

FOREST HEATH DISTRICT COUNCIL
ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

WEST SUFFOLK WASTE AND STREET SCENE SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting held on Friday 26 March 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)

35. Substitutes

No substitutions were declared.

36. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

37. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38. Declarations of Interests

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

39. Expression of Thanks

The Chairman highlighted that this was the final meeting of the Joint Committee being hosted by St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) in 2009/2010 and the meetings would be held at the Forest Heath District Council offices for the 2010/2011 municipal year. He wished to express his thanks to the Waste and Street Scene Services at both authorities for the commendable work undertaken in the past year and particular congratulations were given to Sandra Pell, SEBC's Corporate Director for Economy and Environment. The Committee supported this recognition and acknowledged the significant improvement and development of the joint Waste and Street Scene Services in comparison to progress made by other local authorities.

40. Joint Service Plan: 2010/2011

The Joint Committee considered Report A593 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the Joint Service Plan in 2010/2011.

A Joint Service Plan for the period 2010/2011 had been drafted and approval was sought by the Joint Committee. This document, attached as Appendix A to the Report, would form the Business Plan for the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Partnership. The Joint Service Plan was intended to aid the integration of service delivery and enable the Joint Committee to manage and oversee the delivery of services in accordance with the Partnering Agreement.

The Joint Committee was informed that some minor amendments were required to the document and Members agreed to delegate authority to the officers to make minor amendments.

Members considered that a number of the timescales allowed to complete some of the targets outlined in the Joint Service Plan appeared to be over cautious and milestones should be achieved as soon as practicable. In response, the officers stated that the timescales were largely realistic given the enormity of the workload connected with a number of the tasks, but every effort would be made to achieve targets earlier than anticipated.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the Joint Service Plan for 2010/2011, as detailed in Appendix A to Report A593, be approved; and
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Head of Environmental Services at Forest Heath District Council and to the Head of Waste Management and Projects at St Edmundsbury Borough Council, in consultation with the Chairman of the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Services Joint Committee to make any minor typographical, grammatical and/or factual changes to the Joint Service Plan for 2010/2011.

41. Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee confirmed that the next meeting, which was the Annual General Meeting, would be held on 11 June 2010 at the Forest Heath District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall.

Members determined that the following dates for future meetings of the Joint Committee in 2010/2011 be held on:-

15 October 2010; and
14 January 2011.

However, Members requested that an alternative date be sought to replace the suggested date of 18 March 2011.

All meetings to be held on Fridays at the Forest Heath District Council Offices, commencing at 10.00 am, with a briefing at 9.30 am.

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.

42. Joint Waste Collection Round Reorganisation: Update

The Joint Committee considered Exempt Report A594 (previously circulated) which updated on the progress made on the Joint Waste Collection Round Reorganisation Project.

The Joint Committee had previously noted that Suffolk County Council (SCC) had retendered the arrangements for the transfer and disposal of residual (black bin) waste collected within West Suffolk. Members had also noted that the retendered 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 composting plant and transfer station respectively. Furthermore, it had been 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. These changes would therefore, impact on the Waste and Street Scene Services provided by Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC), which had resulted in a project to redesign waste collection rounds across the two districts.

The Joint Committee noted that the project would contain five principal elements to enable its implementation and these were outlined in Paragraph 7 of the Exempt Report. Attached as Exempt Appendix A was the Project Status Report (PSR), which outlined the current status of the project and was used as a tool to monitor the progress of the scheme.

SEBC's Head of Waste and Street Scene Services and Projects, together with SEBC's Fleet and Technical Manager and FHDC's Service Manager undertook a presentation which provided further details of the Round Reorganisation Project and the measures that would be taken to implement the changes.

The Joint Committee commended the work of the officers on this project and whilst acknowledging the enormity of the task, recognised the efficiency savings that could be made. As the next meeting of the Joint Committee would not be held until 11 June 2010, a suggestion was made that a briefing be held with Members before the roll-out of the scheme.

RESOLVED:- That,

- (1) the progress of the project to redesign Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils' domestic waste collection rounds be noted;
- (2) regular updates on progress, including a report for consideration at the next meeting of the Joint Committee, be received; and
- (3) a briefing with the Joint Committee be held prior to the roll-out of the Joint Waste Collection Round Reorganisation Project.

43. Service Level Agreements: 2010/2011

The Joint Committee considered Exempt Report A595 (previously circulated) which sought approval for extending the Service Level Agreements relating to Vehicle Maintenance and A14/A11 Cleansing for a further period of one year. Approval was also sought for funding to be made available to appoint a Vehicle Maintenance Apprentice should the Councils be unable to secure external funding.

