

**WASTE STRAGEY PANEL held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON  
ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 10am on 5 JULY 2013**

Present: Councillor L Wells (Chairman)  
Councillors S Barker, C Cant, K Mackman, E Parr and  
H Rolfe.

Officers in attendance: C Chapman (Waste and Recycling Officer),  
R Dobson (Democratic Services Officer), Roger Harborough  
(Director of Public Services) and R Pridham (Head of Street  
Services).

**WS1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Wells was elected chairman.

**WS2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Howell.

**WS3 COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE IN ESSEX**

The Panel considered performance data comparing Uttlesford's overall recycling performance against national and Essex local authorities. As national data was published annually in September, these figures were for 2011-12. Figures for Essex for 2012 – 13 were, however, available.

Members noted the implementation of the new collection system in September 2012 meant that Uttlesford's data for 2012-13 gave only a partial picture of its contribution to recycling performance. Nationally, Uttlesford was in 32<sup>nd</sup> place with overall performance of 54.5%, a figure based on 35.47% dry recycling and 19% compost. Of the councils in the top five for overall performance, all operated kerbside garden waste collection schemes. Three other Essex authorities had, on the face of it, performed better than this council for overall performance, but this was because they operated free of charge kerbside garden waste collections from all households. Uttlesford's dry recycling rate remained top in Essex, despite three authorities increasing their rate.

Members discussed the explanation for Uttlesford's ranking. Members discussed whether there would be any benefit to this council in offering a free garden waste collection service. Councillor Barker said the only significant performance indicator for the council taxpayer was the tonnage of residual waste per household going to landfill.

Members noted increased recycling of garden waste would earn the council recycling credits, but this would be balanced out by gate service fees.

The Head of Street Services suggested an initiative to gain increased garden waste recycling in order to maximise use of existing collection capacity of one recycling lorry and two staff, to cover six rounds a fortnight.

**ACTION**

- circulate recycling rates for Essex waste collection authorities for 2012/13.

Councillor Wells said she was concerned that black bins were being filled with recyclable materials.

Councillor Cant said she had had complaints from families that the kitchen caddy was inadequate, so that most kitchen waste went in the black bin; and that the bins were subject to damage by being thrown down by the recycling teams.

Members were reminded that people could ask for a second caddy.

The Head of Street Services said whilst this council was top in Essex for dry recycling and fifth nationally on last year's data, it was not improving year on year. In Essex the majority of authorities had experienced a drop in dry recycling, three had increased, and Uttlesford had stayed the same. So whilst Uttlesford bucked the trend, it had not improved.

Councillor Cant said there could be a need to educate those moving into the area to reduce the amount of recyclable materials going into black bins.

Councillor Rolfe said increasing garden waste collection would improve the Council's recycling rates.

The Head of Street Services suggested the most cost-efficient way of increasing garden waste collection would be to target estates in a location which encompassed a large number of properties, and which would enable convenient access to a tip. If for example the estates in Dunmow were targeted, this would enable the crew to cover 3,500 properties each fortnight.

Members rejected a suggestion to offer a reduced subscription charge to residents taking part in such an estates-based scheme, preferring instead to promote the scheme with a month-long offer of a free bin, and to emphasise that the service cost would be pro rata until the end of the garden waste collection for this year. The scheme should be publicised as soon as possible.

Regarding residual waste, members felt it was important to educate households to minimise what was put into black bins. It was important to keep the message simple. Councillor Wells said rather than list what

could be recycled, the Council should emphasise the very small number of items that could not go in the green bin. It was agreed to this was a good approach and that appropriate publicity should be arranged.

**ACTIONS:**

- to arrange further promotion of kerbside garden waste services to concentrate on estates in Dunmow area, such promotion to be implemented as soon as possible featuring the offer of a free bin and emphasising that the subscription for remainder of year was pro rata
- to publicise guidance on what needs to go in black bins, and what can go in green bins, and that food containers can still go in the green lidded bin even with food traces.

WS4

**BOTTLE BANKS/CLOTHES COLLECTIONS**

Members considered a list of sites where glass and textiles collection banks were located.

The Waste and Recycling Officer said the tonnages were dropping off and if they fell below a sustainable level then some sites would have to be removed.

Since the introduction of recycling textiles via the green bin it was no longer viable to collect clothing separately, and all textiles were collected by recycling crews now. However, there was still an apparent demand for bottle banks, as some people were not keen on the idea of co-mingling glass in the green bins with other recyclables.

**ACTIONS:**

- review demand annually
- publicise that glass can go in green bins next time the collection calendar or other general promotional material is circulated

WSP5

**FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2012/13**

Members were pleased to note the service was in credit by approximately £100,000. The income figures were good, but Members wished to understand costs.

