

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the East Devon Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board, held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 3 February 2010

Present:

Councillors:

David Cox – Portfolio Holder, Street Scene Services (Chairman)

Mike Green

Philip Skinner

Honorary Alderman – Ron Mudge

SITA:

Rick Aldridge

Mike Dobson, Communications Manager, South West Region

Dave Swire

EDDC Officers:

Paul Deakin – Waste and Recycling Manager

Cherise Foster – Customer Service Manager

Karime Hassan - Corporate Director

Peter Jeffs - Corporate Director

Rachel Perram – Democratic Services Officer

Mark Reilly – Head of Street Scene Services

Nick Stephen – Communications Officer

Apologies:

Cllr Andrew Moulding

Diccon Pearse – Corporate Director

The meeting started 10.00am and finished at 12:45pm

81 Welcome

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Mike Dobson, Communications Manager, SITA, South West Region, to the meeting and hoped that it would provide a useful insight to the partnership working between EDDC and SITA.

Peter Jeffs, Corporate Director, was welcomed to the meeting. Due to changes in the organisational structure at East Devon, Street Scene would be passed over from Karime Hassan from March 2010.

82 Minutes

Subject to the addition of the word 'least' (Minute #72 refers) in the paragraph 'LGA Win Benchmarking System', the minutes of the meeting of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board held on 25 November 2009 were agreed and signed as a true record.

83 Matters Arising

Otter Rotters

Members heard that the partnership agreement had been signed between EDDC and Otter Rotters and that the announcement had been well publicised in the local press. Information for residents had also been added onto the EDDC website.

It was hoped that this partnership would allow Otter Rotters to grow and expand their service. EDDC would benefit from the partnership as waste tonnages sent to Otter Rotters would count towards the Council's recycled materials figures.

84 Matters Arising (cont'd)

Members suggested that it would be good publicity to advertise the partnership between Otter Rotters and EDDC on their collection vehicles.

Head of Street Scene

Mark Reilly, Head of Street Scene advised Members that he had accepted a post in Aberdeen as Head of Environmental Services. This would be a challenging role and a promotion in rank.

Members heartily congratulated Mark on his role, and said that his loss would be a blow for EDDC.

85 New Depot at Greendale Barton – Update

Members had received a set of photographs with their agenda, which showed progress made on the construction of the new depot.

The Waste and Recycling Manager had attended a meeting with the landlord and the depot was on target for April completion. The floor was due to be poured in the warehouse and ground works would be completed next in the programme.

Members heard that the front of the building would feature signage that promoted the partnership between SITA and EDDC.

In response to a query over an official opening ceremony for the depot, Members were asked to think of a suitable person to approach to carry out this task for the Council.

Members were advised that the Legal Executive would be working with SITA to produce a secondary lease with SITA for the new depot.

SITA's Senior Contracts Manager advised that their IT staff would be ready to start cabling and networking the new building upon completion of building works. It was anticipated that this would be complete by the end of April 2010, and that SITA would change from the old depots to new over the period of a weekend.

Weekend working

Members heard that permission had been gained by FWS Carter from Devon County Council to commence weekend working at the depot when necessary. The Board requested that a copy of this consent be obtained so that EDDC could keep this on file.

86 Details of missed collections (recycling and refuse) December 2009 / January 2010

The Waste and Recycling Manager advised Members that due to a technical fault with the computer software, the reports were currently unavailable. These would be circulated to Members as soon as resolved.

87 Use of vehicles in bad weather conditions and communication to Householders

The Waste and Recycling Manager reminded Members that a draft policy document for proposed contingency plans for changes in collections over the Christmas period and for adverse weather conditions had been included with the meeting agenda for their consideration.

Use of vehicles in bad weather conditions and communication to Householders (cont'd)

A decision had been made to rationalise the process, as a result of lessons learnt during recent adverse weather conditions that for safety reasons had forced SITA to suspend refuse and recycling collections.

Members noted the following issues:

- That Devon County Council (and their contractor Viridor), did not have a procedure in place to notify EDDC or SITA of unscheduled tip closures.
- That the process of communicating with Parish Clerks needed to be improved – especially relevant in rural areas that may not have good access to the internet or local papers.
- The Customer Services Manager reported a 6,000 increase in call numbers in January, most of these logged as ‘requests for information’ as they concerned collection arrangements.
- SITA’s Senior contract Manager reported that there had been a few minor incidents with vehicles slipping off icy roads. The biggest problem was that of ice and that vehicles could not get out of the depots. Drivers were advised to be risk averse.

The Waste and Recycling Manager congratulated SITA on catching up with their collections so quickly after the weather improved. This was particularly noticeable when compared to other district councils that had received poor national media coverage in the same period.

- RESOLVED** that the following amendments be made to the proposed contingency plan for changes in collections:
- 1 Point 8. ‘Contact be made with ICT **and the Communications Team** to publish a message on the website as soon as possible.’
 - 2 Point 9. ‘Contact the Communications team to get a message out to **broadcast media and** householders as soon as possible.’
 - 3 Additional Point. ***That daily contact be made between SITA and EDDC as the situation continues.***

88 Phase 3 Launch – update on progress

Bin Deliveries

The Waste and Recycling Manager advised Members that deliveries of wheeled bins were now complete with a few missed bins to rectify. A number of bin swaps for smaller bins had been requested. Residents in need of gull sacks had been identified early in the process, with these being delivered instead of wheeled bins. Food waste bin deliveries were nearly complete.

