

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the East Devon Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board, held at Knowle, Sidmouth, on 24 July 2014

Present:	Councillors: Ian Chubb – Portfolio Holder, Environment (Chairman) Tom Wright – Deputy Portfolio Holder, Environment (Vice Chairman) David Cox - Portfolio Holder, Finance Geoff Pook
SITA:	Rick Aldridge – Senior Contract Manager Peta Johnson – Municipal Development Manager
Officers	Paul McHenry –Recycling and Waste Contract Manager Andrew Hancock – Street Scene Manager John Golding – Head of Housing Steve Joyce – Waste Management Officer Cherise Foster – Customer Service Manager Stephanie Lewis – Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Also present	Councillor: Phil Twiss – Corporate Services Portfolio Folder
Apologies:	Councillor Steve Gazzard Mark Williams Richard Cohen Darren Lockett - SITA

The meeting started at 10.00am and finished at 12.25pm.

***1 Election of Chairman**

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder – Environment, Councillor Iain Chubb be elected as Chairman for the ensuing year.

***2 Appointment of Vice Chairman**

RESOLVED that the Deputy Portfolio Holder – Environment, Councillor Tom Wright be appointed as Vice Chairman for the ensuing year.

***3 Minutes**

The minutes of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board meeting held on 29 April 2014 were agreed and signed as a true record.

4 Matters arising*Missed Collections:**

At the last meeting the Board discussed issues around an increased number of missed collections and a drop in the amount of kilometres travelled by SITA vehicles. The Senior Contract Manager advised the Board that he had looked into this and presented two main reasons for the changes to the statistics:

- the vehicles currently used, and
- staffing issues over the past six months.

The Senior Contract Manager explained that there had been multiple problems with vehicles breaking down and as a result other vehicles had to make up the shortfall. There had also been numerous staffing problems over the past few months, where SITA had to use more agency staff. SITA was trying to address this problem by providing more training and qualifications for staff.

The Chairman reported on concerns raised where members of the public had seen green boxes kicked down the street by operatives causing damage. The Senior Contract Manager advised that this had been discussed at team meetings and checks had been implemented to reduce this issue. It was explained that separate bins are marked as 'slave bins' which are used by crews to transport waste to and from the vehicle. These are currently the same colour as resident's bins and there may be some public confusion and issues over perceptions if these bins are not clearly marked as being different.

RESOLVED that the Senior Contract Manager research costs and materials for alternative stronger options for slave bins and report back at the next meeting.

***5 Changes to meeting format**

The Waste and Recycling Manager advised the Board that it was appropriate for the meeting to be split into two halves; part one attended by SITA and part two held without any contractors present. This was to allow discussions to take place with Officers and Councillors concerning future contracts.

***6 Statistical Information**

The Board was presented information by the Waste and Recycling Manager regarding statistical and operational data on missed collections, finance and SITA key performance indicators.

The Waste and Recycling Manager highlighted concerns regarding a high level of staff turnover of up to 20% per year. This was extremely high and as a result was reflected in the increased number of missed landfill collections. There had also been a delay in the delivery of 500 bins, boxes and caddies which SITA had resolved by organising overtime activities during a weekend. The Board discussed reasons for a high staff turnover which the Senior Contract Manager explained had always been an issue, and ways to resolve this problem which included offering full qualifications to drivers. It was also agreed that many young operatives who join decide to move on quickly as it was a hard job which did not offer an overly generous salary. The Board noted that SITA offered a slightly lower salary when compared with other companies.

The Board agreed it was important to research the causes of the high staff turnover and to compare the cost of a high turnover and loss of services with the cost of increasing staff salaries to match other external companies.

RESOLVED that the Senior Contract Manager research the reasons and cost to SITA of a high staff turnover rate and present the findings at the next meeting.

***7 Cardboard collection update**

The Waste and Recycling Manager advised the Board that the Council had considered the options available for recycling cardboard, however had decided that now was not the right time to implement changes due to budget constraints. This was due to the cost of redeveloping vehicles to cope with additional materials and the extra drivers that would be required.

The Board agreed that the Council had a commitment to look at finding a solution to card collections and it was still the intention of the Council to introduce this service by 2016.

