

**AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE  
held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.00  
pm on 28 November 2005**

Present: - Councillor A R Thawley – Chairman.  
Councillors C A Cant, J F Cheetham, A Dean, C D Down, S  
Flack, M A Gayler, E J Godwin, B M Hughes, J E Menell, V  
Pedder and E Tealby-Watson.

Officers in attendance: - D Burrige, R Clark, V Harvey, P O'Dell and R  
Pridham.

Also attending:- Steve Brown from Indecon Consultants.

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**UTTLESFORD WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The chairman started by thanking the Executive Manager (Environment and Culture) and the Services Officer for a good report. They had devised a Municipal Waste Strategy for Uttlesford to address four key aims of improving recycling performance, minimising waste, maximising recycling credits and minimising landfill tax penalties.

There were improvements in service to be gained by asking residents to separate waste into three different wheelie bins. This would be a weekly collection of separated kitchen waste with a weekly collection of dry recyclables and residual waste.

Uttlesford was one of the highest producers of waste in Essex and residents were keen to recycle more waste. A collection programme would need to be rolled out as quickly as possible to avoid the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) penalties and to reduce the environmental impact of the biodegradable waste going into landfill. Uttlesford had a recycling rate of 23% (2004/05) and this was unlikely to improve without step changes in the collection regime.

UDC had signed up to the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex and wished to achieve a recycling rate of 33% and would aspire to achieve 60% in the future.

The Executive Manager (Finance and Asset Strategy) discussed the figures outlined in the report and made an amendment to the 2006/07 (part-year) increase in the current budget. It would be £280,000, as previously reported. He confirmed that the 2007/08 (full year) cost would be £420,000 above the current budget. The Council would continue to buy vehicles and would lease the wheelie bins. He said that the figures were being refined and would be re-considered again in January 2006 as part of the budget process.

A table in the report gave details of an increased cost per household of the proposed approach compared to the 'no change' option. This was estimated to be £14 per household which many Councillors showed concern over. Councillor Tealby-Watson said that if marketed in the right way this figure

would not be a concern to many residents. Many people were interested in recycling and were willing to help the environment.

Councillor Dean expressed concern over an increase in council tax. He wanted to ensure that tax payers pay as little as possible. It was said that the increase in costs would not have a direct effect on council tax. The budgetary provision was already built into the Council's provisional council tax level, which would in any event be constrained by capping by the government as well as the Council's own desire to limit any rise. Councillor Dean proposed an arrangement with Essex County Council to ensure that costs were fairly allocated amongst councils and that recognition was made of Uttlesford's active and enthusiastic approach on this issue.

The Executive Manager (Environment and Culture) then explained that the length of the working day for the transferred refuse crews would increase but not their contracted hours. Steve Brown from Indecon Consultants explained that productivity would drop as collecting wheelie bins was a lengthier process than collecting black bags. Bins would have to be attached to the truck and then taken back to the collection point.

Councillor Cheetham asked if this would be noisier, to which Steve Brown said that the bins had been tested for noise and produced 98 decibels. It was also a legal obligation not to start collecting before 7am.

The use of wheelie bins would anticipate any Health and Safety requirements to move away from the repetitive manual handling operations that were currently in practice with the refuse and recycling operations.

The Executive Manager (Environment and Culture) then explained the four possible options to adopt. She advised that models one and two were not sustainable. Options three and four involved wheelie bin usage, both offered a recycling collection to 100% of the district but model three would not provide sufficient diversion from landfill to achieve the recycling target or address the issue of landfill penalties. Model four offered the greatest potential for achieving the criteria of improving recycling performance, minimising waste, maximising recycling credits and minimising landfill tax and LATS penalties. This would give a weekly collection of biodigestable kitchen waste, an alternating weekly collection of all dry recyclables and general refuse. This option would project to achieve a recycling target of 48% and give a significant diversion from landfill of biodigestable material.

Councillor Dean referred to the Municipal Waste Strategy and wished to amend item 5.4.7, to say:

*At a future date householders may fill any available void space in their kitchen waste wheeled bins with green, garden waste. Households who require any additional garden waste to be collected may purchase biodegradable bags that would be collected and placed in the kitchen waste vehicles.*

The risk analysis was then looked at. This identified that systems would be put in place to deal with assisted collections for households that were unable to place their collection at the boundary. Systems would also be in place for households with larger occupancies and properties that were not suited to

wheelie bins. It was not expected that 100% of the district would have the wheelie bins due to difficult access. Councillor Dean added to the risks the unfair LATS compensation.

Councillor Tealby-Watson drew attention to the Municipal Waste Strategy 5.7.7 (v) and said that additional provision should be made for households that had disposable nappies to send to landfill. It was agreed that the supporting policies would be developed before implementation.

The new Waste Management Strategy would commence implementation in May 2006 and should be fully in place by December 2006. Councillor Dean suggested that urban areas get their collections on the same day to avoid confusion and road congestion on two different days of the week. Councillor Cheetham asked if it would be possible to inform residents what time of day their bins would be collected. Steve Brown from Indecon Consultants said this would not really be possible as it would be uncertain how long the round would take, and over time the speed would increase. However, the Services Officer did say that it would be possible to tell residents whether it would be an AM or PM pick up.

Councillor Cheetham acknowledged that the introduction of wheelie bins would be a massive culture change for the district. She suggested information on the implementation be put in local parish magazines as she thought more people were likely to read these than Uttlesford Life.

Councillor Dean said that education was crucial for success.

#### RESOLVED AS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

1. That Members adopted the Waste Management Strategy model 4, subject to a full break-down of costs being provided to all Members of the Council on or before the Council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> December
2. In view of the higher cost to Uttlesford District Council taxpayers of this collection model and the potentially even greater financial savings to the disposal authority, Essex County Council, through the avoidance of LATS penalties and the receipts of LATS credits, officers were instructed to step up robust negotiations with the County Council before the Council Meeting on 13 December with a view to reducing Uttlesford's net costs through a fair and equitable sharing of costs with the disposal authority.
3. The County Council to also be asked to compensate Uttlesford for its extra collection costs in achieving higher recycling targets resulting from the County Council's continued omission to provide a civic amenity site at Dunmow.
4. Officers to implement the strategy in accordance with the implementation plan.
5. That a communications consultant be employed to prepare and deliver a campaign of education and community engagement.

The meeting ended at 9.10pm.