Flats

Waste Management Officers had visited a number of residents that lived in flats in order to resolve any issues or queries that arose.

Roadshows

These were reported to have gone well. Attendance had been mixed, although residents were happy with the information received at these events. Members noted with disappointment that with the exception of the event at Honiton, Ward Members had not attended the roadshows. The Rural Champion had reminded Members of these events.

Phase 3 Launch – update on progress (cont'd)

Future Phase Launch Information

Members received a verbal report on progress. Details of the programme for the launches would be distributed to Members after the meeting.

Food Waste Caddies and Bins

Members were shown pre-production examples of two bins which were alternatives to the current bins that were supplied from Italy. Whilst Members felt that the proposed models were lacking in aesthetic appeal, the cost savings were attractive, as was the fact that these bins would be manufactured in the UK.

Cost savings per unit were quoted as follows: Caddy – 7p cheaper. Food Bin – 13p cheaper.

Revised samples would be presented at the next meeting so that Members could verify amendments to the pre-production samples that had been agreed with the supplier.

Gull Sacks

The Council was awaiting delivery of smaller gull sacks. These could be offered to residents that were struggling with the current bags, which were very large.

RESOLVED that the Interim Waste and Recycling Manager obtain an example of a well designed gull sack used by Cheltenham and Gloucester.

Waste Support Officer

Corporate Director, Karime Hassan asked the Chairman for an update on this position, whose recruitment had been agreed at a previous meeting of the Board. Members heard that this post had been frozen, due to the current economic climate, but that a temporary post might be an option under exceptional circumstances.

The Customer Service Manager advised the Board that the call centre had already lost two team members that had not been replaced. The Board agreed that this support role would be critical to support the launch process of Phases 4 and 5.

RECOMMENDED that Corporate Director, Peter Jeffs note the issues regarding the Waste and Recycling Team's workload leading up to Phase 4 and 5 launches and considers a case for a temporary position to be created of Waste Support Officer.

89 SITA Update on progress with Recycling and Refuse contract

(a) Further information on Insurance quotations obtained to limit EDDC's Liability

Dave Swire advised Members that SITA's group insurer, AXA, were not prepared to provide a separate insurance policy by contract. SITA operated self-insurance for their own vehicles.

The liability to EDDC had been reduced to £30,000 for an accident to a SITA vehicle.

Members heard that insurance liability was different in the case of hired vehicles

SITA Update on progress with Recycling and Refuse contract (cont'd)

- RESOLVED**
- 1 that SITA inform the Waste and Recycling Manager at EDDC of a need to hire a vehicle for use on the contract and that permission be sought in advance of hire;
 - 2 that EDDC accept SITA's insurance arrangements with regard to the occasional use of hire vehicles and that Dave Swire produce a statement of SITA and EDDC's liability of Insurance.

Senior Contract Manager's Report

Rick Aldridge distributed the report to Members of the Board. Whilst running through the detail Members were advised of the following additional points:

- That all materials collecting for recycling continued to be bought and collected from SITA.
- That a new possible buyer had been found for textile materials that would double the price currently paid.
- The price paid for plastics had been fairly constant.
- That the recycling rates throughout the district were running at between 30-35% in total.
- That the term 'deductible damage' on insurance claims referred to such minor accident damage as broken wing mirrors, bumpers, windscreens etc.

Members received a confidential report that compared East Devon's contract performance with other SITA contracts, the contents were noted. Corporate Director, Peter Jeffs, commented that the number of missed collections seemed high when compared to other authorities. Members were reminded that these were classed as re-work and were therefore a cost to the contract. Dave Swire questioned the accuracy of EDDC's reporting of missed collection data.

Fuel Prices

Members noted that the price of fuel had risen substantially, but were advised that SITA had national arrangements for the purchase of fuel and reviewed prices and suppliers on a monthly basis.

Personnel

Members heard that one of Bentley Jennison's tasks in their forthcoming audit would be to review the 'tipping point' for temporary and permanent staff that had been employed by SITA to cover the additional workload required for the phased launch of the new contract.

(b) Details of processes to combined workforces for new depot at Greendale Wage Rationalisation

Rick Aldridge ran through a chart which detailed possible scenarios that were proposed to combine the workforce at the new depot at Greendale. Changes in working hours were proposed, along with changes in job titles.

Members heard that staff whose roles were currently divided by 'Refuse' and 'Recycling' operatives, would have a new job title of 'operative' which would mean much greater flexibility throughout the workforce as team members could be called upon to work in either area depending on fluctuations in workload.

The new wage structure proposed offered operatives a much fairer and transparent wage structure. Members although disappointed at an increase in wage costs to EDDC of approximately £70,000 in 2010, could see the benefits of rationalizing staff at such a pivotal time for SITA.

