

**WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
MINUTES**

Date of Meeting: 12 January 2011
Location: Cabinet Office, Civic Offices, Epping
Time: 2.00 pm
Attending: Cllr Mrs M Sartin – Env. Portfolio Holder & Board Chairman (MS)
 Cllr Mrs D Collins – Leader of Council (DC)
 John Gilbert - Director, Environment & Street Scene (JG)
 Qasim Durrani, Assistant Director, Technical (QD)
 Arshad Khan, Waste Management Officer (AK)
 David Marsh, Waste & Recycling Manager (DM)
 Paul Madden, SITA UK (SH)
 Vlad Velikoselskis - SITA UK (V V)
 Sebastian Rawski - SITA UK (SR)

		Action
1.	Apologies for Absence - Steve Holgate	
2.	Declarations of Interest - None	
3.	Draft minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2010 - Agreed	
4.	<p>Matters arising P1: customer satisfaction survey. It was agreed to include a survey with the new calendars due to be sent out in March. DM to discuss possible questions with Val Loftis and VV, and to send a draft questionnaire to the Board within the next few weeks. Home composters will again be offered in a prize draw.</p>	DM
13.	<p>Depot relocation (brought forward in the agenda) As an introduction, JG explained that with plans for the new retail park at Langston Road gaining momentum there is some pressure to relocate users from the Depot as quickly as possible. Grounds maintenance will very likely be moved to Oakwood Hill, and AK was leading the Innovation Forum to investigate the feasibility of relocating the waste management service to a temporary site at Merlin Way, North Weald. There is now also a potential alternative site within the confines of the airfield but this has not as yet been evaluated.</p> <p>AK then presented his findings thus far in his research. He had held meetings with various organisations including ECC Planning, Highways & Enforcement, EFDC Planning & Facilities Management, Essex Wildlife Trust, management at the airfield and SITA. Based on these discussions and some external consultations he had estimated the cost at £2.5m. JG had presented the report and cost estimates to Pre-Cabinet on 16 November where it had been rejected as being too expensive and AK had been tasked with bringing the final figure down to between £1 and £1.5m. AK circulated a document giving details of his investigations, and went through the salient points:</p> <p>Location - the temporary waste depot is proposed to be sited on a piece of land, total area 8.71 hectares or approx. 22 acres, outside the airfield on Merlin Way which is undeveloped green belt land owned by the Council (former golf driving range).</p> <p>Facilities - the planned facilities are based upon discussions held with SITA and will potentially include office (portacabin) accommodation, a paved parking area, equipment storage areas, fuel pumps and a vehicle wash section. The total area</p>	

required is 1-1.5 acres, approx. 6.7% of the total land available.
Planning requirements - due to the fact that it is green belt land and special surveys and studies must be conducted, it will be necessary for the full planning process to be undertaken.

Timescale - details of the various steps required to be taken before completion were provided in AK's handout. The timescale is estimated to be 12 to 18 months.

Cost estimate - this is difficult to predict as there are many cost variables, including the possibility of having to put decontamination measures in place. However, the current revised estimate is £1.5m.

Concerns/issues - There is some pressure to conclude the relocation process as quickly as possible as any delay will impact upon the development of the retail park. The planning process is likely to be very complex and lengthy as the area is contaminated green belt land. Also the Essex Wildlife Trust have identified it as a possible protected species habitat, and special surveys will need to be carried out. These may take 4-5 months and if there are greater crested newts present, studies can only take place between March and June as this is their active period. If this time slot is missed it could delay the development process for another year and a decision must be reached very quickly. A further concern is that SITA operatives will have further to travel, with no local public transport facilities.

This concluded AK's presentation. JG showed the Board the location of the piece of land being considered as a potential alternative site. This is smaller, but just large enough for the depot, and is currently being used for archery and football, with some storage and grounds maintenance areas. It may prove to be less costly than the Merlin Way site as it is within the boundary of the airfield and would therefore have the advantage of security measures already being in place. It is also closer to sewers and main drainage, is unlikely to be contaminated land and there is less risk of protected species being present. However, it would make little difference to SITA staff's travelling distance as it is not far from the Merlin Way site. It may be necessary to provide financial support to operatives for the first six 6 months.

There is some concern that the new depot is termed 'temporary' as the SITA extension terminates in Nov 2014 when the contract will be put out for competitive tender and it will present difficulties if there is no facility as part of the package. However, there are political obstacles to having a waste management depot, some of which may be overcome by referring to it as temporary. It had been established that sharing Harlow's depot would not be possible in the short term as it is already let out to others.

JG stated that the work carried out by AK and his Forum colleagues would not be wasted as many of his findings would relate to either site. Both areas would have to be licensed by the Environment Agency and their exacting standards are expensive to maintain. It was agreed that investigations into both sites would continue concurrently until a clear frontrunner was identified. It should be possible for the newt survey to be carried out before the end of June.

