

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the East Devon Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board, held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 23 June 2008

Present: Councillors:
David Cox – Portfolio Holder, Street Scene Services (Chairman)
Mike Green
Philip Skinner
Honorary Alderman - Ron Mudge
SITA
Rick Aldridge
Dave Swire
EDDC Officers
Paul Deakin – Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager
Karime Hassan – Corporate Director
Mark Reilly – Head of Street Scene Services
Derek Smith – Legal Executive, EDDC
Nick Stephen – Communications Officer
Rachel Perram – Democratic Services Officer

Apologies: Mike Baker – Chief Engineer

The meeting started at 10.10am and finished at 12.30pm

1. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting of the Recycling and Refuse Partnership Board held on 20 May 2008 were agreed.

2. Update from EDDC

Phase One Launch Update

The Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager advised the Board that everything was on track for 4 August launch for the new services. Wheeled bin deliveries would start on 7 July, followed by kitchen waste bins on 26 July.

Further press advertising was planned to drive home the message about the new services.

A draft of the householder instruction leaflet was distributed to the Board for comment and/or alterations. The Board discussed a number of points as follows:

1. Collection Days

The Board noted that each day was listed in the leaflet for 2008/09. The Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager stated that the decision to list all days was in response to 'best practice' that had been identified by WRAP. The Board noticed that there was no reference or changes to dates made in the case of Bank Holidays and Christmas/New Year, and this

Update from EDDC cont'd...

was agreed to be confusing for householders. After discussing a number of options the Board settled on the format for this list. The Board also noted that with the new contract, recycling days would match landfill collection days at bank holidays. Previously, recycling collections continued unaffected by holidays.

2. Front Cover

The Board felt that wording needed to be added to stress the importance of encouraging the householder to retain the information contained within the leaflet and asked for wording to be added.

3. Yes Please and No Thanks

The Board discussed the issue of volume for plastics if householders did not choose to squash bottles. It was felt easier for a bottle to stay crushed if the lid was placed back onto the bottles after squashing. The Board were advised that lids were generally made from a different type of plastic than the bottle and therefore not recyclable. However, this issue was resolved in pellatised processing, due to floatation of this type of plastic, which could then be removed from the system and discarded.

The Board discussed lids and tops on glass containers and bottles. They were advised that the high temperature procedures involved in recycling glass separated out metal, which could then be recycled, and incinerated any other tops, such as plastic and cork. Leaving lids on was therefore not a problem.

RESOLVED

Landfill Bin Collection Days

- 1 that an asterix be placed next to collection dates where changes may be made due to bank holidays and the Christmas period and that 'special collection arrangements may apply' be added to the bottom of the list in explanation;
- 2 that the artwork for this list be amended from a green colourway to brown shades to avoid possible message confusion.

Front Cover

- 3 that the words 'IMPORTANT – Keep for future reference' be added in clearly visible bold letters to the front cover of the booklet.

Visit to Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

The Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager updated the Board on the visit and advised that it had gone very well and had given Board members reassurance that EDDC was progressing in the right direction.

There were several good initiatives that worked well for SWP:

- Newsletter – a copy was distributed to the Board for information/inspiration. It was agreed that this was an excellent tool, both to keep in touch with householders and to raise awareness. This could be a good vehicle for initiatives such as questionnaires and competitions.
- Bin Tags – these were used by SWP's contractors to attach to all types of waste and recycling containers. The tags clearly advised residents why they had not conformed in waste disposal – such as whether it be wrong type of material for recycling or misuse of landfill bin. Again, these were considered by the Board to be an excellent and quick way to advise a resident of a problem.

Update from EDDC cont'd...

- The Board noted that SWP did not provide lids for their recycling boxes. The Board noted that there may be cost savings in this, but also that there was a risk of wet and mouldy paper in boxes.
- Kitchen Waste Vehicle – the Board was interested to note that there were no obvious smells emanating from a full waste lorry. SWP estimated that each household was generating 1.7kg of this type of waste per week.

Phase One Roadshows

The Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager advised that the six roadshows had gone well and that the public were very positive about the scheme. Some residents had come with questions and concerns and had left the roadshows happy and well informed.

