

Council meeting 21 July 2009 - Item 8(i)
Matter referred from Environment Committee on 16 June 2009

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ESSEX WASTE AUTHORITY INTER-AUTHORITY AGREEMENT

The Chairman welcomed Roseanne Sorelle to the meeting to answer any technical and legal questions.

The Head of Street Services presented a report that explained the provisions of the proposal for a long term Inter Authority Agreement (IAA). He explained that the agreement was between the Essex County Council, as the waste disposal authority and the district boroughs as the waste collection authorities. It would meet the provisions of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and also support the County's PFI bid to the Government to procure long term waste disposal facilities.

The IAA was a legally binding contract between the waste collection authority and the waste disposal authority, which would run in 2 stages, from April 2009 until the signing of the PFI document and the second for 25 years after the signing.

As part of the agreement ECC had committed to support a separate kitchen waste collection service in each district and in Uttlesford would provide an index linked sum of £440,000 per year for the duration of the project. The Waste Collection Authorities were asked to commit to deliver the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and to signing the IAA.

Councillor Howell declared a personal interest as an employee of May Gurney Integrated Services PLC

He asked for clarification on a number of issues, particularly whether there might be a conflict between the District Council's aims to maximise recycling and ECC's investment in an incinerator that would need to be fed with a certain amount of residual waste. He also asked about the type of facility that ECC might provide.

He was informed that the current plan was for ECC to build a residual waste Treatment facility called an MBT. This was a mechanical biological treatment plant where the waste was mechanically separated then composted to produce an inert bio product that could be put to landfill or used as a fuel. Members were reassured that although the plant would be a large capital expense it would only be built to a capacity that would meet the needs resulting from the agreed recycling targets.

Councillor C Dean congratulated officers and members of the Waste Strategy Group for their time and effort in getting to this stage. In answer to a question it was confirmed that the recycling target in the agreement would start at 40% and then increase as other authorities increased their recycling activities. It was confirmed that the £440k from Essex County Council was ring fenced for recycling and would go towards running the kitchen waste scheme. The amount would be subject to an annual review and might be increased if the scheme was expanded.

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Members asked for clarification as to the definition of organic waste as it appeared that some districts included their kitchen waste within a garden waste collection. Some members felt that there was public demand for the collection of garden waste and the Council should take action to respond to the customer. The Head of Street Services explained that a few years ago a study of residual waste had revealed that it contained a very small amount of garden waste but greater quantities of kitchen waste. To introduce a garden waste collection now would increase the amount of total waste that was collected and this would go against the waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recycle and recover and the agreed Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex to reduce the overall waste collected.

Most members were happy to sign the agreement but wanted assurances that the Council could terminate the PFI elements of the agreement if it was not happy with the facility to be provided by ECC. This assurance was given but it was also pointed out that the procurement process would take at least two years and authorities would be kept informed during that process. Once the agreement had been agreed by each District Council, it was intended that all authorities would then sign the agreement together.

RESOLVED that

1. the Environment Committee recommends to Council that Uttlesford Council should, in principle, enter into the Inter Authority Agreement with Essex County Council.
2. The Service Delivery and Base line plans submitted in accordance with Schedule 8 of the Inter-Authority Agreement be approved.
3. The responsibility for finalising the Inter Authority Agreement be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Environment Committee.