

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the East Devon Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board, held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 27 June 2012

Present:	Councillors: Iain Chubb – Portfolio Holder, Environment (Chairman) Phil Twiss – Deputy Portfolio Holder, Environment (Vice Chairman) David Cox – Portfolio Holder, Finance Steve Gazzard Geoff Pook
Also present:	Councillor: Roger Giles – Recycling Member Champion
SITA:	Rick Aldridge – Senior Contract Manager John McOmbie – SITA
Officers	Paul Deakin – Waste and Recycling Manager Steve Joyce – Waste Management Officer Stephanie Lewis – Assistant Democratic Services Officer Hannah Whitfield – Democratic Service Officer
Apologies:	Andrew Hancock - StreetScene Manager Simon Davey – Head of Finance Denise Lyon – Deputy Chief Executive Nick Stephen – Communications Officer

The meeting started 9.00 am and finished at 11.00am.

***16 Minutes**

The minutes of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board meeting held on 24 May 2012 were agreed and signed as a true record.

17 Report and presentation from RSM Tenon on Audit of SITA Waste Management Contract

Simon Atherton, RSM Tenon gave a presentation to the Board on their financial audit of the SITA Waste Management Contract. His opening statement was that in his audit he had found no instances of payments or claims that were not justified.

The key objectives of the audit were to verify and validate key charges made by SITA in delivering waste management. The main summary of findings discussed staff costs; maintenance costs; fuel costs; the fixed asset costs; damage costs and accruals.

The report made the following recommendations:

1. SITA should ensure that costs allocated to refuse and recycling are accurate so that East Devon District Council can be clear about the cost of each element of the contract.

2. East Devon District Council and SITA should agree a fixed monthly payment on the contract to minimise unusual charges caused by incorrect accruals. This would be reconciled on a quarterly or yearly basis to the actual cost.
3. East Devon District Council should be provided with a breakdown of the basis for the increase in fixed asset costs that was implemented in January 2012.
4. A process should be put in place to agree any increase in costs such as maintenance, staff etc.
5. East Devon District Council should implement a performance management framework with SITA to drive continuous improvement.

The Board discussed the recommendations. Points raised included:

- The possibility of using bio-fuel in the future when technology improves, to reduce the Council's carbon footprint. The Senior Contract Manager advised that SITA's Fleet Department continually looked at ways to reduce their environmental footprint. Discussion took place on Sita's new plant which will turn mixed plastics into diesel which may then offer a closed loop system.
- Consistency in monthly fuel costs could be improved through regular invoicing from suppliers. SITA advised that they had spoken to the suppliers about this issue
- A reduction in the number of accidents had helped to reduce costs to EDDC.
- There should be more accurate allocations to Refuse and Recycling costings which would then give a more accurate monthly figure and it may not be necessary to consider the fixed monthly payment.
- Members would like to see a more 'user friendly' performance framework report in a traffic light format.

RECOMMENDED

that the Waste and Recycling Manager and the Senior Contract Manager of SITA produce a more in depth report into the recommendations made by RSM Tenon to take to the next Board meeting.

***18 Side waste update**

Members received a verbal report from the Waste and Recycling Manager concerning the process of contacting households who put out side waste or were not using EDDC branded containers. This process commenced on 6 February 2012 and had been running for just over four months, resulting in a marked improvement. All areas would have had eight collections since the campaign began. The number of letters that needed to be sent out was reducing.

At the previous meeting the Waste and Recycling Manager had circulated figures showing the number of first, second, third and fourth side waste letters that had been sent out to households over the period since 6 February. In addition to this a significant number of non EDDC containers had been identified and these figures were noted. It was agreed that the side waste campaign had been successful in tackling the issue of side waste. The cost of the exercise was noted. Members agreed that the campaign had been time consuming, but very effective. The Board acknowledged the effort and involvement of the Waste Management Officers, the Customer Services Team and SITA operatives.

***18 Side waste update (continued)**

In response to a question, the Waste and Recycling Manager advised the Board that he was working with StreetScene to implement more effective public recycling bins, particularly in seaside towns.

