

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the East Devon Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board, held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 19 September 2012

Present:	Councillors: Iain Chubb – Portfolio Holder, Environment (Chairman) Phil Twiss – Deputy Portfolio Holder, Environment (Vice Chairman) David Cox – Portfolio Holder, Finance Steve Gazzard
SITA:	Rick Aldridge – Senior Contract Manager Steve Bell – SITA
Officers	Paul Deakin – Waste and Recycling Manager Andrew Hancock - StreetScene Manager Kaz Arnett – Waste Management Officer Alethea Thompson – Democratic Service Officer
Apologies:	Councillor Geoff Pook Councillor Roger Giles – Recycling Member Champion Cherise Foster – Customer Service Manager Paul Shipman – SITA group fleet manager

The meeting started 10.10 am and finished at 12.30 pm.

***26 Minutes**

The minutes of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board meeting held on 27 June 2012 were agreed and signed as a true record.

27 RSM Tenon Audit of Sita Waste Management Contract – Follow up

Paul Shipman, SITA fleet manager was unable to attend the meeting and sent his apologies. He had been due to attend to explain and discuss the matter of vehicle recharges. He had submitted figures to the Waste and Recycling Manager regarding the breakdown of costs and these were circulated at the meeting. A meeting was needed to discuss these figures, as well as the tyre contract, before Paul Shipman presented figures for 2013 to the Board in November 2012. It was agreed that an interim meeting should be held between the Waste and Recycling Manager, Paul Shipman and Rick Aldridge. The Waste and Recycling Manager would submit an estimated figure for the increase into the budget process. A request was made for the actual number of tyres used to be included in the report.

The Board then went on to consider a report of the Waste and Recycling Manager which contained recommendations made by RSM Tenon, along with suggested responses. These were as follows:

27 RSM Tenon Audit of Sita Waste Management Contract – Follow up (cont'd)

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

Response:

This had now happened and the amount allocated in the accounts was as accurate as possible but due to the fluidity of the workforce where they changed from refuse and recycling may vary the cost a little.

It was noted that problems with reconciliation had occurred through the fuel supplier not regularly billing SITA, however this was being rectified by SITA chasing the fuel supplier for weekly bills.

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

Response:

Whilst this may seem a reasonable option it was felt that it may mean that either SITA may either be short on their finance or EDDC may be cash financing the company when funds were not due to the contractor. Also any reconciliation would not be so easily evaluated due to the time delay in carrying that out and specific issues may be overlooked. This proposal should not be accepted.

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.

Response:

Figures had been provided to EDDC as they were required by Finance to ensure sign off of 2011/12 accounts.

The Group Fleet Manager from SITA had been due to attend the Board meeting to explain this situation and this had now been deferred until the next meeting.

4. A process should be put in place to agree any increase in costs such as maintenance or staff.

Response:

A process had been set up whereby SITA's Contract Manager would submit information to EDDC in November 2012 to highlight any increases in vehicle and maintenance costs for consideration. The date for implementation of any operational increases was 1 January 2013. With regard to staffing costs, these would be submitted to EDDC for consideration by the Board following a submission made to SITA by the recognised Trade Union. The date for implementation of any pay increases was 1 April 2013.

5. RSM Tenon recommended that East Devon District Council implement a performance management framework with SITA to drive continuous improvement.

Response:

This was subject to a report which followed this item on the agenda.

27 RSM Tenon Audit of Sita Waste Management Contract – Follow up (cont'd)

Members requested written information on how the fuel costs were accounted and SITA's contract manager agreed to provide this to the Board. It was also requested that a copy of the RSM Tenon recommendations and responses be included in the minutes.

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| RECOMMENDED | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1 that the responses contained within the minutes be agreed and submitted to RSM Tenon.2 that SITA provide the Board with information on how fuel costs were accounted.3 that an interim meeting be held between the Waste and Recycling Manager, Paul Shipman and Rick Aldridge. |
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28 South West Audit Partnership final report

Consideration was given to the final report back on the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) and agreed action plan. Risk 2.1b was discussed (the ability to cover for the absence of the Waste and Recycling Manager was limited). The Street Scene Manager reported that nothing was in place at present, but he would be discussing this with the Deputy Chief Executive Transformation and Systems Thinking. It was hoped that this would be added to the budgetary process in October. It was reported that Systems Thinking was looking at the work processes. They were almost at the end of the 'check' phase and as part of the 'redesign' process the ability to provide cover within the team would be looked at. Currently the Waste Management Officers did not have sufficient knowledge of all of the Waste and Recycling Manager's work. This was a weakness in the service. There was a need to share knowledge and put processes in place for cover.