Residents generally felt that an evening roadshow would have been very useful for working people who were unable to attend a day time event. The Board thought this to be an excellent suggestion for future events.

Axminster Guildhall had a display for further information, which showed residents the bins and explained the service in depth.

There were no questions from the Board.

3. Update from SITA

Rick Aldridge updated the Board on the progress of the contract.

Greendale Barton – New Proposed Depot

Devon County Council Planning Committee were due to visit site on 24 June 2008.

The Board felt that it was important that there be a representative present from EDDC who would be able to answer questions, as well as being able to explain the basis and need for the site. The Board proposed Karime Hassan, who would be a non-political officer and who would be able to judge the best approach at the meeting.

RESOLVED that Karime Hassan attend the planning meeting on 24 June at Greendale Barton as representative for EDDC.

Food Waste Permit

Rick Aldridge confirmed that SITA had applied for the license and encouraged EDDC to contact the licensing authority to help try to progress the application. The Board was advised of the authority's standard time frame of 12 weeks for decision making. SITA had looked at two sites where the waste might go, as a temporary measure, if the issue of the permit was delayed until after the 4 August scheme launch.

The references for the permit application were as follows:
Application No. EAWML100154, submission number 6548
Permitting Support Centre : Tel 08708 506506

Vehicles

SITA advised that the first of the new 12 tonne vehicles would not be with them until September 2008. They were therefore planning to modify their existing fleet of 7.5 tonne vehicles to take up capacity until the new specialist lorries arrived.

Update from SITA cont'd...

The Board discussed the possibility of a large take up for recycling in the first few weeks of the contract. Plastics, were felt to be a potential problem as residents may recycle large quantities and volume was always an issue with this material. The Board felt that it was important to over, rather than under cater for this possibility and advised that additional resource should be on hand in preparation for any capacity issues that may occur.

The Board highlighted the importance of a good start to the Phase One launch. Public perception was all important and collection delays were not a good way to start the scheme, even if this was due to the popularity of the scheme.

RESOLVED that SITA formulate a plan to be prepared for the provision of vehicle capacity at short notice.

Day Changes and New Rounds

SITA were pleased to advise that the profile in recycling had risen greatly over the past three weeks and that this had been matched with an increase in recycling rates. Vehicles that would have previously taken 1 to 2 loads were now filled with up to 3 loads per day.

- RESOLVED**
- 1 that SITA report volume data for recycling back to the Board, who would publicise increases in recycling volumes to residents.
 - 2 that SITA would prepare regular reports on waste volume levels for the Board to enable any reductions in landfill waste to be measured.

Kerbside Vehicle for Houses of Multiple Occupancy/flats (Micro Recycling Sites)

SITA confirmed that a price was still awaited for this specialist vehicle that would allow for collection of several types of recycled material.

Green Recycling Boxes

SITA confirmed that the additional stockholding had been ordered. The Board was advised that since the launch of the day changes and associated publicity, that they had delivered an additional 600 boxes to household requests throughout the district. The Board was delighted that uptake was so high.

There were no questions for SITA.

4. Communications Update

The Communications Officer advised the Board that advertisements for the launch of the Phase One Area were being run in the three dominant and competing papers that covered that area, namely, Pulmans Weekly, Midweek Herald and View From papers.

The EDDC newsletter, Devon Talk, would also carry editorial to promote the launch and the distribution (in July) of this, would coincide very well with the launch.

Members of the Board were advised that EDDC had been featured on the Politics Show at the weekend (22 June 2008) and were encouraged to look at the programme which was available to view on the internet.

5. Re-routing Process Update

The Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager distributed details of calls received by the Customer Service Centre from residents regarding this matter. Call numbers had been high, with just under 10,000 of East Devon's population calling with questions.

Many of the calls were to clarify information that had been provided on the leaflets. A number of residents called to say that they had not received the leaflet.

Missed landfill collections rose from an average 50-60 per week, to 459 at peak, reducing to 359 in the second week. The Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager advised that although this figure may seem high, it still only amounted to 0.5% of the district.

Missed recycling collections rose from a 25 per week average to 234 in the first week.

It was anticipated that these problems would settle down within four weeks.