Members noted that Devon County Council had carried out a survey across Devon (200 properties were chosen at random across East Devon) on bin contents. It was reported that there was still a lot of food waste included in landfill bins. It was suggested that a press release could be issued on the results to highlight in particular the materials still in the bin which are able to be collected through the council's recycling collections. The size of landfill bins was discussed. Education on what could and could not be recycled was key.

RESOLVED

that Ward members be informed where and when audits take place in their area and the results.

***19 Statistical information**

The Board considered a report presented by the Waste and Recycling Manager, setting out statistical and operational data on missed collections, finance and SITA key performance indicators.

Members noted that there had been a rise in missed bin collections in May for recycling and refuse. The Senior Contract Manager advised this increase could be due to changes in crews and the loss of a supervisor. A decision had yet to be made about filling this vacant position. The situation would continue to be monitored.

There had been a reduction in the number of replacement recycling bins issued. The Board discussed materials currently used for food waste bins and possible alternatives to reduce damage.

***20 Update on proposals to consider an integrated Devon - wide waste service.**

The Waste and Recycling Manager gave the Board an update on the proposals to consider an integrated Devon wide waste service.

The first Project Board meeting would be held on 28 June 2012 to discuss the scope of the project and timetables for a final business case.

21 Review of Devon Waste Strategy – details of response to Devon County Council.

Following the last Board meeting, responses to the revised Devon Waste Strategy had been drafted and circulated to Members for approval prior to submission to Devon County Council. Details of the responses were included in the Waste and Recycling Manager's report and were considered by the Board.

RECOMMENDED

that the Waste and Recycling Manager submit EDDC's proposed responses on the Devon Waste Strategy to Devon County Council.

22 Review of Local Authority Enforcement Powers – Waste Collection

The Waste and Recycling Manager reported that a letter had been received from Lord Taylor of Holbeach Parliamentary Under Secretary Defra concerning interim measures to vary the amount of financial penalty which could be levied for offences under Section 46 Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) – bin offences (wrong day, wrong place, not contained or wrong material).

The Board noted and discussed the amendments, as set out in Lord Taylor's letter of 23 May 2012, and outlined in the report. The main changes were:

- The level of fixed penalties applying in relation to section 46 EPA would be reduced from £75 - £110 to £60 - £80.
- Early payment discounts were currently possible, but the amount paid could not be less than £60. This amount would be amended to £40.
- The default amount (if the local authority did not specify the amount of the penalty) would be reduced from £100 to £60.

In order that any penalties could be served the Board recommended the following to Cabinet

- RECOMMENDED** that the level of fixed penalty notice payments in East Devon be set out in the following way:
1. the level of fixed penalty for offences under Section 46 be set at £80.00 - the same level as is currently issued for littering offences.
 2. no discount be offered for early payment - again, the same situation as applies to littering offences
 3. the default amount becomes irrelevant if the authority has set the level of fixed penalty notice.

23 Update from SITA

The Senior Contract Manager reported that SITA had introduced a new policy to all personnel regarding alcohol and drug testing at work. If it was felt that an employee may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, an agency could be called in to carry out a test on the individual. There would also be random testing throughout the organisation. The Senior Contract Manager noted that there would be a two month amnesty period where employees could declare any dependencies they have, or prescribed medication they take. It was acknowledged that the policy had been discussed in depth with the Unions due to the legal implications; at this time there had been no objections. This new policy would be implemented on 1 October 2012.

The Senior Contract Manager reported that discussions had been held with Unite over staff wages; negotiations were ongoing.

A member of the Board queried the implications of the Pension Inclusion Scheme.

- RECOMMENDED** that the Senior Contract Manager speaks to SITA's Human Resources department about implications of the Pension Inclusion Scheme and reports back at the next Board meeting.

***23 Communications update and call details**

The Waste and Recycling Manager reported that the overall number of calls received to the Customer Service Centre had decreased. However there may have been a spike in the number of calls received in June due to the change in collection dates as a result of the bank holidays. The Board discussed using social media to promote the service.

***24 Any other business**

The Board noted that a site visit had taken place by Devon County Council's Development Management Committee to determine the suitability of the site for the new Otter Rotter depot. The Committee would consider the planning application at a later date. East Devon District Council Planning Service had registered an objection to the application.

***25 Next meeting**

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board be held on Wednesday 19 September 2012, at 10am

Chairman

Date