It was agreed that an Assistant Waste Manager should not be appointed until more was known about what would happen with regard to an integrated Devon wide waste service. The Board did agree to continue to look at the work processes through Systems Thinking.

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| RECOMMENDED | that an Assistant Waste Manager be not appointed at present. |
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29 South West Audit Partnership – Performance Framework and Business Continuity Plan

The report of the Streetscene – Waste Collection and Recycling Audit (by SWAP) and the RSMN Tenon forensic accounting report outlined various requirements to be established. These included the proposed Performance Framework and SITA's Business Continuity Plan. Consideration was given to both of these proposed documents, contained in the agenda. It was noted that these might have to be revised if the Council offices moved in the future.

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| RECOMMENDED | that the Performance Framework be adopted subject to approval by SITA and EDDC's legal departments, with the Board seeing the agreement before it was signed off. |
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30 Side waste update

The Waste and Recycling Manager updated the Board on the issue of side waste and action taken. There had been a significant reduction in the number of letters being sent out. In the last two weeks 121 first letters had been sent out and no fourth letters had been sent out at all. Only 6 fourth letters had been sent out in total since the process had been implemented in February. Members requested that if there were any problems that Ward Members be involved. The Team was now dealing with households with multiple bins. Multiple bins would be removed, with the residents informed. It was hoped that this would reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. Waste reviews were carried out, whereby Waste Management Officers would review everything that a household was putting into the bin, and provided everything possible was being recycled, an assessment would be carried out.

On behalf of the Board the Chairman thanked the Waste Management Team for all the hard work they had put into the side waste issue, and requested that they be awarded with a staff bouquet in the next Team Brief.

RECOMMENDED	that the Waste Management Team be awarded with a staff bouquet in the next Team Brief to thank them for all their hard work in relation to tackling the issue of side waste.
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31 Assisted collections – disputed applications

The Waste Management Officer outlined to the Board a particular case where officers did not believe that an application for an assisted collection was genuine. Officers sought clarification on how they should deal with cases where assisted collections were not deemed necessary. It was requested that in exceptional circumstances, when dealing with a fraudulent request, that the Waste Management Officer would be able to ask for a doctor's letter from the applicant.

There were approximately 2500 assisted collections. Residents had to reapply bi annually. Officers were urged to involve Ward Members, who may have additional information on the household, before taking any action.

SITA reported that other authorities required households to provide further supporting evidence in disputed cases, such as a doctor's letter, or a waiver giving the council permission to contact the GP to discuss the issue. Steve Bell agreed to further investigate this waiver option.

RECOMMENDED	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1 that Ward Members be involved in disputed cases of assisted collection.2 that, in exceptional circumstances, Waste Management Officers be given authority to require more supporting evidence from residents in cases of disputed assisted collections.
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***32 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.

There had been a reduction in the number of replacement recycling bins issued and this was thought to be down to improved use of the slave bin.

It was noted that the high wage cost in July was due to the two bank holidays in June.

It was reported that ICT were currently working on an in cab reporting system and that details on this would be reported at a future Board meeting.

***33 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.

A Project Board meeting had been held on 29 July 2012. Work was being undertaken with gathering information to draw an initial outline case by December 2012 and a full business case by June 2013. The next meeting would be held on 25 October 2012. An officer meeting would be held on 3 October.

It was noted that the average savings with these types of partnerships was around 5-10%. EDDC and West Devon District Council were the only two authorities with contractors. All the other authorities provided an in house service.

34 Recycling of electrical items

Consideration was given to the Waste and Recycling Manager's report which outlined opportunities for residents in East Devon to recycle small electrical items and compact fluorescent lamps. He had been in discussion with WEECare which would provide a free service by providing bring sites at various existing bank locations. However, this could lead to a loss of parking spaces and therefore income to the Council.

An organisation called Recolight offered a bank system for collecting compact fluorescent light bulbs either by having a small container within buildings or larger banks at recycling sites. This was a chargeable scheme, with various options. If large banks were provided on site, then smaller boxes would be provided free and could be placed in EDDC and Town Council offices.

Members discussed where the recycling banks in Honiton should be placed, following the closure of Dowell Street car park in December 2012. The Waste and Recycling Manager agreed to speak to Car Park Services to discuss the options available for Honiton. It was requested that recycling banks should be placed in the Land of Caanan car park in Ottery St Mary and it was agreed that this be investigated and added to the proposed locations for these new recycling facilities.