On 6 June 2008, the Joint Committee considered and approved the proposed Service Level Agreements (SLAs) relating to Vehicle Maintenance and A14/A11 Cleansing. The SLAs commenced on 9 June 2008 and initially operated for one year. These SLAs could be extended for further periods of one year each, subject to written agreement of both Councils and on 20 March 2009, the Joint Committee resolved to extend the SLAs for a further year. Approval was now sought to extend the contract periods for another year.

The SLA relating to Vehicle Maintenance had now been in operation for almost two years following an initial 12 month contract that preceded the Partnering Agreement. During that period, there had been an overall improvement in vehicle compliance and annual testing pass rates. Whilst the Vehicle Maintenance Agreement was basically the extension of St Edmundsbury Borough Council's (SEBC) existing workshop facilities to incorporate additional vehicles, the SLA relating to A14/A11 Cleansing was a new operation for both authorities. Consequently, it had taken longer to achieve its original objectives but had also had to operate in circumstances that were not completely in its control, such as adverse weather conditions and increased public expectation against a restricted budget. Nevertheless, the SLA had been kept under review by both partners and in general was considered to be operating satisfactorily.

Sections 3.0 and 3.3 of the Exempt Report detailed the proposed fees charged by SEBC to Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) for 2010/2011 in respect of both SLAs, including an additional fee detailed in Section 3.2 relating to the funding of a new Vehicle Maintenance Apprentice post.

An opportunity had been identified to fund a Vehicle Maintenance Apprentice and investigations would be undertaken into seeking external funding of this post, but with the current economic climate this may prove difficult. The officers suggested that if external funding was not forthcoming the two authorities should fund this from existing budgets. Whilst accepting that budgets were constrained at present, this opportunity had been viewed positively by the West Suffolk Waste and Street Scene Partnership, which would enhance both Councils' reputations in supporting young people whilst also providing a degree of successor planning.

The Joint Committee supported the proposal to extend the existing SLAs by a further year and the recommended fees, including that should external funding not be secured, a Vehicle Maintenance Apprentice should be appointed by committing funding from both authorities' existing budgets.

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the changes to the fees identified in Sections 3.0 and 3.3 of Exempt Report A595, and the extension of the Service Level Agreements for a further period of one year relating to Vehicle Maintenance and A14/A11 Cleansing, be approved; and
- (2) should St Edmundsbury Borough Council agree to appoint a Vehicle Maintenance Apprentice but be unable to secure external funding, the additional fee identified to fund the post identified in Section 3.2 of Exempt Report A595, be approved.

44. Co-Mingled Collections to Include all Food Waste in the Brown Bin

The Joint Committee considered Exempt Report A596 (previously circulated) which sought approval for the introduction of food waste within the brown bins in order to increase the volume of waste diverted from landfill by increasing the amount of waste that was able to be composted.

The Brown Bin Scheme for the collection of green kitchen and garden waste was introduced by St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) and Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) in 1994. Following the successful roll-out of this scheme, in June 2002, both authorities received funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to further improve the operation and quality of the service.

At present, both authorities excelled in terms of maximising the diversion of materials from landfill through the implementation of the Councils' current refuse collection schemes. However, in order to increase performance, the Councils needed to increase the amount of recycled or composted waste. It was proposed that food waste be co-mingled with garden waste within the existing brown bin with minimal disruption to the current service. This system had been successfully introduced by Suffolk Coastal District Council. In addition, discussions with SEBC and FHDC's service provider, Green View Environmental Limited, identified that modifications required to the existing composting process could be made relatively easily to accommodate the co-mingled food waste.

The Joint Committee fully supported the proposal and made enquiries with the officers into the proposed timescale to roll-out the project and examples of food waste that could be mixed with the garden waste. Particular reference was given to:-

- (a) the Communication Strategy to promote the scheme;
- (b) whether the scheme would extend to trade waste collections; and
- (c) whether the roll-out could be incorporated with the launch of the Round Reorganisation Scheme.

A discussion was also held which centred around the promotion of household composting. The officers duly provided comprehensive responses to the enquiries.

RESOLVED:-

That the introduction of food waste into the Brown Bin Scheme as a partnership project between Forest Heath District Council, St Edmundsbury Borough Council and Green View Environmental Limited, as detailed in Exempt Report A596, be approved.

The meeting concluded at 11.42 am

CHAIRMAN