In response to PM's query about finding a site to accommodate cleansing vehicles in the south of the district, JG said that this would need to be considered. There would be no space available at Langston Road once the retail park development went ahead, but it may be possible to use the new Oakwood Hill facility.

DC thanked AK for his presentation and for the work he has done so far but said

that time is of the essence as the Council badly needs the income from the retail park. Although the many problems are recognised there is no alternative but to move the process on more quickly, and the Board will support all efforts to proceed with identifying the most appropriate site without delay. AK thanked the Board for their time and left the meeting.

5. Review of current contract performance (operational & financial)

SR went through his report for Jan 2011: Because the new service started in September, the figures reflect the 1st half of 2010 compared with the 2nd. P3 - The best month in terms of recycling was June with a figure of 63% (1800 tonnes), but it dropped to 57% (1690 tonnes) in Dec, mainly due to falling green waste. The Dec figures also reflect the difficult weather conditions, but there will be a spike in Jan when backlog collections (inc. Xmas trees) are included.

Residual waste also went down from 1704 tonnes in Nov to 1395 tonnes in Dec. However, dry recyclables remained roughly at the same level, always above 1000 tonnes. VV offered to run a survey at the MRF, and DM asked for the recycling mix figures to be broken down more accurately.

Glass tonnages change little each month, at around 240 tonnes, surprisingly not changing even at Xmas but DM thought there was often a rise around Easter time. It was suggested that a comprehensive list of religious holidays would be helpful to anticipate when glass recycling may increase.

P4 Profit Margins - Revenue generated in the last 12 months was £6.3m, with operating profit at £503k, or 8%. When the overheads are removed the net profit reduces to £172k, making a 3% net profit margin, not a huge return but at least last year was profitable. The full contract shows a loss of £800k, or 5%, which is an improvement over the previous 7-8% and the plan is to break even eventually. Performance in the 2nd half of the year was slightly worse than the 1st, possibly due to the introduction of green and food collections, vehicle leasing, more holidays taken by the crews, or greater wear and tear on the vehicles.

P5 Cost Summary - Total contract costs were £5.8m, 44% of which were wages. Deductible damage and insurance claims for the year were £39k, but this figure fluctuates month by month. The main costs occurred in June (£17k) and Nov (£12k), where the cases were won by SITA. The figure for short term vehicle lease in Nov 2010 was almost double that of Nov the previous year.

Fuel costs for the 2nd half of the year were slightly lower than the 1st. Although fuel prices rose, there was a dip prior to the increase and the effects will not be seen until January. Drivers are also now being taught to drive in a more fuel efficient way, and a new initiative is to be introduced in March which will improve this further.

P6 Cost Split - Total costs for the 1st half were £2.9m, slightly lower than the 2nd at £2.95m. 'Other' costs in the 1st half were higher than the 2nd due to a £22.5k personal injury claim in Jan. There was a later £7.5k public liability claim in Sept. There was a serious accident in Dec (the operative broke his ankle and has still not returned to work), and two road traffic accidents. MS said that this is useful information to give to those residents who will not accept it is dangerous to send vehicles out in bad weather.

Wages in the 2nd half are slightly higher than the 1st, mainly due to agency labour and overtime.

P7 Missed Bins - The figures have greatly improved, with only 12 bins per 100,000 collections missed in Dec. Only bins that were missed due to confirmed

SITA error are recorded. A new code was used in Dec, 'missed due to weather', but even these numbers were not too great.

P8 Cost Split Monthly - The main point to note is that there was a £23k refund for deductible damage and insurance claims in Oct.

SR concluded by asking how the report could be improved. It was suggested that figures for injuries, accidents and RTAs would be helpful.

6. Christmas & New Year weather related issues/performance

JG thanked SITA, their crews and EFDC staff for their sterling efforts to manage the waste service in very difficult circumstances. He will be writing to SITA to this effect on behalf of the Board. It was apparent that the decision not to attempt to catch up with missed collections was the correct one. Residents had been given a clear indication not to leave their waste out but to present it on their next scheduled day and although this was unpopular it undoubtedly reduced the number of calls received when compared to last year. However it was still a difficult time for the call centre staff. JG felt that more thought should be given if similar conditions occur in future to the collection of waste and recycling in communal blocks in areas such as Ninefields and Limes Farm. DM confirmed that problems had been averted in W/A where refuse had been cleared within the first week. VV reported that extra vehicles had been on hire because of the amount of recycling over Christmas and extra crews had dealt with the estates. However, these additional resources would not be available if severe weather conditions occurred again later in the year. DM said that street cleansing and other vehicles had been diverted to help with clearing backlogs in the past, but he would need to be convinced before supplying extra resources in future and residents would have to expect to wait until their next collection day.