The Board welcomed the introduction of recycling banks for both small electrical items and light bulbs. They agreed that the proposals should be put into the budget process for discussion, with a view to implementation in April 2013.

34 Recycling of electrical items (con'd)

RECOMMENDED

- 1 that the provision of small WEE (waste electronic and electrical) banks be provided through WEECare at the following sites:
 - a) Axminster Coombe Lane Car Park
 - b) Budleigh Salterton Lime Kiln Car Park
 - c) Exmouth Imperial Road Car Park
 - d) Honiton Lace Walk Car Park
 - e) Ottery St Mary Land of Caanan Car Park
 - f) Seaton Harbour Road Car Park
 - g) Sidmouth Ham Car Park
- 2 that compact fluorescent bulb banks be provided at the same locations as above.
- 3 that the sites be agreed with Car Park Services as additional banks would involve a loss of parking spaces and income.

35 WRAP benchmarks

Consideration was given to WRAP overall benchmark comparisons for kerbside dry recycling, kerbside residual waste, and household recycling and composting 2010/11. This gave the Board an overview of where EDDC was in comparison to other local authorities. Members were disappointed with the low performance figures for kerbside recycling of plastic bottles. However they were pleased with the figures for the percentage of waste that was sent for composting and felt that this should be presented to the public as a good news story, whilst at the same time encouraging them to recycle plastic bottles.

RECOMMENDED

that the Communications Officer produce a good news story with the WRAP benchmarking results and at the same time encourage the recycling of plastic bottles..

36 Update on Otter Rotters

The Waste and Recycling Manager gave the Board an update on the Otter Rotters. They had had some issues with an ex-employee providing the public with malicious information. However they were fully staffed for collections. Their planning application had been refused so material was being taken to Hill Barton, which added time to the collections. The Otter Rotters had not been able to do as much expansion as they had hoped for due to the number of issues that they had encountered. The Board agreed that Otter Rotters should be invited to a future meeting to inform the Board of their activities.

RECOMMENDED

that the Otter Rotters be invited to a future Board to provide an update on their activities.

***37 Update from SITA**

SITA's contract manager warned the Board of rising fuel prices. An increase of 1p would lead to an increase of £500 on the monthly fuel cost and therefore represented a significant cost to the account.

Due to the difficulty in employing HGV staff SITA had been enquiring about putting younger drivers on HGV courses through apprenticeship programmes. It was hoped that this would retain staff and increase interest from employees about their future with the firm.

38 Recycling an extended range of materials

SITA provided the Board with an update report on the options for collecting additional materials – cardboard and mixed plastics. This had been requested following the SITA presentation to the Board in May 2012. The proposal submitted in May was for the collection of cardboard and mixed plastics on alternating weeks (plastic bottles would no longer be collected weekly). Prices were also included for the alternative options of reconfiguring existing vehicles, separate cardboard collections and separate card and mixed plastics. SITA believed that the original option proposed remained the lowest cost option, although it would lead to confusion amongst the public. It was noted that the figures provided in the report did not include the provision of the bag required for the collection of additional materials. This would be a capital cost to the Council. There was an option for SITA to purchase these bags at a preferential price and add the cost as a service charge to EDDC (SITA would not make any profit).

Members agreed that one of the biggest issues for residents in East Devon was the recycling of cardboard and mixed plastics and felt that the Council must provide this kerb side service. The Board agreed that the cheapest option should be pursued through the budget process for the interim period of 3 years, until the current SITA contract expired in 2016. This would then enable the Council to take into account all the options in the future.

It was noted that material income (money made from recycling) and DCC recycling credits went back into the waste management budget and were used to offset the cost of the service provision.

RECOMMENDED	that an extended range of materials be collected kerbside for recycling, with the Waste and Recycling Manager producing a report outlining the proposals and costs involved, for inclusion in the forthcoming budget process. .
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***39 Communications update and call details**

This item had already been covered earlier in the meeting. The Communications Officer would be informed of the 'good news' story relating to the Council's benchmarking performance with the amount of household waste sent for composting.

***40 Any other business**

The Waste and Recycling Manager reported that he was working out the schedule for Christmas and New Year collections. The end of the catch up period would be 12 January 2013.

***41 Next meeting**

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board be held on Thursday 22 November 2012, at 9am

Chairman

Date