

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF SAFER, CLEANER, GREENER SCRUTINY STANDING  
PANEL  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2008  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING  
AT 7.30 - 9.43 PM**

**Members Present:** M Colling (Chairman), G Pritchard (Vice-Chairman), R Barrett, K Chana, R Frankel, Ms J Hedges, D Jacobs, J Philip and Mrs P Richardson

**Other members present:** Mrs M Sartin and J M Whitehouse

**Apologies for Absence:** Miss R Cohen and Mrs L Wagland

**Officers Present** J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

**18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**19. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)**

The Panel noted there were no substitute members.

**20. NOTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes from 2 September 2008 were noted and agreed as a correct record.

**21. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME**

**(1) Safer, Cleaner, Greener (general) –**

- The Panel noted that the rapid response vehicle had been delivered and officers were currently recruiting a driver.
- The Environment and Neighbourhood team were to be launched in the new year.
- Once enforcement action begins then figures will be brought back to the Panel for information.
- The Safer, Cleaner, Greener Strategy document was nearly completed.
- Councillor Frankel was encouraged by the Environment and Neighbourhood team and asked if they could make a presentation to the O&S Committee or the Council. He was informed that there will be a formal launch of the team who would go around the Town and Parish Councils to make themselves known.

**(2) Safer Communities -**

- The new CCTV officer will be updating our current CCTV policy in the near future.
- The pictures from the CCTV will be able to be used as evidence.
- Neighbourhood Action Panels (NAPs) were still going strong.

- Joint Action Groups were now called Joint Area Action Groups (JAAGs). Both NAPs and JAAGs were working reasonably well at present.
- The crime trend was downwards with the only area of real concern being millennium Crime (car theft resulting from keys stolen from homes).
- There is a National Indicator on the fear of crime that is being researched by a survey being carried out. It would be interesting to know why the fear of crime was still high even though crime itself was low.

**(3) Essex Waste procurement process and joint committee -**

- Noted that the Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy had been adopted by the Council in September 2008.
- The text of the inter authority agreements to come to this panel at a later meeting.

**(4) Waste Management Partnership Board -**

- The next formal meeting will be held in January 2009.

**(5) Nottingham Declaration -**

- Good progress has been made on the Climate Change Strategy; the first draft will be available by December 08.
- The local biodiversity action plan was ready and the carbon reduction plan was almost ready.
- A new Council cycle scheme had now been advertised.
- 2,000 trees to be planted at the Bobbingworth Site in November.

**(6) Residential Parking -**

- Councillor Frankel reported that a draft policy on parking on Housing land was going to go to Cabinet.

**(7) County Highway Matters -**

- Still awaiting the Speed Management and the Freight strategy from County.

**(8) Bobbingworth Tip -**

- Currently buying topsoil for the site. Officers were confident that they would get the job finished by the end of the year, subject to the weather.

**22. REVISIONS TO THE WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICE**

The Director of Environment and Street Scene informed the Panel that he had a number of amendments to the report printed in the agenda. He also tabled a paper with the latest outcomes from the recent survey on a revised waste service. The closing date of which was Friday 24 October 08.

According to the preliminary results, option 1 was the favoured option. This option proposed:

- Recycling to be collected using the existing clear plastic sacks and blue box every fortnight.

- Kitchen waste and garden waste to be collected together using a new large wheeled bin every week.
- Residual waste to be collected using the existing wheeled bin every fortnight.

It was noted that:

- there was a generally high level of satisfaction with the current arrangements;
- option 4 was where a responder had indicated their preference for the status quo or for another option;
- respondents were broadly in favour of having their kitchen waste collected on a weekly basis (question 5);
- people were also broadly in favour of having a second wheeled bin (question 9);
- it was intended to take the report to Cabinet for them to make a decision as soon as possible so that if agreed the Council could order wheeled bins for next year in plenty of time;
- the cost would lie with SITA for the collection and delivery of the bins;

Councillor Mrs Richardson asked what if a resident did not want a second wheeled bin. Mr Gilbert replied that if option 1 or 2 was chosen they would have to go along with the agreed policy for the district.

Councillor Frankel asked which was the better option, 1 or 2, both for the environment and for EFDC. He was told that option 1 was slightly better. The significant difference was that option 2 separates food and garden waste. Councillor Frankel asked if there was a lot of green waste could they add bags. He was told they could not, as they were trying to constrain people in giving the council too much green waste, they would much prefer that people composted at home.

Councillor Jacobs said that he had contacted other district councils about the matter of food and garden waste. Norfolk said that they did not have co-mingled loads (food and garden waste) and did not like it. Did the council have any feedback about the use of co-mingled waste? SITA have said that they like co-mingled collections. Councillor Mrs Sartin said she had asked to meet with Rochford council once they had bedded down their system.