If the waste management service operates from North Weald in the future it would be more difficult in icy conditions for the crews to travel to work and for vehicles to access the site. Arrangements would have to be made to put the approach road on the ECC gritting round.

7. Bank Holidays in April/May 2011

With the Royal Wedding on 29 April there will now be five bank holidays in April and May and it will take many weeks to catch up with collections. Working on one or more of them is not viable when the disposal sites are closed or restricted on bank holidays. The costs of tipping away in other districts would be prohibitive. It was agreed to include a statement in the March calendars, giving householders their revised collection dates and informing them of the difficulties in collecting waste when the disposal sites are closed. This information has never been given before.

8. 2010/11 Quarter 3 Performance

Q3 recycling figures have not yet been received from AK. They are likely to be around 60% but may be a little different to SR's.

9. Contract negotiations/extensions etc.

Schedule 2 is still awaited from John Bell in Finance. A breakdown of profits and overheads is required, and this is the subject of an exchange between SITA and Finance. PM stated that Steve Ostler was not sure what was called for but once DM had clarified this the matter could be finalised.

QD reported that the bin washing service previously undertaken by a third party had now been incorporated into the SITA contract.

<p>10.</p> <p>11.</p> <p>12.</p> <p>14.</p> <p>15.</p>	<p>Olympics The number of meetings JG attends is increasing, and he circulated the latest planned road network to and from the venue. The route from the park & ride at NWA and the remainder of the Olympic route will require special treatment. DM and VV will be in touch with their counterparts at Broxbourne to discuss ways of managing refuse collections, street cleansing etc. during the event.</p> <p>No bins or sacks are to be present in the area for the duration of the White Water event, for security as well as aesthetic reasons. All fly tipping and abandoned vehicles must be removed. Litter bins may have to be sealed off or coned over, and the area will be litter picked and verges cut before the games begin, including the link road, which is private land. Rounds may have to fundamentally change, either postponed or brought forward. The event takes place between 11am - 4pm, with the public arriving from 9am onwards, and rounds and street cleansing could possibly take place early morning or late evening. Every effort must be made to keep the entire area clean all day.</p> <p>Significant parking controls will be in place within the immediate vicinity to prevent people parking and walking to the venue. The use of car parks will be restricted and all day parking will not be permitted. There is to be a limited test event in the summer of 2011 which will give some indication of what will be required. The venue opens to the public in the spring.</p> <p>Review of policies With a view to a possible future change in the policy governing charging for second bins, MS showed the group a plastic tag which she had brought back from NZ. The tag is attached to the bin and snipped off when the collection is made. JG said that the plan at present is to give the service a period of stability for at least 12 months but the tag is a simple idea and would be borne in mind if and when a new charging policy is anticipated.</p> <p>DM reported that requests for second bins had reduced to 1-2 per week, although this will no doubt increase in March/April time, but there are still many complaints from residents who had been refused a second bin.</p> <p>Health and safety As well as the operative within the district with the broken ankle, there had been a fatality in Dover; no details were available. The outcome of the previous fatality in the north was not known but details will be available at the next meeting. SITA expect a 10% reduction in reportable accidents and lost days across the board. The lost days target was met, but they failed with reportable accidents which increased due to weather conditions earlier in the year in, amongst others, Eastbourne and Kensington & Chelsea (their largest contract).</p> <p>Visit to MRF This can now go ahead, with SITA requiring 10 days - 2 weeks notice. A note will be placed in the Members' bulletin, with a date planned for mid-February.</p> <p>Any other business JG (1) The Environment Agency require an official return giving details of the final destinations of waste and recycling materials. This is a legal duty and must be responded to. SITA have been requested to supply written confirmation that it is complying with EA requirements. It is not acceptable to withhold this information on the grounds of commercial confidentiality.</p> <p>(2) There have been two incidents where VV's staff were confronted by potentially violent members of the public, both drivers of black cabs. The first one was in W/A, where a person attempted to enter the cab and threw waste into the back of</p>
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the vehicle, contaminating the load. The second was in the Chigwell area and DM distributed a letter from the operative concerned who was intimidated by an unpleasant character and is now afraid to return to the premises.

Incidents like these affect crew members' ability to work and must be dealt with. Strictly speaking it is SITA's responsibility and they have their own procedures in place but JG would like to know what support other Councils give to their operatives, and whether it is lawful to refuse to pick up their waste. This was assault and the Police should be informed, as should the Carriage Office as the registration numbers of the taxis are known. It was agreed to bring the matter up at DM's next meeting with SITA, and ask Wendy Gains and Caroline Wiggins for advice.

QD: A few residents have asked if it is possible to pass information to them by text or email. It was generally agreed that this would involve a lot of work, but PM is to look into whether this system is used elsewhere.

PM

Date of next meeting

6 April 2011. 2pm, Cabinet Office.

An Assistant Portfolio Holder, Sue Jones, will accompany MS to sit in at the meeting, although she will not take part.