

**WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD
MINUTES**

Date of Meeting: 10 October 2011
Location: Cabinet Office, Civic Offices, Epping
Time: 2.00 pm
Attending: Cllr John Knapman – Env. Portfolio Holder & Board Chairman (JK)
 Cllr Gary Waller (GW)
 John Gilbert - Director, Environment & Street Scene (JG)
 Qasim Durrani, Assistant Director, Technical (QD)
 David Marsh, Waste & Recycling Manager (DM)
 Steve Holgate, SITA UK (SH)
 Paul Madden, SITA UK (PM)
 Vlad Velikoselskis - SITA UK (V V)
Also present: Stella Forster (Minutes)

	Action
<p>2. Apologies for Absence - None</p>	
<p>3. Declarations of Interest - None</p>	
<p>4. Draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2011- Agreed</p>	
<p>5. Matters arising - None</p>	
<p>6. Review of current contract performance (operational & financial) JK confirmed that the Council is very comfortable with the current performance levels, particularly as analysis of the complaints figures shows only a 0.1% rate of genuinely missed bins. JG to ask J Barnard to let GW have copies of the figures that are sent regularly to JK.</p> <p>Beginning SITA's accounting report with profit margins on P4, SH stated that Q2 for 2011/12 was showing an improvement on Q1, with operating profits increasing from £122k to £172k. The contract has achieved an excellent 10% return in Q2, due in part to the lack of bank holidays in Q2 compared with Q1.</p> <p>P5: The contract is good one for SITA and the partnership works well, with operating profits for the full contract up to 3.3%. EBIT (Earnings Before Interest & Tax) for the year to date from April is showing at 3.8%. EBIT differs from operating profit in that it reflects SITA adding their central overheads (HR, office expenditure, etc) back to the contract. It is therefore more of an internal measure than an external one.</p> <p>P6/7 Cost splits - wages vary very little, and although fuel costs are generally increasing SITA are showing savings of some £14k this quarter, probably due to the Eco Track System which is currently being trialled. The 5% increase in other costs is due to an accrual for weed spraying.</p> <p>In response to JK's question, JG stated that planning permission for the transfer station at Harlow has now been granted by the County Council, and it is due to open in 2013/14 following a procurement process. This will undoubtedly be advantageous to both SITA and the Council as tipping away terms are a key component of this contract.</p> <p>P9 Summary of waste flows: SITA's KPI figures for recycling, although they differ slightly to the Council's, are showing an excellent low-60's percentage, which is</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JG</p>

being maintained over the year.

JK asked if, by concentrating on flats, this figure could be improved. SH replied that, depending on the number of participating properties, volumes of recycling collected from flats are often so low as to be uneconomical to set up. DM stated that he is still working with Housing to create facilities in their flats. However, as collections are fortnightly there are often storage problems in these properties. In many cases individual flats within a block must be assessed separately as they may have different storage areas. New developments, which have been through the planning process, are sometimes using the space allocated to recycling for other purposes. The accessibility of recycling containers must be addressed as if residents have difficulty obtaining sacks, they will use residual bins for their recycling. To be covered later on the agenda.

GW had two questions; (1) if every household recycles everything they should, what is the maximum that could be achieved, and (2) what is the position on charging for garden waste, and does collecting this waste boost recycling figures compared with other non-participating authorities?

In answer to (1) SH replied that the figure could theoretically be 90%. However, this could not realistically be achieved. It is difficult to break habits, and there will never be even an 80% participation or capture rate. For example, many people only separate recyclables in the kitchen - bathroom waste is placed in the bin. Recycling volumes increase following any form of promotion, and then gradually decline again. The message must be continually reinforced.

JG: If, as Eric Pickles suggests, recycling is collected weekly, the rate would no doubt increase. However, this must be weighed against the huge increase in costs needed to implement it. In answer to (2), as long as food is collected with garden waste there can be no charge. JK stated that there are no plans to change the present arrangement, and asked if wet garden waste would give additional tonnage. SH confirmed that moisture content would make a difference to the weight collected.

P10 Missed bins - although not reaching the low Feb/April figures, an excellent performance level of between 25-27 per 100,000 collections is being maintained.