There were a number of issues in Exmouth in properties of multiple occupancy and these areas were re-leafleted to clarify days and dates.

Residents of Littleham were the most confused in the district, being part of Exmouth yet having their collections a day later, on a Friday. Those residents affected were sent a follow up letter.

In all, 1,500 residents in Exmouth had problems with the day change, of which 1,100 were in Littleham.

SITA advised the Board that they felt the day changes had gone well considering the above issues.

6. Deed of Variation

The Legal Executive updated the Board that the Deed was nearly ready, there were a couple of minor points over leases at Greendale Barton.

RESOLVED that a copy of the lease be circulated to the Board before this was sent to SITA.

7. Forensic Accounting – Tender Update

The Head of Street Scene updated the Board that three tenders had been received and they ranged from £32,000 to £4,800 per annum. These details contained within the tenders would be examined to ensure that the bidders were quoting on a like-for-like basis.

RESOLVED that a meeting be set up with SITA, EDDC finance teams and the shortlisted auditors, so that an agreement could be made as to the best presentation format for producing their accounts.

8. Schedule 2 Properties

The Head of Street Scene advised the Board that under the legislation there were perhaps 2-4 properties in the Phase One area that met the requirements, EDDC would therefore contract to collect from these. Another interesting issue was how collections should be charged and this would depend upon how waste was separated for recycling.

Schedule 2 Properties cont'd...

Proposed charge levels were:

£100 p.a. for a 180L wheeled bin

£600 p.a. for a 1100L bin.

£75 p.a. for a 180L wheeled bin for 6 month holiday let properties.

Bins would have a blue lid, which would clearly distinguish them for collection. Recycled material will be charge-free. The Board agreed that although inconvenient, it was important to charge at a reasonable level in order to be competitive with commercial waste contractors - who also charge for waste disposal.

The Board discussed charging levels, deciding to keep one pricing level for the 180 L wheeled bin for holiday homes. This fee covered administration costs associated with offering this service. In the case of properties that were only let for 6 months of the year, there would be no cost savings in the additional administration involved in cross checking Council Tax records.

RESOLVED that schedule 2 properties be charged the following per bin, per annum:
£100 for a 180 litre wheeled bin
£600 for a 1100 litre wheeled bin

The Board discussed properties of multiple occupation, such as caravan parks and campsites. These were without doubt the biggest challenge, with large volumes of waste and issues surrounding separation of recycled material. The Board recognised the need for such properties to comply with the District's policies on recycling and landfill waste and that once weekly collections may not suit these customers. The approach in taking on business in this sector here would be reactive rather than proactive.

The Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager advised the Board that he was attending a meeting at the South West Centre of Excellence, on 25 June, where this topic would be discussed in depth. The Board would be updated at the next meeting.

9. ICT Update

The progress towards Lagan implementation had progressed a little. Lagan (the software supplier) had come back to the Council and requested £25,000 for programming, which was a little over the original quotation of £6-10,000. The Head of ICT had been able to negotiate this figure down to £21,500. The Board was keen to know whether this system would give what was needed and that the processes were correct.

Handheld Terminals for Waste Enforcement Officers

There had been no progress on these, or in the provision of laptops as an interim measure. ICT's feedback was awaited and would be chased.

10. Any other Business

Compostable Liners for Kitchen Waste

The Interim Recycling and Refuse Manager updated the Board that the recommended retail price for 50 bags was £3.99.

Any other Business cont'd...

Fuel Shortages

Members of the Board were concerned at the recent fuel shortages and the effect that this may have had upon the Council's ability to continue refuse collections in the district.

SITA intended to get a much larger fuel tank on their new site at Greendale Barton. This would be capable of storing 30,000 litres, as opposed to current arrangements for storing a week's supply of 9,000 litres. SITA also had a reciprocal arrangement in place with Mid Devon in the case of fuel shortages.

The Board was advised that there was a National Agreement with the Government and a National Contingency Plan, which would allow for essential services, such as waste collection to continue in the case of industrial action in the supply of fuel.

10. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Partnership Board is scheduled for Tuesday 22 July at 2.00pm in the Committee Room, Knowle.

Chairman

Date.....