

# **Report to the Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Scrutiny Panel**

**Date of meeting: 21 October 2008**

**Subject: Revisions to the waste management service**

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**Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry**

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## **Recommendation:**

- (1) To note the current progress in developing a revised waste management service and the results of the consultation exercise to date; and**
- (2) To receive further reports ahead of appropriate Cabinet decisions on service development and the information and education programme for residents.**

## **Report:**

1. Panel Members will be aware that the Council is currently engaged in a consultation exercise to assist in the determination of a revised waste service commencing in April 2009. The background to this exercise is the need for the Council to:

- (a) continue to improve its waste service overall;
- (b) further increase its recycling performance and reduce waste volumes overall;
- (c) consider alternatives to the current use of biodegradable sacks for the garden waste service;
- (d) comply with the recently adopted Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy; and
- (d) deal with the issues and recommendations arising from the Audit Commission inspection of the waste management service

2. A copy of the consultation questionnaire is attached to the agenda for Members' information. This report deals with only with the issue of the three options and not the more detailed content of the other questionnaire responses; these will follow at a later meeting.

3. The likely reporting process for the new service will be as follows:

- (1) Cabinet in November – a decision on the preferred option or options with additional recommendations on how best to meet the capital costs of the proposals;
- (2) Cabinet in December – a final decision on the preferred options following a report with detailed revenue and capital costings

In between these meetings, pre-reports will also come to this Panel and then onto Overview & Scrutiny Committee, so that Cabinet can be advised of the views of Scrutiny.

The rationale behind this approach is that because of a shortage of wheeled bin availability, it is essential that a decision is made in November on the preferred options, since both options 1 and 2 require the procurement of some 50,000 new wheeled bins. Through Sita's pan-European procurement arrangements, if a decision is made at this time, bins should be available for the new service introduction in April next year. If that decision is delayed then the introduction could slip considerably.

The financial consequences of the new services are extremely complex, since they involve

not only costs associated with the new services themselves, but also the costs and incomes associated with gate fees and recycling credits. Sophisticated modelling is required to undertake these assessments and this will not be possible by the 10<sup>th</sup> of November; hence the second report to the December Cabinet.

4. At the date of report preparation (7<sup>th</sup> October) the situation with the consultation was as follows:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option "4"	Total
Received via post	530 (33.7%)	430 (27.3%)	380 (24.1%)	235 (14.9%)	1,575
Received via web site	()	()	()	()	
<b>Total</b>					

**NB: Option "4"** is where a responder has indicated their preference for the status quo or another option for the service.

5. Given that around 50,000 questionnaires were issued through the Forester, and that the waste service is one of the few services received by all residents of the district, and as such engenders considerable comment, this is a relatively disappointing response. However, it is clear that there are some 960 responders (61%) in favour of options 1 or 2, both of which entail the requirement for a second wheeled bin either for commingled kitchen and garden waste or for garden waste alone.

6. It was considered important to analyse the responses to options 3 and "4" a little more closely at this stage, in order to determine the degree to which the requirement for a second wheeled bin played a major part in the decision not to opt for either option 1 or 2.

With respect to option 3 .....

With respect to option "4", of the 235 responses 106 indicated that they did not want a second bin due to lack of space or because they "did not like bins". Within the 235 some were persons on assisted collections and were concerned about the collection arrangements for a second bin, whilst others wanted an even bigger bin and/or weekly collections for all types of waste.

7. With the information available, and the likelihood that the relative responses to each option were unlikely to change significantly between the date of report preparation and cabinet, a report has been prepared recommending to Cabinet that options 1 and 2 be retained for further detailed work, and option 3 be discarded.

8. Past experience has shown that changes to the waste management service, however well trailed, are very controversial. Therefore, work has already commenced on the development of a publicity and education programme to run alongside all the stages of the new service development. This programme will encompass, inter alia:

- why we having to change
- the national, regional and local picture
- the consultation outcome and what that means
- the new service, how it will work etc
- advice and guidance on waste reduction, recycling, re-use etc
- frequently asked questions
- problem solving

As these are developed it is proposed, subject to the timing of Panel meetings, to bring them to the Panel to seek a member opinion on the approach and the nature of the information to be provided.