

**WASTE STRATEGY PROJECT TEAM held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 11.30 am on 8 MARCH
2010**

Present: Councillor S Barker (Chairman), Councillors C Cant, J Cheetham and C D Down.

Officers: C Auckland (Waste and Recycling Officer), D Burrige (Director of Operations), R Pridham (Head of Street Services) and R Procter (Democratic Services Officer).

WS34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Dean and E Godwin.

WS35 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2010 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

WS36 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Minute WS30 – TOMRA

Members asked for an update. Officers replied that although some invoices had been received, it would only be possible to analyse changes at the end of the quarter. Information would be supplied at the next meeting.

Some Members had received complaints that there was no paper recycling facility on the Dunmow Tesco site and that not all TOMRA machines had been working.

Officers had been working to identify alternative sites, in view of the fact that people could not recycle paper at the White Street facility. Although Tesco's customers were providing feedback about providing a paper recycling bank, cost-effectiveness was likely to be a factor, as the value of recycled paper was currently only £10 a tonne.

Regarding credits, officers said the Waste Management Advisory Board were collectively considering the arrangements.

BRAINTREE AND UTTLESFORD SHARED FACILITIES PROJECT

The Director of Operations said that following a meeting between the two districts and the County, the Cordons Farm facility had been discounted on the grounds of cost. The Lakes Road site was therefore now being considered. Currently the target was shared facilities, but in the long-term, shared services would be considered.

Officers had made initial enquiries with St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath authorities, which were preferred partners for each other. It was clear that any waste partnership arrangement should be aiming to establish a separate, single entity. Whilst partnership arrangements might usually have a lead authority, this arrangement was not desired by Uttlesford. Uttlesford's preference was to set up a new entity, which would have its own HR and health and safety policies, to be applied to the entire service.

Members asked various questions. It was important before proceeding further to be sure there was the same level of awareness of the proposals in each authority. It was suggested that in order to progress the project, officers should seek an expression of intention from the leader or cabinet of Braintree District Council. It would be necessary to set up a joint Member/officer task group, and this would be recommended to Environment Committee.

Members raised further issues. It was vital to minimise the risk of one authority withdrawing from the project, by requiring commitment to a shared entity. The proposals could enable cross-border rounds, as this may be the most efficient solution in certain areas. Officers summarised Braintree's waste collection service, which differed from Uttlesford's in several respects: they collected a black bag fortnightly; they had a green bin for food and garden waste; they used plastic bags for dry recyclables; and from next year they were implementing a caddy system, having obtained funding from County. However, on the whole, their service was similar to Uttlesford's service.

Members discussed the question of garden waste collection. Members recalled previous advice that garden waste collection was costly, and that it was better from an environmental perspective that people aim to compost it on their own premises. The Head of Street Services said Rochford District Council were conducting a waste analysis regarding garden waste. Councillor Cheetham said she was aware that combining kitchen with garden waste was something Rochford had been advised to do so by their consultants. The scheme was successful as there was a charge of £25 per year, and people could choose to subscribe. Councillor Barker said these issues would need to be considered when reviewing new vehicles in two years' time. The Head of Street Services said preliminary advice from White Young Green Consultants was to consider use of podded vehicles.

In conclusion Members asked that officers continue to pursue discussions and to require from Braintree an expression of intention.

RECOMMENDED to Environment Committee to set up a Member and officer task group jointly with Braintree District Council to pursue proposals for shared waste collection facilities.

The Director of Operations drew Members' attention to two risks to the project. First, Braintree might not commit to a long-term tenure for the Lakes project, in which case Uttlesford could not proceed. Braintree might look at an alternative location, Rivenhall: this was not a viable option for Uttlesford due to distance. Second, The costs may be found to be prohibitive. An estimate of £143,000 over the first 4 years for relocation of staff had been made and the method of cost sharing with Braintree had not yet been established.

Members briefly discussed the Inter Authorities Waste Agreement, expressing frustration that the process was still undecided. Members noted that current thinking was against the use of PFI agreements as not the best means of obtaining capital.

WS38

REVISED RECYCLING LITERATURE

The Waste and Recycling Officer asked Members to comment on a draft revised recycling information leaflet. Councillor C Dean had sent comments by email, which the Chairman drew to Members' attention.

Officers explained the leaflet was being designed in such a way as not to require annual revision, although it was noted care should be taken to avoid being too generic. Members offered various suggestions for amendment, in particular, asking that a simple example of costs of landfill tonnage be included, using recent figures and projected costs so as to give an idea of the expense to taxpayers.

Officers then circulated a leaflet produced by another authority, showing a contrasting picture-based style. Members felt a pictorial design was easier to understand, and met equalities requirements better than a text-based design. Members therefore asked officers to prepare a further draft in this style.

The Director of Operations said the leaflet was intended to summarise the service, but that the website would set out all information. People should be asked to refer to their parish magazine or website for dates of weekend collections.

WS39

ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Head of Street Services gave an update on bids for disposal of dry recyclables. A range of competing bids had been received. Regarding commingled waste, currently Uttlesford paid £20 a tonne, and recycled 8,000 tonnes. The Chief Finance Officer had enabled a suspension of financial regulations to permit Uttlesford to enter into a contract for two years with Holmans, on terms of £14 a tonne, resulting in a saving to the authority of £45K.

Members agreed this was a very good result.

The Director of Operations said the annual “Spring Litter Pick” arrangements were shortly to be announced to parish clerks.

Staff who had previously worked from the Dunmow office had last week relocated to Saffron Walden.

WS40

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be on 8 April at 11.30am.