Councillor Jacobs said that SITA costs were higher than anticipated, and wondered if county could meet these extra costs.

Councillor Barrett asked why the Council could not say that they just can't do this, as it was too expensive. Mr Gilbert said that was an option to be considered. However the council will have to pay one way or the other, either with providing more bins or by paying the higher landfill taxes.

Councillor Chana said this was a self inflicted problem, people used to take their garden waste to the council dump, now we encourage them, as we collect it. Mr Gilbert agreed. At the time of removing the charges for garden waste the council was recycling at 20% and needed to get up to 36% and green waste recycling was the answer and it did increase the council's percentage.

Other points made were:

- it was not made clear that side waste would not be collected;
- a lot of 'Foresters' were not delivered therefore the survey was flawed;
- however, the majority of people had received a copy of the Forester;
- a lot of people had not answered the survey;

- it was surprising how few people wanted a free compost bin, it would have been an ideal solution;
- the data on the number of sacks given out had not been broken down as yet, but it was a very large number; and
- at present waste sacks cost the council £400,000 pa.

Mr Gilbert commented that following the consultation option 3 could be disregarded. Either options 1 or 2 would need orders for wheeled bins. Despite the increased costs it was found there would be better recycling with the bins. The Council would be looking at a bill of three quarters of a million pounds. It may be that the Council could get some funding from the County Council, as it would be better for them to help District Councils rather than picking up a large bill themselves. County will be putting forward a suggestion to pick up the tab for the food waste and it may be better to wait for this to come through.

A report will be going to the Cabinet asking them to note the consultation results to date. A would be better if a decision was delayed for now and more discussions are held with SITA and County to get better options. There was a need to reconsider the use of sacks and the £400,000 spent on them. He was happy to take forward the option that the Council do nothing at all – it was for this Panel to put forward any suggestions they thought applicable. If the Panel wanted to keep sacks then they would have to be ordered soon.

Councillor Mrs Richardson asked if there were any restrictions on the type of food waste that could be recycled. She was told that as the waste went to a commercial plant, anything would be recycled and it was less of a problem in a co-mingled bin. Food caddies could be used along with bio-degradable bags or food wrapped up in old newspaper.

Councillor Jacobs said they needed to wait for the new costs and information before they could move on. Questionnaires do not always give clear cut answers, and as the public do not have all the information, their responses would be flawed. It would be helpful to find out what Rochford Council pays for this.

Councillor Barrett commented that if the Council cannot afford to pick up the green waste lets tell the public and cut the service if need be.

Councillor Frankel was worried about the environmental impact if the council withdrew the service, such as the public having to make more trips to the municipal dump.

Councillor Jacobs said that South Devon had alternative weekly collections and they have no problems. Mr Gilbert said it all came down to education and advice and there would have to be some responsibility put on householders. Councillor Mrs Sartin added if the council stopped collections then there would be more problems with flytipping of garden waste. Mr Gilbert sited an example of a council that took a freighter to a village and invited residents to use it for a few hours.

Councillor Whitehouse said that the district needed to keep a green waste service and people will continue to need it. The council needed to demonstrate some flexibility in difficult circumstances.

Councillor Colling said it may be that the council will have to charge for sacks or provide a number of sacks and charge for more if wanted. Councillor Mrs Hedges

added the council could distribute the sacks for free but charge for how many were picked up.

Councillor Jacobs thought we needed to claw back the £400,000 spent on sacks to pay for food collection. In the long term the council will have to go for wheeled bins, they could not go backwards to using sacks.

Mr Gilbert summed up the discussion by saying the Panel recognised the situation that the council was in and were in favour of charging for sacks in some form as a stopgap solution until a permanent solution was found.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Panel noted the current progress in developing a revised waste management service and the results of the consultation to date;
- 2) That the Panel were in favour of having some kind of charging for waste sacks in some form as a temporary solution, until a permanent solution was agreed.

**23. WEST ESSEX WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT COMMITTEE**

The Panel noted the summary of decisions for the last meeting of the West Essex Waste Management Joint Committee held on 26 August 2008. It was noted that a Waste Collection Authority Inter-Authority Agreement Work-Stream Leader had now been recruited and that they had not yet appointed a IAA Legal Advisor for Waste Collection Authorities.

The members said they would like a seminar to explain the decisions that were coming up. Officers to arrange a suitable date.

**24. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

1. That a suitable verbal report to go to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the discussions had at this Panel's meeting.
2. Councillor Pritchard wanted to draw the Panel's attention to the new recycling bins for batteries that were now appearing outside shops and in recycling centre around the country.

**25. FUTURE MEETINGS**

Future meetings of the Panel were noted.