SITA Update on progress with Recycling and Refuse contract (cont'd)

Management and Administration Structure

Rick Aldridge presented a proposed organisation structure to Members for their consideration. Members noted that a post of Assistant Manager would be created, which they agreed would be extremely beneficial for effective contract management. EDDC was the only contract run by SITA that did not have this position in its structure. Questions were raised over the number of reporting levels in the structure, with Members agreeing to allow this system to operate for a year and be reviewed after a year of working at the new depot.

- RESOLVED**
- 1 that the proposals for new pay scales and working hours for SITA operatives be agreed.
 - 2 that the proposed organisation structure for the management and administration of the new depot at Greendale be agreed for 2010 and that this arrangement be reviewed by the Board in March 2011.

90 Re-routing – details of progress

Members of the Board heard that this had been an interesting process. Extra resource had been called upon to pull the correct information together, and this had now been resolved. The rural nature of the East Devon contract area had raised some issues with the system. The system would give EDDC and SITA the ability to pin point and resolve problems as they arose on rounds.

Members were interested to hear that the system had some interesting anomalies. These included splitting streets vertically and horizontally on routes, which would have meant that one round could have serviced odd numbers on only half a street and another crew service the remainder. These were being identified, as well as ensuring that traffic bottle-necks were avoided at peak times in school and work commute areas.

91 Contractual issues

Performance Framework

The Head of Street Scene advised Members that no feedback had been received from the document that had been circulated to Members for their consideration.

- RESOLVED** that as no feedback comments had been received from Members on the Performance Framework document, that the Head of Street Scene would proceed to put in place the procedures documented.

Bentley Jennison review 2010

Members heard that the auditors had visited EDDC and would be contacting SITA shortly. Bentley Jennison had been specifically requested to examine the 'tipping point' for the workforce employed by SITA to service the new refuse and recycling contract for EDDC. The auditors would look at whether it was more economic to recruit staff on permanent contracts, rather than to employ agency staff to cover. A proposal may be made to employ operatives on a permanent basis, but to increase working days in line with the launches of phases 3, 4 and 5.

92 Communication update and call detail

The Customer Services Manager circulated a report to Members, detailing call volumes to both the Street Scene and the dedicated Waste line numbers. Call rates in January had seen a dramatic increase. These were due to two factors; (a) Householder Information Leaflets for Phase 3 Launch - The call centre had received a number of calls with requests for information and clarification; (b) Exceptional Weather - The call centre had received huge numbers of requests for information from residents, relating to the very poor weather in January 2010.

Live Log

EDDC had made progress on this system that aimed to have a live 'blog' between SITA and EDDC. This would give live information and could give feedback from the public.

Cardboard

Members were advised that there were still a high volume of calls requesting the addition of cardboard collections from households in the district. The Waste and Recycling Manager reminded Members that there was no room on the recycling vehicles for cardboard. Discussions were underway with WRAP who might be able to offer householders advice on alternatives for collection. Cardboard banks were discussed, with Members recognising that the volumes involved in cardboard meant that these filled up extremely quickly.

Cardboard had a high calorific value, and its inclusion in general refuse would be a useful addition to the 'energy from waste' incinerator that was being built to service Devon from 2012. Members heard that much of the calorific value had been lost in EDDC's waste due to the separate collection of food waste in the District.

Press Communication

The Communications Officer advised the Board that there had been no adverse publicity in the press regarding the recent poor weather conditions and accompanying disruption to services. The press had been happy to broadcast updates from EDDC.

A press release was going to be issued shortly that would give information on the Phase 3 launch, for householders in that area. This would be supported by the Midweek Herald. There would be a ½ page spread in two local newspapers.

The Communications Officer would share information that related to the recycling and refuse contract with the Communications Manager from SITA.

93 Any other business

Schedule Two Properties

Members heard that there had been problems with being able to split out and identify all properties that classified as 'Schedule Two', within the data available on the EDDC ICT system. This was recognised as being a missed opportunity for revenue to EDDC.

Sandy Bay Holiday Park had requested refuse and recycling collections from EDDC. Unfortunately the frequency of twice weekly refuse collections did not comply with EDDC's waste collection service. However, it may be possible to commence recycling collections with the Park. EDDC have requested that the customer supply their own bins, that the council would empty on a weekly collection basis.

Members were advised of business waste that had been put into wheeled bins in the Phase 1 and 2 areas. These cases had been identified and were being monitored.

Recycling sites that had been put into schools in the District were reported to be working well.

Any other business (cont'd)

Assistant Contract Manager – SITA

Members of the Board extended an invitation to a future meeting of the Board to the Assistant Contract Manager, once recruited.

Karime Hassan – Corporate Director

Karime Hassan formally advised Members that he would be passing over responsibility for Street Scene to Peter Jeffs, Corporate Director, whilst he carried out a temporary dual role for EDDC and Exeter City Council.

Karime praised Rick Aldridge, Senior Contract Manager at SITA, for the excellent work that he had done for EDDC and SITA at bringing the contract back in line in a period of great change. He was to be commended for his role.

94 Next meeting

The next meeting of the East Devon Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board is scheduled for Wednesday 10 March 2010, Council Chamber.

Chairman

Date