The Board discussed the Avonmouth plant and was informed by the Municipal Development Manager that this plant was not yet commissioned due to technical problems. The Board discussed the options of sending mixed plastics to this plant but was advised that this would not be possible as it would involve doubling the amount of plastics on vehicles and a significant amount of time for crews to separate all of the materials.

***8 SITA Contract Manager's report**

SITA's Contract Manager presented his report to the Board which included training for all recycling operatives to ensure service delivery was of the highest standard. The roll out of this programme had just started and would last several months. It would also help the operatives to consider the quality of materials as they were being sorted.

Trainees were also being recruited on apprenticeship schemes, with the government providing funding to support this programme. It was hoped that this would help to reduce the high turnover of staff. Further educational programmes have been provided, including training on contamination for crews.

Communications update – Cloud 9 had been installed on all vehicles which allowed crews to collate information collected on rounds in an organised manner and to use the information to help improve service delivery.

Educational Ambassador Courses – this was an education service provided to schools. SITA was currently looking at provisions from Devon County Council and how they could add to this service.

SITA Trust – the company was looking at how they could provide funding to community groups. It was suggested that a talk could be provided at the next meeting to provide further information to the Board.

A Member of the Board asked whether the operatives had any input into the training provided to new trainees. In response the Senior Contract Manager explained that there was a staff forum where operatives share any issues or ideas they experienced from their rounds. Operational Supervisors were also encouraged to visit other areas of the country to bring back any ideas or experiences to help inform practices.

The Board discussed developments at Cranbrook and asked whether SITA was coping with the number of houses that were now occupied. The Senior Contract Manager explained that crews were struggling to cope as they had introduced a separate Friday round which stretched the workforce. SITA management would be looking at how to cope with the increase in houses over the next couple of months. One issue which had been raised by crews concerned residents' parking in the road and blocking the access for crews to reach bins as the roads were too narrow.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that this issue should be raised with the planners and referred to the Deputy Chief Executive, Richard Cohen, to be raised at the next Design Group, as this would continue to cause problems at Cranbrook.

RESOLVED

1. that the SITA Contract Manager's report be noted
2. that the SITA Contract Manager arrange a presentation for the next meeting regarding the SITA Trust
3. that the SITA Contract Manager provide an update report at the next meeting to look at how training ideas from operatives are put into practice.
4. that the Waste and Recycling Manager raise the issue of access for SITA vehicles at Cranbrook with the Deputy Chief Executive.

***9 Exclusion of contractual partners due to the nature of the items which will include business plans and future contract arrangements**

The Council's contractual partners were asked to leave the meeting at this point as the Board wanted to discuss various commercially sensitive issues including business plans and future contract arrangements.

10 Presentation of report – Waste Recycling and collection contract options

The Board discussed the report presented by the Waste and Recycling Manager. This provided members with an update on progress towards procurement of a new recycling and waste collection contract and informed them of suggested commissioning, procurement and mobilisation options, with recommendations on the best route to enable the successful completion of this project.

The Board was advised that the recycling and waste collection contract was a major item of council expenditure and was also a very important and valued frontline service. The report outlined the optimum route toward commissioning, procurement and mobilisation of a new contract for this service that would allow for future improvements to recycling rates and provide reduced tonnages of waste for disposal.

The Board agreed that it would be beneficial to hold a Think Tank to facilitate Member input which would help shape a future waste contract.

RECOMMENDED

1. that Members note the progress made to date and agree with the re-tendering recommendations outlined in the report;
2. that Members consider the procurement options as presented and agree with the suggested procurement route of competitive dialogue following a detailed commissioning period;
3. that Members agree to the creation of a sub-group of the Recycling and Waste Board [the 'Recycling and Refuse Commissioning Group'] to aid in the commissioning process;
4. that Members agree with the outline timetable produced;
5. that Members agree that delegated authority be given to the Officer Procurement Panel to procure and mobilise the new contract following the completion of the detailed commissioning phase;
6. that Members agree the length of contract as recommended in the report.

***11 Any other business**

No further business was discussed.

***12 Next meeting**

RESOLVED

that the next meeting of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board be held on Thursday 18 September 2014, at 2pm in the Committee Room.

Chairman

Date