The Director of Public Service the service had limited capacity. The suggestion minuted above regarding increasing garden waste collection rates through targeting estates would enable the existing capacity to be used more fully. However, improving the rates over this level would require a business plan to be drawn up and officers were working on some proposals to be considered at a future meeting.

The level of trade waste income was briefly discussed. The Head of Street Services explained that the net cost had been increased due to a previous undercharge of disposal costs.

WSP6

### **GREEN WASTE SKIPS – DUNMOW, STANSTED, THAXTED**

The Head of Street Services raised a number of issues regarding village skips green waste collection which would need to be addressed in the near future. The site for the green waste skip in Stansted would no longer be available, and trucks that currently serviced Dunmow Stansted and Thaxted would no longer be available from November.

Councillor Barker said Councillor Dean had raised the issue of insufficient capacity at Stansted.

Officers explained that if the vehicles had to be replaced the Council's costs of providing the service would increase significantly. The question therefore arose as to whether the town and parish councils would be prepared to pick up those costs.

Members considered that the Council would need to find a way to deliver the service so as to fulfil existing agreements for this year with the town and parish councils. However this matter would become a significant issue in service planning for next year, as this was regarded key public service to communities. Members expressed reluctance to consider any solution based on the charge rate to a particular village reflecting the differential in costs.

The Chairman said costings for provision of a green waste skip or truck service would be needed for the next meeting before the budget setting process in November.

#### **ACTION:**

- put together costed proposals for community garden waste bring service prior to October Cabinet to feed into budget preparation

WSP7

### **DOG WASTE**

Councillor Davies had submitted a request that additional dog waste bins for Woodlands Park be provided. Members noted that there was no need for segregated bins for dog waste, that the option preferred by the Council was for dog waste to be placed in the black bin, and that there were cost implications for servicing dog waste bins. It was necessary therefore to find suitable locations for additional bins on established collection routes. Officers would progress Councillor Davies' request.

Members discussed the general problem of dog owners failing to pick up dog waste and possible measures to tackle this such as education via a press campaign, prosecution, the engagement of the Animal Warden and leafleting.

It was agreed to arrange for a press release to be issued regarding the responsibility on dog owners for picking up dog waste, and to emphasise the risks to health if this was not done.

#### ACTIONS

- discuss with Cllr Davies provision and siting of additional bins
- press release about importance including medical reasons for dog owners picking up

WSP8

#### **CHARGING FOR WHEELED BINS**

Members were asked to review the introduction of charging for provision or replacement of wheeled bins, as currently bins were given to incoming owners of new properties and replacement bins were also free, representing a significant capital cost. The price of the bins was £18, the caddy £5.

Members felt these costs should be part of the development cost. It was noted that provision of bins could not be a planning permission condition or part of a section 106 agreement. The only option would be for the Council to rely on the goodwill of developers, in providing a 'welcome pack' for new homes. Ideally the Council would provide a supply of bins to the site agent, enabling the Council to pass to the agent the responsibility for storage and distribution.

It would be necessary to have a promotional campaign to secure developers' support, as they could not be compelled to participate.

Members noted that the budget for provision of bins last year was £30,000 but that £54,000 had been spent.

Members considered options such as charging for extra or replacement bins, and noted it was important to balance the cost against the principle of promoting recycling. It was agreed to defer consideration of this issue for the present, to allow data to be collected if possible on the reasons people made requests for replacement bins.

#### ACTIONS

- campaign for developers to pay for and provide bins/ caddy to residents of new homes supplied by the Council
- capture data on reasons for requests for new bins

WSP9

## **CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS**

Members approved a suggested schedule for the recycling collection timetable for Christmas and New Year.

It was noted that the previous year the placing of stickers on bins had been a successful means of communicating the adjustments to the timetable at Christmas. Members considered the use of stickers for promotion of other messages, but it was agreed that including too much information could distract from the key message about collection times.

WSP10

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor Barker asked for the issue of recycling rounds taking place during the school run near schools to be considered at a future meeting.

Councillor Barker also raised the possibility that recycling promotions offered by County should be sought for this district, as she was aware some other districts appeared to benefit from such campaigns.

Officers advised that a recent promotion involving compost bins given to residents in the Braintree area had been paid for by Braintree District Council and that Uttlesford received free compost from ECC in the same way as other authorities.

WSP11

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed officers would arrange a meeting in September to enable the Panel to consider proposals prior to the budget setting process. (Subsequently this was arranged for **Monday 16 September at 2pm.**)

The meeting ended at 11.40am.