

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE WEST ESSEX AREA WASTE MANAGEMENT JOINT COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2006

Present:

Members

Councillor Michael Gage, Braintree District Council
Councillor Michael Lager, Essex County Council (vice Councillor Roger Walters)
Councillor Mary Sartin, Epping Forest District Council (vice Councillor Stephen Metcalfe)
Councillor Tony Sleep, Brentwood Borough Council (Chairman)
Councillor Alan Thawley, Uttlesford District Council (Vice-Chairman)

Substitute Members

Councillor Sarah Courage, Brentwood Borough Council

Officers

Ian Haines, Braintree District Council
Brian Lawrence, Brentwood Borough Council
John Gilbert, Epping Forest District Council
Nicola Beach, Essex County Council
Melanie Clark, Essex County Council
Alex Creecy, Essex County Council
Peter Kelsbie, Essex County Council
Kathy May, Harlow District Council

63. Apologies for Absence and Notices of Substitution

The Secretary to the meeting reported that he had received formal notification that Councillor Michael Lager had replaced Councillor Norman Hume as the Substitute Member for Essex County Council.

Apologies for absence were received from, Councillor Stephen Metcalfe, Epping Forest District Council with Councillor Mary Sartin as his substitute; from Councillor Roger Walters, Essex County Council with Councillor Michael Lager as his substitute; and from Councillor Christopher Millington and his substitute Councillor Bob Davis, Harlow District Council.

64. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

65. Matter Arising from the Minutes
(Minute 52 – Appointment of Vice-Chairman)

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Councillor Thawley for agreeing to act as Vice-Chairman.

66. Project Progress Report

Peter Kelsbie, Essex County Council, presented his 'dashboard' progress report (WEWM/18/06), giving an update on the overall progress of the project. It was explained that the overall status of the project remained as "red", which was inevitable while talks with DEFRA were continuing. If the timetable is to be met, the Outline Business Case will need to be submitted to DEFRA by mid-December 2006. This deadline was considered to be tight but achievable.

It was reported that Southend-on-Sea had completed its soft market testing exercise. As part of the exercise it had received feedback that partnership with the County Council for disposal was the best way forward rather than going it alone. Arrangements for Essex County Council's soft market testing event were underway; the invitations had been sent out and about 50 delegates were expected at the conference to be held on 29 September. The Rivenhall planning application had been received by the County Council and was now going through due process. The revisiting of the Thames Gateway joint procurement desktop study had concluded that there would be real economies of scale for three authorities working together.

Plans for the next period included continuing discussions regarding the Courtauld Road lease; the commencement of discussions with existing landfill contractors on the potential extension of current contracts; the preparation of question packs for the soft market testing event and the preparation of the MRF business case subjective report which would be presented to members for approval in the October/November round of meetings.

The Chairman thanked Peter Kelsbie for his report.

67. Kerbside Analysis Tool (KAT) Modelling

Melanie Clark, Essex County Council, gave a presentation on the KAT and mass flow modelling work.

It was explained that the objectives of the system were to design an integrated collection, treatment and disposal system which –

- met the statutory obligations of BVPIs and LATS;
- delivered the aspirations of the waste strategy;
- represented best value;
- informed choice of future system configuration;
- created a starting point for discussions on Funding Formula.

The intention was to construct 14 models for five pilot authorities (Braintree, Harlow, Brentwood, Basildon and Tendring). The starting point was to assess and calibrate the current systems and to use this information to model a series of options for the Districts.

It was noted that, following the conclusion of the modelling, the next steps would be –

- to approve formally the process and modelling results;
- for parent Authorities to consider recommendations from the modelling report;
- to start development of the Funding Formula to establish the financial position for each Authority;
- to develop Service Delivery Plans (recycling plans)
- to develop Inter-Authority Agreements (IAAs).

Discussion

In response to a question from Councillor Courage about the promotion of home composting Nicola Beach responded that the intention was not to detract from home composting or to lead to the unnecessary collection of green waste.

In response to a question from Councillor Thawley concerning the confidence levels in the data, it was confirmed that part of the pilot work involved a calibration exercise using 05/06 data so that the model closely reflected the actual figures. From there, it would be possible to build fluctuating rates into the pilot models in order to create different “what if” scenarios.

In response to questions from Councillor Lager it was explained that another package being used in conjunction with KAT called “Waste Flow” is better able to deal with uncertainties in such areas as population growth. Having used KAT to agree a process the next stages will be about examining detailed options. A separate desktop exercise had shown the benefits of group working and percentage bandwidths of savings.

The Chairman thanked Melanie Clark for her presentation.

68. Update on Communications Strategy

Nicola Beach, Essex County Council, provided a brief communications update for the Joint Committee. The following points were noted.

Rivenhall - the planning application for the Rivenhall site had been received in August.

Courtauld Road – negotiations on the lease were continuing with Integra, the site owners. Heads of Terms had been agreed. It was hoped that the details of the lease could be finalised as soon as possible. Until the lease is agreed the planning application will not be submitted. Arrangements were in hand when the application is submitted for a full range of public information leaflets and exhibitions.

Stanway – a planning application may be submitted later in the year.

Sandon – was still at a very early stage.

Pitsea – an application for works had been submitted.

There had been very few media enquiries and the media were being kept informed on progress with the Courtauld Road site.

Project branding – proposals had been prepared. The branding was intended for internal use only, for businesses and DEFRA. These would be considered at the Waste Management Advisory Board meeting on 28 September.

69. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 2.30pm on Wednesday, 1 November 2006 in Committee Room 1, County Hall, Chelmsford.

70. Exclusion of the public

Resolved:

That the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

Report on Commercial Partnership Arrangements
(Para 3 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of another party)

71. Commercial Partnership Arrangements

(Public and press excluded)

Peter Kelsbie, Essex County Council, gave a presentation on the structure of the possible Inter-Authority Agreements and a timetable for achieving them.

Chairman
1 November 2006