

**WASTE STRATEGY PROJECT TEAM held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 11.30 am on 11 JANUARY
2010**

Present: Councillor S Barker (Chairman), Councillors J Cheetham and C M Dean.

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

WS28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cant and Godwin.

WS29 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2009 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

WS30 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Minute WS24 – TOMRA (Tesco’s recycling)

Members asked for an update. The Head of Street Services said following negotiations with Tesco Uttlesford was to receive 15% of the recycling credits, the same as for Harlow. However, officers considered a county-wide approach was preferable and would therefore raise the matter at the next Waste Management Advisory Board meeting. Officers would also ask for a letter to be written to Defra to seek the full amount of the recycling credit.

No overall tonnage figures from Tesco’s recycling were available yet. A request to remove fly tipping from the Tesco’s recycling point in Dunmow had been refused.

A question was asked regarding the market for steel and aluminium cans collected by individuals. Officers said scrap dealers would buy these materials, although the amounts involved would need to be fairly significant to be worthwhile.

A further question was asked regarding recycling of glass at the Saffron Walden Civic Amenity site. Officers said the glass was not separated by colour as it would be used for mixing with road aggregate. However, Uttlesford gained a good income from separated glass.

(ii) WS26 – road sweepings

On the subject of overall recycling figures, officers reported that 70 tonnes of road sweepings had now been recycled, which would increase

the figures by 1 – 1.5%. All householders who had not previously had brown bins now had caddies, but recycling figures were decreasing for reasons which were not clear. There could be various causes, including positive reasons such as people attempting to reduce the amount of packaging they used. It was also well known that new estates were less likely to recycle. Members said a publicity or educational campaign could be considered for such areas.

WS31

CUBEC

The Head of Street Services gave an update on the early indications of a consultation carried out by the consultancy firm White Young Green. The Director of Operations said that the consultant's responses to the brief were currently in draft format, and that it would not be right to table the documents at this meeting. However, a verbal report based on these documents would be given.

The Head of Street Services said the firm had been briefed to explore the feasibility of the four authorities, Colchester, Uttlesford, Braintree and Chelmsford, working in partnership in certain areas of waste services. He outlined the main conclusions of a draft report on Value for Money. This report compared the service Uttlesford provided in terms of the three-bin service and trade waste. The report compared the hypothetical cost per round against typical private sector charges. On this calculation, Uttlesford's costs were £156K per round, whereas recent private sector comparative costs were considerably higher, typically £170K per round per annum. The report therefore indicated that Uttlesford provided good value for money for the bin collection and trade waste service.

The report further indicated that whilst Uttlesford was providing a good service with good value for money, this service would benefit from improved technology to increase productivity. The Head of Street Services said technology was advancing for recycling vehicles, and Members discussed use of split body (front pod) vehicles, which were currently being trialled elsewhere. He anticipated that for rural rounds such vehicles could provide greater efficiency.

The Head of Street Services said since replacement vehicles would be needed in three years' time, it would be advisable to start looking at the type of replacement vehicles within the next year, perhaps with a visit to the annual exhibition at the NEC in Birmingham.

Officers then referred to the draft report on trade waste, which again indicated Uttlesford provided an effective service. In reply to questions from Members, Officers said the Council's capacity for growth in this area was limited, although partnership working could open up further opportunities. The prices Uttlesford charged had been benchmarked as part of the review and this was reflected in the fees and charges proposed to Environment Committee.

The proportion of trade waste business handled by Uttlesford was discussed. Uttlesford provided a service for about 850 businesses, which represented a high proportion of the district's businesses.

WS32

FEASIBILITY REPORT ON SHARED FACILITIES BETWEEN UTTLESFORD AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCILS

Councillor Cheetham arrived at this point.

The Head of Street Services said the brief to the consultants included a report into the feasibility of Uttlesford entering into shared facilities with Braintree District Council. He outlined the existing depot, recycling facilities and offices which were owned and leased by Braintree District Council at three sites, and summarised their reasons for seeking a study into shared facilities with this Council. The consultants had identified that it was feasible to run the two services from the Lakes Road site with a disposal point also located in Braintree at Cordons Farm.

The cost benefit to Uttlesford would be the avoidance of future costs as the vehicle workshop was no longer fit for purpose and would need to be re-provided in some way. Sharing one with another authority would be a cheaper option. The question of whether to move Uttlesford's vehicle workshop to one of the sites owned by Braintree District Council would need to be considered in detail. The Head of Street Services said the draft report indicated this proposal might indeed be feasible. Further exploration of the options would be required.

Members asked detailed questions about the implications of different site options for a vehicle maintenance depot. Provision for accommodation for general office staff and recycling collection staff would need to be made.

Officers gave detailed replies based on the draft report, and said the possibility of locating a transfer station at Cordon's Farm would be the subject of a meeting with Essex County Council later in the week.

The Director of Operations said a sum had been put in the capital programme, which was on the agenda for Environment Committee, which was for the transfer station and depot without a vehicle workshop at Hoblongs, Great Dunmow. This sum could be reallocated if the shared facilities with Braintree were to be the preferred way forward. She invited Members to consider their recommendation to the policy committee.

RECOMMENDED to Environment Committee that officers continue to pursue proposals for joint working and shared facilities with Braintree District Council and that Members arrange a Member and officer meeting with Braintree District Council to discuss such proposals further.

Members emphasised the importance of ensuring any resulting partnership did not find itself subject to separate auditing by the Audit Commission. If set up correctly, an equal partnership could benefit both Braintree and Uttlesford.

Further discussion took place on projected timings, management and staff structuring. A careful approach to aligning staff structures was essential. Officers said initially two services would be run separately.

Officers gave details of the dimensions of the possible space available for a workshop with offices above it, which should give improved efficiency. Whilst this option had not been provided in White Young Greens draft report, officers felt this would bring the greatest efficiency to the services they would contain. Gains in efficiency had already been made apparent following the moving of the administration staff to Dunmow.

WS33

NEXT MEETING

A site visit to the Braintree District Council depot site was agreed, to take place prior to Environment Committee. The site visit would be at 9.30 am on Tuesday 19 January 2010 at Lakes Road Industrial Estate, Braintree CM7 3RU.

The meeting ended at 5 pm.