue to be delivered to the Lackford Transfer Station. Furthermore, it was acknowledged that the change would also impact on the disposal of other waste such as street cleansing residues, albeit this would be to a lesser extent than household waste.

Since the receipt of tenders SCC officers had been undertaking a review of the likely impact and mitigation of various options offered by prospective contractors. This activity had focussed on changing tipping points for residual waste and potential impact to respective waste collection services.

Changes to the tipping locations for residual waste would precipitate a significant piece of work involving the reorganisation of waste collection within both Councils. The benefits and impacts of the reorganisation of tipping points would not be realised unless a complete review of collection rounds was undertaken. Work had therefore been undertaken to scope a Partnership project to completely redesign waste collection rounds. The extent of the work involved was detailed in paragraph 6 of the report.

RESOLVED:- That:

- (1) the partnership approach adopted by Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council to maximise efficiencies in refuse collection rounds by redesigning collection rounds be supported; and
- (2) regular updates on progress be given, including a report to the next meeting in March 2010.

32. Joint Working/Joint Waste Authority

The Joint Committee considered Exempt Report A435 (previously circulated) which provided an update on the Suffolk Waste Partnership Members' Group meeting on 17 December 2009 which had discussed further joint working and a potential Joint Waste Authority. Subsequently a questionnaire had been forwarded to each of the Suffolk Authorities seeking views on the next steps forward. Approval of the draft responses to the questionnaire was being sought and these were contained within Appendix A of Exempt Report A435. A suggested amendment to the response to question 6 was discussed and agreed with officers as follows:-

'Current contractual arrangements would need to be carefully considered. Consideration would also need to be given to ensuring fair budgetary arrangements are in place and that there is no negative budgetary impact to the partner authorities. There should be an aim to seek to achieve common service levels and charges.'

The Joint Committee noted that a full business case would be required and that this would have to be the subject of approval by each Authority in Suffolk before any changes could take place.

The Joint Committee noted that Suffolk County Council were keen for this work to be progressed but that District and Borough Councils were adopting a cautious approach since the loss of a function and accountability at the local level were factors which would need to be weighed against the advantages of an autonomous Joint Authority.

RESOLVED:-

That the draft responses to the questionnaire attached to Appendix A of Exempt Report A435 be approved as the joint response from the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee subject to, Forest Heath District Council's Strategic Director (Services) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Corporate Director, Economy and Environment having agreed, the amendment to question 6 as follows:-

'Current contractual arrangements would need to be carefully considered. Consideration would also need to be given to ensuring fair budgetary arrangements are in place and that there is no negative budgetary impact to the partner authorities. There should be an aim to seek to achieve common service levels and charges.'

33. Inter Authority Agreement

The Joint Committee considered Exempt Report A436 (previously circulated) which gave an update on the development of the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) between the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) and the Suffolk Waste Collection Authorities (WCA's) which would set out the future for waste management across all the authorities. The report sought approval of the provisional baseline waste tonnage as set out in Appendix A for Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and Appendix B for St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) and for delegated authority to be granted to the Strategic Director (Services) (FHDC) and the Corporate Director, Economy and Environment (SEBC), in consultation with their relevant Member Champion and Portfolio

Holder along with their respective Heads of Legal Services, to agree the Inter Authority Agreement.

It was the intention of the IAA to reflect the current and proposed future working relationship of both the WDA and the WCAs in delivering their respective waste disposal and waste collection responsibilities, services and opportunities and to set out the agreement reached between them in respect of Recycling Performance Payments, Organic Waste, Trade Waste services, delivery points and the type of waste to be withheld for WCA recycling schemes.

The first part of this work was to agree the tonnages, and therefore the collection systems in place for waste collection and diversion for the next 5 years.

Officers advised that before the figures were submitted there was a need to re-examine data relating to trade refuse and recycling since changes in these did not appear to conform with any identifiable trends. Members commented that the figures did not take account of increasing number of houses.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the provisional baseline waste tonnage, as set out in Appendix A (Forest Heath District Council) and Appendix B (St Edmundsbury Borough Council) of Exempt Report A436, be reviewed and approved as the joint response from the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee; and
- (2) authority be delegated to Forest Heath District Council's Strategic Director (Services) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Corporate Director, Economy and Environment, in consultation with their respective Member Champion (Forest Heath District Council) and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Street Scene (St Edmundsbury Borough Council) and Heads of Legal Services, to approve the Inter Authority Agreement.

34. Partnership Update

Prior to the consideration of this item, Waste and Street Scene Services' officers present who had not been involved in preparing the Interim Joint Waste Structure (Proposed) were asked to withdraw from the meeting. Officers remaining gave an oral report on this matter outlining the proposed changes and the circumstances that had arisen which had allowed these to be made. In this regard it was mentioned that an evolutionary approach was being adopted rather than the making of wholesale revisions at the outset. A chart showing the proposed Interim Joint Waste Structure had been circulated as Exempt Report A437.

RESOLVED:-

That the proposed interim Joint Waste Structure, as contained in Exempt Report A437, be endorsed.

The meeting concluded at 11.40 am

**P A STEVENS
CHAIRMAN**