P1 Accidents - there has been a significant improvement this year and no RIDDORS (Reports of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regs. 1995) were reported for this contract. This is likely to change if and when the snow arrives as Epping seems to be particularly badly affected in these conditions.

DM: The HSE are due to return for another check at the beginning of November. Overall they appear to be happy with H&S arrangements, but this will not be confirmed until their report is received. SH stated that the HSE are concentrating on local authorities at the moment. RIDDORS are changing from 3-7 days.

JK: Chigwell Parish Council have purchased heavy brushes which can be attached to existing machines and used to help clear the snow in side roads not currently on the gritting round. ECC have requested that these be lent to Buckhurst Hill. It was confirmed that SITA could supply a list of roads, awkward corners, hills etc. that are not gritted and cause problems for the vehicles. V V pointed out that pavements are also dangerous to operatives, even if the roads are clear. The purchase of snowshoes for the men is being investigated, although these can be slippery on tarmac which is clear of snow. PM to chase.

P12 Overtime, Agency & Sickness days - SITA are tracking where sickness is having an effect on the company. With agency legislation changing from October, they are trying to limit the use of agency workers, only using them when sickness

V V

PM

levels are above expectations.

Referring to his statistical report (last page), V V said that sickness levels jumped to 4% in September (3% year to date). The long term sick leave of 3 members of staff is being dealt with by Sita's HR. The needle stick accident occurred at a diabetic person's premises where the needle was poking out from the lid. After tests the operative was given a clean bill of health.

7. Contractual issues to include extension

JG had written to SH informing him that Cabinet had resolved to extend the contract to November 2014. This is good news as it means 3 years of certainty for both parties. This time will be used to take stock of how the contract is run and identify where changes should be made, bearing in mind that the next round of competitive tendering will begin as soon as 18 months' time. The report was well received by both Cabinet and Council, and the £850k of savings was welcomed at this difficult time. However, it was made clear that as this is income generated, performance levels must be maintained and the recycling message must be regularly reinforced. Only minor changes to the contract are envisaged, and QD and SH are to arrange for both legal teams to meet so that it can be finalised and signed as soon as possible.

QD/SH

8.

Government announcements on weekly collections

JK: These proposals have not yet been clarified and it would have been helpful if Eric Pickles had consulted local authorities before announcing his intentions. The general view is that this Council is not planning any drastic changes as it already fulfils most of the requirements and it may be worth writing a letter to bid for a retrospective grant. SH mentioned that authorities are using many tactics to qualify for the funding; some are rushing through a fortnightly collection so that they are eligible to claim for introducing a weekly one.

JG: There has been little guidance so far, but the funds will not be offered unless an increase in recycling can be demonstrated. The £250m available will not go far across all authorities over a 5 year period, and a retrospective grant is unlikely to succeed. The only putrescible waste not currently collected is nappy/ incontinence pads. As this waste is left in residual bins and collected fortnightly, it would only be necessary to introduce an alternate weekly collection, using smaller vehicles, which would not impact on performance numbers too much.

SH stated that some authorities treat this as clinical waste, which reduces the price. Although any new round would be beneficial to SITA, it would make little financial sense to introduce an extra collection when the system is already working well. Nappies etc. are very absorbent and can be pre-sealed, or placed in nappy bags, and most residents cope well with the current process.

9.

Olympic Games Update

JG: Final touches are being put to the City Operations Plan, which outlines proposals to deal with street cleansing, and waste management generally, during the White Water event. The report will be taken to Cabinet once complete. Following approval at last Cabinet, DM has made contact with officers at Broxbourne BC to discuss ways of working together to deliver the most efficient and cost effective service. Firm action plans will be laid down in the new year.

Extra item

Before leaving for another appointment, JG wished to bring the Board's attention to the forecasts for freezing temperatures in the next few months, and the importance of having arrangements in place to keep the fleet of vehicles on the road. Although County have stocked up on salt, it is to be hoped there is sufficient to cope with an early onset of bad weather. JK has received confirmation that County will provide one ton of salt for Chigwell's extra vehicles,

and have indicated they will keep salt bins topped up.

JG left the meeting.

Returning to Olympics issues, DM distributed a report prepared by the Innovation Forum, which comprises of officers from EFDC and SITA, with proposals for managing street cleansing and waste collections for the duration of the White Water event.

(1) Collections: The roads affected by the Park & Ride, identified through a survey of the area, will take priority and all bins and sacks will be collected from those roads before 9am. As there is a requirement for no containers to be left on the highway, they will all be returned, not to the boundary, but to the front doors of properties. Normal schedules will be resumed once this is completed.

(2) Street cleansing: All roads affected will be thoroughly cleansed during the week before the event. In the week commencing 30 July these areas will be litter picked daily, once between 7am and 9am and again between 4pm and 5pm. A flexible mobile crew will be on hand for some important areas and DM and V V will ensure that any unforeseen circumstance can be dealt with quickly and easily. Schedules have been reorganised, and there should be no great disruption to normal cleaning services. Existing resources will be used so that no additional costs are incurred

JK thanked DM and V V for an excellent piece of work.

Health and Safety issues - Covered above.

10.

Depot Relocation

11.

JK: Although the planning application for North Weald is proceeding, it is by no means certain that the depot will be relocated there. A site immediately adjacent to the current depot is being considered as a potential alternative; it is large enough for the garden waste operation to also be situated there. The rental costs are as yet unknown, but they may be covered by the returns on the retail development and other Portfolio Holder advice will be sought on the likelihood of this going ahead. The advantages to this site are: minimal disruption in the relocation process, proximity to the motorway and zero costs of moving staff. Weighed against this, NW would benefit from being closer to the Harlow facility when it opens in 2013/14, although there are issues with NW being a 'temporary' premises. Some feedback from SITA would be appreciated.

SH: SITA's requirements have already been supplied; they are mainly staff accommodation, parking, fuel tank and a wash.

Any Other Business

12.

DM circulated a report comparing two waste analyses carried out in the Epping Forest district in 2007 and 2011. Both exercises were conducted on the ACORN classification system, identified through postcodes, although an extra category (5) was added to the later study. Details of the categories are given on P1. When comparing the figures for residual waste, there is an obvious decline in food waste since the introduction of the new service but there are still significant levels of dry recyclables being placed in residual bins. There are also large numbers of nappies, and even in the wealthier categories there is a high proportion of glass not being recycled. This must be addressed.

JK: As much as 40% of what is disposed of at the Ongar tip could have been collected from the doorstep. These materials are recorded in ECC's figures, but if collected could boost Epping's recycling levels. The message must be driven

home that unless residents co-operate in maintaining high recycling returns, Council Tax may have to be increased.

DM: An EFDC/SITA Innovation Forum was set up as a requirement of a previous Board to identify ways in which Epping's recycling levels could be increased to match or improve on those of Rochford. DM passed around a report compiled by the Forum setting out the current problems with the sack-based collection of recyclables, and giving four options of improving the accessibility of sacks to households, each having its own advantages and disadvantages. All options would include maintaining or slightly reducing the number of outlets.

It was suggested that one or more options could be trialled over a 6-9 month period on one or perhaps two rounds. The results of the trial would help in determining which method would (a) increase recycling, (b) best drive the message home (c) be the most cost effective way to set up and administer, and (d) result in the increase in recycling credits being sufficient to cover the costs of implementation. The Board agreed to consider the report fully before discussing further at the next meeting.

DM also circulated another Forum report, giving an analysis of WYG's review of street cleansing standards (excluding fly posting and graffiti). Although the Forum accepted a few of WYG's conclusions they felt that the findings were flawed, and disputed most of the criticisms. Their reasons are given in their report and are reinforced by an assessment received from Keep Britain Tidy (KBT) indicating that Epping's standards were above the national average. Officers also visited other boroughs identified by WYG as achieving higher results, and found that, with the exception of Hertsmere, this was not the case. It was agreed to discuss this topic further at the next meeting when the report had been read and digested more fully, but that priority would be given to the few areas identified in the KBT assessment as requiring some attention.

Date of next meeting

12 January 2011. 10am, Cabinet Room